

1. Introduction: Switching over to Identity Politics

Nepali left political parties have come to regard caste and ethnicity equivalent to class disseminating new ethnic-based identity that demonstrates how the very foundation of communist ideology has been shifting from class into identity politics. The politics of identity that emerged and spread from 1990 received prominence in Nepali politics especially after 2006 April Uprising which ultimately popped up as an apple of discord when political parties failed to deliver new constitution through the Constituent Assembly (CA) bickering over it. Ultimately, the CA got dissolved on May 27, 2012 after parties apparently failed to make consensus on identity-based federalism. Though a number of identity-based organizations emerged before 2006 as well, the trends of forming identity-based organizations and focusing on identity groups rather than class soared after the second people's movement. Moreover, polarization due to the identity politics has heightened in Nepali politics after the CA dissolution.

Left political parties of Nepal who are guided by the Marxist slogan as 'Worker's of all countries, unite' gradually gave way to identity politics that was diluted from 'class struggle' itself. As the time changes, everything changes with it except the 'change' itself. Same is the case with ideology. It shifts from one to the other as Daniel Bell in his book " The End of Ideology: on the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties" claims that the older humanistic ideologies developed during the nineteenth and early twentieth century is ebbing gradually (1960). During 1960s and 70s, in contrast to the logic of Marxist and Neo-Marxist theory, social movements were focused on culture and identity such as civil rights and women's movements challenging the class structure (Bernstein 49). Bernstein says, "New Social movement (NSM) theory moves beyond the parameters of Marxist frameworks to understand the

variety of social movements that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s that were not ostensibly organized around social class" (54). As the claim of Bernstein, the rise of identity politics in Nepal focusing on ethnicity is a social movement beyond Marxist framework.

Nepali political parties do not abide by their pure ideological principles. They use pure ideology only for identifying themselves and motivating their cadres. The shift of pure ideology into identity politics comes against the background of the resurgence of historicity based on identity on national front, and a setback of capitalism seen in economic recession that began in the western world from 2008, and Occupy Wall Street Movement of late 2011. It popped up a number of questions against the authenticity and logic of pure capitalism on international fronts.

The ideology of Socialism of Nepali Congress envisaged by its veteran leader B.P. Koirala never got transformed into practice but got stuck in the process. Same is the case with "Naulo Janabad" of CPN UML propounded by the Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) leader Madan Bhandari. On the other hand, "Prachandapath" of the Unified CPN Maoist drew flak before it emerged as a well-formed political ideology. Moreover, the party got into a messy situation while trying to implement the Maoist ideology. However they are not implementing their ideologies in practical front though none of them formally leave their ideology because they can use it to differ themselves with others, and can take it as a tool to mobilize the cadres when they need mass movement.

Identity politics begins to mingle with class struggle. Even left ethnic activists advocate identity politics as the ultimate resolution of marginalization imposed by the states giving references of Lenin, Mao and other Marxist ideologues (Karki, Lekhi Tharu, Sherpa et. al, 2011). However, there are a number of schools of thought which

regard identity politics as a diluted version of class struggle that would ultimately divert attention from fundamental issues of proletariat class struggle and hinder the way to reach classless society. Moreover, a significant number of leaders and right activists fear that identity politics will push the country to communal clash and ultimately split the nation (Adhikari, KC, 2011, Rawol, et. al, 2012).

2. Literature Review: Through the Eyes of Left Politics

Actually caste and ethnicity refer a matrix of identity vectors like other identity markers as sexuality, ethnicity and nationality (Alcoff, 2003). In the context of Nepal, the surnames of people are the markers that signify in which caste and ethnic group he/she belongs to. However, predecessor's clans play vital role to determine a person's caste. Moreover, in traditional society people were assigned tasks according to which caste they belonged. Likewise, particular works were ascribed to a certain ethnic groups; for example, groups like Gurung, Rai and Limbu were associated with the choice of joining security forces and going for Lahur or foreign armed services. Human beings are divided into ethnic groups or races, and caste is based on a social handiwork. Different ethnic groups have different language and culture as W.E.B. Du Bois states, "Many criteria of race differences have in the past been proposed as color, hair, cranial measurements and language" (43). Different ethnic groups have different typical language and typical culture, which varies one ethnic group to the others. In fact, conventional Nepali society identifies people according to their surnames that they write at the end of their names. For example, Upadhaya refers to the higher caste Brahman, and Thapa, Pandey and Basnet signify Chhetri. On the other hand, Rai, Limbu, Gurung etc refers that they belong to ethnic communities.

Rig Veda, one of the oldest Hindu scriptures, talks about the cosmic individual whose mouth is Brahman, hand Kshatriya, thigh Vaishya, and leg Sudra. It means that the concept of caste or racial hierarchy is not the new. Its foundation has been laid more than 1000 BC ago (Aahuti 479). Later such racial classification was transformed into the division of labour; Brahman is for study and providing knowledge, Kshatriya for battle and administrative field, Baishya for animal husbandry, agriculture and

trade, Sudra is for labour, servicing others and craft. Then it gets a form of religion based on race called “Branashramdharma” (Saskritayan, 1942). Now what we call caste is the product of that foundation laid by the Rig-Veda. And, such hierarchies of caste have been used by the rulers to rule over people. Introduction of Muluki Ain by the first Prime Minister of Nepal Jung Bahadur Rana in 1854 by classifying people into 'pure' and 'impure' on the basis of caste is one of the best examples of it.

Aahuti opines that the so-called higher Brahmin caste has origin in the same racial group as the other ethnic groups. So castes and ethnic groups have been considered not by the physical qualities of the people but by the varied aspects of social-economic bases (478). Later the society has strictly systematized the hierarchy of caste from the time of Manu since 200 BC (Baral, 2050). The origin of caste and race is thus dependent on the myth for the purpose of discrimination and exploitation which has no scientific basis. The modern genealogy has proved that the same racial group creates more racial differences than the conventionally regarded different race. So, there is no scientific justification of the concept ‘race’ (Aahuti 478). However, identity markers such as racial, ethnic, sexual etc come into existence as burning issue as Linda Martin Alcoff states, “Every one seems to agree that social identity such as ethnicity, sexuality and nationality have come to the centre of political mobilization” (1). In the same tune, Nepali left political parties have also started focusing on caste and ethnic identity rather than class. Their shift from class into caste and ethnic identity has been regarded as ideological dishonesty. However, Alcoff claims, “For some, the emphasis on identity is a threat to democracy and an incitement of ceaseless conflict; for others, it is a struggle long overdue” (1). Then a question necessarily blooms over here as to- Why people are being attached with the racial identity who have been oppressed because of that rather than trying to escape from that? The

history of the world says that people have fought against oppression based on race, caste, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, culture and nationality throughout the world (Alcoff 2). Undoubtedly, the world might be a better place without caste hierarchy. But, struggles between the so-called higher and lower castes even with the groups will continue to exist. Herein, like the locus of the dialectics between the ethnic and class hierarchies.

Though caste and ethnicity differ, Nepali left political parties have blurred the caste and ethnicity categories by upholding the concept of Jatis. In fact, in literal sense Jati stands for 'thus born'. Jati refers to communities and sub-communities in Nepal. Jati is a term that is used across religions. In typical Nepali society each jāti has an association with a traditional job function or tribe. However, religious beliefs or linguistic groupings define some jatis. Deepa S. Reddy says that the identity vector 'caste' has a long history both in and out of the Indian subcontinent which is in one way or the other intertwined with the race (2005). A person's surname typically reflects a community (jati) association. For instance, Dhobi refers to the community of Washermen, Damai as clothes sewing and so on. A caste has various internal hierarchies. For example, Newar is a jati but it has various hierarchies inside it. Inside Newar, there are the so-called untouchable caste like Poda and a few others. So, it is questionable how the caste-based slogan of left political parties can resolve the internal categories.

The Constituent Assembly Election Declaration Paper of the then CPN (Maoist) tries to define 'jatiya' identity as not caste or race but a stable group of people with shared language, shared geography, common economy and common psychology. It refers to 'jati' loosely translated into 'caste' in English not as it is conventionally used to signify but as it is used for the meaning of “nationality” (24). However, the

declaration paper time and again talks about 'jati' in conventional way. It believes that caste liberation can be possible only when the right is determined on the basis of the race or caste (20-30). On the one hand, it suggests to take "jati" as only 'nationality', on the other hand, it advocates a division of the states along the lines of the ethnic groups. However, it is remarkable that it regards "jati" as group of people who have been exploited, marginalized and underprivileged by the state from time immemorial. For example, it tries to evoke exploited Madheshi people to be conscious about the probability of presenting the so-called high Madheshi exploiters themselves as fake liberators of the marginalized Madheshi people (24-25). Moreover, Maoist CA declaration paper vows to change Nepal into federal states based on jati such as Magrat, Tharuwan, Tamuwan, Newa, Tamsaling, Kirant, Limbuwan, Kochila and Madhesh (26). It not only offers federal autonomous states for the above mentioned ethnic groups but also vows to establish state-units on the basis of sub-jati like Mithila, Vojpura, and Abadha inside Madhesh. The main caveat of the logic is if it says to take ethnic group as "nationality", why does it offer the condition of state-based categories on region such as Seti-Mahakali and Veri-Karnali and so on, what about the nationality of those places if 'jati' refers to nationality? Is 'jati' the major determining factor of nationality that necessities the naming along caste and ethnic lines? Actually, the CA declaration paper of Maoist is taking jati in ethnic sense. Such argument would lead to the creation of a condition that would federate the country along the ethnic lines under different nomenclature like Himali region as Bayshi Himali (Lama, Bhote), Sherpa, Thakali etc, Hilly region as Baramu, Bhujel, Chepang, Chhantel, Dura, Hawu, Halmo, Jerel, Lepcha, Sunuwar, Thami etc, Mid-Terai region such as Majhi-Bote, Danuwar, Darai, Kumal etc, Terai's Dhimal, Jhagad-Kisan Meche, Munda-Santhal, Koch-Rajbansi etc (26). Although, in Nepal no

place can be defined in terms of community of race, language and religion, the nation is defined as a community. Hark Gurung defines “Jat” or “Caste” that refers to social groups with internal hierarchy and “Jati/ Janajati” (ethnic groups) are differentiated on the basis of mother tongue, religious tradition and native area (12). If Jati or ethnic groups must have common mother tongue, religious tradition and native area, there are numerous groups which meet some of them. But surprisingly, no group meets all of them clearly because of the internal migration pattern. Of more than one hundred castes of Nepal, no place is clearly populated entirely by one jati. The census of 1991 shows that all the eastern hilly districts, which are supposed to have been the indigenous places for Kirant, have more Hindu population than followers of “Mundhum” religion. Because of internal migration, in 1952/54, 5.9 percent Pahare” (Hilly people) live in Terai which surprisingly increased by 31.7 percent after four decades which consequently turn Jhapa, Morang, Chitwan and Rupandehi as Brahman dominated and Kanchapur which is regarded as Tharu has turned into Kshetriya dominated areas in terms of population. It shows no jati is equally distributed in a certain region so that they can be given their own state on the basis of single identity. In twenty-two districts, Kshetri's population is more than other caste, in nine districts Brahmans are more than the other groups. Tharu's population is widely dispersed in seven districts, Magar in six, Rai in five, Gurung in four, Limbu in three, Newar in three, Yadav in five and Muslim in four. Moreover, among the total population of the ethnic groups, 51 percent live in Terai and 13 percent live in mid Terai and only 7 percent live in western Himalaya, and 18.7 percent live in mid-hilly region (Gurung 429-31). It is crystal clear that jati is distributed unequally across Nepal which creates difficulty in establishing federal state in terms of single identity of a jati/ janajati or ethnic groups.

The census of 1952/54 has recorded 53 languages though only 32 have been recorded by the census of 1991. Eighty percent people out of total population have their mother tongues. In the groups of languages, 'Bharopeli' is spoken by 50.3 percent population. The census of 1991 has shown that more than half of the ethnic groups are using Nepali language as their mother tongue. In different caste groups, 5.6 percent do not speak their language in Himal, 14.4 percent in Terai, 15.2 percent in Eastern Hilly region and 52.4 percent in Mid-Hilly region, and 66.5 percent in Mid-Terai. Between four decade from 1952/54 to 1991, the speaker of Bhot- Barmali increased by 73.8 percent, and Bharopeli by 131.5 percent (Gurung, 2005). It shows the increase in the use of Nepali language which is the main language of Bharopeli groups. Then, it is crystal clear that no place can be separated for a certain language speakers. Moreover, the logic of separating different states on the basis of language deconstructs itself because the census shows the unequivocal increment of Nepali speakers.

During a period from 1952/54 to 1991, the population of Islam religion has increased by 212.7 percent that is more than the increasing rate of the Hindu population which is 118.5 percent. Buddhists increased by 103.5 percent from 1961 onward. Christian increased by 68 percent and Jain by 9 percent. However, no religion has distinct place because followers of all faiths are living amiably together. Since they do not have their own territories, they are living unequivocally across the country (Gurung 418-46). The census alarmingly shows the growth of Islam, Hindu, Christian and Buddhist religions which have different language, different psychology and different cultures. Surprisingly, left political parties have no clear vision on that score. If different religions demand separate states where a religious group has more population than other because they all meet the requirement for separate states as

shared language, shared psychology and shared economy, what would be the consequence? The left political parties have no clear answers for that.

Likewise, CPN (UML) declares to establish Federal state on the basis of jati and ethnicity in its CA Election Declaration Paper (20). It assures the name of the federal state on the basis of jatis, languages, culture and historical identifications. It gives first priority to the jati to establish federal state. It says “Federal Structure is developed on the basis of jati, lingual, cultural and geographical distinction” (20). Nevertheless, it regards ethnic and jatiya identity as a major vector like class identity.

Moreover, political parties do not remain firm in their own declaration on the issue of identity. Even Maoists have changed their views on ethnicity based federal states after Constituent Assembly election. Same is the case with the CPN UML. Later, Maoist proposed 13 autonomous states as Limbuwan, Kochila, Seti- Mahakali, Tharuwan, Kirat, Sherpa, Veri- Karnali, Bhote-Lama, Tamsaling, Newa, Tamuwan, Magrat and Madhes (nepalnews.com, 2009). Maoist put forward Sherpa and Bhote-Lama autonomous states later that were not mentioned in its CA Declaration paper earlier. It shows that they are flexible to add the federal states as per the pressure from ethnic sectors. They repurposed the federal states after they got some pressure from ethnic sectors (nepalnews.com, 2009). It proves they are not sincere enough to solve the problems of marginalized communities. They change their views not according to the problems of marginalized communities. Their main interest is to curry votes for their parties.

None of the left political parties talk about the classless society achieved by abolishing the bourgeoisie class structure. They talk about the exploited communities and seem to say “caste as class” by ignoring contradiction that exist inside an ethnic group. Necessarily, some questions come up here as: What made the communist

parties conform ethnic identity as class identity? Are they using identities as temporary political strategies, or working with the ultimate aim of dissolving such social categories based on ethnicity? Moreover, do they really want to value the diversities of identities? They can not and have not yet provided answers to these crucial questions.

Since the CA declaration paper of Maoist tries to redefine the jati identity by linking to the ‘nationality’ question by attaching it with ethnic or race (24), it seems that it is compelled to regard jati to make the people gather under one flag ultimately which they hope that it would result positively in ballot-box politics. It clearly uses Jati/Jatiya and suggests taking it in the sense of ‘nationality’. It states thus, “Here Jatiya means not race or caste, rather it is necessary to understand in the meaning of a stable group of people with common language, common geography, common economy and common psychological structure or nationality” (24). If ‘jatiya’ stands for ‘nationality’ what makes them use the debatable word ‘jatiya’ for the sake of nationality. And, if any Jatiya group claims that they have shared economy, common language, common geography, and common psychological structure, are they ready to craft out new federal states for them too? Moreover, it believes to resolve the problem of the caste or racial exploitation on the same basis in terms of which old state has exploited. The declaration paper further states, “Again since exploitation has been done by the old state on the basis of class as well as caste and regions, the problem can be solved by ensuring the rights on the same basis in terms of which exploitation has been done” (24). It clearly hints that Maoist also does not take the caste differently as it is regarded conventionally. It proves that Unified CPN (Maoist) has taken identity as strategical essentialism as Gayatri C. Spivak says in a different

context. It uses the ethnic identity as class identity to unite people or to bring people under the red flag of Maoist.

On the other hand, CPN (UML) uses ethnic identity as taken for granted. Its CA Election Declaration paper is not as clear as Maoist regarding federal states on the basis of ethnicity however it simply says that federal states will be formed on the basis of identity. It focuses identity as a first priority for the basis of federal division of the nation (CA Declaration Paper of UML, 2064). UML also is saying 'caste is class' for the purpose of strategical essentialism as Maoist does.

The communist parties, which have been regarded as supporters of internationalism in terms of class, seem to emphasize nationality by using 'jatiya' to form national identity. Benedict Anderson regards nationality as imagined identity (1991). For communist parties it is not genuine to establish national identity on the basis of ethnic identity which is somewhat close to caste as Mendiante argues, "Class and caste conspired to project a certain national identity" (408). They are strategically using ethnicity as class to give sense of nationality against the background of Indian boarder hegemony on the one hand, and to organize people by touching their sensitivity on the other hand.

Identity construction through the use of 'jati' evaporates because of the identity crisis of the jati itself. David H. Holmberg claims that "Tamang" is reconstructed jati as 'Tamang' as such does not exist in real sense. Tamang is a category of people found throughout highland Nepal; they have "emerged not out of time immemorial from hidden Himalayan valleys but with the formation of the state of Nepal" (12). However Tamangs have been defined as indigenous tribal people and are assumed to give different state as Tamsaling though there is no logical answer in political parties why they do not take "Thakuri" and "Kuwar" who have the same

origin with the construction of Nepal. If they argue as Tamang has been exploited in the past that is why they are prioritized today, they have no answer about those who are Thakuri but still being exploited. Then a question necessarily blooms over here as to: how many states will satisfy to the people of more than one hundred ethnic groups and sixty four different languages?

Actually jati and caste do not exist as such because they are not attributing the ontological integrity to the term as Julia Kristeva says in the case of women that they can not be said to exist (Butler 202). Caste is also socially constructed as woman. Ranjit Guha also says that subaltern class has also heterogeneity within itself in terms of subclasses, interests and identities (Guha 139). Definitely, a caste consists of a variety of differences including bourgeoisie and proletariat classes. Then how can identity politics solve the problem of exploitation by the bourgeoisie on proletariat. Actually caste is produced in the interest of Hindu religious scriptures. However, since it is easier to bring people under the political flag because of the strong sense of caste and ethnicity rooted in the society, Nepali left political parties give the undeclared slogan “caste is class” for the strategical essentialism with the hidden purpose of the politics of ballet box.

3. Research Approach

This dissertation has tried to gauge out the every nooks and corners of the left political parties regarding their approaches toward class struggle and identity politics through their formal documents, literature published in daily and periodical papers, journals and magazines including Television interviews which the researcher (myself) conducted. The researcher personally conducted a number of Television interviews regarding the issue with considerable feedback from the people of various walks of life during the research period. It led the dissertation to have claimed that Nepali left political parties have started seeking class inside identity group focusing extremely on the later.

Method

In fact, this study has focused on the perspectives of the left political parties of Nepal regarding caste and ethnicity. The perspectives of Unified CPN Maoist and CPN UML along with other fringe left parties deserve attention. Articles published on daily news-papers (Kathmandu Post, Republica, Kantipur and Nayapatrika), online (ekantipur.com, nepalnews.com), weekly and fortnight magazines (Himal Khabar Patrika and Nepal Magazine) on caste and ethnicity help this study to gauge out the gradual shift in political ideology and the gap between sayings and doings of left parties. Television interviews (on ABC TV) with political leaders and ethnic activists and online articles also help to understand their changing perspectives about caste and ethnic problems and their resolutions. Their political documents and activities show the paradox they possess regarding identity politics.

Significance

This study breaks the iceberg of the hidden objectives of the left political parties on identity politics especially on caste and ethnic discourses. The study also

opens a fresh ground for discussion about political parties' perspectives towards caste and ethnicity as no other studies so far have challenged ideological bases of them. This study leads to the rethinking of the basic ideology of left political parties that have changed over a course of time. The study also sheds light on how political parties are equating class identity with caste and ethnic identity and evoking possibilities of communal conflict. It also shows how they are blurring the possibility of what they call 'communism' achieved by establishing classless society and demonstrates how the left political parties are ultimately practicing caste and ethnic politics deviating themselves from class struggle.

In the present era when Nepal is at transitional phase in all aspects, Nepali political parties themselves are being changed which makes the society more viable. So the thrust of this research is justified as it is in touch with the current burning issue in Nepali socio-political change. Through analyzing the writes-up on the perspectives of left political parties on caste and ethnic discourses and the theoretical writings on caste, ethnic and identity politics, it leads to claim that Nepali left political parties are emphasizing more on identity politics rather than on class struggle, which is not necessarily an armed struggle, even if they need to talk in terms of class identity only for identifying themselves and for mobilizing their cadres in times of need.

Limitation

This dissertation has covered the time frame from the election of Constituent Assembly to its dissolution after four years. It has used the word "left political parties" to refer the communist parties of Nepal. However, this dissertation has not paid equal attention to all parties which claim themselves as "communist". It took two left parties, Unified CPN Maoist and CPN UML in spotlight including other left parties as such Rastriya Janamorcha, Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist Leninist), CPN

(United) and (CPN (Unified)). As fringe left parties have no strong national take on burning issues, they have not been paid profound attention. Though my research led me to claim that Nepali left political parties are gradually shifting from class struggle to identity politics, there are ample possibilities of proving it wrong because of the very nature of political parties which are saturated with with full of contradiction between their appearance and reality.

4. Identity Politics and Class in Nepal: From Class to Identity Consciousness

Class struggle is an integral part of left politics without which a communist party could not be called a communist party. Nepali left political parties, though they have abandoned class struggle in practice, in one way or the other are compelled to keep on repeating their familiar slogan. However, it does not mean that class struggle can only be articulated through armed conflict. The interest of a particular class can be advocated through various means even in open and competitive politics. But, instead of focusing on class struggle for ultimate resolution of class-based discriminations, Nepali left political parties have been indulging in identity politics. However, it is a global phenomenon that class struggle is being marginalized, and other cultural movement such as identity politics begins to appear as an alternative to the class struggle. Rohit Lekhi says,

...class now occupies a marginal role in both contemporary social and political theory and, it seems, in politics more generally. This is discernible most clearly in the proliferation of emancipatory projects constituted around non-class axes where class appears to be of little (if any) relevance. Instead, gender, sexuality and race/ethnicity (to take only a few examples) seem equally as, if not more, convincing upon which to base the potentialities of political struggle (361).

Their shifts from pure class struggle to emphasis on what they call 'indigenous nationalities' which means 'Jatiya' in Nepali and loosely translated in English as 'Caste' is a significant turning point. However there is dispute whether Jatiya should be called caste or not. Dennis B McGilvray claims, "Caste is jatiya and this term primarily refers to the notion of categories" (21). So caste and Jatiya can be used interchangeably.

In fact, identity politics tends to advocate for the recognition and equal status of the particular identity group to the other on identity basis. Bernstein says,

Identity politics is assumed to be cultural not only because identity is putatively unrelated to institutional structures and the political economy, but also because these scholars see identity groups as advocating for recognition of and respect for their cultural differences, which drive from their distinct group identities (50).

So, identity politics seek equal status of one group with that of the culture regarded as the mainstream.

Actually, caste and class both signify groupings of people based on heredity and economic status respectively in a society. Class is classified on the basis of economic status, profession, political status, and religion. Max Weber claims, "Now: 'classes,' 'status group/'and 'parties' are phenomena of the distribution of power within community" (83). But, Weber clarifies that classes are not communities rather they represent possible and frequent bases for social action. Class can be formed when a number of people share a "specific casual component of their life chances" (84). He claims that depends on the economic interests, i.e. possession of goods and opportunities for income which is out and out controlled by commodity and labor market. In this sense, class situation is ultimately a market situation. Weber says, "Those men whose fate is not determined by the chances of using goods or services for themselves on the market, e.g. slaves, are not, however, a class in the technical sense of the term. They are, rather, a status group" (85). But, the latter definition of Weber may not be relevant to Nepali society because Nepali society has complex relations between class and caste hierarchies.

Class consciousness is awareness of one's social class or economic status-quo in society. In Marxist perspectives, class consciousness refers to the self awareness of a particular economic rank where people of a particular class tend to act as per the rational interests of that group. However, the focus on identity politics will weaken the power of class struggle as Bernstein says, "[T]he claims of identity politics have replaced collective bargaining and have undermined the trade union movement" (50). Since identity groups are unrelated to economic structures of the society, identity politics emphasize on the other dimensions stemmed from identity discriminations.

Class identity is based on the conflicts between the social classes that requires class relationship and sense of exploitation from one class to another as T M Thomas Issac claims, "The formation of the working class cannot be considered complete till workers become aware of the social relationship which defines their common identity as well as the conflicts arising there from" (5). For Karl Marx, class consciousness refers ones social class of economic ranks in any social relationship. Class consciousness refers to the self awareness regarding a class. Class consciousness requires capacity and sense to act in its own rational interests and awareness to its historicity. In other words, class is a group of people having shared relation to the means of production. And, class consciousness is constant senses of belongingness to that of particular class (Elster, 1986). Thus wage-labor relations give a class identity to the people as Issac claims, "The emergence of political consciousness, unlike trade union consciousness, requires conscious intervention and is related to the totality of social relations and traditions in which the wage-labor relationship is embedded" (5). However, Neo- Marxist approach tends to separate cultural movement from class struggle which is highly criticized for focusing on identity rather than political economy as Bernstein claims, "Neo-Marxist approaches to identity politics can also

be criticized for challenging the separation of culture from class and political economy" (53).

Nevertheless, class identity is relatively new identity in comparison to that of caste identity since class identity is product of capitalistic mode of production whereas caste identity is out and out attributed to the feudal society. Issac carried out a research in an Indian society on caste and class and concludes as,

An important aspect to be considered is the implication of the persistence of pre-capitalist relations and institutions like the caste system and the social conflicts arising there from in the larger society outside the factory. These problems, related to the interaction between caste and class in the development of the working class (1).

Caste refers to the social classes in Nepal that differentiates group of people with regard to their lineage, heredity, wealth, occupation, and endogamy. Class distinguishes a group of people which has a common economic status determined by their occupation and income. The conflict of feudal and capitalistic identity vectors as such caste and class are at loggerheads and the leading left politics is messing up the class into caste. In Nepal, the whole society is divided into four broad castes named Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Sudra. These castes are divided into many other sub-castes. Generally people from a caste marry within their own caste group (Nepalese caste System, www.enotes.com).

Members of lower classes are more aware to their economic rank than members of the higher classes. So is the case with caste; members of so-called lower classes are more alarmed in their caste hierarchy in the society than are the members of so-called higher caste (Thapa, 2010). Class consciousness to some extent is related to caste and ethnic consciousness because so-called lower caste often correlates with

poverty. But it is not true in all cases because caste is not only determinant factor for economic prosperity of the people in the society. However, a central committee member of unified CPN Maoist Suresh Ale Magar denies it. He opines that since the state has been constantly marginalizing the so-called-lower caste (for him jati) and ethnic communities on the basis of their culture and language, caste resembles class to some extent. So caste consciousness resembles class consciousness, too (Ale Magar, 2011). But, to say caste is class will be a mistake since all lower caste are not poor and all high caste are not rich. In fact, the languages of ethnic communities have been marginalized because of the emphasis on one language by the state as the president of Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities Raj Kumar Lekhi Tharu claims that the culture and language of indigenous nationalities and ethnic communities have been underprivileged by the state since the state has been giving emphasis on one language- Nepali, and one culture- Hindu for a long time (Lekhi Tharu, 2011). The language and culture of ethnic communities have been marginalized but it does not mean that marginalization of language and culture makes them poor in all fronts.

Georg Lukacs shades light on class consciousness through his famous book "History and Class Consciousness". Luckas says each social class possesses a determined class consciousness that it can achieve. For Marx, class consciousness is not an origin but it is an achievement which can be earned, won or achieved (Luckas, 1923). . But, in the context of Nepal, especially the ethnic activists however try to co-relate ethnic consciousness with class consciousness. According to Parshuram Tamang, they are more concerned with identity based approach of struggle rather than class-based (2011). They are seeking the ethnic identity at the first hand claiming that establishing identity in itself leads to achieve rights. While doing so they forget the

fact that ethnic community or an identity group also has social hierarchy with discrimination.

Class and caste operate differently with other identity vectors such as race, ethnicity, and gender. Class identity is based on the production system of the society emerged vividly right from the beginning of the capitalism as Alcloff says, "...class emerging as an objective social location only with the emergence of capitalism..." (5).

Caste based discriminations can be ended only after the elimination of caste-based hierarchy as abolition of class is the only one solution of class exploitation as Alcloff says, "... there are excellent reasons to eliminate class and caste as we know it, but these reasons do apply to race, ethnicity, gender or all other identity groups per se" (2). Since Identity of an individual goes beyond class, race ethnicity, gender, religion and regionalism, these should not be taken as a vector for discriminating the people. A person can not live being confined in a certain set of identity vectors. Focusing on individual freedom Alcloff claims, "... liberation from class or caste forms of oppression can plausibly be articulated in terms of individual freedom" (2). Pouring a set of identity vectors upon the person limits his or her freedom to live independently.

On the other hand, caste is an identity vector basically based on heredity and birth which has a common culture. Dipankar Gupta says caste identity itself gets challenged since it is the outdated notion of a single, inclusive hierarchy where each caste co-exists peacefully. He says the traditional view of caste with single hierarchy; Brahman at the top and untouchable castes at the bottom is not valid. So, the caste system is being questioned from gender to politics and economic interaction. Giving some example of India, Gupta claims that castes that once had the lower status are

now at the political forefronts. The caste identities are being taken outside village and the so-called lower caste are now aggressive seeking broader rights (Gupta, 2004).

Caste, Jat, jati, jatiya, janajati

Although Nepali society is often associated with the word "caste", it was first used by the Portuguese to describe inherited class status in their own European society. The English word *caste* is derived from Latin *castus* that means "pure, cut off, segregated", and the participle of *carere* "to cut off". Hinduism applied caste system in the 17th century via Portuguese *casta* referring "breed, race, caste" (Nepalese caste System, www.enotes.com).

Caste and ethnicity differ to each other but generally they have been blurred into Jatis. Jati literally means thus born. Jati is the term used to refer communities and sub-communities in Nepal. It is a term used across religions. In typical Nepali society each jāti typically has an association with a traditional job function or tribe. However, religious beliefs or linguistic groupings define some jatis. A person's surname typically reflects a community (jati) association. For instance, Dhobi refers the community of watermen, Damai as clothes sewing, Sarki or Chamar as shoes sewing, Kami as metal workers. Jati has a similar system with that of guilds which is out and out associated with occupation. A jāti is defined by the mutual interaction among the members of the community on the basis of two most common bonds as such Roti (Bread) and Beti (Daughter). It means dining together and intermarrying together are two bonds that differ and identify as similar (Risley, 1908). Jati plays a significant role in the individual's whole life as Alcloff claims, "...social categories of identity has an enormous impact on one's life, determining job prospects, career possibilities, available place to live, potential friends and lovers, reaction from police, credence from jurors..." (3). So, the Jati as an identity vector delimits the future of an

individuals on which he or she belongs to. Not only the occupation but also his/her social apparatus is determined by jati where he or she anchors. Jati system strictly prescribes the person to ascribe social roles and endogamy. It requires marriages to take place only within that Jati. Thus is supposed to provide identity, security and status and has historically been open to change based on economic, social and political influences (Nepalese caste System, www.enotes.com).

The word "Jat" and "Jati" refer different social structure. Jat is a social community (Aauhuti, 2005). "Jat" has been identified with "Barna" and "Gotra" discrimination whereas "Jati" is ascribed to place, language and culture. "Jat" refers to the community that believes in "Barnashram" and "Janjati" refers other "Jatis". Now "Jati" has begun to have been identified as "Janajati." Janajati (ethnicity) is linked with aboriginal (adivasi). Jati has been replaced by Adivasi\janajati. But Adivasi and Janajati have different meanings. Adivsi is related with time and place that refers to aboriginal inhabitants of a particular geography. Janjati refers Jatiya Samuha (ethnic group) which has no caste hierarchy (Gurung et al., 2005).

In Hindu society Jati is also regarded as Jat i.e caste. Jati is derived from the Sanskrit Jata which refers to "born" or "brought" into existence. In fact Jati indicates a form of existence determined by birth. According to Hindu philosophy, Jati i.e genus refers any groups of things that share generic characteristics in common. On the other hand, sociologically, the tern Jati is used universally to signify a caste group in Hindu. However, the traditional Hindu codes called "Dahrma Sastra" regards jati as varnas i.e. social class (Nepalese caste System, www.enotes.com).

So, the word 'jati' has many meanings depending on the context. The most commonly used meaning of Jati is 'nation' and hence 'jatiya' simply means 'national' - 'antarjatiya' means 'international' (Ale Magar, 2065).

Dennis B. McGlivray claims not only in Nepali but also in South Asian language, there is no verbal language that can identically refer caste. McGlivray clarifies: "In Wellagoda, a number of Sinhala terms are used to talk about what I have labelled as 'caste'. Some of these, such as Jattiya, simply mean 'group'. But there are more directly related to the English term 'caste': Jatiya, vargay and Kulaya" (11). McGlivray further claims,

...caste is Jatiya and this term primarily refers to the notion of categories, either people or things. It connects differentiation rather than hierarchialization and in no way is there any inherent notion of inequality in the concept of Jatiya. Yet at the same time, when Jatiya is used to refer to people, it is associated with ideas of inequality. And perhaps this inevitable: that once categories of people are separated out, there is a tendency to rank the categories (McGlivray 21).

So, in the concept of jatiya , there is no inherent notion of inequality in itself. But when jatiya refers to people the ideas of inequality comes with it. When the people are categorized in various categories, rank and hierarchy exist. A caste has various internal hierarchies. For example, Newar is a jati which has various hierarchies inside it. Inside Newar, it has so-called untouchable caste like Poda.

However, Jatiya does not simply mean 'caste'. Rather it is related to the idea of 'kind' or 'species' or 'variety'. It is more related with racio-linguistic and religious identity. McGlivray says, "Jatiya stands for national group as Indian, British, Nepali, racio-lingusitic group as Tamil, English, religious group Hindu, Buddhist Catholic, for named hereditary groups of the type recognized in English as caste " (11).

In the context of Nepal, Khas, Gurung, Magar, Rai, Limbu, Tamang, Tharu, Newar, Meche, Koche Dhimal etc are Jati. According to Suresh Alemagar, janjati

generally refers to the jati who still have a collective life-style with matriarchal vestiges in backward condition (Ale Magar 5). Alemagar further claims, "In the distinct situation of Nepal, except Khas jati, other jatis like, Gurung, Magar, Tamang, Rai, Limbu, Newar, sherpa, Sunuwar, Thakali, Jirel, Thami, Dhimal, Halmo, Tharu, meche, Rajbanshi, Hau, Chepang etc should be regarded as Janajati. They are Mangol (or Anarya)" (Ale Magar 5).

However, Ale Magar is in contradiction while terming Khas as not a janajati. He says janajati means nationality in English but in the sense of 'Rastriyata', Khas jati should not be termed as caste in English, it should be regarded as Khas nationality. He says that caste refers the hierarchy under Khas jati as such Bahun, Chetri, Kami, Damai, Sarki, Sunar, etc, and under Newar caste Bajracharya, Shrestha, Joshi, Manandhar, Shakya, Dangol, Khadgi, Napit etc. Ale Magar further claims that English has only one word nationality though in Nepali Janjati is a jati and Khas jati is not janajati. Jati and Janajati are two words used to indicate two distinct jatis with different origin. However, both can be called Jati in Nepali language (Ale Magar 6). But Ale Magar can not define why Khas jati is not janajati? He says janajati means nationality in English. However, he refers to call khas jati; a khas nationality, and also claims that Khas is not janajati. Ale Magar forcefully tries to distinguish with Khas and janajati that signifies how they are trying to politicize the identity in their own interest.

Jat, jati, jatiya, janajati, race or ethnic groups require binary opposition to identify one from the other. Binary opposition needs discrimination to be identified even it is in linguistic level or in practical ones. Creating opposition demands inequality since one always identifies from other ascribing positive adjective to oneself and the negative adjective to the other. So a number of derogative terms are

in practice to refer ethnic communities and so-called high caste like Bahun and Chhetri. One community terms itself better than the other. For example, Bahun and Cheetri humiliate and make fun of Newar in a proverb as "Newar Ista ra Bahu Dusta Kahele Hudaina" (Newar can not be a friend and father can not be a foe). On the other hand, Newar derides Madhesi people as "Manu Makhu Marsya Kha" means "No man but a Marsya". And, Newar terms Bahun and Chhetri as 'Khe'- a derogative term to define them as an inhabitant of hilly areas. Mendiata says, "And thus, we have had anglophilia, fracophilia, germanophilia and more recently americanophilia" (409). A community has a collective consciousness to deride others which is in one way or the other being politicized because they are more inclined to their own community in the name of deriding others instead of developing the culture of mutual respect which ultimately leads to sense of communality driven by strong passion. Sushma Suri says, "The collective senses of identity characterize the individual's significant social groups e.g. religion, caste, nation, or culture" (3). Thus, caste, religion, nation and culture are those identity vectors that not only differ people with others but also tend to discriminate to each other.

Jeff Pratt says that since political movements across the world have diverse characteristics it is almost impossible to examine that as a collective group. Class-based movements are portrayed as economic interest whereas "by contrast the study of ethnic or nationalist movements has concentrated on the complexities of identity formation within culturally defined groups driven by strong passions" (2003). It does not only affect others adversely but also the community itself. The sense of communality yokes an individual to a certain boundary blindly sidelining his or her creativity, potentialities, and talents. It shows that how long the system of forcing a person to take a particular work based on his or her caste prevents the humanity to

take advantage of the potentialities of all individuals at utmost level. History needs judgment rather than the repetition of identifying oneself by inclining oneself in a particular jati. However, to delimit a person's occupation on the basis of his birth in some community is not matter of discussion now since it no longer exists as it was in the past. And still we talk about the system and tend to identify oneself with it whose foundation is already destabilized. If there is no jati based occupation and no subversion to do it, there is no physical existence of jati system, too. It exists only in virtual reality. Evoking the sense of jatis is an identity politics and that claiming to subvert exploitation on the basis of it unknowingly helps keep continue the vicious circle of exploitation. Recurring of the past trauma, since jati system is traumatic experience for the untouchable because they were the victim of discrimination, torture and exclusion of this system, only deepens the wounds rather than healing it. If the social practices that the Jati system prescribed are not in practice i.e. occupation and marriage to the same jati, why the virtual identity in terms of jati is forcefully kept alive? The answer is clear; it is for identity politics.

History of caste-based discrimination practice in Nepal

The caste system of Nepal has a numerous Jāti divisions within a Varna system that somehow resembles the Jati system of India. It was King Prithivi Narayan Shah who introduced caste system in Nepal officially. He divided the people into four castes and thirty-six Varna for the convenience of work division. However, inscriptions show that the beginning of caste system dates back during Lichchhavi period. According to David Gellner, Jayasthiti Malla (1382–95) categorized Newars into 64 castes. A similar exercise was made during the reign of Mahindra Malla (1506–75). The Hindu social code was later set up in Gorkha by Ram Shah (1603–36) (Nepalese caste System, www.enotes.com).

The first Prime Minister of Nepal Jang Bahadur Rana issued civil code called Muluki Ain in 1854 after he visited Europe. Undoubtedly, he was out and out influenced by the law and order that the Europe especially Britain was reigned in the mid 19th century. It was Muliki Ain that divided Nepali society into two castes- "the caste whose water is allowed to remain pure" and "the caste whose water is defiled". Chiefs of the various castes were entrusted to sort out the contentious issue of particular caste. For instance, the heads of *Kamis* (blacksmiths) and *Sarkis* (tanners and cobblers) were called *Mijhars*. Similarly the head of *Damai* (tailors and musicians) was called *Nagarchi*. Similarly castes of the first (non-defiling) category also had their chiefs to maintain law and order and enjoy judicial power in local level so that the community members might not need to go to courts or government offices to settle minor legal matters (Muluki Ain, 1854). However, the social injustice also prevalent in defiling caste as there were so-called higher caste inside it too. *Mijhars* and *Nagarchis* as they are the heads of the defiling caste practiced injustice and exploitation to their respective communities as the heads of higher caste exploit them. Muliki Ain formally started the people dividing as Alcloff says, "Between the medieval and the modern period" people" became "races", "sexes" became "gender" and habit of perversion (3)". It systematized and channelized the system of discrimination on the basis of caste system and started never ending chain of exploitations. Moreover, inside ethnic communities too, the attitude of being pure and non-pure is still prevailing. For example, Newar and Rai have a number of variations; a hierarchy of being pure and non- pure. So is the case with other ethnic communities too.

The practice of Muliki Ain witnessed an exploitative and unjust society where the lower castes people were exploited in many fronts. They were regarded lower than

an animal since the so-called high caste people would receive sprinkle of water if they touched lower caste to pure themselves which they do not do even with dogs. They were prevented not only to enter so-called higher caste people's home but also the temples. Hindu scriptures like Grihyasutra, Gautam Sutra, Manusmriti and Shukra Niti advocate for such kind of practices. The lower castes were further prevented receiving education, listening to high-caste people's teachings, worshipping, planting Bar or Pipal trees, digging ponds, and participating in fairs and festivals where so-called higher class participated. In other words, the lower castes were out and out excluded from social realms. They became the victims of apartheid. The untouchable caste could be exiled from the country for looking at a high-caste woman. They required stepping aside if they encountered someone of higher caste on the way. They had to pay *jadau* i.e. obeisance to any higher caste person they happened to encounter. The untouchables would be put to death if they go against caste rules and codes. For example, if a person from higher caste married a woman from lower caste, he was not eligible for legal intercession against *jarikhat* i.e fine for adultery. If a Jainai (sacred thread) wearing or even non-thread-wearing person was touched by an 'untouchable' person, he would need to be ritually purified. The untouchable person was not allowed to have two-way conversations with the 'upper caste'. Practically, the untouchables were forced to live with manual labors classified in accordance to their Varna such as playing indigenous musical instruments, sawing wood, leather-work, practicing music, cutting stone, pottery, general labor, cleaning latrines, and washing clothes (Muluki Ain,1854). Some of them even forced to involve prostitution such as Badi in Dang and others districts. This system remained prevalent by law until Muluki Ain was revised in 1962 (Nepalese caste System, www.enotes.com). However, the

revision in Muliki Ain on caste system still does not come into practice like other rules and regulations.

Caste based exploitation is still in practice in Nepal especially in rural parts in different versions. Crisis group Asia report, N. 199 claims, "Nepali history also shows that there is history of legal discrimination on the basis of distinct Jatas i.e "kind" and encompasses both castes and ethnic groups" (3). If there is someone who is being constantly exploited in Nepal, it is Dalit. But their issue is not raised as the issue of ethnicity. It is crystal clear that the issue of ethnic identity is aroused so much that overshadows others exploitation- exploitation of Dalit and class based exploitation. Nepali political parties tend to support ethnic identity politics since on the one hand they do not have courage to go against the wave, and on the other hand they accept whatever they can benefit in ballot box politics no matter whether it is appropriate to the country or not. CPN UML former lawmaker Bhaire Kami opines that identifying people on the basis of jati will be counterproductive. Kami claims that Dalits are not in favor of identity based separate states because it does not resolve the problems of them that they have been facing from the time almost for immemorial. Separate states with preferential rights to the ethnic community will push Dalits further backward (Kami, 2010). If identity-based federalism is for ending the vicious circle of oppressions and exploitations, the issues of Dalits would not be excluded from the discourse of state restructuring.

5. Identity Politics and Class: A Theoretical Approach

Politicizing the Caste and Ethnicity

In Hinduism, caste is a hereditary social class. Caste has been stratified according to ritual purity. Caste is also a social class separated from others by distinctions of hereditary rank or profession or wealth (Nepalese caste System, www.enotes.com). But, caste does not function as social class in real sense at the time when Muluki Ain has not been in practice for a long time. When Muliki Ain was suspended in 1951, caste and ethnic based social and economic order began to be collapsed because economic opportunity has not been based on caste and ethnicity. So, social class has not necessarily been determined on the basis of caste and ethnic-based discrimination. Nevertheless, there is no basis that provides a logical reason for the left political parties to fight making caste and ethnicity exist since they support the feudal system in one way or the other. Thus the ideology of left political parties knowingly or unknowingly supports to avert the caste system rather than making it a political issue. However, they tend to politicize the caste and ethnicity because it has potentiality of making people gather under their party's flag which may result decently in ballot box politics. So, the left political parties are politicizing the caste and ethnic identity.

Is Caste Class?

Caste and ethnicity is being politicized as if caste is class. No matter caste resembles some features of class but it does not mean the so-called lower caste does necessarily resemble lower social class as well. It can be said that caste is one of the ways in which classes may be grouped though class overlaps in caste and vice versa. Political parties begin to say the liberation of caste-based discriminations will necessarily lead to class-based discriminations. But they are not focusing on the most

exploited sectors of the society i.e Dalit. It is obvious that their concern goes to ethnic identity rather than Dalit since the former is more united and form a strong organization on the basis of their identity which parties know will impact on ballot box politics ultimately. A report of Crisis group on Nepal "Identity Politics and Federalism" published on 13 January 2011 claims, "A further hardening and politicization of ethnic and caste identity is probably inevitable (30)". As it is said that morning shows the day, the beginning wave of identity politics some how refers the possible upheavals of unnecessarily politicizing the caste and ethnicity in the future.

Caste and ethnic identity is so much focused that no political parties and their leaders dare to point out the inconsistencies prevailing on it. When talking about identity-based federalism, the current discourse has undermined the internal hierarchies with exploitations of a certain identity group. As nobody had guts to go against so-called nationality during Panchyat reign, so is the case with caste and ethnic identity of late. Mendiata says, "More explicitly, we can not say that caste is prior to nation: or rather affirmatively, that class is co-constitution of and co-originary with nationhood and nationality. Alternatively, we can ask, is race prior to class?" (408). Broad national identity is a canopy under which other identity vectors such as caste, race and ethnicity come. However, caste and ethnic-based problems have been politicized rather than raising those issues to resolve in real sense.

Terai Uprising/ Tharu Movement

A new alliance of three Madhesi parties the "United Democratic Madheshi Front" (UDMF) that comprises Madheshi People's Right's Forum led by Upendra Yadav, the Sadhavaban Party led by Rajendra Mahato and Terai Madhes Loktantrik Morcha led by Mahanta Thakur, Federal Democratic National Forum that includes the

Federal Limbuwan State Council (Lingden) and the Tamsaling Autonomous State Council- a coalition of indigenous group and the Federal Republican National Front FRNF which includes the FDNF, the United Tharu National Front, and the broad Madhesi Front comprising the Madhesi people's rights Forum (Biswas\Gupta), Dalit Janjati Party, Loktantrik Madhesi Morcha and Madhesi Loktantrik Morcha called on shutdown strike in Terai district from 13 February in 2007. In the Far western region, the United Tharu National Front (UTNF) enforced shutdown strike. The movement demanded to amend interim constitution to ensure an autonomous Madhesi state within federal democratic republic and fair representation in all state apparatus including Nepal Army (OHCHR, 2008).

Nepal Sadhbhawana Party (A) Rajendra Mahato faction formed a youth wing called Madhes Rakshya Bahini which the party claimed to be a 'non-violent' sister organization. Members of the indigenous Tharu community continued their protest against the Madhesi parties' demand for single Madhes province. But, the demand of "one Madhes one province" is like a Panchyat era slogan- " hamro Bhasha, hamro Bhes, Hamro Raja, Hamro Desh" (Our language, our dress, our king, our nation) because the demand of single province undermines the differences in Madhes as Panchayati slogan undermined the differences of Nepal. The demand itself is goaded on politicizing the sentiment of Terai people but not to liberate them from various exploitations. Chaitanya Mishra says that Terai uprising is not regional movement. In fact it is jatiya movement. That is not the uprising of Terai but a Madhesi movement. Jatiya movement does not represent the interests of downtrodden people (Mishra 3). In fact, Terai uprising could not articulate the real problems of the downtrodden but only manifest the sense of identity of relatively upper class of Madhes. So, politicizing the caste and ethnicity will necessarily overshadow the genuine problems

of downtrodden even in that particular caste and ethnic group on the pretext of identifying themselves. Ultimately, that only benefits those who are relatively more powerful inside that ethnic group.

Caste and its social underpinning

A caste is a combined social system of occupation, endogamy, culture, social class, and political power (enotes.com). So caste is seen as a determining factor of the everything of a person but its very foundation is based on the eccentricity of a ruler since caste based work and social status as per the work is not natural; it is the product of social structure coined by some eccentric ruler. Caste is an identity vector that identifies people associating with particular community. However, it is not only associated with identity. Caste refers more than solely identity and it is not an individual affair that only aims to identify oneself as Alcloff says, "... identity is not in the main an individual affair. Individuals make their own identity" (3). There is nothing except caste which discriminate people in the great extent. UNICEF claims discrimination based on caste is prevalent mainly in parts of Asia; India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Japan, and Africa. UNICEF further claims such perceived discrimination based on caste affects 250 million people worldwide (enotes.com). Instead of eliminating such kind of exploitation, it is taking new form in the name of identity. Some argue to reverse it, and some are in favor of using identity in politics. Deepa S. Reddy says caste has a long history in both in and out of the Indian sub-continent which is frequently intertwined with race. She claims left ideology does not regard a person superior or inferior on the basis of race or caste (Reddy, 2005). But, identity of an individual is so much politicized that a person is defined out and out on the basis of his or her caste and ethnic identity.

Depoliticizing the Class

Casino Comrade

December 25th 2010 Saturday's Kantipur Daily covered the news of Unified CPN Maoist cadres' involvement in Casino in Kathmandu. It is recorded fact that Maoist had carried out a campaign to weed out the gambling in their dominant areas during armed conflict. During that period, daily papers' headlines stroke by the news of Maoist's penalty to the gamblers and their cadres assaulted even local card players. They banned all kind of gambling in local levels. But they have labor organizations in all of the casinos of Nepal now. A number of incidents of nepotism of Maoist leaders have been surfaced of late. Even Maoist leaders were found preferring their cadres on the basis of caste they belong. Media reports about some top leaders of Maoist party who preferred their cadres to give them lucrative appointment were rampant. However it was not a new trend in political appointment. Unified CPN Maoist leader Hisila Yami's preference to her closest with surname near to her even inside Newar community was highlighted by the Nepali media of late. However, she has not defended yet against the allegations. Her indifferent attitude to other jat is one example that signifies how a Maoist leader who waged civil war for class elimination is gradually succumbs to clan preference. Terming her attitude as a personal will be a mistake because not only she but also other are following the same path. Maoist leaders are not focusing on class-based discriminations rather they are focusing on identity. They are depoliticizing the class and politicizing the caste.

Ethnicity and Caste

However caste and ethnicity differ to each other hugely though they tend to be blurred into Jati. Jati is the term that stands for communities and sub-communities in Nepal. Sudheer Sharma, in his report "The Ethnic Dimension of the Maoist

Insurgency" claims, "Ethnicity and caste do not refer to the same group even if, in some cases, there is a certain overlapping" (42). Sharma points out that "the disparity in education and economic status has a correlation with caste hierarchy" (42). In fact, ethnic activists and even left political parties pick up the correlation of educational and economic disparity with caste hierarchy. But they forget the way to resolve all of those. Actually, political parties try to cash in the conflicts between Aryan and non-Aryan groups, misunderstanding between Hindus and other religious minorities, inter-linguistic tensions, unequal caste-based judicial system and scarce political representation of so-called low caste. Sharma claims that the Maoist party was trying to use those anomalies to gain popular support. Maoist had raised ethnic and linguistic issues in their 40 point demands presented to the then government before starting insurgency in 1996. Maoist has accepted territorial decentralization with ethnic names that focuses on identity rather securing their demands and aspirations. Sharma claims "the ethnic element is one of dimensions of the Maoist insurgency" (163).

The different caste populations and ethnic groups have extensive geographical overlaps and a village is constituted by members of several castes. Members of ethnic groups are in the process of changing their cultural traits like dress, food habits, language, skill and religious observance (Gadgil, 1983). In this constant flux in identity, it is useless attempt to fix an individual into a certain identity vector like caste and ethnicity. No matter ethnicity is more related to nationality, political parties tend to politicize them mingling both, caste and ethnicity into one for ballot box politics. Moreover, they have failed to differentiate between caste and ethnicity let alone between nationality and ethnicity.

Ethnicity and fluidity

The term ethnicity is derived from the Greek word "ethnos" which generally translated into "nation". The term ethnic was used in English to signify "pagan and heathen" from the 14th century to the middle of 19th century (Liddell and Scott, 1940). However, the meaning of the term ethnic has been changed over the course of time in modern period. Ethnic group refers to the subordinate groups, such as immigrants and colonized subjects in industrialized states. Ethnic group refers to people with distinct cultural identities who generally had become subject of a foreign state through migration or conquest. The term ethnic group is used in English in 1935 and it enters in Oxford English Dictionary in 1972.

Ethnic identity is socially-constructed as David N Gellner says, "ethnic identities are fluid, manipulable, and contested"(7). He further claims that the identity Tamang came into existence only in the early 20th century. Likewise, the identity of Chhantyel emerged only after 1990. Gellner says other identities are emerging like this even now. Gellner further claims "Manangis decided to be Gurungs and many have changed their surname in order to facilitate recruitment into the British Gurkhas. The list goes on"(7). So Gellner opines, "The assumption of rigid and unchanging identities is a leftover of discredited 19th-century ways of understanding peoples and cultures, unwisely revived by contemporary ethnic activists"(7). Gellner wonders why there is "no prominent anthropologist from a Janajati background arguing against ethnic federalism; there is no prominent Bahun or Chhetri arguing for it"(7). Gellner further states, "Nepali anthropologists are split—rather like politicians—along ethnic lines"(7). However, Gellner opines that ethnic identities can not be regarded as harmless folklore as Panchyat did. So, the central issue is not "whether to give ethnicity a role, but how to do so" (7).

Sociologist Chaitanya Mishra says, "Ethnicity is something that gets formed, deformed and formed again. It goes through ebbs and flows. It's not something that is fixed. The ethnic battles being waged in Nepal owe primarily to a search for better livelihood" (6). Mishra opines that so far as ethnic struggle of Nepal is concerned, it takes place in urban area. There is no ethnic struggle in rural areas and small towns. Since rural people have to go urban areas for livelihood for better jobs and means of livelihood, urban areas are gradually turning into a locus of ethnic conflict. Mishra claims that there have been inequality and exclusion for ethnic community but he suggests to address such problems in democratic ways. Saying that dividing provinces on the basis of ethnicity will not provide the solution, Mishra sees no point on separating provinces on the basis of ethnic identity since resolving inequality and separating provinces are two distinct questions. He gives an example of South Africa which denied ethnic federalism (Mishra, 2011).

Ethnicity demands binary opposition to create one's own identity. The ethos of ethnicity is to make rivalry with the other, the more one emphasizes on ones own ethnic identity, the more it centralizes itself that necessarily displaces others to margin either it is in wide or narrow quantity. Ethnicity is an ethnic quality and affiliation with racial and cultural ties. Ethnicity has a strong influence on community status relations. The members of an ethnic group identify with each other through a common heritage which may be real or presumed. Each and every ethnic group has common cultural, linguistic, religious and behavioral traits to differ with the other ethnic group (Liddel and Scott, 1940).

Ethnicity is regarded as a fundamental vector to identify people. However, many social scientists from anthropologist Fredric Barth to Eric Wolf consider ethnic identity not as universal. They regard ethnicity not as an essential inherent quality of

human being rather it is a product of inter-group interactions. They called the process of emerging such identities as ethno-genesis. Ethnic activists claim that the culture of an ethnic group is the continuation from the time immemorial but historians and cultural anthropologists try to prove that many of the values, practices and norms are relatively newly invented (Barth,1969).

Thomas Hylland Eriksen explains two current trends of studying ethnicity. The first is Primordialism and Instrumentalism. The second is Constructivism and Essentialism. Primordialists view the ethnic ties collectively as an externally given even coercive and social bond. On the other hand, the instrumentalists approach takes ethnicity as an ad-hoc element of political strategy. This approach tries to make ethnicity as a resource for interest group for achieving some goals as such some power or status (2010). So far as Nepali ethnic activists are concerned, they are instrumentalists since they try to use ethnicity as an ad-hoc element of political strategy to gain preferential right, reservation or positive discrimination. The second trend of studying ethnicity is a debate between constructivism and essentialism. The approach of constructivism takes ethnic identities as the product of historical forces whereas essentialists view ethnic identities as not the result of social action but as ontological categories defining social actors (Eriksen, 2010). Of late, ethnic identities begin to take increasingly politicized forms of self-representation. So, Gellner claims, "building a constitution on the basis of ethnicity is theoretically naïve, empirically false, and politically dangerous"(7). In fact, since ethnic identity itself is always in the process of forming and deforming, and approaches to view it are always at the stage of constant flux, to take any political decision on the basis of such identity will be counterproductive in real sense.

Race and its historical stress

Race refers a group of people who share the same geographical region with a common genetic composition (Abizadeh, 2001). Race is an identity vector that has been used to identify people from the very beginning of the history. Race discrimination is the main cause of notorious historical events as such Holocaust in Germany. Genocide between Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda which claimed more than eight hundred thousands people is another example of how human civilizations has been back lashed by the race-based discrimination.

In India also, the army regiment of a particular race has been deployed to the people of different race to suppress them who terrorize the people through various coercion in the time of need such as suppressing Naxlite movement and others (Roy, 2010). Kimberle Crenshaw says, "Race is significant determinant in the ultimate disposition of rape cases" (188). History shows that focusing on one race led the unprecedented situation to the humanity as the Fascism of Adolf Hitler did in Germany. Human beings throughout the world have been divided on race and religion than anything else. So far as politicizing people in race and any other identity vectors keep continue, there is no possibility of any certain national identity to be formed as Mendieta says, "class and race have conspired to project a certain national identity" (408). None of the identity vectors can be used just to divide the people and politicize it, but to liberate them if any discrimination is there on the basis of any identity vectors. Mendiata further says, "In conjunction with race and class, the nation has been imagined as emasculated or violated, virile or effeminate"(408). Dividing people on race and identity vectors not only further weakens the national identity but also heightens the possibility of racial conflict sooner or later. Nevertheless, race has not been taken as an identity vector to influence political decision in Nepali politics so far.

6. Identity Politics in the Context of Nepal

Identity politics signifies political stand point that focuses on the self interest of self identified specific interests group. Identity politics deals with the aspects of identity vectors such as class, caste, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation or traditional dominance (Plato.stanford.edu).

Some social theorist tried to identify the identity in different manner. M. Apter describes identity as a sense of personal distinctiveness, personal continuity and personal autonomy (1983). Likewise Weinreich explains identity as the totality of individual's self construal (1997). Similarly Neri and Luckman explain social process forms, maintains and modifies identity (1966). Tajfel says individuals are defined in terms of the groups to which they belong (1972).

It does not mean that identity politics only covers the politics of marginalized class, it also deals with the politics of identity which are not marginalized merely due to their identity. For instance, Kshatri caste has formed an identity based political group however they have not been exploited by the state due to their identity (Khadka, 2011). So do Brahmins who form a caste based group called Brahmin Samaj just fearing to be excluded if the state restructuring goes along the lines of caste and ethnic identity. They claim that they have two kinds of fears; one they fear that ethnic based federalism would marginalize them who were not involved in state discrimination to other caste and ethnic group, on the other hand, they fear that identity politics would lead to split the country in the future (Adhikari, 2011). But the leaders who support for identity based federalism could not convince them. They take for granted the logics in favour of ethnic based identity politics and seem sticking to the stereotypes rather convincing the queries against their claims (Shakya, 2011).

The word 'identity politics' was used at the first time in the US in academic discourse in 70s of 20th century ((Plato.stanford.edu). Identity politics aims at raising consciousness to the certain group in a bid to empower them for their alleged mistreatment because they belong to a certain caste, religion, ethnicity and other identity vectors. In fact, Identity politics is a phenomenon came into practice in liberal democratic societies that denies authoritarian single party states. L. A. Kauffman at first describes the identity politics in early and mid 1960s that has been disseminated by a Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee; an organization fighting for civil right movements during 1960s in the US (1990).

The discourse of identity based federalism has been on the rise in Nepal arguing that it could resolve all historical exploitations over some caste and ethnic communities. However, identity politics will benefit the ethnic elites at first rather addressing the class-based oppressions. The International Crisis Group in its report "Identity Politics and Federalism" claims,

Federalism and proportional representation offer a significant opportunity to unravel entrenched patterns of discrimination on the basis of caste, ethnicity and regional identity. This will not be the end of the road to inclusion, nor will it change the patronage based nature of the state. Ethnic elites are likely to benefit first (30).

That is why ethnic elites are raising the voice of identity as if their all historical problems and oppressions, if there are any, will be resolved as wagging magic wand if identity is accommodated. The exploitation of the people is out and out class based no matter it can be attributed to others causes as well. Though, it could not be denied that class based oppression has a link with identity-based exploitation. But, focusing only on identity will politicize the identity unnecessarily. The crisis group report

further claims, "A further hardening and politicization of ethnic and caste identity is probably inevitable" (30). Ethnic and caste identity are not being taken to ensure the demolition of class based oppressions but as a political tool. Identity politics further claims to imply some preferential rights to certain identity group. The report further claims, "...differential rights, for example granting certain groups preferential access to natural resources or political leadership positions, are bound to alienate many, if they are granted beyond a relative proportion of the population" (30). Of course, preferential rights and reservations will benefit a group of people but it also marginalizes a considerable number of people in the society which ultimately leads to a new kind of conflict.

Identity politics tries to objectify a person through a certain mode of established identity. It takes an individual of a certain group for granted as a product of certain factory. For example, Sherpa wears Bakhu (thick clothes) not because they are Sherpa but because the cold environment of Himalayas where they live needs warm clothes. Thus cultural attire which we term as a symbol of identity vector is also a relative matter. There is arbitrary relationship between Bakhu and Sherpa. So is the case with Daura Suruwal and Nepali collective identity. Trying to identify Sherpa with Bakhu is as meaningless as trying to establish Nepali identity with Daura Suruwal and Gunui Choli-clad person. So, to identify people putting them in a certain ethnic basket in the age of globalization where each individual tries to make their own individual identity is meaningless in itself. Identity of the people is not static. It is always at flux as other things in the society. Identity constantly changes as everything in the society gets changed except the change itself. Dr. Sanjeev Upreti says that identity of an individual is constantly at the state of flux. An individual has a multiple identity vectors at the same time which are also changing frequently. So,

identifying an individual tagging with an identity vector can not identify the person clearly. Dr. Upreti further claims that mutual respect among all castes and languages can prevent the possible communal clash (Upreti, 2011). Mendieta says, "An identity is not a prius, object or substance, or essential substance. It is a social locus, and a social locus is an imagined and imaginary topos" (408). Since multiple identities are fundamental feature of a society. A person can not be delimited in a single identity. He or she has myriad identities vectors at the same time. Then a question necessarily blooms over here as to: How can a person who lives within the realm of the larger society claim to have a single identity?

Scholars of various countries who are interested in Nepali ethnicity express mixed views on whether ethnicity can be a basis for the federal structure. Prof David Holmberg of Cornell University says, " A multicultural and multilingual state is essential not only for working toward the values of peace, politico-economic justice and dignity of all peoples of Nepal but also that a state would foster great creative energy in transforming Nepal socio-economically" (3). Holmberg opines that the structure of the state should foster cultural and ethnic diversity, self determination and the inclusion of historically excluded communities. However Prof William Fisher of Clark University says, "The federalization on the basis of ethnicity is not a magic bullet; there still will be gaps, discrimination, and exclusion. Therefore, a holistic approach should be taken to address multi-culture, multi-religious identity of the country" (3). In fact, the oppressions and exploitations of the people are not based in a single facet. Therefore only one approach can not dismantle the multiple forms of exploitations.

Although, Mahendra Lawoti, a Professor at the Department of Political Science, Western Michigan University of America, says, "Ethnicity is one of the best

options in the context of Nepal to address the rising tensions at present. However federalism alone does not work at all and there needs effective state policies, devolution of powers and social administrations" (3). No doubt, ethnicity is not a single phenomenon to be based for addressing the aspirations of the people. There are a lot of administrative formations to be carried out in a bid to eliminate all sorts of discriminations. But focusing only on ethnic identity avoiding other ways for eradicating oppressions is nothing than politicizing the ethnic identity.

Prof Chaitanya Mishra of Tribhuvan University says, "Ethnicity-based federation will lead to civil conflict. Moreover, this will not only be among the ethnic and caste groups. The projected borders of all ethnic provinces overlap to a significant extent" (3). Mishra further opines that ethnicity- based federalism will give rise to other problems. However surprisingly, the ethnic activists who advocate for identity based federalism failed to convince such logics. They either keep claiming their views or express agitation against them who doubt that identity based federalism will lead to devastation.

Professor Dr. Abhi Subedi says that identity politics is on the rise, and failure of contextualizing it in social milieu will lead to devastation. Subedi says that since global politics is the politics of civilization and local politics is the politics of ethnicity, a glimpse of ethnic politics has been visualized in Nepali politics too (2011). In fact, identity politics is a whim after second people's movement triggered by Maoist insurgency when aspirations of each and every identity groups have been escalated. However, as all exploitations and aspirations are not based on identity, there is no possibility of addressing them through identity politics. No doubt, Maoist has been blaming for focusing on ethnic and caste identity during civil war in a bid to gain popular support. But, Maoist leader Ram Karki denies that his party has

intensified caste and ethnic politics in a bid to get people war a momentum. He says that his party has only raised the issue of caste and ethnicity. Though, he admits that there is probability of fomenting communal violence in Nepal. He also denies the allegation against the Maoist party that it tries to cash in the ethnic sensitivity putting the national integrity and communal decorum in stake (2010) Likewise, Maoist politburo member Barsha Man Pun says that since ethnic communities of Nepal is facing a number of discriminations throughout the history; his party only raises the voice of them (2010).

Professor Dr. Om Gurung, an anthropologist and ethnic right activist, says that identity politics is equally important as class struggle. But he admits that the identity politics is misleading in Nepal. The present state restructuring process, in his view, will not lead to eliminate all kind of exploitation based on identity in Nepal. However Gurung says that identity is always at constant flux, he stresses on the need of forming identity-based federal states (2011). But, he can not convince the question as to: If identity itself is formed and deformed, what will be plight of federal states crafted on the basis of identity? There is no strong logic that identity should be a basis for crafting out federal states. But ethnic activists keep on claiming that identity is a must to liberate people from all sorts of oppressions. However, they can not convince the logics against identity politics —demanding separate states on the basis of identity and preferential rights to identity groups.

The former General Secretary of Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) and the President of Tamsaling Nepal Rastriya Party Prasuram Tamang opines that since indigenous nationalities have their own historical geography of their origin, they should be provided autonomy on their land of origin. He emphasizes on ethnicity-based federal states owing to the fact that Nepal is a multinational states

(2011). But, he could not convince the fears that the country would face havoc if federal states are divided on the basis of ethnicity.

However, former Minister of Education and Sports Prof. Dr. Mangal Siddhi Manandhar who was also a Constituent Assembly member from CPN UML sees no option except emphasizing on identities. Even if he doubts that the wave of identity politics can be misled, he sees no alternative to crafting out provinces on the basis of ethnic identities in Nepal. But, he acknowledges that his party CPN UML is in confusion regarding ethnic provision and tries to mislead it (2011). Likewise, Dr. Krishna Bhattachan possesses a radical view on identity politics. He sees no alternative to crafting federal states on the basis of ethnic identities. He opines that emphasizing on ethnicity at the same time is also emphasizing on class. He claims that there would be a communal clash if identity is not accommodated for federal states. He claims that identity-based federal states do not lead the country to communal clash but the absence of it necessarily pushes the country toward that plight. In his opinion, communal clash can be prevented by providing their rights and identity to communities (Bhattachan, 2011). But, he neither has an approach to equip all communities with their rights and sense of identity nor he can say what the country should do if more than one hundred plus identity groups demand the rights as a number of groups like them will be enjoying when federal states will be based on identity.

Angkaji Sherpa, General Secretary of Federation of Nepal Indigenous Nationalities, claims that identity must be regarded as the first element of crafting out federal states. He claims that identity politics will lead to liberate the oppressed ethnic communities who have been getting marginalization in language and culture from more than two hundred forty years (2011). But he does not pay concern to the Dalits

and poor, even inside so-called higher class whom they blamed to be a ruling class, who also have been marginalized and exploited for a long time. If ethnic activism is out and out concerned on the exploitations and oppressions of the people, they would pay heed to all of the oppressed and exploited indiscriminately rather focusing on only identity group. Their concern on only for identity groups proves that they are mulling over identity politics in the name of exploitations.

Likewise, Pasang Sherpa, a former Constituent Assembly member from CPN UML, sees no alternative except crafting federal states after ethnic names. He emphasizes on identity politics rather than class struggle. He claims identity politics is another form of class struggle. He believes that resolution of ethnic problems ultimately leads to the solution of class-based discriminations (2011). He tries to put all internal differences and variations of an identity group to a single basket. He generalizes the varied forms of oppressions and exploitations of an identity group.

Aahuti, a Dalit right activist and Unified CPN Maoist central committee member, raises the voice about Dalit exploitation. He says that if identity politics is concerned to the genuine problems of exploited and marginalized community, it will emphasize on Dalit as well because there is no other group more exploited and marginalized than Dalits (2010). But at the time when ethnic identity demands separate identity based federal states, the discourse of Dalit's inclusion to national politics is not discussed as it should be. It also proves that identity is only for politicizing the ethnic sentiment.

CPN UML former lawmaker Bhaire Kami opines that jatiya federal states is nothing more than a lie. Kami says Dalits have not been in favor of separate states on the basis of identity. He says that Dalits are against autonomous ethnicity- based province with preferential rights. He questions over the validity of preferential rights

arguing that it would violate basic human rights of an individual since preferential rights advocate providing more rights to one caste and ethnic group than others (Kami, 2010). Likewise, Nepali Congress former lawmaker from Rauhtahat constituency number two Mohamad Afta Alam regards ethnicity-based province as a treachery to the nation. He says that crafting provinces on the basis of ethnicity will lead to a new crisis rather resolving old problems. Separating states in terms of jati and language is a treachery to the nation (Alam, 2010).

An independent former lawmaker of Constituent Assembly from Saptari (5) Sadrul Miya Hawk opines that what Muslim needs is not separate province but identification. He opines that providing ethnicity-based federal states is the repetition of new injustice in the name of ending old one (Hawk, 2010).

It is crystal clear that despite some ethnic elites who are powerful enough to create discourse and pressure the government, no others need to focus on identity for a political tool. Instead of focusing on ending all sorts of oppressions and exploitations, they are mulling over the identity unnecessarily which is nothing more than identity politics that ultimately gives no solutions to the multi-facets forms of oppressions and exploitations.

7. Marxist Approach to the Present Dynamics in Nepal

Ideology and identity politics

Political ideology is a set of guiding principles of a political party to move ahead. However, political scientists have started to believe that the era of ideology has been ending. Though, political parties never declare that they have left their political ideology even if they no longer use such ideology in practical front. Krishna Khanal claims that ideology is necessary for the political parties to identify themselves (2010). Political ideology gradually stops functioning rigidly. It remains as a tool only for identifying political parties, and mobilizing their cadres. Just after the world war second, the notion of the end of ideology came into existence in the world. After that a trend of neglecting ideology was prevalent in the west for some years. Daniel Bell declared the end of ideology through his book "The End of Ideology: on the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties" (1960). Moreover, a number of ex-radical intellectuals and right wing social democrats including Seymour Martin Lipset and Nathan Glazer acknowledged that hard-edged ideology no longer existed. But, many thinkers harshly criticized the notion of the-end of -ideology. John T Jost (2006), Kathleen Knight (2006), Terry Eglaton (1991) and Russell J. Dalto (2005) have negated the notion of the end of ideology. They claimed that the era of ideology has not been ended. Jost claims that the era of 'the end of ideology' has ended instead. He declares the end of "the end of ideology" (2006). In practical level, political parties do not stop carrying up their ideology even if they are not implementing it. They need their ideology to differentiate themselves with other political parties on the one hand and to keep their cadres intact with them on the other. Political ideology is no longer used to get the ultimate goal but it is used as an identity vector. Their pure political ideology succumbs to identity politics which they believe would pay back in ballet

box politics. In this context, the political ideology which prefers class struggle shifts into the identity politics. As political ideology itself shifts from a practical tool to identity vector, it clearly indicates that the left political parties are also gradually shifting from class struggle to identity politics.

It is surprising that why identity politics is on rise at the time when ideology itself is on decline and the globe is at the height of modernization. Mahendra Lawoti says,

The rise of identity politics is probably due to globalization and modernization, which have increased complexities and uncertainties of human life. As a result people seek to ground themselves in local identities and communities, especially because the state level nationalism has increasingly failed to do so due to its weakening from the onslaught on the state (7).

Globalization and modernization have opened the society in various fronts further. As the society becomes more open, challenges and complexities are also increased. So people tend to seek their own ghetto-type of identity when they feel threat to their identity in global world. But, it alarms some as Lawoti further says that classical modernization theory, propounded after Second World War, states "spread of education, communication, industrialization, trade and immigration would erode ties to kinship, tribe and traditional communities" (7). Most of Marxist and non- Marxist scholars of Nepal still chime along this thought. The relevance of ethnic identity has been ebbing away in capitalist and post-capitalist societies. But the ethnic identity is on the rise in Nepal because the industrialization has not been developed here to such height that can eclipse ethnic identity. Generally identity politics will not be raised in industrialized and global world (Lawoti 7). But as Huntington claims that ideology

has been challenged by the civilizations in world level and local politics is the politics of ethnicity (1996). Nepal is witnessing a wave of sense of identity since it has not been reached to the height of capitalism and industrialization. Lawoti further says that it is because the more people become aware with the development of education, communication and media; they came to realize importance of their own identity (Lawoti 7). Nevertheless, identity politics is on the rise at the time when political ideology is getting ebbed away in world politics in practical front. However, political parties even they are not rigidly practicing their ideology, they are not ready to quit their ideology since they can use it to differentiate themselves with their rival political parties on the one hand and can use it to mobilize their cadres in the time of need on the other hand.

According to Lawoti, whether identity politics takes violent turn or not will depend on whether aspirations of identity group are accommodated or not. He says, "The paradoxical nature of identity politics is that its accommodation leads to it becoming less salient while non-accommodation often leads to violent explosion" (7). However, on the one hand, identity politics does not seem addressing the genuine issues of the downtrodden of that identity group, on the other hand, there is no guarantee that identity politics does address anything else than ensuring the identity of some group. However, Nepali political parties can not differentiate their ideology with identity politics. Their ideology succumbs to ballot box politics of identity.

Communism and identity politics

The ideologue of communism German thinker Karl Marx and most of his followers take caste and ethnic oppression as a byproduct of feudalism which is being continued by the ruling bourgeoisie in capitalist societies to keep their chain of exploitation intact. For them, ethnicity distracts the attention of the working class

from the exploitation caused by class based society

(<http://www.yivoinstitute.org/pdf/>). Identity politics emphasizes on the identities and culture that divide the people and dilute class struggle. So, capitalists try to provoke the workers of one ethnic, caste and nation against those of another trying to convince that their primary concern is not the class but the identity. The history proves that national identity silenced the universal unity of the working class profound in Marx's Communist Manifesto in 1848. It was evident in the First and the Second World War. French and British workers were on the one side and the German and Austrian workers were on the opposite tried to kill each other in the name of national identity in the First World War. So did happen in Second World War (Donald, 2008).

Likewise, the leader of the Bolshevik faction of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, Vladimir Lenin took identity politics as a tragic strategic error which could take place only because of the shortsightedness and lack of class consciousness of the proletariat. Lenin envisaged that working class would realize that the common interests transcend the caste, ethnicity and national boundary. The notion of identity politics could be the vanguard of the proletariat and ultimately Lenin said all workers together combat against exploitation realizing themselves as a transnational class. When classless society is established, ethnicity and in general identity politics remain ineffective since ruling class could not manipulate it. Lenin claimed, in socialist era, ethnicity would necessarily extinct and social class would be prevalent. Lenin took identity politics as a transitional phase where ethnicity would be an organizing factor that brought them under a same flag to mobilize against ruling class. Lenin agreed to give autonomy to that ethnic group with large geographical constitution even after socialist revolution. Lenin agreed to constitute republic federal states based on

territorially concentrated group. But, his party remained a supranational, hierarchical and unitary party not a federal one. Lenin's Communist Party was superior to state apparatus. If the federal states would decide to secede, the party could countermand that decision. (<http://www.yivoinstitute.org/pdf/>). However, after almost two decade united Russia has divided into different states. Lenin says that the aim of communism is not only to end divisions of nation into tiny parts, but also to end all kind of differences based on caste and bringing the castes near to each other aiming to the dissolution of all kind of exploitations.

Joseph Stalin, in 1913, defined a nation as a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of common language, common territory, common economic life, common psychological make up and common culture. All these characteristics are a must to regard a group as a nation.

(<http://www.yivoinstitute.org/pdf/>). Unified CPN Maoist is saying the same in a bid to form separate federal states on ethnicity. But it is crystal clear that a small state will have to face a lot of challenges to exist in this global era no matter how much a discourse of equality and independence has been blown up. For example, Jews had no common territory, language and economy; they could not have a claim for nationhood. In this sense, communism defined by Lenin and Stalin was contrary to the Zionist movement for nationhood. However, after 1918 Soviet state recognized the Jews as an ethnic group i.e nationality. Though communist Czechoslovakia and Hungary after world war second recognized Jews only as a religious group. Romania, Poland, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia allowed Jewish religious and cultural organizations to function (<http://www.yivoinstitute.org/>). So communism also tried to use ethnic identity as a strategical tool for organizing against capitalism for reaching toward socialism. For communism identity politics is a means not an end up. But

now, Nepali left political parties start regarding the identity politics as an end up because they start resembling class struggle with identity politics.

Identity fetishism

Identity fetishism, like commodity fetishism in Marxist point of view, is demonstrating a particular caste and ethnic group trying to veil up the internal differences of that group with shutting up class-based exploitations including other forms of oppressions. Marx says that the product that is sold in the market with hi-fi advertisement is alienated with the labor used to produce it (Robinson, 2010). So is the case with identity politics because it alienates a person in the name of a certain group identity with the class based exploitation within this group. Not only this, identity politics alienates a person with basic human values and collapses him or her into a certain group, ethnicity and clan. Since politics is a constant attempt to achieve power for ruling others no matter what one defines politics in principle, identity politics remains effective as far as it tries to establish dominance on other in the basis of some identity vectors. The members of the same class even in the same society may be of different race, caste or ethnicity whereas the members of all castes in one society belong to the same race. But identity politics overshadows all of other variations of an individual and delimits him or her into a certain identity group.

Identity of a person is constructed and determined by the external factors with interaction of various elements as Mendiata says, " Identities have been determined and constituted by the framework of the national economy, fairly stable class identities, gender and race relations that have entered into interaction with each other within the political economy of the nation states" (409). That is why the process of loosing one identity and forming another is always going on. But, identity politics tries to fix the identity of an individual into a certain group negating the fact that

identity itself is always at a constant flux. Identifying a person attaching him or her with a certain group identity is like showcasing a product alienating itself with its process of production because identity of an individual is not limited in a certain identity vector.

8. Left Political Parties of Nepal and their Perspectives toward Identity Politics

Left politics refers to Left-wing and leftist political party. The term Left and Right were coined in France during French Revolution (1789-1799) to refer the political parties as per their seating arrangement in Estate General. After French Revolution, those who sat on the left side of Estate General advocated for radical changes whereas Right sitters supported for reformations. The term Left became more prominent after the restoration of French monarchy in 1815. Now the word remains a general term to refer communist party (Nora, 1996).

Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) is considered a far-left political party which in its core principle is said to have an aim of establishing Maoist form of communism. The party was founded in 1949. Previously, the Unified CPN Maoist was named as Communist Party of Nepal. It got the former name after the unification with the Communist Party of Nepal (Unity Centre- Masal) in 1995. The previous name has been readopted by Maoist Madhes based leader Matrika Yadav when he split opposing the unification with unity centre in 2009. The emergence of Maoist party goes to the establishment of Communist Party of Nepal on 22 April 1949 under the leadership of Pushpa Lal Shrestha. The CPN aimed at establishing classless society by abolishing feudalism and semi-colonialism through armed struggle. However, the CPN could not consolidate its policies and military initiation in a bid to materialize its ideology. In May 1968, Pushpa Lal Shrestha called a national conference of the CPN with setting the goal to carry out democratic revolution. However, the CPN had already witnessed a number of split. After three years, on 16 May 1971, the CPN- Jhapa district committee abruptly started an armed revolt assassinating some 'local feudals'. The movement apparently led by juvenile cadres of CPN, most of who are now in CPN UML, was out and out an influence of Naxalite

movement of India and Chinese Cultural Revolution. Indian Naxalbari village of West Bengal then had been witnessing an armed revolt since 1967. But, Jhapa movement ended without any concrete outcome mostly criticized within and outside the party as being impromptu ultra-leftist move. Then, in 1974, the CPN took a new direction when a large section of communist movement held fourth congress of CPN. The fourth congress itself formed a new party named as CPN (Fourth Congress). The new party adopted Marxism, Leninism- Mao Tse-tung thoughts as its ideology. In 1984, the CPN Fourth Congress split into two factions- CPN (Mashal) led by Mohan Bikram Singh, and Nirmal Lama continued leading the CPN (Fourth Congress). Again Singh-led CPN (Mashal) split in 1985, and 1986 he formed a CPN (Masal) which divided into various groups in 1991. In 1989, the national conference of CPN (Mashal) led by Mohan Baidhya elected Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda as its general secretary. In 1991, Four parties CPN (Mashal) led by Prachnad, CPN Fourth Congress led by Nirmal Lama, Proletariat Workers Organization and CPN (Masal-rebel group- divided from Mohan Bikram Singh) got united and formed CPN (Unity Centre) . However, the first national conference of CPN (Unity Centre) in 1994 decided to launch People's War that also witnessed a faction. The CPN (Unity Centre) split again. Nirmal Lama started leading a faction of Unity centre. Though in July 1995, the extended central committee meeting of CPN (Unity Centre) led by Prachanda endorsed the decision of waging people's war and changed its name into CPN (Maoist) (Sapkota 13-32).

However, UCPN Maoist suffered a spilt four weeks after the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly on 27 May 2012. Maoist Vice chairman Mohan Baidya split the Party blaming the establishment led by Prachnada and Baburam Bhattari for taking the path of reformism and surrendering to the parliamentary political system.

On 18 June 2012, a national conclave of Baidya faction declared a breakaway party named as Communist Party of Nepal, Maoist. The new party stressed on the need for people's revolt or war to establish people's republic laying primary focus on class (Republica, 2012). However, it remained quiet on identity politics.

Unified CPN Maoist: Paradox in mind and hand

On February 13, 1996, CPN Maoist launched a People's War with the slogan- "Let us march ahead on the path of struggle towards establishing the people's rule by wrecking the reactionary ruling system of state" (Sapkota, 2010). The Maoist launched war after its 40 points memorandum submitted to the then Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba on February 4, 1996 was not addressed. The memorandum listed 40 demands including nationalism, democracy and livelihood. The 40- point demands not only called for the end of ethnic oppression but also called for equality of languages and regional autonomy. Though, the Maoist included ethnic aspirations in its programmes and policies even before the start of war. The party had already endorsed ethnic autonomy in July 1995. In February 1997, the Maoist central committee meeting endorsed national and regional autonomy with self-determination right. The party further systematized the policy on nationalities by establishing a central level ethnic department with various fronts under it. Not only this, Maoist has drawn the boundaries of nine autonomous regions for people's government as per ethnic criteria (ICG, 2011). However, Maoist tries to make a fusion of ethnicity with the question of nationality. A report of International Crisis Group (ICG), "Nepal: Identity Politics and Federalism" (Asia Report N. 199) claims that the incorporation of identity politics into a class based organization is ideological stretch (2011). The report quoted senior leader Dr. Babauram Bhattarai who explained giving the reference to Vladimir Lenin that "Maoist approach to the national question is

explicitly Leninist." (6). Dr. Bhattarai quoted Lenin as saying, "[I]n the same way as mankind can arrive at the abolition of classes only through transition period of the dictatorship of the oppressed class, it can arrive at the inevitable integration of nations only through transition period of the complete emancipation of all oppressed nations, i.e. their freedom of secede" (6). Crisis group Asia report further claims; "this does not mean that the Maoist actually expect secession: Lenin believed that - "given the advantage of bigger states- secession is the less likely to happen the more firmly the right to secede is established" (6). Bhattarai clearly says autonomy and self determination is "to overcome semi-feudal and semi-colonial exploitation, progress to capitalism and prepare the conditions for socialist revolutions. But the ultimate aim is the dissolution of national identities in a class-less and state-less society" (6). It is crystal clear that Maoist is using identity politics as a "strategical essentialism" to achieve their ultimate goal as envisaged in line with the principle of international proletariat. In this sense Maoist has been seen in dual paradox in ideology: one they are diverted from their classical ideology of class-based struggle and on the other hand their principle on identity politics is a strategy to get identity group united only for abolishing semi-feudal and semi-colonial forms of oppression. Identity politics for them is just a strategy which is essential in a certain period of time. That is why, Maoist could not or intentionally did not pressure other parties to mention federalism in the interim constitution endorsed on 15th January 2007 which ultimately triggered Terai uprising when thirty people were killed and more than eight hundreds were wounded. However, Maoist senior leaders kept arguing that the Article 138 (1) of Interim Constitution clearly mentioned federalism. Actually, Article 138(1) of interim constitution says," by eliminating the centralized and unitary form of the state, the state shall be made inclusive and restructured into a progressive, democratic system"

(2007). It shows that political parties no matter what they said to unite people for a certain goal while they are in agitation depart from their previous demands when time comes to implement. Mallika Shakya shows the paradox in Maoist party as Maoist is taking dual attitude. The Maoists have said that Nepal needs a 'jatiya struggle' in addition to a class struggle. On the contrary they have insisted that Nepal's 'culture' can be a firm basis for an economic revitalization (Shakya, 2007). Of late, caste and ethnicity are being significant issues while taking some decision on social and policy making. She further claims that the emergence of the people war launched by the Maoist party which called for a communist republic, in fact, also reinstated the 'old' but 'communised' caste/ethnicity-based economic order in Nepal (Shakya, 2007). It clearly shows that Maoist is in paradox between ideology and its practice.

CPN UML: The Politics of Confusion

Communist party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist) abbreviated as CPN UML is one of the largest communist parties of Nepal. It was formed in January 6, 1991 with the unification of communist party of Nepal (Marxist) and the communist party of Nepal (Marxist- Leninist) (Parajulee, 2000) The founder leader of it Puaupalal Shrestha says all jatis living in Nepal are equal in rights and duties who are required to join hands in fighting against the expansionism and feudalism. Pushpalal says his communist party would accept the rights of self-determination of jatis. However, he strongly asserts that the communist party would oppose narrow-jatibadi concept doubting that expansionists and feudalists would conspire to weaken the jatis struggle of the people by evoking one caste and ethnic group against the other (414-15).

According to a report of International Crisis Group, "Nepal: Identity Politics and Federalism" (Asia Report N. 199), CPN UML had no policy goal on federalism

before Madhesi movement in 2007. The report claims, "The formal acceptance of federalism marked a fundamental shift in the UML's position on identity politics" (10). However, when it was established in the year 1949 in the name of Communist party of Nepal CPN, it endorsed ethnic demands with the right of self determination. Though, class struggle remained dominant in ideological discussion overshadowing ethnic sensibility. After 1990, the UML opposed the identity politics and focused on common Nepali culture terming the ethnic activism as reactionary and divisive. In 1998, the Sixth National Congress of the UML emphasized on cultural and linguistic homogenization claiming that only that would create a Nepali state. It further claimed that a demand for ethnic autonomy and federalism is a grave threat to territorial integrity to Nepal. The UML became more ambiguous regarding identity politics after its Seventh National Congress held in February 2003. The document endorsed by the Seventh national congress acknowledged ethnic inequality but claimed that identity based politics is amenable to class- based policies (ICG, 2011). In 2008 UML's central committee passed Constituent Assembly Election Manifesto proposing provinces to be created on the basis of geography and cultural distinctiveness. The manifesto accepted the federalism since the Interim Constitution has already made it a compulsion after Terai Uprising. However, UML's CA election manifesto focused on class struggle and termed the ethnic and regional discontent as the derivatives of class struggle. The Eighth National Congress of UML endorsed a policy report that describes federalism advocating for reservations and positive discrimination in a bid to address the aspirations of marginalized groups. However, the same report reiterated the importance of class-struggle and blamed the reactionary forces for fomenting the ethnic sentiment. (UML, Political Document, 2009). However, some leaders and influential supporters of UML do not express consensus on the concept paper

endorsed by the party. For instance, the editors of two weekly newspapers close to UML *Drishti* and *Janastha* are the members of Joint anti-federalism Front formed by *Rastriya Janamorcha* which carried out a nation-wide campaign against federalism. UML leaders from ethnic background are in support of ethnic based federalism whereas non-ethnic leaders are voicing against identity based federalism. One example is Dr. Pushpa Kandel who regarded federalism as a divisive (ICG 2011). Moreover, UML leader Ghanshyam Bhusal says his party UML would not accept ethnic federalism. Bhusal says, "Nepal is not like China— where minorities share the country with a clear majority. Nepal is a country of minorities. So we can't copy a federal structure like others. Also we can't have federalism based on ethnicity" (6). On the one hand, UML endorsed political document accepting identity-based federalism, on the contrary its central influential leaders keep on analyzing identity based federalism in their own ways. Consequently, its central leaders divide to such extent that the party is on the verge of split (Rai, 2012). UML central committee member Ajambar Rai Kangmang blamed his own party as a main responsible for dissolving the CA without promulgating the new statute. Rai claimed that the Constituent Assembly was dissolved due to the dual nature of UML toward identity based federalism (Rai, 2012).

The Constituent Assembly formed on 2008 through elections got dissolved on 27 May, 2012 after political parties failed to make consensus apparently on identity-based federalism. UML Janjati leaders blamed the party leadership for taking double standards on identity based federalism and warned to defect the party (Rai, 2012).

So, the dual status of UML leaders is confusing people rather convincing them. It is crystal clear that UML has two distinct views on identity politics. It neither

publicly opposes the wave of identity politics visualized through out the country nor can accept it either. It is trying to confuse since it can not convince.

Other Fringe Parties : Going along the flow

Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist-Leninist) is a political party formed by CP Mainali. Mainali refused to go along with the merger when CPN (ML) merged with Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist). CPN (ML) suffered another split on August 6, 2010. Jagat Bahadur Bogati led the new faction with four Constituent Assembly members named as CPN-ML (Samajwadi). CPN (ML) opines that federal states must be classified on ethnicity, cultural, lingual and geographical differences (Parajulee, 2000).

Communist Party of Nepal (United) is a political party in Nepal founded in 2007 following a split in the Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist). The party elected first openly homosexual representative, Sunil Babu Pant to the Constituent Assembly in 2008 as a member of the CPN (United). CPN (United) opines that federalism should be based on historical identification, geographical distinctness, natural resources and caste co-existence (Parajulee, 2000).

Communist Party of Nepal (Unified) is a left party of Nepal formed in 2007 with a unification of breakaway group of the Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist-Leninist) led by Rishi Kattel, a split of Communist Party of Nepal (Unity Centre-Masal), whose Janamorcha Nepal faction was led by Chitra Bahadur Ale and a breakaway group of Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist Centre) led by Sitaram Tamang (Parajulee, 2000). It also does not have distinct view on federalism and identity with other left parties.

Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist-Leninist), Communist Party of Nepal (United) and Communist Party of Nepal (Unified) are some left political parties which

have to toil for their own existence rather than creating influential discourse in the national politics. So they do not dare to stand against the flow. They go drifting where the wave leads them. Most of them made alliance with the Nepali Congress and the CPN UML in their bid to topple the government led by Baburam Bhattarai after the dissolution of the CA along with parties with Panchyat legacy as such led by Surya Bahadur Thapa, Pashupati Samsher and Lokendra Bahadur Chand. In their public speech, they spoke out about the ethnicity joining it with the caste system of Hindu Varnashram Dharma (Kathmandu Post, 2012).

However, the main problem for the left political parties is they make a confusion mingling ethnicity and caste with class. However, caste and ethnicity should not be confused with class because even in the same ethnic identity there are class variations.

Nepali Congress: Deception from inside

The Nepali Congress has taken the federalism as an imposed decision by the then Prime Minister and party president Girija Prasad Koirala who was blamed to take decision unilaterally without consulting others. The same did happen in taking decision on federalism after Terai uprising (ICG, 2011). However the CA election manifesto of Nepali Congress clearly mentioned as "[T]he creation of these provinces will also respect the unique character of Janajati, Mahesi, Dalit, and other groups living across Terai, hills and Himali regions" (12). Though the manifesto mentioned that the provinces will be crafted out on the basis of the principles on "national integrity, geographic viability, population size, natural resources and prospects, interrelation among provinces, linguistic, ethnic and cultural affinity, and political and administrative feasibility" (12).

In Nepali Congress, many district leaders of Brahmin and Chhetri backgrounds from hill regions warned against federalism. But leaders from ethnic and Madhesi backgrounds support federalism based on even identity ardently. However NC leaders oppose federalism itself in private, a relatively progressive wing of the party around central leader Narahari Acharya fears the electoral risks of the party if it ignores the issue (ICG, 2011).

Nepali Congress has acknowledged the identity based federalism as imposed by the leader without consulting to the ground level at first. And they later start endorsing it since they fear going against the issue will risk them in ballot box politics. However, the janajati and Madhesi leaders of the party blamed that the senior leaders of NC mostly from Bahun, Chhetri background had opposed identity-based federalism at the last hour of the CA that led to its dissolution, let alone single identity based federalism.

Against Identity Politics

Rastriya Janamorcha led by Chitra Bahadur KC, the Chhetri Samaj Nepal and the Brahman Samaj Nepal are some organizations who oppose federalism based on identity. The Cheetri Samaj Nepal was formed under the leadership of Professor Dil Bahadur Chhetri in Pokhara in 1996/ 1997. The Chhetri Samaj Nepal is ardently critical to identity politics. The central committee meeting of Chhetri Samaj held in November 2009 termed ethnic federalism as "poison". Moreover, the same meeting regarded ethnic psychology as backward concept which ultimately weakens class based politics (Kshatri Awaj, 2009). However the Chhetri Samaj said it is not against federalism though it out and out opposed federalism based on identity. The Chhetri Samaj favors proportional ethnic representation and demands to include Chhetri into indigenous not under 'other' category. They say they want to save Chhetris from

discriminations in future federal states if it is crafted on the basis of identity.

Ultimately, the constant struggle of Brahman, Chhetri and Dashnami got success to enlist them as janajati (ekantipur.com, 2012).

Brahman Samaj Nepal also opposed federalism based on identity. Claiming that ethnic federalism ultimately split the country, Brahman Samaj started a campaign against ethnic federalism (Adhikari, 2010). Personally many Chhetris and Brahmins fear that ethnic provinces will lead them loose the privileged they are taking in general. They are anxious of loosing out due to proposed reservations, quotas and preferential rights. Crisis group Asia report N. 199 claims, "For current elites, who have money and children safely deposited abroad, this may be less problematic. But for struggling middle-class families, concerns about loosing access to important opportunities are real" (20). So, they have also started campaigning against identity based federalism and warned to revolt if they are marginalized in the name of history when their forefathers had exploited others.

Rastriya Janamorcha, a left political party, the public front of CPN (Masal) led by Mohan Bikram Singh is the only party which openly opposes federalism. It publicly started a National Anti-Federalism Campaign. Likewise, Rastriya Prjatantra party Nepal led by Kamal Thapa also opined that referendum would decide the fate of forms of federalism as well as monarchy. Chandra Bahadur Gurung claims that people has right to decide the major national issues through referendum (2011).

In fact, there are three broad critical responses to federalism. The first one is a leftist, secular, pro-republican that regards identity politics as reactionary and federalism as a threat to the unity of Nepal. The second is many Brahmins and Chhetris who oppose ethnic federalism fearing that it would marginalize them. And,

the last one is Hindutva and pro-royalists group who not only oppose federalism based on identity but also secularism and the republic (ICG, 2011).

Identity politics in art and culture

History shows that identity politics works out in art and culture than as right based politics. The wave of identity politics comes and fades away as the change of time. In Nepali art and literature, Ralfali Andolan, Sadak Kbita Kranti, Boot Palish Andolan, Asukrit Jamat are the identity politics in Nepali art and literature and culture that aroused in an attempt to seek identity, and faded away with the course of time. They intensified such literary movements to let the society figure out and accept their identity. These movements were launched to force the society accept the unacceptable new comers in arts and literature. These movements faded away gradually after dissidents voice was assimilated in the society. So identity politics remain in practice unless they are accepted by the society. If their identity is accepted, the identity politics fades away.

Identity politics have been attributed to a number of artistic movements in the west also such as Hip-Hop music, Skinhead and Punk Subculture, Punk Rock, Reggae, Soul music, film and fanzines.

Hip hop music is a radical musical genre began from America in the 1970s. It is a part of hip hop culture which is defined by four key stylistic elements: rapping, DJing/scratching, sampling (or synthesis), and beatboxing. Rap music and Hip Hop is often used synonymously. However, Hip Hop refers the practices of an entire subculture. Hip Hop music expressed identity politics in the form of Black and Chicano nationalism (Hip Hop, Britanica.com).

Black Nationalism that has been aroused in African countries advocates a racial definition of indigenous national identity. Actually Black Nationalism goes

against the multiculturalism and seeks independence from European society (Moses, 1996).

Chicano nationalism is the ethnic nationalist ideology of Chicanos i.e Mexican American came into existence in 1960s and 1970s. However, the movement emphasizes on civil rights as well as political and social inclusion rather than nationalism (Chávez, 2002).

Hip-hop music poses challenge to so-called established norms in music. The origin of Hip-hop music itself refers the motives of teasing the standard norms. Keith Cowboy including his friends used the term Hip hop. Cowboy used the term to tease his friends who joined to the US army saying hip hop repeatedly in rhythm cadence of marching soldiers. Steven Hager used the term in print in 1984 in his book (Hager, 1984). But Homo hop has expressed Queer identity politics; much like queercore has in the punk. Hip-hop activism draws on black liberation movements but also encompasses issues like environmentalism. Homo hop is related with hip hop music. Homo hop is performed by LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual) artists and performers. Homo hop is described as a global movement associated with homophobia and anti-gay lyrics (Thomas, 2004).

Identity politics has been articulated in Punk rock genres through Anarcho-punk, Queercore and Riot grrrl. Anarcho-punk is a musical movement came to existence in United Kingdom in the late 1970s and early 1980s. It is punk rock that upholds anarchism. It consists of any punk music with anarchist lyrical content such as crust punk, d-beat, folk punk, hardcore punk, garage punk or ska punk (Glasper and O'Hara, 2006, 1999).

Riot grrrl is a radical musical movement came to existence in the early to mid-1990s in the US. The movement was an underground feminist punk movement based

in Olympia, Washington. It was associated with third-wave feminism. The musical movement ran by the radical group of girls emphasizing on universal female identity. It tries to address the issues related to women such as rape, domestic abuse, sexuality, and female empowerment (Rosenberg, 1998).

A skinhead identity is a subculture originated among working class youths in the United Kingdom in the 1960s. Skinheads are named after its members with shaved heads. They are influenced by West Indian specifically Jamaican. Generally the skinheads were primarily based on other elements except politics or race. Skinhead identity is based on class. Skinheads along with skinhead reggae, Oi!, Hardcore and Two-tone songs articulate working class pride and racial unity (Brown, 2004).

Actually, class identity has been expressed in Oi! Despite of gender and sexual orientation, Oi has its origin in the working class East End of London. Oi is defined as a working class subgenre of punk rock. Oi was originated in the UK in the late 1970s. The movement aims at bringing the punks, skinheads and other working-class youths called Herbert in to one place (Dalton, 1993).

Queercore is a cultural and social movement which is an outcome of Punk. It came into existence in the mid 1980s. It is the movement to show discontent to the society. It disapproves the gay, bisexual, transgender and lesbian communities. The movement also rejects the repressive agenda of all of those. The musical movement, Queercore projects itself in DIY style through zines, music, art and literature. The musical movement deals with the sexual identity and gender identity as well as the rights of the individual (Pleissis and Chapman, 1997).

Rock Against Communism (RAC) came into existence in the late 1970s in the UK. The musical movement aims at campaigning against the communism which was at rife during 70s. However, RAC focused on nationalist, neo-Nazi, anti-Semitic,

racist, and violent themes rather focusing on topic on anticommunism (Rock against Communism, wikipedia.org).

Reggae is a music genre first propagated in Jamaica in the late 1960s. In Jamaican English the word Reggae stands for recently established derived from the word "rege", as in rege-rege, that means either "rags, ragged clothing" or "a quarrel, a row (Levitin, 2006).

In fact, a number of movements seeking identity by challenging the established norms and standards have appeared in the west. However, they all are not alive now. They came like a wave and thawed out gradually. It shows that movement for identity comes and fades away after the rebel group achieves some recognition in the society. So is the case in Nepali art and literature as such Boot Palis Andolan, Asukrit Jamat, Sadk Kabita Kranti etc. They are not is existence because they were not for right but for identity of some group of people.

Identity politics in LGBT issues

Some right activists of sexual minorities as such Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual collectively termed as LGBT right activist referring the work of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, explain some forms of identity politics as strategic essentialism. Strategic essentialism works with hegemonic discourses to get collective goals. Strategic essentialism is a major concept of postcolonial theory coined by Indian literary critic and theorist Spivak. It stands for a strategy that nationalities, ethnic groups or minority groups can use to present themselves. Even if members of these groups have a strong differences, they can get benefit by temporarily essentialize themselves in a bid to gain their group identity in a simplified way to gain certain goal (Eide, 2010).

Liberal-reformist gay and lesbian activists advocate for full acceptance of gays and lesbians in the mainstream society. However, queer activists seek their independent identity outside main stream culture. LGBT and Queer differs each other since LGBT flays over the queer's total denial of the existing society as counter productive. It also blames the queer for perpetuating discrimination and societal attitudes against LGBT people. But, queer , on the other hand, criticizes LGBT blaming for seeking to subsume LGBT identities in a bid to take advantage of other forms of opportunity such as racial, economic and geographical (Jordans, 2011)

Queer nationalism or gay nationalism is a phenomenon aims at liberating gay and lesbian people relating it with nationalism. Political lesbianism relates itself with feminism. It is a phenomenon within feminism. Political lesbianism advocates that sexual orientation is a choice. It further prescribes lesbianism as a positive alternative to heterosexuality for women in a bid to get liberation from male dominated society what it says has root to sexual relations (Bindel, 2004).

The trace out of identity politics throughout the world proves that identity politics is more prevalent in art and culture that rises in certain period of time and thaws out after achieving its certain objectives. Moreover, it shows that identity politics is more concerned to the identity of a certain group that tries to assimilate with so-called mainstream culture rather than focusing on the rights of that group.

Identity: Not a reliable base

Identity remains always at flux. It is always at the process of forming and deforming as Mendieta says, "Our identities are never discovered. They are always constituted, constructed, invented, imagined, imposed, projected, suffered and celebrated. Identities are never univocal, stable of innocent. They are always an accomplishment and a ceaseless project" (407). If identity itself remains fluctuating,

how can anything else formed on the basis of fluctuating identity be stable? No doubt, identity itself is a social construction, the process of constituting it keeps continues throughout the history. Identity itself is not a matter which is discovered. Rather it is invented and imagined, sometimes imposed to deride others and celebrated to keep some group above others. For example, so-called untouchable Dalits identity is imposed to a group of people to exploit them in various ways. On the other hand, during Rana regime it has been known that the rulers downgraded and uplifted the caste of people to punish and reward them. Inside ethnic community too, there are a number of caste hierarchies, and exploitation based on such hierarchies will not be resolved by providing certain rights putting a certain identity group in a single basket generalizing internal varieties of it.

It is ironical that the political parties of Nepal which are guided by leftist political ideology have commenced using caste and ethnic identity as an important aspect as class identity. Caste and ethnic identities are more related with image and imaginaries as Mendiata claims, "Identities have a lot to do with images, imaginaries and the imagination, a version of an identity is crystallized or captured as a portrait by a certain image" (407). But, even leftist parties start to regard caste and ethnicity as class identity. It is ironical why caste and ethnic identities become equal to the social reality based identity as such class for them who claim themselves as a political catalyst.

Ironically, they start emphasizing on caste identity in the same manners as they used to emphasize class identity before. On the one hand, communist parties clearly state to establish federal states and provide reservation quota on the basis of caste/ethnicity, on the other hand, they do not have courage to emphasize caste directly and openly to the people. The communist parties are supposed to emphasize

on international proletariat class eradicating the exploitation of them as regards their basic principle. However, they commence to focus on caste and ethnicity which may ultimately lead the country to have a new class in the society based on identity. Some questions necessarily bloom over here as to how communist parties eliminate the economic cleavage of haves and haves-not by focusing on identity rather than class? Are they being able to address the problem of proletariat by establishing federal states on the basis of ethnic identity? Aren't they deviating from the basic principle of communist when they begin focusing on ethnicity rather than class? How they liberate society from caste based discrimination while they themselves are out and out engaged in caste or ethnicity?

Some ethnic activists strongly advocate in favour of identity providing reservation quota on the basis of caste and ethnicity (Bhattachan and Sherpa, 2011). Then another query blooms over here as to: Are the reservation on the basis of caste and ethnicity compensate the poor people in real sense? In fact, it does not work because all people of the same caste do not have equal economic status. Moreover, are not reservation and quota opposite to universal principle of human rights because such system prefers only a certain group of people and discriminates against rest of all.

More than half a dozen leftist parties are activating in Nepali politics in different names now. Each of them claims themselves as original communist. However calling themselves a communist, they regard caste and ethnic identity, what they call the product of feudalism, as a vector for identifying the people and organizing them. And, they claim themselves to have been struggling against caste and ethnic based bourgeoisie society. However, they are struggling against the discrimination based on identity. But it surprises every one as to how Nepali communist parties can establish classless society by classifying people on the basis of

caste and ethnicity because nobody can disagree that a caste and ethnic group certainly has different social and economic classes.

Although Unified CPN Maoist has claimed that it has talked about ‘nationality’ by using the word Jatiya i.e ethnicity. Maoist has also on the one hand proposed to name the federal states on the basis of ethnic identity, on the other hand it has various ethnic sister organizations under its flag. They use the word Jatiya where there is full of confusion in caste and ethnicity while saying Jatiya. Jatiya means more ethnic rather than caste. Sister organizations have blurred the hierarchy of class discrimination for the sake of accumulating people of one ethnic identity under the flag of Maoist. Likewise, another influential left political party CPN UML focuses on caste identity proposing to establish autonomous states on the basis of ethnic identity. Rests of the political parties who prefer them to be called communist are also supporting identity politics in one way or the other. No matter, they prefer identity only in words but not in practice like CPN UML does for keeping their janjati leaders and cadres intact. Leaders from ethnic background of UML threaten the party leadership to quit the party accusing the leadership of taking double standards on identity- based federalism (Rai, 2011).

When a political party deviates from its basic principle, it is no longer oriented to achieve the fundamental goal. Since Nepali communist parties deviate from the fundamental political principle, their political goal gets changed. Nepali communist parties switch over their ideology from class to identity. They indirectly begin to say “caste is class”. Since Nepali left political parties start saying ‘caste is class’ they seem deviating from their basic principle of class struggle and commence evoking caste and ethnic struggle. So they are deviating from their basic political principle. Political parties no longer seem to say ‘proletariat’ rather they start regarding certain

caste or ethnicity as such 'Tamang', Madhesi, Limbu etc as exploited and marginalized class. They try to blur the exploitation between have and have-not through the spectacle of ethnicity and caste. Raising identity of one caste and ethnicity blurs the exploitation of one identity group in general for example what about exploitation between bourgeois Tamang and proletariat Tamang. Raising the identity of a single group deems or nullifies the exploitation in that group. As a result, different ethnic-based political factions have been organized in various names. For instance, cadres of Unified CPN Maoist have joined different outfit as such Limbuwan and Khambuwan activated in eastern hilly regions of Nepal. They start to be guided by ethnic sentiment rather than political ideology (Himal Khabar Patrika, 2009). The legacy of identity-based organization is so high that a caste called Chhetri also formed organization to secure their right fearing that they would be excluded after other ethnic groups formed their organization to secure their rights and identity. In November 2008, a Chhetri organization called Khas Chhetri Joint National Forum was formed which consists 16% in total population (Himal Khabar Patrika, 2009). So, organizations are getting formed on the basis of caste and ethnic sense rather than political ideology.

9. Conclusion: Mode of Production to Provocative Politics

The issue of identity is a very sensitive subject in Nepali politics owing to the mosaic nature of the society. Identity issue has become so important and delicate subject and power that it even led to the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly following the failure of the political parties to address it properly. Ethnic politics is a catchy word for the regional politicians which can easily capture the very sentiment of the people. Samuel P. Huntington asserts that global politics is the politics of civilization and local politics is the politics of ethnicity (1996). The feudal system exploits caste system and ethnicity whereas the modern politics galvanizes caste and ethnicity for the poll politics because no identity based politics can subvert the caste and ethnic based exploitation rather it overplays it for cheap politics of ballot box in the so-called democracy. And, Nepali left political parties have shifted from rigid ideology of class struggle to identity politics for the benefit of ballot box.

In fact, there is no scientific base for constructing caste and ethnicity, so they do not exist as 'Tamang' or 'Chhantyal' were. They were constructed later as David H. Holmberg and Chaitynya Mishra claimed respectively (2011). The more it is overplayed, the more it exists virtually. Without focusing on the discrepancy practiced in various caste and ethnic communities in the name of culture, only focusing on caste and ethnic based-politics would further complicate the problems rather than resolving them. Caste system in itself is the product of feudal society. It is a root of feudal system, and nurturing of the very root of the feudal society and claiming to abolish it is nothing more than a politics of pleasing all by swimming in the pond of ironical paradox. In fact, left political parties are not leading the people to freedom; instead they are being led by the emotional sentiments of the people based on their so-called attachment to identity. Naturally, people tend to be keyed up if they are aroused through their ancestral clinging and idealized history. Nepal will eventually learn the lesson how identity politics could be a terror in itself. It is natural therefore to predict

that only a calamity will make the people understand what it is. Only the course of history will show how perilous it is to tread upon the lesson. No doubt, a state of civilization and the society with social justice is impossible with class, caste and ethnic distinction as Alcloff says, "... social identities such as these operate differently from class or caste. All humanitarians might agree that the world would be a better place without class or caste categories of distinctions" (2). Of course, caste and ethnic identity have some resemblances with class hierarchy. But, identifying people on the basis of caste should be eliminated whereas ethnicity should not be politicized neither for bullet nor for ballot box politics because both are counterproductive.

As Marx sees the end of class based discrimination in demolition of class based society, the demolition of identity-based discrimination is possible only in the annihilation of the hierarchy of identity vectors. When identity becomes a basis for oppressions and discriminations, it turns out to be a tool for counter mobilization. So effort to end discriminations and oppressions on the basis of identity is a must not to let identity be a tool for party politics. If identity politics is a politics for liberalizing the oppressed, it should gauge out the roots of exploitation rather than engaging only in party politics which leads us nowhere. Engaging on identity based politics does not liberate certain caste and ethnic groups in real sense. If identity politics aims at liberating the people in real sense, why the issues of Dalits, who are the victim of inhuman exploitation, do not figure at the hubs of discourses of identity politics? It is crystal clear that since Dalits do not have as much common sentiments as ethnic groups to be mobilized for political parties, their oppressions and exploitations are eclipsed. Ethnic sentiments have been used to play up in the name of identity politics. So, some identity vectors such as caste must be annihilated from the roots whereas identity of ethnic communities should be given a safe haven for their cultural existence without letting it be a tool for politics of counter mobilization.

Appendix

Aahuti (Writer, Dalit right activist). Interview by Sushil C. Pandey. *Talk of the Town*. ABC Television. Kathmandu. 29 June, 2010. Television.

Question: Why Nepali left Political parties are focusing on caste and ethnic identity rather than class?

Response: It is unfortunate that Nepali left political parties are focusing on caste and ethnicity in the name of identity. However, identity politics does not pay attention to the genuine problems of Dalit. If identity politics is concerned to the genuine problems of exploited and marginalized community, it will emphasize on Dalit. Because, there is no other group more exploited and marginalized than Dalits. So parties are focusing on ethnic sentiment for immediate political benefit rather than the real problems of real marginalized group.

Adhikari, Narayan Prasad (President, Brahman Samaj). Interview by Sushil C Pandey. *Janata Jindabad*. ABC Television. Kathmandu. 10 May, 2011. Television.

Question: What is the significance of 'Jatiya' organization like Brahman Samaj?

Response: The nation is dividing on the issue of caste and 'jati'. Brahman has been blamed for the historical exploitation imposed by the previous states. However, Brahmans themselves were not responsible for that. It seems that Brahman will be excluded in the name of making the country inclusive. The country will split if federal states are crafted on ethnic identity. So, Brahman Samaj has been organized to stop such trend.

Ale Magar, Suresh (Leader, CPN-Maoist). Interview by Sushil C. Pandey.

Janata Jindabad. ABC Television. Kathmandu. 18 May, 2011.

Television.

Question: Why Nepali left political parties are focusing on caste and ethnic identity rather than class-struggle?

Response: Nepali state from the long period of time has been marginalizing the so called lower caste "jati" and ethnic communities, so caste and ethnic community also resemble class. That is why focusing the caste and ethnic identity does not mean to deviate from class. It is also focusing on the class at the same time.

Bhattachan, Krishna (Ethnic right activist). Interview by Sushil C. Pandey

Janata Jindabad. ABC Television, Kathmandu. 31 Aug, 2011.

Television.

Question: Why identity politics are being emphasized much in Nepali politics of late?

Response: Crafting out federal states on the basis of ethnic identity is only one way to address the grievances of ethnic community. Focusing on ethnicity is also focusing on class because they are intermingled. Communal clash will be inevitable if federal states are not crafted in line with ethnic identity. Identity-based federal states will not lead the country to communal clash. But on the contrary, if federal states are not based on ethnic identity, it will certainly lead to communal clash.

Gurung, Chandra Bahadur (Leader, Rastriya Prajatantra Party). Interview by Sushil C. Pandey. *ABC Watch*. ABC Television, Kathmandu. 19 Aug., 2012. Television.

Question: How can parties resolve dispute on identity- based federalism?

Response: Referendum will decide the fate of federalism as well as monarchy.

Rastriya Prajatantra Party has been demanding to let the people decided on major national issues which have long-term consequences.

Gurung, Om (Professor, TU) . Interview by Sushil C. Pandey. *Janata*

Jindabad. ABC Television. Kathmandu. 25 April, 2012. Television.

Question: Do you think Nepali left political parties are equally focusing on identity politics as class-based politics?

Response: Since identity politics is equally important as class struggle, it is necessary to focus on identity politics as well. But, political parties are misleading identity politics. The present discourse will not lead to eliminate all kind of exploitations against ethnic communities as expected.

Karki, Ram (Leader, UCPN Maoist). Interview by Sushil C. Pandey. *ABC*

Watch. ABC Television. Kathmandu. 17 Aug., 2012. Television.

Question: Why Unified CPN Maoist has focused on caste and ethnic politics rather than class struggle?

Response: Maoist has raised the issue of caste and ethnicity to address their genuine problems which attributed to their identities too. But it does not mean that Maoist has raised identity issue to get people war a momentum.

Question: There is a blame against Maoist party that it has raised the issue of caste and ethnicity which ultimately push the nation into a new kind of violence. What do you think?

Response: No, Maoist party has not raised the ethnic identity to push the country into a new kind of violence. It aimed at addressing the genuine concerns of the ethnic people. But, focusing unnecessarily on caste and ethnic identity would push the country into communal violence.

KC, Chitra Bahadur (Chairman, Rastriya Janmorcha). Interview by Sushil C. Pandey. *ABC Watch*. ABC Television. Kathmandu. 24 Jan, 2012. Television.

Question: Why you and your party are protesting against ethnicity-based federalism?

Response: Ethnicity-based federalism was not the demand of Nepali people. Ethnicity-based federalism will push the country into a communal clash and split the country because the genuine problems of the people is not identity-based. It is out and out class-based.

Khadka, Kumar (Representative, Chhetri Samaj). Interview by Sushil C. Pandey. *Janata Jindabad*. ABC Television. Kathmandu. 20 Jan, 2010. Television.

Question: Why Chhetri has also formed identity-based organization?

Response: We are compelled to form an identity based organization because we have a fear that we are being marginalized in the name of ethnicity. In the past, Cheetri might have ruled the country but it does not mean that all Chhetri are ruler or exploiter. Most of the Cheetri living in far western region are still poor than a person from a so-called ethnic group. So, the problem does not lie in ethnicity but in class discrimination.

Lekhi Tharu, Rajjkumar (President, NEFIN). Interview by Sushil C. Pandey

Janata Jindabad. ABC Television. Kathmandu. 16 Feb, 2011.

Television.

Question: What is the need for crafting out federal states on the basis of identity?

Since the culture and language of indigenous nationalities and ethnic communities have been underprivileged by the state, they are being marginalized from the long time. To address their aspirations, it is necessary to craft out federal states on the basis of identity.

Mananadhar. Mangla Siddhi (UML leader). Interview by Sushil C. Pandey

Janata Jindabad. ABC Television. Kathmandu. 7 July, 2011.

Television.

Question: What will be the consequence of identity politics?

Response: There is no alternative to crafting out federal states on the basis of ethnic identities. Bu, I have a doubt that it can be misled. My own party CPN UML is also trying to make confusion and trying to misled it.

Pun, Barshman (Leader, UCPN Maoist). Interview by Sushil C. Pandey. *ABC*

Watch. ABC Television. Kathmandu. 5 June, 2011. Television.

Question: Has Maoist stopped the politics of class and started identity politics?

Response: No, Maoist party has only raised the issues of ethnic communities which are also related with class-based problems. Since ethnic communities are facing a number of discriminations on the basis of identity, Maoist has tried to address them in real sense.

Rai, Ajambar (Leader, UML). Interview by Sushil C Pandey. *Janata*

Jindabad. ABC Television. Kathmandu. 2 Aug, 2012. Television.

Question: What is the position of CPN UML on identity politics?

Response: UML is on contradiction so far as identity politics is concerned. On the one hand, its political document accepted identity-based federalism, on the contrary its central influential leaders keep on analyzing identity based federalism in their own ways. The party is likely to split again because of it.

Question: What do you think what the cause of the dissolution of the CA was?

Response: Obviously, there are a number of causes to dissolve the CA.

However, my party's (UML) dual attitude to identity based federalism was one of the major cause of the dissolution of the CA without promulgating the statute.

Rawol, Bhim (Leader, UML). Interview by Sushil C. Pandey. *ABC Watch*.

ABC Television. Kathmandu. 29 July, 2012. Television.

Question: Why political parties are bickering over identity-based federalism?

Response: There is dispute on identity-based federalism even among left political parties. My party (CPN UML) has not been negating identity while crafting out federal states. However, federalism on caste and ethnicity will lead to devastation. It will violate the communal harmony and ultimately split the nation.

Sherpa Aangkaji (Ethnic right activist). Interview by Sushil C. Pandey *Janata*

Jindabad. ABC Television. Kathmandu. 21 May, 2011. Television.

Question: Why left parties are focusing on caste and ethnicity rather than class?

Response: It is necessary to focus on identity because discriminations are based on identity as well.

Question: Why it is necessary to craft out federal states on the basis of identity?

Response: Only identity based federalism will give respect to those historically marginalized group. So, to ensure the rights and respect of the ethnic group, identity based federalism is a must.

Sherpa, Pasang (Ethnic right activist). Interview by Sushil C. Pandey *Janata Jindabad*. ABC Television. Kathmandu. 14 Aug, 2011. Television.

Question: Why Nepali communist parties are focusing on identity politics rather than class struggle?

Response: Since identity politics is another form of class struggle, communist parties are equally emphasizing identity politics as class-based politics. When ethnic discriminations are eliminated, class-based exploitation will also cease. So there is no alternative to crafting federal states on the basis of ethnic identity.

Subedi, Abhi (Professor, TU/ Analyst). Interview by Sushil C. Pandey. *ABC Bises*. ABC Television. Kathmandu. 1 January, 2011. Television.

Question: Do you think that Nepali left-political parties are more concerned to identity politics rather than class?

Response: Yes, identity politics is on the rise.

Question: What is the cause of it?

Response: For seeking the cause of it, I would like to mention Samuel P Huntington. As he said the global politics is the politics of civilization and local politics is the politics of ethnicity, Nepali left politics has

also started to focus on identity rather than ideology. But, if parties fail to contextualize in social milieu, it will lead to devastation.

Tamang, Parshuram (Right activist). Interview by Sushil C. Pandey. *Janata Jindabad*. ABC Television. Kathmandu. 20 July, 2011. Television.

Question: Are not Nepali left-political parties diverting to identity politics from class struggle?

Response: Yes, they are more concerned on identity politics. They are blurring the internal hierarchies and discriminations even inside the ethnic group while focusing only on ethnic identity.

Upreti, Sanjeev (Analyst). Interview by Sushil C. Pandey *Janata Jindabad*. ABC Television. Kathmandu. 5 Jan, 2011. Television.

Question: Identity politics has been on the rise in Nepali Politics. What will be the consequence of it?

Response: Identity of a person is always at flux. The identity vectors of an individual are always changing. So, identifying a person with a certain identity vector is not practical because it is changing always. However, mutual respect among each other will prevent possible communal clash.

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