

**Tribhuvan University**

**Representation of *Madhesh* Movement in Print Media: An Analytical Study of  
National Daily English Newspapers**

**A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of  
Arts in English**

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This is to certify that Mr. Dhananjay Shah has completed his thesis entitled "**Representation of *Madhesh* Movement in Print Media: An Analytical Study of National Daily English Newspapers**", under my supervision and guidance. He carried out his research from Mid-August 2009 to June 2010. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voice.

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## Abstract

This dissertation paper discusses the print media's coverage of *Madhesh* Movement (2007) in Nepal and how it might affect both public opinion and policymaking on the topic. The thesis argues that the representation of *Madheshi* and *Madhesh* Movement by the Nepali press has been largely anti-*Madheshi* and unanalytical in many instances. Not all reportage is negative, and newspaper coverage would appear to be improving over time but the overwhelming majority of the comprehensive collection of newspaper articles, editorials and letters to the editor surveyed for this research sound prejudiced about *Madheshi* and *Madhesh* Movement are extremely unanalytical in nature, uncritically reproducing problematic statistics and assumptions about genuine grievances of *Madheshi* living in majority in the *Terai*. Although it is impossible to draw direct casual links between this kind of anti-*Madheshi* media coverage and State's discriminatory attitude to look at *Madheshi*, the dissertation paper, in a nutshell, does argue that the two are at least mutually reinforcing and that the print media has a responsibility to be more balanced and factual in its reporting on this issue.

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## I. *Madheshi* and Media

### ***Madheshi* as Subaltern Subject**

The federal, democratic and republic Nepal is known for multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-geographical diversity. The Nepali history has witnessed regimes of democracy over the time. Administratively, it is divided into 14 zones and 75 districts and geographically and culturally divided into three different regions as *Himal*, *Pahad* and *Terai* or *Bhot*, *Parbat* and *Madhesh* or *Pradesh*, *Hyundesh* and *Madhyades* or *Madhesh*.

At the moment, widely controversial topics are *Terai* and *Madhesh* because these terms vary interpretations. *Terai* is a geographical name whereas *Madhesh* is a cultural name. Encyclopedia Britannica also refers to *terai* as moist-land. Some authors put forward their view *Terai* is derived from Tar, it means low land. The word *Madhesh* is derived from *Sanskrit* word *Madhyadesh* which extends from the foothill of the Himalayan region in the North to the *Vindhyachal* mountain in the south in central *India*. *Madhesh* approximately 25 to 35 km. wide broad belt of alluvial and fertile land stretching from *Mahakali* to *Mechi* river between *India* boarder in the south and *Siwalik/Chure* range in the north. *Madhyadesh* or *Matsyadesh* whose capital is said to be in *Biratnagar* With its historic values and the word '*Madhesh*' has acquired cultural aspect onto it that today represents different aspects of life style of the people living specifically in the region whether it is *Madheshi Haat* or color or cuisines or *Madheshi 'Boli Byabhar'* the work has integrated different cultural aspects into it, and this stands with a cultural connotation.

C.K. Lal a political analyst, asserted the term *Madhesh* refers to the cultural space where the *Madheshis* reside. They preferred the term *Madheshi* to *Teraibasi*

because the word *Terai* carried the connotation of internal colonization (Social Science Baha, 2005). *Madheshi* are residents of *Madhesh* sharing the correlated regional, cultural and lingual space of *Madhesh*. There were many kingdoms before the unification of *Nepal*; *Mithila*, *Kaushal* or *Tirhut*. *Awadha* and so on (Rakesh, 2007) divides *Madheshi* community in to four groups. Indigenous, *Janjati* ethnic people living in *Madhesh* for generation, people belonging to traditional Hindu caste hierarchy, businessmen of Indian origin (*Marwari*, *Shikh* etc.) and *Muslims*. The *Anglo-Nepal* war between 1814 and 1816 and the resulting treaty of Sugauli reduced the *Madhesh* region around the 12<sup>th</sup> century (ibid). There was eastward migration of people speaking a Sarskrit-based language which later on developed as Nepali language. Due to the culture, tradition, practices and languages of *Madhesh* to be similar to India, they are deprived of resources and powers (ibid).

Gaige (1975) defined *Terai* is the one important region of Nepal that is geographically and culturally distinct from the hills, for this reason there is problems of national integration Despite the *Madhesh* or *Tera* contributes nearly two thirds in national GDP and support nearly half of the total population, it has no any space for national identity (Dahal, 1999) . This condition makes them to search the identity in their own country (Nepal). For instance many observers have noted that the politics and hidden attitudes of ruler towards *Terai/Madhesh* were segregative in nature than encouraging of national unity. *Teraior Madhesh* contains 21 districts. Among them 19 are outer *Terai/ Madhesh'* and 3 are 'Inner *Terai/Madhesh'* "*Bhitri Madhesh* or Inner *Terai"* *Sindhuli*, *Makwanpur* and *Dang* districts. The Bahiri *Madhesh/Tera*is the plain region touching Indo-Nepal boarder: *Jhapa*, *Morang*, *Sunasri*, *Saptari*, *Siraha*, *Dhanusha*, *Mahottary*, *Sarlahi*, *Rautahat*, *Bara*, *Parsa*, *Chitawan*, *Nawalparasi*, *Rupandehi*, *Kapilbastu*, *Banke*, *Bardiya*, *Kailali* and *Kanchanpur* (ibid).



The Mithila or Videha or Tirhut kingdom existed in ancient times with its capital at Janakpur claiming to be the birth place of Sita. Similarly, there existed Lumbini, birth place of the Buddha with kingship at Kapilbastu under the Shakyas and Debdaha under the 'Koliyas' Janakpur would emerge to prove its greatness as religious and cultural center, and its Maithil people would find a role in the governing of Nepal. Kathmandu was twice under the rule of kings from Mithila and during this time both the Newari language and Newar culture came under Maithil influence (Jha, 53). In 1097 *Nanyadeva*, whose capital was *Simraungarh*, dethroned the two princes who ruled *Kathmandu*, *Lalitpur* and *Bhaktapur* (ibid). The last king of *nanyadevi's* dynasty, *Harisimhadeva*, fled to the hill after *Mithila* was attacked by a Muslim conqueror in 1326. Sthiti Malla married to *Harisimhadeva's* grand daughter and later Malla kings in the Kathmandu valley claimed direct descent from a dynasty founded by *Harisimhadeva* (Slussee, 57,66) *Madhesh* has own its history proved the existence of *Madhesh/Terai* and its culture.

In the context of Nepal, some remarkable evidences and Movements have occurred and they brought changes in system. Such as 'Kotparva' (1903), fight against Rana regime (1998-1993) and (2003), declaration of democracy (2007), Satyagrah Movement (2011), Bhadra Abagya Movement (2014), armed Movement by Nepali congress (2018) and (2029), first Jana Andolan (2046), Maoist insurgency/Maoist people war (2052) and second people Movement/Dosro Jana Andolan. Though, all of the above Movements and evidences could not addressed the backwarded communities/groups and *Madheshi* as their expectation. They were discriminated by the since 240 years. This became virtually a breeding ground of *Madhesh* Movement. That's why *Madheshi* raised their voice through this Movement (ibid).

Nepal was a monolithic, autocratic, authoritarian, centralized and closed state for centuries (Thapa & et al., 2003). The state governing system in the entire history of modern Nepal was orchestrated by cajoling, threat of suppression and use of coercive power by the state (Hutt & et al., 2004). Such characteristics of the state consequently excluded a vast majority of Nepalese people from the nation building process (Raj, 2004). *Madhesh* Movement was not only the cause of the failure of the 12 years of democracy in Nepal. Rather it was the manifestation of the failure of 240 years of different governance system of modern Nepal. Plains People (*Madheshi*) were producing about 59-65% of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP) agricultural product 60% and about 76% of the government's revenue (Rakesh, 48). Though, they were treated as a slave or second rate citizen or non-Nepali, behalf of *Madheshi* (ibid). They had to use passport to go Kathmandu until 1956 (Gage, 52).

The *Madheshi* were culturally, socially, politically, economically, racially and geographically discriminated and dominated by the state (ibid). Many Nepalese government officials intensely migrated the *Hill* people into the *Terai/Madhesh* as they grew in numbers and gradually changed the cultural equation, bringing about a Nepalization of the region. This assumption resulted that hill settlers were more prominent than *Madheshi* by the help of government officers (ibid). Citizenship legislation framed by representatives of the nationally dominant hill culture during the 1960s (ibid). Hill people were given preference over plains people settled in the *Terai*, so that the plains people were relegated to a second class status (ibid). *Terai* was understandable as a colony that an integrated part before 1951 (ibid). They are culturally different from Kathmandu so that they considered as quasi-foreigner (ibid, 88). The nationality determined on the basis of linguistic, dress up and facial appearance, which are also way of discrimination.

During 1951 'The Nepal *Terai*' Congress" was established under the leadership of Kulananda Jha later Vedananda Jha with the objectives; establishment of an autonomous *Teraistate*, recognition of Hindi as a state language and adequate employment of *Teraipeople* in the Nepal civil service. 'The Tarai Liberation' Front was established to press the demand of the plain people living in Nepal by Ramgi Mishra, Raghunath Rai, Raghunath Thakur, Satyadev Mani Tripathi, Raghunath Gupta, Baldev Das Yadev and so on, in the period of 1960s (ibid). They were more revolutionary *Madheshi* leaders, but their organization could not sustain. Later, 'Nepal Sadabhawana Parishad' formed under Gajendra Narayan Singh to raise *Madheshi* issues in 1883 and registered as Parti to contest elections but demands constituent assembly in 1994. This party also could not get success as they wanted due to party function and weak action. After that, *Madheshi* Jana Adhikar Forum (MPRF) established as cross party intellectual platform in 1997 (ibid). And protesting against the interim constitution in January 2007 flared up *Madhesh* Movement

The *Madhesh Movement* (2007) further established two regional political parties *Madheshi* people Rights Forum (MJF) and *Terai/Madhesh* Democratic Party (TMDP) under the leadership of Upendra Yadav and Mahantha Thakur respectively in 2007. In the second phase MPRF (MJF), Sadbhawana Party (Rajendra Mahato) and *Terai-Madhesh* Democratic Party made combined *Madheshi* Forum' and declared second *Madhesh* Movement in February 2008 with six point demand (Crisis Group, 60). Joshi (2009) summarizes the pressing demands of combined *Madheshi* forum in the following categories: restructuring of state on the basis of language and culture. Federal and republican type of government, right of self determination and proportional representation in every sector, proportional voting system, constituent Assembly, *Madhesh* as an autonomous region and determine new election

constituencies based on population and proportionate participation of all groups/community (ibid).

After 22 points and 8 points agreement (treaty), *Madhesh* Movement halted in February 2007 and March 2008 respectively. But some armed groups (about 8 dozens) of *Madhesh* or *Terai* claimed themselves as *Madhesh* well-wisher and have been conducting many violent activities against government, officers and businessman (Daily papers 2060s). Except *Independent Terai* or *Madhesh*, most of demands of armed groups and *Madheshi* political parties have common (Ibid). Numerous sources, newspapers, magazine, book, interview, speeches regarding the Movement has focused on the pros and cons of it.

### **Mass Media and Representation**

It is true to say that the media is an extremely important part of our everyday life and as an industry has been critical in the dissemination of information to the mass population. However the influence that the media holds over society has not always been used to society's benefit, particularly in relation to discrimination, where the media has continued to add to the discrimination of *Madheshi* people. The media's contribution to *Madheshi* people's discrimination will be discussed through the following areas:

- ) The media reinforcement of discrimination in its reporting.
- ) The media's creation and underpinning use of *Madheshi* stereotypes.
- ) The role of media influences: media organizations and their employees, political agendas, the intended audience and current societal trends.
- ) The use of images, language and terminology related to *Madheshi* discrimination.
- ) The under-representation of *Madheshi* people in the media.

) The effect of media on *Madheshi* people.

However for long back, there has been much call from the *Madheshi* community for society to recognise *Madheshi* people as equals to non-*Madheshi* people, and to take responsibility for society's contribution to creating disabling environments. The call for adopting the social model of discrimination has seen vast improvements to establishing the human rights of *Madheshi* people and much has been set in legislation.

However it appears that the media has been slow to take on the changes and all too frequently do not practice what they preach.

Previous constitutions guaranteed freedom of expression as a basic right, but in practice this right was severely curtailed. Prepublication censorship, cancellation of registration for publication, and other restrictive regulation severely handicapped the freedom of the press and journalists operated under constant threats of harassment and imprisonment. As an official authorized website [www.countrystudies.com](http://www.countrystudies.com) reports that in 1963 A.D. the king decreed that all newspapers were required to obtain official clearance for reports of political activities. In 1962 A.D. a government controlled news agency, Rastriya Snmachar Samity was established to collect and distribute news about and within country. The Samity monopoly continued until the success of predemocracy Movement. In addition, provision of the "Freedom of Speech Publication Act of 1980 A.D." limited the publication of materials that might undermine the interest of sovereignty of the nation; contravene principles that underlie the constitution, or encourage, abet, or propagate purity politics. This act was repealed in July, 1990A.D.

The constitution of 1990A.D. guaranteed the freedom of the press as a fundamental right. It also prohibits the censoring of news items, articles, or any other

reading materials. In addition, the registration of newspapers or periodical could not be cancelled for publishing offensive news articles or reading materials. The operation of a free press was circumscribed, however, by vague restriction against undermining the sovereignty and integrity of Nepal, disturbing the harmonious relations among the people of different castes, classes or communities, violating decent public behaviour morality, instigating crimes, and or committing sedition or contempt of court. During the 1980s, several journalists were incarcerated and held without trial under the "Public Security Act and Treason Act".

The Nepalese press, was supportive of the pro-democracy Movement, when the government repressed the Movement, the Central Committee of Nepal Journalists Association, headed by Gobinda Biyogi, issued a statement that declared all censorship, banning of newspapers, and arrests of journalists as illegal, unconstitutional, and undemocratic. Nepal journalists Association reported that between the months of January to April 1990, forty journalists were arrested for comment criticizing the government.

The Political changes of April 1990, freedom of the press has come into question only once, in November 1990, when authorities changes two reporters with slandering the Royal family in print, which was dismissed in Dec. when Nepal Journalists Association's protested. As mid of 1991, there were no reports of the seizing or banning of foreign publication to have carried articles unfavourable to the government or the monarchy.

www.nevvs.com informs that in 1991 there were approximately 400 Nepalese newspapers, journals, including national dailies; however, only 125,000 copies were circulated. Two English national dailies "The Rising Nepal" and "Commander" were published in Kathmandu, but circulating newspapers

however were published in Nepali including "Gorkhapatra", "Samichhya", "Matribhumi", "Rastra Pukar", "Daily News", "Samaya" and "Janadool" and numbers of ethnic language newspapers were also published. The dailies "Gorkhapatra" and *The Rising Nepal* are government owned newspapers. "Nepal Rajpatra", the principal publication since 1951 contained law decrees, proclamation and royal order was available in both Nepali and English.

Electronic Media consisted of Radio and Television program are controlled by the government. Only Government owned electronic media were available before 1990 A.D. After Restoration of democracy 1990, there emerged hundreds of FM Radios, dozens of Television channels and thousands of Newspapers around Nepal.

The present dissertation will be divided into four chapters. Besides introducing *Madhesh* Movement and media in the first chapter, it will also deal with subaltern studies in the second as methodology and in the same way the textual analysis will further clarify the statement of problem and lastly it will be concluded.

## **II. Subaltern Subject and Representation**

### **Subalternity Vs Historiography**

The Subaltern, a discourse has been used to characterize the colonial subject by the European with subordinate identity of the Subaltern that has been constructed by (the European discourse and internalized by colonial peoples. The Subaltern has been writing in a European language not to serve them but to resist their language and consolidate their own identities. The term 'Subaltern' is etymologically derived from the Latin terms 'sub' and 'alter' which respectively mean 'under' and 'other'. The term subaltern refers to those who are deprived of the opportunities and access in each and every aspect of the nation.

As the elite historiography is regarded as official history sidelining the repressed or people's history, they only valorized their own cultures, mores, religion, castes, at the expense of the culture, religion, beliefs, and castes of the marginalized. In this regard, the issues of the marginalized have always been neglected, they are not incorporated in the crucial national policies and programmes, and hence their voices are unheard. Since their voices are not included in the mainstream historiography and / or literature, the subaltern writers intend to identify Subalternity as an autonomous domain. They want to write their own historiography which can confirm their representation. In this regard, Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci views "the history of the subaltern is necessarily fragmented and episodic..." (357-358).

The origin of the term 'Subaltern' goes back to the medieval age which was applied to vassals and peasants, however, by eighteenth century; it came to denote inferior rank in military suggesting peasant origin. In nineteenth century, the historians and writers commenced writing about military campaign from the subaltern



point of view. Later on Antonio Gramsci adopted it to designate those groups in the society who are subject to the hegemonic exploitation of the rulers.

However, it had received an inspiring impetus in 1982 in India with the wake of Ranajit Guha in the arena of writing historiography and literature of the marginalized people. A distinct type of Subaltern Studies group emerged who tried their best to establish 'Subalternity' as an autonomous body with their own voice. From 1982 onwards, the concept and / or scope of the subalternity has broadened in such a way that it started to entail all who are deprived of basic rights and privileges because of their class, caste, age, gender, and office or in any other way. The histories, politics, economics, sociology, culture of the subaltern have appeared explicitly and directly which pave the way for the awareness of those marginalized. The people aimed at examining the general attribute of subordination of South Asian people in terms of class, caste, age, gender etc. They began to question and many a time undermine the subaltern representation prevalent that time and scenario. The elitist historiography did not incorporate and acknowledge the contribution made by subaltern in the betterment of the nation. In this regard, Guha comments that the elitist historiography fails to "acknowledge or interpret the contribution made by people own their own, i.e., independently of the elite" (SSI, 03). From this point it can be understood that the Subaltern history has aimed at incorporating the local agenda and the cultural specificity which have been contributing for the betterment of the nation.

In course of time, Subaltern Studies emerged as a theory of change in the changed politico-academic scenario, especially, because of the influence of post modernism and post structuralism. On the other hand, cultural studies were getting proximate to other disciplines and studies. In this backdrop, Subaltern Studies started to include the writing of the cultural theories like Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and

Bernard S. Cohn who brought cultural perspective in Subaltern Studies. In her seminal essay "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography" (Subaltern Studies IV, 1986), Spivak gave a linguistic as well as cultural mode to subaltern studies. She says:

The possibility of action lies in the dynamics of the disruption of Ibis object, the breaking and relinking of the chain. This line of argument does not set consciousness against the social, but sees it as if self also constituted as and on a semiotic chain. (332)

It clarifies that; subaltern studies in its later phase, broke the existing concept and restructured itself as interdisciplinary discourse by redrawing different disciplines in a chain.

Later on, the writers like Susie Tharu and Amitav Ghosh followed her strengthening the feminist issues raised by Spivak. Subaltern Studies was, then, changing rapidly with unprecedented momentum, however, socialist communist and Marxist systems were deteriorating throughout the world and the academic world was moving towards Post-Marxist Studies. In such a context, subaltern studies remained the only domain which could provide a platform to the third world voices, so it remained as the beacon of hope for the marginalized.

Now, the subaltern studies is moving ahead with remarkable momentum by assimilating ideas from diverse discipline history, literature, anthropology, culture, sociology and so on. It has become a new way of writing historiography of the marginalized people. Like other post structuralism and post colonialism, it is very crucial to those intellectuals who oppose the totalitarian concepts and meta-narratives like modernity, enlightenment as such.

Literally, Subaltern mentality refers to the attitude and feeling of thinking somebody else as submissive, dependent, uneducated, inferior, other etc who are always subject to be subjugated. Such kind of mentality works highly not only in the Europeans and the elites but also in the subaltern themselves. The oppressors are of the opinion that they know everything concerning administration, politics, economics, etc, however, they show the lack of knowledge of the subaltern in these domains. So they are always desirous to rule over the subaltern. On the contrary even the subaltern think themselves as inferior, in terms of politics, economics, administration, culture etc. and hence are ready to be submissive. In this case, Gautam Dhaclra clarifies the concept of subaltern mentality in this way: "it is well known that defiance is not the only characteristic of the behavior of the subaltern classes. Submissiveness to authority in one context is as frequent as defiance in another. It is the two elements that together constitute the Subaltern mentality" (54). From the above mentioned lines, it is clear that subaltern mentality refers not only to the mentality of the defense but also to the mentality of Submissiveness. The poor and the oppressed have time and again, and in different histories made voluntary sacrifices in favour of the rich and the dominant.

The co-existence of the oppressors and the oppressed is characterized by the idioms of domination, subordination and revolt which, are inextricably linked together. That's why subordination and / or domination is a never ending phenomenon/ process. And this process is marked by struggle and resistance which ultimately creates the tension. In this hierarchical community, the dominant himself/ herself will be dominated by another dominant. In this remark, Bhadra exemplifies in the poem 'Kantanama' that in hierarchical community, "one's superiors also had their superiors, and one could always appeal to or in the name of-ihe higher authority" (88).

Thus, it can be argued that subaltern mentality is the mentality of hierarchy which exists not only between the two levels- the elite and the subaltern, but also within the level itself.

### **Subaltern (Misrepresentation)**

Representation simply refers to the act of presenting somebody or something in a particular way. However, in its broadest sense 'representations' refer to the verbal formations which are the ideological products or cultural constructs which are created by the powerful person to circulate their power in the different strata of the society. New historicists are of the opinion that these cultural and ideological representations mainly serve to reproduce, confirm and propagate the power-structures of domination and subordination in a particular society. The person who is in power defines a thing, object or any issue in a particular way to produce the truth about that thing. The truth produced as such is circulated in different ('onus to (lie people and the one who knows that truth is said to have possessed the power, so she attempts to represent others, But the truth produced as such cannot become the objective truth because that is made/ constructed by the person who is in power and that person creates the truth for his own convenience which is subjective. There can be the traces of partiality and in consequence, the representation turns into misrepresentation. In this regard, the essayist Louis Montrose states, "representation bears traces of the professor's values, beliefs and experiences ~ his or her socially constructed subjectivity - and also that it actively - if not always consciously and rarely consistently- instantiates those values, beliefs and experiences" (396). So, it can be said that representation is nothing but attributing some dispositions which cater the powerful to impose power on his own way.

As for the concern of the representation of the *Subaltern*, it is explicit that they cannot speak themselves because of their inaccessibility to the national policies and programs. Subaltern groups are subaltern not only because of the exploited position that they occupy as the bearers of political and economic exploitation but also because they lack language or the discourse to make themselves heard. Spivak, in this reference, opines that subaltern groups can not represent themselves. They cannot speak within the web of historical and linguistic context within which they find themselves. Nations and civil communities have their own forms of permitted speech and codes of expression but the subaltern are devoid of their own permitted speech and codes. Their voices can find expression only by mastering the basic codes of those socially approved speech conventions. They have to adopt others language where they cannot find their voices expressed. To express their voices; to make their solid identity, they have to use their own language, but their own language is not sanctioned by the society. As a result, they are compelled to follow the language of the elite.

If the subalterns want their language to have existence, they have to satisfy the demands of these civil and linguistic codes of the socially approved language. In course of satisfying these demands the subaltern almost loses its originality and becomes paralyzed in the end. In such a circumstance, how can we guarantee the true representation of the Subaltern even in the subaltern language? Such a representation is not representation but a misrepresentation.

Subaltern Studies entered into the realm of literature after Spivak rendered the linguistic as well as literary mode. She, in her seminal article "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography", announces that subaltern studies is not much concerned with change but with the representation of consciousness or culture of the

subaltern classes. She is of the argument that the Subaltern can not manifest themselves in their own language, for their language is not sanctioned by the society. They have to take recourse to the socially sanctioned language while writing anything, to be specific, literature. The literature as such can not represent them truly. Nevertheless, the subaltern did not stop writing the literature, rather they, like the deconstructionists; aim at dismantling the binary oppositions like elite/ subaltern; superior / inferior; one / other, etc. This project is rather a positive one as it aspires to investigate, discover and establish a subaltern or peasant consciousness.

Even though the Subaltern has their own language, it is not approved by the society, so they have to fake resource to the national language. Since they cannot use their own language, they are not able to write their own history with true representation, rather they are represented. They are subject to the activity of the elite groups even whom they raise the voice against, the elite group. As they are subject to the means by which they can control their representation. They even have less access to social and cultural institutions. They have the subordinate identity in such societies and to get rid of that identity, they have to take the help of the intellectuals. Here, Gramsci is concerned with "the intellectual. The role in the subaltern's cultural and political Movement is hegemony" (78). Due to the lack of the means and strategies to approach the hegemony, they have to take the help of intellectuals to proceed ahead. To achieve the independence and confirm the solid identity, they should be turned into the revolutionary figures with the help of the intellectuals. Those intellectuals should revolutionize the subaltern and mobilize them.

Guha, further argues "the history of the subaltern is an autonomous domain, for it neither originated from elite politics, nor did its existence depend on the later" (4). The subaltern historiography was proceeding ahead on its own way though there

was direct impact of colonialism. So it was as old as colonialism was. The bourgeois elitist historiography, Guha claims, fails to "acknowledge or interpret the contribution made by people on their own, i.e., independently of the elite" (3). It means that the elitist history ignores the contributions made by the subaltern people. Here it is seen that elitist history has adopted the legacies of colonialism. The national historiography fails to speak on behalf of the subaltern people. Their contribution, in the anti imperialist Movement, to make the country independent of the elite command and suppression is relegated by the elite. To Ignore the thousand year long Indian history Is definitely an act of colonial arrogance. The bourgeois nationalism inherited the same colonial legacy in post- independent India. It commenced to represent all people in a way as if it had got the consent from them. Just like colonialism, bourgeois nationalism confiscates the basic rights coercively rather than making the consent. Such kind of representation can not be considered as the true representation. So it is explicitly clear that the subaltern have been misrepresented a long time which is still continuous. Despite these all hindrances, Subaltern Studies has brought about the remarkable awareness/ consciousness in the subaltern in all modes of life. They are being emancipated day by day.

### **Subaltern in Mass Media**

Mass media include all forms of information communicated to large groups of people with/ from the use of handmade sign to an international news network. There is no hard and fast rule for the number of the audience in the mass communication and there are also no constraints on the type of information being presented. The information can be simply a ear advertisements and sometimes it can be of international significance like U.N. resolution. So that it's coverage ranges from trivial local news or events, to the crucial global issue.

Mass Media include electronic, print and internet media that are used to convey or send message to the mass. Mass Media helps to disseminate the news to the mass with the use of those media. Print media the oldest form of mass communication, which developed with the invention of the printing press, contributed much for the education of the people. This print media also preserve the treasure of knowledge. The print media includes the following media: books, manuals, newspapers, magazines, periodicals, brochures and prospectuses, pamphlets, posters, banners, signboards, caption writing, etc. The next is electronic media which includes radio, television, and cinema. The term electronic refers to things or results produced or operated by a flow of electrons. Radio is an old electronic medium whereas television supported by computer network is known as 'new media'. Television is a more recent innovation. Both these media use open air-waves. In the same way, the movies, e-mail and internet occupy an important place in our culture. The attention of new media is mainly on the collective ensembles of activities that fall under the heading 'Internet' including online news, advertising, and the World Wide Web and certain community-forming potentials. Private e-mail, game-playing and many other more or less private services are less concerned or almost not concerned here.

It is widely approved that media is the fourth major organ of the country which is supposed to present social, political, economic, cultural, racial, ethnic issues without any partiality. However, the premises on which it was founded have been violated by the journalists, reporters and or the media persons. It is still prevalent that the marginalized groups do not hold the 'power over representation' and it is also the fact that representations of those groups are both (lowed and few in numbers. Slowly and gradually, the issues of the Subaltern have occupied the space in the media; however, they could not thrive as they



ought to have been. The media included only the activities, programs conducted by different organizations; they could not explore the researchable issues of the Subaltern which were buried deep beneath the surface. The media hardly incorporate the subaltern culture, their real life world and their problems in the local level. It can be argued that the writings concerning with the uplifting of the subaltern have not been published by the media. It has become so because the advocates of the Subaltern issues are more non- subaltern than the Subaltern themselves, Due to this situation, it is assumed that the problems of the Subaltern have not been illustrated clearly. To spread the awareness and bring them into the forth, incorporation of the subaltern is inevitable. In this regard, Spivak is of the opinion that the Subaltern makes an attempt at self- representation, perhaps a representation that falls outside the 'lines laid down by the official institutional structures of representation" (306) yet, this act of representation is not heard. It is not recognized by the listener, perhaps because it does not fit in with what is expected of the representation. Therefore, representation by Subaltern individuals seems nearly impossible. Despite the fact that Spivak's formulation is quite accurate, there must still be an effort to challenge status-quo representation. So the work of the minority writers, artists are nowadays getting space in the media.

### **Politico-Cultural in the Media and State Ideology**

Mass media inculcate all forms of the means of communication which impart the current information to the lower one. It not only imparts the current information but also gives the different sorts of knowledge of various domains like public awareness, female empowerment, cultural heritage, etc. It can be argued mass media is one of the significant genres of knowledge like philosophy, literature, art, etc which plays seminal role to shape our intuition. The media which shape our intuition is in

the direct inspection of the government and / or the state and the government as such has implemented its own beliefs, codes of conduct which are supposed to be adhered by these media. While acknowledging these sets of belief and rules, codes of conduct, sometimes the media have to twist the reality and impart the knowledge or truth about something in favor of the state ideology.

In addition to the influence of the State ideology on media, sometimes the media themselves are used to writing to confirm their identity as superior in comparison to the Subaltern. Subaltern are hardly represented in the media. Even if they are represented, they will be misrepresented because almost all media are in the access of the elites. Those elite cannot tolerate the uplifting of the Subaltern in any aspect of life. In this way, (be Subaltern arc doubly subjugated and misrepresented in the media. So, many analysts have argued that the media cannot simply reflect as it occurs but most inevitably represent events and ideas in particulars ways. This is because media, like other texts, is a cultural construct that produces the version of any reality. Therefore, news is manufactured according to the rituals and routines of media not according to the true spirit of the events happened.

Thus, the news in media is developed from complex process of construction and reconstruction. The media analysis is tend to argue that in support with (be political and the legal constraints, media provides the receivers/ mass with the supposed truths. Hut media construct a particular version of truth where the truth is shaped by a wider context. The state explicitly controls media output is able to disseminate what is in fact, a propaganda. Critics like Herman and Chomsky argue that the governing parties are able, through structure of media reporting, to ensure that certain view prevail, "the powerful are able to fix the premises of discourse to decide

what the general populace is allowed to see, hear and think about, and to 'manage' public opinion by regular propaganda campaigns" (59).

Media, thus, becomes a means for (the ruling group to control ideas in society. Media collect, select, present and constitute dominant ideology and serves ruling political interest and the use of language favoring the government and employer. Because of the long-term exposure to the state regulation, the news personnel start to censor themselves in agenda setting.

In the process of making agenda, the media personnel set them in choice and ordering of items by privileging one voice at the cost of another. Media have become dependent on the agenda set by the agencies such as government or concerned authority. It seems natural by the selection, construction and presentation of news veils efforts to promulgate a dominant ideology. So media coverage might set the agenda concentrating merely on the events rather than its political origin. The result is seen as the perpetuation of the agenda sympathetic towards the ruling group.

News coverage of Subaltern groups are over or under represented in media, compared to their occurrence in population, can provide inside into the way dominant ideologies and values are reflected and reinforced by mainstream media. *The Rising Nepal*, a government funding newspaper, often puts the ruling parties at first of priority in ruling coverage. It has been run according to the government policy since its establishment. Because government policy towards media and mass communication generally encompasses two forms of interventions: regulation and funding. These can be used to shape a media system in order to promote ideas/ and of objectives their own.

Government run media systems are extremely common, particularly in the developing countries like Nepal. In these systems, the control of context and policy in

general is directly handled by the government. The system is clearly advantageous for authoritarian government wishing to control information and create state-sanctioned forms of politics. In other words, government tries to create hegemony by controlling information.

The concept of hegemony extensively used in media has come to be of the central theoretical importance. It is a concept linked to the notion of power and ideology. The hegemonic model argues that media have the capacity to construct the limited range of views of the world. More specifically, media enhances a set of views based on the ideas of ruling alliance. Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci introduced the term and several others followed him as Gramscians. They believed that the role of media is important because journalism is dominated by a particular world view which effectively remove other ways of seeing and presenting the things. *The Rising Nepal* puts the ruling power holders as prime importance over others common and Subaltern people as *The Kathmandu Post*, too. By attributing wide coverage to the elite and their allies, Media deify the ruling group and present the Subaltern as the docile devotee.

In media production and reception encoding /decoding was developed by Stuart Hall at the center for contemporary cultural studies in England. The model was an attempt to move beyond linear, transmission theories of mass communication; ideology and representation. It has been extremely influential in providing a general framework for the analysis of media power. Encoding refers to the ideological process that informs how the world is represented in media. So the decision to lead the news with publicity stunt by a leading politician is ideological because the printed song is probably more permanent than the visual one. In this sense politics is seen as defined and informed by political elites. As a result, the majority of the subaltern had much

difficulty in literally and denotatively identifying what the linguistic sign, they read on the paper.

The media run by the government depend on government's financial policy and do not have their own independent financial policy. They are funded and economically supported by the government. Therefore, government takes all their overhead cost and (determines financial policy as well. Because of their dependency to the government, the government run media are likely to be tailored to the needs and interest of government in its news. In other words, government controlled media either subtly or overtly reflect the interest of those in power. This has an ideological consequence. It is an interest of government-funded media to favor politicians rather than the interest of the subaltern citizens and to exclude negative messages about government officials and those politicians in power.

Therefore, the aim of the government-funded media is to identify the framework and interest or forms of representation that support the government policy at the cost of the subaltern.

In media studies, ideology is generally understood to refer to a system of ideas, assumptions and beliefs. Louis Althusser in his essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus" argues that the popular use of the term carries negative connotations, ideology being associated with particularly doctrinaire or inflexible sets of usually political beliefs. Althusser describes media as the communication "ideological State Apparatus". He took "the institutions like the school and the church as ideological State Apparatus" (112) crucial to the maintenance of the society's support for one set of ideological beliefs over another. The media Apparatus tend to reflect the ideological position of those who are in power, suggesting the notion of "dominant ideology" that serves the needs and interests of the powerful class in the name of

nationalism, liberalism and moralism etc. by means of the print, audio and visual media. Powerful elite wants to indoctrinate Subaltern people through the means of mass media.

Most of the people are used to spend their time reading newspaper, but reading newspaper lies benefit the ruling class. The newspaper chiefly conveys its own ideology to docile readers. What is important in reading newspaper is probably its ideological content than the news in newspaper. Reading newspaper confirms individual as passive, isolated, privatized role and consumes a good deals of time that could be put to productive political uses. So, the main role of the newspaper is to spread the political ideology through the news.

In this regard, a post-structuralist theorist, Foucault, developed a theory of discourse in relation to the power structures in a society. His main assertion is that discourse is involved in power and such discourses are deeply rooted in social institutions so that social and political power operates through discourse. The discourse, therefore, is inseparable from power because discourse is the ordering forces that govern every institution. Such discourse practices enable the media to exercise power and domination by defining and excluding the other. To exclude and / or represent other, the media persons produce certain set of standard and their dichotomies in which the elite are attributed with the positive qualities whereas the Subaltern are identified with the negative ones. The persons who produce such dichotomies are in the power and they run the newspaper reporting, publication dissemination. These media persons construct the discourses which exert certain truths about the Subaltern. When they create the truth about the subaltern, they start to represent them. But the truth and such representation is, indeed, a misrepresentation. But what the intellectuals and the political authorities lay down is supposed to be the

truth which is followed by the citizens without any objection. In this sense, they become the docile subjects for the ruling class which alleviates the ruler to perpetuate their regime for a long time. In this issue, Foucault "simply identifies truth with power so that whatever discursive practices are operative or have powers in a given society are true or constitute a regime of truth" (102). People are made so ignorant and one directional that they recognize particular piece of philosophy or theory as true only if it fits the description of truth lay down by the intellectuals. The people / subaltern don't dare venture beneath the surface and find their own reality (ies). This is how; the ideology is practiced in a society with the help of the media.

Finally, print media can be decoded to show their ideological role in representation of the elite and the Subaltern, but is it suspected that such representations are the reflection or the distortion of something real. What we have to do here is to go beyond this and see the representation as constitutive. We need to question whether there is only one truth made by the superior or there are many versions of the truth which are relegated by the powerful people. In this regard, Stuart Hall's perspective is different from that of the elite. Hall claims that there may be various truths but the power holder, to be specific, the media persons, only bring about such truths which is in accordance with the stereotypes created to subjugate the powerless. But it is also the reality that nothing gets known until it has been represented. So what we call reality does not exist outside the process of representation Hall says, "Nothing meaningful exists outside of discourse" (117). And that discourse itself is one of the constituents of the ideology. The ideology as such has the direct relation to the State, that's why from the aforementioned illustrations it can be declared that everything is either explicitly or implicitly affected by the state ideology where media can not become the exception. Thus the main task of the

research is not to try to measure the gap between reality and representation, but to try to understand how meanings or truths are produced through politico- cultural State ideology.



### III. Politics of Representation of *Madheshi* in Print Media

Media is a voice of the voiceless and the helpless. As per media ethics, it is believed not to generalize merely anything on the basis of prediction or bliss. But the media of Nepal (National Media) failed to procedure the desired results when it comes to projecting the issues pertinent to the *Madheshi*. Even those working in *Terai* could not understand the problems from a proper perspective. On the other hand, the people had lots of expectations form the media and when nothing actually happened they felt broken and frustrated. Therefore there were many instance of direct attacks on media persons, media houses and media organizations and the tendency is continuing even which needs to be understood mutually by the people and the media (Chandrakishore, 2008). Many journalists and Media were attacked by protestors at different places of *Madhesh* to exert pressure on the media blaming that they neither reported the events factually nor did they analyze the news (Sultan, 2007). Prateek Pradhan, a journalist, claimed:

After the Maoists, the *Madhesh* Movement has proved to be another predator of Nepali press. The people of the plains generally understood as *Madhesh*) started their Movement from January 2007, after the interim government promulgated the interim constitution. These people who are slightly different from hilly people by little darer complexion are demanding autonomous state, federal structure and proportional electoral system. Most of the mainstream presses are not totally against these demands. However, in the name of ethnic identity, the aggressive and armed groups of *Madhesh* have attacked journalists. The journalists have been getting threatening calls from various political

and criminal groups, sometimes for exposing their deeds and sometimes for not publishing or transmitting their news. (4)

Maximum of respondents of *Madhesh* blamed, "Media is communal and biased to *Madhesh* because maximum of the journalists and media owners are non-*Madheshi*. One of the local media persons (B.K. Yadav) strongly claimed that national media and journalists were not sincere to *Madhesh* Movement. They had played quite a different role in *Madhesh* Movement in comparison to the second Peoples' Movement-II. The news and articles of papers, magazines and broadcasting of TV and radio/FM during the *Madhesh* Movement proved it. They hardly covered the positive news of *Madhesh* Movement and tried to misinterpret the protest. There were a few national media journalists. They were only finding weakness of protest not news. It was said that such activities of journalists and media might have agitated the protestors.

In a political transition period like what we are seeing now in Nepal, it is not possible for the State Establishments to see everything correctly, including the plights and difficulties of marginalized communities. As responsible institution, the media must therefore play all important role of pointing out the shortcomings of the state so that the nation at large benefits from it. Its watchful eyes must not be squint when the need arises to point out issues that are inter-community in nature. In world democracies, the media plays the role of initiating inter-community dialogue keeping in mind the need to respect the function as a cementing agent particularly in pluralistic society like Nepal. Similarly no state machinery can effectively provide security to media and media persons at any given point of time. Strict and honest adherence to code of conduct, people's sensitive approach and respect for social values are their automatic and sustainable security or safety. The media had never placed positive

activities during *Madhesh* Movement. "The local media were leading the protest," Arun Shrestha said.

The role of police forces is dissatisfactory since initial phase of *Madhesh* Movement. Police rolled up at least 28 MPRF activist whole the later were staging protests at *Mandala*. Protesting cadets were detained in Hanuman Dhoka by crossing the fundamental human rights. The former clash of Nepalgunj seemed police personnel were biased to the *Madheshi* people. It was extremely inhumane activity of police forces. Protesting cadres and MPRG activist vandalized *Madhesh* after arresting of MPRF activist and leaders at Mandala, Kathmandu. As part of their attempt, the group also distributed some copies of CDs in which the Nepalgunj incident was recorded (Kantipur, 2007, June 17). Even, *Madhesh* Movement was peaceful; the police forces used extremely force that took 54. *Madheshi* protestors life during *Madhesh* Movement. It's large number of martyr (Shahid) comparison to second people Movement. It also proves the role of police forces, civil society human rights organization and media.

### **Representation of *Madhesh* Movement in *The Rising Nepal* from 16 January to 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2007**

On February 7 the *Madhesi* Movement that was launched on January 19 attained victory in Nepal. The victory has been good enough to get the Movement off the streets. The April Revolution last year lasted 19 days and produced 21 martyrs. The *Madhesh* Movement, the Maghe Kranti, after the Nepali month Magh, this year lasted 21 days and produced 38 martyrs. The April Revolution got rid of an entire autocratic regime. *The Rising Nepal* was far from reporting these activities and news. *The Rising Nepal* hardly covered any substantial news regarding *Madhesh* Movement

in its earlier phase in its first day. In the first day gave space in its middle page. The news which was headed as 'Madhesh band announced for today', future goes like this:

Madheshi People's Rights Forum, Nepal has voiced its concern over the Nepal's interim constitution-2063, citing it has not incorporated federal governance system, regional autonomy, proportional representation and economic rights. (17 January, 2007)

Eventhough *The Rising Nepal* has put the above line in its middle page, it had not given any opinion on the rising height of the *Madhesh Movement*. Only on January, 20, after four days, it covers the story of *Madhesh Movement* on its front page.

On 21<sup>st</sup> January, it did not give any space to the Movement. The state owned news paper *The Rising Nepal* reported with feature photo on 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2007 and news entitled "PM offers dialogue with *Terai* groups" with subtitle "we know who are operating them-Prachanda". The news further writes:

Prachand insisted on fulfilling the genuine demands of the *Madheshi* people that included a federal system and proportionate electoral system but ruled out holding talks with the *Madheshi* group. There is no need to hold talks with a group that runs in the name of a *Madheshi* forum' he said indicating the *Madheshi* Janadhikar Forum and Jantantrik Tarai Mukti Morcha. (25<sup>th</sup> January, 2007)

The news and photo also says that the ruling parties were not interested anymore to address the genuine grievances of the *Madheshi* people. And *The Rising Nepal* was mouth piece of their intention. The *Madheshi* people have various demands including the basic needs of human beings. In another issue *The Rising Nepal* reported on 26<sup>st</sup> January, 2007, news on the topic "regressive forces plotting: UML" with its subtitle "upsetting harmony will not benefit people, says Nepal", which writes:

The communist Party of Nepal, United Marxist and Leninist (CPN-UML) has called on all the *Terai* people not to carry out anarchic activities which might benefit the regressive forces while putting forth their just demands, not to be involved in activities likely to distribute the communal harmony and to move ahead towards the path of resolving their problems through dialogue and negotiations. (26 January, 2007)

These types of news that pressures the government are hardly published by *The Rising Nepal* because government funded media only highlights the governments' activities and run under the direct of government. General news about *Madhesis* are given coverage like looting, fighting, entering into the temple and so on. "10 held on charge of looting bus" published where *Madheshi* youths were also involved and "police arrested" them. (30 January, 2007). *Madhesh* Movement was continuing differently with various programmes like relay hunger strike, agitation and interaction with governmental staffs, civil society and intellectuals, that were rarely published in print media like *The Rising Nepal*.

*The Rising Nepal's* another version wrote "immediate steps called to resolve issues of *Terai*". The news story further writes:

At the reporter's club leaders of different political parties suggested that the government initiate immediate steps to address the demands raised by various organizations regarding the rights of "Madhise communities". Political leaders representing the *Terai* region voiced the need with regard to the clashes... minister of state for general administration; Dharma Nath Sah said that the government must take up the demands of the "*Madhise Community*". (22 January, 2007)

*Madheshi* people have been exploited and undermined in their own land as second grade citizen and time and again derogatory term like “*marsiya*”, “*dhoti*”, “*Madhise*” were widely used as tool to humiliate the *Terai* origin black skin poorly clad *Madheshi*. It was more than enough for *Madhesis* to tolerate when the national English daily of Nepal *The Rising Nepal* used *Madhise* in its front page news story title “immediate steps called to resolve issues of *Terai*” to address to *Madheshi* people which is often an embarrassing utterance deliberately applied to interiorize and discriminate the *Madheshi* community.

The *Madheshi* community have been exploited and discriminated since long but in present context they are being aware and conscious about their rights and duties. But instead of supporting *Madhesh* Movement for its noble cause *The Rising Nepal* on many reports has given considerable space to the gloomy aspects of Movement and attempted to divert its happening for genuine grievances and highlights negative temperaments.

Though the *Madheshi* had played a leading role in the then democratic Movement against the Ranas as well as during the April Movement (People Movement 2006), their substantial role is never valued properly. *Madhesis* have demanded equal participation /representation in the Constituent Assembly election through proportionate participation but ignored. There is virtually no participation of the *Madheshis* in the judiciary, too, and other spheres of State's high level.

*The Rising Nepal*, actually a government funded and run print media always supports the government and tries to impose the governmental strategy, policy and ideology to each and every sphere. It does not favor any activities against the State and government. In this long Movement very few numbers of news items of *Madhesis* Movement were given coverage.

**Representation of *Madhesh* Movement in *The Kathmandu Post* from 16 January to 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2007**

*The Kathmandu Post*, a private publication and a sister publication of Kantipur daily which has been operative since 1998 AD as an English National daily where there were hardly one or two *Madheshi* journalists officially involved as reporters. Official representation plays a vital role for the coverage of the news and issues.

*The Kathmandu Post* also favored common events and incidents like *The Rising Nepal*. *Madhesh'* Movement broke out and "*Madheshi* Janadhikar Forum", "*Joint Madheshi* Struggle Committee" and *Madheshi* Civil Movement Central Coordinating Committee were at street with various demands resisting for the rights since January, 2007. *Madhesis* have been undergoing discrimination meted out by society and state since centuries. General events like ill practices and looting occur time and again to *Madheshi* community. Why does it happen? How can we eliminate? These issues are not analyzed well by concerned parties and media. *Madhesis* become mostly victims of these cases.

To a large extent, *The Kathmandu Post* seemed not to be serious about *Madhesh* Movement which was launched for cause.

News and opinion coverage from January 16 to February 7, 2007.

### **January 16**

On January 16, 2007, there is no any headline news coverage on *Madhesh* Movement and nor is any opinion in its Op-Ed page.

### **January 17**

On January 17, 2007, THE RISING NEPAL covered *Madhes* Movement with the headline news “*Terai* hard-hit by anti- statute *banda*”

“Normal life in the *Terai* district was badly affected due to a *banda* (general shutdown ) called by *Madheshi* people Rights forum (MPRF); MPRF called the *banda* protesting the lowly promulgated interim constitution saying it failed to address the issue of the *Madheshi* (people of *Terai*). Deeming annulment of the provision of the constitution in the upcoming CA polls, the forum has seen pressurising for proportionate representation based on to the popular votes”. (17 January, 2007)

### **January 18**

In the Op-Ed page on the third day of general strike called by *Madhesi* People’s Rights Forum (MPRF), *The Kathmandu Post* covered an editorial titled “*Terai* calling” which reads:

“When the political parties and the Maoists are basking in the glory of the first people – promulgated constitution and the intuition of Maoists into the interim constitution the *Madheshi* are being agitated and expressing ire against the interim constitution in various ways.”(January 18, 2007)



The editorial further mentions:

“It is time the *Terai* people also realised that their justified demands would be fulfilled only through a peaceful means. They would only be decimating their cause if they adopt violent methods. Who suffers from banda programme? The poor *Madheshi*. Who loses from vandalism? The country. What happens if the riots erupt?”(January 18, 2007)

Also there was a news-story “OHCHR flays arrest of *Madheshi* activities” that mentions:

The Office of the High Commission for Human Rights in Nepal has expressed concern over the arrests of 28 *Madheshi* activists and political party leaders from Maitighar on Thursday. In a press statement issued Wednesday, OHCHR said the government of Nepal has refused under its international human rights obligation to respect the freedom of opinion and expression. (January 18, 2007)

### **January 19**

There are no headline news stories on the fourth day of *banda* and nor is the photo coverage. There is no coverage in any of its pages at all.

### **January 20**

Following five days of *Madhesh* Movement, *The Kathmandu Post* on January 20, 2007 put photo coverage of *Madhesh* Movement with the caption “Shouldering buses torched by workers of MPRF along the highway in Siraha on Friday. Along with the photo, the headlines news “One killed, 14 vehicles torched, Lahan under 10-hour curfew” reads:

“Lahan Bazaar remained tensed on Friday after Maoist cadres shot dead a protestor demonstrating against the MPRF leaders in

Kathmandu. Enraged protestors set ablaze at least 14 vehicles burnt tyres and obstructed roads till late evening.”

### **January 21**

*The Rising Nepal* put its headline news on front page on January 21, 2007 with the title “MPRF protests continue in Terai”

Thousands of *Madheshi* activists on Saturday staged demonstration across Terai and cited protesting against the killing of Ramesh Kumar Mahato 16, by a Maoist cadre on Friday in Lahan, Siraha districts.

### **January 22**

There is photo coverage about aggression of Madhesh Movement. (Front Page 1, January 22, 2007).

On January 22, *The Kathmandu Post* put an editorial entitled as Pacify Lahan which is mentioned below:

A minor issues of Banda announced my that supporters of *Madhesi* people rights forum (MPRF) protesting the arrest of their activities in the capital on Friday took a nasty turn following a snaffle, which led to the death of Ramesh Kumar Mahato,16 the agitated mass of MPRF supports and other torched 14 vehicles. The issues only aggravated on Sunday when locals defied the curfew and vandalized government offices in Lahan and set one vehicle and two government vehicles on fire. (January 22, 2007)

### **January 23**

On January 23, *The Rising Nepal* gave front page coverage of Madhesh Movement related news which goes like this:

At least two persons were killed and dozens of others critically injured in a fresh spate of violence in lahan of shiraha district Monday.

Pramod sada of nairjapur and Bijay kumar shahani of lahan-4 were killed when police resorted to opening to fire at demonstrators offer the latter reportedly tried to storm the area police post. (January 23, 2007)

### **January 24**

*The Kathmandu Post* put headline news entitled "Govt invites disgruntled groups for dialogue" at a time when the Movement has reached it climax. On the same edition, it included a letter by Chandra Kamal Adhikari in its Letter to the Editor column which throws doubt on noble cause of Madhesh Movement and characterises it as carried out by anti-social elements which in fact was not the case.

*Terai* is bolling and the medhesis are showing their anger because they have been literatures some antisocial elements are involved in nepalgunj and lahan rights. (January 24, 2007)

### **January 26**

*The Kathmandu Post* put an opinion related to Madhesh issue by Dr. Khagendra N. Sharma which goes like this:

In fact, almost two thirds of the national infrastructures of various kinds are built in the *Terai*. The *Terai* presence in the technical services, both in the professional and paraprofessional levels is larger than the other communities. So, the assertion that the *Terai* is exploited is not true. Most of the industries are located in the *Terai*. There are various social issues which are part of the *Terai* social pattern, not imposed by the hill rulers. (26 January, 2007)

In that critical situation, if any media gives space to such type of news, then the media is virtually maintaining status quo and favoring the elite politics.

On the edition of *The Kathmandu Post* on January 27, it put a front page news 'MPRF urges all to shun violence, Curfew in Lahan, Janakpur, Birgunj and Biratnagar that put coverage on Madhesh Movement but was not upto the mark. At a time the Madhesis put their lives at stake for their rights, the mainstream media like *The Kathmandu Post* should have pressurised the government to listen to genuine grievances of *Madheshis*. (January 27, 2007)

### **January 28**

*The Kathmandu Post* put a news headline "Terai tension continues, UML, Maoists offices vandalized" which rather put the *Madhesh* Movement on shadow rather than backing the Movement for rights and identity.

### **January 29**

*The Kathmandu Post* on its edition of January 29 put a news headline that was entitled "Violence recedes, tension remains". However there was no substantial coverage of opinion shedding light on the positive side of Movement.

### **January 30**

On the edition of January 30, *The Rising Nepal* put a front page news "Terai sees no respite, 1 dies in Kalaiya, Madhesi MPs submit memo to PM". It was more like narrating the story and did not support the Movement with coverage of any opinion that could have made it all success.

### **January 31**

*The Kathmandu Post* merely made coverage of incidents rather than analytical coverage of *Madhesh* Movement through interviews with think-tanks. It put a front page news "Key decision on *Terai* likely today."

### **February 1**

*The Kathmandu Post* after two weeks of *Madhesh* Movement put front page news items as "PM invites all for talks" and "MPRF men storm police post".

Nevertheless, the opinion news did not find room in this edition.

### **February 2**

It was on February 2 that *The Rising Nepal* gave coverage to opinion *Burning Terai on Madheshi* issue and *Madhesh Movement* by non-*Madheshi* writer Dhruba Joshi which reads like this:

“The state has made heavy investment in restructure development in *Terai*as compared to the hills. Poor *Terai* has development in these years but the *Madheshi* community remained stagnant, why? It's obvious that the *Madheshi* leaders and the elite are equally part of the nexus...." (February 2, 2007)

Upon analysis we find that the state has not done injustice to *Madhesh* and *Madheshi* but virtually it is not true. *Madheshis* have always been deprived of access to government mechanism. Such type of opinion did not make any substantial breakthrough for the Movement rather put the Movement in the shadow.

### **February 3**

In its edition of February 3, 2007, *The Kathmandu Post* put news items like "Thakur to lead govt. talks team", "3 protesters killed, 15 cops among dozens hurt" and "OHCHR calls for urgent dialogue" but there was no significant coverage of opinion on Op-Ed page.

#### **February 4**

Similarly, on February 4, *The Rising Nepal* included the news items as "5 injured in police firing in Birgunj, minor incidents in other districts but no room for opinion.

#### **February 5**

In this edition of February 5, *The Rising Nepal* put photo coverage of Madhesh Movement front page news "MPRF sets 3 conditions, protestor dies in Birgunj."

#### **February 6**

The Kathmandu Post on February put news coverage of the Movement in its front page as "MPRF cadres beat up five journos".

#### **February 7**

*The Kathmandu Post* towards the boiling point of *Madhesh* Movement gave coverage to opinion on *Madhesh* Movement by a *Madheshi* writer Bipin Shah. The article titled "Belated but popular Madhesh revolt which in fact was a positive light on the ethos of Movement which goes like this:

Jhab Lal Yadav, a Maoist cadre was shot dead by Nepal police when the fight between the then government and Maoists rebels was at its peak what come to me as a shocking news is that the police also adducted some other members of his family mad killed then this is one among hundred of stories of sacrifice. I know personally ajhab. He was my classmate at Rameshwor ramsagar voop multiple campus, janakpur. He latter dropped out of the class and vanished in the jungle for what he believed to be a fight for the betterment of Nepal, only to be shot dead latter. (The Kathmandu Post, Februray 7, 2007)

#### IV. Conclusion

This dissertation critically analyzes news coverage of Madhesh Movement in mainstream national English dailies *The Rising Nepal* and *The Katmandu Post* and how media played its role from 16<sup>th</sup> January to 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2007. Here, *Madhesh* Movement refers to the whole *Madheshi* Social Movement which has been continuously going on since 1950 AD. Traditional concept of society and State still has not changed as the *Madheshi* community has been discriminated, exploited, oppressed and subordinated in each and every sphere of social life- socially, economically, educationally, culturally and religiously. The State itself was the main causes of exploitation because many laws, bi-laws and constitutions were imposed to segregate the *Madheshi* community.

Media often distorts the news story and gives them its own interpretation in favor of state. During the 21-day long *Madhesh* Movement only few news got coverage in government funded print media like *The Rising Nepal*. During protest and resistance many *Madhesh* Movement fighters were seriously injured, hurt, arrested and beaten up by police force but media remained a mute spectator. Many allege that media gave coverage neither to the Movement's agenda nor the events. Movement was on climax with agenda but media story wrote general news about meetings, seminars, workshops, conferences, and common activities in their general pages.

In Nepali print media, strikes, agitation, demonstration, protest, resistance, submission of memorandum and negotiation or "Table Talk" conducted by *Madhesh* Movement, were hardly covered except general or common activities of other groups and parties. When did *Madhesis* declare the schedule of movement or when did they submit the memorandum? Such news stories were unknown or ignored by main

stream news media from coverage. It was a great and appropriate time for *Madhesis* to ensure and achieve the rights that they were deprived for long. They were denied their inborn fundamental rights which went unreported in media. Who are going on street for protest? Who are sitting for negotiation? What are the agreements between or among the government and revolutionary groups? When/is fixed the date for next phase talk? Why are movement and its various parts necessary? Is violence compulsory or common trend of Nepalese? And who broke the agreements? These types of news generally are not highlighted and analyzed. On the one side, Madhesis' voices were ignored by state, and on the other side media was indifferent and disinterested in *Madhesh* Movement, that's why Movement's publicity or popularity was very poor. News about suicides, murdered, fighting, tooling, social discrimination and social unawareness were highly covered in newspaper but news about social change, awareness, and progress and cultural transformation of *Madhesis* were hardly published. *Madhesh* Movement highly or sufficiently got coverage in media, however, it should be analyzed whether they were truly represented or misrepresented? Or they are fabricated by their unique demonstration and protest? On twenty one day long movement, only few news reports were published which is shameful in democratic journalism.

The private media houses run by socially elite class like *The Kathmandu Post* was blamed, according to many *Madhesi* for not gravely representing the *Madhesi* and *Madhesh* Movement during this much long period. Only common events or incidents got coverage rather than Movement. By chance published news also misrepresented and fabricated the *Madhesis* news, which were far from the reality and truth. They even could not follow the general principles of journalism ABC patterns



which is really embarrassing for liberal press or media. *Madheshi*' positive perspectives were hardly covered.

In accordance with other movements, *Madhesh* Movement was rather intellectual and peaceful; however it could not get adequate coverage which became one of the failures of the movement. Telling the truth, the Movement could not achieve the goal which they dreamed of but few agenda were really addressed by the State or government before Constituent Assembly Election (CA Poll).

According to a report prepared by *Madhesh* Media Center, Kathmandu, news about *Madheshi* was insufficient but qualitatively very miserable. Many a news report found during the research bespeaks that media coverage was only common events-based news, no substantial news stories related to *Madheshi* upliftment are published; researchable materials are rarely given coverage, serious news, analytical news and analytical materials are not found published. *Madheshi* official representation is found zero; effective news hardly gets attention from media during *Madhesh* Movement.

To sum up, mainstream print media news coverage was not virtually liberal, independent, and neutral in their perspectives. It is found that news coverage of *Madhesh* Movement in both *The Rising Nepal* and *The Kathmandu Post* were governed, controlled, and manipulated. As a result, they could not justice the subaltern cause because of the censorship or the state ideology. *Madheshi* news coverage in media thus remained miserable, misrepresented, stereotyped, and ideologically contaminated. The *Madhesh* Movement which was suppose to have launch with wide range of concepts concerning ideology, power, discourse, politics and so on. The study proves that print media simply became an ideological state apparatus remained turning blind eye to the powerless people and down-trodden communities like the *Madheshi* community.

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