

Tribhuvan University

Social Process of Cultural Trauma in *Khalangama Hamala*

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of humanities and social science
Central Department of English, Partial Fulfillment of requirements for the
Degree of Master of Art in English

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Kirtipur, Kathmandu

April, 2025

Letter of Approval

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my thesis supervisor Mr. Pradip Raj Giri, Assistant Professor of English at the Central Department of English, for making this work possible. His intellectual guidance, critical comments, and genuine suggestions carried me through the entire stages of writing the paper.

I would also like to extend warmest thanks to Prof. Dr. Dhruva Bahadur Karki, the Head of the Central Department of English, for approving this thesis paper in its present form. I am grateful to him for his valuable suggestions and guidance.

I would like to convey my special thanks to my parents for letting me live my life as I wished. I experienced your guidance, continuous support, and understanding throughout my life. Your prayer for me sustained me this far.

April 2025

Abstract

Khalangama Hamala is a trauma narrative of a young girl, Radha Paudel. It is a live story of the day of the Maoist attack on Khalanga Bazaar and hardship of Jumli people from the prospective of a health worker. Paudel has presented detail on what had come about during the day of assault at Khalanga. She clears line between perpetrator and victims and becomes very objective in the representation of the events at the same time her protrusion is parted. Researcher claims such a projection of binary between two rebelling forces and finger-pointing at narratives do not lead society into reconciliation and ever lasting peace settlement rather it raises a sense of revenge among the conflicting groups and ultimately leads to never ending divergence. To analyze such a complicated composition of the society, I adopt the theoretical tool eni by Jeffrey C. Alexander: Cultural Trauma. This theory deals with how does identity of social group configure and refigure within their societies? How does a suffering of a certain member will be the suffering of the entire cultural group? Who and how victimized narrate their horrendous incidents? How can the war be end at reconciliation? At the same time, I seize some idea from Anker smith and Ronald Barthes who focus on dialogic nature of language and unpredictability respectively. I assume author as ethical and moral character of society they should focus on what is right instead what truth is.

Key words: Key words: Cultural trauma, Nepali civil war, binary representation, reconciliation, middle voice, trauma writing

Long conflict conducted for decade (1996-2006) in history of Nepal is unforgettable. “Nearly thirteen thousand people had lost their lives during the insurgency period”. (Lawoti 16) Besides this, torture and fear was all over the nation. But as trend of postwar literature shouldn’t disclose the things as it is. They could not maintain ethics of post war literature. I examine the narrative representations of language and symbol used to represent the events of *Khalangama Hamala* in the context of the insurgency and counter-insurgency. Is her narrative

able to lead toward empathetic settlement? As the chapter title suggests, my answer is no. Do the narratives in the text pave the middle path by presenting victim's voice of suffering in the post war literature *Khalangma Hamala*? This research paper argues that the narrative representation is focused more on demonizing the Maoist rebels resisting agency to the victims' voices. Thus, the text is engaged more on amplifying the anger and sense of revenge of perpetrators, and it deviates from giving agency to the victim's suffering voices, which are not given space in the text to claim their victimhood.

Before stepping into the text's narrative aspects, it is worth to narrate what kind of Literary genre it is and in which social context does the writer stand while creating literary genre. Maoists launched Peoples war in February 1996, which lasted until the signing of comprehensive peace accord on November 21, 2006. As there is an assumption, 'bad time produces the good literature' writer of contemporary period anticipated their conscience through pen. Nepali literary field colored with varieties of literary genres. Paudel has produced *Khalangama Hamala* as war memoir. Though, the narrative representation of book doesn't seem able to just the victim. As researcher had also witnessed the war fear situation and rumor and torture of insurgency and counter insurgency. Researcher claims that Paudel loses ethos of trauma writing. *Khalangama Hamala* is representative event of Peoples war held in 2059 -7- 28. Paudel had the first hand experience on the night of attack in Khalanga Bazaar. She faced the very numb state of conflict in her own site. "I had urinate in Copara among the people, fear wins shyness" (Paudel 57). When people are engulfed with extreme fear his/her ethos and logos break. How one can urinate among the people inside the room in addition as female it is very difficult to do so. But this happened because in fear one cannot maintain his all ethos. After cross fighting among PLA and RNA outside she had new massive death, destruction, screaming, and bombing around her own site. *Khalangama Hamala* is working through process of trauma. In the prologue of her memoir she supposes to

be very fair “I am a nurse. I do not understand the politics behind conflict. I just see the wounds that conflict leave.” (Paudel 1). But later her narrative representation does not focus to the action that happened instead she much focus to the agent of conflict in the name of being objective.

Khalangama Hamala is the most media-hyped literary genre constructed during the conflicting situation between the state and Maoist insurgents. The book is largely about the night of attack at Khalanga, the head quarter of Jumla on 14th November 2002. During the decade of conflict between Maoist rebels and the state, the nation was entirely converted in to a bloody battlefield. Many books were produced by picking up the issues from the Nepali Civil War. *Palpasa Caffé* authored by Narayan Wagle and *Khalangama Hamala* a memoir by Radha Paudel are two books that have won the nations most prominent literary award the Madan Puraskar provide by the nation. In a similar context, several other books were published on the theme of people’s war. The Maoist insurgency in Nepal, edited by Mahendra Lawoti and Anup K Pahari, revealed why and how violent Maoist insurgency grew in Nepal after the end of the cold War. Similarly, Chhapamar Ko Choro by Mahesh Bikram Sahi, Chhapamar Yuwati Ko Diary by Tara Rai , Karnali Blues by Buddhi Sagar and others.

Khalanagama Hamala illustrates the terrific hours during the day of attack. Kunda Dixit opines that Paudel is expressing the hardship of her own as well as people who live in Jumla. In addition, the most striking part of the book is the day of attack. Dixit writes, “She writes everything she had remembered about terrifying hours of the fierce Maoist attack. The CDO, DSP and dozens of army and police were killed. At the same time Paudel remembers bullets whizzed all around, hitting the ceiling and walls. The army helicopters hovered overhead.” She peeped out from the window to see a captured policeman being beheaded like a goat. It is a well-written book which portrays the realistic scenario of war situation. Beside this, Ihana Mainali, another reviewer, writes that *Khalangama Hamala* is “Deeply personal

memoir recalling the horrors of the Maoist attack. Although it sides more with the Nepali state. A more balanced perspective would have been better but overall, and he also reminds readers who want to remember the forgotten history of civil war and its consequence in Jumla. "Maoist attacks wrenched havoc drenching it in blood and banks are looted, burning everything into ashes. Accounts of war zone during and after the attack are harrowing. Banks are looted government offices are blasted and innocent people are killed. Lucky are they who wake up alive the next morning of Maoist attack. Radha who safely survives the attacks firmly consider this as her rebirth." (126 Paudel)

The text may or may not be an anti-war novel; this can be matter of further research. What we can claim is that objective representation of any war fear situation is inappropriate. As we observed in the reviews, the reviewers had revealed that Paudel hadn't presented balance thought among the warring groups. They are far from producing the texts from middle voice approach that can lead society into never ending violence.

The major objective of this research paper is to analyze the narrative representation of the event *Khalangama Hamala* and the ethical approach adopted by writer in her writing. Similarly, this dissertation focuses on how the middle-voice approach is appropriate to represent the post-war literature. In this dissertation, researcher deals with the narratives of Paudel to represent both perspectives. And Researcher also examine the problematic language in the texts. In order to back up my argument I draw incidents and ideas from other literary works written on the people's war which took place from 1996 to 2006.

Researcher might relate the story or events other than those of the period. In this context, my objective in relating the story would be to make his argument clearer, or highlight the issue Researcher has undertaken in this research. This dissertation is entirely based on the textual analysis from the perspective of cultural trauma.

Peoples war as cultural trauma

While scrutinizing the historical study of trauma process, it seems to be observed thoroughly from western societies to other parts of the world. “The term ‘trauma theory’ first appeared in Caruth’s unclaimed experience-1996.” (Redstone 14) it illustrates that trauma is not an old cultural science. The construction of Trauma is instigated by an idea of the self-interest of a collective identity. When a social group feels events are gravely endangering, suffering becomes a matter of collective concern, cultural worry social panic, gut wrenching fear, catastrophic anxiety. These forces are deeply implicated in social suffering and the strategic calculations and practical considerations surrounding traumatic events have significant effects in social organization. Socio cultural events are not themselves traumatic rather when they configure with tragic event than it becomes traumatic. Trauma process passes following strategic stages to get its fulfillment.

Trauma is not something that naturally exist rather it is something constructed by collective agents particularly those groups that often falls under the minority in society. Suffering events themselves are not traumatic, when collective agents configure human identity and individuals fell a crisis in their communal identity than event turns into traumatic. Carrier group are stakeholder of trauma process. According to Sociologist Max Weber "carrier group are collective agent of trauma process" (Trauma theory 16). When member of victimized fill they have been subjugated and their established identity is threatened, carrier group initiate the formation of a collective identity.

The Decade-long people's war was result of trauma of communal group who were discriminatory social cultural political and economical policy of nation. Social exclusion and inequalities were major cause of Peoples War. In choosing such trauma agent always certain kind of criteria is not determined. Sometime situation might be foreground but very often noble personal (religious, educated) individual are prioritize to carry the traumatic narrative.

People war conducted in Nepal was hanging of decade long trauma. In 20th decade both congress and communist parties were collaborating to settle the issue of poverty inequity and unjust happening throughout the nation nobody seems able to hold the agenda of suppressed people. According to Weber adds “carrier group have ideal and material interest similarly they should have discursive talent fundamentally carrier group are representative of elite class. Maoists also have fulfilled their ideological interest in support of oppressed speople.

According to Thompson, “cultural construction of trauma process begins with claim making.’ (Trauma Theory 16). Claim making is process of configuring narrative of events and crisis in social identity. As it is intentional process of social group, trauma agent acknowledges on social suffering, existential threaten to their group identity simultaneously they can identify perpetrator and nature of suffering and take it as cultural event and try to find cultural solution though there are histories of violence, war, genocide massacre of innocent might invite sometimes. According to Jeffery Alexander,

Claim making is empirical scientific concept[...] this emerging concept illuminates an emerging domain of social responsibility and social action, it is by constructing cultural trauma social group, national societies, and sometimes even entire society not only cognitively identify existence and source of human suffering but also may take some broad some significant responsibility for it. (Trauma Theory6)

If we explore the idea of Alexander, trauma construction is a social science. When, an individual of certain group realizes unnecessary discomfort in identical issues. These issues requires a cultural solution. Those issues should be represented by connecting their past, present and future for a permanent solution. *Khalangama Hamala* provides appropriate background for trauma study. Paudels memoir reflects objective picture of suppressed and oppressed history in Nepal. Her memoir is comprehensive work of literature to project poverty, economic inequality, socio cultural inequality, social fluidity and soon. Paudel

portrayed extreme poverty throughout the whole nation by projecting a vivid picture of Jumla.

“They did not have enough food to eat or clothes to wear. Education was farfetched story. {[...] when they used bar of soap their skin started bleed due to abrasion from the bar of soap!” Not being knowledge of hand washing in 21 first centuries is matter of lol similarly their empty stomach was firing with anger. At the same time some people were utilizing maximum facilities of nation.

Similarly, the nation was completely disrupted by all kind of corruption. Governments’ apparatus was not working efficiently. Paudel in her memoir states when she was appointed as health executive and went to Jumla for the first time she riches in the airport where, hundreds of people had been waiting for plane since 14 days. But she immediately registers her name for the plane. This heart touching incident project how corrupted people were handling the nations apparatus. Authoritarian had seduced the whole apparatus of nation and utilized these for their luxuries this event just as in the Nepali proverb "Nahunay lie yen hunelie chain." “Yes” or “Hus” was the plight of subaltern people.

Besides all these, representation of traumatic event has asignificant role in performing the traumatic event. Alexander states, “group representations can be seen as claims about the shape of social reality it causes, and the responsibilities for action such a cause imply.” (16) By observing the point presented by trauma theorist social representation of trauma refers to actual suffering of a certain group, as well as the legitimate demands of that group.

Creation of master narrative

Creation of a master narrative determines how smoothly trauma proceeds while creating master narrative, the carrier group should have minutely studied cultural classification and horrendous practices and suffering within society. Creation of trauma narrative circle among these questions “What this suffering is exactly? Who delivered it and

who was on the receiving end? ... How can agent be punished and victims compensated? How can social conditions are repaired to prevent such pain from happening again” Lacapra 78. The answers of questions are not objectively known but establish through a trauma process”. Successful trauma process justice to the victim similarly attributer takes responsibilities of suffering which is aim of trauma process. Such creation of trauma narrative passes through four steps: nature of pain, nature of victims, and relation of trauma victims with wider audience and attribution and responsibilities.

The nature of the pain basically deals with the question: what actually happened? To answer the question, we have to consider the context of Nepali civil war and socio-economic and cultural condition of Nepal during civil war. After the restoration of democracy in 1990, Multiparty democratic system restored. People who endured all kind of unjust is the Panchyat system. Poverty, all sort of socio-economic inequalities, gender discrimination and so on were believed to be the result of Panchayat system. But people couldn't feel comfortable even after implication of democratic system in Nepal because, winners take all majoritarian democracy. Dipes Ghimire, Asst. Professor of central department of sociology in his book *Reflection of Nepalese Society* writes “The state structure and political culture gave the little role to the opposition in governance, while the ruling party often abuse ruling machinery and resources to undermine and harass opposition parties” (Ghimire 147). After implication of democracy, democracy became dowry of certain people who have won the election, feudal elite and mainstream politician. Socially marginalized group Dalit, Janajati, Backwarded class, women etc. always subverted by the mainstream. Who were taking themselves as owner of democratic system?

The nature of the victim revolve around these questions- What groups of persons was afflicted by this traumatizing pain? Is it limited to a specific group or is the trauma shared with others? If so, are these groups also specific or is the victim “the people’ in general”? In

the second step of trauma narrative formation, in reference to people war, Dalit, Janajati, backward class, women etc. were victimized by mainstream social and political culture. Dalit and Janati whose population is almost 40 percent of total population were always excluded by mainstream. Dalit, who have contributed in GDP of nation by doing different artesian excluded from mainstream in the name of untouchable in addition they were deprived from land and obliged to live their life in mid-slave position. Similarly, Janajati were also suppressed and oppressed by mainstream culture. They were only used as voting bank. BP Koirala had said “confidence of Nepali congress is Janajati, revolution of 2007 was succeed with confidence of Janajati. If there is insufficient participation of Janajati, there is no mining of congress” (Janaandolan 92). Above statement obviously state that Dalit and Janajati are mobilized as only political interest of major political parties otherwise they were always marginalized. In case of female, female were bounded with patriarchal code and they were underprivileged from possession of property which increase dependency of female with male person. Similarly female fetus is murdered without appearing in the world which is pathetic. Back and fro of restoration of democracy, agenda of Dalit, Janajati and Female were appears in different period but they could not take appropriate direction alone. These all inspired subaltern sects to link in Maoist revolution. Those scattered voice became powerful weapon to fight against authoritarian government.

Audience and situation are another considerable step on constructing the cultural trauma. The term “audience” and “situation” are defined according to oxford dictionary, “the group of people who have gathered to watch or listen to something.” Similarly situation infers to “all the circumstances and things that are happening at a particular time and a particular place.” (Oxford dictionary 1439) after accomplishment of claim making, or representation of trauma, the collective agent of trauma construction should reach to the wider public. According to Alexander such a public might be putatively homogeneous, but

socially fragmented. In trauma process the performance of the trauma is projected to member of carrier group itself it means it will be convincing to the originating collectives but together with it possess challenge to convince fragmented audience. By understanding these obtrusion, collective agent should use highly convincing per formative language which could act upon the fragmented audience. By keeping the concept of audience and examining the Civil war of Nepal through the same lens, nearly events occurred accordingly.

“The moist abducted teachers school children and political opponents and took the abductees around their rallies and programs for initial exposure to the Maoist ideologies some of the abducted children became political cadres, PLA foot soldiers, porter and medical assistant.” (15 Lawoti).

This is how audience can be moved by ideology. Whatsoever, speaker should be very tactful in using referential use of language. Paudel recounts that once when she was wandering to a village to give preservative maternal training she encounters with Maoists organizing program and forced to participate in that program. Paudel states “they pressured me to speak as part of their program [...] then they kept me captive for four hours before releasing me.” (55 Paudel) Maoist seems using all the strategies for spreading their ideology. If we rhetorically compare series of events happening in the memoir it seems significantly implied the rhetorical tools. Maoist action was against popular village elites, money lenders and slack public school teachers. They confiscated the property of their opponent and distributed it to their supporter. Paudel states, “many people tried extortion in the name of Maoists. They asked for money or medicine.” Such behavioral projection from Maoist side implies they have implied loges, ethos, and pathos fully for persuasion of their ideology.

Besides these all these trauma agents proves themselves as tactful in capturing the sentiment of time. Enough factors are responsible to prepare fertile ground of civil war. When we draw the representative events from Paudels memoir in contemporary period poverty and

economic in equality paved the ground for growing people's war according to Paudel when Paudel left the airport, a group of children came towards me and said we have not eaten anything. Let us carry our luggage" (25 Paudel) Paudel further explains before she replied to them they started to pull at each other.

"What is your name? I asked, hesitatingly they told me their name. They were Dalits. Don't you go to school? As a response they moved their head to signal no. they were speaking Jumli dialect. I understood but could not speak in the same way so I asked my questions in Nepali and they replied in their own language. They had never been outside of Khalanga Bazaar. They were 12 years old or so but had never seen the inside of a school and had education.

Above lines signals great whole in the history of nation though, nation had shown enough improvement in each sector of human life during 2000. They were limited to the certain people who were near and dear of main stream culture.

Middle voice approach

In this chapter the researcher examines does the author of *Khalangama Hamala* turn out to be successful to pave the middle voice? As a noble character, does the author appear responsible and rational regarding social issues? Did she play a role in the ultimate settlement of the war? Doesn't she have the role to settle the war? As it is the aim of researcher to experiment trauma representation and emphasis on middle voice approach on post conflict literature, the researcher goes through various literary works produced in the aftermath of the people's revolution. Among them, works Written along the same line of style are *Chhapamar ko Chhoro*, a collection of short stories by Mahes Vikram Shah, *Conflict and War* (2007), translated and edited by Govinda Raj, *Elegy for Democracy* (2005), are a mixture of memoir, history and journals. Among fiction, *Palpasa café* (2005) by Narayan Wagle, *Travels through Nepal's conflict* (2008) is a collection of travel journals *Chhapamar*

Youbati ko Diary (2010) by Tara Rai, Karnali Blues (2010) a fiction by Buddhi Sagar, and others are books born out of complexities of Nepali conflicts. Among the books produced which books have maintained the ethics of trauma writing and which have not will be a matter another research study. As the researcher has mentioned in Politics in the representation of story, Paudel is adapting technique from realism movement of art and literature which was prominent towards the end of nineteenth and the beginning of the twenty century. Dominick Lacpra, the American historian, in his book *writing history and writing trauma* presents some ethical insights to present traumatic stories. He proposes two modules of writing history and writing trauma. Lacpra presents some limitation in the self-sufficient module of history writing, which seem applicable in writing of Paudel, he foreground the limitation as given below:

(1) a strict separation or binary opposition between subject and object; (2) a tendency to conflate objectivity with objectivism or the objectification of the other which is addressed only in the form of third-person referential statements, direct quotations, and summaries or paraphrases; (3) an identification of historical understanding with casual explanation or with the fullest possible contextualization of the other; (4) a denial of transference or the problem of implication of the observer in the object of observation.

Binary opposition is a system of language and thought by which two theoretical opposites are strictly defined and set off against one another. Technique of dividing a nationalities into different sects and favoring one group won't be a suitable prospective for trauma writing. Paudel marks, "whenever we heard gunshot bomb blasts from barracks, we felt the soldiers were safe and, while the soldiers were safe, we felt we were also safe." (Paudel 57) no war is mutual. Shoot of gun either from RNA or from PLA, it won't recognize nearest or farthest rather it only knew to ruin heart and settlement of people. If one goes through the narrative of

Rebel and Government sides, They were both involved in the war to create a prosperous and great nation. Both sides claimed as if they were warring for ultimate peace. Paudel in her memoir quotes,

Who is inside? They asked

“We are only staff member here” she said

Its cold outside. Do you have any warm clothes?

She pointing the towards three children sleeping on the floor and said, “Those kids are using some blankets, if you want I can give them to you”

After seeing the children, one of them said, “we are fighting for their future. We won’t take their blankets” (Paudel 93)

These narratives from the rebel side illustrate, they were struggling against all kind of discrimination and exploitation while dreaming of a better future of children. The nature of recent war is far more different from the World wars. It is the result of social oppression happening within a nation. Those who kill, kill their own compatriots. Nevertheless, the author of the Book is painting them as rebel fold and the national fold. The creation of such a binary in trauma presentation leads to the failure of the author “I wore day clothes when I went to bed at night because, if the Maoists came to kidnap me, I wouldn’t have time to change out my nightdress.”(Paudel 49) Such narrative representation of story does not lead to nowhere; instead, it hypes the conflict between both sides in future. If we go through the then narrative of the nation and the rebels, they both were struggling to establish peace prosperity, and equality.

Similarly, Kundan Dixit, in his review on the book *Khalangama Hamala* illustrates that she has lost all the immediate record she had noted in the form of daily diary writing about attack on *Khalangama Hamala* instead, she prepared this book by memorizing the events. Lacapra illustrates the excerpt from Hyden White, “we can never test our conclusion

by comparing the elected text with the past itself ... narrative substance do not refers to past” (43 Cultural Trauma). Here, white obviously opines as it is narrative of any event through the text is not possibilities rather narrator will guide by political or ideological factor. He further asserts that what we can present through the text is cause and effect of events. Since this is a practical stance in trauma presentation, it is better to perform right facts instead of true facts. The First World War and the second world they were global wars. Millions of soldier and civilians were deceased on the wars and resulted most of the county get freedom from international encroachment upon their nation. But now nature of the war is different. It is much focus on the internal affairs of a nation, in which rival are ethnic and religious groups attack to each other. Similarly, oppressed groups and authoritarian governments struggle to each other. Have eat and have not eat people that is because literary writers role literature aftermath the conflict has great importance in the management of conflict or in reconciliation. Being realistic in presentation does not bandage the wound of war, so the writer should focus in the lenses of Anker smith and white who focus in dialogic nature of language which leads to ultimate settlement of war by blurring the clear diction between perpetrator and victim.

Similarly, Roland Barthes, a prominent linguist in his famous essay *To Write and intransitive verb* claims narrative account doesn't consist only of factual statements and argument: The self or subjectivity is held to be constituted in the exercise of language. According to Barthes, narrativization depend on basically temporality and grammatical categories. We live in a time of course, when issues to do with representation are all the rage. For some, this stems from a postmodernist certainty ‘everything is just representation and that no judgments can be made about adequacy or inadequacy, accuracy or inaccuracy, truth or falsity. However, we cannot just dismiss the role of textual knowledge in a society. In similar context Kundan Dixit writes, In his book review published in the new paper named Nepal Times states, “She had lost her First notes and prepared her book by revising her memory”

This fact further emphasizes the writer for the politicize or to be subjective. On the other hand, trauma theorist claim, each event has virtue of suspension of truth. In that sense, the author can not be fully objective in her narrative. On the other hand, Barthes claims that the narrative the narrator presents is intertwined with preconceived knowledge of the author. In that sense Barthes propose the term “undecidability”. Any language has a double system of time, all narratives are unable to present a clear current position, and rather they project ambivalence.

Politics in representation

Working with the nature of traumatic memory, according to Caruth “traumatic history is no longer straight forwardly referential [...] rethinking of references is not aimed at eliminating history, but at resituating it in our understanding.” (2). Traumatic memory itself posses a nature of suspicion, which means references from memory are not sufficient to represent the event as it is. More than these traces of memory are reconfigure and newer version of conceptual image. Sigmund Freud’s history of Jews entitled “mosses and monotheism” has raised ongoing questions about it historical and political status because of seemingly fictionalization of Jews past.

Similarly, Daniel L. Schechter, enforces in the context of how our subjectivity forms, writes “we construct our subjectivity from fragments of experiences that changes over time” memoir or autobiography is a layer of memory; ‘self’ is created by a combination of different memories. It changes according to time. *Khalangama Hamal* is a memoir published in 2069 after six years late of comprehensive peace occurred in Nepal similarly Paudel stated, “I had lost my first notes and I produced it by remembering a few years later”. Both Caruth and Schechter signal the enough space to play in memory writing. So what researcher claim is, when old memories and the present self of writer mingle to each other, a newer version of memory can be gained after refiguring the old memories with a new context. Schechter adds,

temporality and spatiality have immense impact on memory. There is equal chance of modify the memory according to the political and ideological interest of writer. “Whenever we heard gunshot and bomb blasts from the barrack, we felt the soldiers were safe and, while the soldiers were safe, we were also safe” (Paudel 57) she looks as if she is entirely engulf with favourism and her ideological interest. No war is fair. No conflicting situation does justice to humanity. As we know bullet does not understand kinship neither it possess heart only it knows to break heart. Even it is from side of PLA or from side of RNA. War is always fearful, devastating and heartbreaking.

In the same way, her cultural and social environment does not allow her to stand on the ethical ground of a trauma writer. As there is an assumption that, to identify with the pains of victimhood, one should be the member of the victimized society. This statement seems applicable in the case of Paudel. She could not identify herself with racial subaltern. While dealing with the causes of the Nepali civil war. Racial discrimination and economic inequalities were remarkable cause of decade long civil war in Nepal. Entire nation was engulfed by poverty and socio economic deprivation. This issue also has scattered in her memoir. Issue of gender, racial subaltern and class are set up in her memoir.

As I left the airport a group of children came towards me. They said we have not eaten anything. Let us carry your luggage. Before I could even reply, they started to pull at bags. It looks absolutely pathetic. They had sores on their faces due to running nose. The dried mucus between their nose and looking likes moustache. They wore black woolen shawls, which were torn and full of holes. Their toes poked out from their broken shoes.(26)

Her representation of poor, lower cast children depicts social problem in terms of cast and social class. The image of Jumli people under poverty and racial discrimination, Group of children having age of getting education rushing to capture luggage and their Shoes project

pathetic circumstance of child labor and access of poor children in education. Similarly, full of holes in shawl depicts whole in the culture of mainstream or in ruling system of on nation. Toes poked out from their broken shoe can be premonition of fall of feudal ruling system. Though feudal were not concerned in forecast. Her portrayal of anecdote after she has encounter the boys in airport elucidates she is somehow concentrate on issues of marginalized and voice less though she couldn't fill energy to them. She does not raise moral question why Nepal is passing through such a desperate condition. What might be possible solution to finish conflicting situation? Rather she only limits herself in general sympathy towards them which shows her affinity with main stream culture. Nepal has accepted different ruling system after introduction of democracy in 2007 BS. But none of them aid living of people. Party less Panchyat ruling system and multiparty system after 1990 couldn't reduce the suffering of the marginalized section. Panchyat system is regarded as resistance of development of Nepal but after implication of multiparty system Nepal has got almost ten governments within a decade. This is supper failure of democratic system. Whatsoever, status of poor people is worsening and worsening, certain people who were abusing the power became more powerful than earlier. Certainly, there seem necessities of liberty to the nation from such a state of undesirability and people who felt themselves as suppressed from the nation stood in favors of rebelling party. This was essential to pull out nation from transitional period. According to Lawoti "Maoist raised issues with different governments in the early 1990s and called many strikes to attract the attention of government. The 40 points demand submitted to the Sher Bahadur Deuba. Alternative power is necessary Mahendra Lawati president of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan studies asserts,

The Cast Hill Hindu Hill elite monopolized the political economic and social and cultural power. Bahun ,Chhetri, Newar and Tarai high caste have better access to

material resources while as Dalit, indigenous nationalities, mid level Madhesi cast and Muslim are generally worse off.” (Lawoti 10).

Lawoti states, one can claim that major hindrance of Nepali society is feudalist base Hindu cultures which possess patriarchy and racial system. Social cultural and political and economical system of Nepal has alienated society into binary: Lower cast and upper cast, have eat and have not eat, landowner and landless, socially excluded and included from main stream culture. Always weaker sects became mid-slaves in Nepal. Low cast always suppressed and oppressed by high Hindu and hilly or mainstream. There is huge gap among the social and economical status of Nepal. In such a context Bishow Bhakta Dulal writes in his book *Nepa ma Barna Bewastha Ra Barga Sangharsa* “ having 21 % Dalits population of total population only posses 1% land. Among the 25 million landless farmers nearly 10 to 15 million farmers are Dalits. More than this 95 % of Dalits do not have cultivated land”. (Ahuty 89) One of the strong causes behind social exclusion, discrimination was possession of property. Within same territory some people were enjoying with abundance of balance food at the same time some people were victim of starvation and malnutrition. Dulal claims Still landowner have 44 % land real framer still have no access of land. Similarly gender issue is another terrific problem of Nepal. But Paudel projects somber ignorance on all these problems as she belongs to the legitimate mainstream culture in context of Nepal. “Paudel” her surname is always enlisted in head of dominator. She is regarded as representative of mainstream. As a mainstream to stand in favor of oppressor is her religious responsibility. Her essence was in sustaining Hinduism and discriminatory approach existing in it. In such a critical moment, she could not stay calm by doing nothing in such a crisis of her own clan. She seems as if she has felt crisis in her racial identity which enforce her to speak about her racial identity. Maoist voice against feudal appear here as newer version of traumatic event to Paudel, she engulfed with fear that she is going to loses her legacy upon the marginalized and

oppressed. She sophisticates with encroachment in her legacy. It is also unorganized traumatic sense. Her demonstration and antagonism in her representation toward Maoist opens windows for benefit of doubt. Feudalist especially desirous to use those marginalized and lower class as means of production and they intended to sustain their economic realities. Similarly, she was worried of breaking structure of domination and accepted hegemony by marginalized which is considered necessary to sustain mainstream community. In that sense Paudel roles seem not supportive towards Maoist rebel who were against feudalism, suppression and unjust.

In Narrative of Paudel, the Maoists rebels are in the forefront of her target of demonization. She writes “ I wore day clothes when I went to bed at night because if the Maoist came to kidnap me[...]women alone in her night dress might lead to other incident” (Paudel49) The very narrative aspects of finger-pointing and demonizing lead the Paudel to observe only one side of the conflict, which is, inflicting side. While storm of conflict growing on rural areas, village transformed in to almost battle field. Curfew, densely presence of Police force RNA and Maoist Militias covered peaceful sky of village covered by gloomy cloud of war. Both sides have messed the peaceful living of village. As there is saying war is as cruel as weapon used in the war. Both insurgents and royal army did not follow the ethics of war and understand real sentiment of people. Nation of Gautam Buddha was totally drawn into the bloody battlefield. “Where was it safe? The Maoist conflict had made the whole nation insecure. Should I have live nation?” (Paudel 67) what so ever Paudel narrative seems as if they were only Maoist insurgent who change the slogan of nation and peaceful nation of Buddha into fearful battlefield. In similar circumstance, Lawaoti writer of *the Maoist Insurgency in Nepal* writes,

During the initial counter insurgency activities in the Maoist heartland of mid-western hill district, the police burned house of Maoist suspect and villagers, looted cash and

other goods, raped women and arrested hundreds of people, and thrashed common people and Maoists sympathizer operation Romio and Kilo Sera is lunched which has been cited as very brutal and repressive actions that pushed the common people into the Maoist fold. (Lawoti 19)

Passivization of nationals fold and mainstream ruling class reveals antagonism of books toward rebel side. Maoists have bases in rural area. In that sense rural areas are target of RNA too. Obstacles are created from both side horror and terror of Romio and Kilo sera, operation conducted were not lesser than activities done by Maoist fold. Burning in house, rape, torture and threatening were very common to RNA during this operation. Although, Author who have moral stand to maintain reconciliation in the society is rushing to blame moist insurgent. She seems openly advocating in favor of government power which can be appropriate example of her parted mentality in her representation of trauma. Binary projection of conflicting group leads nowhere rather than another devastating war. Aim of both sides were creating peaceful and stable nation though her portrayal them as enemy of each other lead her far from the ethics of conflict literary writer. When, Maoist started insurgency, it is said by media that the number of insurgents were least. They initiated there revolution from few militia but when it came to the climax thousands of people were appointed as PLA.

Paudels narrative of so called “peoples war” is similar to portrayal of nations discourse. Her narrative is more like a ruling classes ‘political propaganda than being

Agency of victim, for the author evades the other side, the infliction caused by the ruling class and the state security forces among the underprivileged people. “The Maoist could raid every house and kidnap people, they could steal our jewellery and cash. They could even execute people”. (Paudel 81) Actually Paudel is blurring lines between vice of nation and herself. Her representation of Maoist seems as if only Maoist is demonstrating their abruptness. And nation was providing nothing than service them. She picked up narrative of

nation. Author, accepting one fold of conflicting party projects lacking of authors quality. We can mark foolishness in her understanding. Though, the public rhetoric of mainstream politician can be extraordinarily revealing for it often says more than is instead it was possible to puzzle out government strategies from the speeches at a time when they were just emerging. Similarly speeches themselves, as performances were part of pursuit of their strategies, whether bidding for consent at home or coalition building abroad. Putting political progress together finally analysis of the speeches and their changing setting provided a way of finding a critical perspective on contemporary events at a time of great confusion.

The author's lack of awareness of the middle-voice approach, the rebels and the security forces were presented as binary opposites. The security officers sound more insightful. As we have read the whole text she does not deny the fearful situation of war. She does not take a clear position This political problem cannot be resolved by fighting. No one win the war or finish the Maoists by killing of them neither can they win the war by killing Royal army. It is defeat of whole human race. La Capra writes, in any events, the use of middle voice that enacts identification of proximity and distance, empathy and irony with respect to different "object" of investigation and it need not be understood as resulting out all forms of objectivity and objectification.

An author should always stand on solid ground without fearing artistic failure. Writing true things about past is not a mark of artistry it is a very common feature of all writers rather, an eminent writer should focus on creating the right things which can fulfill the ethical responsibility of the writer. True facts and originality are required in history but a literary artist should always focus on dialogic nature of events and their representation. However, she blurs the line between history and fiction. Realistic representation of setting and well-defined character like "Arun" can arouse the sense of revenge even after settlement of trauma. Lawoti adds that the Maoist had three divisions and nine brigades. "Arun" was the

vice-commander of the mid- division. (Lawoti180) such a finger-pointing representation of trauma can lead society into never-ending violence. Yadab and Bastola have noted, the work of fiction can provoke violence rather than help in resolving it. Because a work of literature plays an important role in shaping public opinion, especially when a nation is experiencing an insurgency due to the conflicting ideologies of different social and political groups, and in terms of its dynamics of dealing with traumatic memories author always should avoid binary opposition and should provide middle voice approach which is ethos of literary in after math war.

Conclusion

This research investigates the cultural trauma processes represented in *Khalangama Hamala*, a war memoir by Radha Paudel that recounts the Maoist assault on Khalanga Bazaar in 2002. Employing *Jeffrey C. Alexander's* theory of cultural trauma, the study interrogates how collective suffering is narrated, how victimhood is socially constructed, and how literary texts contribute to shaping cultural memory in post-conflict contexts.

Although Paudel situates herself as an ostensibly objective health worker, her narrative predominantly reinforces a binary opposition between Maoist insurgents and state forces. Such a representational strategy, the thesis argues, not only marginalizes the lived experiences of victims but also perpetuates resentment and antagonism. By privileging one side and demonizing the other, the memoir falls short of fulfilling the ethical responsibility of trauma writing, which ideally should advance reconciliation and restorative justice.

Furthermore, the study contends that the text inadequately addresses the underlying structural inequities poverty, caste and gender discrimination, and socio-political exclusion that were central to the decade-long People's War (1996–2006). In contrast, a comparative analysis with other Nepali conflict narratives, including *Palpasa Café*, *Chhapamar Ko Chhoro*, and *Karnali Blues*, underscores the necessity of a “middle voice approach” that

resists polarized representation, cultivates empathy across divides, and fosters dialogic possibilities for peace.

In conclusion, while *Khalangama Hamala* remains a significant literary documentation of wartime suffering, its narrative mode reproduces divisions rather than mediating them. This thesis asserts that post-conflict literature must move beyond partisan accounts to function as an ethical and dialogic medium capable of facilitating collective healing and sustainable reconciliation.

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