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Effect of Hippie Culture in Nepali Modernity: A Study of Counterculture

**Tribhuvan University**

**Effect of Hippie Culture in Nepali Modernity: A Study of Counterculture**

**A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English  
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Master's of Arts in English**

**by**

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**Letter of Recommendation**

Mr. Gobind Raj Basaula has completed his thesis entitled **Effect of Hippie Culture in Nepali Modernity: A Study of Counterculture** under my supervision. He carried out his research from September 2010 (A.D.) to July 2011 (A.D.). I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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## **Abstract**

This work of dissertation is an attempt to explore the role of hippie culture in social and cultural transformation in Nepal Mandala. The wave of hippie movement arrived in Nepal Mandala exalting 'Cultural Revolution' through a total assault on culture; which opted for every tool, every energy and every medium they could get their collective hand on. But the motivation, influences of hippie movement into Nepal Mandala's culture has not yet been studied properly. So, my study has attempted to study the historical importance of this unique culture displaying the shifts it provoked in the light of counterculture.

To trace out the contribution of hippie culture in Nepali modernity this research paper centers on Nepal Mandala's social and cultural scenario during the late twentieth century. Because the '50s and '70s were the decades of counterculture movement throughout the world as well as a turning point of Nepali modernity due to the direct contact with west through the hippies, the San Francisco Flower Children. As a structural pattern of its discussion on hippie's role in socio-cultural transformation, this dissertation has used the theoretical supports from culture, popular culture counterculture and modernity. Using the dialectics between culture and counterculture this study shows the social and cultural transformation; shifts on social and cultural values, norms, costumes, behavior and practices of people. All these phenomena measured the map of modernity comparatively in the stable water of Nepal Mandala.

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## I. Introduction

### Hippie Culture

The work of research aims to excavate the countercultural role of the ‘hippie culture’ in the development of Nepali modernity. In the process of excavation, it hinges on the shifts in social, cultural transformation from the scenario before hippie movement to present context. For this purpose, this study will deal with the issues of social transformation of Kathmandu with the role of counterculture in the formation of Nepali modernity. Therefore, this research will strive to explore their role in the formation of modernity by observing this subculture with the perspective of counterculture and modernity. For this purpose, this research takes references from different written and visual representations made on hippie culture for authentic information of this bizarre subculture.

As an authentic source of information about the ‘hippie culture’, this research depends on different written and visual discourses made on hippie activities. The hippie’s culture is represented in different mediums of representation. It is scripted in many books even by those writers who had experienced this bizarre subculture. Similarly, many visual medium like films and documentaries have tried to make alive the activities of hippie movement. Among the different written and visualized discourses this research has taken in consideration of the texts like F. D. Colaabavala’s *Hippie Dharma*, Dorothy Mierow’s *Kathmandu, Treks and Hippies Too*, C. J. Stone’s *The Last of the Hippies*, as well as other autobiographical accounts of past hippies. Similarly, the research will take references from films and documentaries such as Dev Ananda’s *Hare Krishna Hare Ram*, Ang Lee’s *Taking Woodstock* and other related documentaries. The representation of hippies in different medium of representation is the primary concern of this research to trace out the

authentic activities of hippies. This research will go ahead through the critical analysis of different medium of representations and other remarks of intellectuals, past hippies as well as the people from Kathmandu who had come in touch with hippies in the decades of 60s and 70s.

As a counterculture 'hippie culture' arrived in 'Nepal Mandala' in the decades of 1960s and 1970s. Hippies were even named as 'flower children' or 'freaks'; who exercised 'flower power', hippie culture associated with young people of 1960s and early 1970s who declared a kind of revolt against enforcing conformism and essentialism of establishment to ascertain love, peace and freedom, and against war. They were not only the followers of the unprecedented subculture involving themselves in drugs and sex but also the harbingers of social and cultural transformation. Hippie culture inscribed many marks in Nepali modernity which has been a part of our lifestyles in some way or another.

Some traces of hippie culture are left even today, since it was transferred into the culture constitutive element and social practices, but the actual movement and activities of hippie culture came in halt in the decade of 1990s. In fact, the actual sites and information of this subculture can be found in written and visual representations as a history. So the field research of this culture today may not be effective because of its direct exposure from social landscape has virtually been disappeared. Though the virtual manifestation of this culture doesn't exist today, this research will explore some transformations brought by hippie counterculture as modernity by taking references from written and visual discourses made on this subculture along with researcher's interaction with some people who exposed their keen interest to them.

The etymology of hippie is from '*hipster*', and was initially used to describe beatniks, and the early hippie ideology included the countercultural values of the Beat



Generation. The movement composed mostly of middle-class white youths between 15 to 25 years old. Hippies inherited a tradition of cultural dissident from bohemians and beatniks of the Beat Generation in the late 1950s. Some created their own social groups and communes, listened psychedelic rock, embraced the sexual revolution, and used drugs such as marijuana, LSD to explore 'alternative consciousnesses'. By 1965, hippies became a center of attention and an established social and cultural group in U.S, and the movement eventually expanded to other countries from America to U.K, U.K to Europe, Europe to Asia.

Hippie culture became worldwide through a fusion of rock music, folk, blues, and psychedelic rock; it also found expression in fashion, the dramatic arts, literature, travelogues and the visual arts. Hippie culture is the most visible, vibrant, and popular counterculture emerged as the radical split with traditional norms and values of conformist society. Hippie rejected established institutions, criticized middle-class values, opposed nuclear weapons and the Vietnam War, and embraced Eastern spiritual philosophy, performed sexual liberation. They were often vegetarian and eco-friendly. They denied violence and domination over people promoting the use of psychedelic drugs which they believed heightened ones consciousness, and created intentional communities or communes. They used and promoted the alternative arts, street theater and performances as well as folk music. They regarded psychedelic rock as a part of their vision of the world and life.

The hippie subculture was a phenomenon that erupted adopting the alternative lifestyles against the mainstream culture in the United States. The hippie culture was a very independent kind of movement in its demonstrations and nature. Hippies attempted to liberate themselves from social restriction, cross the moral boundary set and practiced by conformist mainstream culture, escape from mechanistic corporate

tradition prevailed in America. Hippies assumed themselves as the free spirited people who attempted to live every passing hour to the fullest on the principles of peace, love and freedom, exploring themselves from within with every passing hour.

The hippie movement of the 1960s contributed changes the societal attitudes toward ethnic and cultural diversity, environmental accountability, spiritual expressiveness, medicinal side of marijuana, and attitudes towards the war. The hippies were the countercultural youths of American society of 1960s and 1970s who evaded the primacy of orthodox society and adopted the alternative modes of lifestyle crossing the territorial boundary of rigid and unsympathetic materialistic conformity of the capitalistic society, advocating peace, freedom, and happiness. They adopted alternative cultural practices that consist of experimentations in drugs, shared possessions, uncultured sexuality, and ‘back to nature’.

Some hippies formed communes to live as far outside of the established system as possible. This is one aspect of counterculture which rejected active political engagement with the mainstream culture and hoped to change the society by dropping out it following the dictate Timothy Leary “to turn on, tune in, and drop out” (Stone, C.J , 1999: D).

For Leary, “hippies” can be interpreted as to have been that of an anonymous institutional employee who drop to work each morning in a long line of computer cars and drove home each night and drank martinis like several middle class, liberal, intellectual robots. So hippies liked to break such monotonous and mechanical life. Hippies’ rejection of the political and military orthodox could be found in their protests and demonstrations against the Vietnam War. Their protest against the Vietnam War not only reflects their love for peace but also denotes that how they wanted to escape from that suffocating atmosphere of dominant American culture. In

this regard, Abhi Narayan Subedi in his review entitled “Hippies in Nepal Mandala” states:

The youth of America who were looking for some mythopoetic space found it in Kathmandu. In that sense their visit in Nepal Mandala was not just accident; it was presaged by many tests and the possibilities of various perceptions meeting together. They carefully avoided becoming part of the new text of the American history that is to say Vietnam War. That is why when the American hippies came to Kathmandu they brought with them not only their desire to create a new text of America that they imagined would be ideal but also necessary accoutrements for it like the dreams and the protest that they sang in Woodstock in 1969, the poems of Allen Ginsberg, Gregory Corso, Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Gray Snyder, the prose of Jack Kerouac, the songs of Bob Dylan and Janis Joplin, the rock music of Jimi Hendrix and so on. (163)

Thus, the hippie’s counterculturalists went countering the mainstream American culture. They managed to popularize the iconoclastic legacy of the Beat writers through the practice of different forms of lifestyles.

According to Subedi hippies were playing the drama of the politics of subversion. They practiced the culture movement of rejection, celebrated drug-induced state of existence that blurred the line of reality and dream. The cultural norms and values of mainstream culture were broken violently. There was a systematic violation of mainstream culture. Hippies drew heavily on American pop culture especially acid music and protest. They believed in the power of body, of the physical sensations.

Transforming sex into discourse through focusing on sensation and the bodily capacity for pleasure was an interesting part of their philosophy. They rejected the traditional behaviors of the contemporary society. They loved peace and espoused 'concept of free love'. Avoiding the rationalistic thinking and material sophistication they favored the practices of sensational pleasure, spiritualism and individualism.

### **'Hippie movement' as Counterculture**

The term counterculture was first introduced into cultural debate by Theodore Roszak's *The Making of Counterculture* (1971). Regarding this, the cultural critic Peter Brooker opines about the counterculture of the 1960s to 1970s:

A term associated with the 1960s and early 1970s [...]. It refers to the closely related organizations, networks, communes, music and drug scenes, which arose in this period, primarily in the United States, in opposition to the Vietnam War, the power of 'military industrial complex' and more generally to the conservative morality of post-war Middle America. (42)

From this criticism, we can notice that hippie subculture is based on the ideas of the movement of earlier decade and on a new generation of cultural theorists, political activists, and gurus as different as Herbert Marcuse, Marshall McLuhan, Susan Santag, Mao Zedong, Che Guevara, Eldridge Cleaver, and Timothy Leary. Somehow there was a loose affiliation of woman's liberation movement and 'Civil Right Movement' with countercultural movement though they were concerned only with sexual and racial oppression. The performance of the hippie culture clearly presupposes its significance in social and political issue like Vietnam War.

The term 'counterculture' itself refers to an American culture that began as a movement in 1960s giving emphasis on the idea of personal freedom rejecting the

ethics of capitalism, conformity, and repressive sexual mores of the contemporary society. Social critics applied the term attempting to characterize the widespread rebellion of many western youths, known as hippies, against the values and behaviors espoused by their parents.

The counterculture's deepest roots lay in the Beat Generation sensibilities of the late 1940s and 1950s that chafed under the rigid orthodoxy of the era. Just as New York's Greenwich Village became identified with the beatniks, the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco developed into a Mecca for the hippie counterculture. Social critics applied the term attempting to characterize the widespread rebellion of many western youths, known as hippies, against the values and behaviors espoused by their parents.

In sociology, counterculture is a term used to describe a cultural group whose values and norms or behaviors run counter to those of the contemporary mainstream society. Although distinct countercultural undercurrents exist in all societies, here the term refers to a more significant, visible phenomenon that reaches critical and persists for a period of time. Specifically, here it refers to the rebellious practices of youths and their attitude towards Nepali society during and after decade of 1960s. So it refers to going towards the opposite value of the society, which fully occurred in American society in the time of 1960s.

Beats were the early form of Hippies. The product of the beat generation writers easily caught the attention of the contemporary media that never gave them the literary value but instead focused on their offensive behaviors, drug usages, and sex in negative way. Critic Arthur M. Saltzman opines:

Critic of the movement accused the "beatniks" of embracing anarchy, incoherence, and their obscurity for their own sake. However the

movement did capture a generation's dissatisfaction with what it saw as the dull conformity and false values of the square society. The Beat Movement also advocated peace and civil rights, which set the stage for the radical protests of the 1960s. (189)

Some critics are seemed to mock at the Beats for their social disaffiliation. The beats, according to these critics, was 'a bohemianism that lacked a critique', 'a spirituality that lacked doctrinal authority', and 'a politics that lacked a party'.

The Beat writers discovered Asian Literature exploring the ideas of Zen Buddhism. Although, most of them did not practice Buddhism in any strict form, they borrowed certain Asian literary forms like haiku, a Japanese form. They also included Satori, the experience of certain enlightenment and other aspects of Buddhism in their writing. Kerouac's *The Dharma Bums* is an example that celebrates direct sensory experience, freedom, from conventional responsibilities, emotional intensity of life of hiking, casual sex, drug use and enlightening process of Buddhism.

Beats were regarded as an extension of the antisocial behaviors and juvenile delinquency as being mythologized in some Hollywood films. Mocking at the beats in very harsh words critic Michael Davidson says, "Beat ideology is hostile to civilization; it worships primitivism, instinct, energy, blood and leads to the notion that sordid acts of violence are justifiable so long as they are committed in the name of instinct" (63).

Anyway, beats were able to leave traces of counterculture in American scenario. The energy of Beat Generation died out by the early 1960s. But their portrait of war as a meaningless sacrifice, their celebration of direct sensory experience, freedom from conventional responsibilities, emotional intensity of life, hiking, casual sex, drug use, enlightening process of Zen Buddhism were established as a major

countercultural values for the next generation – the generation of 60s, the hippie generation, the generation of ‘flower children’.

Just borrowing the ideas from the Beat Movement, hippie counterculture came as a movement in the 1960s. Generally, counterculture enjoys a theological, philosophical, cultural, attitudinal or material position that does not conform to the accepted social norms.

The idea of the counterculture began in America as a reaction against conservative social mores of the 1950s. Various factors came to nurture growing idea of counterculture in the 1960s such as the postwar growth of the American middle class whose materialism the counterculture disdained, wide availability of ‘the pill’ for reliable contraception that reduced the risk of the unwanted pregnancy of sexual experimentation, the increasing popularity of hallucinogenic drugs like LSD which encouraged introspection alienation from straight culture, and the Vietnam war which convinced the youths that America had lost its soul.

Thus, the hippies were the next generations of Beat Movement. But, unlike the beats they were one step ahead in many areas. Unlike the Beats, hippies were not confined and limited within America rather they moved through the entire world from one place to another, freaking here to there with a distinct and radical vision about life, world, spiritualism as well as art and aesthetics, spiritual and philosophical significance of these freakish gipsy like generation, exploring their performance throughout the world wherever they reached. As a result they became the medium of cultural transformation through their intercultural experiences across the Continents.

Hippies were also used to call San Francisco’s ‘flower children’. This movement adopted new style of dress, experimented the casual sex as well as psychedelic drugs, lived communally, developed a vibrant music scene and tried to

practice the 'Nirvana' through meditation adopting Zen Buddhism. These styles and behaviors spread quickly from San Francisco and Berkeley to all major American cities and European cities, latter toward the far eastern countries including Nepal. However, they acknowledged the heterogeneities, diversities, and differences on other marginalized. Besides, their other normal social norms and values these groups used street language rather than standard one. They even articulated the issues of drug use and unconventional sexual experience into public arena and set them in motion. This non-conformist practices is an antiestablishment and anti-traditional cultural movement that speaks against cultural conformity and complacency rooted in capitalistic culture.

The hippie movement gained momentum in which the young generation began to define itself as a class that aimed to create a new kind of society. As a result this counterculture turned to be a popular culture across the world especially for the youths. This research tries to explore the effects of this popular culture upon the youths of Nepal which contributed social and cultural transformation. Counterculture is also a literary and cultural movement of America and Europe which flourished systematically after the 1950s onwards.

### **Culture and Cultural Studies**

The word culture is rooted in the Latin word 'cultura', a noun which refers to growing crops, i. e. cultivation. *Oxford Dictionary* defines culture as "the customs and beliefs, art, the way of life and social organization of a particular country or group; art, music, literature, etc.; thought of a group and the belief and attitudes about something that people in a particular group or organization share"(373). From its early usage it has been to refer to all human made things in a society, intellectual and artistic works or practices that define human society as socially constructed. There is



no single history, religion and geography of all human societies since every human society has its own unique culture. Society varies with the differences of culture.

Culture is the natural phenomenon of social structure which is determined by the way of people living in a society, their knowledge, experiences, attitudes, relations and ways of life. It becomes a tool to the people to intercept their life and guide their actions in the society. The social structure exists because of such social and their relations. Thus, culture, social structure and social relations came to refer the same phenomena and interrelated among themselves.

The study of culture as a discipline is new. Mathew Arnold, one of the pioneers in the field of cultural studies, in his book *Culture and Anarchy* saw culture as “the best that has been known and thought in the world” (qtd. In said, *Culture* xii). But another notable cultural critic E.B. Tylor defines culture differently. For him “Culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (1). Thus, culture is an idea for Mathew Arnold but for E. B. Tylor it is social convention. But Edward Said, a notable post colonial writer and critic, analyses culture in terms of ‘power’. He argues:

Culture with its superior position has the power to authorize, to dominate, to legitimize, denote, indirect and validate: in short that is the power of culture to an agent of and perhaps the mainstream agency of powerful differentiation, within its domain and beyond it too. (9)

Thus, culture for Said is not only positive doctrine of Arnold’s “best that is thought and known” but also a differentially negative doctrine of all that is not best. This double faceted view of culture makes one aspect of culture more powerful than others.

Culture thus becomes a powerful means of domain and appropriation. Said's argument on cultural practice does not try to be fully impartial and thus remains limited to the Foucault's notion of 'power' and 'discourse'. This stand is constructed by Clifford Geertz takes "Culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of meaning" (5). Similarly in *A Hand Book of Critical Approaches to Literature* culture is defined as "something lived, part and parcel of one's everyday existence; it is almost as if one's lived culture must be natural; it must simple "be" (295).

From either angles culture is defined in relation to human and his/her society. In the same context, MacIver defines "Culture to be the expression of our nature in our modes of living and our thinking, intercourse, in our literature, in religion, in recreation and enjoyment" (760). Thus, according to him, whatever human do for them is culture.

In sociology we use the word to denote acquired behaviors, which are shared by and transmitted among the members of society. The essential point in regard to culture is that it is acquired by man as a member of society and persists through tradition. These points of acquisition and tradition have been emphasized by Tylor and Redfield in their definitions. It is manmade. Thus, culture is a system of learned behavior shared by and transmitted among the members of a group. Some people use culture as synonymous with civilization but Writers like Ogburn and Nimkoff conceived of civilization 'as the latter phase of the superorganic culture'.

Chris Barker, a 'cultural critic', emphasizes on the significance of cultural studies: "[T]he term 'cultural studies' has no referent to which we can point. Rather cultural studies are constituted by the language game of cultural studies" (17).

Raymond Williams, a notable Marxist-cultural critic setting himself against the high

aesthetic and elite culture focused by Mathew Arnold, develops a new concept. For him, culture is “a whole way of life of a social group or whole society” (55). While conceptualizing culture as universally accepted, he further adds it to be “Signifying system through which necessarily a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored” (Williams 55). So, Williams bears witness to the fact that the other and at the same time the culture of a section of society may be different from that of other. He is basically interested in working class culture and so is E. P. Thompson. Thus, Arnold’s distinction between ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture almost vanishes in Williams’ formation. Raymond Williams says that the word ‘culture’ came to serve against the division and fragmentation of industrial society. He further adds that “Culture [is] made into an entity, a positive body of achievements and habits, precisely to express a mode of living superior to that being brought about by the progress of civilization”(245). Though Williams’ concept seems to be inclusive and gives space to the minority culture, nevertheless it identifies the differences in cultures of a society. Thus, homogeneity of society having a single unified and coherent way of life vanishes and cultural differences in a society are reorganized by him.

Though cultural studies as a discipline emerged during the turmoil of 1950s, it is composed of the themes, approaches and methods drawn from Marxism, new historicism, feminism, gender studies, anthropology, racial and ethnicity studies, popular cultural studies and postcolonial studies. The field is related to social and cultural forces that either creates community or causes discrimination or division. It has heteroglossic nature since the province of it is broad as it constitutes a wide variety of materials, methods, ideas, and facilities. In this connection, Stuart Hall explains:

Cultural studies has multiple discourses, it has a number of different histories. It is a whole set of formations; it has its own different conjectures and moments in the past. It has many trajectories; many people have and have different theoretical positions [...] it has more appropriately theoretical noise [...]. (qtd. in Storey 278)

Thus, for Hall cultural studies, unlike other theoretical tools, is a weapon that is charged with all the available methodological ammunition in the cultural scenario of the present age. Another critic Nicholas Granham views cultural studies as refusing “to think through the implications of its own claim that forms of subordination and their attendant cultural practices are grounded within the capitalistic mode of production” (603). He focuses on cultural consumption rather than cultural production.

Furthermore, cultural studies means a refusal to the ‘universality’ of culture by challenging the essentialist notion of ‘particularism’ which is thought to be having essential and unchanging qualities. Like texts, cultures are seen as ‘indeterminate sites of conflict’ that cannot be pinned to a single integrated whole. The boundaries of cultural studies as a coherent, unified academic discipline with explicit substantive ideas and methods which differentiate it from other approaches cannot be pinned down. A cultural study of Foucault is related to the concept of “power“. In relation to the intellectual scenario of cultural studies, Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson and Paula Titchler emphasize that the intellectual promise of cultural studies is in its attempt to “Cut across diverse social and political interests and address social and political interests and address many of the struggles within the current scene” (1). Thus, cultural study transcends the confinements and boundaries of a particular discipline. Cultural studies have concerns with political and social interests. It is the

phenomenon which respects the struggle within the same pattern. In its extremity, it denies the individual autonomy whether that is text or a person.

Transformations are at the heart of popular culture, which is also called cultural change. Popular culture is the site where transformations are marked. Defining the term popular, in the essay, “Notes on deconstructing the ‘popular’” (1981), Stuart Hall argues, “the things which are said to be ‘popular’ because masses of people listen to them, buy them, read them, consume them, and seen to enjoy them to the full” (446). For him this is the market or commercial definition of the term and associated with the manipulation and debasement of the culture of the people. He further says that “Popular culture is all those things that ‘the people’ do or have done” (448). This definition is close to anthropological definition because the terms: culture, mores, customs and folkways of the people that define their distinctive ways of life.

Popular culture is known as mass culture. It is the culture accepted by majority of the mass public. It is the effort of popular culture to erase the slash of binary opposition thereby making it equal one to high culture. Cultural studies regard high culture as only one more sub-culture in the midst of cultures. In popular culture, popular consumers make choices of their own consumptions with the popular items of choices. Likewise they make their own meanings with the text of popular culture, practice those meanings at the time of consumption. Popular culture is the site for the struggle over meaning.

A society consists of heterogeneous culture. Cultures which oppose the dominating culture’s rules and regulations are known as sub-cultures or countercultures. About the sub-culture drawing S. Thornton’s view barker writes:

Another significant resonance of the prefix ‘sub’ is that of subaltern or subterranean. Subcultures have been seen as space for deviant cultures

to renegotiate their position or to win space for themselves. Hence in much sub-cultural theory the question of resistance to the dominant culture comes to the fore. (Barker, 410)

In the same line Barker opines that subcultures are solution to the structural problems in society and “Youths as a homogenous group who established subculture” (411).

Though there is little difference between counterculture, popular culture and sub-culture all it have common aim to break the traditional or parental culture. Dominating culture always practice the traditions but new blooming generations desire for ‘newness changes’ in practice and pave the way for germination and nourishment for counterculture. So, countercultures are those cultures that oppose to or departure from the domination of unified mainstream culture and make some efforts in establishing a new cultural trend.

### **Structural Modality**

The objective of this research is to trace out the role of hippie culture in the formation of Nepali modernity. In particular, it tries to examine the alternative modernity as cultural tourism in Nepali scenario. As its strategy of structural aspect of this dissertation, the triangular relationship among culture, counterculture and modernity will interplay.

Culture is a long term practiced dimension from one generation to another within a particular community or society. Implicating the Hegelian notion of dialectics of ideas lets take the culture as a ‘thesis’. Similarly, the counterculture is a practice of new revolutionary ethics, values and activities contrasting against the traditionally rooted culture. That’s why it might be taken as an ‘antithesis’. While counterculture comes in existence with culture there is some sort of tussle between cultural and countercultural values, ethics, norms and practices. As a result, this

tussles able to establish a new mode of transformation. The very dynamics of transformation could be regarded as modernity or alternative modernity. This result formed due to the tussle between culture (thesis) and counterculture (anti-thesis) forming modernity (synthesis) taking the reference from Hegelian notion of dialecticism.

The Kathmandu city is a place where the complex fusion of eulogized unique traditions and once widely practiced countercultural elements interplay through which Nepali modernity is being manufactured. Nepal's foreign relations situate the country in international political, economies, and cultural spheres as its heart of modernity; development, progress and change.

As culture becomes increasingly "deterritorialized" (Appaduari 1990a.), we must abandon "[t]he fiction of cultures as discrete, object-like phenomena occupying discrete spaces" (Gupta and Fergusson 1992: 7) and look instead for modern cultural forms that are located in the practices of social formations. Viewing through this light, we can begin to see Nepal more as a location for alternative modernities.

Taking these aspects in consideration, this paper tries to show shifts on cultural practice in Kathmandu city. Due to the contact between native culture and counterculture in other language, this dissertation tries to demonstrate the reality of alternative modernity formation in Kathmandu. This paper mainly hinges on cultural dimensions which developed as alternative modernities in Nepali scenario after the arrival of white Sadhus.

Furthermore they were highly influenced by this mountainous country with full of peace and loving people. They not only lost their time and spent money in this land but also made flourishing popularity of Nepal in western worlds. In such a

context, the hippie movement promoted the tourism in Nepal. Slowly and gradually tourism established as a strong means of entrepreneurship in Nepali scenario.

Food, consumer item, was another factor that contributed to Nepali modernity. Hippie brought the various types of recipes of food from Europe, America, Germany, Middle East, Italy, Mexico and Africa in Kathmandu valley. It is told that Kathmandu learned to cook or make the food items like pizza, burger, and sandwich from hippies. Even hippies established their own cuisine a mishmash of foods items from different countries and communities which enlarged the items of recipe in Nepali restaurants and hotels. Nepalese came in access with foreign foods which marked shifts in consumer choice thereby modernity.

Music was clearly an integral part of the hippie scene and as they climbed out of Ramshackle Airplanes on the cow pastures that served as Kathmandu's first airport, or fell out of buses and minivans half dead from intestinal parasites and Afghan hashish after driving overland to Asia, they were almost sure to be carrying instruments and recorded music. Their musical festivals have contribution behind the emergence of Nepal pop music.

'Fashion' is a most visible sector of transition comparing its mode of wearing before and after the hippie movement in Kathmandu. Hippies used to wear fashion upside down and inside out. Fashion is the most visible cultural practice of Kathmandu which arrived as the alternative modernity due to being connected with hippie culture.

Much of hippie philosophy was positive and vibrant that many social movements incorporated, and even today reflections are found. Hippie movement pioneered many social movements: ecology movement, women's movement, sexual



liberation movement, gay movement, peace movement etc. along with other influences hippie movement seemed to impact the psyche of Kathmandu's youth.

So the researcher will focus on how the hippie culture as a movement connected Nepali people with the new invention and materialistic developments of western world. As a result new scientific invention, mass media and means of communication came in the hands of Nepali people and society which brought a change in the life style of Kathmandu valley. Thus, transformation at social, cultural level became possible in Kathmandu. It eventually marked the milestone of Nepali society and culture towards its journey to the modernity, global culture.

Literature on "global culture" has been to suggest that modernity is simply an ever growing space of cultural homogenization. The problem then arises how to conceptualize cultural difference within a shared realm of modernity. This research does attempt to constantly go through the veneer of global cultural homogenization to explore the historical and culturally produced meanings of (contemporary) modernity in Kathmandu.

Global culture always does not imply homogenization rather a process with differences within the level of shared modernity. Ulf Hannerz asserts that global culture is a matter of the "Organization of diversity rather than...a replication of uniformity" (1990: 237). Similarly Arjun Appaduri argues that globalization is not a homogenization, though it dose involve a "Variety of instruments of homogenization" [...] languages and clothing styles" (1990a: 16). In other words, what is global about modernity is not uniform cultural outcome, but shared experiences of political, commercial, and cultural process; these processes are across the globe...but their cultural splash depends of the peculiar conditions of local waters.

## **II. Social and Cultural Transformations: Modernity**

The term 'modernization', however, has a complex web of meanings. In the context of Nepal, modernity still remains a dream, a quest of life and an unavoidable destination of history.

The idea of 'generation' is cultural. Therefore, people in different cultures understand 'generation' and 'inter-generation differences' in different ways. I think a majority of the Nepali people are no different. They feel no inter-generation differences at all. The idea of inter-generation difference, as I see it, is a part of the 'modern' culture which we strive for.

Modernization is a process which motivates people to break away from the past. It also encourages us to negate tradition by adopting a life of way which is new and desirable. This feature of modernization attracts young population all over the world, and Nepal is probably not an exception. The young population in almost every corner of the contemporary world finds modern way of life attractive. The young people construct their modernity usually in terms of their consumption behavior. Today's young population prefers foods, clothes, music, and several other commodities which are locally and internationally considered as the marks of modern lifestyle. In other words, the consumption of modern things makes people modern. Love of fast food, rap music, jeans, and English language can be some symbols of modernity as practiced in Kathmandu and some other cities of Nepal.

However, the thrust of the young population of Nepal to be modern is not limited to the consumption behavior alone. A large number of young people considers itself as a distinct community equipped with capacity and knowledge required for building a new Nepal. In other words, today's young population understands its status

as a force which can lead Nepal's political, social and ideological realms to new horizon. It is gradually evolving as a formidable political force.

Modernization is more than what we wear, eat, drink, and listen to. Modernity or modernization is an idea, a knowledge which promises emancipation from exploitation. The idea of being different and for that matter being modern emanates from people's desire to resist against the challenges posed by the societies in which they live. This happened to the American young people during the Vietnam War. We can see this in today's Nepal. The influence of the modernity in today's young population of Nepal is the result of their desire to what has been given to them; it is also a desire to refrain from rather complex social organization in which they live. It is resistance in the name of modernization.

In the Nepal's context as diverse groups of the Nepali population are constructing/reconstructing their identities as a way of resisting against the old social order. Women, Dalits, Janajati, and Madhesi are some of the new identities which lead new social movements in Nepal. In this context, the new form of identity as youths is being gradually constructed in Nepal.

Mark Liechty, an anthropologist who has studied modernities in Kathmandu, argues that a large population of Kathmandu finds itself in an infinite struggle to be 'suitably modern'. In other words, the people of Kathmandu have their own standards of modernity although they are not very sure if their modernity is truly modern. To some people watching pornographic movies in the city corner is modern; to some flying to the US for higher studies is modern. Although Liechty's study does not focus on youths alone, his analyses answers many questions related to the behavior of today's young population of Nepal. This quest is sometimes rewarding, very often frustrating, and occasionally humiliating.

We often hear the young people talking about their roles in spreading awareness, strengthening democracy, demolishing traditional conservative values, and so on. We find this dilemma about the prospective roles of youths more rhetorical than convincing. Societies as well as cultures are never static, and so are the young people who often transform themselves to adapt in the new socio-cultural environment.

### **Emergence of Tourism with the Hippie Movement**

I'm convinced that the prosperity of Nepal is bound up with the maintenance of British predominance in India, and I am determined that the sahib who is no sahib shall never enter Nepal, and weaken my people's belief that every Englishman is a gentleman. Rana Prime Minister Chandra Shamsher to Perceval Landon, mid 1920s. (Mark Liechty, 2010, 26)

Until 1950s Nepal was closed country, unknown and pristine zone to the outer world. Before the decade of 60s Nepal and Kathmandu was unknown for the Westerners. Hippies were the first generation in the tourism history of Nepal; most of them come by foot, some with their own vehicle. In this concern social critic Sarad Chirag writes:

Most of the hippies used to come by their own vehicles which were minibuses and Volk Wagon (VW) vans painted with psychedelic colors. Sometimes they used to come hitchhiking. The way of the hippies would be known as the "Hippie Trail" or 'The Rode to Paradise. (6)

In those time Europe and America were in depress whereas Asia was heaven. The rode to paradise would begin from Amsterdam to Turkey's Istanbul, Teheran to Herat,

Kabul to Peshawar, Lahore to India's Goa and Nepal's Kathmandu. Mark Liechty in his anthropological finding writes:

The history of hippie tourism in Nepal or else where has yet to be written even though in the mid to late 1960s there young people were the pioneers (avant-gardes) of a new era of global mass tourism. The seedy tourist area near Kathmandu's Durbar square christened 'Freak Street'- was by the late 1960s the Mecca of Hippidom, a spot centers like reputation for pristine exoticism. Kathmandu was often the destination, with other places just stops along the way. (2010, 274-75)

Freak Street is tucked away at the edge of Kathmandu's shopping and historical center of New Road and Durbar Square. This is the almost mythical magnet for hippies and other social deviants of the 1960s. There was once a feeling of "anything goes" and nothing was shocking to the people lingered there. This was the original center of the city for outsiders to the Nepalese culture, and it gained a reputation as being a place to find enlightenment.

Hippies were influenced by the peaceful territory of Nepal, became ardent lover of Buddhism and Hinduism which helped, they thought, to explore inner 'self' through countercultural practices. Furthermore they were highly influenced by this mountainous country with full of peace and loving people. They not only lost their time and spent money in this land but also made flourishing popularity of Nepal in western worlds. In such a context, the hippie movement promoted the tourism in Nepal. Slowly and gradually tourism established as a strong means of entrepreneurship in Nepali scenario.

The political change occurred in this decade paved the way to the formation of modernity in the soil of Nepalese society and culture. The political shift brought by

the 'people's movement' in 1951 made Nepal accessible to other countries and vice versa. In this period cold war was a hot cake in global reality.

America, the then powerhouse of the world, launched 'Peace Corps' project with welcoming arms to a developing new "Third World" in which many hippies served as 'Peace Corps' agents. But some of the 'Peace Corps' agents found that Nepalese people could live with peace, happy and harmony, although the poverty was the condition lived by Nepalese people. They attained knowledge that wealth could not buy satisfaction.

Nepalese society and culture was unique and so were the people. Historicizing poor condition of Nepal and its unique culture; and flocking of hippies in Kathmandu Dorothy Mierow mentions:

This period marked the formation of the Peace Corps. It was time of great unrest throughout the world. New nations were getting started and young people from the industrialized nations were starting to travel as prosperity at home made it possible. World travelers and hippies went to the countries where they could live with the least money, money went far in Nepal and drugs were easy to obtain, so more and more went there. Trekking, new religious ideas for westerners and a more relaxed way of life had a great appeal to those who had lost their faith the morality of the Vietnam War was questioned. Nepal was no longer isolated as large numbers headed for Kathmandu. (IV)

The hippie movement, with the flocking in mass, had much positive impact to the Nepalese society. The arrival of hippie marked the cultural and structural as well as geographical change in Kathmandu. In that time Thamel, now a reputed tourist zone was "a solitary place, uninhabited and remote place but the tourism of hippie cult

latter migrated there. So the hippie tourism changed even the structure of Kathmandu (2067, 75)".

Prior to hippie movement tourism was not regarded as an industry in Nepali scenario. But the hippies were the first large mass of tourists to establish tourism as an industry in Nepal though they searched for cheap hotel and restaurant. Thus the new form of lifestyle was formed after the arrival of hippie counterculture in Kathmandu. They had significant contribution in the formation of social change in the scenario of Kathmandu. Modernity is simply the sense or the idea that the present is discontinuous with the past that through a process of social and cultural change. It is either through improvement, that is, progress, or through decline. *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology* defines modernity as "Typically contrasted with traditional forms of society. . ." (2009: 484). In modernity life in the present is fundamentally different from life in the past. Hippies' counterculture brought both the decline of some of the traditional values as well as the improvement on some sectors. Thus, we experience modernity as a proliferation of alternatives either in regard to lifestyle or historical possibilities; future directed behavior, as opposed to tradition tends to accelerate the proliferation of alternatives.

There was no concept of tourism except pilgrimages within the country before hippies set for Kathmandu. Many people from periphery of Kathmandu entered in the center to trade curd, Lassi and even hashish to the hippies who were intoxicated with the smoke of hashish. These aspects of intercity "Migration, mass migration from the countryside to newly expanding cities, a rapid growth in production for exchange and the rise of money economy [ . . ] (ibid)" show the modernities in Kathmandu.

Before 1960s no tourists could be seen in such a large number. It was said that every person among three would be a hippie in that decade. The hippies were among

the first foreigners to discover the magic attractions of Nepal in the decade sixties when they were virtually the only tourists in the country. Since then, the number of visitors has grown to enormous quantities.

Hippies dressed in colorful baggy clothes, many with long, matted hair, wearing an assortment of beads and beards, filthy sandals, some of them would walk bare feet. They did not care people outside of their world or so-called commune. They used to sleep like matchsticks. Some Nepalese youth also participated with them as if they were more hippies rather than the real hippie. Mohankrshna Mulepati, a native inhabitant of Bhktapur, growing long hair became a complete hippie. His family later started business in Jhonchhne, remembered as 'Freak Street' today, his two brothers married with the hippie mothers. In this decade tourism was both introduced and began to be industry in Nepal. In this concern, displaying the historical importance of hippie tourism a social critic Sharad Chirag writes "The Road to Paradise" as:

They were the trendsetters of hotels, restaurants, head shops, pubs, etc. in Kathmandu by cleaning the narrow street of Jhonchhne. They, especially Germans, also taught to make coffee, cakes and other foreign food items to the Nepalese people. Most of the hippies used to come by their own vehicles which were minibuses and Volk Wagon (VW) vans painted with psychedelic colors. Sometimes they used to come hitchhiking. The way of the hippies would be known as the "Hippie Trail" or 'The Rode to Paradise. (6)

Hence the counterculture movement of the hippie contributed not to the establishment of tourism but also taught to trade.



In that time Europe and America were in depress whereas Asia was heaven. The rode to paradise would begin from Amsterdam to Turkey's Istanbul, Teheran to Herat, Kabul to Peshawar, Lahore to India's Goa and Nepal's Kathmandu. About this track through which hippies used to come in Nepal Dorothy Mierow writes:

[. . .] of course. Tony showed me the way on the map. We'll go through Germany, Austria, Yugoslavia and Greece to Turkey, where we'll cross the Bosphorus at Istanbul and enter Asia. From there, we'll continue across Iran and Afghanistan and down the Khyber Pass into Pakistan and India. [. . .] Cindy, wondering if she might get to Nepal without too much time spent, [. . .]. After all, she thought, she would be practising her art and she would see her Peace Corps friends in Nepal. (14-15)

Through this trail they used to entered into the world of peace, happiness, love and harmony which was, no doubt, Asia especially Nepal. They used to leave their vehicle selling in least price to buy some pot instead. Before American government appealed Nepalese government to ban the trade of psychedelic drugs in the decade of 1970s, Hotels like "Eden", "Tiffin" along with dozen of legal hashish shops were founded in Kathmandu. In that time residents of Kathmandu used to exchange full truck of money with full bag of money. Despite this piled up money, it had negative impact too. Many of Nepalese youth became heroin, cocaine addict.

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original center of the city for outsiders to the Nepalese culture, and it gained a reputation as being a place to find enlightenment.

Many trekkers and spiritual explorers gathered there to find exotic encounters and try alternative lifestyles, such as not bathing and smoking lots of marijuana. With the end of hashish market, the tourist zone too migrated from Jhonchhne to Thamel. The migration of the tourist area from Freak Street to Thamel marked the architectural change of the Kathmandu city. In that time Thamel was “a solitary place, uninhabitant and remote place but the tourism of hippie cult latter migrated there” (*Sonch*, 75). In the development of tourism in Nepal hippie movement had a paramount importance which harvested great amount of wealth in Nepal. As Nepal became more of a mainstream attraction to hikers and other tourists the area became known as a seedy but exciting place to visit.

Prior to the mass flucking of hippie into Nepal, there was hardly any trend of journeying from west to East. The visit had to be some special purpose and the number of visitor used to be few and specific. But the hippie’s journey was in mass and aimless freaking. This aimless freaking was also a countercultural activity of hippie subculture in contemporary Nepali scenario. About the subculture Chris Barker opines:

The ‘sub’ has connected notions of distinctiveness and difference from the dominant or mainstream society. Hence, the notion of an authentic subculture depends on its binary opposite, that is, the idea of an inauthentic, mass-produced mainstream of dominant culture.

(410)

Anyway Nepal came in touch with westerners due to the hippie movement especially the Gipsy-like trend adopted by these flower children who called themselves ‘The

Freak.’ In *The Last of the Hippies* C. J. Stone writes, “[. . .] and even Steve didn’t call hippie at the time. He was a freak. We were all freaks. The word ‘hippies’ is a media invention” (18). But the irony is that the very aimless freakish nature of hippie movement became the cause behind the emergence of tourism as an industry and the cultural and social bridge between the West and East. After the demise of hippie tourism in the early ‘70s, then adventurous tourism, rafting in the rivers of Nepal, nature tourism, cultural tourism, pilgrimages, trekking, safari etc. took its path. So the credit must go to the hippie tourism behind the emergence of tourism as an industry which served as the foundation budget tourism.

### **Development of Restaurant Culture**

Apart from one exception of military manufacturing when the Rana Regime fell in 1951, non agricultural production in the Kathmandu valley was at a cottage industry. Pottery, Paper, cotton textiles and woolen blankets -all hand made- were the major locally produced products (Sekelj, 1959a; 181).

Before the arrival of the hippie, going restaurant for meal would be a kind of dream in Nepali society, outdoor eating culture with payment was not in practice in Kathmandu. After hippies’ arrival, restaurants, cafés were founded, discos were opened. As a result people even from local community of Kathmandu become habitual in outdoor meal. They get the new means of entertainment in discos and casinos too.

Middle class people pioneered this new mode of practices. Thus the new form of lifestyle was formed after the arrival of hippie counterculture in Kathmandu. They had significant contribution in the formation of social change in the scenario of Kathmandu.

As in western society where restaurants emerged from centuries-old tradition of cook shops, ale-house, taverns, and eventually coffee houses and cafés (Mennell 1985), in Kathmandu also the modern restaurant was pre-dated by a variety of establishments providing snacks, meals and alcohol, and serving the needs of transients and travelers. For Stephen Mennell restaurant is a place with “a particular combination of style and type of food, social milieu and social function” (1985: 136). In Kathmandu this convergence of styles, menu and social role occurred gradually in the decades following in 1951 with the first restaurants emerging to meet the changing needs of a changing urban population.

Talking about the social, historical, and more cultural significance of the emergence of restaurants to meet the changing needs of a changing urban population Mark Liechty inscribes:

The first of Kathmandu’s “street –level” restaurants – that is, restaurants outside of two or three pricey hotels that hotels catered exclusively to expatriates and local elites – were several pie and cake shops located in a neighborhood of untouchables near the heart of old city. Starting in the 1960s, these pastry shops were patronized mainly by youthful foreign tourists. (2010, 251)

But to the people who were in higher position of caste hierarchy these untouchable-run restaurants were is important to see how these pioneering public eating structure emerged at the historical transaction of Kathmandu’s local caste culture and new transnational consumer culture (tourism, “development” etc.).

Superior castes in the social hierarchy are prohibited to have some of the food items in Hinduism about which Dorothy Mierow writes, “Brahamans are restricted to a diet excluding eggs as well as meat. This seemed to serve them right for being so

strict in their religious beliefs” (71). The Nepalese who first countered the tradition and broke into restaurant trade were those who were at the bottom of the caste hierarchy – those with the least to lose from transgressing the rules of purity and cultural boundary associated with transaction in food. Social anthropologist Jentri Anders observed that a number of freedoms were endorsed within a countercultural community in which she lived and studied. She wrote a book named *Beyond Counterculture* (1990) mentioning, "freedom to explore one's potential, freedom to create one's Self, freedom of personal expression, freedom from scheduling, freedom from rigidly defined roles and hierarchical statuses [ . . .]" (N.P.).

Thus the lower caste people's entrepreneurship in restaurants can be seen as the exploration of their potentials countering the values of dominant culture that eating from the hands of lower caste people is 'unsavory'. In the contemporary socio-cultural scenario of Kathmandu, such practice would be a kind of radical countercultural shock to mainstream culture because counterculture, in a simple term, is to attack or protest against the mainstream culture or prevailing culture of the society. Every society has its way of life and dictates certain norms and values for its members and expects them to be fulfilled by its members.

By nature, mainstream culture is hegemonic and exclusive because it aims to bring outdated principle like 'unity in diversity'. Curbing the heterogeneous interests for bringing problematic hegemony is always at the center of such mainstream culture. But in the same society, when an individual or group of individuals do not get freedom to express their emotion, they experience identity crisis; when their dreams are unfulfilled and their rights are cut off, when their questions are unanswered, those people do not follow the dictate of the mainstream culture but rather develop their own culture. Through this, they try to acquire what they need and in this pursuit give birth to "counterculture".

The hippies were the harbingers of restaurant culture in the soil of Kathmandu. One hotel entrepreneur writes that the company with hippies triggered the passion of establishing hotels and restaurants, the foundation of tourism. As he further mentions: It was the contribution of some hippie tourists, some Nepali started to learn new things about tourism. Nepalese learned different methods of cuisines from them to make cakes from 'pumpkin pie' to 'apple', 'lemon' and 'cheese's cake with various tastes. Nepalese learned to make world's food items. In this way hippies taught Nepalese to establish the most important foundation of international tourism (*Sonch*, 2067, 74).

Thus, hippies brought the various types of recipes of food from Europe, America, Germany, Middle East, Italy, Mexico and Africa in Kathmandu valley. It is told that Kathmandu learned to cook or make the food items like pizza, burger, and sandwich from hippies. Even hippies established their own cuisine a mishmash of foods items from different countries and communities which enlarged the item of recipes in Nepali restaurants and hotels.

Some Nepalese youth also participated with them as if they were more hippies rather than the real hippie. Mohankrishna Mulepati, a native inhabitant of Bhaktapur, growing long hair became a complete hippie. His family latter started business in Jhonchhne, remembered as 'Freak Street' today, his two brothers married with the hippie mothers. In this decade tourism was both introduced and began to be industry in Nepal. In this concern, displaying the historical importance of hippie tourism a social critic Sharad Chirag writes in the artical "The Road to Paradise" as, "They were the trendsetters of hotels, restaurants, head shops, pubs, etc. by cleaning the narrow street of Jhonchhne .They, especially Germans, also taught to make coffee, cakes and other foreign food items to the Nepalese people" (6).

Here, following the footprints of hippie many people like Mulepati family from the outskirts of Nepal Mandala migrated into the old city to trade. Such transactions with the foreigners and among the natives in terms of monetary value marks modernity incorporating new consumer production. About such characteristics of modern society John Scott and Gordon Marshal write, “The transition from tradition to modernity involved mass migration from countryside to newly expanding cities, a rapid growth in production for exchange and the rise of the money economy, and the development of a specialized division of labor” (484).

Many people from periphery of Kathmandu entered in the center to trade curd, Lassi and even hashish to the hippies who were intoxicated with the smoke of hashish. Before 1960s no tourists could be seen in such a large number. It was said that every person among three would be a hippie in that decade. The hippies were among the first foreigners to discover the magic attractions of Nepal in the decade sixties when they were virtually the only tourists in the country.

Before American government appealed Nepalese government to ban the trade of psychedelic drugs in the decade of 1970s, Hotels like “Eden”, “Tiffin” along with dozen of legal hashish shops were founded in Kathmandu. In that time residents of Kathmandu used to exchange full truck of money with full bag of money. Despite this piled up money, it had negative impact too. Many of Nepalese youth became heroin, cocaine addict.

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original center of the city for outsiders to the Nepalese culture, and it gained a reputation as being a place to find enlightenment.

In this decade of '50s for the first time Nepalese people came in access with foreign foods. One entrepreneur spoke with joy, and even nostalgically about the ambience and almost magical reminiscent of those days:

Look! When you go there every marine boy used to go there. Who would not be pleased to be there, entertainment there; in Aunt Jane's Restaurant of an American lady. From the high positioned to street-level tourists used to be there. "Yin Yang Restaurant" was also very messy which was in Freak Street and that was excellent. (Interview)

For Kathmandu this was sudden change, new knowledge of entrepreneurship. In such an environment, socio-morality based on caste system went outside the window. As a "fashion" which triggered passion upon it, commodification of food had become signs of new form of prestige based in the logic of class. Hence the hippie tourism contributed a lot in the formation of Nepali modernity by bringing changes in social structure and cultural pattern.

Mark liechty's representation of hippie is very much relative with Nepali scenario. Connecting with restaurant culture and hippie culture he says:

"With savvy entrepreneurs offering everything from apple to yak cheese pizza Kathmandu quickly became known as the "Alice's Restaurant" of the East, a place where "you can get anything you want. Along with cheap hashish, food became one of Kathmandu's prime tourist attractions" (254).

Earlier, many people did not use food outside the door, they even did not touch the family members while having food but the emergence of restaurants transformed such ritual or cultural practices into public eating. The practice of having



food in restaurants and consumer space in the culture of Kathmandu has to be seen in the light of class-based society thereby modernity. Modern values hang with consumer materiality, etc. and such transformation has been going on and on making the society modern. People now are not the same once as sixty years ago. For this shift on restaurant culture F. D. Colaabavala writes:

There is a filthy little café called The Cabin, in Kathmandu [. . .]. Here Kishore Rana serves Chinese, Indian, Tibetan and Western food [. . .] Cabin is a groovy place, bizarre, loony. There are other places. Like the Camp Hotel and G.C. Lodge. Here a room costs Rs. 3 per night. With seven occupying it, it worked out to Rs. 13 per month. (7- 8)

Though hippies searched for chief hotel and restaurant, the beginning customers of the tea house, cafe or cabin were the hippies. Further F. D. Colaabavala justify, “Many hippies eating at *Globe Teahouse* ordered a huge plate of rice and tea, costing Re 1. Some rich hippies rented a room for Rs. 3 per day” (9).

Many Nepali youths came in touch with hippies. Among them many were local public as well as university students. Nepali youths adopted the trend of frequently visiting restaurants. As a result cabins, restaurants and cafés have been established as a popular occupation in Kathmandu. Before the hippie movement upper class people were banned to eat outdoor as well as to take alcohol. Andras H fer mentions about this restriction on foods and outdoor eating in his book *The Caste Hierarchy and the State in Nepal*. He says:

Another reason why restaurant going is a noticeably gendered (male) activity is the “unsavory” associations restaurants have with the consumption of meat and alcohol. So before 1970s, it was risky for upper-caste people to eat eating in restaurants. Both meat and alcohol

have traditionally been marked as vulgar, defiling, and dangerous food that avoided by women and upper castes. (53)

Thus, changing attitudes toward meat and alcohol, especially among upper-caste men, have contributed enormously to the rise of public eating in Kathmandu. As in other parts of South Asia, high-caste people in Nepal have traditionally followed prohibitions on meat and alcohol, though in a somewhat more relaxed manner than among similar caste groups to the south. For example, both Nepali Chhetris and Brahmans eat goat meat (unlike most Brahmans who have purely vegetarian diets) but traditionally neither has consumed. Indeed the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Chhetri and Brahman rulers of Nepal classified Kathmandu Newars as *ritually untouchable* on the specific grounds that Newars used “liquor and buffalo meat both for ritual and domestic consumption” (Nepali 1965: 148).

But after hippie movement, concept of cultural purity took U-turn. As an aftermath of hippie movement in Kathmandu, the easing of prohibitions against alcohol and buffalo meat among upper-caste men seems to be both cause and effect of the growing availability of commercially prepared foods. The lowly “momo”- a Tibetan-style meat dumping- too played an important role in this transformation. In 1960s, Tibetans fled to Nepal following the Chinese invasion of Tibet, refugees began selling momos from street side stalls, and soon, in small enclosed restaurants. Although social, cultural and even biological danger, meat and alcohol have become the staples of male restaurant culture in Kathmandu. To the extent that this kind of consumer sociality depends on commercially provided services, restaurant-going has become a central feature of male sociality. Latter, development of restaurants and hotels commoditized even the sexuality of women.

Timothy Gilfoyle's review essay "Prostitute in History" (1999) is a useful analysis of the huge surge on the modern histories of prostitution in many parts of the world. He notes that "Few subjects have moved so dramatically from the margins to the center of historical study as prostitution" (1999: 140).

One of Gilfoyle's findings is that in spite of its antiquity in many parts of the world, [capitalist] modernity has generated unique cultures of prostitution. He further writes:

[p]rostitution had a long history in the African, Asian, and Western worlds.[. . .] urban capitalism generated new middle and mobile working class, men delayed marriage and patronize prostitutes in exceptional numbers [. . .] economic transformations created a ready supply of migratory, independent, low-wage-women, many of whom viewed prostitution as a viable economic alternative to poverty. Not only were these male and female subcultures unprecedented in scope, but they were embedded in popular, modern, consumer cultures that countenanced new behaviors of sexual expression and purchase...even while prostitution was ubiquitous in earlier societies, modern capitalism...generated new cultural pattern [. . .]. In sum, middle-class pursuit of prostitution became a characteristic feature of modern society in Asia, Europe, and America. (135-36)

In Nepal too, modern socioeconomic practices and transformations have shaped a new culture of commercial sex. In Kathmandu prostitution was the subject of shocking expose, a notorious phenomenon, and illegal too. That situation changed dramatically between 1960 and 1980 that saw the Kathmandu valley into a fast growing

cash/wage/consumer economy as the city was transformed in a modern national capital. Kathmandu saw:

The first known brothels...established in the early 1960s. [. . .] dramatic rise in the numbers of prostitutes [. . .] in Kathmandu dates from the late 1970s and early 1980s, a trend that can be linked directly to the parallel rise of public consumer settings such as hotels, restaurants, and lodges. (Liechty, 2010, 223)

Although tourism has played an important role in transforming solitary place into city prostitution and foreigners have close relationship because of their heavy concentrations of restaurants and lodges. The modern market constructs spaces in the city where the caste system is transformed into the class system, “free” to transact in the new domain of value: money.

All these changes came in Nepalese society as a countering wave to traditional norms, values, and ethics. It was the period of hippie generation who arrived from Europe and America breaking the tradition. Countercultural demonstrations of hippies in the landscape of Kathmandu directly influenced social transformation which led society toward the modernity.

Crossing the boundaries of social privileges that is historically sedimented in caste society was/is regarded dangerous in Nepali context and this same mode of practice also empowered the transformative elements in Nepal Mandala.

Anthropologists have long noted that cultural danger almost always offers cultural power. Caste system’s encounter with the moral logic of the market is only the most recent development in the historical transformation of Nepali society. Hippies were not only the followers of the bizarre subculture involving themselves in drugs and sex but also the harbingers of social and cultural transformation , the hippie culture

inscribed many marks in Nepali modernity which have been a part of our lifestyles in some way or the another. Thus, the transformation in social, cultural and scientific level became possible in Kathmandu due the hippie movement. It was the milestone of Nepali society and culture towards its journey to the modernity.

### **Origin of Pop Music**

This section my dissertation will focus to highlight a few specific ways in which mass media relate to, and help to produce commodity culture in Kathmandu. Here issues are many-faceted history of western (and western-style) pop music in Kathmandu. The local rock bands and middle class pop music fans of today are heirs to a complex set of modern cultural forces (both local and transnational) including migration, mass tourism, transnational youth culture, and class formation. From this perspective emerges a picture of “popular” or “mass-mediated” culture that is unmistakably implicated in a host of countercultural forces associated with the global cultural economy (Appaduri 1990a), but also unmistakably Nepali in the way that local, historical and cultural contingencies from which a particular contemporary experience emerges.

In fact of exploration of Rock music in Kathmandu is an incredibly complex one in which an amazing variety of transnational forces have combined to produce a local history and contemporary scene that is at once uniquely modern and uniquely Nepali.

Rock ‘n roll was an as integral part to the counterculture as were dope and sex. Rock swayed a generation both physically and emotionally, the hippies lived and breathed it and believed that it was the most important new musical form to come along in centuries. As Timothy Miller views rock, “Engages the entire sensorium,

appealing to the intelligence with no interference from the intellect. Extremely typographic people are unable to experience” (73).

To the hippies, rock was not just sound; it was part and parcel of a way of life, and its ethical dimensions were therefore substantial.

Music was clearly an integral part of the hippie scene and as they climbed out of ramshackle airplanes on the cow pastures that served as Kathmandu’s first airport, or fell out of buses and minivans (half dead from intestinal parasites and Afghan hashish) after driving overland to Asia, they were almost sure to be carrying instruments and recorded music.

Due to the new lodges and restaurants were owned and staffed by Nepalese there was plenty of interaction between tourists and, especially, local young people. Although most hippie in the city were sexually passionate and established filthy relationship among the members of so-called commune’, a small but significant number of Nepalese sought ought to their company. Along with the smoke there was music in the air and it was often the times that attracted local young man. While interacting with the researcher Pancharam Kashapati who spent much of his youth hanging out with hippies and now owns a restaurant near Freak Street told:

At that time in all these restaurants, tourist restaurants, every one could hear music. Just about everyday one or the other would be having a music festival. And they would be playing music on instruments, you know white mess, Nepalese, and sometimes there’d have competitions too, they’d do that. Not now, but before you’d see, like out here on Durbar Square, six to eight guitars, and a bunch of people standing a round, and they’d be teaching their Nepalese counterpart how to play. And sometimes we’d go out to Swoyambhu almost every full moon

there'd be this huge party going all night. There'd be many foreigners and some of us Nepalese, and we'd be playing music with them. Once you learn guitar you can't just play only Nepali songs. You've got to go into different sounds. Naturally, once people played guitar in Nepal - that means Jimi, Beatles- well that's just like a second language to us.

(Interview)

Whether in restaurants or in public spaces, local young people could use music as a channel for getting to know foreigners.

An essential part of any hippie living was the stereo. Hippie brought the best sound system they could carry and afford. Focusing on the psychedelic pleasure of music of hippie era that everybody "Got stoned to it, danced, partied, mediated, had sex, even tripped to the music" (Skip Stone, 1999). In the late '60s music went from monaural to stereo which in itself was a psychedelic effect that everybody could appreciate. On the other hand Om Bikram Bista, an accomplished professional musician recalled what attracted him to the hippie scene in the early 1970s:

One reason I used to hang around Freak Street was because that was the only place we could hear western music. There were a lot of restaurants and some of them had collected records and tapes from hippies and other people...But on Freak Street I heard music like Frank Zappa and Pink Floyd. (Interview)

These two data show that the music on Freak Street on the hippie parlance was completely distinct from the music of our traditional songs that western music apparently became interesting. For the then youth of Kathmandu the only way to tap into these new musical streams was to hang out on Freak Street.

Some youths of Nepalese society used to buy second hand records and cassettes in the 'buy and sell' shops that sprang around Freak Street. To buy more hashish, pot and also to lighten their loads before leaving Nepal, many tourists sold their possessions to youth and local merchants. Aside from the blue Jeans it was the tape players, instruments, and recorded music that young Nepalese were most eager to acquire.

Before hippie era, western songs and western-styles pop songs from the soil of Nepal were in dark sky. Nepalese youth heard Beatles lively, practiced it to sing and play almost every hour along with them during the hippie era. Many passionate lovers of such countercultural songs copied it to synthesize with Nepali vernacular.

Following the popularity of Beatles there occurred arrival of Eagles who was really popular in Kathmandu. The psychedelic lyrics and chords really intoxicated people around them. Entrepreneur Karna Shakya who started his business from 1964 says:

We used to go there, listened the hippie bhajans. That was entertaining, unusual change in life, carrier. The disco dance was also the result of '60s. Music was going on and on till late night, night used to be as if it was a heaven. We used to be puzzled with them and them with us. They gave us new boon to Kathmandu. (Interview)

This shows how English songs came in the musical sky of Nepali society so emphatically with transformative power. Paradoxically, however, it is in the disjuncture between Nepali-and English-language lyrics, and the disjuncture between Nepali and "Western" images, that Nepaliness appears most forcefully. The Newaz, in "Rock 'n' Rollko Pujari," create a striking dissonance between English and Nepali words.

*"Kohi Bhanchhan Ma Pagal*

*Kohi Bhanchhan Ma Sanki*



*Hoina Ma Kohi Pagal Sanki*

*Ma Ta Rock 'n Rollko Pujari*

For many listeners, the connection of "rock 'n' roll" with "priest" is ludicrous. These words index, respectively, the West and Hinduism so powerfully that their combination here seems transgressive. This transgression marks a distinctly Nepali concern, however, a concern prevalent among urban youth: how to cross the divide between East and West, how to live along the border between traditional and modern.

Ironically, it was the hippie scene itself that attracted and even educated about how to play guitar, drums to their Nepalese counterpart in rock beats. Like for many westerners, the hippie themselves quite soon became as much of an "attraction" as Kathmandu.

A number of young Nepalese musicians who had been playing the songs started to make such lyrics even in Nepali language; they were caught up by the excitement of the psychedelic musical scene. About the emergence of pop music in Nepal Shambhu Lama, a hotelier who observed the hippie scene says:

The first generation of Nepali pop singers was there because of hippie culture. They grew hair and spent time jamming. Listening the psychedelic music of peace loving hippies Om Bikram Bista, first Nepali pop singer, learnt to sing and play pop music with them.

(Interview)

Encompassing many of countercultural ethos from them, they began to influence Nepali society and culture living with the "Freaks" in Swoyambhu.

The then people of Kathmandu favored those old English songs sung by the countercultural group like the Door, the Rolling stones, the Hell Riders, etc. emphasizing the deep impact of the hippie music in Nepali youth and clamming them

as the harbinger of Nepali pop music and rock song. In this connection Mark Liechty writes:

[. . .] older listeners were in some cases part of the very scene that generated the psychedelic rock of the hippie era. What was so remarkable about the pop music scene in Kathmandu during the 1960s and early 1970s was the fact that the western tourists who flocked to the city were among the trend setters or tastemakers for a radically new form of music. (2008, 197)

In this way music not only linked Nepal with the countercultural tourists but in its continuation became the bridge between East and west which eventually created strong passion that transformed the Nepali society constructing a global sphere of consumer commodities that could no longer be associated to a particular space and group. And this ultimately made a domain for capitalistic forces which help to modernize the Nepali society. Along with the wave of emerging global youth counterculture, Nepalese society not only drew help to produce ‘others’ but eventually depends upon the ‘others’ for solidifying and expanding its cultural horizon in the global market.

Art critic Abhi Subedi expresses in, “The Kantipur Daily”, his deep love towards the hippies and the birth of Nepali pop music crediting to them:

When the sun had been setting I used to go to see them sometimes towards the hill of Swoyambhu, sometimes Sovabhogawati temple, sometimes Pashupati area and sometimes streets of Jhonchhe. Hippies used to play guitars intoxicated by hashish where classical hymns were played, they used to sing and dance till late night. They used to sing songs of freedom, their countenance would have glow with happiness

of freedom. They arrived here with openness in music but their music would have “distorted” the classicality. Nepalese youth had already started to follow them, since this time they fashioned carrying guitars like hippies. Nepali pop music borne in the hill of Swoyambhu and Jhonchhne’s street from these hippies’ guitars [. . .] pop music brought revolution to the classic songs and immortalized too. (IV)

Nepal was just emerging out of relative isolation in the 1950s when rock 'n' roll began in the United States. It wasn't until the late 1960s and early 1970s that rock began to take hold in the capital. Cassettes were the vehicle that enabled rock music to travel upto Nepal. Extensively promoted 1968, cassette technology joined the growing wave of tourists visiting Nepal. Rock in Kathmandu, then, had its roots in the music of the Beatles, Jimi Hendrix, and the Eagles; such 1950s icons as Elvis Presley and Little Richard, missed the first time around, have remained less prominent. Cassettes and cassette players and recorders became more widely available in Kathmandu during the 1970s; the Ratna Recording Corporation in Kathmandu began producing cassettes in 1979.

Also in the 1970s, several local bands began playing predominantly covers of English-language songs. The Melodies, the Hilloks, the Pakheys, Brotherhood, and Prism all found a small space for public rock performance in both cheap tourist hangouts and swankier restaurants and hotels like the ‘Yak 'n' Yeti’. As the tourist district migrated in the 1970s and early 1980s from Freak Street, near Durbar Square, to the "no-star hotel" district of Thamel, closer to the royal palace, music scene too moved with it. Bars like the ‘Blue Note’ and the ‘Mayan Pub’ played selections from extensive cassette collections, and some places occasionally featured live music.

Nepali musicians also found a widening space for performance among the emerging middle class of the Kathmandu Valley, particularly in schools, private homes, restaurants, and, occasionally, in rented performance halls. English-language rock and pop; but these sites have also facilitated the rise of Nepali-language rock and pop, providing recording and dubbing services as well as a marketing front. And the sales of Nepali-language cassettes and CDs continue to grow. As Anil Tuladhar, one of the owners of the 'Tik 'n' Tok', a cassette shop on New Road that has existed since the 1980s, noted, "Before we used to sell only Indian, mostly Hindi, then English, then Nepali, but now the time has changed. We sell Nepali as well as English" (Interview).

Nepali-language rock and pop-music videos lagged slightly behind the music itself. Nepal Television had begun broadcasting in 1985 and screened videos on music programs and special-interest programs more frequently by the mid-1990s. The look of Nepali music videos owes much to the look of song and dance sequences in Hindi- and Nepali-language films but also bears some resemblance to the look of music videos from hippies. These media have slightly different histories in Kathmandu.

Bollywood films had been a prominent part of media consumption in the Kathmandu Valley since the 1950s; the emergence of videocassette shops in the 1980s brought Hindi-language film consumption into private homes. The Nepali-language film industry is, by comparison, much more modest, but still somewhat influential. It began slowly in the 1960s and 1970s, with film production increasing especially in the mid-1980s. Music videos didn't enter the picture until the 1990s, when the increasing availability of satellite and cable-television services gave musicians and video directors access to music videos from outside Nepal.

This is a rough sketch, but it does provide some historical context for returning to the question of what constitutes Nepaliness, in Nepali rock. There are, of course, easy answers. Some say that if a musician is Nepali, then the work is Nepali; singing in Nepali constitutes a stronger statement of Nepaliness. In music-video production, it's easy enough to claim that using Nepali directors, actors, and models creates Nepaliness; Nepali settings and costuming further enhances it.

### **Passion toward Fashion**

Clothing and other kinds of ornamentations make the human body culturally visible. Clothing draws the body so that it can culturally be seen and articulate it as a meaningful form. Clothing is necessary condition for subjectivity— that it articulate in the body, it simultaneously articulate the psyche. Fashions were not just about youths, it represented youths in rebellion against the conservation of cultural life in the sixties, in Nepal what changed was mainstream fashion itself.

Fashion is the most visible cultural practice of Kathmandu which arrived as the alternative modernity due to being connected with hippie culture. Contemporary “fashion” differs from earlier mode of adornment. In earlier Nepali practices of “Female ornamentation specific types of jewelry, clothing, and make-up served to position individuals meaningfully within family and society” (Bledesoe 1984, N.P.).

Before the decade of '60s Nepali youths were unaware about new mode of fashion. But after the hippie movement Nepali youths not only became aware of new mode of clothes but also brought them in to practice. Hippies used to wear fashion upside down and inside out. As Skip Stone put it in words, “Rock n Roll stars like Jimi Hendrix and The Beatles appeared [. . .] in all sort of colorful costumes” (N. P.). Flared bellbottoms, blue Jeans with holes, bright patches on the clothes, hip huggers, leather pants, brightly colored African dashikis, Middle Eastern caftans, halter tops,

tie dyes, silky shirts, loose and baggy trousers, the zippered boots, blouses and braless breasts were some of the popular clothes among Nepalese youths brought by hippies. Similarly, accessories and jewelry like love beads, bandannas, granny glasses, bangles, ring, earrings, nose rings, and ankle bracelets were popular among hippies. Even cheap, comfortable, easily repaired, second-hand clothes too used to familiar with hippie. Even today the traces of such clothes have dominated the Nepali fashion scenario. About the hippies dress up at Freak Street Dorothy Mierow writes:

It would now be near “Freak Street”, the area hippies congregated [...] bundled up in a warm coat and took a walk along the street filed with hippies, dressed in colorful baggy clothes, many with long, mated hair wearing an assortment of beads and bracelets. [. . .] wandered along looking at the interesting clothes shops and art objects on sale in the stores that catered to hippie tastes. (168)

Mierow’s reference clarifies the uniqueness of dress up of hippies. The adaptation of distinct clothes instead of traditional wearing itself is a countercultural activity. Another part of the hippie fashion was their performance of fashion the body origins. Male hippie used to keep a long hair and beards; they used to paint with different colors. Blacks, both male and female wore afros, afro piks (combs) to tease their hair out of the max. Man grew long side burns, moustaches and beards. Women stopped, shaving their legs and underarms. Varieties of hair styles could found in hippie parlance.

The activities performed by hippies in street and body were most visible part of everybody as the mode of counterculture. Though the fashion of hippie was a as a means of counterculture it abled to influenced the Nepalese youths. As a result youths

of Nepal also started to mimic such bizarre countercultural fashion which later formed the alternative modernity in Nepali society.

Today, the fashion world has once again discovered the wonderful styles from the '60s and '70s. Clothes are not only part of hippiedom to resurface for the new millennium. Rather it's a symbol of the resurgence of hippie values in Nepali fashion culture. During the decades of '60s, without restriction, hippies turned fashion upside down and inside out which constructed a tsunami of new styles and used colorful fashions like never before. From the Haight-Ashbury to London and Kathmandu, the hippies took fashion on an eye-popping psychedelic journey. Many of the hippies and hippie fashions were inspired by traditional designs from India, Nepal, Central America, Bali and Morocco.

The fashion styles of the hippie touched at the hard core of inner psyche of the then youths. So were the causes of eruption of many patterns of dressing not only in those days but also today in Kathmandu. Rock 'n roll stars like Jim Hendrix and the Beatles appeared in public and on record albums in all sorts of colorful costumes. Nepali youths copied the styles and color that has been mediated in the psychedelically animated models in the covers of music cassette of hippie songs. The blue Jeans wearing with holes, bright patches over the holes, insertion of triangle of something else to make flared bellbottoms, all were the marks of hippies left influencing in Nepali society. Bellbottoms ruled those days, from stripped, blue jeans to patchwork, to hip huggers, even leather pants became popular not only in Nepal but all over the world wherever they performed their counterculture movement. Mother (hippie girl) adopted the Nepali dress saris, sarongs from Bali and Java, Indian cotton and silk which were all popular fabrics in hippie parlance. But Nepali society

exchanged all these with miniskirt which symbolically manifested Nepali women's sexual freedom. This was responsible for a sexual revolution.

It was their countercultural exposition, to some extent, that triggered the passion of Kathmandu to acquire the things what they were demonizing as corporate achievement of western society. Eventually this passion measured alternative modernity in the still water of Kathmandu. The ongoing fascination and attraction many had for this hippie milieu, and the hippy ethos symbolized special appeal to those who cherished personal freedom.

Even the long hair of men was symbolic disdain for convention. And this aspect was quietly adopted by the Nepali youths, mostly by the academically sound personas. Theodore Roszak, counterculture theorist, opines about the revolutionary side of keeping long hair and beard unshaved that 'fascists keep long moustaches whereas revolutionary keeps beards and long side burns'. Even today many youths can be seen in this fashion which shows the hippiedom in their psyche and the same passion for psychedelic carefree. About the hippie fashion Skip Stone writes:

Hippie used to decorate their living space with every sort of posters imaginable; including peace symbols, love posters, Tibetan Mandala and Yantras, Buddha's poster etc. there was fashion for the nose as well. Scents filled the air wherever hippies gathered and it was not just marijuana. The flower children had to "smell like flowers, with lavender, rose, gardenia, and other floral scents. Patchouli was the most popular since it helped mask the smell of pot. (1999, N.P.)

Nudity was also an integral part of hippie fashion. Going naked was one of the great freedom that hippie fashioned. "Taking Wood Stuck" is a documentary made on hippie culture in which many nude scenes are presented such as: nude beaches, nude



sunbathing and swimming, nude musical performance growling with popular slogans which speaks:

[. . .] but the revolution requires the roles must be reversed! ...Christ who died for you, but not for me! Now we are Christ! Our nakedness will reveal your own.

-Indecent legions of decency!

-Fascist pornographers!

-Racist warmongers!

We are waging Peace. (Taking wood stuck, Ang Lee)

They believed that nudism put them closer to nature erasing sexual hang-ups and fear by dissolving the psychological link between nakedness and sexes, letting them enjoy the beauty of human body. Many hippies believed, as F.D. Colaabavala draws the expression of one hippie button, “God did not create man with a dress on. God did not create a man improperly. Dress is fetters, dress is hypocrisy. I want to be a real human being, the way god created me” (15). Culture is dynamic so changes can be seen. Tradition too is changing. So, today a girl wears less on the road than her grandmother wore in bed. This sort of practice can be seen in the culture of Kathmandu and be termed as shift in wearing pattern to which ‘a modern character is ascribed’.

This feature marks the volatile shifts in wearing patterns of Nepalese youths rupturing the traditional notion about clothing, and such practice can be seen in the light of counterculture, and at the same time modernization. The very dynamic nature of the culture further creates a space to modernize itself continuously. But no self respecting hippie ever wore a logo of any corporations. Although hippie fashion has

been incorporated to create modern fashion-styles, most hippies were anti-fashion since they rejected the corporate nature of the fashion industry.

Kathmandu learnt to trade, fashion, popular culture and pop music with the arrival of white sagas. Their fashion not only degraded the attention of youth but also able to become iconoclastic culture among young spirits in the façade of Nepal Mandala .In such cases could we disregard the significance of hippie movement, simply blaming it as a bizarre subculture?

Hippie culture is not mere subculture as misrepresented by discourses rather a milestone in Nepali modernity through its interaction between West and East rather a popular culture. Popular culture means culture of mass people. Transforming sex into discourse through focusing on sensation and the bodily capacity for pleasure was an interesting part of their philosophy. They rejected the traditional behaviors of the contemporary society. They loved peace and espoused ‘concept of free love’. Avoiding the rationalistic thinking and material sophistication they favored the practices of sensational pleasure, spiritualism and individualism. They performed their individualism through various kinds of experimentations. Fashion is one of such sites through which they led the world experimenting with psychedelic colors.

### **Ideological Impact**

Much of hippie philosophy was positive and vibrant that many social movements incorporated, and even today reflections are found. Hippie movement pioneered many social movements: ecology movement, women’s movement, sexual liberation movement, gay movement, peace movement etc. along with other influences hippie movement seemed to impact the psyche of Kathmandu’s youth. This can be seen in an interview given by the then poet ‘Bhupi Sherchan’ who philosophically spoke: “the sister who has been reared in one’s own home would be the most suitable

wife” (*Nagarik Dainik*, 20, Nov. 2010). Here the ‘suitable wife from one’s own home’ has radical reflection of hippie counterculture. This expression rendered by Bhupi Sherchan shows the incorporation of hippy ideals in Nepali culture. Hippies were the harbingers of sexual openness in Kathmandu where marriage was getting weaker and weaker gradually. Education was easily accessible than earlier after 1951; and co-education approach was adopted which made possible free expression of ‘love’, anger, emotions, feelings, thought and ideas.

As depicted by Dorothy Mierow (1996), English language was a most demanded foreign language; some of the English teachers were hippies too. Along with Peace Corps agent, hippies who were run out of money “apply to teach English at the Nepal–American Culture Centre [. . .] there was a great demand for English teachers, so the girls were quickly accepted” (1996: 101). This text historicizes the then scenario of Nepal, marriage practice on parental appropriation is being shown not in favor of women focusing on ‘dating’ before in order to know one another better, and also taught “free concept of love”. Mierow shows the marriage institution only with parental consent as degenerating. Countercultural tendency invaded this institution providing alternative practice of “free expression of love”. People who practiced counterculture considered, “Marriage as an institution was dead, and we were dancing on its grave” (C. J. Stone, 134). The ‘concept of free love’ was promiscuity disguised as a philosophy “sex is an act of love, which is an act of friendship (C.J. Stone, 1999: 35)”. Due to the influence of counterculture, marriage has been considered as:

Meaningless! Hollow! Degenerating... the fidelity can not be guaranteed... male always presents, custom obstructs female; polyandry has been a fashion in both west and east while polygamy has

been in west but here in latent form ...and wildfire is being spread day by day in the meadow of custom, here too. (*Nagarik Dainik*, 20, Nov. 2010)

The 1960s and 1970s were volatile decades for the emergence of social movements. The majority of the movements formed during this period continue to influence the modern social agenda. The activities and foot-prints of hippie movement are survived in a variety of ways, and we can see the continuing influence of the sixties today in many different areas--Civil Rights, Women's liberation Movement, Ecological Activism, Student Movements and even the continuing and growing dissatisfaction with established political parties.

The most notable and immediate movement that emerged in part from the counterculture is the ecological movement gained impetus from the counterculture's willingness to question the establishment that lasted beyond "flower power" and hippie dress styles, continuing to this day. It is no longer right to simply accept that business and government are taking care of all problems and that the people should allow these institutions to be responsible. The counterculture had challenged this assumption and weakened it by displaying the extreme inactivity and reluctance of these institutions.

The impact of their company, practices, beliefs, ideas were imported in youth culture through various means such as language. Language plays the vital role in intercultural transportation. Anuradha Dingwaney advocates Franz Fanon's remark that "To speak a language is to take on a world, a culture [. . .]" (Introduction: Translating "Third World" Cultures, 38). Dingwaney draws, "fanon's general point that, language can not be isolated from the "world" or "culture" within which it is

embedded”. In this regard, some of countercultural themes were implicitly transported into the practices of Nepalese youths.

Before ‘60s Kathmandu remained untouched so widely with foreign languages in practical sense at social level. But, after the arrival of hippie it came in touch with many foreign languages like English, French, Spanish, and German etc. in community level. Because the hippies were from different language groups and were in direct contact with commoners of Kathmandu, many youths learnt foreign languages expanding the horizon of knowledge. Thus, the hippie culture has its vital role in the exchange of linguistic artifacts with Nepali people with different linguistic groups.

But usages of language and semiotics of hippie lexicons differ from the meaning of usual context of mainstream culture. In this regard F. D. Colaabavala writes, “Hippies speak –a richly descriptive language of their own – glosslalia, a form of prayer, slangs, jargons, lexicons and babbling non-language that cover almost all aspects of their sex-and-drug philosophy” (147). They exposed their constructive nature in developing alternative lexicons and phrases to convey the psychedelic sense in their conversations; and communicated through painting with psychedelic colors, verbal and performatory articulation, writing, singing, etc. They used phrases which did not confirm the meaning understood by standard, cultured speakers. For example: ‘Balling’ was used instead of ‘Copulation’, ‘Acid Head’ instead of ‘users of LSD’, ‘Blow’ instead of ‘smoke cannabis or charas’, ‘Cap’ instead of ‘a capsule of drugs’, ‘Drop’ instead of ‘Take LSD’, ‘Stick’ instead of ‘hashish-cigarette of reefer’ etc. Some of these items have been popular in Kathmandu since the encounter of Nepali youth with hippies.

All these aspect of hippies were mode of counterculture. Countercultural behavior deviates from the societal norm. Such countercultural performances of language in semantic level further led Nepalese youth's culture to the adaption of non-verbal, non-standards language, slang phraseologies and informal terms in their practice. Hence the dialectics between culture and counterculture formed new kinds of cultural practice breaching with tradition that measured alternative modernity in Kathmandu. Karna Shakya who minutely observed and even participated into this counterculture opines:

Hippie movement indirectly had positive effect in the mind of Nepalese. It was their activities, Nepalese youth's accompany with them, that blurred the misconception about the hierarchy between 'men with white skin' and Nepalese, where the former was considered as God [ . . .]. Sixties kids and 'contemporary youth' has massive difference in intellectual capacity. Grown up between the paradox of spiritualism and scientific age, the 'consciousness of development' and 'revitalization of thinking' flourished with the sixties kids but contemporary youth's concept is seen more mechanical. (74-75)

Thus, Hippies' counterculture brought both the decline of some of the traditional values as well as the improvement on some sectors.

Through a process of social and cultural change, and its radical progress and shifts clearly marked the transformation occurred during and after the decades of 70s and 80s. It is either through improvement, that is, progress, or through decline.

Because of the remarkable speed with which "modernity" arrived at its doorsteps, Kathmandu and its inhabitants face extraordinarily intense historical and cultural crosscurrents. As such alternative modernity propelled the theme of

'nationalization of culture and exploration of the counterculture's paradoxical relationship to the nation's "unbridled consumerist ethos".

The hippie movement had inspiration from eastern religious philosophy so their journey towards East symbolized "a longing living in primitive surrounding" (Cohen 1973: 93) which served them as in heaven. So the hippie movement emphasized eastern ideal qualities like "nature", love, peace, freedom, mysticism and psychedelic drugs. In order to fulfill the discourse of living with nature, finding the true humane self through the practices of meditation and yoga and creating a life style based on alternative, in contrast to west, way of living, many hippie flocked to East, especially Kathmandu making it as 'Mecca of Hippiedom'. But the irony is that neither the hippies truly accumulated the real essence of eastern ascetic philosophy and spirituality which they aimed to attain, nor they left it all in its own place uncontaminated.

It was their countercultural exposition, to some extent, that triggered the passion of Kathmandu to acquire the things what they were demonizing as corporate achievement of western society. Eventually this passion measured alternative modernity in the still water of Kathmandu. The ongoing fascination and attraction many had for this hippie milieu, and the hippy ethos symbolized special appeal to those who cherished personal freedom.

### **III. Conclusion**

Exploration of the social and cultural transformation in Kathmandu after 1950s in the light of counterculture clearly reveals that 'Hippie culture' has played significant role in the formation of modernity in Nepali scenario. This work of dissertation has tried to explore the hippie culture, its representation as well as its role in the formation of social and cultural transformation. The primary objective of this research is to trace out the contribution of hippie in Nepali modernity. So, this research paper has centered on Nepal Mandala's social and cultural scenario during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Because the decade of '50s-'70s were the decades of counterculture throughout the world as well as a turning point of Nepali modernity due to the direct contact with west through the hippies, the San Francisco Flower Children.

As a structural pattern of its discussion on hippie's role in modernity, this dissertation has used the references from theoretical concept of culture, counterculture, and modernity using dialectics of culture and counterculture. And the contact or tussle between culture and counterculture later forms the social transformation; shift on social and cultural values, norms, costumes, behavior, as well as psychology and mentality of people. This all transformations could be regarded as the modernity due to its uniqueness in nature.

This research work has concerned with Nepali social and cultural transformation during the later phase of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, it has keenly observed the social and cultural artifacts, customs, behaviors and mentality of Nepali people before 60s. Similarly, it has traced out the activities of hippies going through its countercultural activities as represented in different mediums of representation. These representations classified the activities of hippies as a performance through West to



East. Furthermore, this work of paper analyzed the social transformation of Nepal Mandala after the decades of '60s and '70s. This research has explored the transition phase of Nepali society in the sector of tourism, restaurant, music, language, fashion, and social awareness.

Interaction with the hippies in different levels transformed the geographical as well as social structure of Kathmandu such as farmland now covered by commercial districts, hotels, pub, restaurants, public buildings, roads, concrete homes, and factories. Nepalese socio cultural religious aspects transformed through transnational currents: new ideologies of education, progress and change, new labor and economic relations, new zones of material goods and new areas of public display. Chasm began to be manifested in the caste cultural practices transforming into class culture since "class is not a thing acquired by birth and a set of characteristics to be defined and measured, but as practice and process.

All these shifts or transitions were directly or indirectly influenced by hippie culture. This research has focused on the texts and other written and visual discourses which represent the subject matter of Hippie culture. In one hand, the hippies are pausing in to Indian subcontinent proliferating thousands living on the road, meditating, painting, singing, prostituting, pimping, begging, dropping and passing drugs, drifting from place to place. On the other hand their trail from Europe to Asia becomes a cultural and economical bridge between Europe and Asia; West and East. In such cases could we disregard the significance of hippie, simply blaming it as a bizarre subculture? Kathmandu learnt to trade, fashion, popular culture and pop music with the arrival of white sagas. Their fashion not only triggered the attention of youth but also able to become iconic popular cultural practice between the young spirits. Hippie culture is not mere subculture as misrepresented by discourses rather it

become a milestone in the formation of Nepali modernity through the interaction between East and West; traditionally unique culture and radically expository counterculture.

After bringing this popular culture into discussion, to connect it with social, cultural and economical transition in Nepali scenario, the research has gone further to the social and cultural situatedness of hippie culture. For this purpose the research has included the theories related with culture, counterculture, and modernity. The research has a significant contribution mainly in five areas of its concern. First the research has brought a bizarre subculture into the dimension of its study as a popular culture. Second it has connected this popular culture with socio-cultural transformation of Nepali society. Third, it has traced out the role of hippie culture in Nepali modernity. Fourth, the research has attempted to delimit the misrepresentation of Hippie culture by focusing on the positive part of this culture which is related with Nepali modernity. Fifth, the research is a fusion among culture, popular culture, counterculture and modernity with its relativity with Nepali context.

Hippie culture is both represented and misrepresented in different mediums of representation. Some discourses are made focusing on positive aspects whereas some other focusing on negative aspects. Though the different critics focus on different aspects of hippie culture, their effort is insufficient for its connection with the Nepali modernity dealing with the issues like tourism industry, restaurant culture, pop music, mass media, social movements and openness in fashion practices. To prove the hypothesis that hippiedom has significant contribution in the development of Nepali modernity; the research has included the references from anthropological researches and ideas. Furthermore, this study has included the library research, suggestion from

teachers and prescribed thesis guide, and proper use of tools and techniques has been included as a secondary tool to complete the paper.

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