

**Tribhuvan University**

**Discourse of Delusion: Representation of Nationalism in Panchayat Era  
School Textbooks**

**A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Central  
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The idea of exploring nationalism in Panchayat era school textbooks first struck me when I was browsing a library in Kathmandu for English textbooks of the Panchayat era for my second semester term paper. The original plan had been studying English textbooks of the time. When I shared the idea with Prof Dr. Abhi Subedi, perhaps the most respected scholar in Nepal, he suggested “How about nationalism?” Apparently, he had read a couple of my newspaper articles on Nepali nationalism. I realized that could be possible. I had made the vague outline of this dissertation right during this conversation with Dr. Subedi. Dr. Subedi, who also supervised and guided my work with encouraging remarks each time I approached him for help, is, thus, the first person to be acknowledged. My respect to him again. Dr. Sanjeev Uprety is another scholar behind this thesis. Whenever I met him in the social gatherings or elsewhere his first question would be “so did you finish your thesis?” This prodded me to speed up my work.

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## Abstract

This dissertation explores issue of Nepali nationalism through historical analysis critically examining its development all the way from Prithvinarayan Shah to Bhimsen Thapa to Junga Bahadur Rana to king Mahendra's eras. The historical continuity is built up to set the background to critique Panchayat nationalism as it takes recourse to history in defining and creating its own version of nationalism reusing, recreating, galvanizing and—also misrepresenting—omitting some aspects of history while retaining and promoting less threatening contents and facts from it. In a way, Panchayat nationalism relies on repetition and narrativization of history. The study takes into account language, religion, cult of the crown, politics and education and state policies that guide these elements during the Panchayat era. The argument here is that Nepali nationalism from Prithvinarayan Shah's unification drive to, by and large, the present day, is continuing to create the discourse of delusion by evoking 'hate thy neighbor love thy nation' attitude in the people in one way or the other. In the process, the discourse takes resort in evoking Hinduism, Nepali language and, during the Panchayat era, in institutionalizing the education policy through New Education System Plan of 1971, thus rendering the very idea of nationalism to be another form of state policies and state myths. During the Panchayat regime, in a drive to consolidate power, the state agencies projected grand narratives of nationalism. The study basically digs into school textbooks, besides touching on other Panchayat literature such as Panchayat constitution and sawais—which served as reliable means of disseminating nationalism across the nation—to analyze representation of nationalism of the Panchayat era.

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