

Tribhuvan University

Sutar as a Hegemonized Character in Govinda Raj Bhattarai's *Muglan*

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Letter of Recommendation

Om Acharya has completed his thesis “Sutar as a Hegemonized Character in Govinda Raj Bhattarai's *Muglan*” under my supervision. He carried out this research paper from February 2017 to May 2018. I hereby recommend this thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Sutar as a Hegemonized Character in Govinda Raj Bhattarai's *Muglan*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Om Acharya, has been approved by the undersigned members of the thesis committee.

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Abstract

This thesis is a study of the working conditions of Nepali immigrants as reflected in Govinda Raj Bhattarai's, Muglan. There in Bhutan, their dehumanization, exploitation and misery knew no bound. Their working conditions and thwarted passions are doubtless heart-rending. When the base of the national economy of Nepal was still feudalistic, thousands of Nepali immigrants went to different regions of Bhutan and India for different purposes. Poverty, Superstition, threat of feudal lords and the hope of getting recruited in British Army pushed a large number of Nepali immigrants to different territories of Bhutan and West Bengal. Despite their repeated efforts and struggle to actualize their dream, they are doomed to suffer. They are so cheated and manipulated by the organized network of middlemen, agents and brokers that they had to beg money for survival. They are taken to Bhutan and forced to do a backbreaking work. Some immigrants die of consumption whereas others managed to return to their homeland.

Key Words: Immigrants, Subordination, Hegemony, Exploitation, Settlement, Brokers, Homeland, Recruitment, Dehumanization

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I. Sutar as a Hegemonized Character in Govinda Raj Bhattarai's *Muglan*

This inquiry aims at exposing the nature of the working conditions of Nepalese immigrants who had to migrate to Bhutan out of several socio-economic causes. In Bhattarai's *Muglan*, the bitter and heart-rending reality about Nepali immigrants in Bhutan is represented from the critical angle of neo-Marxism. The way those immigrant workers are compelled to work is not as direct and immediate as classical analysts guess. It is the system, network, compulsive scenario, hegemonic forces of regional economy and Nepal's own regressive feudalistic forces that put immigrants in Bhutan in the vicious cycle of exploitation, oppression, and dispossession. In the novel, *Muglan*, two characters, Sutar and Thule happen to land in Bhutan out of the play of countless coincidental and unexpected forces. Some of these forces are the repressive and indifferent nature of feudal structure of Nepalese society. The impoverished condition of mass Nepali people is another reason. The third reason is the temptation of being recruited in British army. The fourth powerful reason is to get settled in different territories of Assam.

Sutar and Thule are enmeshed in the vicious cycle of poverty in their backward region in Nepal that they had to sell ghee to make money to go to Siliguri in the hope of getting recruited in British army. But the organized, corrupted and dehumanizing network of middlemen, cheaters and thugs put them in trap. Contrary to their hope of getting settled in Assam as the second best option of emigration, they fall into the hand of middle men. With their seeming kind but inwardly callous guideline, they reach Bhutan where they had to do backbreaking jobs. Like Sutar and Thule, many Nepali immigrants in Bhutan who had to sell their labors in Bhutan's construction sites die of TB, lack of nutrition and extreme physical enervation. Those Nepali immigrants are subjected to tough and hazardous works. They are given low

paid. The working condition is tough. But nobody is directly accountable to it. Those immigrants know that they had to raise their voice but they are so trapped in poverty that they do not have even a sufficient amount of money to return. It is the enfeebled economic base of the then Nepal that makes many Nepalese immigrants vulnerable to many Indian and Bhutanese hawks. The dependence of Nepal's economy on the economy of India and job-seekers' vulnerable position are largely accountable for their tragic demise. In the novel, all the friends who used to work with Sutar and Thule are landed in the tragedy of irreparable loss.

The phenomenon of migration spurred by the then feudalistic social structure is portrayed with a lifelike touch. Sutar and Thule are two representative characters who were trapped in the vicious cycle of poverty. They had had no chance getting education. Since there was no chance to get employment, it was difficult to pay off the debt their feudal lord owed to them. An organized network of deception, exploitation can be seen in the novel. Thule and Sutar are just the representative character. Bhutan turns out to be its satellite state. For the expansion of transport infrastructures like roads, India applied lots of gimmicks and tricks to attract Nepali immigrants. Thule and Sutar, two representative characters, fall prey to the organized network of exploitation put into practice by central economy. Socio-economic factors pressurize many poverty-stricken Nepal is to immigrate to the neighboring countries like Bhutan and India.

The journey undertaken by Sutar and Thule clarifies the case in point. It includes the migration of refugees, displaced persons, uprooted people, and economic migrants. Thule and Sutar also construct new social relations and institutions in the process of migration. To break the vicious cycle of poverty, they reach Siliguri in the hope of getting job that yield a good sum of money. But unfortunately they fall into

the hands of middle men, brokers, and a gang of labor supplying agents.

Consequently, they fall victims to exploitation, and oppression.

It is clearly seen in the novel when dispossessed and impoverished characters like Sutar and Thule sell ghee, make money and go to Siliguri in the hope of making money. Nepal, as depicted in the novel and as realized by immigrants, gradually turned out to be a supplier of physical labors to some of the construction companies of both India and Bhutan. The involvement of Sutar and Thule in the construction sites of Bhutan betokens undeniably this scenario. The representation of Nepal-India relation in *Muglan* is the relation of power. Question of dependence both economically and politically arises in the novel. The plight of Thule and Sutar reveal the case. Thule and Sutar are two Nepalese youth who lived poverty-stricken lives. The impoverished condition galvanized them to the economic centers like Assam and Bhutan. Because there was a trend of migrating to Bhutan via India, they thought that they could make their future bright by going to Bhutan. Thereafter, Thule and Sutar reach a gang of local contractors. Initially, they did not know the contractors belong to a local gang. They are again promised a high pay and the agent demanded rigorous work. At the time of receiving pay, a huge amount of commission was deducted from their wages.

Workers who were involved in the same work Thule and Sutar did receive a high pay in comparison to them. They had to face discrimination. Just the because they come from Nepal was taken as a basis to offer wage not their hard work. The dualism and dichotomy of center-periphery debate invites the use of Neo-Marxist theory as the essential methodological tools. In the novel, Nepal is portrayed as a country with weak economy, terribly dependent, lost in the web of illiteracy. The plight of Thule and Sutar clarifies the case in point. It is clear from the text that

hundreds of thousands of illiterate Nepali youths went to India for jobs, settlement, and stability. India was powerful in comparison to other South Asian countries.

Thule and Sutar reach Bhutan with a hope of making an earning so that they could cope with economic crisis at their home in Nepal. But their hope falls flat landing them in a state of perpetual despair and frustration. They are cheated treacherously by a middle man who promises them to get enlisted in the British Army. They barely avert the grip of the cheater. They fall into a gang of local agent who recruits hundreds of thousands of illiterate and ignorant Nepalese immigrants on a construction project in Bhutan. They come to realize that foreign soil is not favorable to them and they decide to make a retreat.

Thule and Sutar are underpaid, bullied and forced to work longer hours than they were contracted. Since they belong to the underclass of immigrants in Bhutan, they are forced to work hard by the middle man who recruited Nepalese immigrants like them on different construction sites and projects. Contrary to their hope, they received low pay. They got only big promises like getting enlisted in the British army and permanent settlement in Bhutan. But the reality they faced is unbearable and dreadful. Nepalese immigrants were cheated and exploited in Bhutan and in different South Asian countries. The death of some Nepali immigrants who are the friends of Thule and Sutar proves that economic exploitation, dispossession and oppression characterized the conditions of Nepali immigrants in Bhutan. Economically, the relation between India and Nepal is the relation of independence and dependence.

Exploitation takes place in the center-periphery economic zone which is Bhutan. The use of neo-Marxist tools is relevant because Nepal and Bhutan had to fall victims to the hegemony of India and Indian economy. When migrants integrate and diffuse broadly within their adopted homeland, the adopted homeland becomes more

diverse and migrants have a better chance of being valued as enriching society and introducing complementary cultural traits.

Dispossessing and debilitating Nepali immigrants is the key technique of thugs of India and Bhutan to exploit immigrants like Sutar and Thule. First of all, the power to make decisive and favorable choices is taken away by thugs of Siliguri.

Strategically, their Nepali immigrants' are put in economically dependent and dispossessed condition. Having put them in a state of dispossession, they are robbed of their ability to make choice. Economically, politically and culturally, Nepal is dependent on India and its satellite states. Geopolitically, Nepal is bound to be the periphery of the center that is India.

India as a powerful economic center of entire south Asian region is in a position to exploit, draw and drag cheap, untapped resources and materials. Causes of frustration and disappointment on the part of Nepalese immigrants in Bhutan are noticeable. This is typified by the plights of workers in Bhutan. The compulsion of Thule and Sutar to get engaged in back-breaking jobs which is physically demanding and exhaustive is itself a clear evidence of The illiterate and ignorant poverty-stricken Nepalese immigrants who went to Bhutan in a hope of creating a better future is the area in which this study is confined and limited.

Due to the lack of technical knowhow, expertise, and investment, Nepal lacks its own internal potentiality to revive itself economically. It has no option other than submitting to the self-interest or the national interest of India. Resultantly, Nepal is economically subservient and dependent. This issue is reflected in the novel. So, the neo-Marxist tool appears to be essential to the completion of this study. Regarding the novelty and heart-rending appeal of the novel, *Muglan*, Nilu Shrestha makes the following remarks:

Muglan, the first novel by Govinda Raj Bhattarai is a heartrending tale of illiterate and naive Nepalese youths who are tricked to work as bondage laborers in Bhutan while in search of better future in India. It is a saga of sorrow owing to lack of education and consciousness; there is cruelty of the heartless and extreme of exploitation. The major theme is the dictatorship of the state and discrimination suffered by the immigrant Nepalese. (12)

The lifelike tapestry of this novel is proverbial. It is by means a flawless novel. The juxtaposition of a pure longing for better future and pessimistic plight of the seekers of better prospect constitutes the rich narrative aura of this novel. Pathos is intentionally overwritten in the shattered dream of Nepalese immigrants.

Meena Parajuly sees the reflection of socio-cultural milieu in the story collection of Parajuli. In *Muglan*, the then cultural milieu is perfectly manifested in the novel. Even the political movement that took place at the time of this novel's creation is represented to some extent in this novel. Parajuly reveals the following facts with respect the novel:

The socio-political and cultural milieu in which the novel is set is significant as one sees the immigration gather momentum and the plight of the migrants who were shifted from one camp to another while some sought refuge different areas of Bhuttan. When hope is shattered, the Nepalese immigrants keep only the bare hope of making a retreat to their own homeland. (10)

Muglan examines the hidden lives of those who were lost in the maze of hope and frustration, prospect of gain and bitter reality of loss. They are suspicious of those

who offer them hollow promise and fake consolation. When harsh reality dawns, they are guilty. Only the thought of safety and shelter drives them.

The politicized version of the history of the immigration of Nepalese of poor class into several South Asian countries is presented in *Muglan*. The inclusion of politically charged setting heightened the historicity of the truth. Similar view is expressed by the critic Rabi Thapa. Thapa's view is cited below:

Muglan narrates how Nepalese people have lost the integrity and identity. This novel presents past incidents of Nepalese history- i.e. history of migration, immigration, exploitation and displacement that occurred in all around three decades. It is one of the most read books in Nepalese literature. It explores subjects which linger deeply in the psyche of Nepalese immigrants. (1)

Thapa maintains that historical incidents are politically modulated and then presented with a note of exaggeration. Historical fact gets embedded in the novel. Undoubtedly, it mirrors three decades of the globalization. The element of conflict is hinted in the novel.

Michael Hutt emphasizes the need to discuss Nepali literature outside a purely literary frame of reference so that not only the foreigners but also Nepali themselves can find appropriate referent. This concern needs special mention also because it speaks about the author's intended audience, i.e., Nepali critiques who have been accustomed to slavish borrowing of nomenclatures in their assessments. The pervading eerie atmosphere problematizes the generic fixity of the novel. Regarding the need to read *Muglan* outside the typical frame of reference, Michael Hutt makes the following remarks:

In creative writings there are several entries and exists, one chooses one or the other. These are poetry, essay, fiction, drama and criticism. If poetry fails, essay, if essay fails fiction, if both fail drama and if everything fails criticism. Criticism is easier done than said. *Muglan* was written out of the genuine sense of maintaining critical distance from those things related to the lives of victims that appeal the empathy inherent in everyone. (2)

Narrative writing is acquired by one's own efforts increasingly over a period of time with the gradual accumulation of experiences and addition of small knowledge particles. This understanding and insight are perfectly manifested in *Muglan*. It is helpful for deciphering the mystery of the world, mystery of the larger world of Nepalese immigrants who tried hard to carve niche in the entire narrative oeuvre of the author.

Bhattarai's novel *Muglan* has also gained many accolades and acclamation from different reviewers and critics. It invites critical inquiry and reflection. Pooja Dadwal's view regarding the author is cited in the following citation:

The author shows the sly and vicious nature of the middleman and those who got commission; replete with their debauchery, backstabbing and sycophancy. It is a telling recital on the restrictive and antiquated practices, defrayal and the utter disregard for anybody else in the pursuit of decent fortune. Bhattarai brings to life the trials, turmoil and harrowing search fought in the realm of migration, the seedy and unpalatable realities that permeated the Bhutanese society. (3)

Dadwal is of the opinion that the effeminate and indecisive nature of migrants turns out to be the breeding ground of conflict and chaos in construction site. The novel accounts the search for fortune which is evident in the text. The narrative framework of the novel contributes to the uniqueness of voice which rings prominently in the novel.

Anju Thapa reviews the novel, *Muglan*, from the angle of the author's power to capture the agony of Nepalese immigrants in Bhutan. Thapa puts forward the following opinions:

Muglan helps the emergence of new notion of individual freedom and demand for a greater degree of space for creative outpouring. Bhattarai comes across a new kind of interpersonal relationship. Understanding and familiarity amidst marital partner is a must for the sake of creating greater level of creative outburst. Such a relation can occur between a married woman and her unprecedented lover-turned- fiancés. (27)

Pathos of immigrants struggling on the alien soil is inherent in the centrality of the text. The victimization of innocent migrants is at the center of the text. It is fair to say that the glimpse of dynasty mentality is expressed in the way most of sober-minded people.

The sense of rebellion on the part of immigrants is suppressed by coercion, threat and terrible sense of insecurity. Not only the bitter reality of exploitation but the political message is also hinted in the text. Similar view is expressed by the critic Kanak Mani Dixit. Dixit's view is cited below:

Muglan is a story about Nepalese immigrants who struggle hard to make money in the hope of creating proper settlement in their homeland. This novel presents the political incidents of Nepalese

history- i.e. history of migration and compulsive exile. The crippling innocence on the alien land is depicted in a lifelike way. (1)

Dixit maintains that historical incidents are politically modulated and then presented with a note of exaggeration. Historical fact gets embedded in the novel. Undoubtedly, it mirrors three decades of the Nepalese society. The element of conflict is hinted in the novel.

Achyut Wagle treats *Muglan* as the partly subtle and partly straightforward text. The entrapment of pathetic Nepalese immigrants in the tug of collusions and conspiracy is the foremost issue handled in the novel. Additional ideas about the novel are mentioned by Wagle in the following citation:

Muglan is something of a subtle text in which Sutar and Thule including Karki caught between the deterministic forces and conscience. Frequently the judgment of right and wrong behavior rests almost exclusively on sexual behavior. Evil is identified with exploitation which is ruthless: there the devil wields his greatest powers. The relaxed social and sexual rituals of his time occupy the forefront of the novel. (27)

It is difficult to maintain their ennobled feelings when they were tested by the adversity of situation. The frequent dilemma of the workable conscience is at the center of this novel. In an attempt to dramatize the harmful effects of restrained financial prospect, Bhattarai indirectly happens to assert the mightiness of deterministic forces.

Although all these critics and reviewers discussed Bhattarai's *Muglan* and arrived at different findings and conclusions, none of them noticed the issue of Nepalese immigrants in Bhutan suffered exploitation and deception in the hands of

the middle man and local agent who underpaid immigrants like Thule and Sutar. They faced the danger of being used as decoys by those agents. Several false hopes and hollow promises were given to them but in reality they got only humiliation, exploitation, treachery and deception. A local middle man promises them to get enlisted in the British Army. But they remained deprived of being enlisted because it was just the hollow promise. The illiterate and poverty-stricken Nepalese immigrants worked hard to change their lot but the reality was terrifying to them. They finally make a retreat to their homeland struggling with their bitter experiences in Bhutan. The exploitation faced by Thule and Sutar is representative. Like Thule and Sutar, there were thousands of Nepalese immigrants who suffered the same lot in the alien land.

The theory of neo-Marxism mainly developed by Althusser, Eagleton and Gramsci constitutes the methodological framework of this study. It is relevant because it looks into the new forms of exploitation arising from the concentration of economic power in a fixed region. The exploitation of Nepal's physical laborers, illiterate youths and strong uneducated people by India can be examined and understood in the light of Center-periphery dichotomy. Ideological state apparatuses, according to Althusser, use "methods other than physical violence to achieve the same objectives as repressive state apparatus. They may include educational institutions, media outlets, churches, social/sports clubs and the family" (17). These formations are clearly apolitical. They are a part of civil society. They are in no way a formal part of the state.

In terms of psychology ideological state apparatus could be described as "psychosocial, because they aim to inculcate ways of seeing and evaluating things, events and class relations" (Althusser 18). Instead of expressing and imposing order,

through violent repression, ideological state apparatus disseminates "ideologies that reinforce the control of a dominant class. People tend to be co-opted by fear of social rejection, e.g. exclusion, ridicule and isolation" (Althusser 18). In Althusser's view, a social class cannot hold state power. It can do so if it simultaneously exercises hegemony over and through ideological state apparatus.

Althusser uses the term interpellation to describe the process by which ideology constitutes individual persons as subjects. The ideological social and political institutions are the family, the media, religious organizations, the education system and the discourses they propagate. Althusser compares ideology to "a policeman shouting "hey you" to a person walking in the street. The person responds to the call and in doing so is transformed into a subject — a self-conscious, responsible agent whose actions can be explained by his or her thoughts" (23). Althusser thus goes against the classical definition of the subject as cause and substance.

Althusser emphasizes instead how the situation always precedes the (individual or collective) subject. Concrete individual persons are the carriers of ideology. They are always-already considered as subjects. Individual subjects are presented principally as produced by social forces, rather than "acting as powerful independent agents with self-produced identities" (Althusser 62). India was and is a powerful economic center that can easily usurp, exploit and tap both the physical and natural resources of Nepal. It had created such a mechanism, strategy and network that all the physical and natural resources flow the center that is India. In addition, the finished and refined goods produced in India are sold in the market of Nepal. In both ways, Nepal is an economic periphery and India is the powerful economic core. In this unequal economic relation, hundreds of thousands of Nepali youths are trapped,

disappointed and displaced. In addition, the nature of exploitation is somewhat different from the traditional types of exploitation. Even the structure of exploitation has assumed a new form and manifestation. Thus, the applicability of new-Marxism is doubtless justifiable.

Althusser intends his theory to explain and develop a revolutionary outlook. His rejection of humanism created the sense that agency was illusory. Without a theory of human alienation, his approach risked positing the eternity of capitalism. This idea of Althusser is applicable in the novel, *Muglan*, because of the new forms of exploitation to which Sutar and Thule are subjected. In Althusser's view, ideological apparatuses can properly be described as belonging to the state, even if they appear formally separate from it. He argues that the state actually has two components: a repressive state apparatus, "which includes the army, the police, and the courts, and enforces class domination directly, and the ideological state apparatuses (ISA), which maintain complicity and identification with class society" (24). Althusser argues that the domestic sphere of family life is included in the domain of the state. It functions to maintain and develop an ideology that will maintain psychological adherence to and participation in class society.

Antonio Gramsci's conception of ideology describing ideology as a "terrain of practices, principles, and dogmas having a material and institutional nature constituting individual subjects once these were inserted into such a terrain" (45). There was a time in which many Nepali immigrants hoped to get enlisted in British army. It was the dominant force. Next dominant force was the possibility of getting settled in Assam. Ideology constitutes individuals as subjects and social agents in society. The same social agents play also economic roles at the level of production.

Ideology has an important function in the realm of production. It also has the same role in the overall structure of society.

This function is as real in the recurring dynamics of a mode of production. It demands productive system in equilibrium. It is in a system in organic crisis. In the latter case, of course, ideology is of relevance to the struggle for power in a rather decisive moment. Gramsci's conception of ideology masters class reductionism. It does so by asserting that classes in the infrastructure are not "duplicated in the superstructure through ideological elements. Ideological elements could be articulated in the different ideological discourses of those classes contending for hegemony" (Gramsci 34).

What concerns Raymond Williams is the social acceptability of particular conventions. Williams would develop this concept further. He does so by using it to problematize Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony. Hegemony, which can be thought of as either 'common sense' or the dominant way of thinking in a particular time and place, can never be total. Williams argues there must always be an inner dynamic by means of which new formations of thought emerge. Structure of feeling refers to the different ways of thinking vying to emerge at any one time in history. It appears in the gap between the official discourse of policy and regulations. Williams uses the term feeling rather than thought to signal that what is at stake may not yet be articulated in a fully worked-out form.

With this idea of Williams, it can be said that various forces dragged poor Nepalese immigrants to some of the economically viable zones of India and Bhutan. The living style of Nepali immigrants in Bhutan, their willingness to help one another in crisis and their hope to find escape from exploitation give rise to the culture of underclass workers. To probe this issue pertaining to the lives of underclass Nepali

immigrants, it is imperative to apply Williams' idea. Building on Gramsci's theories, Williams finds that hegemony links social inequalities to culture. Hegemony conditions cultural practices.

This study is divided into three chapters. The first chapter consists of the issue, review of literature, departure and design of the thesis. The second chapter consists of the detailed analysis of the text with the mobilization of theoretical insights of some Neo-Marxist theorists. The last chapter includes the conclusive finding of the study.

II. Exploitation as an Outcome of Collusive and Hegemonic Practice in Bhattarai's

Muglan

This study views exploitation as an outcome of collusive and hegemonic practice applied widely in a widely interconnected economic zone. In Bhattarai's novel, *Muglan*, the Nepalese society in which Sutar and Thule belonged are seldom offered settlement. So, they went forward to economically viable zone. No single economic base is the direct cause of Thule and Sutar's sufferings and agony. The immigrant is a matter of compulsion. The burgeoning trend of immigrant is reflective of how victimized and insecure the majority of Nepali immigrants were at that time. The stranger who takes interest in Thule and Sutar's conditions has another motive. He wants to exploit them. He tells them that he can help them to get recruited into Bharti recruitment. In a consolatory tone, he insists "Or do you want to go for Bharti, the recruitment? We set out thinking of recruitment. If only we could get it! After Sutar replied, that man reassured them-all right, hang on for a while, stay right here" (21). Treacherous stranger implants in their minds the fantasy of getting recruited in force. In a critical condition, Thule and Sutar were ready to accept any hopeful offer of advice.

Hearing the words of the stranger who claims to help them, "rays of hope electrified in them. That man moved a short distance away, took out a rickshaw from a corner and sped up pedaling his rickshaw and disappeared into the crowd of people. Only now did they realize that this was the same man person" (21). Surrounded by unconquerable setbacks, Thule and Sutar allowed themselves to be carried away by the seeming benevolent man. When the stranger mentioned the words 'Bharti recruitment', they felt as though "their hunger, thirst and exhaustion dissipated" (21). This way they tried to carve a way out of the maze of misery.

It is Gramsci's great contribution to have emphasized hegemony. Hegemony supposes the existence of something which is truly total. It is not merely secondary or superstructure. It saturates the society to such an extent that "it corresponds to the reality of social experience very much more clearly than any notions derived from the formula of base and superstructure" (Gramsci 31). For if ideology were merely some abstract imposed notion, then the society would be very much easier to move and to change than in practice it has ever been or is. This notion of hegemony as deeply saturating the consciousness of a society seems to be fundamental. Hegemony has the advantage over general notions of totality. It emphasizes the facts of domination.

Concerning hegemony, Gramsci asserts:

Yet there are times when I hear discussions of hegemony and feel that it too, as a concept, is being dragged back to the relatively simple, uniform and static notion which 'superstructure' in ordinary use had become. Indeed I think that we have to give a very complex account of hegemony if we are talking about any real social formation. Above all we have to give an account which allows for its elements of real and constant change. (41)

Hegemony is not singular. Indeed its internal structures are highly complex. It can continually be renewed, recreated and defended. By the same token, they can be continually challenged and in certain respects modified. The stranger who assisted them is actually a middle man. He used to send helpless boys to agents and contractors of some construction sites in Bhutan. He wanted to make money by sending Thule and Sutar to Mal Bazar. At first he had given them the hope that they would be recruited as armies in the new place. At that time many construction projects had started in Bhutan.

This critique of the 'base superstructure' model has led to dissolution of various binary oppositions modeled on the thesis of which that of 'literature and society' is of special importance" (Williams 77). This idea of Williams is basic to looking into the troubles of Thule and Sutar. Williams argues for seeing literature primarily a social practice which is specific and situated within a complex of social practices. His argument for connections and relationships has given rise to the most important of his concepts cultural materialism. The concept can be seen as an extension of historical materialism to the realm of culture which has been so resistant to such as interpretation.

There was scarcity of both physical labors in Mal Bazar. That is why dozens of middle men, agents, hagglers and aides were available to take helpless Nepalese immigrants. Thule and Sutar fell into the grip of such agents and middle men. The following extract is illustrative of how Thule and Sutar fell into the grip of middlemen and cheaters:

The contractor feigned anger and yelled-ugh, don't make things difficult. My mother does not come in vain either. Let's make a compromise somewhere in between-let's settle for thirty. Ranu shook his head in negation as usual. No dai, even if the river Teesta reverses its course. Interrupting him half way, the contractor said all right, don't be too obstinate, let's make it forty. Is it ok? Ranu gave his decision wagging his head as usual. Well, only I know whether it is alright or not. (36)

Sutar and Thule were compelled to move from the hand of one middleman to the other. From the hand of a stranger in Siliguri, they reach the hand of Ranu who is a cruel and insensitive middleman. He is a powerful agent to supply physical labors to

Bhutan's different construction companies and sites. They had the big labor-supplying network in which once a person is stuck, he has had a rare chance to come out of it. And Sutar and Thule are almost trapped in the dreadful network of middlemen who make huge fortune by supplying helpless workers who come from Nepal to different regions of India to make fortune.

Gramsci highlights a typical problematic of the over-determination of socio-cultural dialectics that bear certain connection with the literary production. It is indispensable to argue that a solid work of art arises from the dialectical space in which a cluster of factors and parameter exert influence. He says that a single locus of socio-cultural parameter should not be allowed to effect profound transformation in the dialectics of the socio-cultural and the artistic representation. Concerning to this aspect Gramsci demonstrates the following views:

Alternative senses of the world, which can be accommodated and tolerated within a particular effective and dominant culture. This has been much under-emphasized in our notions of a superstructure, and even in some notions of hegemony . . . In the practice of politics, for example, there are certain truly incorporated modes of what are nevertheless, within those terms, real oppositions that are felt and fought out. (46)

Totality is an impossible cognitive category. But in any comprehension of totality, one would always have to specify and historicize the determinations which constitute any given field. With sufficient knowledge of the field, it is normally possible to specify the principal ideological formations and narrative forms. What is not possible is to operate with the few texts that become available in the metropolitan languages.

All ideological complexity is reduced to a single ideological formation. All narratives are read as local expressions of a meta-text.

Those immigrants like Sutar and Thule in the novel, *Muglan*, fell prey to the tricks of trade of various middle men, brokers and smugglers. What at a macro level drives the severe labor exploitation of Nepali immigrants like Sutar and Thule is the combination of gross regional economic disparities on the one hand and increasing economic mobility on the other. As a result, growing numbers of Nepali immigrants work abroad. They are driven by the economic situation in their home country. These workers feel that if they accept conditions that are exploitative. The feeling of accepting what lot comes handy is best demonstrated by Sutar and Thule in *Muglan*.

The neighboring regions of India are the markets for the cheap, menial labors of Nepal. In the novel, *Muglan*, two characters Sutar and Thule represent how neighboring regions of west Bengal, Aassam, Manipur and Bhutan consumed physical laborers of Nepal. The time in which illiterate Nepali youths sought for jobs in India was the tough time for Nepal. The exploitation faced by Sutar and Thule proves it. They are always underpaid. Several tricks were applied by middle men to hold them back on the construction site to use them unfairly. Socio-economic and cultural factors drove Nepali youths to immigrate to India. They are cheated, oppressed and dispossessed in a strategic and organized way. Due to Nepal's strategic geo-political setup, Nepal is dependent on India in many respects.

Sutar and Thule are forced labor from the peasantry in Nepal by the landed classes. The state in this period was directly correlated with the growing British economic and political expansion in the rest of the sub-continent. It was used to bear the military costs of expansion and of holding out against British expansionist efforts, as well as to fund the consumption of luxury goods introduced into the market by the

British. Along with migrants from other regions like Orissa, Bengal and Bihar, these migrants from the hills of Nepal provided cheap labor for the tea industry in Bengal and Assam. In some regions they participated in land reclamation and resettlement. Nepal denuded her rice fields and maize terraces, her high villages and mountain pastures to send forth her best as cannon fodder for the imperial aims of the British bourgeoisie. In the novel, certain glimpse of this sort of trade can be found. The resultant labor shortage badly harmed further the development of the agrarian economy. Outmigration has become an economic necessity for the survival of the hill peoples.

The entire terai belt of Nepal was filled with dense forests and it was dreadful to migrate there. Deforestation had not started and the threat of malarial disease was endemic to the plain regions. In the hilly regions, the majority of people lived in abject poverty and they were denied access to basic services and facilities. In that condition, impoverished and illiterate Nepalese youths were tempted to go to Muglan. They had the illusory hope that Muglan offers them a better life, economic power, practical experience. The following extract describes how the word 'Muglan' carried multiple implication in the time in which the trend of immigrating to the countries of the Indian subcontinent was in vogue:

Sutar and Thule could not control themselves from the temptation of getting lost in this colorful world of Muglan, away from home.

Neglecting to carry the salt back home after selling ghee in Dorling, they got into a truck heading for Siliguri. They descended with the truck. In the meanwhile, a small hill train with only ten or twelve coaches descended down from Batase station releasing ear-piercing sounds. (2)

Like Sutar and Thule, hundreds of thousands of Nepalese youths and middle aged people went to different provinces of India and other neighboring countries of India. At home, the local feudal lords exploited in various way poor and illiterate Nepalese youths. From bonded labor to direct confinement of youths as peasant workers at the house of feudal lords, youths had to fall victims to unnecessary hurdles. To escape the persistent exploitation and oppression in the feudal framework of Nepalese society was the main motto and meaning of landing oneself on the way to migration. In addition, the tempting prospect of making fortune, creating proper settlement and being free of roguish and thuggish practices of Nepal were equally driving forces behind the flourishing trend of migration.

Althusser calls Ideological State Apparatuses a certain number of realities which present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialized institutions. The following extract throws light on how ideological state apparatus works:

This is the fact that the (Repressive) State Apparatus functions massively and predominantly by repression (including physical repression), while functioning secondarily by ideology. (There is no such thing as a purely repressive apparatus. For example, the Army and the Police also function by ideology both to ensure their own cohesion and reproduction, and in the 'values' they propound externally. In the same way, but inversely, it is essential to say that for their part the Ideological State Apparatuses function massively and predominantly by ideology, but they also function secondarily by repression. (45)

If the ideological state apparatus function massively and predominantly by ideology, what unifies their diversity is precisely this functioning. Given the fact that the ruling class in principle holds State power (openly or more often by means of alliances between classes or class and therefore has at its disposal the (Repressive) State Apparatus.

The entrapment of Thule and Sutar in the novel can be examined in the light of Althusser's notion as elucidated above. To create at least certain level of economic stability and security, Sutar and Thule wanted to go to Aasam. So they took a bus from one local station of Darjiling. They are cheated by a driver who charges undue bus fare. They know that just one or two rupees are enough to pay the fare of the vehicle they used. But the driver, seeing innocent Nepalese immigrants, decides to charge bus fare which is thousand percent higher than the usual bus fare. The following extract throws light on this aspect of the scenario in which both the innocent Nepalese immigrants fell prey to shrewd and deceptive bus driver:

It is not certain, but we had started off thinking of going to Muglan came the answer in chorus. It is alright; this vehicle will take you too straight to Muglan. Ok, give me your fare. The driver's helper spread out his hand, popping his shrewd eyes at them. Turning his innocent eyes, Thule said, how much for two people?" His reply was simple, 'Not much, just twenty rupees per head. Sutar got a shock for once. Both of them thought- twenty rupees means one kori. They had made three koris each selling ghee, should they part with two koris right now. (3)

With the sale of ghee, Sutar and Thule had made money to go to India in the hope of making plenty of fortune. With much hard work and struggle they reach the junction

from which the road to Aasam departs. But they are cheated. They cannot make a journey to the intended destination. They are left in the difficult condition. In the maze of Indian bazaar and junction, they are like innocent people whose ignorance is capitalized by a group of shrewd Indians.

All the State Apparatuses function both by repression and by ideology. They work with the difference that the (Repressive) State Apparatus functions massively and predominantly by repression, whereas the Ideological State Apparatuses function massively and predominantly by ideology. Elaborating on this line of reasoning, Althusser argues:

Whereas the (Repressive) State Apparatus constitutes an organized whole whose different parts are centralized beneath a commanding unity, that of the politics of class struggle applied by the political representatives of the ruling classes in possession of State power, the Ideological State Apparatuses are multiple, distinct, 'relatively autonomous' and capable of providing an objective field to contradictions which express, in forms which may be limited or extreme, the effects of the clashes between the capitalist class struggle and the proletarian class struggle, as well as their subordinate forms.

(77)

Althusserian Marxism incorporates those changes keeping in mind the changes in social conditions which have undergone change over time. Whereas the unity of the (Repressive) State Apparatus is secured by its unified and centralized organization under the leadership of the representatives of the classes in power executing the politics of the class struggle of the classes in power, the unity of the different

Ideological State Apparatuses is secured, usually in contradictory forms, by the ruling ideology, the ideology of the ruling class.

With this idea of Althusser, the plight of Thule and Sutar can be understood. When Thule and Sutar were robbed of their money, they had no option other than working as labor. On railway station they tried to carry the luggage of passenger. Seeing the new faces of coolies, some passengers doubted if Thule and Sutar are real coolies or scoundrels. One of a passenger shouted "Who told you to pull somebody's bag so forcefully? You bugger! One of them, hurt with the blow, . . . this bastard hill man hits really hard, leave him alone" (7). The more silent they keep in an unresponsive way, the more "Hurriedly he picked up his rickshaw and left the places as if he was running for his life. Everybody followed him and in an instant the place was empty" (7). One after the other these two innocent and illiterate Nepalese immigrants suffer a lot. Their dream of making fortune through their journey to Mulgan, the foreign land faces deadlock.

Before reaching the land they had dreamed to reach to fulfill their hope of making fortune, Thule and Sutar come across a shocking and troublesome condition. Whatever money they had taken from Nepal is taken by pickpocket. Their pockets are torn as pickpocket had already used a scissor was used to tear it. Seeing this condition made both Thule and Sutar dumbfounded. The real days of struggle, misery and cautiousness began. The following extract is suggestive of the beginning of their real trouble that gives a halt to their search for fortune in foreign land:

Thule and Sutar were drenched with perspiration. They almost took our lives. Thule was panting desperately. These are all scoundrels, brother; you should hit them nicely if they pounce on you, only then will they run away. Sutar was talking as if he was the only person who

could rescue Thule from this trouble. Wiping their sweat, they went to the pavement and stood there. Thule's waistcoat was torn, his topi lay crushed on the ground. Would they have to keep wrestling constantly like this for their life in this strange place? (7)

Cheaters, looters and deceivers took advantage of the innocence and illiteracy of Thule and Sutar. Whichever way they choose makes them bogged down into trouble. It appears that they are fated to suffer on the Indian soil. Yet they do not keep the idea of making an instant return to their homeland. They struggle further with endurance in the hope of making fortune on soil strange to them. Once they enter a train without buying tickets. They were in the reservation compartment. Other passengers laughed when they saw them squatting in a cross-legged position. They felt frightened and asked question each other why others are laughing. Soon a ticket-searching agent came, interrogated them and forced them to get off the train as they had no ticket. The police caught them by the arms and said in Hindiised Nepali "You got to get down; got to buy ticket, you cannot sit like this, understood?" (16). the fate of being inexperienced in travelling, illiteracy, ignorance and innocence made them terribly vulnerable.

Each of them contributes towards this single result in the way proper to it. The political apparatus works by subjecting individuals to the political State ideology, the indirect (parliamentary) or direct democratic ideology. In Althusser's words:

The communications apparatus produces effect by cramming every 'citizen' with daily doses of nationalism, chauvinism, liberalism, moralism, etc., by means of the press, the radio and television. The same goes for the cultural apparatus (the role of sport in chauvinism is of the first importance), etc. The religious apparatus by recalling in

sermons and the other great ceremonies of Birth, Marriage and Death, that man is only ashes, unless he loves his neighbor to the extent of turning the other cheek to whoever strikes first. The family apparatus . . . but there is no need to go on. (76)

An apprenticeship in a variety of know-how is wrapped up in the massive inculcation of the ideology of the ruling class. The relations of production in a capitalist social formation are largely reproduced. The mechanisms which produce this vital result for the capitalist regime are naturally covered up and concealed by a universally reigning ideology of the School.

With this idea of Althusser the network of exploitation in the novel is probed. Seeing their vulnerable, helpless and miserable conditions, a man comes to help them. Sutar says "O! bhaiharu, where are you going? Both answered in one voice, actually, we set out with the thought of going to Muglan. After coming here we thought of going to Achham, but we could not. The man spoke in a bossy voice; this is the mail going to Assam. What are you waiting for" (20). When Sutar and Thule told him how their money was taken by pickpocket, he cries "Someone must have stolen your money. You people think all places are like your own village. Haven't you heard that the pickpockets of Katihar take refuge in Siliguri? How much money did you have?" (20). In a state of helplessness, both Thule and Sutar got at least a stranger who inquires about their pathetic and helpless conditions. They had hope that perhaps they can come out this helpless condition with the help and suggestions of this stranger.

The compulsion created by the working scenario forced Sutar and Thule to connive at the level of abuse and exploitation. This compulsion faced by them can be understood by the theoretical ideas of Raymond William. In this connection he is

deeply suspicious of all forms of orthodoxies and accepted truths. Theory for him is practice. He never professed anything that does not emerge from practice or experience. The problem faced by Sutar and Thule is also traceable to the feudalistic framework of Nepalese society. He has difficulties in subscribing to Marx's idea of base and superstructure. He seeks to redefine this most hallowed concept of Marxism. Williams has been unique, in rejecting the concept as it has been understood by the Marxist. "The distinction base and superstructure", he argued, "was reified version of the social process" (37).

There were many Nepalese immigrants like Sutar and Thule who had headed to muglan from Nepal but ended in shipwrecked conditions. Like Sutar and Thule, they had to endure exhaustion, hunger, sleepiness and insecurity. A broker is taking them to Bhutan through Mal Bazar. They are all sure to be exploited rapaciously not only by brokers and middlemen but also by an employer who often gives low pay to menial labors. The fatigue and exhaustion weakened them when they were put on a truck and taken to Bhutan. At an outpost on the road to Bhutan, the contractor got down from the vehicle, went to a house nearby and knocked at the door. After a while, "one small Bhote-boy came down from upstairs and was seen opening the door. Then he asked everybody from the truck to go inside, and left. Exhaustion, sleepiness and hunger combined, had silenced Karki's tittle-tattle completely" (42). Those immigrants had hope that they would find nice lucrative jobs. But the reality turned out to be somewhat unbearable. The following extract sheds light on accompanying misery and hardships that befell Nepalese immigrants:

Before sleeping, Karki expressed a feeble suspicion that there is no sign of the destination. Will he take us straight to Malaya Cantonment or what? Sutar Kanchha injected some reassurance-what does it matter

wherever they take us? We have been handed over and our boarding needs are taken care of. They lack wisdom to see where real problem lies. (42)

From Siliguri helpless and cheated Nepalese immigrants were given the promise that they would be recruited in army. But now they have started realizing that they are no longer taken to the cantonment. On the contrary, they are taken to the different regions of Bhutan where there is an increasing demand for physical labors on construction project and manufacturing companies, road expansion and other developmental works.

Every social practice and all material production involves signification, but neither communication nor fashion nor any other of those things that Cultural Studies takes as its specific object of study is merely or even mainly a signifying practice. Nor can the relation between cultural production and its basis in economic and political processes be read off anecdotally or epiphenomenally. It has to be studied rigorously and structurally. The following extract discloses Gramsci's view regarding hegemony and its expanding effect are elucidated in the following extract:

The political and practical implications of Gramsci's ideas were far-reaching because he warned of the limited possibilities of direct revolutionary struggle for control of the means of production; this 'war of attack' could only succeed with a prior 'war of position' in the form of struggle over ideas and beliefs, to create a new hegemony. (35)

This idea of a counter-hegemonic struggle has had broad appeal in social and political movements. It has also contributed to the idea that knowledge is a social construct that serves to legitimate social structures. In practical terms, Gramsci's insights about how power are constituted in the realm of ideas and knowledge. It is expressed

through consent rather than force. It has inspired the use of explicit strategies to contest hegemonic norms of legitimacy. Gramsci's ideas have influenced popular education practices, including the adult literacy and consciousness-raising methods.

The contractor from Siliguri named Moktan and his friend had guided a group of Nepalese immigrants including Sutar and Thule. The contractor had the secret purpose of handing all these immigrants and helpless labors into another contractor who install them on different work station and demand commission. When the truck reached the center of Construction Company in Bhutan, Moktan and his ally were absent. The labors searched for them a lot but Moktan and his friend were nowhere to be found. The harsh reality is that Moktan had already handed over those innocent workers to a new contractor. The following extract describes what plight those workers were landed in following the sudden disappearance of Moktan and his aide:

Nobody knew anything about him. Even his bag was missing. The driver looked here and there, created a hullabaloo, and still nothing came out of it. Taking the remaining fifteen, he drove away.

Everybody was feeling bad in the absence of Moktan. The contractor had left them, and a friend of theirs was also left behind in an unknown world. (44)

There is no question of reaching the intended destination. Since all of them including Sutar and Thule fall victims to the saccharine words of Moktan, a dark fate and future await all of those workers. They now gradually realized that they are cheated and hoodwinked. At first they believed that Moktan is genuinely interested in the wellbeing of helpless Nepalese immigrants like Thule and Sutar. But when they found themselves abandoned beside a hilly region, they are jolted into painful and terrifying

awareness. But it was too late to make a retreat and all of them including Sutar and Thule had to offer what sorts of physical back-breaking works were offered to them.

To speak of any of that directly and simply is to be vulgar. It is absolutely essential to reiterate that most things are a matter of class. Gramsci further throws light on the issue in this extract:

In common parlance, the word "domination" denotes subjugation, or the exercise of absolute control either by a state or by an individual. On the other hand, hegemony conveys such notions as influence, patronage, or leadership. The cohesion of such a state springs from the spiritual and cultural supremacy it exercises through the manipulation of civil society. By using agents of socialization such as the church, family, schools, the media, and other non-governmental institutions, the state foists its own values and beliefs on society, thereby providing a cultural direction. (65)

Its hegemony in this sense becomes rule by consent. It parallels the supremacy of force, but diminishes the need for its application. In contrast, domination is supremacy established by force and maintained by the state through military, political, judicial and fiscal systems. In this case, domination is an antithesis of hegemony. The hegemony of the state rests in part on ultimate coercive power. But the currency of force is devalued if it must be constantly applied. A state seeks rule by consent, and strives to secure habitual acquiescence to its authority.

With Gramsci's idea of hegemony, the gradual fall of Nepali immigrants into the power of core economy is studied. Thule and Sutar are assigned with the task of breaking boulder with crowbar and spade. At Moktan's disappearance, a new Jimdar appeared as a new contractor. He openly and honestly informs workers like Thule and

Sutar that they are brought here to work as coolies, labors and workers to break boulders using crowbars and spades. For a brief span of time the dream to get recruited shattered. Now they are in a catch22 situation. They can neither go back to Nepal nor work as it is a tough work to break boulder with crowbar and spade.

In a very bossy and superior air, the Jimdar kept telling "Kanchho and Sutar now you have to work. The work is digging the road. You will get one hundred to two hundred as monthly salary depending upon your work. For food, you will get ration in our own canteen at a cheap rate" (48). On surface, the words of the Jimdar sound convincing and attractive. But time shows whether he keeps to his words or not. In a mood of giving instruction to Thule and Sutar, the Jimdar says:

Not only that, you will get clothes, shoes, and sometimes you will also get leave. You have to work from six o'clock in the morning to five in the evening. You will have to do whatever you are assigned. Whoever works well, his salary will keep increasing. With his red bloodshot eyes, the Jimdar raised his finger at them and added- but if you think of going into hiding or running away from here . . . your life. Beware. As they listened to him, everybody felt deeply maimed from inside and shattered completely. They wilted within themselves. (49)

Through different strategies and tricks, poor and helpless immigrants who had come to India in a hope of making some money are subjected to back-breaking works. Before exploiting and oppressing them, various techniques were used to entrap them. It helplessness, and poverty are utilized in a strategic ways to entrap immigrants who go there from Nepal. The hope never finds promising horizon for its natural and timely accomplishment. In hope of better future and certain sum of money, they are

always exposed to treachery, perfidy, powerlessness, helplessness and horror of being compelled to work in alien land.

Williams in his essay, "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory", establishes the proposition that:

Social beings determine consciousness as contradictory to the conventional model of analyzing Marxist theory by establishing the relation between the base and superstructure where base denotes the forces and relations of production and superstructure represents societal behavior and culture as a whole. One of the established definitions of superstructure is the reflection, the imitation or the reproduction of the base in the superstructure in more or less direct way. (87)

In the twentieth century there is the notion of 'homogenous structures' which was viewed as a basic homology or correspondence in all structures which can be discovered through the process of research. He harps on the inter-dependence and inter-relation between activities which blur the distinction between economic base and superstructures but instead make them related and connected or intertwined with each other. Williams also harps on the proposition of economic base being more crucial and vital for understanding the realities of cultural process. He says that base is never static or uniform since there are deep contradictions in the relationships of production thereby effecting the social relations.

The base can thus be seen as a continuous process and not as a 'state of being' or as being static and constant. Williams talks about re-valuing notions in order to make "them realistic and rational when placed in contemporary socio-economic relations" (72). He argues that Marxist ideology is "based on a certain economic

structure which might be ambiguous when placed in the modern cultural scenario which is fast changing" (87). He presents a much dynamic, interrelated and complex structure of the developing social conditions which in certain ways contradicts Marxist concepts of economic relations. Williams says that most often the complexities of modern society cannot be examined based on the ideologies of Marxist concepts.

In the light of Williams' notion of base and superstructure, the modality of exploitation of immigrants in an economically volatile zone is examined. The works which were given to Nepalese immigrants including Sutar and Thule were risky, horrible and exhaustive. Some workers were "on the top of the high cliffs above making holes on the rocks; they would insert gelatin in those holes and blast the rocks. Rock -bursting would produce a loud ear-piercing sound . . . the gigantic cliffs dissolve and roll down" (49). Lives of workers were put on high risk. But surrounded by crisis, threat, poverty and compulsion, they used to work with smile on their faces. Tougher than the toughness of task is the Jimdar's rude and strict surveillance. The following extract serves as an index to the rigor and toughness of task:

The Jimdar serially assigned a task a task to each one of them. Not more than three were allowed per task. Thule, Karki and Sutar made a group of three. They were first assigned the task of felling the trees ahead and removing the boulders that lay on the track. All the three held axes in their hands and made for the trees on the other side. After reaching the site half a mile away, they started to fell trees rapidly as the Jimdar had instructed . . . Thule and Kanchha did not care about anything else. (50)

The Jimdar orders workers to work from six am to five pm. Moreover the works are tough, risky and dangerous. Yet Thule and Sutar work because they have no other option. Like them, other laborers also work. On the foreign land of Bhutan, they do not lose heart and continue their works. Their dedication to work comes from compulsion and a scenario of entrapment. Under strict and compulsive conditions, workers are involved in back-breaking jobs. In the actual sense of the word, constant involvement in this sort of works can incur death at any time. It is due to shrewd Moktan that they are lost in the life-ruining tasks. It is their own gullibility that invites such conditions. Thule and Sutar sidestep all types of weak thoughts and go on doing the assigned daily works in a bare hope of making some money to escape such a terrible conditions.

Geopolitical motive operates at the back of phenomenon of globalization. Tough rice, lentils and other provisions were offered on ration from a store, the cooking condition was troublesome. The blowing wind from the top of a hill disturbed the cooking of food. The work they had to do was risk, tough and backbreaking. Even the cooking and living conditions were in no way better. There was no chance of ennobling life in such conditions. At the end of a week, all the old workers queued themselves up in front of the store, collected their rice, lentils and other provisions in their cooking utensils. Then they started to cook their meal in their respective tents.

Everybody had to register their names. Karki signed up three places and collected his pots, utensils and ration. The following extract describes the conditions for cooking meals:

For fuel, they borrowed some firewood from their friends, which they had collected in the forest. For water, they had to go quiet far, deep down into a place and started to cook meal. It was a hilly place and the

wind blew quite strong. They found the job of burning firewood and cooking their meal. It was a hilly place and the wind blew quite strong.

(52)

The Jimdar's style of exploitation is clearly reflected in the above-cited extract. Workers were forced to do heavy, risky and life-threatening works. They were compelled to work overtime. The food, ration, water, cooking place and sleeping quarters were not acceptable. After working so much work for eleven hours, workers no matter how uneducated, illiterate and menial must get at healthy food, clean drinking water and good place to sleep. But none of such basic needs and necessities was provided. Just the workable and makeshift conditions were offered to workers mainly Nepalese immigrants like Sutar and Thule.

Thule and Kanchha worked till they are completely soaked with sweat. They perspired and exhausted themselves. It was very difficult for them to go back to the colon to cook, eat and sleep. They would not even realize that they were getting drenched fully in sweat as long as their axe moved. Ignoring their hunger, thirst and even the call of nature, they razed countless trees. While they were working like this, dusk fell. At six o'clock, the bell rang on the hill above. All the workers put their equipment on their shoulders and started to climb up the hill that Kanchha felt himself dehydrated. He felt extremely thirsty. Thule found it very difficult even to "keep himself erect on his legs. He also noticed other workers moving around sticking up on their bodies, clothes more torn and ragged than that of his group. With parched lips, all of them would take deep breaths and sigh out loudly showing that they were fully gagged out" (54). To quench their thirst and hunger, they all reached the camp. The rice they had eaten in the morning had already deserted them much before it was

noon. They again queued up again in the evening for the ration. They collected their rice and started to cook.

The camp manager on the construction site and the Jimdar had introduced to hold workers in the construction field. Guessing that work is tough and workers can run away if they are given their wages on time, they declared that the wages of all the workers would be distributed only after the camp shifts to next location. It is their astute and treacherous plan to get the already employed workers trapped. That is why the manager at the camp warns them that they would not get full salary till a chosen location is changed. It is also an example of exciting workers to work hard at fast pace so that more works would be done and camp changes. On this hilly region where Thule and Sutar worked, water was very cold.

There was no provision to get water warm. In winter it was challenging to take bath with the very cold water. On the first holiday of the month, many of them let their bodies sour with sweat touch water. It was another natural difficulty posed by nature to workers. As it was notified that the salary would be distributed only after the camp shifted fully to the new location, they ate their meal hurriedly and started carrying away all the goods from there. At the time of receiving wages, the agent reduced all the cost which he had supposedly invested on brining Karki, Sutar, Thule and other immigrants. The following extract portrays how the agent straightforwardly tried to hoodwink the salary of immigrant Karki, Sutar and Thule:

While calculating the salary, he sensed that everybody wanted to take their money immediately, and he started to speak up Shekhar Karki, monthly salary one hundred fifty. He looked at his face. On hearing that, Karki radiated smiling rays who otherwise was wearing a long face. Other friends also looked at him and grinned. Karki who was

wearing his old coarse cotton daura, that had soiled so much that it had turned black, shoved it into his stumped suruwal and looked reluctantly at the face of Jimdar. (58)

Due to this sort of deceptive measures and tricks, Nepalese immigrants were forced to remain in the same plight. No matter how repeatedly they try to escape hellish conditions, they are forced to remain in the same hellish conditions. Hearing the agent's astute rhetoric, Karki and Sutar grinned and expressed their gratitude. Extreme obsession with the neo-Marxist theory is detrimental towards the trend to examine the phenomena like exploitation and dominations. Global capitalism has caused several atrocious practices and injustices.

A large class of people has been adversely affected by the harsh conditions of the global capitalism. That is why, neo-Marxist mode of analysis bears significance no matter how popular postcolonial theory might be. Even the salary which immigrants had to get is reduced in the names of various expenditures. Sometimes a new cost is added while on other occasions other forms of unknown expenditures are added. This way or that way, immigrant laborers are puzzled and then prevented every now and then from getting the exact wages which they deserve. Terry Eagleton puts forward his view regarding to the growing relevance of Marxism in the era of global capitalism as follows:

If we have the broad sense of productive forces, we look at the whole question of the base differently, and we are then less tempted to dismiss as super-structural, and in that sense as merely secondary, certain vital productive social forces, which are in the broad sense, from the beginning basic. At the same time, however, Neo-Marxism

has been vocal about its own status as a possible ideological effect of a new world situation after colonialism.

The complicity of Neo-Marxism in hegemony lies in post-colonialism's diversion of attention from contemporary problems of social, political, and cultural domination.

Global capitalism serves as the structuring principle of global relations. It has nevertheless helped concentrate less than one term what previously had been diffused among many.

The middleman charged hefty amount of money from every immigrant ranging from Karki to Sutar and Thule. Obviously, Karki felt shocked. He is disappointed. He had never imagined that he would be charged from Siliguri onward. After listening to the calculation made for Karki, one hundred and fifty hardly surprised anyone. The same rule applied to Thule as well. As he had stayed three days less than Karki in Teesta, his debt was also less than Karki's, which was only twenty rupees. Despite their month-long work, nobody was debt free. From every angle, this sum or that sum was deducted leaving only a small amount of wage. The following extract illuminates how every crooked measure was applied to prevent laborers from getting their exact reward:

Nobody remained debt-free from their group. On hearing the same pronouncement from the Jimdar, they felt betrayed and their countenances appeared depressed and dark. However, a frail element of hope was pinned up somewhere in their thought-there might be better days next month onward. The rest of the activities went on as usual in the new camp. The same work, queuing up in line for the ration, making fire, and cooking food on a barren hill and eating, and sleeping on the cold floors. (61)

Eleven hours work on a day, being deprived of getting full salary, lack of nutritious food, bad sleeping conditions, and the burgeoning anxiety produced harmful effects in the health of laborers. Their health deteriorated. Just in a matter of a month, Thule and Kanchha had lost all their zeal and agility. Their body started to look anemic and eyes sunken. Karki, who was already weak, was getting more and more emaciated and frail. Irrespective of one's physical condition, it was mandatory for everyone "to work for ten hours a day. There was no alternative to it. They went on breaking rocks continuously; they did not have time to mix up with new and old colleagues or make friend" (62). Before they could think of anything, the Jimdar cautioned them after he had informed them of their account.

Sutar, Karki and Thule worked hard but got just the bare wage to meet monthly expenditure. They are promised that they will get a big salary. But at the time of getting salary, they get just that amount with which they could barely maintain hand to mouth. Despite the immigrants' desire and planning to return to Nepal, they are under pressures to live in Bhutan and work the same life-taking jobs. Festivals come and go but their desire to return to their homeland never comes true. Only the pathos and agony are endemic in their hearts. In their leisure time, they spread their tearful gaze all over from the top of the open field of the hill. They grope in every corner of their own hearts. The following extract is reflective of their agonized bent of mind:

Sutar's mind was cast with an everlasting fog since the day of his daju's disappearance. The top officials like the supervisors and engineers celebrated their festival in a grand manner but one of them saw the fog clouding the Dashian- Tihar and entire life of the workers. The arrival

and departure of this festival gave neither pleasure nor distress to anyone. (73-74)

The days of celebration seldom come in their lives. They repent for the sudden decision they took in a rush. Without knowing what sorts of pitfalls come on the way, they had run away from their homeland. And now they are paying huge price for what they did. But they continue to cherish the hope that one day they made enough money and make a retreat to their homeland. That day would be the day of freedom from exploitation on the alien land of Bhutan.

To cut the whole matter short, The Nepalese immigrants who go to different regions of India and Bhutan are subject to vilifying practices. A bad fate of being exploited and oppressed awaits them. Shrewd and astute people of muglan try to capitalize on their illiteracy, honesty, innocence and gullibility. Once the middlemen capture them and install them as physical laborers, and bonded laborers, they have no quick means to get out of it.

III. Bhattarai's Concern with the Rights of Nepali Immigrants

The core finding of this thesis is that Nepalese immigrants are exploited and oppressed in a various ways in Bhattarai's novel, *Muglan*. Two main characters Thule and Sutar are Nepalese youths who are already oppressed and dehumanized under the feudalism that was endemic in the then society of Nepal. This issue is probe in the light of theoretical insights of Althusser, Gramsci and Williams. The notion of the general interest, the common culture, and community might be reclaimed. Poverty and oppression are twin factors that contribute to the sudden decision of Sutar and Thule to emigrate to India. They make certain amount of money by selling homemade ghee. They reach Siliguri within a week. They had to take a train from Siliguri to reach Assam.

In Siliguri train station, they are lost and puzzled. They hardly know the route that takes them to train station. The provision of taking train tickets, train fair and different systems of reservations in train were unknown to them. That is why they fell into the hands of swindlers, cheaters and pickpockets. Pickpockets take their money and left them in the lurch. They had to live hungry, helpless and miserable.

From every way, Nepalese workers had to endure oppressive pressures from their feudal lords. In addition, they were entrapped in the grinding mill of poverty. Since generations, they have been affected badly by the deep-rooted practice of feudalism in Nepal. That is why they want to escape Nepal and go to Muglan. The longing to go to Muglan, neighboring countries of Nepal arises from two factors: one is the internal cause of feudalism makes no decent room for vassals and subalterns. Next is the increasing prospect of making money by going to work in Muglan. At that time the trend to go to neighboring countries of Nepal had gained an upper hand.

There was a chance of making money by going to Manipur, Acchham and other neighboring regions of Nepal. So Thule and Sutar, who were perhaps eighteen or twenty in their ages, decides to quit Nepal for Assam. The novel is tilted towards the enumerating facts about the working conditions of Sutar and Thule. That is why the very representation of the issue pertaining to Nepalese immigrants in Bhutan is questionable. Though the problematic of exploitation and oppression of Nepalese immigrants in Bhutan is obviously noticeable, the incomplete nature of realism that is raised in the novel is what I mainly want to focus and study. To get recruited in the British army was the biggest dream of Nepalese youths.

Sutar and Thule were also attracted by the possibility of getting recruited in the British army by means of the conditional help of middle men. The middle men gave them false hope and went on exploiting them till they are physically weak. Thule and Sutar are underpaid, bullied and forced to work longer hours than they were told to do at the time of making a contract. The bias of the upper class to the poor displaced ranch workers disrupts the possibility of the constant sidestepping of their dream. The upper class inhabitants practice the policy of depriving and dispossessing the workers.

To sum up, underclass Nepalese workers inculcate the dream of buying house of their own and making some fortunes in Muglan. They retain firm belief in the possibility of making their dream come true. The belief in hard work is the key to the accomplishment of dream. But the circumstances pose threat to their collective and individualistic aspiration.

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