

Chapter 1: Indigenous Identity and Literature

A new wave of ethnic consciousness spurred by post 1990 era, directly or indirectly paved the way for sudden upsurge of disgruntled voices of marginalized ethnic indigenous communities, pertinent to their social, cultural, linguistic, economical, historical, educational and political disadvantaged state of being in the backdrop of Brahmin, Chetries' predominant control over entire legislative, judiciary and executive state organs in the country.

The people of Nepal can be basically categorized into three main ethnic groups, the Indo-Aryans, the Mongoloid and Austro-Asiatic (Baral 2012-8). Of the total 30 million population of Nepal, ethnic/ indigenous janajati population covers (36%) Dalits (13%), Madhesis (18%), Brahmin-Chetri (28%) and others including Muslims, Jains, Sikhs and Marwadi comprise (5%) representing 125 languages and 123 ethnic groups (CBS 2012). And generally, except the 28% population of Brahmin and Chetri (Indo-Aryans), the remaining population comprising 72% languishes, entrenched in social, cultural, historical, territorial, financial and political discriminations as observed and analyzed by various inland and foreign scholars.

These pervasive discriminatory practices even in the post conflict era gives an ample opportunity for politicians, donor agencies, various national and international power centers to manipulate and capitalize these issues for their own strategic utility, thereby paving the way for further conflicts and crafty maneuvering. The word 'janajati' or 'indigenous' in this research paper has been often used as synonymous of ethnic or ethnicity or sometimes interchangeably.

The one decade long Maoist triggered armed conflict (1996-2005) was the most politically volatile era that witnessed bloodshed and the maximum capitalization of these so far undermined ethnic issues of marginalization through ethnic and regional political slogans chanted under the pretext of liberation of these ethnic communities, until the last historic peace agreements signed in between government and rebel group in 2006, that could not culminate into fulfillment of the political dreams assured to the marginalized ethnic communities, which is likely to become the bone of contention for future Nepal.

Concurrently, the Nepali literature also could not remain bystander of what was and is happening in the diverse Nepali society. Several new emerging and reputed authors, poets embarked upon introducing new literary trends in current Nepali literatures by incorporating new themes and fictional characters in their literary pieces. Most of these literary subjects and themes dwell upon Marxist, Maoist and democratic philosophical approaches to mitigate the ethnic conflict or issues as one of the class struggles existing in Nepal.

The new wave of consciousness that swept the entire country in the post 1990 era and further saturated by Maoist insurgency ignited the imaginations, thoughts of many writers and has impelled the minds of many intellectuals to debate differently on ethnic issues these days.

The impact of this new ethnic social and political consciousness was such that its infectious impact was also felt in the donors' funding of Nepal targeted programs. Furthermore, some of the political parties' major political slogans are based on ethnic issues such as "Identity based federalism" and right to self determination.

However, the researcher's point of departure is to explore the approaches (mode of representation of ethnic issues) in the Nepali literary writings such as Ug Pathaks' "Urgen Ko Ghoda," Rajan Mukarung's "Damini Bhir", Shrawan Mukarung's, "Bise Nagarchi Ko Bayan and Sun Re Siyaram," have taken in novelizing or creating stories of suffering as well as aspiration for rights of the ethnic indigenous groups.

This research paper explores into how contemporary Nepali literature reflects, fictionalizes, symbolizes and tells directly about the ethnic issues? The other sub-research questions are: Do these novels and poems assert the rights of indigenous ethnic groups? Or do they problematize such issues? Or do they romanticize them? or do they politicize or poeticize them? And then hypothesis is that these literary texts try to take multiple stands such as that of Marxism, feminism, ethnicity, poetic diction and romantics as well. By doing so, they tell that ethnicity or indigenous movement for identity cannot be understood as mere political jargon only.

The researcher's conceptual framework will consider multi-dimensional theoretical and interdisciplinary study as well as analysis of contemporary ethnic/indigenous movement including analysis of selected primary text (novels and poems) as the main area of study.

This will begin with definition of the word, "Indigenous Peoples". Various terms used for indigenous peoples in Nepal, Asia and across the world. The worldwide indigenous movement and its ramification in Nepal will be argued to know the nature of indigenous/ethnic movement in Nepal.

The historical situation of marginalization of indigenous/ethnic peoples will be argued within the historical time frame falling within the time periphery, before and after late King Pirthi Narayan Shah's unification period, autocratic Rana regime, Panchayat regime and through post 1990s era, wherein few major political parties have politicized the ethnic issues for identity and federalism as showcase of propaganda.

Furthermore, the relation between Nepali literature and indigenous ethnic movement in post 1990 era will be argued to support the argument that how ethnic indigenous movement for identity has crept into the literary figures which has given a new trend to Nepali literature.

The researcher's methodology adopted for this paper is primarily based on interdisciplinary, multi-dimensional narrative, qualitative and inductive method, which has been deemed appropriate for this research paper. The paper makes a study of a number of both Nepali and foreign literary theorists on the mode of representation of ethnic/indigenous issues.

The researcher partly analyzed the indigenous ethnic movement and also analyzed the primary text in order to find out how Nepali literature reflects, fictionalizes, symbolizes, tell directly about ethnic issues as multi-dimensional theme through fictional characters. The words, such as "Janajati", or "indigenous" for ethnic people are interchangeably used.

Since this research paper is primarily based on study and analysis of selected contemporary Nepali literatures and selected literatures produced on the ethnic indigenous issues by Nepali and foreign authors and theorists, its empirical utility may be

lesser. However, future researchers may certainly find a vantage point to make further research strides on the ethnic issues.

This research paper will contain three chapters such as Indigenous Identity and literature, Analysis, and Conclusion.

Primary texts includes two Nepali novels, one by Rajan Mukarung (Damini Bhir) and other Yug Pathak (Urgan Ko Ghoda) and two poem anthologies comprising of Srawan Mukarung's "Sun Re Siyaram" and "Bise Nagarchi ko Bayan" are selected to represent ethnic issues through plots, literary metaphors, characterization and narrativization.

For secondary source of data the researcher relied upon previous multi-disciplinary research works done with regards to ethnic issues by Nepali authors/researchers and foreign authors and researchers.

Since the researcher was personally involved in the indigenous movement in the past, personal observation about ongoing ethnic indigenous movement has amply supported the researcher to analyze the situations.

Being born and nurtured in a marginalized ethnic indigenous community and being an activist, the researcher's close alignment with the ethnic movement has sometimes baffled to think as to whether the researcher is doing justice to non-partisan research work or being swayed by the researcher's activism.

Nevertheless, the researcher tried to keep aloof from any activism and tried his best to be objective in this research paper preparation. On the other hand, alignment with

this movement has enabled the researcher to collect the relevant literatures very easily, as the researcher was already familiar with most of the literary texts needed for this research.

However, the researcher's study is confined to the study and representation of ethnic indigenous issues in selective literatures, so it may not represent the whole picture of what's going on with the whole ethnic population comprising of Madhesis, Dalits, Muslim and other non-indigenous population.

The ethnic/indigenous peoples of Nepal claim that they have been marginalized historically, socially and politically. Commencing from Kirat Rule (before 400 A.D), until Licchavi rule (400-879), and Medieval period (879-1200), the issue of ethnic indigenous marginalization does not seem to have surged up.

The phenomenon related to marginalization of ethnic/indigenous peoples is said to have started with the reign of Malla King, Jayasthiti Malla (1382-1395) after Jayasthiti Malla instituted social codes for classification of castes and sub-castes (Sherpa 2009:13). Then, late King Prithivi Narayan Shah's long process of unification of Nepal from 1743 to 1769 was also marked as the beginning of Hinduization, Nepalization and Sanskaritization that directly or indirectly deprived the indigenous communities of their right to their traditional territories (Bhattachan 2002:7).

Followed by this was the autocratic Rana rule (1846-1951) with the promulgation of Muluki Ain in 1854 that legally categorized and socially discriminated the indigenous ethnic people by creating a social hierarchy of upper caste and lower caste, whose

indelible imprints upon the gullible minds of the Nepali people can still be observed in rural areas today.

Then the Panchayat regime from 1960-1990, controlled by King Mahendra and King Birendra launched a national campaign of "One King. One country, one language and one dress," which did not give any space for pluralistic cultural norms (Bhattachn 2002:5).

Soon after the unification process was complete, there was limbu rebellion in the eastern Nepal (1770), Kirant rebellion (1781), Rai –Khambu rebellion (1791-92), Tamang rebellion (1791-92), Tharuhat Movement (2065-69), (Tamang 2070:173). However, all these ethnic indigenous historical rebellions were repressed forcefully.

Although, the interim constitution of Nepal 2007 proclaims that "Nepal is a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, secular republican, democratic, independent, indivisible, sovereign country, some of the clauses of Muluki Ain are inconsistent with the spirit of the Interim constitution. For example, No.10 of Chapter on Quadrupeds of the Country Code (1963) mentions that" whoever takes cows, bulls or calves of any category to a foreign territory from Nepal and slaughters them, causes them to be slaughtered, he/she shall be liable to a punishment of imprisonment for 6 years (Bhattachan 2002:4).

This chapter of Muluki Ain actually deprives the ethnic indigenous people of their cultural rights which include their traditional food habits as ensured and incorporated in ILO convention 169 and United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The ethnic communities of Nepal are also known as indigenous groups, whose definitions are illustrated bellow:

Nepal government's National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN) Act 2002 defines "Indigenous nationalities" as those ethnic groups or communities, who have their own mother tongue and traditional customs, different cultural identity, distinct social structure and written or oral history" (Bhattachan 2012:12).

According to NFDIN definition, 59 indigenous groups have been so far listed as officially recognized ethnic indigenous communities, while many continue to struggle for their new indigenous identities. These ethnic indigenous peoples were historically marginalized after their territories were annexed into present Nepal through land tenure system such as "Birta" and "Jagir" (Bhattachan 2012: 3).

Another definition of indigenous peoples according to Rodolf Stavenhagen, UN Special Rapporteur (2001-2008), "Indigenous communities, peoples and nation are those which having a historical continuity with the pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of societies now prevailing in those territories or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop, and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories and their ethnic identity as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems" (AIPP 2014).

The world council of indigenous peoples (WCIP) in 1977 passed a resolution which declared that only indigenous people could define indigenous peoples (Boodle 2008).

The population of indigenous peoples globally comprises nearly 370 million, which is 4.4 % of total world population, of which an estimated 2/3 of the total 370 million populations live in Asia (AIPP 2015). Different countries refer to their indigenous population by different names. The terms used to refer to ethnic indigenous peoples in Asia and worldwide is given bellow:

Nepal	Adivasi, Janajati, Indigenous Nationalities
India	Scheduled Tribes, Adivasi
Bangladesh	Pahari, Jumma, Adivasi, Tribal
Burma/Mynmar	Ethnic Minorities
Cambodia	Indigenous Minorities
China	Ethnic Minorities
Indonesia	Masyarakat Adat
Japan	Indigenous Peoples (now officially applied to the Ainu)
Laos	Ethnic Minorities
Malaysia	Orang Asli, Natives, Orang Asal
Pakistan	Adi vaas, Tribal People
Philippines	Indigenous cultural communities/Indigenous Peoples
Thailand	Ethnic Minorities, Hill/Hill Tribes
Vietnam	Ethnic Minorities
America	Natives
Australia	Aborigines
Europe	Gypsies

Source: AIPP 2015

Post 1990 drastic spread of new ethnic consciousness across the country induced by culmination of Nepal into a republican state, coupled with ratification of United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in 2007 and ILO convention 169 inspired and instigated the marginalized and historically defeated ethnic indigenous communities of Nepal to raise their disgruntled voices for more democratic rights in consonance with the ongoing fourth world movement.

As the worldwide ethnic indigenous movement continues to make strides, indigenous peoples in Nepal will continue to push ahead their social, cultural, educational and political demands such as right to self-determination and identity based federalism, despite indifference on the part of ruling parties for reasons of reservations against indigenous people's demands.

Now, the researcher aims to look at what do theorists both Nepalese and foreigners say about mode of representation of ethnic issues in literatures.

Mode of Representation of Ethnic Issues in Literature by Nepali Authors/Theorists

The assertion of ethnic identities in today's Nepal is not the emergence of a new phenomenon, but rather the expression of what was latent in the earlier regimes. The enabling factor was the new democratic polity with pluralistic pretensions

(Harka,Gurung 2000))

Post modern foundations lay down the basis that knowledge is constructed personally or socially. Although, there is dearth of academia on various aspects, specific and extensive research about indigenous/ethnic movement impacting Nepali society and

political predicament, yet few relative literatures such as Nepali fictions, poetry and anthropological and sociological researches can be found.

Quite a good number of literatures have been produced by indigenous authors and writers in their mother tongues and Nepali language. However, such literatures have rarely found attention from the mainstream academia, nor treated them authentic.

Even so, the following literature review pertinent to primary text and past research views on the given research topic are reviewed here. Khagendra Saugraula in his review of Ug Pathak's 'Urgen Ko Ghoda' writes:

This fiction is the narrative of struggle and soul sacrifice, legacy of women awareness, indigenous ethnic identity and class liberation. It is conceptually based on the very idea of revolt, strategic moments of rebellion, and ups and downs of liberation journey. This is a live documentation of revolutionary upheavals that emerged in Nepali society. It is also a new record of resistant literature. (My own Translation, 1)

The evidence illustrates that the author Saugraula finds permeation of all burning issues pertinent to feminism; ethnic identity, class struggle and revolt through the novel which indicates that the issues reflected in this novel are mixed and mingled, making it difficult for readers to conceive a common concept conveyed by this novel. Saugraula being a subscriber of Marxist and Maoist ideology might conclude the way he did above.

Likewise, Unified Maoist Party leader Baburam Bhattarai after reading *Urgen Ko Ghoda* readily admits, "From artistic idea point of view, *Urgen Ko Ghoda* is the best among all literary pieces produced, based on 'peoples war' so far. Tears rolled in my eyes

and my throat was obstructed, while reading this fiction. It is one the best progressive literatures if seen from Nepali perspective" (My Translation, 2).

As the core subject matter of this novel deals with Maoist triggered war against the state with the sole mission of class liberation, apparently enough Bhatarai, who was one of the top brass political leaders in command of this 'peoples war', his perspective of progressive literature given to this novel cannot be denied.

Then, the one line version of Nepali times 2010, while reviewing 'Urgen Ko Ghoda' comments as follows:

This is another fictionalized story of civil war, related to Tamang community, one of the marginalized indigenous communities in Nepal. Mhendo rebels and fights against the state by being inspired by mythical Tamang Hero Urgen and his horse, trying to prove that history belongs to those who are victors. (1)

The evidence indicates towards new historicism as it indulges in historical nostalgia by referring to mythical Tamang hero and horse, who constantly hunt the mind of protagonist Mhendo to fight against state.

Furthermore, for Prashant Gyawali, the major theme of Rajan Mukarung's 'Damini Bhir' revolves around the lives of characters such as Lachhi, Kancho, Kanchi Damini, Birman, Hangdima and Birman (1).

Mukarung's way of presenting his character's psychological characters in short sentences is an original concept. The narrative illustrates the marginalized conditions of indigenous groups in the village known as Damin Bhir (13).

This literary plots and narrativization depicts the real pathetic social, cultural, economic and political situation of contemporary period in Nepal. Similarly, the ekantipur (www.ekantipur.com) in its review of Srawan Mukarung's "Bise Nagarchi Ko Bayan" writes:

After two and half centuries, Bise Nagarchi has suddenly gone insane in this country. In his fits of insanity, Bise Nagarchi pleades before his lord (King) that he should not have demanded ownership over this nation. Subaltern characters are dramatized through the moving story of Bise Nagarchi, using powerful metaphors to indicate towards marginalization of dalits and indigenous Communities in this country. The symbol of madness is a metaphor for outrageous explosion and bursting out of frustration and rebellion from the subaltern indigenous communities. (My Translation, 11)

Likewise, commenting on and reviewing Srawan Mukarung's "Sun Re Siyaram" (www.tharuculture.blogspot, writes, "In the poem, 'Sun Re Siyaram' a Kamlahri starts her journey to the city, leaving her lover in the country side, telling him that she would not be returning to the country side again as she could fight her case in the city court against the landlord who impregnated her" (12).

The metaphor used here is for indication of how marginalized indigenous communities are living in critically pathetic conditions that instigates them to rise in rebellion against the state.

Showing relation between post conflict poetry and indigenous/ethnic ethos, Professor Abhi Subedi suggests that, in order to measure the changes that occurred in Nepal after one decade war from 1996 to 2006, the genre of poetry can be chosen, which shows that two types of changes occurred in poetry which were induced by either violence or conflict.

The first type was explicit expression of conflict or war, describing about rebels, victims, marginalized communities. Subedi further illustrates that the literature in post 2006 produced by marginalized groups including fighters, women are complex amalgamation of trauma, ire and celebrations.

He also admits that the poetry produced after signing of historic peace agreement between Maoist insurgent and seven party alliances on 21 November 2006 reflects both obtrusive and unobtrusive ways of indigenous/ethnic expressions. They generally demand for the restructuring of the literature, arts and institutions and theatre. Subedi further views:

My observation is that the post-conflict Nepal opened up new debates about rights and equality among all marginalized groups and neglected but rich cultures. In short time waves of self-assertion have swept the country. Voices unheard before are heard. People have been using different kinds of forums to speak from. But poets have used the most subtle but very

strong ways of presenting their cultural ethos, their creativity and sense of resistance. When ethnic groups take up the medium they project the persona with a very strong sense of impersonation on the one hand and the projection of the community ethos, and culture on the other. But with communities where writers produce poetry or narratives, a bigger self-the social and community or ethnic self becomes dominant. (3)

It seems clear from this evidence that Nepali literature has also provided a good platform for ethnic writers to reflect the ethnic sentiments on pervasive ethnic issues related to state of marginalization and discrimination through the poetic diction, characterization and plots.

Associate Professor Mahendra Lawati commenting about indigenous movement in Nepal and elsewhere writes:

The movement for ethnic identity started in Nepal in 1990 that pushed for ethnic indigenous group cultural rights in order to resolve their particular group problems. Such demands are not aimed at threatening the presence of other dominant communities in society. Instead such demands aim at proactive mainstreaming of society, nor are these demands communal in nature. This social movement will further consolidate and integrate the fragile state of excluded groups. However this process of integration is through equality and social justice and not through assimilation. (4)

The evidence shows that the indigenous movement is part and parcel of democratic movement for cultural and political rights and it does not threaten the peace

of other communities in society which is fully agreeable. In order to make his points clearer Lawati further argues:

This social movement has not demanded secession. Social unrest and violent threats may surge up only if the discrimination against these ethnic groups, minorities continues and these marginalized ethnic groups form an alliance on cultural lines to defy the pervasive discriminatory state policies. (5)

Although, Lawoti is also suggestive of these indigenous demands being devoid of spirit of secession, however it is not certain that such demands will never crop in the political scenario in future.

Writing about prevalent ethnic problems and issues, professor Krishna Hacchethu in his article "Democracy and Nationalism Interface between States and Ethnicity in Nepal, published in Contributions to Nepalese Studies (CNAS/TU: 2003) writes:

Ethnic upsurge is inevitable in Nepal as the historical process of national integration is exclusionary. The restoration of democracy with the principles of popular sovereignty, equality, freedom, and cultural rights has provided platform for ethnic activism. The advent of democracy has, therefore, been followed with the rise of ethnic consciousness and awareness. The ethnic issue has gained a new weight and strength because of the impact of the Maoist's armed insurgency. (232)

It is agreeable that ethnic activism and consciousness was induced after the advent of democracy in 1990s. However, Hacchethu fails to dig into the historical foundations of

ethnic activism that was laid almost nearly two decades ago, by merely accrediting Maoist insurgency for the current weight and strength of ethnic activism.

The Maoist insurgents had only capitalized and fanned the already extant ethnic disgruntlement. Similarly, the multilateral donor agencies were also motivated to fund projects related to mitigation of conflicts after observing the increased weight of ethnic issues in the country. Indicating towards the interest and investment of donor agencies in ethnic/indigenous issues in Nepal, Hachhethu further argues as follows:

In coming years, the ethnic problems of Nepal is likely to address at greater level by donor countries in their much –weighted scheme of "Conflict management" in Nepal. The ethnic activism of Nepal has already been internationalized. The international environment, particularly UN declaration of (1994-2003) as International decade of indigenous peoples, has proved additional input to highlight the problems of ethnic people within the country also a link to local initiative as part of global movement. (240)

The evidence here suggests that the indigenous movement in Nepal is much more influenced by international movement endorsed by United Nations and donor countries as part and parcel of international politics and neo-colonial legacy being set up everywhere globally. Indicating towards different destinations of Janajati, Madhesis and Dalit social movements and difficulty to achieve unity among these movement actors, Hacchethu puts:

Though Janajati, Madhesis and Dalits have a common target to shift the prevailing balance of power, their destination is different. The issue, i.e. language, religion and culture etc relate to Janajati identity have nothing to do with Dalits as they are part of Parbatiya Hindu culture. For Dalits, both the high caste groups and non-caste Janajati are exploiters so long as the practice of untouchability remains unchanged. The objective of Dalit movement is social justice while Madhesi hardly distinguish between Pahadi caste groups and Pahadi Janajati so far as its regional identity, language and culture is concerned. So the unity among the three largest ethnic groups is hard to achieve. (243)

This evidence shows that how the ethnic movement of Nepal is divided among indigenous, Dalits and Madhesis, as they tend to raise the common voice of discrimination and marginalization. However, in essence, each of these ethnic movements aims at specific separate goals due to which solidarity and integrity in between these ethnic movement actors is not possible. There are also conflicts over the use of proper words for movement such as "Janajati" "Dalit" and "Madhesi".

As the social movement for Janajati proceeds, there are few hard line ethnic leaders, who do not agree to accept the word Janajati. For example, Gopal Gurung of Mongol National Organization rejects the idea to use the word 'Janajati'. For Gurung, Janajati means the tribes that live in the jungles who have neither any literacy nor any access to state resources. Few scholars also opine that the words like "Dalit" would rather further discriminate the group of people seeking social justice. Similarly, few scholars view the word "Madhesi" controversial for Madhesh movement.

Conflicts like all human interactions can be perceived as a state of oppositions and the projections of contesting view points between individuals, groups, nations or international organizations. Conflicts and contradictions are essential aspects of social and political life. This evidence suggests that conflict and contradictions sometimes bring in positive results.

Hence a contesting view points in between indigenous peoples and non-indigenous peoples in Nepal will continue to prevail until positive results are achieved (Dahal 2006). It is not certain from this evidence that conflicts always bring in positive results as there are instances in world history where thousands of innocent people have lost their lives due to conflicts. For example, the conflict between Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda, the Serbs and Croats killed in Balkan wars and Jews killed during Nazi regime.

One of the leading commentator and indigenous people's rights campaigner Krishna Bhattachan in his seminar paper "Expected Models and Process of Inclusive Democracy in Nepal writes:

There has been 'tug of war' between 'unity' and diversity' at different levels-global to local or vice versa. At the global level, the process of colonization and modernization in the past and current on-going process of globalization are indeed part of the process of homogenization putting the west at the center. It continues to be well entrenched in the forms of social science and development practices. However, the wave of post modernism and mounting assertion for respect for diversity has now challenged and is in the process of deconstructing such old paradigm. (3)

Referring to collective rights demanded by indigenous peoples and right to self – determination and ethnic autonomy, Bhattachan puts:

Indigenous nationalities have demanded the creation of society as a "salad bowl" or rainbow culture" secular state, equal language status, right to self –determination or ethnic autonomy or proportional representation or federal government based on ethnicity, language, and religion, right to land, forest, water, and pasture, affirmative action or positive discrimination (both remedial and preferential), transformation of the upper house -The National Assembly - as the House of the Nationalities.(5)

Commenting on the nexus of pervasive knowledge and power in the country ever since the state nation formation, Bhattachan views:

Jagger Habermass has aptly noted that life-world creates system but eventually system colonizes life-world. Hence, the fundamental question is how to make system useful to life –world?. If we look at Nepal from Habermasian perspective, it becomes clear that the system –political, social and economic of the past, including 104 years of Rana Oligarchy, 30 year old autocratic party less Panchayat and 12 year old "Multi-party political system" indeed colonized Nepalese life world. In perpetuating internal colonialism by the dominant caste, language, religion, region, and gender group, it was not only the nexus of "knowledge and interest," following Jurgen Habermass (1971), but also the nexus of "power and

knowledge," following Michael Foucault (1977) is also equally responsible. There is indeed a strong interconnection of knowledge, interest and power. Therefore, there is need to turn around the existing dominant nexus of knowledge, interest and power. (7)

In addition, Bhattachan while refereeing to root causes of racial discrimination and oppression of marginalized communities in his article "Breadth and Depth of Racial Discriminations in Nepal" writes:

Main cause of all forms of racial discrimination in Nepal include Brahminism or Khas-Brahminism or Bahunbad, which is an ideology, policy and practices of suppression, oppression, depression, exploitation, subjugation, domination, , monopoly and hegemony of one caste, one language, one religion, one sex over others in fields of power, authority, resources, language, religion, and culture. Racial discrimination has historical, political, religious, socio-cultural and legal roots. (2)

Om Gurung, the professor of Anthropology and Sociology at Tribhuvan University in one of his paper " Social Inclusion: Policies and Practices in Nepal" writes:

One of the widely accepted factors of improvisation and marginalization of indigenous peoples and other marginalized communities in Nepal is the social exclusion. The cultural discrimination, economic exploitation, social exclusion and political oppression have become national characters of Nepal state politics ever since the formation of greater Nepal through territorial conquest by the Gorkha rulers in 1769 A.D. (11)

Gurung further argues that the creation of national parks in the 1970s displaced many indigenous peoples from their ancestral lands and territories. The customary rights of indigenous peoples over their land, forest, and water resources were confiscated by the state (6).

It is not that only the ethnic indigenous oriented writers and researchers have commented and written about ethnic marginalization, discrimination and impending conflicts. Various reputed non-indigenous scholars have also shown their expertise on ethnic issues as well.

Pratoush Onta, one such non-indigenous researcher on ethnic indigenous movement and issues in his book "*The Growth of the Adivashi Janajati Movement in Nepal after 1990: The Non-Political Institutional Agents-2006*", illustrates that the indigenous movement is a stark reaction to exclusionary and discriminatory state policies imposed upon the gullible population of *Janajati adivasis* which seeks social and political justice and proportional representation in all vital organs of the state by means of this social movement (1). Onta further writes:

One of the most influential social movements that Nepal has seen in the post 1990 era is the *adibasi janajati* (indigenous nationalities) movement. In the main, this movement is concerned with creating a Nepal in which discrimination against 'ethnic' Nepalis who make up about 37 percent of the population does not exist. The movement was first launched by individual activists during the late years of the king-led Panchayat System (1960-1990). (1)

Savitree Thapa Gurung, a PhD Fellow at Jawaharlal University-New Delhi in her report on "Inclusion and Exclusion of Adivasi Janjati in Governance-2011" quotes Stefan Wolff on ethnic study as follows:

Ethnic conflicts are new phenomenon that came after the cold war. After that "conflicts within states has become more prevalent than conflict between states; ethnic conflicts are based on ancient hatreds between the groups fighting in them and that, therefore, nothing can really be done about them; and ethnic conflicts do no really affect 'as' in the west any away. (17)

Another scholar Bishnu Raj Upreti in his book "Nationalism and Militarization in Nepal- 2014 narrates his views as follows:

In Nepal, long standing social harmony and co-existence are now torn apart and the friction between the resistant elites (who resist meaningful change) and the neo-elites (the new actors emerged by using the ethnic sentiments and grasping power and resources in the name of marginalized and excluded ethnic groups) is mounting. The logic and argument of the neo-elite is that all people belonging to ethnic groups are excluded and marginalized and all people belonging to Chhetri and Brahmin caste groups are exploiters. They do not acknowledge or even recognize the class as determinants of the power but assign responsibility to race. (11)

Upreti further explains the nexus between exclusive ethnicism and societal militarism and concludes that 'exclusive ethnicism' and 'societal militarism' are

interlinked as a substantial portion of different ethnic youths are being mobilized in militant activities in the name of ethnic movement, thereby contributing to societal militarism which has societal effects and vice versa, (17).

The other political scientists and scholar Professor Lok Raj Baral in his recent book, *Nepal-Nation State in Wilderness* mentions:

Rise of ethnic and regional demands on the one hand the declining efficacy of the state to respond to such resurgent demands and aspirations on the other make us nervous. So, even for removing such psychology of fear and also to equip with its regulatory functions effectively, the Nepali state needs to be revamped. However, such revamping should not be at the cost of core of democracy. (251)

The above evidence exemplifies that how the ethnic and regional issues have smitten the psychology of Nepali elites and divided them on the basis of issues they prefer. Baral's writings, in doing so seem to claim that ethnic and regional demands are creating scary and precarious situation in the country, whereas, a true democratic man should not have been so much baffled by such democratic demands in a secular and democratic county like Nepal.

Anthropologist Dor Bahadur Bista, in his book, *Fatalism and Development: Nepal's Struggles for Modernization 1991* reflects:

Nepal's strengths have always been in the indigenous qualities of its various ethnic groups. The attempt to follow the Indian model has often overwhelmed and suppressed these qualities, substituting them with

something which is incongruent with its own culture and ultimately defeating progressive adaptations and change. (8)

The researcher certainly agree with this evidence that indigenous cultures in this country were never valued as valuable social assets in which the nation could feel proud of. We can therefore, assume that Nepali regimes from past till present day, making no shift in the adoption of Indian model of cultures will certainly prove to be detrimental to primordial identity multi-racial nation with multi-ethnic indigenous cultures.

The government agencies make pretensions for national need to protect and preserve national indigenous cultures as ancient heritage, but exhibits paradoxical or double standard nature of disposition when it comes to issues of preservation of multi-cultures in practices. Presumably, ruling mono-racial supremacy seems to be at work in designing and implementing national plan of actions.

Bista further illustrates how ethnic indigenous peoples are described to be falling in the group of "*Matwali*" which means *alcohol drinking persons*, although the community members of ruling elites do not fear to drink more than the indigenous peoples. To this end Bista in the same book writes:

Ethnic Matwali groups are aware that once they identify themselves as Hindus they will be placed at a low social status and will be at a disadvantage. As a result we are beginning to see the assertion of ethnic organizations for political and economic rights. There has been some exploitation of this ethnic dissatisfaction by political activists and some members of various ethnic groups are rallying under the slogan of ethnic

rights to fight the high caste Hindu domination. But this development is not unique to Nepal. It is quite common where ethnic minorities feel that they have been discriminated against. (56)

This evidence implies that the indigenous people's movement surged up after these ethnic groups felt serious crisis of their primordial identities which they had inherited from their ancestors. In additions, this evidence also shows that the indigenous movement is one of the fourth world movements which is occurring in every nook and corners of the world. For example, the Chiapas movement in Latin America and armed struggle of indigenous peoples in New Paupua Guina etc.

A study on the Socio-Economic status of Indigenous Peoples in Nepal, done by Chaitanya Subba and his team write:

Dalits and indigenous peoples are often marginalized and excluded from the benefits of education. These groups are typically compelled to devote nearly all their total household expenditures on basic survival needs, spending only a very small portion of their expenses on education and development of their skills, knowledge and capabilities. (35)

The book further illustrates that among all 125 ethnic social groups (self asserted) in the last national census held in 2012, the hill Brahmins have the highest literacy and capital income, followed by Chhetries, then indigenous groups and Dalits, (ix).

In an annual souvenir published by Nepal Magar Students Association affiliated with Tribhuwan University, *Gemi La Rosha* published in 2014, Hit Kham in his article entitled, " Indigenous Peoples' Global Struggles" argues:

The world is at a threshold of ethnic struggles for restoration of old historical identity, no matter what may be the outcome of the struggle. The conflicting interest is between the ruling and ruled nations. The issue of historical reparation might arise from those historically vanquished indigenous nations, while concurrently; indigenous communities worldwide would opt for virulent struggle against the regimes that had encroached upon their historical territories. (37)

Another political activist Bijay Subba in his dissertation submitted to Tribhuwan University for doctor of philosophy in 2013 puts:

The revolt of Limbus and Tamangs in 1773 against the Gorkhali rulers, the revolt of Khambu Rais in Majh Kirat in 1808. The Magar revolt against Rana rulers in 1870, the Gurung revolt in 1877. the Aathpahariya Rai revolt of Dhankuta against Hindu religion and the revolts by Limbus, Rais and Tamangs against the Rana rulers in Limbuwan, Majh Kirat, East No 1 were the major episodes for the federalism against the Hindu rulers and upper caste. (73)

Subba further illustrates that how the process of Hinduization, Nepalization and Sanskritization led to underdevelopment or subservient status of ethnic indigenous communities in the country (83).

Such evidences testify that the indigenous communities in the country were forced to forgo their proportional development. Coupled with modern trends of

globalization and universal values of post modernism have further handicapped their natural growth and development as their way of development is distinct from what modern theorists think of developing the modern societies.

The inundation of modern materialistic commodities and so called civilized life has pushed the indigenous communities as most backward and uncivilized, whereas they are the ones who have dared to sustain the pristine glory of ancient cultural heritage.

According to Narayan Silwal, 2008 "the issue of inclusion and socioeconomic disparity among various deprived ethnic and backward indigenous groups in Nepal surfaced as the root cause of a decade long conflict"(31).

Silwal in his thesis submitted to University of Madras Chennai, besides illustrating the root causes of socioeconomic disparities in society, further goes on to suggest that in reality in Nepal federal state reconstruction is essential to promote proportional participation of all marginalized communities in the emerging political process and development (31).

In fact, federal structure is in need of time that ensures the reasonable participation of the target population in both the development and in the democratic political process (31).

Nepali literatures are also rife with the issues of violence. Referring to aesthetic value of violence in literature, Pokharel quotes (Barak 7) and writes in Crosscurrents:

Violence is an important ingredient of literature. It has been widely used in literary writings from ancient times. Literature in its most initial state

also might have used violence in the verbal, action, gesticulatory and pictorial form. In the old times, violence was used for moral and religious justifications and also for the quest for beauty, power, and wealth.

Violence lies at the center of human instincts, as that of animals, birds and insects. (133)

Pokharel through this example seems to be attempting to let the readers feel that just as violence is one of the ingredients of literature, the violence lies at the very center of human instincts as one of the fermenting factors that directly or indirectly mould his human nature during the time of peace or conflict. Pokharel further illustrates the relationship of conflict and violence as follows:

When a nation –state feels humiliated by another nation-state or group of nation-states, collective violence of the most atrocious kind may result, including mass murder and genocide. Putting aside the question of whether or not youths or adults who have killed felt compelled, out of control when murdering occurred, it is instructive to examine the multiple pathways toward and away from both violence and non-violence. (135)

It seems clear from this evidence that group of marginalized ethnic communities after suffering constant humiliations and deprivation of identities for prolonged periods ultimately resort to collective violence, which must be averted well in advance by addressing these extant problems and issues, which unwittingly render the situation precarious and vulnerable.

Mode of Representation of Ethnic Issues in Literature by Foreign Authors/Theorists

The self-identity of indigenous people has now become a central element in their political struggle for social and cultural survival. The most obvious answer to the question who are indigenous peoples? Is that they are whoever they say they are. (Bodley 2008)

By now many foreign scholars and researchers have accomplished their research projects on Nepali ethnicity and complex ethnic issues. The conclusions on ethnic issues derived by these scholars might at times be disagreeable and controversial for them because their affiliations with the kind of knowledge and power. Some of the foreign authors and researchers have often been alleged of having worked or concluded about ethnic issues in Nepal under the influence of influential donor agencies.

For instance, one of the social and political movement launched in the past for 'Akhanda Sudarpasshim' or undivided Far western region, its activists even did not hesitate to allege the United Nations Development Program in Nepal of having instigated ethnic people/indigenous communities by funding them various community development projects related to civil and political empowerment, democratic and human rights orientations.

These activists even prevented movement of UNDP vehicles and field monitoring visits during their movement for undivided far western region.

Referring to vicious elements of racism, ethnocentrism and xenophobia that often lead to most abominable genocide in the world, writers Pfaff Czarnecka et al narrate as follows:

Whenever individuals come together, especially on the basis of their shared characteristics that excludes others and creates demarcation line in between "Us" and "them" then there are potential threats of ethnocentrism, racism and xenophobia including other forms of intolerance, which all ultimately contributes to war and virulent reactions against racial, ethnic minorities and foreigners. Many of the world's enmities involved various ethnic communities in ethnic conflict. Ethnic, religious differences combined by hatred for one another were the root causes of wars throughout the human history including the crusade of middle ages (European Christians Vs Arab Muslims), Thirty years war between Catholic Vs Protestants. The recent antagonism and African wars that took place in between Hutu and Tutsi leading to genocide of at least one million Tutsi and Hutus have more ethnic roots of hatred than religious one. (Pfaff Czarnecka et al 1999)

This evidence apparently suggests and implies that demarcation lines deliberately created by individuals, groups on the basis of social, religious and political differences are the core root causes of any latent or impending ethnic conflict, genocide or civil war in any country, which have already been exemplified by genocides in Rhuwanda and currently ongoing cultural wars in between Christians and Muslims in the middle east.

This definitely gives a clear message of early warning to all Nepalese that continued discriminations and humiliations against ethnic minorities or marginalized groups such as indigenous groups, Dalits, Muslims, and Madhesis may ignite ignoble wars, which ought to be averted at any cost.

"The crusade of social movement and ethnic political polarization in today's Nepal is aimed against unequal access to resources and pre- dominance of high caste Hindus, besides going against the dominant cultural forms displayed by those in power" (ed, Nathon, Kelkas, Walter 2004).

It simply implies and is easily understood that ethnic movement is aimed at equal distribution of resources and against pre-dominance of elite groups, due to upsurge in ethnic consciousness that will continue to rise and continue to seek more cultural and political rights in the days to come.

As public debates generally reflect, it is the past that effects the present in the sense that prevailing inequalities are deemed as outcome of century long struggles through which high caste Hindu families set up their rule at societal apex. When observed globally the nations are segmented into ethnic enclaves by process called, "ethnic conflict". The South Asian regions are no acceptance to this global trend (ed, Nathon, Kelkas, Walter 2004).

The evidence implies that once inequalities are removed from the society, it automatically augments new socially just order in the society, which leaves no space for ethnic conflict.

Gellner, N. David in Economic and Political Weekly (May 19, 2007) entitled, "Nepal towards a Democratic Republic: Caste, Ethnicity and Inequality in Nepal, writes:

Nepal faces the danger of an all-out ethnic war breaking out in the Terai between Madhesis and Parbatiyas. But, in most of the country there are so many complex and crosscutting ethnic allegiances which make a Sri

Lankan –type polarization unlikely. In the eastern Terai, however, with its 30 per cent population of parbatiyas, there is a very real possibility that two majorities with minority complexes" could confront each other in bloody vendetta. (1-2)

This implies that the long standing ethnic issues have become so virulent these days that it may any time lead to bloody ethnic war in the country which must be averted by taking judicial decisions and a middle path of live and let live.

Such findings further problematize these ethnic issues. On the one side the political actors capitalize the ethnic issues for their political benefit while the contemporary literatures through characterizations of various ethnic themes have also represented the ethnic sentiments. Besides, violence in literature is never omitted as if it were indispensable element for the writer and fiction writers.

Yash Ghai, one of the reputed Indian ethnic theorists while presenting his workshop paper in Tribhuwan University on Nepal's ethnicity 2013 puts his views as bellow:

Ethnicity should not be neglected; constitutional reforms should be adopted for social justice. Pervasive discriminations, exclusionary situation, injustice, state failure to develop institutions of common political community were very roots of previous political and social problems rather than ethnic differences. Nepal's ethnic consciousness has not yet reached a stage where it ignores reasonable solutions. Nepali identity for most people in Nepal is stronger than ethnic or regional

affiliations. However, it may not remain the same for ever unless legitimate concerns are met with in a suitable manner. (17)

Mr Ghai through these comments suggests that Nepal's ethnic issues have not reached an intractable situation till now. The state should introduce certain reforms and end all sorts of discriminatory practices against discriminated groups in all aspects, which can only resolve these issues once for all.

He further argues that Nepal is passing through a very critical situation in its history. Its leadership should be wise and, willing to listen to others (20).

Mr Ghai concludes in indicating towards difficulty in reaching a common consensus on main political agenda, engendering protracted political impasse on indigenous identity and identity based federalism and difficulty in drafting a new constitution in the country. This situation has contributed to more liquid state of political process and prolonged transitional phase and political peace process.

An international crisis group, working to prevent conflict worldwide, in its Asia report 2011 remark:

Federalism and proportional representation offer a significant opportunity to unravel entrenched patterns of discriminations on the basis of caste, ethnicity and regional identity. This will not be the end of the road to inclusion, nor will it change the patronage based nature of the state. Ethnic elites are likely to benefit first. But this is not an argument against the group rights. New ethnic, regional and Dalit elites would hardly be less

legitimate than established ones. No one set of measures will address all the diverse forms of exclusion. (7-9)

Furthermore, in case the constituent assembly fails to resolve the ethnic demands of identity and federalism, it will have its ramified impacts upon the wide ranging members of ethnic fronts across the country. Consequently, the confluence of increasing politicization and frustrations may lead to escalated violence and unrest in the country (11).

This evidence is sheer indication of how donor agencies are apt to in creating ethnic conflict in Nepal, which will certainly increases instability and perturb social harmony whereby foreign elements can fish in muddy waters in the country.

Indicating towards the marginalization and massive relocation of the indigenous peoples from their land ownerships, the United Nations (UN) working group on Indigenous peoples admits that the indigenous peoples (ethnic people) have been deprived of fundamental human rights, which directly affects their right to development according to their own interests and needs (1993).

Referring to current disadvantaged situation of indigenous communities in Nepal, American scholar Susan Hangen in her book "Creating a New Nepal-Ethnic Dimensions-2007" views:

The high caste Hindus from the hills have dominated the state since its inception in the late eighteenth century, which has created political, economic and social disadvantages for others. Indigenous movement has made substantial contributions to the democratization process since 1990.

Although, ethnic activism has been considered as destabilizing and divisive, the indigenous movement has taken place within the framework of democratic state, making demands peacefully rather than through armed revolution as Maoists did. The centrality of the discourse of self-determination, the right of a group to determine its own culture, stems from its currency in the international indigenous rights movement and in communist ideology. (57)

This evidence certainly suggests that indigenous movement is contributing substantially to promotion and protection of democracy. However it is not certain if indigenous movement is entirely controlled by communist ideology, for it can be assumed that ethnic political slogans are often influenced by ethnic sentiments rather than communist ideology.

Professor James Anaya, who visited Nepal from 24 November to 2nd December in 2008 as United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples of Nepal, in his press release in Geneva on 10 August 2009 mentioned that he was encouraged by the government's commitment to advance the indigenous peoples rights, although much remained to be done.

Mr Anaya had recommended among many others to make domestic policy reforms including improving the human rights situation of the ethnic/indigenous peoples in Nepal with special stress on effective implementation of ILO convention 169 and United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which

typically underline special rights to the historically colonized and marginalized indigenous peoples of Nepal.

Those Nepali people, both government officials and civil society members, who are agreeably and readily pushing for inclusionary measures to end ethnic disparity and discrimination, have already begun the process of re-defining themselves in terms that emphasize the egalitarian elements in their own traditions and blend these elements with increasingly shared global democratic norms (Bennet, 2005: 44).

Bennet further points out that, "However, other Nepalese from the dominant groups have not yet engaged in the difficult process of examining, critiquing and re-formulating their inherited traditions in a more contemporary egalitarian frame" (44).

Indicating towards the resistance to egalitarian changes Bennet finally remarks as follows:

Many in government and civil society –either do not want to understand their own ingrained habits of thoughts or-with varying degree of self awareness-are simply resistant to the loss of privilege and to the deep seated changes in their own self-definition that would be required for the goal of social inclusion to be realized. (44)

In history, the ethnic issues have caused several conflicts in the world. However, most of the scholars and philosophers ascribe ethnic conflict as a result of class struggle and class consciousness in the world, while other elusive perspective has not been taken into consideration.

Karl Marx's Class Struggle is deemed as the main theory of social class struggle in between haves and have-nots. Giving the reference of Marxism and class consciousness, George Lukacs says, "social class has a determined class consciousness which it can achieve" (1).

He further remarks, "The proletariat was the first class in history that may achieve true class consciousness, because of its specific position highlighted in the *Communist Manifesto* as the "living negation" of capitalism. He argued that "only a global perspective can point out how all these different domains interact"(2).

Here when Lukacs argues about class consciousness, he does not verify that how class consciousness refers to ethnic consciousness? This has created confusion for readers, who would like to understand the differences between class and ethnic consciousness or about similarities that contribute to same class struggle in contrast to how ethnic struggle has been widely discussed as most hatred conflicts across the globe.

Therefore, various scholars have argued against the notion of class consciousness. For instance, economist Ludwig Von Mises remarks:

Marx confuses (ed) the notion of caste and class. Mises allowed that class consciousness, and the associated class struggle, were valid concepts in some circumstances, where rigid social castes exist: eg when slavery is legal and slaves thus share a common motive for ending their disadvantaged status relative to other castes. But no such conflicts are present in society in which all citizens are equal before the law. (3)

Refuting the social division of labor and then identifying on the basis of castes, Mises claims, "But it is nonsensical to classify the members of a capitalistic society according to their position in the framework of the social division of labor and then identify these classes with the castes of a status society"(4).

Similarly, another philosopher Leszek Kilakowski remarked that the "Theory of class consciousness is the false" and that the attempts by Marxist and Leninists to advance the concept of class consciousness necessarily led to totalitarianism"(4).

Sociologists Ernest Van Den Haag also argued that "One way is to say that "objectively "people have" common class interests and should act accordingly to the class struggle patterns. But that they are not always "Class consciousness". They suffer from "false consciousness."

He further says:

If you insist on the importance of race, you may persuade people to act according to their "racial interest" for a while-as the Nazis did. If you convince people that they should act according to what you tell them are your class interests, they might. The prophecy becomes self-fulfilling. But the action comes from race or class propaganda-not from race or class as objective facts. (6)

This evidence is to prove that people do not work out of class interest. They generally act on the basis of false consciousness. Haag clearly refutes the class consciousness theory of Marx by arguing that:

If we assume that classes are as important as Marx thought but that people do not act accordingly, because not having read Marx, they are not class conscious. But the distinctive point of Marxian theory is that class membership is decisive in determining most and particularly political actions. This patently wrong. (My Translation, 4)

This evidence is certainly suggestive of wrong Marx theory which takes the side of class struggle by means of class consciousness; while on the contrary, people are seldom guided by this class consciousness rather than their personal or ethnic community interest. So, the Marx theory may be wrong in its patent.

German sociologist, philosopher and political economist Max Weber also remarked against Marx's "historical materialism", by emphasizing "the importance of cultural influences embedded in religion as means of understanding the genesis of capitalism" (1).

Alternatively, two American scholars, Daron Acemonglu and James A. Robinson in their recent book, "Why Nations Fail" have logically argued that nations today fail because of their long history of vicious as well as extractive political and economic institutions that do not allow space for inclusive institutions (371).

For example, the least developed nations such as Angola, Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Liberia, Nepal, Siera Leone, Sudan, Negeria and

Zimbabwe are smitten with stagnant economy, civil wars, mass displacements, famines and epidemics (372-373).

The American duo scholars conclude that the nations that adopted non-discriminatory and inclusive institutions have now become the advanced nations today because of their inclusive political and economic policies (267). This evidence indicates that once extractive institution is transformed into inclusive institutions the positive outcome is sure to be achieved.

However, the author's freedom to put Nepal in the list of those African countries such as Sierra Leone is certainly is not a genuine sign, but a deliberate vicious design to undermine the status of Nepal as a sovereign country.

Chapter 2: Literary Analysis

1. Romanticization, poeticization and problematization of Indigenous Ethnic Issue in Literature

With the advent of new social upheavals and political transformations, the Nepali literature also adopted new literary resistant trends, in which we find the hallmarks of romanticization, poeticization and problematization of indigenous social and political issues.

For instance, Rajan Mukarung's novel *Damini Bhir* is suffused with so many literary imagery, representing ethnic sentiments pertaining to discrimination, rebellion and struggle for identity and federalism.

And in doing so it unwittingly romanticizes, problemtizes and poeticizes the issue at the same time. For example, in one of the plots, one character named Khil Raj Adhikari rises up and says, "We have fought for you, brats. And now we can't speak before you. Have our days gone in this country? Which jungle rule you are seeking for? (My Translation, 276).

This evidence clearly illustrates how even Bahuns born amid Kirantis have fought for Kiranties to create their autonomous kirant states. It also indirectly indicates that Bahuns cannot remain silent in this country

Then Tison speaks in anger, "O! brother, why do you agitate. We know how to put you down on the spot. Being an exploiter, you want to be smart with us and talk big

things?." These lines tell its readers that there are chances that the continued hostility in between ethnic people and elites groups comprising of Bahuns and Chetries might invite ethnic or racial conflict in future.

This is where the author wittingly or unwittingly romanticizes and problematizes the ethnic issues, in the process of succeeding for his literary metamorphosis.

Yug Pathak's *Urgen Ko Khoda* also reflects, fictionalizes, symbolizes and narrates about the contemporary pervasive issues by reaching to the extent of being nostalgic for Tamang myths, land and history. The author uses literary devices like allusions, metaphors, and folklore imagery of mythical Urgen's white horse that keeps hunting the mind of the author and the novel's protagonist Mhendo (one of the Maoist women fighter) and goad her to rebel against the state (148).

For example, one of the characters of this novel –Mausam says to his fellow comrade Ujwala , "Now, the days of calling "Bhote" is gone. It is not good to call any ethnic community by such disparaging words. The people, who are involved in the revolution today, are Bhotes, Damai, Kami, Magar, Chamar and Tharus" (My Translation, 55).

The author by referring to all ethnic communities involved in the insurgency indicates towards the underlying sense that there is sudden upsurge in the rebelling ethnic consciousness, both socially and politically that ultimately impel them to resist state injustices through arms struggle or peaceful means. However the political parties insulate the ethnic sentiments under the veneer of class issues.

Similarly, Mukarung's *Bise Nagarchi* romanticizes and poeticizes the ethnic indigenous issues through his poetic diction and narrative of prevailing disgruntled voices of marginalized communities comprising of ethnic indigenous peoples, dalits, Madheshis and Maoist insurgents whose voices and aspiration to reconstruct new Nepal is vividly described in his poem.

Through the mouth of Bise Nagarchi, the poet attempts to drive home his message that that even after two hundred and half years, the country men like cloth weavers (Bise Nagarchi) today face caste discriminations and social injustices, which has forced him to go wild and insane. That's why Bise Nagarchi in the first stanza of the poem says:

O! Lord, in this Gorkha Kingdom

I have gone insane

After two hundred and half years

My head reels

I see the sky descending towards ground

And ground ascending towards Sky

I behold you bearing ten heads

I know not

Which ground my feet hold on to? (My Translation, 1)

Alternatively, by means of this evidence, the poet lets his readers know about the sudden upsurge of ethnic consciousness, pangs of sufferings and pent up feelings that seems to usher in new social and political transformations that paves the ways for republican views in the country.

Shrawan Mukarung's '*Hami Adhibasi*' (*We Indigenous Peoples*), also reflects the ethnic indigenous sentiments using his typical literary devices in the anthology "Sun Re Siyaram". This very lyrical poem has already been adopted as the national song by National Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (57). The lyrical poem goes like this:

We Indigenous Peoples, we janajaties

Nature's first progeny

Man's early identity,

This world, our creation

Behold, where our sweat isn't found (My Translation, 57)

The poem depicts indigenous peoples of Nepal as the first progeny of the nature and first human identity on this spacious earth, that the indigenous people created, which is spread with their sweats from one end to the other of the earth.

The poem emphasizes on the significance of indigenous people as early settlers on this land who tilled the land and made it possible for agrarian life. These lines also indicate towards their plight despite being the first progeny of the nature, who have been slighted by the state instead of honoring them for being the first identity of humanity.

Similarly, the mode of poeticization, romanticization on ethnic issues is ample in Shrawan Mukarung's "Sun Re Siya Ram" poem. The poem metaphorically describes the plight of a domestic Tharu slave girl known as "Kamhalari" in Tharu language as most of the domestic slaves come from Tharu community of Dang, Banke, Bardia, Kailali and Kanchanpur districts. The poem reads:

Listen, O! Siya Ram

Listen, O! Siya Ram

Well of my tears witness

That my love for you is true

I wished to live with you

Yet I bear landlord's child (My Translation, 2)

In the poem, the Kamalahari speaks to her beloved, who is presumably a Tharu youth, telling him that her love for him is true enough and would like to live with him for the whole life but she is moving to the city due to circumstances and will not wait for him anymore, (1). The poem reads further as:

Now I'll go to town, police and court

Where government dwells

I am sure to win the case

You fish and celebrate Maghi alone

As I will not wait for you

Will not return to village anymore (My Translation, 2)

Why she is moving to the town is because she is bearing a child of her land lord who forcefully impregnated her under threat of being driven out of the work. So she is going to the town, police station and court to complain case against her landlord to seek justice for the child she bears, (1).

She wanted her lover to go along with her to the town, but her lover chose to remain in the village. So, she tells him, since he did not agree to go with her, she would never return from the town.

She also tells her lover that he should now onwards fetch fish for himself as she would not be with him any more as she would never return from the town. Siyaram is the name of her lover while her name is not given in the poem. The poem however succeeds in illustrating the marginalized conditions of indigenous Tharu girls who must leave for the town and cannot stay with her Siyaram as her life partner.

The poem reflects the miserable social conditions under which the marginalized community of Tharu people have to survive as the landlords hire them to work as domestic slaves to take care of their domestic chores for bare minimum indecent wages that can never raise their living standards.

On top of this grim situation the domestic servants who are usually Tharu girls are exposed to vulnerability of being raped by their own land lords in the absence of their wives at home. And after the forceful rape or sexual exploitation of such domestic

servant, the land lords usually deny their involvement in such heinous acts and also influence the court verdicts by means of back door and behind the screen evil design and plots to get acquitted of the charges put against them.

The author through this depiction of narration this time is suggesting that the class war issue and ethnic issue of marginalization, discrimination and deprivation of rights is going to be different in society and politics.

2. Multiple Theoretical and Philosophical Stand Taken for Class Struggle Vis-a- Vis Ethnic Conflict

The contemporary Nepali literatures reflect ethnic issues through the narratives and plots. However, such narratives tend to tilt to multiple philosophical stands in their works. For example Mukarung's main protagonist Namdeng, an indigenous limbu guy is Maoist cadre by political faith, yet the whole novel's plots revolve around ethnic issues in juxtaposition with class struggle which is the main trajectory of Maoist insurgency in Nepal, which renders this novel a paradoxical stance that keeps fluctuating in between ethnic issues and proletarian class consciousness.

Similarly, Ug Pathak's *Urgen Ko Khoda* also creates more ambiguity in understanding the issue of caste and ethnicity, for he seems to be arguing about ethnic issue, but deviates to the issue of caste which he thinks is synonymous to the issue of ethnicity, while it may prove to be different if analyzed differently. This is exemplified by protagonist, Mhendo's assertion as follows:

Fighting among various castes is not a class war. Our party is not filled with one caste only. This is a communist party and not a

racial party. Racism is always blind, because it looks at caste only.

But we look at class within the caste. (My Translation, 229)

These lines clearly enable the readers to understand the intention of the author that how he is very much bent on clarifying the concept on the vicious effect of fighting for the cause of caste which is usually the political tactics of racial parties as racism is always blind at caste that does not see the class issue. Once again the author fails to delve into the depth of effects to be wrought by caste conflict and racial conflict.

The author looks like as if he is dwelling in a confused state of mind as not being able to differentiate between the issue of caste, ethnicity and racism. He just jumbles caste, ethnicity and racism into one by simply referring racism and ethnicity as inseparable part of caste system.

And then channelizing the whole process of ethnic conflict into class war by hook and crook. In other words the author is somewhat prejudiced against the ethnic conflict.

By doing this the author secretly seems to intend to defend the Brahminism, despite being seen on the side of Tamang community in this novel. Finally he implies that caste and ethnic issues in Nepal should be allowed to flare into different belligerence beyond the class war which is accomplished under communism and communist philosophy only.

The protagonist also says, " We all come from exploited group of ethnic nationalities. Specially the party raised the issue of ethnic liberation, in order to address the issue of caste discrimination "(My Translation, 143). Then, comrade Dorje who harbors more racial sentiments for struggle in the country blurts out to Mhendo:

Didn't we plunge into battle field for the liberation of Tamang community?' Aren't we waging war to destroy the Brahman-Chetri dominated unitary state with Hindi religion and culture? Haven't we started arms rebellion against that state that destroyed our race and identity?Whom to believe or not? When the party that vowed to fight for our cause started to be run according to ideology of Brahmanbad.?Now, we will form a Tamang army and fight for Tamang liberation For Tamang ethnic community is also one of the ancient warriors. (My Translation, 227)

This evidence suggests that many ethnic fighters who joined the Maoist insurgents had dreamed of liberating their respective communities from the extractive and discriminatory unitary state of Brahmin and Chetries while few others truly sacrificed their lives for a class free society according to their Maoist political ideology.

Even when characters of this plot discuss about the problems they are fighting for, the different angles of their thoughts and concepts automatically come into power play which mould their surface duties and responsibilities. This evidence is also skeptical about how Prachand will further lead in the class struggle.

The discussion about formation of a Tamang army for Tamang liberation seem to be controversial here but will in the long run catch up with the emerging world of possibilities.

In these lines also the author juxtaposes ethnic liberation with caste discrimination, so as to impel the common readers to conceive the idea that freedom from

caste based discrimination in the society will automatically lead to ethnic liberation of all ethnic communities, without making the distinction between caste based discrimination and ethnicity based discrimination pervasive in the Nepali society.

3. Impending Ethnic Conflict in Nepal

Most of the inland and foreign scholars including International Crisis Groups conclude and suggest that the increasing gulf between ethnic indigenous groups and hill elite groups on the basis of communal prejudice against one another is predictably likely to cause a terrible ethnic conflict in this country where discrimination, inequality and denial of cultural and linguistic rights continue to oppress and torment hundreds and hundreds of such historically marginalized indigenous groups in this country.

For example, we find the ethnic (racial)sentiments and issues being reflected at the commencement of Mukarung's novel *Damini Bhir* when the protagonist Nembang after entering the Kathmandu valley from his village of Damini Bhir (54), goes to a theatre to play his role in a play, when he confront his play director on the issue of ethnicity for asking questions related to the play: "How can it be possible that this play is entitled as 'Violin and love in Monastery?'(66). Then, the play director taunts Namdeng by saying." These days, all of you are poking your nose into ethnic issues everywhere. You are too clever. You can go and do politics" (66).

This evidence illustrates how ethnic indigenous peoples like Namdeng have become conscious enough to ask questions everywhere if they smell rats in anything they go through. As an outcome this prying attitude on the part of Namdeng certainly makes the play director outrageous who concurrently is a Brahmin by ethnic origin. This also

suggests the readers that how difference of opinion on a particular subject can lead to conflict and misunderstanding among the people of the same society.

In fact Rajan Mukarung wittingly creates Kiranti and Non-Kirati characters through his well set plots and narrative in his novel to enable his readers to understand clearly that what's going on latently in the minds and opinions of Kiratis and Non-Kiratis on particular ethnic issues at the same time.

Through this evidence, the author intends to show the lack of trust among the different workers and leaders of the same party and movement due to different racial origin and concept about the issues their parties push ahead to capitalize them and further make the movement proceed.

This is also clear from the next dialect that takes place between Namdeng and a local mendicant who comes to ask for alms from Namdeng. For example Namdeng says to the wondering mendicant, "Late King Pirthivi Narayan assigned your generation, the task of espionage. Has your generation become beggars? Is your caste duped?"(88).

The author here makes it clear for his indigenous audience that how King Pirthivi Narayan Shah made use of one caste of society to engage in espionage to collect necessary information for preparation of aggression over the neighboring kingdoms of indigenous peoples. Although, the play "Daminibhir" is basically based on foundations of Maoist insurgency where Namdeng is affiliated to this party, yet ethnic issues in the novel has been viewed from various perspectives (proletarian as well as ethnic struggle for equality) which is one striking hallmarks of this novel.

It is also one of the examples of resistant literature in the country that delves into contemporary issues being discussed as the main agenda.

Similarly, referring to defeated history of Tamangs the author Ug Pathak through the mouth of Mhendo in *Urgen Ko Ghoda* says:

Victor's history is written and defeated history is unwritten backward history then goes into extinction. Kings, Ranas and all powerful regimes in the past intimidated and exploited Tamangs. Why Tamangs only, the other indigenous groups are also humiliated even in police. (My Translation, 93).

The author here discusses the issue of Tamang history getting into oblivion due to negligence of this history by its generations and state. Through vivid narrative of this forgotten Tamang ethnic history, the author has done a marvelous job in reviving and commemorating the lost Tamang history although he comes from an elite class of Brahmin family.

His sympathetic approach to shed light on Tamang myths, his choice of using Tamang dialects are indeed significant works done by this author, whose efforts have already been awarded and more laurels await him in future. In addition, another character named, Binay blurts out to his comrade:

Mhendo seeks for Tamang land, I will look for Tamuwan, does it cause headache for you?. Those who are oppressed people will raise the issue of identity. If Tamang is humiliated, why not he seek Tamang land? (My Translation, 56)

The author argues that since Maoist insurgency for class liberation was participated by various ethnic communities, the war topics such as Mhendo being Tamang seeking Tamang land simply sets in ground for another guy from Gurung ethnic community to demand Gurung land or Tamuwani during the struggle for new Nepal.

The evidence also exemplifies that if identity is denied blatantly to each of the ethnic communities, despite promulgation of democracy and human rights, increased conflict is inevitable. Then, another character named, Rupchan gravely looking at Sonam and Furba remarks:

Bhate, look for your fore fathers' history

Your Bhote nation was not always backward in history

Otherwise how could you become such an artist?

Look for the reason for your backwardness

Look for your nation's civilization

If you seek it, you will find it. (My Translation, 68)

These lines incite Tamang characters to seek their ancient history and civilization and find out the reasons for their backwardness and state of marginalization. The author through these lines certainly is inspiring the backward community members to gain a new ethnic consciousness to rise above their current status of deprived living and seek to revive their ancient historical identity, which has remained forlorn and forgotten for ages after mythical Tamang heroes and warriors like Urgen and his friend Waiba Kings were killed in battle with Khas kings in Kathmandu valley.

In America it acceptable for black people to seek identity, while Red Indians also struggle for identity. And you are taking your degree by studying about these stuffs. Then when any one seeks identity in our own country it irks you? To hell with your intellectuality. (My Translation, 259)

The author through this evidence has explored and conveyed the commons sense to his audience that the country people whether intellectuals, politicians or civil society members are all divided over the ethnic issues of identity, which may push the country to further battle field and political instability.

The author Ug Pathak being a Bramin by racial stock highlights the issue of Tamang history, land and struggle for identity which like following the tracks of what other scholars and researchers have already presented before the Nepali audience since many years.

The authors indeed through this novel seems to seems to take the side of marginalized community of Tamangs who are underrepresented in government bodies and considered to be uncivilized and slighted.

The author seems to be writing this novel at the call of his inner soul that gives testimony that history has really cheated and marginalized the Tamang identity. Pathak seems to give the message that things should change now and history should not be repeated as suggested by other Nepali and foreign authors such as veteran anthropologist Dor Bahadur Bista, Krishana Bhattachan, Susan Hangen etc and others.

Mukarung's poem *Bise Nagarchi* metaphorically symbolizes that surging ethnic consciousness for greater democratic rights and ethnic struggle against the extractive

environment is directly or indirectly expressed in the poem, which is presumed to be the reflection of ongoing ethnic movement of marginalized communities. So, the poem further narrates:

The hills surrounding Gorkha Kingdom

Look diminished in height

How crooked, bloody people are today

Who were innocent yesterday?

Why Daraudi Rivers flows opposite?

And royal palace in ruins, I see (My Translations, 2)

The poem in the 5th stanza narrates how Bishe is skeptical about the use of royal sword that beheads human heads and is no more scared of royal sword that tries to kill the human ideas. Bishe in the poem is baffled to understand whether the state was carved by the royal sword or the toiling subjects. Bishe ...further strongly also claims that he is not a terrorist; he has only gone insane in Gorkha kingdom after two hundred fifty years.

The poet uses the word terrorist because when the poem was being created the Maoist rebellion was on and the state had declared a bounty upon the heads of Maoist guerillas labeled as "terrorists" which was later lifted by government upon reaching a consensus to initiate peace process (2).

This imaginary one way conversation between Bishe Nagarchi and late King Pirthivi Narayan Shah directly or indirectly is embedded in the current social and

political stalemate observed in the country which is in its transitional phase and the poem ultimately envisions for a new Nepal free from any sort of exploitation and repression (3).

In the 7th Stanza compares himself with national poet Bhanubhakta and claims that he has also toiled for creation of this nation as Bhanubhakta's songs would have done. In a fit of wilderness, Bishe.... seems to have blurted out abusive words even against God and would have showed his worn out clothes before others (3).

4. Politicalization of Ethnic Indigenous Issues through literatures

Political parties have always looked for new political issues to be raised to beguile the public in order to get their full support. So, these political parties have been able to capitalize the ethnic issues which by perchance were slighted in the past history. So, such topics have also cropped up in the Nepali literatures.

For example, since Mukarung's novel *Damin Bhir* narrates about both political and ethnic issues, the novel at one place also describes the scene of various political slogans being written on the walls of Kathmandu by political parties of various backgrounds and philosophies such as, "Long live, people's federal republic Nepal. Long live, traditional Hindu state, Down with Susta encroachment, Hail, Kirant Peoples government (My translation, 206).

The author through the use of these slogans intends to let his readers know about perplexed state of mind of various politician and parties and difference of stand on political slogans raised on the walls of Kathmandu valley.

Meanwhile, one of the characters –Chetan is startled to know that Madesh movement has spread like wild fire in the terai region. The Madesh demands are very strong. Constituent assembly election are also over (My Translation, 217), which enabled Maoist party to win maximum seats in the first constituent assembly.

This evidence shows that Rajan Mukarung in his novel has reflected all the important ethnic related movements that surged up along with Maoist movement in the country. Madhesh movement is also an ethnic and regional based movement that has had heavy influence upon Nepali politics later on.

The novel also has references to someone making political speeches on the streets of Kathmandu valley:

We Nepali people want durable peace. Democratic constitution. No violence, war and general strikes here. No dictators, emperors, we need only democratic rule. We intellectuals, we peace lovers, we democrats have come to the streets. Hey, Prachand withdraw the general strike. If we intellectual want, your journey to Nagarjun will start. (My Translation, 246)

To hear this speech Namdeng also gets furious and reacts in an hostile manner against those who are chanting slogans against the strike called by Maoist that day The authors intends to make his readers realize through his narrative technique, characterization and plots that how the revolutionary party of Nepal like Maoist is also forced to withdraw its indefinite general strike under the pressure of all professional

organizations, intellectuals and artists who take to the streets in protests against Prachand's call for indefinite strike.

Next in the novel is the rally and speeches by Maoist leaders and cadres in response to what, so called intellectuals did on the streets in defiance of Maoist strikes. One of the comrades speaks to the audience on the streets:

Comrades, against our peaceful people's movement, so called intellectuals of the town in the name of dead peace are rallying out in the streets and countering our protest rallies. Just now there has been scuffle at Ratnapark. Long live revolutionary, to hell with reactionary agents, city agents. (My Translation, 248)

This evidence tells us that the political actors are all the time engaged in capitalizing the volatile issue that they want to manipulate according to their mission and visions. The authors wants to let the reader know that how can the new Nepal be created when such conflicting political forces and civil societies are playing their role towards their dreamed world rather than accepting what is currently happening as normal process of societal change and political transformation.

The author also intends to convey his latent meaning of what sort of political events are taking place when Namdeng blurts at one place, "Kathmandu has become all the more communal. It does not understand that ethnic liberation is co-existence and respecting all ethnic communities" (My Translation, 261).

These lines of course impels readers to understand precise both the surface and latent meaning of ethnic liberation as rumored or disseminated by Nepali media and

political actors in the country. On the other hand it also predicts that due to lack of misunderstanding about what is ethnic liberation, the country might unfortunately witness another conflagration of ethnic conflict which must be averted for peace and harmony of diverse societies.

In addition to introducing new resistant trend of Nepali literature by incorporating ethnic folk lore, cultural values and dialects neglected so far by forerunner Nepali writers and authors, Mukarung also introduces the current national debates about identity based federalism in the novel, through his fictitious characters like Khugsung who says to protagonist Namdeng as follows:

"Hey, brother! Let's go to Yayokha. Why? There is movement from tomorrow. What movement? Movement for Kirat autonomous state. Who is doing it? Kirat struggle committee. Who did it all? Kirat Rai Yayokha, Kirati Liberation Front, Democratic Rai Association are all participants in the movement. In the banner is written "Identity based Federalism and Federal constitution" The demands are ethnic based autonomous state.
(My Translation, 263)

The author through this description brings to the forefront all those ethnic issues including "ethnic based autonomous state; Identity based federalism and federal constitution" which are being raised vociferously by various ethnic based social and ethnic political organizations.

Even the novel fictionalizes and symbolizes through its imagery and figure of speech, the one day general strike called by all indigenous janajatis to put pressure on

the government to meet their demands for identity based federalism in the new constitution at the end of first constituent assembly:

There is complete closure of all shops because of indigenous janajaties' strike. All transportations and factories are shut down. Kathmandu is remains standstill. Agitators are alert in every cross road corners. (My Translation, 264)

The authors includes this real incident in his novel, may be to put the effects of reality and gain support of indigenous peoples and also to show his solidarity with the indigenous peoples movement for identity and federalism as he himself comes from the same indigenous racial background, so he must be fulfilling his obligation of being an indigenous novelist who must develop a different perspective in his novel to stand aloof from others in Nepali literature.

The novel while hinting towards disintegrating factors of political slogans and demands for ethnic states, Nambdeng's bother –in-law speaks to him on the issue of ethnic states being demanded by all as, "Everyone is demanding for ethnic state. I don't think ethnic state should be given to all. Will it not disintegrate the nation?" (My Translation, 265).

This evidence certainly tells its readers about the true representation of divided mentality of people in the country over the ethnic issue of identity based federalism which has caused even the constituent assembly to collapse time. In other words, the whole nation is actually divided over the issue of ethnic based federalism, for esoteric reasons which are never divulged.

Then Namdeng responds by saying as follows:

No, it will not disintegrate. Instead, if federalism is not given it might disintegrate. Moreover, the way, rumor about demand for ethnic state is being spread is not genuine. Seeking own identity is not to impose oppression upon others. Instead of it, the slogans like undivided far western region may sound like good outwardly, but it raises voices against federal changes in Nepal. This country is not anyone's alimony. (My Translation, 265)

The author through this evidence has vividly given answers for his readers who might be divided over the issue of whether to give ethnic states or keep stance on "undivided far western region" where protestors continue to reject the federal idea of "Tharuhat" raised by Tharu indigenous groups so as to protect and preserve their ancient territory.

The author seems to be trying to defend the idea of ethnic based federalism and identity of the indigenous peoples, while he also delves into different public opinion about federalism. Certainly, his non-partisan stance is appreciable indeed.

Then, the novel delves into the complicated issues being raised either for the indigenous movement or Maoist struggle for ethnic liberation. To make this reference in the novel, a Maoist cadre Khil Raj Adhikari drinks some water at a place where some Kirati volunteers are crowded. Meanwhile someone from, the crowd remarks, "Why this water for Bahun?" Then suddenly Namdeng responds by saying "No, sister, it is not like that. All Bahuns are not same, all Bahuns are not anti-federalist. (My Translation, 274).

This evidence also exemplifies that some section of ethnic people or indigenous peoples including Madhesis or Muslims and Dalits mistrust Bahuns and they usually exhibit their hostile attitude towards Bahuns wherever they get the chance to do so. They think that all Bahuns are exploiters and oppressors. So they should be shunned. On the contrary, there are other segment of Nepali people including ethnic indigenous people who usually are friendly to Bahuns in the country.

Khilraj says, " O, elder brothers, why don't you understand that I am also Bahun of Kirat states?" (My Translation, 276). Suddenly Khuksung gets angry at the conversation and says, "You are like Prachand. We will see that all Bahuns united will collapse this constituent assembly" (My Translation, 276). From this example, it becomes clear that the author is very much conscious of developing mistrust and hostility in between Bahuns and Kirati people. That's why he predicts about suspension of first constituent assembly which came to true as narrated in the novel.

The next, Namdeng says, "What to do. The seed of mistrust is sown by King Pirthivi Narayan Shah, manipulated by Jang Bahadur Rana, so they look at every Bahuns with the same skeptical eyes" (My Translation, 274).

The author vividly describes the prevalent notion of common indigenous people against Bahuns, who are usually considered hostile. Khuksung asks, what will happen now. Namdeng says "alliance against anti-federalists" (My Translation, 278).

What is more remarkable about this line is that whatever the authors narrates and predicts here for constituent assembly come out to be true.

The undercurrent of pervasive communal hostility in between the ruling elites and historically marginalized ethnic indigenous peoples have already been expressed in research papers, news papers, researches done by other Nepali and foreign researchers as well.

Few of the scholars have even predicted that if ethnic issues in Nepal pertaining their identity, federalism, right to self-determination, right to cultural practices and community practices are not guaranteed in the new constitution, the ethnic movement will take a violent movement which might lead to terrible intra-ethnic conflicts in between elites and non-elites and marginalized and privileged class as suggested by various scholars such as Mahendra Lawati, Krishna Bhattachan, Yes Gahi, Susan Hangen and International Crisis Group in Nepal.

Consequently, it is a usual outcome of prevailing scholarly researches, situations further escalated by slogans on ethnic fault lines that even Nepali poets and writers have incorporated these ethnic themes to give new literary outlook to their masterpieces alongside their motive to assert the rights of ethnic communities directly or indirectly.

Furthermore, *Ug Pathak's Urgan Ko Khoda* illustrates how ethnicity and ethnic issues are sometimes politicized. He exemplifies this sense when Masaum tells his comrade, "It is not a crime to be born in a particular ethnic community, rather there has been politics in the name of ethnicity which has ascribed ethnicity to be like a crime" (My Translation, 55)

Through these lines, the novelist attempts to convey the very meaning that the ethnicity has been politicized and romanticized under the pretext of prevalent social discriminations and state of marginalization and exclusionary state of affairs.

This process in the long run makes ethnic issues more compounded, problematic and challenging, which may also pave the way for divisive forces to play foul games for communal conflicts.

However, while writing these lines through his imagery, characterization and plots in the novel the author seems to have inclined towards some kind of prejudice against ethnic politics, because he only sees the class division based class war and not the ethnic division which is also deeply embedded in Nepali society since ages.

Through this novel the author basically wants his readers to learn that ethnicity cannot have ethnic political color which if given might jeopardize the social harmony. That is why, in one of the dialogues, the protagonist Mhendo says to her comrades:

Brother, this class war is not only waged by caste issue. You know that there is class within a caste. The world is divided into haves and have not. And we are fighting for the rights of have not, and downtrodden Dalits. Tamangs and more indigenous janajatis are oppressed because of caste. But considering caste as the main issue of struggle would be roundabout way of adhering to another Brahminism again. (My Translation, 228)

Through this evidence the author intends to convey the message to his readers that caste should not be taken into consideration as the main bone of contention for

conflicts in Nepal. It should rather be deemed as part and parcel of class conflict in society that leads to ultimate class war aimed at liberation of lower class.

In one of the meetings with local Tamang villagers Mhendo meets and discusses Tamang issues and responds to some of the questions raised by the elders who are usually called "Meme" which literally means uncle but generally addressed to any stranger as well. So, one stranger asks Mhendo, "Will we get a Tamang country after this fight?." Then Mhendo replies by saying, "No, not a Tamang country, but a separate Tamang state within Nepal nation state. We have to bring back our cultural, linguistic ethnic identity. The king is the leader of cunning people" (My Translation, 237).

Through the novel the authors typically delves into the Tamang history and legends and even uses Tamang dialects to inspire his characters to speak on the side of Tamang culture and history that was defeated and slighted for ages in this country where the Tamang form a bulk of the Nepali population.

At the same time the , author drives home his point through the novel as many readers would believe in what is written in black and white rather as concrete document for reference rather than relying upon undocumented theory of ethnicity, which otherwise might convey different meaning to the readers.

Hence the author very dexterously plays with the issue of caste and ethnicity by presenting them as both sides of the same coin before the readers through the mouth of lively characters and plots which are linked to Tamang mythical saga of the past that revolves around mythical hero Urgen, who fights against Khas invaders in Yambu in a

most valiant manner by riding his white charismatic horse and ultimately gets beheaded along with his friend Waiba King in a most treacherous manner.

The two heads of warrior Urgen and Waiba king keeps rotating in the Wabeng River until Tamang youths take vow to avenge their deaths when the two heads sink into the water (My Translation, 244). This mythical Urgen's white horse shapes and inspires the personality of Mhendo in this novel, who despite giving birth to a girl baby continues to fight for the historical identity of Tamangs and struggle against class and caste exploitation. The author then writes:

After the demise of Yambu king, Urgen and his white horse, the Tamangs did not even cross the Yabeng river, they shifted from Yambu to top hill areas around Yambu and created a new society and civilization. Since then they became history-less, called as cowards and porters only. (My Translation, 52)

This evidence exemplifies how Khas king treacherously defeated Tamang kingdom in Yambu and forcefully merged ancient Tamang kingdom into Khas kingdom, which initiated a vicious process that rendered Tamangs as history less and identity-less indigenous peoples of Nepal.

The author also tells the readers that today the things are not the same, things are changing, those communities that were gullible in those days are now becoming clever enough to voice for their historical, social and political rights. Decoys and plots are no longer going to work in future as new ethnic consciousness sweeps the country whose waves will effect for major transition and transformation.

Mukarung's poem *Bise Nagarchi* has used metaphors that tell that the ethnic indigenous peoples whose smaller kingdoms were annexed to the kingdom of Gorkha are now dissatisfied and are rebelling against the state. The poet also depicts the imagery of Maoist insurrection during which Bise ... lost his wife, his daughter raped, and his small hut burnt down. This situation has also causes him to go insane. Bise in the third stanza says:

Broken are my limbs

Hence, can't weave clothes

For your royal courtiers

I fail to guard your state

Because of disorder in mind

Can't speak in decent manner (My Translation, 2)

The metaphors used seem to politicalize the ethnic issue which relates to social disorder and political instability in the country besides outgrowth of republican public opinion that surfaced during and after Maoist rebellion, which juxtaposed with the ethnic resentment against the traditional state that had repressed and oppressed ethnic communities for more than two hundred years through various autocratic regimes.

In the eight stanzas, Bise ... also dares to compare and contrast the unification efforts by using his sewing needle as compared to royal swords. Also, Bise denies the allegations of being anti-national.

Hence it can be surmised that this poem has truly reflected and manifested the ethnic groups' dissatisfaction against state functioning. Being insane for Bishe after a long period of nearly two hundred and half years is clear manifestation of unjustified rule of law and democratic system which would only give social justice for all with proportional representation and development.

Then Mukarung's poem *Hami Adhivashi* (We are Indigenous Peoples) taken from his anthology-*Sun Re Siya Ram* also simmers with political tinge when his poem narrates about significant birth of indigenous people and the question of their survival including their struggle for identity. The poem goes on as:

Low lands (Terai) and Hills, Himal

Were born with us

Rivers and jungles sprang up with us

Main roads traced our early footsteps

This soil colored with our sweat. (My Translation, 67)

The poem refers to birth of low lands (terai) and hills and himal (mountain ranges) along with the birth of indigenous peoples on this land. The rivers and jungles sprang up along with the birth of indigenous peoples and main roads followed the traces of footsteps left by the indigenous progeny. So, the color of this land is that of the indigenous sweat that they dropped on this land.

These lines also indicate towards the ancient contribution of the indigenous peoples who are as old as rivers, jungles and hills where as as the migrants ruled the new

found nations states these indigenous peoples are being treated with despise, discrimination and deprived of natural resources with which they had closure affinity from the time of commencement of this nature (My Translation, 57).

The poem further explains how indigenous peoples as the early settlers on this land taught second generation of humanity, to walk on this earth. However, their contribution has not been recognized. Instead of recognizing their historical contributions for the humanity, they have been tortured, exploited and enslaved to lead inhuman lives.

History has witnessed gruesome genocide of indigenous peoples when outside migrants came to settle in the lands of these indigenous people by driving them out of their traditional lands and histories. In today's world most of the indigenous peoples across the world are leading miserable lives at the mercy of the state rulers who are non-indigenous and have less sympathy for the survival of the indigenous peoples.

The history has also witnessed how the natural resources of indigenous people were plundered and pillaged by external invaders. Their natural rights have been denied by modern states.

They are facing identity crisis and their survival is jeopardized. That's why the indigenous people today are ready to fight for their rights such as right to self – determination and ethnic/indigenous identity because more than 70% of indigenous populations are leading stateless lives in their own lands where they are internally colonized, oppressed and repressed by the states.

Chapter-3: Conclusion:

In conclusion, it is evident the Nepali literary text in asserting or reflecting the rights of the ethnic people (indigenous people), ethnic issues, resort to various interdisciplinary, multiple philosophical grounds, which further makes this issue more compounded to understand that ethnic movement for identity is merely a political issue. It is rather entrenched with elusive social, historical, cultural, and political roots and it seems that there is no confluence of trajectories on the ethnic issues. Alternatively, there is no single theory and force in the country that can truly liberate the historically marginalized ethnic/indigenous communities from their current state of being.

In summary, the Nepali literatures in the contemporary world attempts to represent the vibrant ethnic issues of identity, federalism, nationalism, through fictional characters, plots and poetic diction, by using metaphors, literary devices of imagery, personification, poeticization, romanticization, problematization and politicalization as well.

Alternatively, literary texts profusely pervade in reflection of feminism, ethnic nationalism, Maoism and racism under the veneer of class struggle for the sake of proletarian liberation which forms the basis of monologues and dialogues among characters of the of the novels and poems.

Poet Shrawan Mukarungs poems-*Bise Nagarchi Ko Bayan* and *Hami Adivashi* tend to represent new historicism by being nostalgic about bygone days and ruminate

over re-writing the history with new concept of pluralism, republican and democratic ideals inserted in them.

On the other hand Mukarung's novel *Damini Bhir* provides manifestation of ideals related to Marxism, Maoism, ethnic conflict, racial differences as well as class struggle with references to Maoist war.

Then, Ug Pathak's *Urgen Ko Ghoda* also dwells in historical nostalgia for Tamang lost history, mythical hero Urgen and his white horse, with combination of ideals for Marxism, Maoism and class struggle in juxtaposition with ethnic struggle for ethnic Tamang autonomous state.

The literary text does take ambivalent stands in illustrating on the issues of proletarian class and ethnicity. Both class and ethnic issues are represented as two sides of the same coin. These texts conclude that all outstanding ethnic issues of identity will automatically be resolved as soon as proletarian issues of class struggle are solved in society.

The authors of these texts seem to have presented these social and political issues of class struggle and ethnicity in the form of "salad bowl" to their gullible readers, who take away the sense of these texts and start advocating the same in the diverse society to make the existing problems complicated and endless, without conceiving a concrete solution.

Intentionally or unintentionally, the authors are telling us through these evidences that ethnicity/indigenous movement for identity cannot be taken as merely social, proletarian, ethnic or political jargon only.

However, despite this confused state of understanding such issues, an extensive debate has begun in the country at academic, government, civil society and international level which certainly render this issue more prospective future. People and academicians are reportedly discussing about prospects of establishing educational departments to study multi-ethnic cultures in Nepal which might attract many researchers from abroad.

What is little perplexing thing about these texts is that, instead of giving a clear concept about ethnicity and proletarian issues, the literature seems to have misguided and confused the readers on such issues.

For example, in Yug Pathak's *Urgen Ko Khoda*, the protagonist- Mhendo is a Maoist insurgent, who fights for class less society and nation but keeps being nostalgic about her own ethnic Tamang's pristine history and kingdom lost to Khas Kings.

She is continuously hunted by the image of mythical Urgen's white horse that keeps her goading to fight with a warrior like spirit in the battlefield, aspiring for establishment of Tamang saling autonomous state within Nepal where she would freely make use of her Tamang language, script, cultures, history and state.

The hot debate over whether they (Maoists) are fighting for ethnic liberation or for freedom of proletarian class in the country is uncertain. The ethnic issues largely crop into the dialogues of the characters and protagonist. The fictional characters claim that they are fighting for both class as well as ethnic liberation after abolishing the absolute rule of 'Brahamnbad'.

This ambivalent stand taken on the side of class issues in combination with ethnic issues seems have caused as deterrent for clear solution of these conflicts as despite such

ideas expressed through literary text and revolutionary Maoist conflicts the issues remain unchanged and unresolved.

Rajan Mukarung's *Damini Bhir* reflects ethnic sentiments in backdrops of struggle going on for Kirat autonomous state and identity based federalism. This text delves more on the ethnic issues in his plots and characters and less on proletarian issues, perhaps because of the Kiranti racial background author hails from. So, he more tilted to Kiranti issues even while narrating Maoist insurgency issues in the novel.

Mukarung's characters even express hostile communally hatred words against their counterparts in the novel, which alternatively suggest that proletarian issues are not being treated in tandem with that of class issues not only in novels but also in real society.

Mukarung's protagonist Namdeng represents a Limbu indigenous groups of eastern Nepal and through vivid plot and characterization, reveals how the indigenous people versus non-indigenous sentiments are capitalized for political motif. That how Namdeng is engaged in creation of an autonomous kirant state within Nepal after the end of Maoist revolution.

This novel has more descriptive narration of ethnic/indigenous movement for identity based federalism as well.

Shrawan Mukarung's *Bise Nagarchai Ko Bayan* represent strong ethnic combined with Maoist sentiments and issues of deprivation through nostalgic and insane Bise Nagarchi of ancient Gorkha Kingdom.....through his panoramic poetic diction even by throwing challenges at the late kind Pirthivi Naryan Shah after almost 200 years.

The same author's poem *Sun Re Siya Ram* and *Hami Adibasi* (We Indigenous Peoples) also directly reflect the sentiments of indigenous peoples struggle for identity and self-determination.

One can say that these Nepali texts are infused with resistant literary devices and succeed in introducing a new trend in Nepali literature by expressing ethnic folklore and issues.

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