

## CHAPTER ONE

### The Trajectory of Changes

#### Introduction

Whether it is the rapid proliferation of McDonalds throughout the Asian countries, wide acceptance of coca-cola in households of Asia and Africa, rapid boom of popular culture in India or the arrival of cable television in Nepal, the fabric of everyday life in many parts of the world is change of people's lifestyle and thinking pattern. Growing intensity of the foreign investment in the name of international trade, trans-national corporate alliances and mergers, cultural exchanges usually through international film festivals, university tie-ups and international labour markets have intensified worldwide links between people, organizations and regions and governments. Terms such as "global economy", "cultural diversity" and "international law" have widely emerged into the arena of contemporary socio-economic and political discourses. These unavoidable flows of the capital and cultures as well as other components of socio-political life have constantly weakened the presence of earlier life-worlds even into a state of negation. And this is happening in such an intensity that these phenomena very easily penetrate any kinds of boundaries, too. This has even been applied to the case of nation-states that had been consolidated recently along the industrial development of Europe as an institution of modernity. Arjun Appadurai, in his essay "Production of Locality" observes the nation-states "struggling to retain control over their populations in the face of a host of sub-national and transnational movements and organizations" (189). In the course, Anthony McGrew in "A Global Society?" writes: "It is somewhat ironic that, as the century draws to a close, the pace of "progress" is

being indicated for dissolving one of the quintessential institutions of modernity: the nation-state” (467).

The newest changes in the worldwide socio-economic scenario can be easily traced out if we simply walk along the street of any major commercial city of Nepal also. However, such traces are not new things even in the remote villages, too. People buy canned and packaged food from market and depend on the career opportunities of the countries that are thousands of miles away. These phenomena are not just existent in these areas but have left a strong presence in the minds of people.

People in the villages are well aware about the possible wages paid in different countries of the destination of their foreign employment, and on the basis of this they make the deals with the manpower agents. Their commissions to these agents depend on the rate of the wages they are paid in those countries where they want to go. Apart from this, their family members in the villages know the time difference between their location and the location of their kinsmen in foreign countries though they lack any formal education. More important than this is people's dependency upon market and their consumption habits. They prefer fancy things bought from market: coca-cola instead of *sarbat* (a kind of local cola famous in Nepal and India), aluminum vessels instead of mud and wooden vessels and hybrid seeds instead of local seeds.

Changing lifestyles of people have changed their leisurely activities, too. The older practices of transmission of the life ritual songs from the older generation to the younger generation have changed or even vanished. Not surprisingly, these songs are in the market and recorded in CDs and DVDs. But these songs have passivized the roles of people. The newer generation, specially, feels no attachment with these songs. In place of this, there has been an advent of gadgets like mobile phones and DVD players.

Along the changed lifestyles of people, there are many other changes that can be realized if we observe the values and thoughts in our societies. Earlier, people's farming was concentrated on their own consumption but now they value cash crops and productivity of crops rather than on the consumption. They sell their products and buy other necessary things from market. Whether it is for buying or selling people's dependency over the markets is increasing day-after-day. Along with this dependency is increasing people's motif of profit. Those who thought farming to be their religion now take it as non-profitable.

Though there can be many reasons behind the changes in people's thinking about the dependency over the market for livelihood but the fact that the new generation is outside the country in a significant number should not be forgotten. Worldwide opportunities of employment have attracted them to go abroad and this has changed the lifestyle of the people living in the 'home' as well. Their relatives in home value more on monetary system rather than on the system of grain and goods.

Another major impact seen in the homes is people's transformation in the understanding of time. They know that the time of their locality has the worldwide reference by 'some hours' though this knowledge is restricted to those places where their people are working. And on this reference, they talk to their people abroad.

Another major shift in rural people is their hyper-dependency on electronic gadgets that have revolutionized people's communication system. People are adapting to everything 'new' though we can observe some sort of meager resistance to it. They take every change occurring around them as the "fruit of *jamana*" and the "*bikase jamana*" (time of development). So, whatever changes are taking place around us, all look as the myths of progress and prosperity. And these new trends are homogenously named as "*Amricane*" (American), or sometimes,

“*Khairé*” (European). Thus, the changes brought about by the *Amricane* or *Khairé* are creating proximities among geographies of disparities and linking people to a worldwide reference of time.

People’s hyper-dependency over the electronic gadgets and market goods along with people’s changed perceptions on the contemporary changes around the world have brought remarkable changes in the contemporary Nepali literary writing as well. Whether they are fictions or non-fictions, Nepali literary practice has invariably included the intermarriages, cross-boundary locations, international transactions of money and goods, cross-boundary migrations, email, internet and so on.

In such a context of changed socio economic life of people around the country, Nepali fiction writings have, basically, created their settings moving from one country to another country, characters ranging from country to country and themes obtaining universal concern. Pages of such writings cover the themes of worldwide debates of women’s rights, human rights and equality whereas the characters range from various races, ethnicity and citizenships.

Analysis of such type of trajectory of change in the spatio-temporal frame and the traces of impacts in the lands across the borders of countries pose many questions, such as: what is such a phenomenon that links such distant entities? What is it that has been such a powerful solvent? What is its historical as well as political background? How are these phenomena affecting Nepal in particular and its literary writing practices?

In an attempt to build answers to these questions, I have depended on four major conceptual cornerstones. First, the historical context; second, examination of the underlying assumptions and operating definitions that surround much of the contemporary debates over this issue; third, application of this process over the economic, cultural and literary practices in

Nepalese context; and fourth, judgment on the theoretical and empirical approaches and their interrelations as the concluding remark.

## CHAPTER TWO

### A Critical Investigation of Globalization

#### What is Globalization?

Along the route of free trade as ushered by the GATT, the conscious worldwide efforts started for the combined economic activities outside the national boundaries. Later, this was continued along the establishment of the Brettonwood Institutions. These combined efforts of the actors beyond the national actors for the cause of economic prosperity and security was natural and a new phenomenon at that time because of the huge recession in Europe after World War-I. Though interconnectedness among the rulers and nations was as old as nations' history, it came with an amazing intensity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Proper understanding of the growing interconnectedness of this century was more than just capturing the event of Trojan War and role of princes from the various cities.

After observing the complexity and intensity of the worldwide changes in the various spheres of the society that are consistently contributing to the worldwide interconnectedness, McLuhan proposed a new phrase to denote this phenomenon, global village. Later, as a derivative of this word, came the term globalization. It brought not only the worldwide concerns over the various spheres of contemporary society but also made a fertile land for growing this concern, further. Though the root-term to globalization was a common word for about 400 years in Oxford English Dictionary, but this word, to its present intensity, came into academic debates only during 1980s. The dictionary definitions of global is extended to a certain variation while defining the term globalization, such as, to render worldwide or the act of diffusion throughout the world. Now, the question arises; what is it that is rendered worldwide? And what is it that is diffused throughout the world? Answering these questions is not just answering with one-word

answer but with a reference to a certain set of socio-economic and politico-cultural variables. According to Waters, globalization is “a social process in which the constraints of geography on economic, political, social and cultural arrangements recede, in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding and in which people act accordingly” (5). This definition of globalization, as given by Waters, presumes globalization as a social phenomenon in which the ever existing barriers in socio-economic or the politico-cultural aspects of living are constantly moving back and, more importantly, people are aware of this fact. Another aspect implied in this definition is the people’s activities, which is harmonious to the change brought by the process of globalization. In this respect, Waters’ definition has a clear proposition that globalization is reflexive phenomenon, too.

Similarly, Roland Robertson’s definition of globalization can be worthwhile. According to him, the concept of globalization incorporates “both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole... both concrete global interdependence and consciousness of the global whole” (8). If we observe this definition, we find the concept of diffusion in his phrases “compression of the world” and as he says the “global interdependence,” he gives us the sense of rendering something worldwide. Though the world has been undergoing the social compression since the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century as the European explorers started to find out their nation’s economic opportunities by the use of resources from the countries other than their own.

More interesting thing about Robertson’s definition is his contention on people’s consciousness about this phenomenon, which he calls the “consciousness of the global whole” (8). According to him, globalization is not merely a process of compression of the world but also a consciousness of the world as a whole entity—not in terms of any other boundaries. His

definition of globalization, that takes the people's consciousness of the interconnectedness, has remarkably the common thing with that of Waters' views that globalization that makes the socio-cultural and politico-economic barriers among the people recede, and make them aware of it. Thus, the ancient interconnectedness among the 'cities' (understood as the present nation-states) can be excluded from the process of globalization, as suggested by Waters and Robertson because neither the people of that time had a consciousness of interconnectedness nor they were aware of it.

Similarly, Giddens' definition draws the similar lines along the definition of Robertson. He defines globalization as following:

Globalization can be ... defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities .... Local transformation is as much a part of globalization as the lateral extension of social connections across time and space. (64)

Here, Giddens' definition brings the notions of time and space as the two variables of globalization in his definition. His definition emphasizes on the territoriality in which he means globalization not merely a process of the centre-stage activities of the corporate mega-mergers but also the autonomization of local-stage behaviours of the life-worlds. Thus, his definition of globalization seems to be arguing on the expanding nature of globalization in which distant localities undergo the process of transformation and appropriation. This leads to the proximity in economy, culture and polity of the people around the globe, and eventually to globalization. However, his argument equally admits the other side of this process, in which entities of one locality not necessarily transform the other locality but help them to consolidate and crystallize as an autonomous life-world, and thus, localize.



An obvious but a reverse process called 'localization', according to Waters, "implies a reflexive reconstruction of community in the face of the dehumanizing implications of rationalizing and commodifying" (5). He means that there will be an increase in the tendency of making their own conscious decisions by the people in the local life-worlds regarding the value systems, amenities, and practices according to their priorities in their communities and that such decision will obviously look against global activities.

To sum up, as a process of interconnection of the world's people and their practices, globalization is among us since long past. However, this worldwide interconnectedness obtained a new dimension when this interconnectedness among people of the world was associated with the consciousness about this relationship. In fact, in the later part of the twentieth century, the worldwide connections have come to intensify, in which people have become conscious of this intensification along with the multiple relations among localities around the globe. Thus, globalization is such a social process in which traditional barriers of geography in relation to people's lifestyles recede and people become aware of it and act accordingly.

### **Local/Global Dichotomy: Erosion of the Edges**

As we observe the scholars' arguments on globalization, more categorically, in the arguments of negotiations between the global and the local, a new debate on this phenomenon has emerged. The global as such has been problematized and questioned on its status of being global. Though the common understanding of global has emerged out of its nature of rendering worldwide, but for many—more specifically, for those who are advocating and facilitating the process of globalization have paradoxically spoken in such a tone that problematizes its nature understood as such. Their declarations ultimately aim at expansion of a particular set of values around the globe, but at the same time, they negotiate with the conceptually reverse element—

local. “We are not a multinational,” the management of Coca-Cola has stated, “we are a multi-local” (qtd. in Featherstone 352). Though the quote made by Featherstone indicates towards a politics of the global product to make its strong presence in multifaceted localities around the globe, I see this as an indication of the threat received by the global along the routes of the globalization process. In fact, globalization paradoxically requires the continued survival and support of other cultures traditionally understood as local. Or, if we look at this situation from the point of Cevasco, this phenomenon must be named as detachment because she argues that “[o]ur perception of space has been transformed into a sense of placelessness” (95). Thus, living in the placelessness, today, we have detached ourselves from particular location and, rather, attached to nothing local and global either.

Take for example; the marketing and advertising strategies of global corporations quite often imply this in their marketing strategies. On the one hand, a global strategy is employed to ensure that the product is seen as having a global brand that transcends any national identity. Thus, Coca-Cola, stressing global youth and global harmony, ran an advertisement in the seventies and eighties in which a multiracial gathering of young people promised to buy the world a Coke and teach it to sing in perfect harmony. But, facing competition from local cola manufacturers, Coca-Cola in the nineties has started to identify with the local and the ethnic-national. In 2005, Nepali Television channels, such as Nepal Television and Kantipur TV broadcasted an advertisement in which Bollywood star Amir Khan was shown dancing with Nepali cap and in Nepali song’s tune, “*chisso bhanekai Coca-Cola, hey kanchhi, chisso bhanekai matra Coca-Cola*” (It is the only option, coca-cola—for cold drinks). Coca-Cola’s global identity is, thus, made to go hand-in-hand with its claim to be closely connected to local communities—a perfect example of what has been called a glocalizing strategy.

Therefore, globalization has been amazingly meant an effective measure of multiplying the investments through the integration of markets and manipulation of labour for many big producers; the concentration of investments, production and employment in one part of the world whereas the adverse situation in another part; and a scornful ideology of the capitalists that is based on the opportunity and profit as well as the erasure of loyalty to any place on the globe. Robert Reich, the U.S. Labor Secretary during Clinton's first term, recounts a chilling tale of a corporate mindset that sees the global as a concept emptied of any effective sense of place and in this course how he observes a global manager is having no bound emotionally who "invests in the most promising opportunities and abandons or sells off underperforming assets- no matter how long they have been part of the corporate family or where they may be located" (78).

Globalization, far from superseding the national or the local, discovers that it still needs that which it thought it had surpassed. David de Pury, the co-chairman of Asea Brown Boveri, a giant corporation in electrical power systems, underscores globalization's paradoxical dependence on the local or national when he states: "A local presence is the key if you want to make it in Asia. Our own objective at ABB is to become more Indian, more Chinese, more Indonesian and so on than our competitors, in order to be truly local" ("Europe's View" 29). De Pury's statements of the national or local has less to do with respect for culture or loyalty to place unlike as Ross Poole has stated to define the national identity which, for him, "provides us with a hand in which we are at home, a history which is ours, and a privileged access to a vast heritage of culture and creativity" (272). Poole's definition opens up a privileged access only at the virtue of a citizen but that of Pury is challenging that a so-called outsider can also be more Indonesian than Indonesian himself. After all, a global company, involved in massive infrastructural projects, needs the support of national or local governments to do its business.

Similarly, if we choose to say global culture to that set of cultures which is collectivity's way of life, then there seems to have a trouble because many cultures in the world are not so easily labeled as global even though there is significantly huge population behind such cultures, such as Chinese and Indian cultures. But if we take the stance of Waters to label anything global by observing its nature of receding, we must admit a fact that there must be something other than global. However, Anthony Smith's view is quite different in this matter, and he advocates the global phenomenon as something "place-less", "context-less" and "time-less" nature of globalization (177). Here, Waters' definition admits movement of cultures in globalization—but with one's own context whereas Smith's definition admits it as a movement "from everywhere and nowhere" (177).

Though Smith's thesis tries to argue the deterritorialization of the global, exactly problematizing the possibility of hybridity, but his thesis seems to be merely romantic imagination in front of the asymmetrical transactions of the cultures around the world. Thus, global remains not a context-less and place-less, but always a contextual to West and full of West.

The local, on the other hand, is not local as observed by a prominent cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz, while making his thesis that "the knowledge[s] are always ineluctably local, indivisible from their instruments and their encasements" (4). It has been merely a myth over the by-gone three decades due to its enmeshment in the contemporary supra-local networks of connections, and eventually turned to be a "conceptual issue" which stands as a reverse phenomenon of the global (Kraidy 154). Here, Appadurai's remarks regarding the local seem to be worthy of mentioning, in which he argues that the local knowledge is "not only local in itself but, even more important, for itself" (181). Appadurai's remarks, in fact foreground the

political nature of the local because local for him is the site for power struggle with its any kind of counterpart. But Geertzian thesis takes the empirical grounds. But the problem in the Geertzian thesis equally applies to the advocacies of 'global' because understanding globalization and localization in terms of dichotomy will hardly make any sense of this phenomenon at all. Rather, their nature suggests us to admit the fact that they co-exist. And globalization is more than being a contestation and confrontation of global and local, an act of accommodating the Western fabrics in the masquerading acts of accommodating the global/local dualities and diverting from both of them.

However, a number of scholars have drawn frequent romanticized references of the 'local' in the globalization debates that are treated as "heaven of resistance against globalization" (Haugerud 61). But these romanticized images of the local are further challenged by the concept of critical transculturalism that argues in the lines of erosion of a local's purity as such. This takes place due to two main reasons: "local's supra-local relations and exogenous and endogenous nature of the local" (Kraidy 155). Thus, there is possibility of dialectics of relations among the locals. This further suggests that local is, by nature, constantly in outreach.

Though global and the local are quite often treated as contesting opponents but there are hardly any empirical bases to look them in a constant dichotomy. Yet, connecting global with the dominant side, people view it as a penetrating entity that passes through the local. Thus, observing their nature, people have conceptualized them as opposing entities but constantly coming closer and getting eroded through the edges.

### **Globalization and Nation State's Alibi**

Recent threats of swine-flu and, moreover, the threats of the recession and debt crisis of Europe have been much discussed globally. Besides, the global problems of climate changes,

depletion of resources, extinction of forest and wildlife are other major issues discussed along with live concerts of Bryan Adams and MLTR Band in the Asian countries like Nepal and India. The attempts of quarantines in airports, and various workshops and seminars on climate change and conservation activities have been made beyond certain countries and that has been desired, too. The lines of borders matter less than the multiplying situations of the moving cultures and capital. Thus, the unavoidable flows of the capital and cultures as well as other components of socio-political life have constantly weakened the presence of nation state into a state of negation. Arjun Appadurai, in his "Production of Locality" observes that the nation-states "struggl[e] to retain control over their populations in the face of a host of sub-national and transnational movements and organizations" (189). In the course, Anthony McGrew in "A Global Society?" writes: "It is somewhat ironic that, as the century draws to a close, the pace of "progress" is being indicated for dissolving one of the quintessential institutions of modernity: the nation-state" (467). Looking at these statements, anyone can be tempted to declare the demise of the nation-state. Though this seems to have enough ground on this declaration but I find the nation-states still acting as the regulatory forces around the globe.

Let us examine one more argument against the claim that economic globalization spells the death of the nation-state. Believing that national government plays an increasingly small role in the global economy, but those who welcome globalization in the name of the end of the national boundaries have not acknowledged the role of the nation-state that it still provides the governance and infrastructure needed for economic stability and development. Here, we can simply bring an example of Kodak Papers that was established in Makawanpur district of Nepal but the return of this so-called multinational company from Nepal has obviously indicated how a nation state can play a significant role to make the suitable conditions for such so-called

borderless investments any longer. The extra taxes imposed by India on its import in the Indian territories foiled its stay in Nepal. This gives a strong message to the TNCs who acclaim the end of the nation-state and national boundaries that they still regulate and enforce socio-economic discipline despite a rapid involvement of private sector in the area.

However, poorly or inefficiently pursued, these are the tasks that the nation-state still holds values. From this perspective, one can argue that the nation-state helps to subsidize the operations of these Global investors, who do not have to worry about providing basic education, public health, or a police force. Referring to the example of Japan Inc., a model of corporation between business corporations and the government, Richard Barnett and John Cavanagh write:

“Clearly, Japanese corporations have benefited from the decisions of Japanese governments to invest in primary and secondary education. In this sense the playing field is never quite level. The national origin of a global business corporation matters less than it once did; but in a world of nation-states, it still matters” (282).

For these writers, the role of nation-state seems very nominal yet there is still some room how such global businesses stem out of the nation-states. Moreover, in the recent years global corporations have rushed to set up factories in such nation-states as Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and the People’s Republic of China—nation-states that have strongly interventionist or the authoritarian governments. Thus, while seeking open economic borders and neo-liberal market policies, global investors and the TNCs appear to be equally attracted to the closely supervised nation-states of politically anti-liberal regimes.

Clearly, then, the expansion of globalization has established a fact that the nation-states are not ended but the claims of globalization theories have sounded too much propagandist. Their masking to be hyper local is just a politics of reaching the local markets around the globe

and it is possible when they pretend to be more Indian than the Indian themselves and more Nepalese than the Nepalese themselves. The global corporate or the global investors need a market place where they desire of boundless expansion and that also both in the investment and in the market so they always create such rhetoric of a unified world without the national boundaries where there is dissimulation of the reality of the presence of the nation state.

### **Westernization or Globalization?**

The concept of globalization is not far from criticisms. It has been a target for ideological suspicion recently because it has apparently been an advocate to the spread of the Western culture and of capitalist value systems. But this thesis demands a major conceptual clarity and that is a question about the term West. The term ‘West’ is one of the most consolidated and harmonized term in today’s world’s politico-cultural scenario. As the trans-European culture is understood to be ‘West’, it can hardly be identified as a geo-political boundary. Rather, it has been understood as a notion that has a common set of fundamental principles and value systems. But the major question of this understanding is how such a vast expansion of the land and culture could be identified as West? To argue this, according to Huntington, is that the worldwide relations need “to be reconfigured along cultural lines” (1). Then, a question still comes in front that how could the region of trans-European expansion be accommodated into a single notion of West where many wars have recently broken between Slovenians and Croats or Serbians and Albanians—all fought for the reason of cultures.

Taking Palestinian scholar Edward Said’s thesis, if the Orient was “almost a European invention” (1) and “a mode of discourse” (2), ‘West’ also must be, in the similar way as Orient, the consolidated form of a notion set forth by the layers of politico-cultural transactions the world has ever made. And understanding West, therefore, needs to understand the existing power



relations among the people around the globe. As Europe is economically prosperous and so are its allies in North America and Oceania. Economic prosperity is associated to the notion West. Huntington identifies eight commonalities that contribute any part of the world to be the West in which he argues that “out of eight components Reformation (Protestant), rule of law, statehood, enlightenment and equality to be major components to define West” (2). Even among all these, for Waters, “Protestant Reformation was critical” (164). The Reformation strengthened the status of every individual raising universalism at a level by advocating the possibility of the direct relationship between the God and an individual, thus, leading to individualism and equality—another major component of West.

Thus, West as a notion is the world’s economically prosperous, culturally White dominant and politically democratic region of the world—no matter it is east or west. Its cultural base is Protestantism; economic base is capitalism invariably enforced by consumerism; political base is the advocacy for equality, and thus, democracy.

Now, let’s move to a point whether the contemporary change is a process of westernization or globalization since these changes that have been identified as established are more Western in nature rather than looking global. Regarding the enmeshing of the socio-economic entities of the contemporary world, Arjun Appadurai offers five main categories, namely: *financescape*, *ethnoscape*, *mediascape*, *ideoscape* and *technoscape* (33). His observation of the globalizing phenomenon is nothing but mobility in various aspects of our contemporary living. Waters, in this regard, makes even more clear and categorical remarks. He finds globalization to be “the direct consequence of the expansion of the European culture across the planet via settlement, colonization and cultural replication” (6). In this connection, Waters seems more presumed with the thought that the process of globalization is merely unidirectional.

However, Deleuze and Guattari on the contemporary global cultural economy seem to have different views about the global connections of people's culture and economy. They find the global scenario to be "rhizomic" (qtd. in Appadurai 29). Thus, most important aspect implied in their argument is the nature of flows of culture and economy around the globe. They believe these flows to be criss-crossed. Now, of course, the flow is not restricted to be a unidirectional but a multidirectional one and the return or the profits have been the major principle of attraction of such flows. But along this process also larger share of the profit is invariably directed towards the West.

In their search for larger market shares and higher investment return or profits, companies have had to consider more flexible modes of production and cheaper labour costs. As a result, Transnational Corporates (TNCs) welcome globalization because it can be a good reason for them to roam the world for cheaper materials and cheaper labour. The search for cheaper labour has led to what economists call the new international division of labour. What this means, for example, is that if labour costs for manufacturing rise above a certain level, they move to other destinations in which they would get another set of cheaper labour. Nike, for example, moved from South Korea to Indonesia for the reason of the increased cost for manufacture where a worker may be paid as little as fifteen cents an hour (Barnet and Cavanagh 326).

Whatever may be the pattern of economic flow, the invariably established fact of our time is growing westernization of world's various cultures. Progress and prosperity in every part of the world is measured in relation to the capitalist West—to express it in Robertson's term, "it must relativize itself" (qtd. in Waters 6). However, there can be possibility a rejection of westernization as through "local-to-local" relationships. But the contemporary deterritorialization

of politico-economic arrangement itself is a European model and this is the reason why globalization has become yet another model of westernization.

### **Westernization and Consumerism**

A different pattern observed in many economies of the contemporary world is growing dependency in the market products. Earlier economies of the subsistent types are crumbling because of the improvement in people's purchasing capacity and easy availability of market goods. This is bringing not only the world's economies together but people's behaviours also together. Growing interconnectivity among the economies is not only availing people with opportunities of earning but also habits of spending. Thus, this phenomenon is termed as global consumer culture. This is quite synonymically termed as Americanization, Coca-colaization and McDonaldization. This instance is clear how American consumer culture has been adopted worldwide because both of the abovementioned brands are exclusively American brands expanded worldwide.

It is easy to see how consumerism can be accused of serving the interests of global capitalism, dominated by TNCs based in the United States. The dynamic of permanently increasing consumption of the products of capitalist enterprise feeds through the profit maximizing practices of each individual unit to the system as a whole, irrespective of the consequences for the planet. The specific task of the global capitalist system in the Third World is to promote consumerism among people with no regard for their own ability to produce for themselves, and with only an indirect regard for their ability to pay for what they are consuming. Consumerism, thus, has nothing to do with satisfying people's biological needs but creating induced wants.

In their search for larger market shares and higher investment return or profits, companies have had to consider more flexible modes of production and cheaper labour costs. As a result, Transnational Corporates (TNCs) welcome globalization because it allows them to roam the world for cheap materials and cheap labour. The search for cheap labour has led to what economists call the new international division of labour. What this means, for example, is that if labour costs for manufacturing athletic shoes rise above a certain level in the country where costs are much cheaper, the production plants are moved to other locations, possibly other countries. Nike, for example, moved from South Korea to Indonesia where a worker may be paid as little as fifteen cents an hour (Barnet and Cavanagh 326). Capital's search for cheap labour has resulted in the deindustrialization of parts of North America and Europe- the so-called rust belt- and the increasing industrialization of the Far East whose large populations provide a source of cheap labor and environmental standards in the interest of growth. It is interesting to note in this context that the strongest advocates of a global free market are also the most voluble critics of arguments for global parity of wages, global labour laws, and global human rights.

### **Culture, Media and Hybridity**

According to Marwan M. Kraidy, "hybridity is one of the emblematic notions of our era" (1). His statement comes as a celebration of cultural fusion from the West and the East or from the North and the South. Basically, derived from a Latin word to mean the offspring of a domestic sow and a wild boar, hybridity, these days is widely understood as a concept describing the electronic gadgets of multipurpose, designer agricultural seeds, postcolonial cultures, etc. Looking at all the intended descriptions of hybridity, we can find a common thing in all of them; that is their quality of blending of the varying features into the same.

The recent expansion of the term hybridity has been very common in many areas of academic or non-academic practices which compels us to think about its relevancy in the contemporary socio-economic scenario—how this situation has aroused to the surrounding of us and how it has been represented in the academic fields. Thus, this term has been an image to the socio-cultural phenomena. Whether it is the writings of Bhabha writing about the postcolonial world-order and cultural practices or it is Edward Said's writing about Orientalism, the concept of hybridity comes in one or the other way. Colonial homogenization and standardization of the native cultures to their culture of the West was a common phenomenal ground to use the term hybridity for Bhabha in which he argues hybridity to be “a strategy of subversion of political and cultural domination” (6) whereas the mystification of the native cultures of the East in the light of the Western hegemonization was the background to Said's thesis on Orientalism in which he argued that Orientalism was “a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient” (3).

Though Said and Bhabha might have taken different ontological and empirical bases to come to their conclusions but the implications of this term have been quite relevant to this discussion at present. Both of them have a presupposition of the colonial residue attached to the term hybridity. The linkage between these two prominent philosophers of the present time shows that the term has a high analytical potentiality, however, understanding hybridity in the wake of the present global world has basically cultural paradigm in which cultures of the extremes, in terms of North/South, East/West, developed/underdeveloped, blend as an inevitable socio-cultural phenomenon.

Said's critique on the Western authoritative and hegemonizing stance reminds us of the idea of Antonio Gramsci when he wrote about the concept of hegemony as the process of "giving

consent" to the other for his/her domination which has an obvious linkage to the process of European expansion through colonization (6). Though Said has taken hybridity to be a fundamental dimension of intercultural relations, Bhabha has clearly captured the imperial dynamics of hybridity, and thus claimed it to be the tool of resistance.

Now, the question arises how do these extremes of cultures blend? It is always a matter of concern when we discuss about the blending of the cultures that whether they are mixed up in equitable manner in which all the elements of the whole are identifiable or they are mixed up in such a way that one is dominant and the next is transformed to look like the dominant one. Regarding the patterns of this blending process, Paul Lee has identified and metaphorized four patterns: parrot pattern, amoeba pattern, coral pattern and butterfly pattern (Qtd. in Kraidy 6). He described the nature of these patterns, too. According to him, the parrot pattern meant a wholesale mimicry of foreign culture by local industries—both in form and content. The amoeba pattern meant a modified form with the same content. To make it clear, he has given example of the foreign movie made for the local consumption. The next one which he calls as coral pattern is meant as the process in which cultural products whose cont is changed but the form is as the original. Finally, the last pattern the butterfly pattern meant to be a radical hybridization that blends the two entities in such a way that the native (or domestic) and the foreign become indistinguishable. Understanding the patterns of hybridity as suggested by Paul Lee can be an important tool for understanding the contemporary patterns of cultural fusion that prevail in our society because cultural blendings due to various reasons have been experienced in various aspects of socio-cultural realm.

Globalization forces are hegemonizing other indigenous cultures everywhere. Not surprisingly, this process is carried ahead by the world-wide mass media of our world today. In

villages that continue to be deprived of the basic necessities of life it is possible to watch Star TV, MTV, Zee TV, cable TV or other MP4 videos. The cultural invasion by consumerism is becoming pervasive, creating a severe conflict between what is desirable and what is available. The invasion by images is critical. For the time in histories of countries like ours we are watching the homogenization of Western or Northern culture into a consolidated, alluring image of the other, of a liberal capitalist, materially and sexually exciting market, of a world where comparison with our life can only force us to look up to it in reverence.

### **Fordism to the Rise of Samsung: An Easy Access to Goods and Technology**

Fordism is the consumerist ideological paradigm arising after the name of The Ford Motor Company of the USA, which advocated the mass production of standardized items aiming at reducing the cost per unit. To achieve this, the company adopted basically three strategies in its production system: mechanization intensively, production at large scale and utilization of capital equipments. This famous transformation of the production system was termed as Fordism. Success of The Ford Motor Company after the adoption of this system of production, it became idealized system of production everywhere. This system gave “high incomes” and “mass markets” to the producers (Waters 49). Later, this system became “idealized system of production not only in the capitalist West but in the socialist East” (49).

However, this system was valued not only in terms of its possibilities of high incomes but in terms of its influences in political and social lives of people because Fordism was an effective means through which the labour process was controlled and manipulated by providing a significant amount of wages. This, according to Waters, led to the transformation of the “proletarians into instrumental workers” (49).

But Fordism was not unlike any other process of globalization that would not adapt to the distant culture of value systems. Take for example; its transformation of the proletariat into the instrumental workers acquired the attention of a manipulative paradigm of management called 'human relations'. Thus, for its survival and expansion, Fordism also adopted value system of varying cultures wherever its firms were established. This was, in a sense, another kind of negotiation in the level of value system made by the so-called global with so-called local.

In such a scenario, success of Samsung as the world's leading mobile brand has raised an issue whether it has adopted the same system of production as established by The Ford Motor Company (*Kantipur*. August 2, 2012). The same *Kantipur* writeup says, it has engineers from various countries around the world engaged in constant research and development (R&D) activities. Success of Samsung is hardly anything but the success of a business, yet its fundamental principles of production called Fordism marks how it has been a means of penetrating the economies of remote localities and a means of establishing consumerist culture there.

### **Globalization: A Multi-centric or Borderless World?**

Political economists, on the other hand, view globalization not so much as a continuous and growing linear process but, rather, as a process punctuated by upward and movements—periods of expansion, decline and stagnation. Most political economists place the take off phase of globalization in the nineteenth century, an era marked by the stability of the gold standard and international finance. Many political economists agree with Robertson regarding the linkages between globalization and modernization. This linkage seems to be shared by social scientists across disciplinary boundaries. Among social theorists, Anthony Giddens views globalization as an intrinsic consequence of modernity. Giddens defines globalization as an "intensification of



worldwide social relations which link distant localities" (64). This account is not far removed from the argument of James Rosenau theorizes the dualism of the world in two terms: "a state-centric and a multi-centric" (Qtd. in Waters 12). He presents globalization as a "boundary-eroding process and a movement jeopardizing the domestic/foreign frontier" (Rosenau 81).

Lucian Pye, a Spokesman of mainstream American political science, and an expert on development, writing in his book *Aspects of Political Development*, notes that the process of development and modernization may also be called "Westernization". Both during the Cold War and in more recent years, a number of intellectuals have been troubled by and openly critical of the asymmetry of global relations and the reality of the Western hegemony in the postcolonial world. Immanuel Wallerstein's "world-system theory" has, for several decades, exposed and criticized the inequities in global economic and cultural relations. The persistence of postcolonial Western hegemony is also a central theme of Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism*, published in the aftermath of the Cold War.

Strategic global theorists like Samuel Huntington have also written widely on postcolonial hegemony. Huntington's (1993) work is often attacked for his provocative thesis of an impending clash of civilizations. His thesis transfers the traditional enmity of states into the arena of cross-cultural relations and observes the threats to America in being multicultural along the process of globalization.

However, this has not gone unchallenged. Andrew Hurrell and Ngaire Woods have critiqued the persistent and deepening strains of inequality fostered and covered up by the globalization process. Raimo Vayrnen's study of global transformation in terms of economy, politics and culture is very explicit about global disparities. He exposes the emergence of an international class structure—the division between middle-class and underclass societies that is

paralleled by a cultural division between hegemonic and non-hegemonic cultural frameworks and traditions. Vayrnen believes that while the former are largely compatible with globalization, the latter undergoes a process of dislocation and marginalization.

Although we are readily adapting to the pos and cons coming along globalization process, but we cannot completely agree with the pro-globalization logic. The circumstances have shown that in the masks of globalization Western form of modernity has come to non-Western societies through the vehicle of colonial or post-colonial forms of Western hegemony. Thus, globalization is kind of foreign intervention or globalization from above and a form of negligence of the world's multiplicity and diversity.

Globalization, as a process, is today's new form of Western imperialistic thought system, however, people's perception regarding this phenomenon greatly vary. Though many scholars view today's world's socio-cultural as well as politico-economic boundaries seem to be collapsing but enough asymmetries remain along the trajectory of this process. Western cultures, whether brought forth by the historical process of colonization or recent development in the area of mass media, are very loosely declared to be global by many scholars. But a fact is clear that these intruding cultures have to negotiate with the so-called local cultures around the globe. Similarly, romanticized and mystified local cultures are also receding within a society where 'transculturation' is not a new phenomenon, may it be not a Western culture in contact to a so-called local culture to affect it, but any other Eastern culture. Yet, to be globalized it amazingly needs the presence of something Western in one side. This is why, globalization, is the expansion of politically hegemonistic, economically capitalistic and consumerist, and culturally, ladden with Western value systems.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Globalizing Solvents in Nepali Society

#### *Chhodka: The Net-Man (There is No Work These Days)*

I spent most of my life in my village till I reached the age of twenty-two. It is a village in Dang, and dominantly inhabited by the Tharu. We heard a legend quite often when we were children that this place was ruled by the Tharu kings and one of the most quoted names was Dangisaran. They said the name of this district was named after this name. This legend also tells us about the Tharus. They were not the migrant but the original residents of this place for centuries.

Earlier, when I was a child, my fancies had no boundaries when the time of catching fishes from the nearby rivulet or paddy fields came. But it was an odd act to do so for a boy from a Brahmin family. So I had to follow the Tharu boys who had the necessary wherewithal for catching fishes. Every Tharu family had *helka* (a half-circular net supported and expanded by bamboo stick on all sides and used to prevent fishes to run away from the water outlets; from the net passes water but not the fishes) and *delle* (a pot with open mouth and made of bamboo sticks by weaving them) hung on the wall of their house to make fish catching easier. I fancied to possess at least one when I saw them hung on the wall as I passed by.

Tharu people go to the rivulet for catching fishes in various occasions in most of the seasons throughout the year, and go to the paddy fields in the rainy and autumn season. Usually, they go in a group of either a single family or some families in the village. As a common technique of catching fishes, they make small canal by the side of the main current of the rivulet and made the water pass through it. For the remaining water in the place of catching fishes, they remove it by the help of some kind of flat wooden piece. It is a very good time for us to collect

some fishes from the area they discard after they have caught fishes because we still can collect many fishes hiding under the mud from those areas. They usually indicate such discarded areas by making lines of mud at their back. Though we are always aware that we are not intruding the area they have still to discard, we, sometimes, cannot stop ourselves and the result is always the same—either scolding or a slap.

Since *helka* and *delle* are so much important to Tharu people in my village, there is a dedicated supplier of these goods too. The supplier is *Chhodka*, the *Matau* (the chief of the village affairs) of my village. Though he is in his 70s, he is a consistent weaver of *helka*. When I go to *Chhodka*'s house, he will be busy in weaving *helka* all the time, or he will be busy preparing jute fiber for weaving *helka*. Though this is customary to him but I have mused quite often how *Chhodka*'s everyday life is occupied by his weaving business.

*Chhodka* never depends on the market for his weaving. He neither uses any tools from market for weaving nor does he use any kind of fibers bought from market. His weaving tools are so simple and plain that they all are made of locally found bamboo pieces. I have seen him so many times making these tools. They are all like blades of varying breadths.

The bamboo blades are so attractive to me that every time I see them they always invite me to use them for weaving my own *helka* and *tapi*. Once, I tried to weave with *Chhodka* when I was at home after my S.L.C. (School Leaving Certificate) examination. It was the month of April. He was sitting under the shade of a mango tree in my fruit garden. I asked him to teach me the weaving skill. He looked quite grim with a kind of anxiety about how a Brahmin boy who was attending school education could engage in weaving nets like *helka* and *tapi*. His answer was, "*Thakurwa fen machchhi mara lagla se kauna manain skul jaakar padhi? Machchhi marna ta Tharun ka kaam ho je baabu.*" (If the landlords [he meant Brahmins] also start catching fish,

who will go to school for studies? Catching fishes is the business of Tharu people). He was clear about the fact that catching fishes exclusively belonged to a particular the Tharus. It was his firm belief that the society should have division of works on the basis of ethnicity and caste system. In fact, this looked a truth because my parents also believed the same, therefore, I could not learn *Chhodka's* skill openly. Moreover, they never realized how on earth any Brahmin boy could do this when Tharus supplied fish as gift if they had caught more.

Catching fish is a matter of commitment: Tharu people are committed to it. It will be a matter of insult if Brahmins and Chhetris catch fish. People hardly go for fishing also if anybody has put foliage into the rivulet in the time of *Dashain* (great Hindu festival falling usually during September-October) and *Maghi* (an important Tharu festival celebrated as New Year falling during December-January). It means commitment and reservation. People in my village give it the name *veora* (part of rivulet separated by putting dams and foliage to give fishes proper hiding).

Similarly, when it is the time of *Atwari* (a Tharu festival usually falling in the month of September but according to the lunar calendar in which Tharu men take fast and prepare various kinds of dishes. The other day, they take the dishes like rice and fish-curry to their married sister's house as a share.) many Tharu women go to the paddy canals nearby my village. They have a *helka* in their hands and a *delle* (an urn made of bamboo sticks by weaving them like a net used for putting fishes after catching them from water. It is usually tied on the waist so as to put fishes as fast as possible) tied on their waist. Many women come out from the village enjoying each others' company with part of a *chhokada* (a typical paired rhyming song) and *maghauta* (a typical paired rhyming song particularly sung during the festival of *Maghi*).

We follow these women also because their efforts of catching fishes will work for us, too. They remove water from the canal and catch fishes and crabs and discard the areas where we catch fishes after their departure. Usually, they sing the *Astamkiha* (songs that are sung by Tharu people during the celebration days of the Lord Krishna's birth festival), *Chhokada*, and sometimes, *Maghauta*.

Catching fishes is not always same and not always in the similar manner. When the summer monsoon brings the first rainfall and the rivulet gets flooded for the first time, the following days will be a different ritual. Usually, women go to the rivulet with their *helka* and *delle* searching for fishes. But when it is the time of *Atwari* they collect fishes in the paddy fields and the paddy-canals. Usually, all the family members get involved in this ritual. Then, as the monsoon gradually become low, they use *kwange* (a conical structure made of the stems of reeds with wide opening side) and trap fishes in it. After the monsoon starts to recede, the season of *Dashain* begins and *Tharus* make *veora* in the nearby rivulets and canals:

*Garwa wa kulwama*

*Veora banaibi[,]*

*machchhi wa gekta marke*

*Dashya manaibi[.]*

(In the rivulet and canals we will make *veora* and by catching fishes and crabs we will celebrate *Dashain*.)

*Dashain*, is followed by the onset of winter season and they make *supli* (a huge half conical structure made of bamboo sticks with open upper side, and the wider side of which is placed against the current of the rivulet. The narrower part at the end of which is used as a trap). Once, when I had been to the *supli* to ask for some fishes, Bhoje was there nearby guarding it.

He offered me a few fishes. But as I asked him for some more fishes, he told me that in days to come the water would get colder and then he would be able to give more fish because as the water gets colder the fishes move towards the current and fall in the trap of *supli*. The Tharu people have knowledge about the behaviour of fish, too. As a regular supplier of the tools and materials for catching fishes, *Chhodka* enjoys a life of dignity among other Tharu people. He keeps himself busy all the time in weaving nets. So, I know him as net-man.

These days, however, *Chhodka*, the same net-man, is hardly found under the shadow of mango tree weaving *helka*. Rather, I find the wrappers of Spicy Instant Fish disposed at the back of his house while passing by. In fact, I had been to my village last March I observed how globalization has affected life of the people there and what sorts of effect as well as perception could be seen among the people there.

As I noticed the wrappers, I was amazed to see it there. Because *Chhodka* was a synonymous with fish-net and, source of knowledge of catching fishes. However, the wrapper of readymade packed fishes was still a matter of amazement. So, to see this kind of change around *Chhodka's* family gave me an idea that he could be a participant of my research.

Determined to include *Chhodka* as my research participant, I went to his house with all the hope that he would be found weaving *helka* (fish-net) sitting under some trees that grew in his backyard garden. Going there at his house was very common thing for me because I had to go there sometimes to call his son *Barka* (the eldest) who worked for my family as a labourer. It was a hot day in the month of March. I searched for him under the tree—his usual place, but could not find him there. Later, I found him with Punaram listening to a Tharu song, *Astamkiha* (a typical tuned song sung by Tharu people during the month of August, the birth celebration of

Lord Krishna) in the DVD player. I joined him with the usual courtesy, "How are you Chhodka?"

He gestured me respectfully and said, "When did you come home, babu?" Just after his question, I answered him in a readymade manner that I had been there just the preceding day. By this time, he looked quite uncomfortable to be in front of the DVD player. He could have thought it to be a mismatch to his age and experience.

"How is your weaving, Chhodka?" I asked. This question added even more discomfort on his face.

"There is no work these days, babu." His answer was mixed with a kind of grim but shortly after that he added, "Now days, there are no fishes in the rivulet and paddy fields so people don't waste time for catching fishes nor do they come to ask for a fish-net. Rather, they buy fishes from the shops in plastic packets."

"What made the fishes disappear, Chhodka?" I asked.

"People use hybrid seeds and market fertilizers in the paddy fields. So, it killed fishes." He appeared confident in his answer that all the wrong was happening due to the changed farming system.

Just after his answer to my question, I moved up to a different sort of question and asked, "Chhodka, how many helka do you weave in a month?"

He answered grimly, "Earlier, I used to make one-twenty and five (25) in a month. (Tharu people, in my village, count taking the base of twenty, thus, 68 becomes three-twenty and eight). Now, all go to the shop and buy market fish in plastic packets and nobody comes to me for helka. There is no work these days."

Then I asked further, "How much do you ask for a helka, Chhodka?"



"How much to ask? They offered me jaad (locally made crude intoxicating drink) and I made helka for them, but now, nobody needs it." His answer was a clear indication that the traditional way of catching fishes had, by that time, gradually changed. He had simply stopped receiving orders for the nets, which meant loss of job for him but his relationship with Punaram meant a lot. Earlier, Punaram was an example of laziness and joblessness but as he went to Malaysia and returned home after two years, he had been a man of worth for all of the village. So, *Chhodka* had befriended Punaram. And the reason for this relationship was the DVD player that Punaram had brought from Malaysia.

After taking a short pause, I asked, "Why did they stop asking for a helka, Chhodka?"

"Jamana. It's jamana, babu." Though the word *jamana* is equivalent to 'time' but in this conversation, he meant the changed contemporary time that I am discussing as globalization. His face was quite grim at this word and most probably he meant *jamana* in negative terms. His tone of disapproval to the new time could clearly tell me that he meant *jamana* to be something like a storm that brought such a big change around him.

After observing him for a while, I asked him again, "So, you have got an easy life with this jamana? There is no need to weave and no need to go to catching fish. Rather, enough time to listen to songs. Or, how do you think, Chhodka?"

"Though it's easy... because... no problem in eating... but I've not enjoyed losing my previous job of weaving. People valued me as a matau but nobody today values a matau. I was the only person weaving helka for people in these five villages, but who needs it now? Three or four years earlier, I had bought 'lylon' [he meant nylon] from bazaar thinking that people would like it but they didn't. Now, they have enough money earned in Malaysia and they buy fish in shop. This jamana is very bad, and hard to understand."

*Chhodka's* evaluation of *jamana*, however, was not one-sided. He had evaluated it as good in the sense that it had brought a better sort of scenario in the village—a kind of prosperity. More than celebrating the advent of this contemporary situation of globalization, he seemed to be seriously affected by this. In fact, *jamana*, which I am discussing as globalization have swept away every value associated with indigenous skills. However, he has tried to cope up with the situation by buying nylon thread to weave nets. His efforts of preserving and promoting the so-called local has been even compromised with the market commodity marketed by some multi/national company. It is a negotiation of the local with global for its survival. In this regard, Robertson's (1994) concept of "glocalization" in which negotiation of global with local for its proliferation becomes relevant. *Chhodka's* case is hardly any case of proliferation rather an effort of survival, and possibly a process of "reverse-glocalization". But the major impression about "glocalization" is that it has been successful in its project but not in the reverse process.

Now, I move to the topic of music as *Chhodka* is seen being busy listening to songs in Punaram's DVD player. "What is the song you were listening to, *Chhodka*?" I asked.

"That is *Chhokada* song, the one that is sung during *Maghi* and other festivals. May be you have heard it. What an amazing thing! Our *chhokada* song also is in radio (for him, every electronic gadget for playing music is radio). This *Tharu chhokada* song is also in the radio. What an amazing *jamana* has come around us. I have heard only *Nepali* songs in the radio but now our *chhokada* also. The only benefit of my living up to now is to see the things like these." His answer reminds me of the idea how globalization has brought the two paradoxical entities together: the collapse of indigeneity but the revival of the local. *Chhodka's* indigenous skill of weaving has turned out to be useless with the new *jamana* but at the same time, local and sub-

national artefacts like music of ethnic communities have been revived because of the huge investment made by the globally expanding recording industries.

After I wanted to know whether Chhodka had accepted the phenomenon of globalization as celebratory or not. To be more precise, I wanted to know whether he had agreed to the changes brought by globalization. So, I asked, "So, don't you think you'll be back at weaving business after some time?"

"Who'll again ask me to weave a net? Jamana has extensively changed, babu. Now, it's better to adjust with this *jamana*. Children also had been complaining of my weaving because they wanted me to ask an amount for the net. But I never liked selling them as a shopkeeper would do. Better, I'm fine to eat whatever they manage fromzin the field and market and listen to the songs. No work, no quarrels."

His answer is an approval of the changed *jamana* (globalization). The changes brought by globalization have appeared to be more tangible and truer to him than his status as a net-man. He has realized that the more early he adjusts to this phenomenon, the better will be his life. Thus, globalization for him seems to be the carrier of prosperity and happiness. However, he had a strong disapproval on its one effect: his skill has been useless and he has been jobless.

### ***Barki* Thinks *Mubile* (Mobile) is Inevitable**

Every time I go to my home village, I find *Barki* working in my house: cleansing, and weeding, cutting grass for buffaloes or making dung-cakes for making fire in the kitchen. She works as a *kamlari* in my home and she has been almost a family member. Her age must be around 50 years, slightly younger than my mother. She has a son and a daughter. The son is elder between the two who has been to Malaysia along with his father for two years.

Last time, when I had been home, I saw a worn out Samsung cell-phone set hanging on the wall. The set had a piece of thread tied at its corner and hung on the wall at the other end. The set was plugged in onto the switch board for charging. It looked as an old set so it could possibly give a short back-up. The thread was shining as it was completely wrapped by the blackness of the kitchen smoke. I asked my mother whom did the cell phone belong. She looked amazingly keen to talk about that and told me that the cell phone belonged to *Barki*. Her amazement was clearly telling me that *Barki* also owned a cell phone!

As I came to know that *Barki* owned a cell phone, I realized she could be my research participant as she could have some views about this latest technology of the ICT, a prominent feature of globalization. For this reason, I waited for her till she came there after collecting some firewood.

"Barki, how are you?" I asked.

"We are fine, babu. When did you come from Kathmandu?" She answered, but with one more question.

"Everything is fine....And... Barki, when did you buy this phone?"

"This Mubile? Just a few months ago. But this is just a second hand." She replied but she had a sense of inferiority about her old and second hand set.

"Where did you buy this?"

"Mallha's son Budhe had brought it from 'Malesya' (Malasia) and I got it from him for two thousand rupees. Is this price fine, babu? I think, he cheated me."

This conversation reminded me of those days when I was an elementary school child. *Barki* used to work for us then also. Usually, in the morning, I had seen her frequently asking for

one rupee note from my grandmother to buy a match-box. But at this time, she had a Samsung cell phone bought for the cost of two thousand rupees!

It was not only *Barki* who practiced to preserve fire putting some pieces of firewood dung cakes in the oven after cooking, but most of the villagers did it so that they would stop wasting even a single match-stick. Take for example; as she cooked her *kalwa* (lunch), she did not put off the fire but preserved it for the evening meal *beri*. She preserved the fire by putting firewood or dung cakes. If the fire was gone, they asked for the fire in the neighbourhood instead of using a match-stick. They used it only in the cases when they had to make fire outside their house. I used to think that they could not buy it but *Chhodka's* reluctance of selling his *helka* clarified a fact that they had no such culture of depending on the market goods as far as practicable.

Now, *Barki* is still working for us but has a cell phone bought for such a huge amount. So I continued the conversation and asked, "Such a huge amount! Isn't it a waste of money, *Barki*?"

"Babu, this is of great work. It has made me so easy to talk to *Barka* (*Barki's* husband) and *Bimale* in 'Malesya'."

I still insisted and said, "You could talk to them through the PCO also, isn't it?"

"Every other woman in the village has a new mobile set to talk to their man (by saying 'man' she meant husband, though their sons were also outside the country). It's my compulsion, *babu*." I was still amazed how a mobile phone could be a compulsion for those who hardly managed even one rupee note for a match-box! This question made me think further; whether this was her compulsion or her desire.

After a short pause, I asked, "So, if you lose it, are you going to buy a new one?"

"This is an old and second-hand set. So, whether I lose it or not, I'll buy a new Samsung set as that of Punaram. I'm waiting till Barka sends money from 'Malesya'. I'll buy such a set that will have songs to play. It's nice to listen to the music while working outside."

I added, "What do you want to listen in it?"

"Songs."

"Tharu songs or anything else?" I asked question for clarification.

"All.... Tharu, Nepali, or Hindi. All."

"Will Barka be still happy with you if you spend so much on mobile phone?"

"Jamana is so much changed. Every other woman in the village has a good mobile set with so many songs. How could Barka only be so cruel to me? Will he not be able to know how jamana is now? Should he not be aware of the changes appearing around him?"

"And, what type of songs do you have in it, Barki?" I asked.

"All. Tharu, Hindi, Nepali. All. Yeah, Punaram has kept an American song also."

Barki completed her words but her words seemed a little more boastful when she was saying she had songs of all languages and cultures. Moreover, her boastful words suggested to me that she could show herself by having such a mobile phone that had "all". So, her perception about this change was quite celebratory.

### **My Grandmother Loves *Nukkalalu* (local breed of potato)**

I still remember, when I was a school child I was part of a large joint family. We had a large plot of land near our house which was called *aalubari* (piece of land separated for sowing potato) though this land was used for sowing maize also during the rainy season. After harvesting maize in the month of August/September, we planted potato there. Panchuram and his

brother ploughed the field and we put the seeds of potato at their back. And when the month of December came, we all went to *aalubari* and harvested potato.

My grandmother was all watchful during the time of harvest, in the land and back home. She was mainly worried on two concerns: one was whether we children were taking potato to bake it and the second concern was whether we were careful enough not to cut more potatoes while our digging with a tool called *kuto*. She was worried on the first point because we cousins were many in numbers and if we took potato haphazardly that would cause shortage later on because we ate that potato for the whole year. The second point for her worry was that if we cut many potatoes by our *kuto*, it would cause the shortage of seed for the next session. She was perhaps in her late sixties at that time but she looked very energetic and enthusiastic about the sowing and harvesting of potato. It looked to me that she was born for potato: a potato expert.

She started preserving potato seeds in the months of February/March. For this, she separated potatoes according to the size. After separating potatoes of desired sizes she called Panchuram for further help. He brought paddy-straw, some ropes and a *chhitwa* (a large bowl-like vessel made of bamboo sticks that can carry 10-15 kgs. of weight). Then, he put ropes in the bottom of *chhitwa* and straw over this, and potatoes at last. As it filled, he tied it with ropes from all sides and took it away for hanging by the side of balcony. This looked like a big pouch made of straw and beneath this the potatoes were kept. But my grandmother decided everything about it: the size, number, place etc. of the pouch.

There was a large separate room in our house which was used for storing potatoes. Though we had three buildings for our residence, the room was in the building in which my grandfather, grandmother and three unmarried uncles slept. My grandmother worked for many days to separate potatoes according to their size, and made heaps according to their size.

Everyday, she brought potatoes for the dishes that would be prepared for every meal in the morning and evening. If any child among us entered the room, she would scold us and her scolding would have the similar remarks every time that the potato in the store was for the whole year and we needed to be careful to make it last till the next season!

The season of sowing potato was marked by the harvest of maize. *Aaalubari* looked very charming. So looked my grandmother with her incomparable enthusiasm. She called Panchuram and told him to land the potato-pouches from the balcony. As the pouches were landed and opened, every seed had some shoots which proved my grandmother's decision to be right because they were ready for sowing. Then, we all went to *aalubari* carrying compost manure which was prepared of the buffalo dung. Panchuram carried the potato seeds in *chhitwa*. After this, Panchuram and his brother would plough the field and we would drop the seeds which were later followed by the task of putting maize-hay over the field as the last ritual of sowing potato.

Then, in the month of December, the day of harvesting potato would come. My grandmother would decide the day of the harvesting. Though my grandfather used to make most of the decisions in my home, but then I never knew why she used to decide this every time. Now, I guess, it was fairly a kitchen matter to my grandfather!

After the harvest, a ritual would take place. My grandmother would put fire on the dry maize-hay and put some potatoes over it to bake; and as they were fully baked, she would distribute them among all of us in the field. But we children wanted more to bake ourselves. At that, she would respond with the same remarks every year, "Where to get more? This should last for the whole year. If it is over before Dashain (A Hindu festival usually falls in the month of September), what shall we do? Last year, there was a very good harvest, but this year it's too



little.” And after few weeks, she would start working on the separation of potatoes according to the size.

But now, my grandmother is not so enthusiastic about potato. It is perhaps because she must have lost her interest in potato or because she is too old now to be an enthusiast in such a matter. This time in June, when I was at my home, there were no potato pouches hanging by the side of balcony. Though I had not been able to see them hanging for about four or five years, I thought there must be something behind this. Otherwise, my grandmother would never let it happen.

Last year, just after *Tihar* (A Hindu festival falling usually in the month of October) I had seen my grandfather walking to the cold-store at Tulsipur and Panchuram following him carrying a jute sack. They brought potato seeds from bazar. But this time, I realized we, and particularly my grandmother, had agreed to depend on market for potato seeds. Last year’s memory compelled me to think how our crop cycle had changed and changed our traditional knowledge of preserving seeds. Confused at the situation, I asked my grandmother, “Jeï (I use this word to call my grandmother), why don’t I see anymore potato, what shall we eat this year?”

“The days are over, now. Panche (she says Panche to Panchuram) had asked for adhya (farming crops in half-share system) and brought carinal (she meant cardinal potato—a hybrid type) from bazar, and after that potato is gone.”

“What is the name of that potato seed you said just now?”

“Carinal.”

“Was that not fine, then? It gives good harvest also.” I interrogated.

“So was Panche excited about. This is neither tasty nor good to preserve for seed. Every year he has to go to bazar and buy seed. And it’s so costly to buy seed. Now he has realized the

mistakes he had made. But what to do, two years after that we tried to sow ‘nukkalalu’ (she meant local breed of potato) it did not work, now the field is also spoiled. And as we try to eat carinal, it tastes so bad.”

My grandmother’s lamentation for *nukkalalu* was not a surprise to me because I had seen her attachment with potato but now her indifference to this ‘potato-affair’ meant a lot to me. It was a detachment of the local agent from the local affairs and an indication of their loss of control over their indigenous practices. In fact, it was the issue of whether these hybrid seeds enrich people or plunder them. Take for example; the worldwide proliferation of ‘Monsanto Seeds’ has aroused heated debates on whether they are enriching the people in the distant localities with better productivity or plundering their indigenous knowledge and practices for its profit.

### **Chhodki *Matini* likes a Flower Garden in the Place of *Marwa***

Chhodki Matini is in her seventies and I know her since my childhood. She is the second wife of Chhodka and a legitimate *matini* (the wife who lives together with *matau* and plays particular socio-religious roles in Tharu community which resembles the concept of first-lady) of our village. She loved me very much because her son Dubulle and I used to play together. I also used to go to her house frequently because she used to give me chicken soup that was brought by Chhodka from his client’s house. More than this, I liked to follow her when she used to go to village *ghattwa* (a Tharu word to mean spring of water where they go to fetch water) to offer vermilion after the *ghattwa* was cleansed. The reason was that she gave me a handful of fish from her share. It was the duty of the *matini* to purify *ghattwa* by offering vermilion to it brought from *marwa* (the place for Tharu god which is like a small hut) that was established in the backyard of *matau*. The *marwa* was a highly cleansed and tidy place where Chhodki *matini*

placed all the *bhuttwa* (Tharu god) and they were the idols of horses made of clay. Its roof was mended every time she offered vermilion and its floor was cleansed with a broom everyday. Around the *marwa*, there would be a large open space that was neat and clean where there would grow no grass. Chhodki removed every bit of grass growing nearby. It looked really a place of honour.

But this cannot be seen these days. The *ghattwa* is there but people have their own well for drinking water and they hardly go there. Tall grasses and reeds have covered it. I was confused why they might have discarded it in such a manner since it was one of the major places that *Chhodki Matini* had to look for, and all other villagers too.

As almost a month passed, a lot of grasses would grow around the *Ghattwa*. *Chhodki Matini* would call a volunteer from each family. Then, they all would gather to cleanse it but no one cares it now. So I decided to talk to *Chhodki Matini* on this matter:

“How are you, Chhodki?” I asked.

“Fine, babu.”

I was hurried to know the fact about people’s negligence towards *ghattwa* so I asked a series of questions, “Chhodki, why is *ghattwa* so deserted? No one goes there perhaps. Was there any mishap?”

“Who will go, babu? Every house has a well now made by the ‘ress cross’ (she meant ‘Red Cross’) and nobody goes.”

“So, don’t you offer vermilion?” I asked.

“People left going to *ghattwa*, so I don’t need to offer vermilion. Rather, I have grown a garden of flower in the place of *marwa*. Nobody values *bhuttwa*, now. Who will value it in this *bikase jamana*?”

I was shocked how she could make a garden of flower in place of *marwa* (though the *marwa* was there but it looked completely discarded)? But *Chhodki Matini* was quite confident about it. She had started to value a garden of flower rather than her *bhuttwa*. I asked her why she had chosen for the garden of flower instead of some vegetable. Her answer was that she had seen a garden of flower in the houses shown on the television shows that she managed to watch in my home when she was there to watch TV. She was very clear that she also had to have one like that of the TV. It was more charming than the old *marwa* which she told “useless” since today’s *bikase jamana* had wiped all the values they had earlier with *bhuttwa*.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### **Galvanizing Western Cultures in Nepali Literature: A Case of Padmawati Singh's**

#### *Samanantar Aakash*

Literary writing is a reflection of the socio-economic and politico-cultural situation of that country/society. Recently developed worldwide economic networks or the cultural exchanges all constitute the setting of a literature. This is quite simple if we observe Cevasco's (94- 111) thesis on how a cultural critic should adopt to new forms of representation of the ever changing culture around them.

If we look at Nepal's literary writing all these socio-economic phenomena appear in one or the other way. Nepali literary writing is, thus, gradually being galvanized by the ongoing process of globalization. It has incorporated the features of worldwide migrations, presence of international organizations, consumer culture, electronic gadgets, international transactions, universally dominant political thoughts and ideologies etc.

To observe the characteristics of globalization in Nepali literary practice, I have taken a case of a contemporary Nepali novel *Samanantar Aakash* written by Padmawati Singh. In the novel, though her characters appear to be dismantling the male-centric value system existing in our society since the past, but at the same time, give a full glimpse of globalizing Nepali society.

Contemporary Nepali critique, Sudha Tripathi, in her remarks on the novel's manuscript, writes, "There are imprints of the new time in this novel." Her remark indicates that the writing of this novel was, in fact, influenced by the writer's contemporary time. No doubt, the time has hardly any sense—neither of the 'foreign' and 'domestic' and neither in lifestyle nor in thoughts and values. The characters are linked to each other by mobiles, email and internet inside the country and abroad. This amply gives us the impression of the 'space-time compression'.

Moreover, as we observe the novel carefully, we find a number of impressions of the phenomenon globalization in characters' lifestyles and value system as characterized by their daily activities, economic behaviours, thinking ideology and awareness of the phenomenon as such. Take for example; the shopping culture, restaurant culture, the acceptance of the 'live-in-together' culture, frequent advocacy of the "intermarriages" (46) as claimed by Marwan M. Kraidy as a cause of present globalized world. These all give the flavour of "hybridity" (Kraidy:1) throughout the novel.

As we look at the characters in the novel, all seem to be adopting a new lifestyle which is categorically "Western" for Sudha Tripathi. But, at the same time, there is still a strong sense of adherence to the 'local' and 'national' culture in the novel. As a myth of modern and prosperous life, globalization has a lot of imprints in the lifestyle of Sushmita, the major character, and possibly, the mouthpiece of the author in the novel. After her departure from the 'married' life with Abhinash to the 'separated' life, Sushmita starts to work for a project on women development, which is by-and-large funded by the international donors. This is clearly stated in the novel as Sushmita frequently refers to the Residential Representative while narrating her activities at job. Though the personality of the Residential Representative with his/her nationality is not thoroughly built in the novel, but his/her presence is felt strongly.

Sushmita's career is, no doubt, attached with an internationally funded project but the background of her association with this organization is worthwhile to discuss. She expresses her reasons to choose her career in front of her children, to be more general, her family. If we look at the prominent Nepali short story writer Guru Prasad Mainali typical Nepali value system is expressed whether we see in his short stories '*Naso*', '*Chhimeki*' or '*Kartabya*', we find an individual's value always under the value of his/her family or society. But, in this novel, we find

a significant departure from the value system as revealed in Mainali's short stories. The value system adopted in this novel is of the Protestant, Western value system which values an individual's choices, preferences and decisions. Though the older value systems overwhelm her thinking as residue but Susmita tries to justify her choice of career in front of her children. She says:

“I did not separate my loveliest ones to build my career. Circumstances compelled me to leave them. I also came as a job-holder under my own circumstances.” (7)

In fact, after getting separated from her husband, Sushmita had no other option but to find a good job to keep herself busy and make a good earning for her own sake and for her children's sake. Thus, she justifies her choice of career over the children. But, under her choice remains her strong commitment to new Protestant and Western value system.

Similarly, her friend in her work place, Sweety is even more clear on her choice of her career. She says:

“Look, my sister, we can't die for children in front of career. It's my compulsion to carry this small child with me, in such a remote place, in the course of my job.” (7)

If we look at these both characters, both take their career important and both of them hold the idea that happiness and prosperity is in their own hands though this thought, in both of them, seems to have come only after a significant shock in their family-life.

Now, the question comes, is it only their circumstances pressing them to go for their career? The answer would be more than this. More than the circumstances, their awareness that is aroused by their university education seems to have played the vital role in their decision as both of them are well educated in university. This is the reason why they are well aware of the changing time around them. Sushmita has a clear understanding of this change and admits those

changes as normal. This can be seen in the novel when Sushmita watches TV, and at the same time, thinks:

Today, we can see the incidents happened in either America or any other country immediately through the means of TV and internet. We don't need to go anywhere-- just sitting in room. World, today, is accommodated in a room. Due to the rapid development in communication sector, the world is, today, changed into a village. In English, this has been said as 'global village'. (154)

Her thoughts over the world's present scenario demonstrate that she clearly recognizes today's globalizing world and its features. Even amazing is her recognition how this phenomenon is perceived by the academia around the world because she has been able to catch McLuhan's phrases 'global village' regarding the changed situation of the world.

Apart from this, an amazing thing in this novel is that though Sushmita is well aware of the fact that the world is ever globalizing, and Nepali Society also along this line. In such a situation she shows a strong adherence to Nepali culture, but admits the western culture to be an inevitable phenomenon. On one side, she expresses her repulsion against the tendency of excessively adopting the 'foreign' culture, but on the other side, she admits it as a part of adaptation with the changing time. Sushmita meets her old friend Pratima from her college who is; at present, in America in her own flat, but finds her activities odd and humiliating to 'domestic' culture. After she meets Pratima, she remarks in lonely:

I don't like those who humiliate their own culture in the name of modernity. Whether it is a woman or a man, I can't accept him/her who adopts anarchy in the name of freedom.  
(47)



But this repulsion is immediately diluted by her recognition and admittance of the changes in people's lifestyles along the same lines. She realizes:

The fact that Kathmandu has already been in the claws of modern lifestyle came into my knowledge. Young generation is also adjusting to the Western culture and lifestyle day-after-day. This is the change brought by the time. How can Nepal be unaffected in such a situation of the whole world being affected by the Western culture? (47)

Sushmita's repulsion and admittance to the Western culture is typically the situation of Nepali society, where many western practices have been accepted as part of appropriation to the new time and attacked in the name of keeping the so-called national and local culture free from foreign contamination. In fact, our society is still facing the state of ambivalence in the matter of globalizing 'hybrid' culture.

However, the case appears vary rude and one-sided with Sushmita's friend Sweety, who chooses to give birth to a child she bore from a man who had taken shelter with her in a cowshed in a field trip. The man rapes her in the night taking advantage of her inability to escape and proposes her to marry. But she rejects this marriage and decides to give birth to the child she conceives in such difficult circumstances. To compare Sweety's decision with that of Jhuma in Lil Bahadur Chhetri's *Basai*, we find a significant twist in people's value over virginity and single parenting. Jhuma tries to commit suicide whereas Sweety, despite having chances to marry the child's father discards the proposal and chooses to fight the traditional frame of her society. However, in both of these cases, both of these girls face rejection from their respective societies; Jhuma escapes it and Sweety does the same either.

Yet, behind the similar kind of reactions from their respective societies, there appear differences between their situations. Jhuma is sympathized by her family and friend but Sweety

is not. Furthermore, Jhuma has hardly any courage to fight the injustices perpetrated by Rikute and her own society but Sweety has enough courage of her own to fight against the perpetrators of injustices. Similarly, we find differences between how society reacts at their situations, respectively. In Jhuma's case, her society's reactions are not built onto the stage but implied in the fears of her mind whereas in the case of Sweety, they are explicitly narrated by her own words. The time of these two novels indicates how Nepali society is changing because Jhuma's fears are the outcomes of her time and Sweety's courage has come to be parallel to the changed time in which educated people at least can choose to go for single parenting.

Apart from this, there are many cases in the novel that give us a glimpse of how easily a particular group of Nepali population has accepted Western lifestyle as this group is constantly in exposure of the Western countries. Sushmita's niece Aparna, who is living in California, America and going to marry an American citizen Robinson in Kathmandu after spending a year as live-in-together in Washington D.C., is an example of such a radical departure from the value of virginity before marriage to exclusively Western culture of living together before marriage. Had Aparna married in America according to the Christian culture, it would be appropriation to Western Christian culture, but her marriage with Robinson in Kathmandu according to her Newari culture has made it a 'hybrid' situation. This fact is revealed through the memory of Sushmita:

After that I had to stay in Kathmandu for a few days for Arpana's marriage. She was coming to Kathmandu for her marriage. All the preparations of her marriage had already started. Her meeting with her would-be husband had taken place in an interesting manner. She was working in California. Her would-be husband was studying in a university of Washington. They firstly came in contact with each other through the email exchanged

by a friend. They both sent their bio-data and pictures via internet. Both of them received information on each other's family background, rites and rituals, social behaviours and cultures. They became ready to marry only after a regular relationship of two years. They had a live-in-together relationship before getting married. Then, only after that they consulted their parents for their consent. She [Aparna] is going to marry an American citizen, Robinson. (92)

Arpana's decision to come back to Kathmandu and marry Robinson according to Newari culture has not diminished the position of her 'domestic' culture but brought it parallel to the widely existent Christian culture. This hybridity has been a celebration of Arpana and Robinson's cultural difference and fusion.

The novelist has not only presented the hybrid situations of globalizing society but makes it justified. And this justification of the enmeshing of the cultures around the world seems quite celebratory in her tone. To the writer, adaptation to these phenomena only will make us compatible to the new era and new generation. She opines it through Sushmita:

Youths are going abroad for the reason of study. Due to this, intercaste and international marriages are increasing. Also these marriages are becoming acceptable in the context of today's modern time as the youths are attracted to move abroad for study and work. Now, the concept of choosing one's own spouse is gradually developing unlike the earlier ones in which such decisions were made by the parents. This all is the change brought by time. If we cannot adapt to the time and thoughts brought by it, we will fall behind. (92)

Sushmita's view, here, seems to be celebratory on the hybridity of cultures and her opinion is quite similar to that of Marwan M. Kraidy in terms of the causes of such a cultural hybridity. Kraidy believes it to be brought by "voluntary and forced migration, wars, invasions,

slavery, intermarriages and trade” (46). Similarly, her remarks remind us of Appadurai’s ‘ethnoscape’ as one of the globalizing forces.

Global fusion of cultures around the world is visible not only in the case of Sushmita but also in her children Aastha and Aakash. As they reach to the adolescent age, they appear to be inspired by the Western culture. When they are at home, “they either pass their time by watching TV or listening to English music in CDs” (106).

The case of Aakash in the novel is yet another example how Nepali youths are migrating abroad in search of jobs as they find the situation in the country quite unfavourable. This reminds us of the fact that the opportunities offered by the developed economies of the world are not alone responsible for Appadurai's 'ethnoscape' but the pushing factors of their own 'domestic' economy and polity. Though Susmita seems to be against her son's decision to go to Australia for a job, but she admits his decision, later:

Aakash became ready to go to Australia as he got a good offer of job there. Though I tried to convince him not to go, but he did not listen to me. As he convinced me on his decision that due to the worsening political and social situation of the country, he would not be able to make his future good in the country, thus, he would go abroad for earning name and fame for some years, I kept quiet. (172)

In views of Aakash, the pushing factors of the country's political and social situation have played their role in his migration to Australia. Though there is a desire to make his living better in his new destination, he is more critical on the situation at home country. This is one of the major attitudes found among the Nepalese youths, at present.

Apart from these, the novel brings references of restaurant culture and consumer culture, global terrorism, financial transactions and globally expanding ideology of women's right. The

main as well as subordinate characters frequently visit the dance parties and restaurants. Celebration of the milestones of their personal lives in hotels and dancing in foreign music shows us how this culture has been dominant among us. They visit the shopping malls. They have awareness about how terrorism is challenging the whole world, and more importantly, many of them are followers of globally expanding women's rights movements.

Take for example; Sushmita's birthday celebration at Solti Hotel (9) and her dances in foreign [Western] music with Abhinash in the parties (34) tell us the fact of growing party culture among people of cities in Nepal. Sushmita's orders for French Fries (44) from A la Carte Menu shows us the growing restaurant culture among them. Similarly, she brings reference of the collapse of the twin towers in America (167). She thinks it as the situation of being informed as a result of being educated, and softly laments on this kind of awareness.

Yet, another dominant phenomenon of today's globalizing world, international transactions of capital whether in the name of trade or donations, also appears in the novel. Sushmita mentions this as she comes to realize that Kathmandu is already under the claws of modernity, where people have direct contact with the people abroad through telephone and internet and have international transactions (45). Similarly, American citizen Linda's commitments to arrange financial resources to the NGO established by Susmita tell us how these transactions take place in the name of donations, too. Last, but not the least, is these characters' awareness for the women's rights, and this is what Susmita and Sweety constantly advocate in the novel as the job holders for the project working on women's development.

However, this novel is always a dream to establish localism and globalism side-by-side. The novel presents Nepali women's weaving culture. As Sushmita goes to Kathmandu and returns to the work-place, Sweety waits her arrival sitting by the side of window and weaving

sweater. In this, we find the writer's sense of localism against capitalist-consumerist culture. It reveals our own conventional mode of production for our own needs. In another example, Sushmita recalls her 40th birthday in which her children had prepared a birthday cake and candle to blow out for the celebration, but she had crushed their excitement for she could not be happy at the expense of her [Newari] culture. She says:

"Sorry, my son, it is not our culture to chop cake and blow out candle. We light lamps in the days of celebrations. We take it as a bad indication to blow the lamps out. Therefore I'm not going to chop the cake and blow the lamp out." Aashtha and Aakash's face became pale to hear my say. (155)

She adds:

"Don't be upset, I'm going to celebrate this birthday according to our own custom." I told smiling at Aashtha. "Go, prepare the *sagun* [collection of various food items believed as pious and lucky for celebrations, mostly famous in Newari culture] ready." Aashtha and Aakash started to prepare *sagun*. According to Newari culture, Aashtha offered me *dhog* [homage] lighting lamp in *sukunda* [typical sort of lamp having image of Lord *Ganesh*] and offering boiled egg, fried meat fish and *bara* [typical Newari dish like a bread and usually made of grams] in one *bohota* [a bowl made of leaves and famous among many communities of Nepal] and curd as *sagun* in another *bohota*. Aakash offered his *dhog* by offering fruits. I also blessed them for their progress, peace and longevity receiving the *sagun*. Then only Aakash chopped the cake and distributed. (155)

Though Susmita clearly says that chopping cake and blowing the lamps out in birthday celebration is not her culture, but the incident of chopping cake at last in her 40th birthday is not merely an act of consolation to her children. Here, localization of the culture has been brought

intentionally. In fact, Sushmita seems so adamant about her Newari culture for at least two reasons: the one reason is to show her culture having the same height as the Christian culture—the culture of the West and the second reason is that she is, in fact, negotiating with the Western culture. This seems to be quite reverse to the process of 'glocalization' in which global force negotiates with the local for its ever stronger association amongst the so-called local agencies.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Conclusion

Expanding as a multifaceted phenomenon, globalization has been affecting people from West to East, rich to poor and from urban to rural in their lifestyles and thinking pattern. People from physically distant locations have been affected by each other's thoughts and practices, and this has been ever increasing day-after-day. People have adopted the thoughts and living patterns of the people of the locations other than their own. This adoption and adaptation to such foreign entities has taken place in various manners, and this has taken place for the various purposes and needs.

Observing these linkages of the people of distant localities, many scholars have termed and interpreted this phenomenon as 'globalization'. Some scholars have seemed to be quite different from both of the groups mentioned above. For them, it was simply the continuation of the natural process of interaction among the cultures of distant locations as facilitated by the means of mass media and technological development of the contemporary time. Some others seemed to be jubilant at this because of its borderless characteristic. But my evaluations regarding this phenomenon suggest it to be yet another form of 'Westernization' through which the West is manipulating the rest by the help of its culture, lifestyle and values.

My experiences and observations in my society regarding the context of this phenomenon have a significant concern over this research. My ontological bases as a product of my locality, I have felt a number of changes coming around my locality. Regarding the nature, some of these changes have contributed to bring about changes in people's lifestyles and cultural practices whereas others have contributed to bring about changes in their thinking pattern.



Looking at the changes that have appeared among the people around us has given us an indication of the routes they have come along. Some of them have made their avenues out of the economic opportunities that have sprung up with opportunities of cheaper labour markets—one of the dominant features of globalization. But many other changes have sprung up with people contacts with various market goods and gadgets.

Careful observations on these phenomena have identified that the impressions of one locality over the next seem to have come along the myth of prosperity in some cases and as an indication of disaster in some other cases. But people's efforts for appropriation and adaptation have obviously helped in the expansion of the Western hegemonic practices and values even in the rural villages of Nepal.

Since these Western practices and values have intruded into our societies, people looked weary about the changes they brought in people's traditional occupations and lifestyle. But globalization looked to be more promising expansion of the West, so it brought some opportunities that tempted people from developing countries like Nepal vary easily. Now, despite chanting a meager voice of cultural purity and its promotion people have given up their rituals, lifestyles and values showing complete detachment with the practices of their own for they have perceived globalization as a myth of prosperity. However, some people have perceived it as a wagon of humility at the same time. This has made an ambivalent attitude towards the contemporary global changes. In fact, the changes have brought so strong currents that people have not been able to stay against it and have not been able to adopt it whole-heartedly as they are so humiliating that they are detaching the people of various localities from their own practices, places and value systems.

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## Appendix-1

### Unstructured Interview

1. Name of the research participant: Surya Lal Tharu  
 Pseudo name: Chhodka  
 Age: 75 years  
 Address: Manpur- 6, Dang
  - I. How are you Chhodka?
  - II. How is your weaving, Chhodka?
  - III. What made the fishes disappear, Chhodka?
  - IV. Chhodka, how many helka do you weave in a month?
  - V. How much do you ask for a helka, Chhodka?
  - VI. So, you have got an easy life with this jamana...?
  - VII. What is the song you were listening to, Chhodka?
  
2. Name of the research participant: Jhaljhali Chaudhari  
 Pseudo name: Barki  
 Age: 53 years  
 Address: Manpur- 6, Dang
  - I. Barki, how are you?
  - II. Barki, when did you buy this phone?
  - III. Where did you buy this?
  - IV. You could talk to them through the PCO also, isn't it?
  - V. So, if you lose it , are you going to buy a new one?
  - VI. What do you want to listen in it?

- VII. Tharu songs or anything else?
- VIII. And, what type of songs do you have in it, Barki?
3. Name of the research participant: Kamala Subedi
- Pseudo name: My Grandmother
- Age: 83 years
- Address: Manpur- 6, Dang
- I. Why don't I see anymore potato, what shall we eat this year?
- II. What is the name of that potato seed you said just now?
- III. Was that not fine, then?
4. Name of the research participant: Samphulya Tharuni
- Pseudo name: Chhodki *Matini*
- Age: 73 years
- Address: Manpur- 6, Dang
- I. How are you, Chhodki?
- II. Chhodki, why is *ghattwa* so deserted?
- III. So, don't you offer vermilion?