

Tribhuvan University

Traumatic Experience in Radha Paudel's *Jumla: A Nurse's Story*

A Thesis Submitted to Central Department of English

In the Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts in English

Rajendra Saud

Symbol No. : 582

Regd. No. : 6-2-552-184-2010

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

September 2018

Tribhuvan University
Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences

Central Department of English

Approval Letter

This thesis is submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Rajendra Saud entitled “Traumatic Experience in Jumla: A Nurse’s Story” has been approved by the undersigned members of the thesis Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee:

Internal Supervisor

External Examiner

Head

Central Department of English

Date: _____

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my profound gratitude to my respected supervisor, Dr. Anju Gupta, Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, for making constant supervision and guiding me with regular inspiration, encouragement, and insightful suggestion throughout the study. Her vigorous efforts made me present this research work in this form.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Prof. Dr. Anirudra Thapa, Head of the Central Department of English for his approval of this thesis. And I am also grateful to my respected Professors Dr. Shiva Rijal, Dr. Tara Lal Shrestha, Rajkumar Baral, Pradip Raj Giri and Shankar Subedi for their co-operation and valuable guidance.

Similarly, I am grateful to my parents and colleagues for their continuous inspiration, support and encouragement. I am sincerely grateful to my friends for their honest remarks during the research period.

Finally, I would like to extend sincere acknowledgement to the entire group of Professors, Lecturers, and the Teaching Assistants of the Department for their valued inspiration. I would like to express my equal thanks to all of my colleagues Ganesh Sapkota, T.S Chalise, Khem Saud, and all my well-wishers who directly and indirectly helped me to complete this work.

September 2018

Rajendra Saud

Abstract

The present thesis entitled Traumatic Experience in Jumla: A Nurse's Story examines Radha's tackles with psychological and physical suffering and becomes an inspiration to the entire community. The author tries to valorize the significance of the human identity of those people who are marginalized and desires to give to voice to voiceless Jumli people. The protagonist, Radha is a victim survivor of civil war as well as poverty and gender. She sacrifices her personal desires and struggles on behalf of Jumli's empowerment and self-identity. This paper excavates the sufferings that Radha undergo and the reasons of sufferings and the research focuses how she tries to heal her trauma through the process of working through. The story portrays the life of Radha from her childhood to old age. She struggles for social changes and challenges the existing system and notion of contemporary Nepalese society during Maoist insurgency. Despite all these challenges and difficulties she stands up and becomes an inspirational figure to the people of her country.

Key words: Trauma, experience, struggle, identity, Maoist insurgency

Traumatic Experience in Radha Paudel's *Jumla: A Nurse's Story*

The present research explores into traumatic experiences of characters, especially the major character Radha and people of Karnali region. *Jumla: A Nurse's Story* was written in Nepali “Khalangama Hamala” and it was translated in English by Dev Paudel and Ishan Gurung. The memoir is a saga of difficulties and challenges Radha faces in contemporary Nepalese society during Maoist insurgency. However she stands against all odds and sufferings. The memoir is all about the tragic story of Radha. The memoir discloses the various themes like gender, poverty, social injustice and inequality, traumatic experiences, class, patriarchal dictatorship, Maoists insurgency and self-identity. The research tries to explore how Radha, as a female has faced torture psychologically and physically while fighting against social injustices and inequality to establish her new identity. Radha remembers her own traumatic experiences in her memoir and gives a vivid picture of discrimination in Karnali region and effects of civil war on them. The paper examines the traumatic experiences of Radha and Jumli, where trauma of identity has been explored more importantly on the basis of trauma theory. The research also illustrates evils of the poverty and trauma of the Karnali region thereby showing traumatic experiences of victims to create new identity, justice and equality for them.

By mobilizing the theoretical concept of Cathy Caruth's “Trauma and Experience” and Dominick LaCarapa's “Acting Out” and “Working Through”, the research assess Radha's situation in the result of traumatic past. The moments and events Radha recounts in the text are traces of traumatic experiences. The research tries to characterize these traumatic experiences as the properties of self-identity. The main concern of this study is about how Radha's overcomes on trauma and creates

self-identity in the contemporary Nepalese society during Maoist insurgency. The memoir exhibits the lives of Radha and Jumli people intermingled with traumatic experiences caused by Maoist insurgency and poverty in Nepalese society. These critics are concerned with traumatic experiences, witness, testimony, identity, child abuse, repression of feeling and sexual abuse. They relate these issues with trauma in their discussion thus, their idea regarding trauma in relation to traumatic experiences.

Trauma theory is a fundamental tool to interpret the textual evidences. In simple understanding the word 'Trauma' refers to the action of physical pain reflected through gestures in normal ways. Psychic disorder and distress provide meaningful interpretation of trauma. Trauma is defined as emotional wound or shock that creates substantial, lasting damage to the psychological development of a person, often leading to neurosis and reflects in normal functioning. The repetitive action which trigger our mind bringing serious impact on life is the cause of trauma. It is serious mental illness that some people develop after experiencing traumatic or life threatening events. Such events include warfare, rape and other sexual assaults, violence, torture, child abuse and natural disasters. Traumatic events in particular may lead to a multitude of symptoms including depression, anxiety, guilt, sleep disturbance and obsessive thoughts about the victimization experiences.

In this context professor Dominick LaCapra, says that there are two ways of dealing with mental disturbance: one is acting-out and another is working-through. She describes acting out and working through as two processes by which persons and societies deal with traumatic historical pasts. LaCapra associates acting out with a repetition compulsion, repeating the trauma and re-inscribing its power to wound, and working through with the generation of alternative relation between people that

counter those destroyed by trauma and that continue to be threatened by acting out. If we think about these terms in terms of psychological understanding of trauma, LaCapra's arguments seem to give how psychology makes sense of trauma. Acting out is a process where traumatized victim commit action that somehow repeat negative emotions/actions associated with trauma and working through counters this process. It is described as "a mechanism by which the patient expresses drive, fantasy, desire in an action and it is introduced with close connection with phenomena such as resistance, transference, repetition, compulsion and remembering" (3). As per LaCapra, Radha encounters both terms and finally, able to go on 'working through' process.

The sense of suffering of Radha also has its connection with the representation of holocaust. In the same way, Dominick LaCapra's theory of trauma focuses on three psychoanalytic topics: the return of the repressed; acting out versus working through and the dynamics of transference. A traumatic historical event tends first to be repressed and then to return in the form of compulsive repetition trauma.

Giving a general definition of trauma in her essay "Unclaimed experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History" Cathy Caruth says, "Trauma describes an overwhelming experiences of sudden or catastrophe events, in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, and uncontrolled repetitive occurrence of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (81). Further she adds a traumatic event that is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated possession of the one who experienced it. The definition clearly elucidates that trauma is a response to an unexpected violence which is not totally grasped as it occurs, but return in repeated nightmares, flashbacks and other repetitive phenomena.

Traumatic experiences continually haunts by dreams, flashbacks and hallucination. Trauma is mainly concerned with psychological network extending into the body. Trauma not only makes people panic and anxious but it also turns them towards the recovery or solution of conflict within. Radha firstly, involve in social activities and then, through literature tries to outlet her traumatic feelings from which she is able to soothe her painful experiences and see better for future life, thereby being away from traumatic life.

Furthermore, Caruth says, “Through the notion of trauma, I will agree, we can understand that a rethinking of reference is not aimed at eliminating history. But at resituating it in our understanding, that is of precisely permitting history to raise where immediate understanding may not” (182). Radha, who is a victim survivor, witness all those kind of situation of Khalanga attack and shares her all experiences in the text. In this sense the text is related with traumatic study and also tries to focus on marginalized and unclaimed truth with challenging the main stream history as well as giving alternative history.

In this memoir, she is shown exploited from different sides from her childhood. She is denied of essentials in her daily life. She struggles in her life from childhood, the society compels her to become the traumatic figure in the society. She struggles through established notions, conservative thinking and challenges those systems to show female empowerment. The entire Karnali region is discriminated by Nepal government policy. As a result, they are forced to suffer from poverty and Maoist insurgency. They have not any access to raise their voice. Radha is a victim survivor and social worker, struggles on behalf of Jumli’s pathetic condition before and after Maoist insurgency for their equal right and identity. The inherited shadow of patriarchy at the same time of civil war also force her to survive a terrific, tearful,

torturous, repressive and panic life. Relating to this context Elissa Marder says, “Trauma, therefore, presents a unique set of challenges to understanding further because traumatic events often happen due to social forces as well as in the social world, trauma has an inherently political, historical, ethical dimension” (56). The original meaning of trauma carries some sense of ‘wound’ which points some sort of psychological wound. The reason of such wound is definitely social forces.

The study of trauma explores the relation between psychic and its signification. Sigmund Freud is the first person who studied the relationship between internal and external sufferings in course of his treatment of the people who were being mentally and physically wounded, disturbed and disordered in world war I. Being the profounder of psychoanalytic approach both in treatment and literature, most of the trauma theorists and critics and more or less influenced and associated with him and they try their best to define trauma basing on Freud’s psychoanalysis even speak for or argue against it. Critics like Cathy Caruth, Dominick LaCapra, Sushana Felman and others have based theory of trauma on Freud’s psychoanalysis. These theorists emphasize on the need for acting out or working through of trauma leading a healthy life.

Trauma is a reckoning that haunts its victim after a catastrophe, war or on the loss of someone very near and dear ones. It is an internalized experience of pain incurred to an individual after the irreparable loss to which there cannot be an alternative. Hence the only way out is to stay in touch with trauma, to dare to tackle the challenges borne by it, as there is no other way to deal with it, but to face it. As this is exactly what Radha does to overcome the great pathetic condition while working in Jumla during Maoist insurgency.

From the childhood, Radha is curious girl and faces so many problems because of poverty. Her father teaches her living knowledge specially, he tells miserable stories of Jumla. Every night before sleeping and cuddling next to father, her child brain is disturbed by the thought of poverty-stricken Jumla. Firstly, she surprises what she hears about them. "I used to say to my father. Father we're poor right? And he would reply, no my dear, there are people poorer than us living in Jumla" (8). After completing her nursing study in 1984, she starts to work in Bharatpur hospital on a contemporary contract. She treats countless patients in hospital, among them three cases in particular that touches her soul. Many people are just interested in earning money to at least pay back what was invested in their education to become a doctor or nurse. Providing health services has become a business. She is trapped in a suffocating web of questions. And she stops to say to her father, "We are poor, right?" Her horizons and her way of looking at life, and the world are getting broader. Finally, she decides to live in community and does community work.

Radha dreams about Jumla from her childhood. Her father has shown her those dreams. His words "My daughter will go to Jumla to serve people once she finishes her studies?" (21) are always with her. After many years of wondering the dreams come true but all of a sudden new thoughts come in to her mind. In her father's day's Jumla was peaceful and secure but now it has a strong hold of the Maoist rebels. Every day there is news of murder and violence there. Adjective like poor and remote always attached to Jumla. And the newspaper also prints sad stories. In addition to that she leaves her permanent job at Bharatpur hospital. Her friends start to make fun on her. "Are you going there to make a lot of money? Many concerned about Maoist insurgency, with people being killed in Jumla every day, only

a lunatic would go there” (22). While even Nepalese treat Jumla as some sort of backward foreign country, how could it ever develop? Despite the views of her friends, she makes up her mind.

At first time, when Radha is in Jumla, her first challenge is to prove herself and to win the trust of people. Many people try to obstruct her. But she keeps it continued. Many of her friends from nursing college are in Britain, they email her to come to UK. She replies “is Jumla in Britain?”(27). She considers herself very fortunate to have a chance to work in Jumla and not in Britain. Right then she decides not to run away from her decision. She faces several difficulties to create awareness among Jumli people.

While working in Jumla, she involves herself with Jumli’s culture and life style. She exposes the bitter reality of Jumla such as poverty, ignorance, hunger, superstition, feudalism and effects of Maoist insurgency. Through these kind of hardships Jumla give her new direction for her plans. She gives training about health, education, violence, social injustice and so on. She spends most of her time for the community. Whereas Nepal government has not any concern about them. They are discriminated and neglected by government biased policy and leaders. People have made negative images on them as uneducated, uncivilized, poor, remote, superstitious and so on. At the very same time, Radha arise as a candle for Jumli people. In Jumla while working for community, she is arrested, threatened and warned by Maoist, other relatives and friends. But, she does not listen to them rather gives focus on her social tasks and plans that is more needed to serve to Jumla at this situation. Each and every day there are gunshots and bombs blasts in the evening. People are living in critical situation.

She faces Khalanga attack on 14 November 2002. Khalanga bazar turns into a ball of fire, just like at the cremation site in Aryaghat when dozens of corpses burn at the same time. Radha and Jumli's life turn into a nightmare of trauma. Then after she comes back to her home, her unfinished plan and childhood dreams haunt her day to day, so, she again returns back to Jumla to complete her work and to make aware to people of Jumla. "Now Jumla is my life" (126). She makes commitment to do something significant for Jumla and its people. On the other hand, she plays vital role to rescue and collects fund for the earthquake victims. Similarly, she breaks down the existing notion of society. She gives *mukhaagni* to her mother which is beyond her tradition. Still, she works for Karnali region to empower poor, venerable and socially excluded people so they may live with justice and equality. She has sacrificed her personal desires and wants for society especially for Jumla.

Radha does not surrender in front of the norms, rules and subjugation imposed by Nepalese culture rather she becomes a strong woman and decides to create her own self according to her own actions and desires. Besides, the rise of Radha from the pathetic situation, the status of national fame and name is an aspiration for thousand people that achievement is not far, if only one is supported and backed by never dying spirit. This never dying spirit comes to Radha because she wants to stand up and experience Jumli's society and culture while serving them. Then one day when her spirits are woken, she is able to put her suffering on one side and let the nation know of the same. As such she publishes her memoir, the publication on Radha's memoir has been considered as a mile stone in shaping up the life of thousand people around the country. Radha receives the international awards and also her book is awarded by national prize known as 'Madan Puruskar' in 2014.

Similarly, the book has been hailed by many writers and critics as one of the greatest contributions to man-kind. This book continues to influence people and very same time aware people as well as to Nepal government about the pathetic situation of Karnali region people and struggles of Radha. Among several critics who have hailed the work as one of the greatest contribution to mankind, Kuna Dixit is one of them. In his opinion this memoir is a work of great value for mankind. He comments:

In the book, Radha Paudel relives minute details of the battle of Jumla and how that close brush with death motivated her to continue to work for the upliftment of the people of this remote part of Nepal. But, as Radha Paudel, remind us, ‘The end of the war has not mean the peace. The roots of the conflict are still there. As long as people are hungry, there will be war’. Radha set out the remote parts of the district to care for women even though it was a war zone. She kept working in Jumla and got the women peace maker award last year for her selfless work in rural Nepal during the conflict. (13)

This is about empowerment and patriotic feeling of female in the patriarchy society. Dixit says that’s why Radha preserved award because she thought it is important to tell the story, then people will understand the true meaning of peace and value it. Similarly another critic, Bibas Sapkota critiques upon the writing level and relation between cover page and contain of this memoir. In his review of this memoir under the title “Writing Level and Cover Page” he notes:

Writing is simple, but even surface. Radha Paudel writing is simple and tasty. However, most of the literary style seems a little steep. Although simple in style, she has filled poignant expression. In the memoir Radha Paudel is presented as strong will girl. She is the hero of the book. The memoir is all

about her own experiences however that would feel like fiction. Readers feel, it would be the story of Khalanga attack after reading title and cover photo of book but it is more about nurse story. In the memoir, Rhadha has neither criticized nor praised Maoist, but she has challenged the government policy.

(09)

In his critical analysis, Sapkota raises several issues such as, it would be better to keep Jumli's women photos instead of destroyed house, we need to find better solutions to develop Karnali region, and also shares his ideas about human responsibility.

The present research explores the sufferings and quest for identity of Radha which is the center of analysis from traumatic perspective. Trauma is a crux, speaking to the indecision representation and limits of knowledge. This study also based on of internal suffering "Trauma as an outlet" as similar Radha's recognition of trauma changes her life. Trauma is torture associated with internal sufferings of an individual, it is less visible. It is more an internal scenario of victim of suffering and woes. According to Cathy Caruth, "Trauma as an experience or event so painful that the mind becomes unable to grasp it. Trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual past, but in the rather in the way it's much unassimilated nature" (36). The way it was precisely not knowing in the future instance- returns to haunt to the survivor later on. When she describes these symptoms, however, she returns to the theme of objectivity, suggesting that they tell us the reality or truth that is not otherwise available.

The memoir is a set of bitter experiences of a young lady in Karnali during Maoist insurgency. However it is the struggle of an individual to find an escape to the internalized voice. As such the memoir carries deeper level of meaning and

significance besides the hardships and constraints faced by Radha. Trauma is a common phenomenon in human society and no society or even individuals are free of sufferings. However the level of these challenges differs. Radha sacrifices her personal wants for Jumli people even though she could live with more facilities. Radha, one such unique example stands up to face the challenges and gives the voice to voiceless people and finds meaning through representation of trauma to the outer world. And today, the status of Radha has reached to a status of literary figure.

She is a representative of the contemporary Nepalese society and culture. She challenges the conventional notions and limitations of the society. And from her starting phase, she decides to dedicate her life for society especially for Jumala. The person who has experienced unbearable pain, the psychological defense of dissociation allows life to go on. But at great internal cost, the essence of traumatic experience achieve its meaning in the form of representation. There should be outlet for trauma to be depicted and presented. As it is consciousness of trauma that produces an escape in the form of voice both symbolic or literature. An outlet not only helps to reduce the internalized suffering but also help in reducing it to a considerate level in consideration of the trauma as a source of representation.

It is normal that people are often delved in a misfit or various incidents that distort some with various physical and psychological injuries, Radha, being one of them. However Radha's life is very much different from that of normal people. While working in Jumla, she meets with Jumli people and she gets familiar with their lifestyles and cultures. Firstly, it is very difficult to make aware Jumli people and on the other hand there is Maoist insurgency increasing day to day. She does not get enough support by Jumli people and Maoist threat to her. Her life turns into a

nightmare of trauma. She is caught by Maoist that makes her traumatic. She narrates those suffering as:

I am a nurse, I'm here giving training. I don't have anything, they did not listen me, searching all my belongings, they found nothing more than medicines. Give us money they said but I did not have any cash. They scolded me then they kept me captive for four hours before releasing me after returning from the village the army used to interrogate us. (52)

She is challenged by her relatives, friends and from her project officers to leave Jumla. There is very miserable situation. At first, people of Jumla do not disclose their situation. They think one day she will leave her job and go away. Every day there are gunshots and bombs blast from the barrack. People afraid to go out during the night.

She further says:

My mind was unstable, Jumla was unstable my country was unstable. While we development workers were shrinking back inside our secure perimeters, the Maoist launched yet another attack. "I had left my home to work for the country and to continue the program. Was there no value to my sacrifice? I became disheartened whenever I thought about it? (59)

These kinds of sufferings and lifestyles people cannot imagine and sacrifice their personal wants and desires as Radha does. However Radha not only defies the intense mental sufferings and subjugation but also searches for an alternative to expose her internalized feelings and desires to the world, which means an escape from traumatic experiences that challenged her life.

Despite the fact, people are haunted by several of tragedies, life has to go on. This is one of the important aspects of coping with trauma. No one can remain lamenting over the loss of past what ever the volume of trauma, one might have gone through. As such, reckoning of lamentation is common but there is no turning back. Radha has such reckoning reminded in her life. She recalls one of them in following manner:

I visited my eldest sister. She was upset about me leaving home to go to Jumla. Did father tell you to go there to get killed? Go when it's more peaceful. I won't stop you then" it my job sis. I said if I mind my own business nothing will happen me I started to console her but she just continued crying with out saying anything my eyes were also full of tears. (64)

Radha's psychology is haunted by such kinds of moments time and again however, she is not horrified. The owner of Everest hotel Sunil *dai* and Goma *bhauju* give love and care throughout her time in Jumla. They protect and support to her as their daughter. Radha's life is totally different from other people.

Her child brain is full filled with feeling of social service. She is denied of essentials in her daily life. She shares, "I used to go to jungle with my mother to take the buffaloes to graze. This was our daily routine" (136). Her family uses pine cones to burn fire and also sells pine seeds in the bazaar. It help to buy some essentials thing for them. These kinds of hardships of her family from her childhood makes her psychologically eager to think about the people poorer than they are. Then her thought turns towards to work for poor people. Radha works for poor people from her childhood. In this context, Elissa Mardar argues, "Trauma therefore presents a unique set of challenges to understanding further because traumatic events happens due to

social forces” (56). The level of difficulties borne by Radha are much more difference by, probably any other persons, as there are certain rules of achieving them. However, in the case of Radha there are so many social cultural boundaries and at the very same time Maoist insurgency. The position or education may not necessary in social service. Just only needs of devotion and scarification. In this memoir Radha’s spirit is mainly connected with the poor people. She says, “Everyone knows we dream in our sleep. My experience, whoever day dream can not sleep. I had dreamed about Jumla from my childhood” (21).

Initially, Radha starts to serve to people from Bharatpur hospital as a social worker. After, completing her nursing studies, she meets different kinds of patients from all over the country in the hospital, such as diarrhea patients from Jajarkot, encephalitis from Sarlahi and patient with cancer. By talking with these patients, she knows the miserable state of health service throughout the country. After then, she realizes that there are many people who are poorer and critical than she is. Trauma is not only experienced in the aftermath of single, dramatic events; it can also be ongoing and structurally induced as, for example in the case of extreme poverty or ongoing civil war, where day to day life is a struggle for security and survival. During that time, she decides to live in community and do community work. She says:

My presence and absence would make no difference in a city, where as a village needed me. I decided I would go to Jumla, the Jumla of my father’s stories, after I finished my studies. My father had planted the seed of jumla in my mind and during my time working in Bharatpur hospital that seed grew into a large tree. (20)

During the time, she completes Master's degree in Health Education as well. Radha is appointed for a position in the safe maternity programme of the UK's department for international development. She gets chance to serve in Jumla which is her childhood dream. She recounts, "After so many years of wondering, the dream was coming true. For me, it was like a light in the darkness. I was extremely excited to share this news with my father. I was going to serve the poor of Jumla, just as he had always wanted. I thought my father would be overjoyed when he heard the news" (21). There is stronghold of Maoist rebel nevertheless, she decides to go Jumla. Her father does not give her permission to go to Jumla leaving a permanent job, and her friends and relatives also force and warn to stop her, but she ignores them and makes her own decision. Relating with this context, trauma occurs due to the disorder which is an extreme reaction to excessive of stress, generally when an individual or a system constantly pressurize the mental aspect of an individual.

Trauma study explores the relation between psychic wounds and its signification. The struggle of Radha is miracle on it self. However, she tackles with obstacles. While moving to Jumla, she remembers her mother's condition. "Seeing river following through the middle hills reminded me of my mother and almost brought tears to my eyes" (25). She remembers the bitter experiences of her family experiences during this time. In Jumla airport, a group of children and old men bending and twisting their arms and legs towards her. They have come to the airport hoping for work as porters. They are begging to carry bag. She recounts, "We haven't eaten anything let us carry your luggage, gesturing towards their bellies" (25). Radha becomes speechless, after reaching the hotel she knows that those children father has disappeared all of sudden, nobody knows if he has been taken by the Maoist or has

fled to India or if he is dead or alive. They are *dalit* and has no education at all, they look absolutely pathetic.

Radha realizes that the birth place of a person is not their choice. The heart-rending side of Jumla has presented itself to her on the very first day. She recounts, “I thought about my own childhood. I had walked without shoes. I had gone to bed hungry. I had carried loads larger than my self. I had cut grasses and worked in the field. But I had never been as poor as this” (27). In this case, another enigmatic aspect of trauma for Caruth is the relation between trauma and survival: The traumatic experiences of survivors not only haunt at the time of experiencing but continually trigger in the form of memory or nightmares all over their life. When the similar type of incidents occurs, that refresh the old past memories into the mind. Similarly, these are incidents which are related to the memory which revives traumatic experiences in an individual life. In fact memories are associated with the internalized feeling that seeks outcome in forms. These feelings are certain to have its way out.

Once she thinks, her situation is miserable. Now, she realizes the true meaning of ‘poverty’. Radha shortly understands the situation of Jumli people and gets familiar with their cultures. Many people just come to fulfill the government requirement. During winter time her hands often get freeze but she does not have enough money to buy cloths. One day a lady dies due to retained placenta after delivery. Radha tries to help her but she is not succeeded. The image of the woman dying in front of her keep flashing before her eyes. She is terrified and she sees her mother in that lady’s face and wants to cry. This event has profound effect on her. She thinks, it is better to leave Jumla altogether than to see patients dying needlessly every day, and dying a little with them. But the thought of leaving Jumla makes her feel cold. She lies down

on her bed and remembers her father's words. "Daughter people poorer than us live in Jumla when you become big, you have to serve them" (33). In this context, Domminick LaCapara argues, If we deal with the term with the way of acting out. It is related with recurrence as he says that trauma is kind of obligation. It is a behavior which the patient repeat compulsorily. People relate past to present and become unhappy and disturbed. Because of something unpleasant events in their past, they become mentally disturbed and tortured. One event or situation takes connotative meaning. Similarly, LaCarapa acknowledges a certain value in 'acting out'.

This incident makes her bold and commits to struggle on behalf of Jumli's prosperity. Even a single incident of inspiration could change life, as so is witnessed in Radha's case. Again a whole new energy starts to take place in her life. Radha than, finds an escape to tackle with hardships and problems. She recounts, "My father always showed me the right way. Jumla needed me because people poorer that I lived there" (33). Within the pains and extremes of hopelessness there is always a ray of hope. But within these extremes, one needs a sense of understanding to know the coming of symbol of hope and expectation. Radha gets enough support from the owner of hotel Sunil *dai* and Goma *bhauja*. They becomes like family to her. She says, "They were like my own brother and sister in law or may be even closer" (44). This is to depict that trauma and experiences go hand by hand: when there is darkness there is light to evaluate it.

Radha's pain is more of internalized pain rather than physical. Radha is one such victim who has a life long suffering due to poverty and Maoist insurgency. This extreme of psychological pain effects in her thinking capability. However, she controls it and turns it into social works as her human responsibility. Despite the

gloom and dark present in her life, she displays some of the signs and activities that provide solace in her troubled life. But as said “luck favors the brave” so does happen in Radha’s life. The support of Sunil *Dai* and Goma *Bhauju* in her life change everything for her.

She is a witness and victim survivor of Khalanga attack on 14th November 2002. While Radha is having dinner at nine pm with Sunil *dai*’s family, they hear a bang and machine gun fire. Then the sound of gunshots come from all direction. Traumatic experiences is continually haunted by it in dreams, flashback, and hallucination. Similarly, she is thinking about the Jumli people and other health equipment. She is worried about her plans would have to change as a result of attack. “If I died there today, then all my worries would die with me but, if I didn’t die what would happen to my plans?” (73). She also works in the curfew for Jumli people. But at that night her mind starts to move in terrible direction. Positive thought are impossible for her. She feels, she is facing imminent death and finds herself remembering and thanking those who had wished her well. She shares her inner feeling such as, “As I am very dedicated to my work. I expect the same level of dedication in other. Ultimately I try to force other people to be like me even though I know that’s impossible. When you’re facing imminent death, you realize that you might have argued with people for petty reasons” (75). Here, time and again the traumatic events are repeated and gives tortures to her. Those dreams are like her wound which gives her pain for the time being. Radha’s some experience are like this nightmare of losing the love and her plans in the community. She has extreme fear of losing her childhood dreams which are shown by her father.

Radha gets so traumatic at that night. There is fierce fighting between Maoist and the army. Between now and then, anything could happen. Her life is in critical situation that makes her compel to think about her family. Tears rolls down her cheek. She feels that she could not bring happiness to her parents. She thinks of her sisters and brother as well. She is becoming more nervous and nostalgic. In this point she narrates, “If I was still have alive the next morning. I would call them other wise that would be it for this life. I was dying without being able to pay back even a portion of the sacrifice and love my parents has bestowed on me” (76).

Similarly at that night, it is very difficult to pass the time. The bombs explode on the roof of houses and other things. Even when death is certain, humans still option for the easiest way to die. The fighting continue until seven am. Blood is everywhere. Radha’s dreams turns into ashes. It makes her psychological torture, thinking about childhood dreams. But she still has ray of hope. She shares, “In just a single night my lovely Jumla has been burned to ground but I was still a live. This was my rebirth” (82). It is worth saying that LaCarpa thinks acting out is an inevitable and often necessary part of the healing process as he says:

...for people who have been severely traumatized, it may be impossible to fully transcend acting-out the past. In any case, acting-out should not be seen as different kind of memory from working-through. They are intimately part of process. Acting out, on some level, may very well be necessary, even for secondary witnesses or historians. On certain level there’s that tendency to repeat. (2)

Thus, Radha is a witness of Khalanga attack and victim survivor of war. She endures a lot of physical and mental tortures without concerning about her family and personal

life. Trauma is forced to the core of identity. Yet people do manage to re-establish a sense of purpose and identity after major loss compounded by traumatic experience. For many, they try to cope by blocking all memory of shattered past. The different ranges of concerns can be conceptualized under the category of trauma. It has been newly stretched from private life to public history, reading materials that can include romantic poetry, psychiatric histories, accounts of sexual abuse, memoirs, testimonies, documentaries, the symptoms, silences and so many others in national histories.

For Shoshana Felman, “As such the witness act of seeing or what is called ‘testimonial witnessing’ is a responsible affair and irreplaceable performance” (45). The testimonial witnessing is an act of seeing things through the eyes of a witness, and whatever is witnessed gets accumulated in the mind in the form of memory. This memory in the long run gives rise to the sense of pain, and it is unlikely that such pain ever passes away. As such memory needs to be shared because it is special memory consisting of first-hand seeing, it is unique and irreplaceable. This shared concern of memory is depicted in *Jumla: A Nurse's Story* which is in the form of written testimony.

In *Jumla*, after the Khalanga attack, Radha, a female social worker, makes a strong heart and comes out from home to understand the effect of last night's attack. Loss in our life is next to a universal phenomenon. Such loss, for somebody, becomes a serious stress and for somebody it does not matter at all. Being a serious stress, such loss becomes a wounding trauma which can never recover and for somebody, as they can easily accept, it works as nothing pushing them to new challenges of life. In the case of Radha, in the Khalanga attack, she loses her ongoing projects and her well-wishers. And her psychology is affected badly. However, she is able to balance her

pains and sufferings. The level of intelligence and devotion is not determined by physical well-being. Intelligence and social spirit are determined by the outlet an individual shows through the innovative work an individual performs and actions. Radha turns her internalized feelings and pains into her actions. She says, “I had started to build a new hospital building, many people recognized me. Also I was the only female officer in the district” (95).

This is one of the great turning points of her life. She is able to maintain her physical and mental pains. She, for the first time in her life, totally eager to meet with people to shares her innermost feelings. She shares her inner feeling in following manner. “All the meeting that are our first meeting returning safely from the road to death. Life is just a collection of moment lived between chances. There is nothing we can take with us. We get nothing by getting angry with others, feeling low or arguing. That just gives us things to regret on our deathbed” (97).

In the same way, Dominick LaCapra’s theory of trauma focuses on three psychoanalytic topics: the return of the repressed; acting out versus working through and the dynamics of transference. A traumatic historical event tends first to be repressed and then to return in the form of compulsive repetition. Loss is often correlated with lack, for as loss is to the past, so lack is to the present and further. By contrast to absence, loss is situated on a historical level and is the consequence of particular events. However the sense of loss is full filled when there are other people of similar type who can understand and share the level of sufferings. One such event Radha narrates:

On the right blood was dripping from the verandah of a house like that of goats killed during *dasain*. On the verandah was decapitated human head

while the rest of the body was in the doorway. Now I realised that a beast resides inside every human and horrors could happen when that beast is unleashed. We did not know if the kids were hungry and nobody said anything. They do not understand many things. They are seeing fear in their parent's eyes, they were also afraid. (86)

Radha express her feeling towards the small children. They are extremely victimized by civil war and nowhere to go. So, the compensation of loss is to make up with similar things and scenario that people could make up with for it. She wishes that one day this people would be able to rise again. The nature of losses varies with the nature of events and responses to them and some losses may be traumatic while other are not. Furthermore, the conflation of absence and loss would facilitate the appropriation of particular traumas by those who did not experience them in a movement of identity formation. In this regard, LaCapra writes:

Losses occur in any life of society, but it is still important not to specify them prematurely or conflate them with absence. Historical losses can conceivably be avoided or, when they occur, at least in part be compensated for, worked through, and even to some extent overcome. Absence, along with the anxiety it brings, could be worked through only in the sense that one may learn better to live with it and not convert it into a loss or lack. (712)

Trauma is a discourse of the unrepresentable 'absence' of the event or objects that an individual loves the dear most in his/her life. This sense of 'absence' is hardly compensable but only reduced when there is a sense of outlet of this tragedy.

There is an escape to express the inner feeling in one or other ways. So, when Radha is conscious enough to express her inner thoughts, she quickly comes out to

share her feelings with Sunil *Dai*, Goma *Bhauju* and other people as well as delighting people with her curiosity, public activities and traumatic experiences she lives through smile. It is as LaCapra term 'working through'. It is rightly commented that 'suffering are divided when we share them' as Radha does in community, people make her confirmed to live with them. So, it is a life conquered by Radha, a life that is full of impossibilities, but only to others but not for Radha. As such, the traumatic experiences are minimized by the display of sheer intelligence, intellectuality and actions.

It is obvious that there are different ways of overcoming suffering, but the ways are not the always same. Radha's suffering is always search for peace, aware to Jumli people and challenges existing notions of Nepalese society. She transfers her trauma into social activities. Transference is the occasion for working through the traumatic symptom. It is imperative therefore to recognize the symptoms and the trauma as one's own, to acknowledge that the trauma still is active and that one is implicated in its destructive effects. In this case of Radha, gets enough support by Sunil *dai*, Goma *Bhauju*, Jumli people, and she herself recognizes her transference of desire to express her internalized sufferings and pains. She is not ordinary girl, as a female in the remote village during Maoist insurgency, sacrifices all personal desire, she tackles with obstacles. The most important thing is that she is able to turn her sufferings and pains into social performances and actions. She recounts:

Every Nepali should accept this reality. You should accept it. I should accept it. I have experienced conflict in a war zone, my mind might not be in the best place right now. I also do not need counseling. I am mentally and physically

fit. I have spent time with my family, I'm feeling reinvigorate I will go back to Jumla. I said confidently. (125)

She is a representative of Jumli people. She raises the voice of voiceless people. She also plays the role of carrier groups. She spends most of the time of her life for the society. Especially for Jumla and still going on. She is an agent for the Jumli people. In this aspect, Jeffrey Alexander in her essay, *Cultural Trauma: A Social Theory* argues, "Carrier groups are collective agents of the trauma process. Carrier groups have both ideal and material interests. They are situated in particular places in the social structure. They have particular talents for articulating their claims for meaning making in the public sphere" (16).

Through her articles in major magazines and newspapers, Radha explains the problems encountered by people of remote village. At the same time, these writings help her to express her repressed feelings. She evokes the voice of poor people to make aware to government policy and the people who have negative image about Karnali region. She also gives the alternative history to the public as well. Similarly, Cathy Caruth says, we need traumatic study to bring the unclaimed experience or marginalized truth in the center. It gives the alternative history to the main stream history. The main stream history alone cannot give the actual truth because it is manipulated there is power play game. She argues, "I would propose that it is here in the equally widespread and bewildering encounter with trauma both in its occurrence and in the attempts to understand it. That we can begin to recognize the possibility to a history which is no longer straight forwardly reference through the trauma" (182). As Caruth says, Radha through her memoir gives the marginalized truth.

After the Maoist attack, Jumla is in a more pathetic situation. However, Radha makes her decision bold to continue her unfinished job. “I was filled with the feeling that I should help heal the wounds of Jumla to the best of my ability” (127).

Traumatic victims cannot hold their job well. They become abnormal, losing their heir the capacity of deciding what to do or not but in the case of Radha she balances it.

She builds an operating theatre and blood bank and creates an emergency fund for the jumal hospital. She starts an initiative called “Miteri Village- Let’s Live Together” to heal the wounds caused by ten year of conflict and focus on raising awareness at the local level. The organization is also helping in case including litigation, education, domestic violence, sexual abuse and so on. She is also raising voice on promoting women’s right at the national level. The programme ends but her work there does not. She is still working and raising the voice of Jumla as well as other remote villages.

However, tragedies are to occur more and more in her life. Nearly forty year, she loses her mother. The main concern is as a female, she gives *mukhang* to her mother and lights her funeral pyre which is beyond the tradition. Finally she establishes Ganga Devi scholarship fund for socially outcast students and *dalits* in her mother's commemoration. In the contemporary Nepalese society women face problems like physical and emotional torture, social restriction and powerlessness, deprivation of social, political and economic privileges. They are culturally and socially bound within the social structure. Radha is a rebel character who challenges traditional social values and successes to create her self-identity.

Radha’s generous personality and self-confident is an example for the society. After thirteen years of Maoist attack in Khalanga, a major earthquake strokes in Nepal on 12th May 2015. She starts to collect fund for victims and devotes more than twenty hours for helping them. While witnessing all these events, her mind reaches and

thinks about the western part of Nepal. She remembers, "I could not stop my self from imagining what would happen in the remote areas of mid- western and far- western Nepal in the case of natural disaster"(149). Radha at present cannot forget the past because they are inscribed in her mind in such a way that they disturb her present living. And that gives rise to the traumatic experiences.

This is the traumatic experience of living with suffering and pains of history. It is living with history because the psychological breakdown is already occurred in the history that has its impact in the present. Radha remembers her previous incident, she gets fascination as she finds herself satisfied and also called as a brave girl. She recalls the incidents as, "Giving up a well-paid job I had decided to serve in Karnali and its hard working people guided me to make that decision, which many considered foolish" and now people especially the security situation there in the wake of Maoist attack, they called me a "brave lady" (151).

After analyzing the memoir in detail the researcher comes to the conclusion that deals with search for female self. It basically focuses on Radha who turns her trauma into social activities. She creates self-identity with challenging contemporary Nepalese society during Maoist insurgency. Now, Radha is around fifties staying unmarried and continuing with the social programmes. As such, the only thing that makes difference in human life is the presence of internalized feeling and emotion that remains with the human. In absence of feeling; traumatic or soothing, it is hard that human survive. Traumatic experience has its passage in various way. There are events in human life which lets the bitter experience to have an access. Radha recalls her frantic effort to express herself and involve with social activities.

In this way, Radha's suffering gets an escape in the form of writing materials. Her traumatic experiences in the form of social activities and writing which is a form of depiction of alternative ways of management of pain. This way is based on LaCapra's term 'working through' of trauma rather than bring stubborn towards it. That help to minimize the level of suffering. It is true that by lapse of time, the level and magnitude of suffering becomes less but it is unlikely that they are eliminated. So, a way to lessen it is to make sure that there is a proper mechanism for its outlet.

Radha is more guided from her inner feeling to serve poor people which always drives into forward. She takes her decision herself. She does not care about her family, relatives and other people. The researcher sketches the traumatic experiences of Radha and evokes the social realities of Nepalese society. She faces ups and downs in her life while working in Jumla and tries to maintain them. It is obvious that human need escape to suffering, otherwise it will accumulate unless there is a burst resulting in violent outcomes. It is a fact that human cannot escape trauma. However, it can be lessened through 'working through' and 'acting out'. Through these ways people can give an outlet to their internal suffering. In the case of Radha, through the process of 'working through', she does dare to cope with suffering and finds an escape in the form of literature and social activities that help her to reduce her trauma. Thus it is the conscious knowing of the suffering that provides an outlet to the victimized ones.

The story of Radha is of suffering and overcoming it. She is physically and psychologically challenged and confirmed with the boundary of superstitions in remote villages during Maoist insurgency. Her devotion and self-confirmed idea leads her towards new phase. Life of Radha is in a deep saga of hardship and difficulties. Her life is affected by deep turmoil, difficulties and bitter traumatic experiences in

which she is living. However, support of Sunil *Dai* and Goma *bhauju* and her own self confidence leads her to continue to pursue on her childhood dreams. Radha's life extends in to new phase in the form of way out of internal suffering in which she is living. Despite, all these challenges and difficulties. She stands up and becomes an inspirational figure to the people of the country.

The notion of self is so much important in human life, to be recognized in society with distinct values. Identity means independent and social status but this research do not only emphasis Radha's social identity but also focuses to self-decision making power and own feelings. She has strong desire to work in Jumla and its people which she successes at the end. Radha's whole life is full of struggle and miserable but she overcomes all the trauma and achieves greatness in the literary world through her works and will power. She becomes a role model for the society in contemporary Nepalese society. Her works are based on the prevailing social problem and able to raise the voice of voiceless Jumli people as well as her self-identity.

Works Cited

- Alexander, C. Jeffery. "Cultural Trauma: A Social theory". *Trauma a Social Theory*. London: University of California press, 2004.
- Caruth, Cathy. "Trauma and Experience Introduction". *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Ed. Caurth. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1995.
- ... "Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of the History". *Literature and the Ethical Question*. New York: Yale University, 1991, pp. 181- 82.
- Dixit, Kunda. "Nurse's Book Wins Madan Prize". *Nepali Times*. 25th, September, 2014, pp. 13.
- Felman, Shoshana. "Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History". New York: Yale University Press, 1992.
- LaCapra, Dominick. *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory and Trauma*. Ithaca: cornel University Press, 1994.
- ... *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.
- ... Acting-out and Working-Through Trauma. *Shoah Resource Centre, the International School for the Holocaust Studies*, June 9, 1998.
- Marder, Elissa. "Trauma and Literary Studies: Some Enabling Questions". *Reading On: Trauma, Memory, and Testimony*. New York: Yale University, 2006.
- Paudel, Radha. *Jumla: A Nurse's Story*. Kathmandu: Napa-laya Publication. 2016.
- Sapkota, Bibas. "Writing level and Cover Page". *The Rising Nepal*. 7th October, 2014, pp. 9.