

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Ideology and Identity in Narayan Wagle's *Palpasa Café*

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By
Chandra Bahadur Balampaki
Central Department of English
Kirtipur, Kathmandu.

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Central Department of English

Letter of Recommendation

Mr./ Ms. Chandra Bahadur Balampaki has completed his/ her thesis entitled "Ideology and Identity in Narayan Wagle's *Palpasa Café* " under my supervision. He/ She carried out his/ her research from May, 2008 (A.D) to November, 2008 hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for vivavoce.

Supervisor

Date: _____

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Faculty of Humanities and Social Science

This thesis submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Chandra Bahadur Balampaki entitled "Ideology and Identity in Narayan Wagle's novel *Palpasa Café*" has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of Research Committee:

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Head,

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

Date: _____

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Chandra Bahadur Balampaki

Abstract

The present research focuses on the debut work of Narayan Wagle, *Palpasa Café*. The vision of Siddhartha and Drishya stands in contrast to each other as they are guided by different ideologies. Drishya represents the traditional ideology of the state whereas Siddhartha represents the new ideology of Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) that struggles for replacing and restructuring the old ideological structure of the state. Because of the different conflicting ideologies and identities, the lives of common people are affected dangerously.

Chapter – I

Introduction

Narayan Wagle's Life and Works

Narayan Wagle was born in a Brahmin family in 1965 and attended elementary school in the hills of Tanahu district in central Nepal. In 1985, he moved to Kathmandu for further studies and began working as a reporter in 1991 in Nepal's largest circulation daily newspaper *Kantipur*. His first novel *Palpasa Cafe* was published in 2005, winning in the same year Nepal's most prestigious literary award, the Madan Puraskar. Wagle lives in Kathmandu and travels extensively throughout Nepal.

Since the last 13 years working as a reporter of *Kantipur* daily, in his later carrier, he also served as an editor of the same paper who has traveled every nook and cranny of the country in his carrier as a journalist. As a journalist, he has done many important efforts to introduce to the state which are unknown or beyond the notice of the state. It was unforgettable reports by him that groundbreaking Kalapani story and that nation shocking reporting over food crisis in the remote district Humla in 1994 because of the heavy snow on the passes, which forced the government to rush aid before starvation hit.

There are many abatar we can find in the form of Narayan Wagle. Narayan Wagle or Agle (the tall man) as his contemporary call him, has set an illustrious carrier that every reporter in this country aspires to follow. Popularly known as "Coffee - Guffee Wagle" among his readers through his "Coffee-Guffee", a Popular weekly column on "Koselee", *Kantipur's* Saturday supplement inspired his pen in literary world and Nepali literature has found a new novelist in Narayan Wagle.

Apart from his journalist carrier, he has also worked as a star. He has worked as a star in a documentary called “Bheda ko Oon Jasto” in search of a song that won special mention prize in Film South Asia 2003. Wagle leads a team of musicians including Amrit Gurung of Nepathya, in remote trails of Langtang looking for a local tune that he heard a decade ago. For the first time in the history of documentary of film, BKOJ was screened nationwide including Jaya Nepal Theater in Kathmandu.

In his carrier as a journalist, he has traveled to remote corner of the country bringing stories of neglect and apathy to the notice of the government in faraway Kathmandu. So, he has presented the social realities, his feelings and experiences about the contemporary Nepali society while doing journalism in the semi-fictionalized form. In a way, this novel is the extended version of his ‘fictionalized fact’ –based column “Coffee-Guff.”

Wagle’s Nepali is simple and touchy. He taught himself English spending days at the British council while the People’s Movement Protests raged on the streets outside. Simplicity is the hall mark of Wagle’s writing. In this semi-autobiographical novel, facts are often more dramatic than fiction in societies wracked by messy conflict. The atrocities, execution, disappearances, abduction, landmines, and people caught into the cross-fire that we read about everyday have presented vividly and in realistic way. In this sense, he has experimented these facts in the form of writing as a fictionalized form of a novel.

This novel is as fresh as an open wound and written in non-linear style that is almost experimental in the world of Nepali fiction. He has used simple and colloquial language and his voice is genuine and sincere. In terms of contents, Wagle prefers form over the content. The story weaves both the complexities of ongoing conflict and its consequences. He observes all the events by the eyes of society with clear vision.

He loves to play with colors in life's canvas to express different kinds of human's feelings, emotions, and sentiments. He has also used pictorial and moving image of the contemporary Nepali society. The style of presentation is very affective and unique and everyone gets his/ her feeling overflowing while reading the text.

The most popular and important novel *Palpasa Cafe* was widely acclaimed for its portrayal of people's war which was started before ten years ago in Nepal as an insurgency from the side of people called Maoist group and the aftermath of royal massacre of 1 June, 2001 that things really started hurtling out of control. This novel reflects the whole scenario of ten years ongoing people's war in land of Nepal with the mixture of love story as a spice of the novel.

Drishya, a male protagonist of the novel, narrates the story of the novel in his own voice that had happened in his life, in his village home, and in his surrounding as a whole, in non-linear style through the eyes of a painter. As it is a semi-autobiographical novel, Drishya narrates the true picture of our nation's trauma and the fictionalized account of some actual events, the lives of and deaths of ordinary Nepali people caught in the vice of war very lively and vividly.

Though the novel has covered many dimensions of people's war – its consequences, its different aspects good as well as bad, Nepal's foreign relation, the structure of Nepali society, the fragile and undeclared love between Drishya and Palpasa, sentiments of human feeling that Drishya faces in the hill, and his dream project of establishing 'Palpasa Cafe' in an idyllic remote hill in the memory of his beloved Palpasa etc., but the main aspects of this novel are the insurgency by the Maoist or People's War that was the result of state's old ideological structure. The poor condition of people in every aspect of social life and their dissatisfaction towards state and its old structure made ongoing war within ten years between the state and

Maoists. There was smell of revolution everywhere, the people were being conscious gradually about state's old ideological structure and the need of new one with just Nepal. The struggle between old ideology of state and the ideology of new generation were standing in opposition; as a result ordinary people were in the cloud of uncertainty. In the sameway, conflict among the different identities and ideologies are the main focus in the novel.

Narayan Wagle's first touching novel, *Palpasa Cafe* has been reviewed in a number of ways. Kunda Dixit, Dominique Francon, Sanjeev Upreti, Deepak Adhikari, Pratyoush Onta analyze the novel through the perspective of experimentation with the amalgamation of fact and fiction of the contemporary Nepal. They have also explored the use of style whether it suits the aims of the writer and theme of the book or not. Most of the reviewers have considerably focused upon the fact of the country, its ideological structure and its effects on individual unconscious, conflict on different identities in terms of the situation of the contemporary Nepali society.

According to Dominique Francon since ancient time war has been a part of civilization and even today, every now and then we are inundated with war news like for development and change. War has also spurred writers and artist. He further writes, "When none had an idea how the war was going to end and intellectuals were too staid to assess the consequences of loss, Narayan Wagle wrote a novel neglecting alchemy of violence." (27)

Francon views this novel as a war novel. War has become a part of human civilization and like development and change; war is also an important part of human life which can bring something like change, newness in human society. In the cloud of war, uncertainty and violence, no one could imagine the better future but it can be the source of inspiration and creativity in the hand of an artist who creates beautiful art.

Even in the war, Wagle gets creativity and creates this novel. The mixture of aspects of war in contemporary Nepali society, its real situation, different conflicting ideology and identity in society have presented in realistic way

Reviewing the world of the novel, Deepak Adhikari focuses on the contemporary problem of the country and attitude in the social milieu. He writes:

Wagle's best features are in the broader canvas he paints –firstly into the disappearances and general description of the post-royal massacre Kathmandu and then of the conflict into the hills. Wagle's description of schools being blown up, emptying villages, indiscriminate bombs, Maoists attacks on district Headquarters and mourning Nepali families are extremely hard-hitting and powerful. Wagle, too, uses the novel to protest against both warring sides . . . my colours showing my support for the third camp. (67)

The world of the novel is portrayed by the different aspect of the Nepali society. The conflict between the Maoists for the restructure of society against the state's old structure is the main cause of mourning of people in society. It has affected common people dangerously. Conflict in the institution like royal palace reflects the inter-conflict situation in the country. The different aspects of Nepali society are neatly observed such as “the individual stories in many other aspects of Nepal e.g. Diaspora Nepali, Gurkhas, Nepali foreigner relationship and internal immigration for school and work” (72). All these aspects are the results of war and he tries to improve the situation with the help of writing a novel.

Reviewing the novel, columnist Sanjeev Upreti writes:

The outer frame of the novel describes a journalist whose daily job consists in receiving factual information from the reporter from around

the nation. The facts that he receives are often depressing. They describe bout of violence and horrendous deaths that are happening around the nations. “Narayan” is thus caught-up between his vocation as journalist and as novelist. Such an in-between positions of the author/narrator is reflected by the novel itself, a novel that is written at the juncture of both fact and fiction. (22)

The real condition of the country is narrated by the medium of a journalist as his/her reports reflect. The condition is horrific because of the ongoing war between the Maoists and government. Wagle has reflected this situation in the form of the novel. Both fact and fiction have mixed in such way that reflect the situation of contemporary Nepali society.

While exploring the situation of the country, media commentator Pratyoush Onta said, “each and every person in the country may find his/her character with the flow of the story in the book” (9). The factual situation of the Country can be realized while reading the novel. So, it reflects the contemporary situation of Nepali society.

Commenting timing and setting of the novel, C K Lal writes that Wagle has tried to introduce a new style of writing. He further argues:

The book deals with the first few years of 21st century. It is the story of the mountains of Nepal. Drishya, the protagonist is trying to understand himself. He is trying to understand other people’s feelings. He is trying to understand the inner mind of the one who has gone for the revolution. He is trying to understand the city where he is living, the village where he was born, the country and the horrors of the time. (25)

C K Lal finds Wagle essentially presenting Nepal's sensibility of contemporary time. Wagle has portrayed the facts of the turmoil situation of his surrounding. The situation of individual in the war period has presented in experimental way where he lives. The different identities living in different situation in the period of revolution are reflected in the novel. He has also viewed the conflicting gender identification and biased traditional ideology of male narrator. He writes, "From the feminist perspective, the book is male dominated, from the 'dalit's perspective, the book has shown its affection to that underprivileged group but failed to include the feeling of the member of that community" (31). The identities of minority are excluded and their voices are suppressed in the novel. They are treated unfairly.

Kunda Dixit also reviews the novel as the outcome of the ongoing war between old structure of the state and Maoist insurgency against it which has affected not only Nepali society but also foreigner in the world. He further writes:

So, when the Maoist insurgency turned incredibly violent in 2000, it seemed as though editor in newsrooms in London, Hong Kong, and New York couldn't quite believe that there was trouble in Sangri- La. And even of there were, they believed it would be over soon enough. It was only after Nepali's crown prince murdered his entire family as well as himself in a massacre of the royal palace on the night of June 1, 2001, that parachute journalists who come to cover the story realized something was seriously wrong in the mountainous kingdom. (38)

Here, Dixit analyzes the history of Nepali people as peace loving, mountainous country. The beginning of Maoist insurgency did not attracted many foreigners but it was after the royal massacre that many foreigners, journalists took

interest on the conflict situation of the country. The devastating situation of the Nepal has affected people both within and out of the country. Dixit sums up saying this novel as, “anti-war novel and that will be talked about for years” (72). Because of the drastic development of communication and transportation, the conscious level of people are growing fast and world has become a small village. And every news of development and change in every corner of the world is approach of everybody and it attracts and affects every person in the world.

Chapter- II

Ideology and Identity

Both terms ideology and identity have reciprocal relation and function simultaneously affecting each other in different condition. Beginning from the history of human civilization, different ideologies and identities have been constructed and functioning in human society in different ways. The ideology of medieval age on human existence, gender, society, politics, religion, state got new form in pre-industrial and industrial age, and simultaneously, have been remaining changing its form and function till now, and such ideologies constitute different kinds of identity in human society in different stage of human civilization. Ideology thus manufactures identity.

In Marxist tradition, there are two groups or classes in human society- *Haves and Haves not, or exploiters and exploited* and both have their own ideology and process of identity formation. The rich and power holder group always imposes their domination over the poor or classless group. They rule over the common gentry class in the society. Even in the medieval age, there was domination and suppression over the land workers by landowners as was over the industrial workers by their owners in industrial age. So, there is always class conflict in society between powerful and powerless, landowners and serf. Powerful group impose their ideology over the powerless group and constitute different kind of identity at the same time.

Those who have power in society and approach to politics, always rule the state. The political leaders impose their political ideology to people as state's ideology and use it as Repressive State Apparatuses (RSA) and Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) and these apparatuses function in different organs of the society and state in the form of different legal organs of the state. This repressive force functions as state's

ideology over the citizens and it forms their identity differently. The traditional patriarchal male ideology, in the same way, has always been functioning male as superior being and female as inferior being. The identity such as inferior, second sex, flesh, other are linked to female whereas superior, creator, strong, giver are identified to male. Since the time immemorial, such a binary opposition based identities are being imposed in terms of gender by the male ideology in our society.

In terms of caste and colour, in the same way, the identity of different group has been formed in human society. In Indian civilization, there was caste based society and they were identified in terms of caste-based working system. The so-called superior groups in term of caste are considered high ranked people and low caste as low ranked and untouchable in society till now. Likewise, whites always view blacks through their jaundiced vision as inferior, barbaric, wild, uneducated, uncivilized and simultaneously the identity in terms of caste, race, colour are formed by the so-called high class people. The ideology of such high grouped people function to rule over the low ranked people in society and creates different identity in terms of gender, caste, colour, state, politics, religion and others.

Such ideologies and its repressive apparatuses affect on individual internally and it creates conflicts in different classes. The feeling of superior or inferior complex in human nature immerges directly or indirectly because of identity imposed to different groups. Likewise, the suppression, domination, tendency of being upper hand always remains working in the name of ideology and identity. Gender conflict, politics in religion, colours, caste always remain functioning in human society and it affects on individual human unconscious dangerously. Different ideologies, in this sense, function in human society and manufacture different kinds of identity at the same time which affects individual unconscious internally as well as in other forms.

Many theorists have analyzed the concept of ideology and identity formation in different perspective. The function of ideology and its effect on individual unconscious have discussed widely in their theories. Ideology and identity formation in terms of state, gender, caste, subaltern, and politics are analyzed by various Marxist, feminist and Gender theorists as well.

State and its ideological apparatuses are the main organs which determine the identity of different group in society and function accordingly. In this respect, Louis Althusser in his essay “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” defines state and its ideological apparatuses in strict Marxist tradition. Althusser asserts:

The State is explicitly conceived as repressive apparatus. The state is a ‘machine’ of repression which enables the ruling classes to ensure their domination over the working class. The state is thus what the Marxist classics have called *the state apparatus*. (Althusser, 1999:106)

This very term ‘The state apparatus’ means not only the states specialized apparatuses whose existence and necessity are recognized in relation to the requirements of legal practices i.e. the police, the court, the prison but also the army, which intervenes directly as supplementary repressive force in the last instance, which the police and its specialized auxiliary corps are ‘outrun by events’, and above this ensemble, the head of state, the government and the administration.

The state apparatus, which defines the state as a force of repressive execution of intervention in the interests of the ruling class in the class struggle conducted by the bourgeoisie and its allies against the proletariat, quite certainly the state, and quite certainly define its basic ‘function’. The state is, quite certainly, ruled by those who is in power and functions by executing different ideological apparatus as legal institution to its citizen.

Althusser further asserts, “The state has no meaning except as function of *state power*” (109). As claimed by Marxist theorist the state is the repressive state apparatus and by these apparatuses they gain power and rule their citizens. In this condition, the opposing force always raise their voice against ruling bodies .On the one hand, the objective of the class struggle concerns state power and in consequence of the use of the state apparatus by the classes holding state power as a function of their basic objective, on the other hand, the ruled class or proletariat try to seize state power in order to destroy the existing bourgeoisie state apparatus, then in later phase set in a motion a radical process, that of the destruction on the state i.e. the end of state power, the end of every state apparatuses.

Every state apparatus,whether repressive or ideological ‘functions’ both by violence and by ideology. No class can hold state power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and it the State Ideological Apparatus. In this way, in every society and in state, the powerful and powerless classes always remain conflicting for state’s power and their domination and hegemony over each other for their identity. The conflicting forces always remain working in the mechanism of the society and state.

State and Ideology are complimentary, as Marxists believe, and the very relationship between them is inseparable. The expression of ‘ideology’ was invented by` Cabanis, Destutt de Tracy and their friends who assigned to it as object the (genetic) theory of ideas. For Marx, “Ideology is a system of ideas and representation which dominate the mind of a man or a social group” (120). In other words, ideology reflects the social group and their identity that they are dominated by particular mode of ideas or concepts. The project of a theory of ideology in general whatever their form (religious, ethnical, legal, political) always express their class positions. In *The*

German Ideology, ideology is thought as an imaginary construction whose status is exactly, like the theoretical status of the dream that can be changed, subverted or imaginatively constructed and applied in particular mode of system. In this context, Marx says, “Ideology is an imaginary assemblage (bricolage), a pure dream, empty and vain, constituted by the ‘days’ ‘residues’ from the only fall and producing their existence” (122). In this sense, ideology is a representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence.

In ideology, to sum up, men represent their real conditions of existence to themselves in an imaginary form. Ideology therefore is not the system of the real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of those individuals to the real relations in which they live. Man, in this sense, is an ideological animal by nature.

Obviously, ideology ‘acts’ or ‘functions’ in such a way that it ‘recruits’ subjects among the ‘individuals’ (it recruits them all), or ‘transforms’ the individuals into subject (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which is called *interpellation* or hailing and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police or other.

Marx conceived that every social formation arises from a dominant mode of production. The structure of every society as constituted by ‘levels’ or ‘instances’ articulated by a specific determinants: the *infrastructure* or economic base and the *superstructure*, which itself contains two ‘levels’ or ‘instances’: the political – legal (law and state) and ideology (the different ideologies, religious, ethical, legal, political etc.)

By the same token, Michele Barrett in the essay “Ideology, Politics, and Hegemony: from Gramsci to Laclau and Moufle” reads the reciprocal relations among

the concept of ideology, politics and hegemony. He forwards Gramsci's concept of 'hegemony' which is the organizing focuses of Gramsci's thought on politics and ideology, and his distinctive usage has rendered it the hallmark of Gramscian approach in general. Hegemony is best understood as *the organization of consent* – the process through which subordinated forms of consciousness are constructed without recourse to violence or coercion.

Gramsci's interest in relation between the state and civil society leads directly to his work on what has been called socially 'cementing' functions of ideology and the ways in which consent is secured at a non-violent level. The ruling block, according to Gramsci, operates not only in the political sphere but throughout the whole of society.

Barret further discusses the unsatisfactory term such as 'New Social Movements' that groups together struggles as diverse as 'urban, ecological, anti-authoritarian, anti-institutional, feminist, anti-racist, ethnic, regional or that of sexual minorities'. These groups are the articulation of antagonism in a wide range of sites beyond the rational practices in which class conflict has been situated by Marxism to consumptions, services and habitant as terrains for these new conflicts. Such anti-forces have brought the 'logic of equivalence' as we have moved from a social order in which subjects are differentially, but fatefully, positioned, to a social order in which the democratic project can articulate itself in a literal discourse which takes those differential positions as an objects of struggle. So, the democratic revolution brings about a logic of equivalence, a logic of comparison of subjects that are, essentially, construed as equals, through its new discourse of 'rights', 'liberty', and 'equality'.

While discussing ideology and its effects on individuals, Slavoj Žižek in his essay "How Did Marx Invent the Symptom?" argues, "ideology is not simply 'a false

consciousness' or 'an illusory representation of reality rather it is a social reality whose very existence implies the non-knowledge of its participants as to its essence- that is, the social affectivity, the very reproduction of which implies that the individuals 'do not know what they are doing'. Ideological is not the 'false consciousness' of a 'social' being but this being itself in so far as it is supported by 'false consciousness' (305). Thus, we have finally reached the dimension of the symptom and the subject can 'enjoy his symptom' only in so far as its logic escapes him – the measure of the success of its interpretation is precisely its dissolution.

Žižek further views ideology as a cynicism forwarding the very elementary definition from Marx: '*Sie Wissen das nicht, aber tun es*' – they do not know it but they are doing it. This very concept of ideology implies a kind of basic, constitutive variety. The misrecognition of its own presupposition of its own effective condition, a distance, a divergence between so-called social reality and our distorted representation, our false consciousness of it.

If ideology is as a cynical then question may arise – does the concept of ideology as a naive consciousness still apply to today's world? Is it still operating today, then how does it affect to individuals? Peter Sloterdijk in *The Critique of Cynical Reason*, a great bestseller in Germany, puts forwards the thesis that ideology's dominant mode of functioning is Cynical which renders impossible or, more, precisely, vain – the classical critical ideological procedure.

The Cynical subject is quite aware of the distance between the ideological mask and the social reality. "They know very well what they are doing but still, they are doing it" (309). One knows the falsehood very well, one is well aware of particular interest hidden behind and ideological universality, but still one does not renounce it.

In other words, Cynicism is the answer of the ruling cultures to this Cynical subversion; it recognizes, it takes into account, the particular interest behind the ideological universality, the distance between the ideological mask and the reality, but it still finds reason to retain the mask.

Žižek further states, “Ideological illusion lies in the knowing” (314). It is a matter of discordance between what people are affectively doing and what they think they are doing. Ideology consists in the very fact that people do not know what they really doing: that they have a false representation of the social reality to which they belong, i.e., the distortion produced, of course, by the same realities.

As Marx says, “They do not know it, but they are doing it” (320). The illusion is not the side of knowledge, it is already on the side of reality itself, of what people are doing. What they do not know is that their social reality itself, their activity, is guided by an illusion, by a fetishistic inversion. What they overlook, what they misrecognize is not the reality but illusion which is structuring their reality, their real social activity. They know very well how things really are, but still they are doing it as if they didn’t know. The illusion is double: it consists in overlooking the illusion which is structure in our real, effective relationship to reality. And this overlooked, unconscious illusion is what may be called *Ideological Fantasy*.

An ideology, to sum up, is really ‘holding us’ only when we do not feel any opposition between it and reality –what is, when the ideology succeeds in determining the mode of our everyday experience of reality itself. An ideology really succeeds when even the facts which at first sight contradict it start to function as argument in its favour.

As ideology manufactures identities, the identities such as social and national identities, gender and subaltern have emerged and have analyzed variously. In this

respect Johann Gottlieb Herder, known as the first theorist of nationalist, in his essay “Header on social and Political Culture”, argues that a nation is constituted through its language and culture. He emphasizes the significance of the practices, customs and ritual of everyday life, and of the stories, folk beliefs and myths in terms of which people make sense of their lives. In the same essay, he further argues:

The most fundamental constituent of a culture was the language in which these stories, beliefs, and myths find expression. Language and culture were not merely aspects of social environment within which people made their lives, they were constitutive of their very identity.

(Herder, 1969:229)

Obviously, social as well as national identities affect not only external elements of one’s life in a social world but one’s interior life as well, in relation to pattern of effect, belief, desire and experience. The basic framework is provided by the language and cultural symbols in terms of which we become aware of ourselves and other language provides the taken for granted and inescapable framework within which we think, experience, imagine and dream. It provides us with a primary form of self-and other- consciousness.

Another aspect of the strength of a national identity lies in the richness of the cultural resources which are employed in forming the conception of national community. This identity provides us with a land in which we are at home, a history which is ours, and a privileged access to a vast heritage of culture and creativity. It not only provides us with the means to understand this heritage, it also assures us that it is ours. Like other identity, a national identity provides us with a specific moral agenda.

Herder further views we begin to acquire our national identity literally on our mother’s knee. We discover our nation – as we discover ourselves – in the bed time

stories we are told, the songs which put us to sleep, the games we play as children, the heroes we are thought to admire and the enemies we come to fear and detest. Our national identity comes to us in the language in which we learn to articulate our most primitive demands.

Likewise, the resources which are necessary to understand national identity are those provided by the language, history, literature, music and other cultural traditions which form the national narrative. In this sense, the citizen's relationship with the state – the nation state – is constituted by his or her national identity. It is this which provides the commitment, both to one's fellow citizen and to the political institutions, necessary for public life. It also provides the motivation for some level of participation.

As far as the gender identity is concerned, many feminists, psychoanalysts and other critics have analyzed it broadly. The debate on issue of gender and its construction has become a hot issue till now. In this respect both Simon de Beauvoir and Judith Butler argue biology is insufficient to explain the vast expanse of attributes to which we have given gendered meanings and association. In her essay "The Second Sex" de Beauvoir argues, "It is not upon physiology that values can be based; rather, the both of biology take on the values that existent bestows upon them" (36).

They claim that women are made, not born, and thus they can be remade as the meaning of femininity change and mutable through historical disruption. And it this is true of gendered identity. So much the more so for all of those identities with even less of a connection to any significant biological feature. Juliet Mitchell's *Psycho-analysis and feminism* (1974), sought not only to show that gender is constructed rather than biologically necessitated but to identify those gendered

subject. He further argues to offer feminist a way to describe a psychological and cultural ground of shared gender identification.

Elaborating on Lacanian theory but making significant departures from its presumptions of universal patriarchy, Luce Irigaray maintains that the very construct of an autonomous subject is a masculine cultural prerogative from which women have been excluded. She further claims that the subject is always already masculine that it bespeaks a refusal of dependency required of male acculturation, understood originally as dependency on mother, and that its “autonomy” is funded on a repression of its early and true helplessness, needs, sexual desires for the mother, even identification with the maternal body.

Indeed, most psychoanalytic feminist theories maintain that gender is constructed, and they view themselves (and Freud) as debunking the claims of essential femininity or essential masculinity. Indeed, this seems to be the case when we consider Freud’s claim, for instance, in *The Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, that heterosexuality is not a given of biological life but a development accomplishment, his theory of primary bisexuality, and his further claim in *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* that to become a woman is a laborious construction which takes the repression of primary bisexuality as its premise.

In the same way, the identity formation in terms of subalternity analyzes different aspects of marginalized groups in the field of literature. The term ‘Subaltern’ as Ranjit Guha announces in the editorial of *SS I* (1982), “ will be used in these pages as a name for the general attribute of subordination in South Asian Society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender, and office or in any other way” (vii) . He includes rural gentry, impoverished landlords, rich peasants and upper-middle peasants into the category of subaltern classes. He, however, admits that they

“could under certain circumstances activities for the elite” (8). He declares that SS will study “the history, politics, economics and sociology of subalternity - - - “in short, the culture informing that condition” (vii). Subaltern studies’ commitment to history and culture is rather conspicuous. As the elite historiography is generally regarded as “official history” by sidelining the people’s history, SS has committed itself “to rectify the elitist bias characteristic of much research and academic work in this particular area” (vii).

In the same manner, the SS deals with the issues like subaltern consciousness, and effect of colonization on subaltern people. Both SS and postcolonial writing try to represent suppressed and marginalized groups, postcolonial literary writings deal with the issues like Diasporas, cultural encounter, hybridity involved with the third world people. Thus, the culture of the indigenous people emerges to be a point of convergence for subalternity and postcolonial literature. With the help of the technique like magical realism, the postcolonial literature tries to demonstrate various aspects of the indigenous culture disrupted by colonialism and its aftermath.

When SSG emerged in India in 1982, it was set to undertake empirical study on various aspects of subaltern people irrespective of caste, gender, colour, profession, space and class. The women issues, however, had not drawn much attention until the publication of *SS IV* with the inclusion of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in *SS V*, entered a new domain – feminism. As she points out that as a discourse to speak on behalf of marginalized groups, SS is indifference to the subjectivity, not to mention the indispensable presence of the women as the crucial instrument. Spivak, therefore, thinks that “woman is the neglected syntagm of the semiosis of subalternity of insurgency” (359). In this issue, she not only translated Mahasweta Devi’s ‘Stanadayini’ (Breast Giver), but also wrote a commentary on it. In her witty commentary “A Literary Representation of the Subaltern: Mahasweta Devi’s

‘Stanadayini’”, She argues how women are denied their subjectivity, their voice. Whether the woman is looked ‘from above’ merely as a sexual object make’s desire. The hegemonic males refuse to perceive women what they desire the latter to be, she says the gaze ‘from below is only the model strategy to dissimulate the oppression inflict on his female counterpart through his gaze ‘from above’. In this text, thus, she has depicted how women are subalternized in colonialist and patriarchal society. Literature has become a point of departure for feminist agenda at the hand of Spivak.

In 1988, Spivak published her widely discussed essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” which proved to be a watershed in the history of the feminist mode she had rendered to *SS IV* and *SS V*. This work makes a remarkable discussion on the problem involved with representation. She argues that subaltern people can not speak themselves. Instead, they have got to be represented. There can be no unrepresentable subaltern group. The problem with representation, however, is that the subalterns’ voice gets overshadowed by that every investigator’s voice. There is very chance that the knowing subject will erase the voice of the ignorant subject. The elite intellectual can represent the subaltern voice filtered through an elitist perspective. So, there are, obviously, the chances of misrepresentation.

Spivak further says “there is no space from which the sexed subaltern subject can speak” (103). “Between Patriarchy and imperialism, subject constitution and object formation; in Spivak words, “The figure of women disappears.....” (102). She analyzes the problem of the category of the subaltern by examining the position of gendered subjects. She comes up with an interesting conclusion that both as an object of colonialist construction of gender keep the male dominant”00(82). Such an ideological reinforcement of male power, in Spivak’s view, happens because of “in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, subaltern female is even more deeply in shadow” (83). In other words, colonialism appears to be hazardous to females than to males of the colonized space. She claims

that the woman is doubly subalternized in the colonized patriarchal space and the subaltern woman will be as mute as ever.

Obviously, the strategy of presenting the woman as subaltern clarifies her position in the imperial as well as patriarchal society where woman's voices and deeds always remain unheard. So, her position appears to reflect the meaning of the subaltern at best. This is one of the reasons why the women issues are so widely discussed in SS.

Chapter – III

Textual Analysis

The popular novel *Palpasa Café* by Narayan Wagle was widely acclaimed for its portrayal of contemporary Nepali society which was in the very critical situation caught in the vice of war because of the ten years ongoing Maoist insurgency called people's war against the state and the aftermath of royal massacre in 1 June, 2001 which had affected public very dangerously in the different aspects of their lives.

In this novel, different ideologies and identities are merged in such ways that have intensified the war into its climax and none had an idea how the war was going to end. Different conflicting ideologies and identities were in the battlefield. The Maoist insurgency against the state was basically for the state's old ideological structure and its regressive tendency in terms of development and the different aspects of the society. The traditional superstructures of state was no more functioning as the demand of time and as per the interest of the public, for this reason, the need of new ideology and the replacement of whole superstructure of state were inevitable. Maoist wanted to replace and change the old ideological structure of the society with the new one as per the interest of the public and demand of time. In such a situation the ongoing conflict between opposing sides affected common people's lives very dangerously. The conflict between different ideology and identity of the common villagers and rich city people in terms of their living standard, concepts and believes on state, developments have been widely discussed. There was a vast gap between poor villagers and the people who were in the position of policy makers of the state.

Likewise, the treatment of gender, caste, underprivileged group and their status in Nepali society is another hot issue in the novel. The suppression by state and the Maoists concurrent state in many areas had affected the living of common people. The political turmoil situation had affected people's lives negatively and it had

attracted interest of foreigners and many international organizations as well. These various conflicting aspects in terms of ideology and identity are the main focus in this analysis.

Just after the aftermath of royal massacre in June 1, 2001, Siddhartha, now a guerrilla, the schoolmate of Drishya, comes to Kathmandu to seek shelter in Drishya's room in the night. While entering into Drishya's room, Siddhartha suddenly stops by a sketch hanging on the living room wall of bomb- blasting school where they had studied in their village. Pointing and describing the situation of sketch, Drishya says:

“This picture speaks to me about the state of our country. Whenever I look at this picture, I'm reminded of the way things are in our country these days.” "Yes, Siddhartha said at last, 'I'm sorry, I understand I'm partly to blame but, still, ultimate blame rests with the old power centre.'” (76)

In this very first conversation, the conflicting ideas in both Drishya and Siddhartha reveal the real situation of the country. As an artist Drishya portrays the picture of a bomb-blasted school, injured and killed students in encounter. But his under grounded guerrilla friend Siddhartha blames to the state for this because of state's' old power centre, though he is himself partly to blame. Because of their different ideology on state and identity, they observe the same event differently, Drishya views the event surfacely whereas Siddhartha views it critically from new perspective. As Drishya is guided by states old ideology and Siddhartha with new ideology, their concepts oppose each other.

In Drishya's house, the two argue over whether the goals of revolution justify the means:

“Consider the purpose”, Siddhartha said, “Destruction in order to create”

“Isn’t it possible to create without destroying?”

The important question is” what’s being destroyed? To cure this diseased country its fundamental structure must be changed. And that’s what we are doing.” he said.

“But people are being killed.”

“Most of the people who are being killed are representative of the old power elite [. . .]. People don’t need peace, he said, they need justice.

The people are tired of having lives of despair and the façade of ‘peace’ [. . .]. We should ask for a just country”. (82)

Here, Drishya opposes to Siddhartha. He represents the old ideology of state. Siddhartha, on the other hand, represents the new ideology of people’s war. He tries to clarify the ultimate goal of people’s war to create new by destroying the old structure of the state. He claims for just country rather than the facade of peace imposed by the old power centre. For the peace and prosperity of the people, the old structure and ideology of the state must be changed and replaced by new one as per interest and desire of the common people .If there is just society there will be peace forever.

The state is always ruled by powerful people who have approach to politics and every organ of state is controlled by them. For Siddhartha, this is the conflict of power holder and those who are powerless that state never tried to listen them. State always suppressed the voice of powerless which made powerless to take-up arms which give power to powerless. The society is torn apart because of the old ideology of state and its suppression and domination over the voice of powerless people. They reveal the conflicting ideology and identity on the issue of revolution.

Siddhartha compares the situation of the country to the situation in the royal palace. Clarifying his vision on an individual and institution to Drishya, he further argues:

“You see your school as a symbol of the state of the nation. But I see the royal palace as its true reflection. What happened in the palace mirrors the current crisis. Every house in our country is falling into ruins, every family’s being torn apart [. . .]. You are talking about an individual. I’m talking about an institution.” (83)

For Siddhartha, the situation that is being devastating day by day is only because of the old structure of the state which is no more functioning. He views the conflict within the royal family is a reflection of the situation in the whole country. The prince, for Siddhartha, was left to rot within the four walls of the palace with nothing but drugs, alcohol, and guns to occupy him. The king didn’t have time to give enough attention. The state, in the same way, is being failure to give basic needs of common people. There is no individual freedom and every institution like royal palace is being careless to their duty for public. In such a situation revolution is obvious. Siddhartha hopes for freedom, justice and equality in society from people’s war.

Siddhartha and Drishya reflect the two different ideology and identity within the same world. The situation that the country is facing differs to them because of the principle and ideology they are heading towards and they oppose each other. As a painter Drishya, for Siddhartha, cannot capture the vision, inner reality of things in terms of spatial and temporal dimension. As Siddhartha says, “You want to paint real characters but can’t accept that real people change and grow. You’re scared of their growth and you never thought about the changes taking place behind the façade” (82). Obviously, Drishya, here, represents the status quo, the representation of state whereas Siddhartha represents the progressive ideals, the representation of People's war for change in the society.

An ideology really determines an individual’s identity formation. As an artist Drishya doesn’t see any colors of politics in his paintings. For him, paintings aren’t meant to change society and he uses colors to express beauty. He blames Siddhartha,

“becoming a knife that’s cutting ordinary Nepalis. You’re responsible sowing only bitterness” (85). But for Siddhartha, “Beauty lies in the bitter truth of life and art should have colour for the change of society”(85). As a guerrilla, Siddhartha views art should portray the society and its inner reality for change and newness which represent the mass. Both of them are guided by their identity, ideology profession and accordingly interpret their worlds. Because of the different ideologies, their interpretations conflict. Drishya gives more importance to aesthetic aspects of art whereas Siddhartha interprets from social perspective.

Siddhartha takes Drishya to the hill to view the real beauty of the country that is in the control of Maoists where Siddhartha makes people conscious about their condition and about the ideology of bourgeoisie culture. For change, he takes many young boys and girls in this movement. While convincing to an old man to involve his daughter in the revolution, he argues that they are fighting for poor people, for common villagers like him. He further argues:

There is no electricity in your house, no telephone, no television. You don’t have roads or a market in which to sell your oranges. How long should we look up from the ground at planes flying overhead carrying the rich?

“But it’s all according to God’s wish. We were born and raised in these hills. How could we, who till the land, know anything else”, the old man said. (88)

These lines reflect the real condition of the village where more than 85% people live. They are living in scarcity, they can’t fulfill even their basic needs. There is no sufficient infrastructure for development. They are uneducated and unconscious about change and outer world. Until and unless the power and approach of the state remains in the grip of rich or bourgeoisie who fly high in the planes, the situation of the poor people remains same as before. There is wide gap between village and power centered

city area. That reflects the poor living standard of common villagers who are deprived from the development. They are unconscious about state and its mechanism. For Siddhartha, the people of village are beyond the approach of development and guided by traditional beliefs and culture. They have been justifying the misdeeds of the rich people in the name of God. They are committing biggest mistake in the name of God.

Siddhartha totally opposes the ideology of the state and bourgeoisie culture.

He further claims:

The rich, the powerful, the exploiters and the bourgeoisie have everything. They can afford any health treatment they choose, all the education they want and any entertainment they like [. . .]. We'll never get anywhere till state power rests in the hands of the people. Your daughter had to leave schools while the children of the high and mighty are studying in America (89).

In fact, these lines describe the bourgeoisie culture which has covered every structure of state for rich, exploiters, and powerful people. Every important organ of the state is controlled by rich people and it functions as state apparatus to control over the poor common people. They hijack the development of the country. America has become the symbol of bourgeoisie culture.

It is necessary to subvert the bourgeoisie culture for the equal distribution of means of production and for the approach of proletariat to the every organs of the state. The unequal distribution of education, health system and development should be ended. As long as the rich keep running the country, generation will continue to live like this in the hill. It is necessary to subvert this situation for new and changed structure of the state. Only then poor or common people can uplift their life.

Siddhartha wants to get join the village girls and boys to militia for the change that can be brought by people's war. He convinces parents to send their children to help their mission of new Nepal. Many young children join to Maoist revolution.

Listening Siddhartha's revolutionary ideas, one girl becomes ready to join to this movement. While returning home with basket of orange the girl argues:

How long do we have to keep carrying these baskets? Our mothers did the same thing. Our sisters-in-law still do it. Those brothers are telling truth! [. . .]. If we'd studied in boarding schools, we could've learned something. We wouldn't have to spend our lives picking oranges, cutting grass, and looking after the mustard fields! Our lives are wasted. If we take part in their struggles, at least our younger sisters and brothers might be able to get a proper education. (92)

As the common people become conscious about their real condition, they raise their voice against suppression and domination against the dominant group in society. They raise voice for their basic rights and all kinds of inequality. She realizes the tragic situation of Nepali woman in the village. There is the sense of protest in her voice. Despite her father's permission, she wants to join to people's war. There is a vast gap between the living of people of city and rural area. This situation reflects the inequality and discrimination in education, health system and other services between village and city people of the state.

Siddhartha further argues, "That if we don't take part in the struggle, Kathmandu will never take notice of us. Nothing will change if we go on suffering silently and don't try to make our voice heard." (93) Kathmandu represents the bourgeoisie culture and symbol of state's repressive apparatus. Everything is centralized here giving the slogans of decentralization over the common people. They want to reach in Kathmandu and want to get heard their suppressed voice, which is beyond the notice of the state. The dissatisfaction towards the state is revealed in his voice. The very gap between city and village should be maintained properly for the equality and prosperity of the common people.

The conflict between the state's traditional ideology and Maoists new ideology reveal the failure of state to provide unalienable rights for peace, freedom and equality. Siddhartha chooses the path of revolution for permanence peace. He remarks to Drishya, "You are talking about temporary, artificial thing. You need permanent peace for everyone to be safe. And for permanent peace, the state must negotiate with the people" (160). Siddhartha takes help of arms for power and involves his life into war. As he gets power, the ultimate goals would be for establishment of permanent peace that can be brought by the power of arms as well which is the ultimate goal of people's war. For peaceful and new Nepal, the state must negotiate with the people for reconciliation.

As a war literature, this novel reflects the effort of society to understand different conflicting identities and concept on people's war in the name of an ideology, change, transformation of society and its effect on individual and society as a whole. Standing between the suppress of the state over the people and people's war as a counter- insurgency, protagonist Drishya has analyzed the vivid picture of the hills that he happened to experience in his home village with Siddhartha.

The turmoil situation of the country has affected many people directly and indirectly. In the very beginning of the novel the author as a journalist depicts the exact situation of the country that:

Nothing new here. Everything it is the same. Tomorrow's paper will be same as this morning's. The same stories of army petrol being ambushed, suspected spy executed by Maoists, a bomb going off somewhere. We are just chronicles of carnage. (6)

The situation of the country was being critical and there was frustration in the lives of the people .Everyday the same events, news, reports were being reported. A district reporter reports, "Seven children died after temperature dropped to a record low due to heavy snow in the western part of the districts" (6). The case of abduction was

being increased and there was no security and there was fear in the mass. Drishya, like many others was abducted without any reason by five men from his art gallery without giving their introduction and warrant for his arrest. The politics, in such a situation in the country had no any fixed direction and it had increased the uncertainty on the whole mass.

The turmoil political situation has affected directly or indirectly the lives of common people. There are atrocities, execution, disappearances and people caught in the crossfire that we read about everyday in the newspapers. Siddhartha made Drishya to travel his home village where he finds his village torn apart by war. His home village has become a model for people's war where he finds different kinds of trauma prevalent in mass. While meeting with his Lahure uncle, his uncle says this war as "People of the New Power", and says, "They say under this system the country will be transformed" (116). He finds many young boys and girls involved in the people's war. There are no security forces functioning anymore in the villages as well as in district HQs. He spends one night in district Headquarters where there is the attack on all government offices by Maoists. Everyone seemed fearful and insecure. Such an attack might be taken place in anytime. When he prepares to leave the lodge, the female lodge-owner says, "I don't want to do any business today, stay another day, we don't charge you anything" (135). She further pleads, "They might attack again. We'd feel safer if you stayed" (136). This very expression of woman shows the actual situation of the common people. She feels insecure because of the lack of male member in the house. The effect of war has directly expressed by the common people.

The situation is more traumatic in the village. The conflict between Maoists and state has affected dangerously in the lives of common people. They have abducted and killed many innocent villagers without any specific reason. Drishya's meet Resham was killed a month before. His miit-Ba and mitini-Mother have lost senses after losing their son and are living a senseless life. Drishya could not talk to

them and returns desperately. In Harilal Damai's house he takes shelter and knows more about the tragic situation of the village. In the meantime, some police come there for enquiry and give threaten to Harilal with abusive words.

The suppression by state through police force has affected many common people negatively. The husband of tea-shop lady's has been killed unknowingly. There, someone says, "They took him to the cleft over there and shot him. It said on the radio that he was a terrorist. Her husband died a senseless death" (151). Even the medias were controlled by state's force. There was threat from both sides to the common villagers. They had to suffer without any specific reason. They were victimized dangerously.

After observing the whole situation of the village, Drishya almost loses his senses. He heads towards feeling weary as the thought of perhaps not finding shelter for a second night in a row. He faces identity crisis within himself and asks "who was I? No one here believed I was neutral. I'd become stranger in my own home district. My identity was linked to my profession but who'd respect my profession here?"(152). He is disillusioned and imagines himself having gun in his hands as guerrilla. In another tea-shop, the shopkeeper says, "what a strange man. He laughs alone. He must have lost his mind." (155)

Actually, he is totally affected by the traumatic situation of the village caused by the war. This situation has affected individuals unconscious very dangerously. This very condition of Drishya reflects the condition of victimized people from both sides.

The situation of the country has affected many foreigners as well. Christina, a foreign journalist, writes in her mail to Drishya, "Nepal's my first international war reporting assignment" (27). Not only Christina, many other journalists, international organizations were observing the situation of the Nepal. It has attracted many foreigners on Nepal's inter-war situation.

The traumatic situation of war has directly affected the living of the youths, too. They want to fly aboard in any cost. Kishor is one of them who says:

But they rejected my application anyway what they told me was, with so many problem in your country, why would you want to come back?

Many Nepali's have applied in political asylum in Europe. (205)

Because of the turmoil political situation of the country, most of the youths were flying to abroad for the work and education. They just wanted to go abroad anyway to avoid the turmoil and uncertain situation of the country. It was certain that they wouldn't return Nepal again and embassies were rejecting their application. The application for 'political asylum for Europe' also reflects the situation of the state. The reality is that, "there are few houses in Kathmandu without at least one family member in America. And my family will think I'm a failure if I can't get visa" (206). To get visa for most of the youths like Kishor is linked with their success and failure. This situation reflects the brain drain tendency of most of the underdeveloped countries that they fly aboard for better education and income sources.

While returning from the hill to Kathmandu, Drishya crosses the river by a boat. In the mean time, the boat man strained against the current says, "it's so sad to see war in our country. It's terrible to see our own people die. Don't you think so, Bhai?" (69). He fears that:

I don't have clue who are you. I say one thing; you might take out a gun and shot me. If I say something else, you might still take out gun.

(170)

The situation is very terrible. There is no more belief and faith to each other. The boatman suspects who actually Drishya is. He is worried. He is doing his job for Drishya but he is the cause to feel nervous, uneasy to others. Still rearing the boat the boatman says, "This boat's may livelihood. I feed my wife and children by roaring it. But I fear this boat might get me killed and pitiless" (171). The common people are

suppressed and unable to express freely what they want to know. The state is unable to give security to the public. They are compelled to do their job in the risk that might occur in any moment. That has affected badly to them all the time.

The situation is same in the hill that Palpasa visited for her documentary. While returning to Kathmandu, coincidentally, she meets Drishya on the same night bus. Observing the verdict of the people's court in the hill, she explains:

They have made the villagers their prisoners! No one can go anywhere without their permission. It's simply dictatorship. It shows how they'd run the country if they ever come to power. And threat could only be achieved at the power of a gun, not with the support of the people. (184)

This people's court and the government have seized the freedom. She explains that they are so fearful that even they can't talk to new people. She also happened to face many problems and couldn't remain long time for her documentary.

In the sameway, Drishya prepares to portray the canvas titled "Old Woman Coming Down a Mountain" named Manmaya who was compelled to leave her home because of the verdict of people's court. On the way, she replies to the journalist:

At least they did not sentence me to death! I won't lie to you son. My daughter -in-law realized she'd been wrong and asked them to change the verdict. But, finally, I left of my own volition. I was too scared to say who isn't scared of them. (224)

In society, the tension between in-laws is a common problem in many households. Even such a problem has created the situation to leave their home village in the absent of male member in the family. The verdict of people's court has affected the life of common people very dangerously. In such situation, state is beyond of approach of

those areas and Maoist rule their own concurrent government. Verdict of people's court has made to suffer more like the woman Manmaya.

After returning to Kathmandu, Drishya goes to Palpalsa's home to meet her grandmother where he doesn't want to look at Buddha's statue and doesn't want to chant 'Om Mani Padme Hum'. He believes that it brought no peace. His unconscious is diverted in such a way that he thinks, "Were the Buddha to be born today, even, he'd raise a gun" (189). He visions Buddha, the god of peace as a terrorist. These all are the result of imbalanced mind because of effect of war on individual from both sides, state and Maoist as well.

He further says to grandmother that in village the communication was impossible outside world that he had gone. He explains, "There the situation was terrible. All the communication towers had been destroyed. There was nothing but bombs and bullets everywhere "(190). This situation was created because of the ongoing war between Maoist and government that common people have to suffer and made their unconscious traumatic.

There was suppression everywhere by the state. The situation of the country was being critical. In this turmoil situation, there was voice of protest and dissatisfaction over the state and monarchy. Everyday the encounter between the police force and protest group was being increased. There was tension in every street in the valley. Police force had been mobilized everywhere with arms. There was suppression and people were facing many problems.

In every campus' gate, there were demonstration against the monarchy and suppression against police force of the state. In most of the cases, everyday, there was encounter between students and police force:

A loudspeaker had just announced the result of a mock referendum held by the students. Democracy had won by a landslide. Shortly after this announcement police had entered the campus, trampling over 'Democracy forever,' 'Long Live Nepal.' The students were demonstrating in protest. (7)

The condition of the campuses was fearful. The fundamental rights of people were seized. There was no more democracy. The constitution was in the hands of Monarchy. There was anarchy in the government and they had executed legal bodies as they liked. The abduction of people was being increased day by day by police force. The writer views that they had hijacked the constitution which made possible to kidnap Drishya without giving any warrant. As nothing corrupts as does power, the state executed its forces to suppress the protest in any cost ignoring the basic human rights of common people.

The condition of the valley was being worst after the royal massacre. There was no truth, rather the truth was hidden. The real cause of massacre was beyond the approach. People were showing their dissatisfaction. To suppress this, there was curfew which had made the situation more worst and difficult:

None of the shops were open. I leaned on a tree trying to listen to a distant radio. A curfew had been imposed. Security personnel began ordering the crowds to clear the streets. Near Ratna Park, riot police resorted to baton charges. The crowd dispersed, leaving slippers and shoes scattered on the street. (73)

The situation was exact like this. There was no more peace in the country and people were voicing about the facts of royal massacre. They were victimized from the regular

curfew and strike in the valley. Even the media were controlled by the government and there was no more truth on newspapers.

The abduction of common people was increased day by day. Nepal was one of the countries that the rate of abduction was highest in the world. From both sides the case of abduction was increased. Drishya himself faces the case of abduction. When he knows that he is being abducted by five men of police force, he tries to convince them:

Listen, Amnesty International has placed Nepal at the top of the list of countries with the highest rates of civilian disappearance. All the human rights groups are keeping an eye on Nepal. (227)

No one could tell how and where they might be disappeared. The enquiry by the police force in civilian's houses used to be in any moment either in day or even in night. The situation was fearful.

The most tragic situation that Drishya faces in the hill was the death of Siddhartha. He was captured by policemen already. On the way, he saw Siddhartha reach up to pick an orange on mustard field. Excitedly, he cried pointing toward him, "look! Siddhartha! By then, the men had caught up with Siddhartha. He was completely surrounded. I heard three shots and he fell" (166). Such event was common by the state's force and this had increased the rate of disappearance people day by day. The condition of insecurity was prevalent everywhere.

If we look the novel from the perspective of gender, we can find the woman's role as subsidiary. The first person male narrative breaks loose at some places. The protagonist is inconsistent. The portrayal of the women character is insensitively handled. There are many instances that the protagonist Drishya is, certainly, guided by the traditional patriarchal male ideology.

In their first meeting in Goa, Drishya portrays Palpasa as an erotic figure:

Like an obedient student, she sat on the chair she'd earlier wanted to take. 'Namaste', she said, pressing her palms together. I reached over and shook her soft hand. She was biting her lips; I could tell she was nervous. The shadow her body cast against the wall moved rhythmically with the music tempting and erotic." (17)

In their first meeting it becomes clear that Drishya only cares her physicality her figure as "tempting" and 'erotic'. Is she only limited to physical attraction? What is about other aspects of her personality? He is guided by male ideology and just wants to flirt her for entertainments, to pass time. Her other aspects are not the subject of interest for him and just takes interest on physicality.

While presenting Palpasa and Christina, the author seems stereotype and there he bungles. While chatting with a sixteen years old unknown girl, Drishya directly asks, "Are you virgin?" (41). But later it becomes clear that it was Tshering who was kidding him changing his email address. Even in such situation, he shows his male ideology directly to an unknown.

In the same way, while returning Kathmandu from the hill, some Maoist guerilla captured him. On the way, he was guarded by a girl with gun. Even such a situation, he can't restrict himself expressing his male nature. He asks if she is married or not:

She said, "a long life without purpose is a waste of time.'

'And life becomes purposeful when you carry a gun?'

'It's better than wearing bangles just to show I'm a slave to some man!'

I ventured, please don't be angry but

I...'

'Are you a virgin?'

At this, she took out her gun and pointed it straight at me. And I couldn't help myself! (165).

It becomes clear that wherever he is, even in such a dangerous situation he reveals his male ideology. Even in the mouth of death he doesn't hesitate to ask whether she is 'virgin' or not. He thinks only bangles look good on a woman's hand instead of gun. He is unable to assimilate the changed perspective on gender and limits woman as an useable thing for men. On the other hand, it shows the conflict between male and female ideology. The conscious level of female is improved more or less than before. The traditional role is neglected as slave of male partner.

Palpasa also reveals Drishya's dual nature in her letter before leaving Kathmandu. She can't know him. As she writes in his letter, "But you came into my life and destroyed my peace of mind, I wasn't able to resist you. You hijacked my will then left me alone to suffer [. . .]. I have to go far away from you to find peace. I want to be out of reach of you to find peace. I want to be out of reach of your lies and deception" (195). Clearly, this expression suggests that Drishya only attracted her but could not understand her feeling and sentiments. If he is in real love with her, he'd express everything on time. As Palpasa writes, "And why are you afraid of seeing the ripples created by the stone you throw into a still pond?" (193). It shows that the undeclared love on the side of Drishya made Palpasa to move another world. He is unable to understand Palpasa on time. Such a dual character of Drishya shows his biased male nature.

By the end of the novel we are confused if Drishya is really in love with Palpasa. He wanted to flirt with Palpasa and later does the same with Christina. He is

an artist and a poet in heart. Christina, an art lover, really appreciates him, but later, in their meeting in his art gallery, she comments about his male nature:

“Every time we meet, for example, you compliment me on the way I dress. Even today you did it,” She said.

“You think all women love to get accomplishments on their appearance.”

‘I’m an artist! I’m drawn to colours and texture.’

‘No you’re a male chauvinist. Your idea of what makes a woman happy comes from your sexist preconceptions. You’ve never tried to understand me.’ (199)

It becomes clear that though he is an artist and loves beauty of aesthetics but treats female as objects and loves for physical content, outer appearances. He flirts Palpasa as well as to Christina. He uses Christina as an object. He doesn’t respect woman as a human being. He only loves to play with emotion and sentiment of his girl friends. He fears with Christina, “I feared I might be influenced by her feelings” (216). He can’t believe his real manhood. At last, Christina declares, ‘I want you to be honest with me. You’re flirting with me while thinking about Palpasa. And I don’t like it!’ (217).

In this way, it becomes clear that Drishya is guided by male ideology and just flirts his girl friends. He cannot trust to women and just loves to play with woman as an object. These conflicting ideas are because of their different ideology and identity. He cannot expect female as human being even in the changed scenario of the society. It reveals his traditional male nature on female as object just to play for entertainment. Women characters thus are misrepresented.

Chapter –IV

Conclusion

An analytical study of the novel *Palpasa Café* suggests that the very ten years ongoing war as an insurgency of Maoist group known as People's War against the power centre of the state is basically because of the state's old ideological superstructure which was no more functioning in national life. Drishya represents the state's old ideology whereas Siddhartha represents the new ideology and sees the need of restructuring it. Because of the different opposing ideology and identity, their principle conflicts each other. So, the ongoing war was basically among the old and new ideology about the concept of nation, society, politics, freedom, peace, art. As far as the old structure of the state is failure, it is obvious to replace it by new one as per the demand of time and the interest of the mass.

The everyday news such as atrocities, executions, abductions landmines, and people caught in the crossfire were the common events where common people were victimized from both sides. There was suppression from the state and people were deprived from freedom on the one hand, and on the other, many villages were captured by Maoist and were ruled by their own people's court. In such a situation, lives of common people were affected vary badly. The situation was traumatic because of the conflict between the opposing forces. The individual tragedies and conflict inside the protagonist reflects the outer violent, conflict of Nepali society. There was the breach of basic human rights and this situation had attracted many foreigners and international organizations as well.

Palpasa Café also portrays the individual stories in many other aspects of Nepal e.g. Diaspora Nepalis, Gurkhas, Nepali foreigner relationship and internal migration for school and work. From the perspective of Nepali Subaltern people like

dalit, the book has shown its affection to that underprivileged group but failed to include the feelings of members of that community.

From the gender perspective, the book is male dominated. Female characters have been used only to convey the message of protagonist. They have not genuine position in the text. While presenting female characters, they are insensitively handled. The protagonist Drishya is totally guided by the traditional biased male ideology in the treatment of female characters.

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