

**Tribhuvan University**

**Dehumanization and Ideological Othering of Maoists in *The Kathmandu Post***

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## Abstract

This dissertation is about the representation of the Maoists in *The Kathmandu Post* during and after People's War which is the period of People's Movement-II as well. In course of representation, *The Kathmandu Post* holding the ideology of the then king Gyanendra and bourgeois class people treated Maoists as 'other' by taking it for granted that Maoists, who 'missed the way,' are 'terrorists' and 'anti-nationals.' *The Kathmandu Post* not only others the Maoists but also dehumanizes them denying their individual identity. *The Kathmandu Post* has worked as ideological state apparatus while representing the Maoists. This misrepresentation is due to the difference in ideology which is rooted in its bourgeois economic position. It has treated different political parties from different stand point which is unethical. With the support of wide range of theories concerning representation, ideology, and media ethics, the study proves that professional media houses always do not work as ideological state apparatus as believed by Althusser, rather they work according to their economic position and interest. *The Kathmandu Post*'s support to People's Movement-II undercuts the Althusserian notion of 'ideological state apparatus.'

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## **CHAPTER ONE: Political Representation and the Media**

### **Media, Its Scope and Impact**

In contemporary society media serves as a powerful socializing agent. As a medium to disseminate news and views about the world, it has been an integral part of society. Readers learn and internalize some of the values, beliefs and norms presented in media products. Media industries provide information and entertainment. Apart from this, media can also affect the political, social and cultural institutions as well.

Modern journalism feeds five departments of mass communication- newspapers and periodicals, radio, television, films, and advertising. Different versions of media like print media, video, television, radio and modern websites are serving people's right to inform and to be informed. Media accompany us in our day-to-day activities.

With the invention of first movable printing press by Johannes Gutenberg in 1450, print media has been influencing social lives. But, to be precise in Nepalese context, Nepali media started to develop since 1851AD when Junga Bahadur Rana brought 'Gidde Press' while returning from England.

After 'Gidde Press', 'Manoranjan Chhapakhana' was introduced in 1862AD which was a second crucial step in the development of Nepali print media. In 1873AD in the tenure of Bir Samsher Rana crucial development was made not only in the sector of print media but also in education system.

Though all these aforementioned press were used in the publication and dissemination of eulogy-texts of rana regime, their contribution on the further development of independent media cannot be neglected.

'*Sudha Sagar*' monthly was the first magazine ever in the history of Nepali journalism that was published in 1898AD. But, significant step was made in the history of Nepali journalism by establishing '*Gorkhapatra*' in 1901AD. From '*Gorkhapatra*' (Nepali daily) through '*The Commoner*' (first English daily), '*Everest News*,' '*Daily Mirror*,' '*The Motherland*,' '*Rising Nepal*' to '*The Kathmandu Post*' and '*The Himalayan Times*,' Nepali print media has been influencing the pattern of lives of Nepali.

Comparatively, though the reading habit of newspaper in Nepal is low, the growing influence of media in daily lives cannot be neglected. The thinking pattern, behavior, value system, morality and many other human activities are patterned by media. Some forms of mass media touches nearly each Nepali everyday economically, socially, culturally or politically.

Taking the reference of industry estimates Shirley Biagi in *Media Impact* writes: "the average adult spends more than half of his or her waking life with the media" (4). Likewise, he further claims, taking the reference of an anonymous researcher that "64 percent of all adult read a daily newspaper" (4) in America. From this data, we can make an easy speculation on how the scope and impact of media has expanded in modern world. As Nepal is also getting access to the means of modernity like television, films, magazines, daily-newspapers and other means of communication, its influence to pattern the lives of Nepalese cannot be underestimated.

Media do have both negative as well as positive impact upon the people. Since media industries are the business industries, they primarily focus on their economic interest and sometime publish gossips as truths which can have a negative influence upon people. Shirley Biagi in *Media Impact* cautions media persons while arguing:

But most reporters also know there are times when publishing can harm or ruin people's lives. Members of the press sometimes print gossip as truth, disregard the impact they have on people's lives, and are ready to believe the worst about people because the worst sells . . . we in the media have much to answer for. (327)

While the activities of the journalists and media houses are under question regarding news representation, they are primarily expected to serve the 'general welfare' and 'public interest' principally. Denis McQUAIL concentrating on social responsibility of media expresses that:

The media are widely expected to serve the 'general welfare' or 'public interest' whether by design or not. This means, in practice, that mass media are not the same as any other business or service industry, but often carry out some tasks which contribute to the wider and larger term benefit of society as a whole, especially in cultural and political matters, over and above their own ostensible organizational goals. (135)

Apart from economic interest of the institution, to inform people about social affairs is the first duty of journalism. Even International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) adopted a nine point declaration by the world congress of IFJ in



1954 as the code of conduct in which it primarily declared that “respect for truth and for the right of the public to truth is the first duty of journalists.” (Acharya 268)

Education and information are the pillars on which a free society rests. A free press is central not only to the public but also to the politicians. Thomas Jefferson acknowledges freedom of press as “that liberty which guards our other liberty” (Tuchman 27). But at the same time because of the privileged position of press outside and inside leaders have persistently urged it toward responsible behavior. Focusing on the possible misuse of press freedom Thomas Jefferson himself lamented “how much a noble enterprise could degrade itself by publishing slander and errors” (Tuchman 27). Joseph Pulitzer warned that without high ethical ideals newspapers would fail to serve the public and could even become dangerous.

### **Media and Politics**

Only when properly used, media acts as guards and pillars on which a free society can rest, but if the freedom of expression and views and news in media are instrumentalised for petty selfishness, it may lead society towards destruction. Media plays great role in politics of a nation. It can serve nation by making people aware about political happenings and making people politically aware. At the same time it can be influenced and used by the politicians for their interests. In this sense, Media and politics are interrelated bodies.

Moreover, the existence of one is dependent on the other. Yet, there is a constant struggle between two as well. Politicians wish media houses represent them according to their desire and try to make them their mouth piece. But,

contrary to this, newspapers do have their own ideology and interests. So they make their news in their own ways. But, neither political party can function without media nor media will be complete without political news, for which they should depend on parties.

Nowadays, general public favor reading newspapers to know the political happenings rather than involving the programs in public spheres. For this, politicians try to win favor of media houses. Media is highly important for the politicians and their success and failure is somehow dependent on the nature of their relations with media. We relate ourselves to the worlds of politics through media.

For example we base most of our knowledge of government on news accounts rather than experience. Not only are we dependent on the media, then, for what we know, but the Medias connection to politics also affects how we relate to the worlds of politics. Before media, political debates usually took place in the public forum where a crowd was physically present. Today, instead of attending the political events, we are more likely to read or watch the news of a political debate followed by instant analysis and commentary in the isolation of our home. (Fowler 80)

By acknowledging this fact politicians have started to influence media and take their favor for their success. Not only this, even journalists have found to be tilted to some political parties and politicians for their petty selfishness.

Based on the decade long personal experience regarding the relationship between media and politics, Shreeram Singh Basnet in *Dimensions of Journalism*

claims that journalists have misused the press freedom to manipulate power holders and fulfill some tiny selfishness. He even claims that the constitutional provision of press freedom is misused. Every interested group tried to open some media to manipulate some power holders and fulfill some tiny selfishness (266).

He further writes:

Though sphere of journalism is expanded, journalists are low-paid, poorly facilitated. Low paying and arbitrary hiring and firing of the journalists led them to be utilized by some elites for the vested news, which led to threat journalism or checkbook journalism or parachute journalism. News papers are always found to be sided to some political party. (266)

Media is not only related to politics, rather it has its own politics. As the larger media houses are related to mainstream position, their politics is to maintain the status quo by suppressing the counter voices – marginal voices.

The media as an industry conform to the general capitalist type, with factors of production (raw materials, technology and labor) and relations of production. They are likely to be in the monopolistic ownership of capital-owning class, and to be nationally or internationally organized to serve the interest of that class. They do so by materially exploiting workers (extracting surplus labor value) and consumers. (Making excess profits) Media ideologically by disseminating the ideas and world views of the ruling class, denying access to alternative ideas which might lead to change or to a growing consciousness on the part of the working class of its

interests, and by hindering the mobilization of such consciousness into active and organized political opposition. (Eagleton 76)

Media have significant role in both success and failure of any political party during the period of election. Shirley Biagi in *Media Impact* taking the reference from *The People's Choice* logics that “eight percent of the voters in the study were actually converted by media coverage...” (295)

Thus, this research proves that media can attract or distract the people to any political party. Media possesses power of attracting and directing public attention, structuring reality persuading in matters of opinion and beliefs. But, contrary to this, ruling political parties can impose strict state-approved policies and organized violence to control media.

Focusing on the relationship between media and politics in Nepalese nontext, Shreeram Singh Basnet in *Dimensions of Journalism* writes:

One decade long armed rebellion in the country emerged as a new kind of challenge to the Nepali press. The people involved in the movement threatened journalists to publish matters in their favor, not to publish any matter against them or to criticize their programs and policies. (266)

But Maoists voices were not accessible at that time since they were underground. Even after the twelve point understanding between mainstream political parties and the establishment of Maoists as the largest party of the state, by securing largest number of seats in the election of constituent assembly, the cold war between media and Maoists is continuing.

Maoist's chairman, Prachanda, in his public speech in open theatre (tundikhel) blamed Kantipur publication for creating propaganda against Maoists to suppress their movement and the subalterns' desire for freedom, justice and equality. He suggested media persons avoid such propagandist act. From this also we can claim that there is interdependent relation between media and politics.

### **Maoists, People's War and Media Representation**

Established as one of the largest parties of Nepal, CPN (Maoists), is the party basically assisted and supported by the proletariats and subalterns of the state. People's War led by Maoists was one of the major factors that made the Maoists the largest party of the nation. Despite its efforts and success to establish the agenda of the peasants, women, *dalits* and *Janjaties*, People's War led by Maoists had negative impact upon people, too. On the one hand it provided rapid political consciousness to *dalits*, *janjaties* and backward rural peasants and inspired the people to demolish semi-feudal and intra-colonial structure of the state, to some extent, in new democratic republic; on the other, many innocent people were victimized and killed in the cross-fires.

CPN (Maoists) has its own political structure based on the communist ideology. It has "the most powerful standing committee at the top, followed by the politburo, central committee, regional committees, regional bureaus, district committees and cell committees" (Sharma 379). The central committee assists politburo to issue directives to the standing committee and the party. The committees at village areas and district levels assist the regional bureaus i.e. Eastern, Central, Kathmandu Valley, Western and International Departments in every issue. The politburo and standing committee reportedly formulates most of

the political and strategic policies. The party has “two separate wings as military and political divisions” (Sharma 379). The military wing known as People’s Liberation Army (PLA) has its “central military commission to coordinate its military commission, will be assisted by the regional, sub-regional, and district level commissions” (Sharma 379). The Maoists political wing United People’s Front (UPF) had different committees from district level to ward level. The supreme commander of the PLA was the Maoists chairman Prachanda himself.

Armed revolution led by Maoists, named as People’s war, was not only the product of Maoists desire rather it was boosted by the social, political and economical dimensions of the time. Henning Karcher, UNDP resident representative in Nepal (19<sup>th</sup> May, 2003) argues:

While the conflict in Nepal has no doubt a political, ideological and even geo-political dimension, its main root causes are social and economic related to frustrated expectation that came with the advent of democracy, related to abject poverty that persists for a large percentage of the population related to poor and inefficient delivery of social services in areas such as education and health and related to inequality, exclusion and discrimination. A large percentage of the population of Nepal, in particular *dalits* and members of ethnic groups feel that they are politically and economically excluded, unable to contribute to decisions that affect their lives and enable to benefit from the economic advancement of the nation. (20)

At this phase of inequality and exclusion of marginal groups, Maoists caught their sentiments and waged war for the emancipation of all the subalterns with a target

to eradicate *brahminism*, nepotism, feudalism, semi-colonialism, corruption intra-colonialism and bourgeois dictatorship.

The revolution started in February 1996 in the hilly areas of mid-western part of Nepal. As one of the political causes of rapid development of Maoist revolution is the Nepali Congress government itself. Corrupt political leaders of Nepali Congress, mostly related to *Panchayat* regime, directly or indirectly, focused on caste, gender and class interests and domination and neglected all other marginal and peasant class voices; and for that Maoists had to wage People's War.

Though Maoist revolution started in 1996, many outside and inside scholars had warned about the future possible rebellion half a decade back. Viewing the governance of the Nepali Congress, scholars like Andrew Nickson and Stephen Mikesell had earlier in 1992/93 respectively had warned the government through their articles about the possible Maoists armed rebellion. Taking the reference of Andrew Nickson, Deepak Thapa with Bandita Sijapati in *Kingdom under Siege* writes:

The future prospects of Maoism in Nepal will ... depend largely on the extent to which the newly elected Nepali Congress government address the historic neglect and discrimination of the small rural communities which still make up the overwhelming bulk of the population of the country. As in the case of the Peru, this would require a radical reallocation of government expenditure towards rural areas in the form of agricultural extension services and primary health care provision. Successful implementation of such a program would mean a radical shake-up of the public administration

system in order to make it both more representative of the ethnic diversity of the country and more repressive to the needs of peasant communities.

However, such a scenario is extremely unlikely ... (54)

The prediction of these scholars proved true. Neither the Nepali Congress government addressed these issues nor did the inevitability of People's War stop.

Another cause of People's War that arrived in association with politics is economic condition. The fiscal year 1993/94 saw some promising results. But by the 1995 economic growth rate decelerated rapidly due to instability, bad governance, and rampant corruption among politicians. Deepak Thapa with Bandita Sijapati in *Kingdom under Siege* writes:

The fiscal year 1993/94 saw some promising results. There was an unprecedented growth in agriculture of 7.6 percent; GDP registered a 7.9 percent increase; the tourism sector was able to contribute 4 percent to the GDP; and in the manufacturing sector, the carpet industry emerged as a major foreign-exchange earner with the value of its exports tripling within three years. Furthermore, per capita GDP rose from around US \$ 202 by 1994. But the moment did not last long. These economic advances did not have enough of a foundation, and the growth rates decelerated rapidly in 1995 due to political instability, bad governance, and rampant corruption among party politicians. These politicians translated the increased freedom and openness of the polity into an open house of nepotism, bribery, and corruption. (58)



As Nepali Congress was ruling almost throughout the Post-People's Movement democratic period, all the charges go to Nepali congress from moral ground.

State sponsored violence imposed upon innocent peasant class people, women *dalits* and *Janajaties* by the Nepali Congress government in the code of 'Operation Romeo' was another political blunder that flamed People's War. To resist state organized violence, people were compelled to wage People's War. This so-called "Operation Romeo" organized with the motive of political revenge under the leadership of Sher Bahadur Deuba in 1995 was condemned everywhere.

*The Human Rights Yearbook 1995* reported how after a clash of a village fair, the government initiated . . . suppressive operations to a degree of state terror. Especially, the workers of United People's Front were brutally suppressed. Under the direct leadership of local ruling party workers, the police searched UPF cadre's homes in eleven villages of Rolpa district, and tortured and arrested many of them. Nearly 6000 locals left the villages due to this police operation. One hundred and thirty two people were arrested were some who were over 75 years of age. All the detained were subjected to torture. (Sijapati 72)

At the situation of state sponsored terror on the part of ethnic minorities, *dalits*, women and peasants, Dr Baburam Bhattarai on behalf of the United People's Front, Nepal on 4<sup>th</sup> February, 1996 submitted 40 point memorandum to the then prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba. As Deuba government denied to acknowledge and address the issues raised regarding women's marginalization, unequal economic distribution, semi-colonial and semi-feudal state of nation and

victimization of *dalits*, no option was left on the part of these people to make their 'voices' 'heard' except by waging People's War.

But the state violence increased rapidly during the period of People's War. Many innocent people were arrested without warrant, brutalized, raped and killed. Not only the government imposed organized violence, but also media misrepresented them. Belonging to the mainstream position larger media houses played the role of ideological state apparatus to defame their revolution and suppress the voices as said by Althusser:

Effectively, the repressive state apparatus was the dominating political force, but ideology developed a life of its own as the symbolic controller. The ideological state apparatus were located in religious, legal, and cultural structures, in the mass media and the family, and especially in the educational system. (Freedman 25)

Contrary to this, there are journalists like Shreeram Singh Basnet who blame Maoists trying to impose their programs and policies and forcing journalists do according their wish and restricting the press freedom. In *Dimensions of Journalism* he writes:

One decade long armed rebellion in the country emerged as a new kind of challenge to the Nepali Press. The people involved in the movement threatened journalists to publish matter in their favor; not to publish any matter against them or to criticize their program and their policies... The Maoists and the army both neither honored the press freedom guaranteed in the constitution nor obeyed the international norms of the press. (266)

But contrarily, Maoist's Chairman, Prachanda, in his public speech in open theatre (tundikhel) blamed Kantipur Publication for creating propaganda against Maoists to suppress their movement and the subalterns' desire for freedom, justice and equality. He suggested media persons to avoid propaganda.

When we analyze the news reported by *The Kathmandu Post* we find Prachanda's words valid. To defame Maoists, Kathmandu Post has often gone beyond the ethical principles of journalism.

*The Kathmandu Post* has reported an incident of bomb explosion inside Mahendra Multiple Campus in Nepalgunj, dated 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2006 which lacks minimum criteria of news reporting. The news bulletin was:

Banke, March 26 (PR), Maoists detonated a powerful bomb inside Mahendra Multiple Campus in Nepalgunj, Sunday morning. Examination of proficiency certificate level was going on while regular classes of Bachelor level were in progress when explosion rocked the campus building. There was no casualty. Various district based human rights organizations and teachers condemned the Maoists act.

Aforementioned news undermines three of the basic ethical values of journalism out of four that are: truthfulness, fairness, privacy, and responsibility. Except 'privacy' it has not followed other three main principles when it does not mention the source of the news. It has equally undermined the code of conduct of the International Federation of Journalism (IFJ) that reads: "the journalists shall report only in accordance with facts of which s/he knows the origin. Journalist

shall not suppress essential information or falsify document” (Acharya 268). The news is completely baseless and contradictory.

This news claims Maoists detonated bomb inside the campus but there is no evidence for truthfulness and validity of it. Neither the source is disclosed explicitly (any eye witness or the claim of district police post with evidence) nor Maoists’ views with regard to the explosion in the news. So, it lacks accuracy, balance and credibility. Next, the news reads: “examination of proficiency certificate level was going on while regular classes of Bachelor level were in progress when the explosion rocked the campus building. There was no casualty.” Can it be possible that students were inside the building when explosion rocked it and there was no casualty? How can a journalist claim that the explosion was made by the Maoists without any evidence? Isn’t there the prejudice of the journalist explicit in the news?

There were, and are, other underground criminal gangs named Madhesi Tiger, Madhesi Cobra, Terai Janatantrik Morcha (Jwala singh group), TJM (Goit Samuha), and others doing their activities in Terai while the event had occurred. But neither of the groups took responsibility of the explosion. At this situation, why did the reporter blame Maoists for explosion instead of others? Isn’t there any interest of *The Kathmandu Post* in doing so? Isn’t it the propaganda made by *The Kathmandu Post* to suppress the voices of the subalterns by defaming their movement?

The news is totally baseless, one-sided, invalid, and prejudiced, that not only rejects the code of conduct of International Federation of Journalism (IFJ), Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ), American Society of Newspaper Editors

(ASNE), but also the ethical values forwarded by the Nepal Press Council (NPC) itself. Such news items underscore the need to do research on hot topic of media representation.

When Maoists were overtly expressing their grave concern over the activities of the journalists and were proposing creating new model of media ethics in Maoists led government, journalists were not following its universal ethics. As the media houses are the business houses, they primarily focus on their economic interest and sideline all other things that go beyond and against their interest and ideology. As the events represented in the newspaper are linguistic construct, there is always chance of the play of ‘ideological determinism.’

The main motto of journalism is to voice the voiceless. As Maoists were uniting all peasants, *dalits*, *janajaties*, women and giving voice to the voiceless, *The Kathmandu Post* should have given priority to their voices. Gayatri Spivak, in *Can Subaltern Speak?* writes that subalterns cannot speak by themselves for their freedom, justice, and equality because of the hegemonic influence of the state ideology, which is also the ideology of the mainstream-class people. Subalterns are always relegated from the pillars to the post. Taking consideration of the fact, Maoists took initiative to make the ‘voices’ of the subalterns’ ‘heard.’

Maoist’s party and the People’s war led by them was the war waged against nepotism, *brahminism*, corruption, semi-colonialism, expansionism, semi-feudalism and mainstream domination, to establish a rule of the proletariat and secure their rights; at the situation, *The Kathmandu Post* and other newspapers misrepresented the Maoists and People’s War just taking into consideration the

class interest and sidelining all other issues with regard to ‘social responsibility’ of the media.

## **CHAPTER TWO: Ideological Influence in Media Ethics and Representation**

### **Media Ethics and its Significance**

There are many different codes of ethical conduct depending on the conventions and traditions of the country concerned and on who formulates the code—whether it is publishers, editors, journalists or an external regulatory body. Most codes concentrate on matters to do with the provision of reliable information and on avoiding distortion, suppression, bias, sensationalism and the invasion of privacy, but some codes go further. Journalistic codes may try to protect the independence of journalists from undue pressure from publishers or advertisers and often also call for protection of the confidentiality of sources.

Among many, truth, accuracy, impartiality, fairness, respect for individual's privacy, independence from vested interests, responsibility to society and the public good, respect for law and moral decency and good taste are received as basic ethical principles of journalism.

As judgments of news values are often relative and based on a journalistic 'feel for the news' at a particular moment, there will usually be strong elements of subjectivity. And as the subjectivity of a journalist is conditioned by the socio-politico-cultural conditioning of journalist; there is, consciously or unconsciously, enormous possibility of bias. To avoid such bias and center the profession for 'social interest' "media should follow agreed codes of ethics and professional standards." (McQuail 124)

Yellow journalism often avoids taking consideration of the ethical principles for petty selfishness. This sort of tendency not only degrades the public trust on profession but also harms society as a whole. Shirley Biagi further claims:

Journalists are no more likely to exploit their positions than people in other professions, but when journalists make the wrong ethical choices the consequence can be very damaging. “It may well be that if journalism loses touch with ethical values, it will then cease to be of use to society, and cease to have any real reason for being”, writes media ethics scholar John Hulteng. But that, for the sake of all of us, must never be allowed to happen. (328)

Taking into consideration the freedom of press and its responsibility towards social welfare, different organizations like International Federation of Journalism (IFJ), American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE), Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ), Public Relation Society of America (PRSA) and Nepal Press Council (NPC) have forwarded their codes of conduct. Though there is slight variance among them, principally, all agree on basic principles.

In 1923, American Society of Newspaper Editors (ANSE) prescribed seven canons of journalism which includes (a) responsibility (b) freedom of the Press (c) independence (d) sincerity, truthfulness, accuracy (e) impartiality (f) fair play and (g) decency.

Likewise, The Commission on Freedom of the Press formed in 1947 known as Hutchins Commission prescribed different functions among them one significant point reads: “the press should offer a representative picture of constituent group in society, that is, no stereotyping” (Acharya 268). On the other, Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) in its ethics stresses: “Journalists must be free of obligation to any interest other than the public’s right to know the truth.” (Biagi 339)



To restrict journalists exploiting press freedom and creating propaganda, IFJ code of conduct proposed: “the journalists shall report only in accordance with facts of which s/he knows the origin. The journalists shall not suppress essential information or falsify documents.” (Acharya 268)

Moreover, International Principles of Professional Ethics in Journalism drawn up by UNESCO highlights “Respect for Universal Values and Diversity of Cultures, calls for respect for human rights, social progress, national liberation, peace, democracy” (McQuail 125). It even stresses on “The journalist’s Declaration to Objective Reality. This aims to provide the public with adequate material to facilitate the formation of an accurate and comprehensive picture of the world.” (McQuail 125) Most importantly, SPJ code of ethics highlighted to “give voice to the voiceless; official and unofficial sources of information can be equally valid.” (Acharya 270)

Are journalists following these ethical principles or not have become a serious issue at this period. Biased presentation of news and underestimation of ethical principles not only diminish public trust to the profession, but also equally will harm society as a whole. Ideological distinction may bring distinction in representation and violation of ethical principles.

### **Representation and Ideology**

High consideration of ethical principles minimizes the possibility of misrepresentation and falsity in news. Analysis of print news in media studies has centered on questions surrounding its supposed accuracy and the political implication of the world/events represented by news bulletins. Many analysts have argued that news cannot simply reflect the reality as it occurs, but most inevitably

represent events and ideas in particular ways. This is because “news like any other text, is socially constructed that produces versions of reality” (Tuchman 2). Hence, news is manufactured according to the rituals and routines of news production rather than a set of spontaneous events.

News in the paper emerges from complex process of construction and reconstruction. News constructs a particular version of event, where the version is shaped by a wider context. The state explicitly controls news output and is able to disseminate what is, in fact, propaganda. Unlike state sponsored newspapers and televisions, independent professional media houses are supposed to represent events with their neutral position. But the critics like Herman and Chomsky argue that governing parties are able, through structure of news reporting, to ensure that certain view prevail, “the powerful are able to fix the premises of discourse, to decide what the general populace is allowed to see, hear and think about and to manage public opinions by regular propaganda campaigns.” (Fowler 6)

News thus becomes a means for the ruling group to control ideas in society. It collects, selects, presents and constitutes dominant ideology, and serves ruling political interest and the use of language favoring the government and employer. Media also faces more or less explicit state regulation. In addition, long-term exposure to such regulation eventually results in a notable degree of self-censorship in agenda setting among news personnel

Bearing wide range of meaning, ideology is a dominant concept in media studies. It is the “body of ideas characteristics of particular social group or class” [or] “ideas which help to legitimate dominant political power” (Eagleton 1). It is well known that

[. . .] the expression ideology was invented by Cabanis, Destutt de Tracy and their friends, who assigned to it as an object the (genetic) theory of ideas. When Marx took up the term fifty years later, he gave it a quite different meaning, even in his early works. Here, ideology is the system of the ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man or a social group. (Althusser 120)

But Althusser departs slightly in his definition of ideology. For Althusser one can speak of descriptions or representation of the world as being either true or false;

[. . .] but ideology is not for him at root a matter of such descriptions at all, and criteria of truth and falsehood are thus largely irrelevant to it. Ideology for Althusser does indeed represent but what it represents is the way I 'live' my relations to society as a whole, which can not be said to be a question of truth and falsehood. Ideology for Althusser is a particular organization of signifying practices which goes to constitute human beings as social subjects, and which produces the lived relations by which such subjects are connected to the dominant relations of production in a society. (Eagleton 18)

An important device by which an ideology achieves legitimacy is by universalizing and 'eternalizing' itself. Values and interests which are in fact specific to a certain place and time are projected as the values and interests of all humanity. The assumption is that if this were not so, the sectoral, self interested

nature of the ideology would loom too embarrassingly large, and so would impede its general acceptance.

Later scholars, especially Michael Foucault, associated ideology with discourse rather than ‘false consciousness’ of an epoch. For the scholars like him “ideology is a matter of discourse rather than language” (9), writes Eagleton.

Ideology concerns the actual usage of language between particular human subjects for the production of specific effects.

[. . .] ideology is less a matter of the inherent linguistic properties of a pronouncement than a question of who is saying what to whom for what purposes. [. . .] The general point, then, is that exactly the same piece of language may be ideological in one context and not in another; ideology is a function of the relation of an utterance to its social context. (Eagleton 9)

These ideologies are disseminated by the various state apparatuses like religious state apparatus (church/temple), educational state apparatus (schools and universities), media and others unlike repressive state apparatus (police and army). When ideological state apparatus (ISA) functions massively and predominantly by ideology, Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) functions massively with repression and violence. Dominant ruling ideology is realized by the ISA. All ideological apparatus, whatever they are, contribute to the same result: the reproduction of the relations of production, i.e. of capitalist relations of exploitation.

Louis Althusser, in his essay, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus,” describes television, radio and press as “the communication ideological state apparatus” (111). He conceived the mass media along institutions like “the schools

and the church as ideological state apparatus” (112) crucial to the maintenance of a social support for one set of ideological beliefs over another. The communication apparatus tend to express the ideological positions of those with, suggesting the notions of ‘dominant ideology’ that serves the needs and interest of powerful elite “by cramming every ‘citizen’ with daily doses of nationalism, chauvinism, liberalism, moralism etc. by means of the press, the radio and television.” (117)

Ideology is the representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence. Althusser further claims in “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus” that

[. . .] it is not their real conditions of existence, their real world, that ‘men’ represent to themselves in ideology, but above all it is their relation to those conditions of existence which is represented to them there. It is this relation which is at the centre of every ideological, i.e. imaginary representation of the real world. (124)

Issue of representation is the key component in ideological struggle: in representation “what matters is not so much what is said, but who says it to whom for what purpose” (Althusser 110) is important. Representation is also central in media study because it is closely linked to issues of depicting reality. Media are supposed to depict the real world in their construction of news. However, whether newspapers set out to be realistic or not, is always engage in a process of representation.

Understanding representation takes us into an exploration of power and ideology. Representation or ‘to represent’ can mean ‘to present again or depict something;’ and in this representation there is maximum possibility of play of

power due to the interrogation of subject. No matter how the presentation might be, what we read in paper will be a construction, involving decisions about what to select for printing, how to edit and present the material.

News is not actually the representation of the facts, rather the social construct. Roger Fowler in his book, *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press*, taking the reference of Glasgow University Media Group and the University of Birmingham: Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies, acknowledges news not as the representation of reality rather a social construct. He further argues:

News is socially constructed. What events are reported is not a reflection of the intrinsic importance of those events, but reveals the operation of a complex and artificial set of criteria for selection. Then, the news that has been thus selected is subject to processes of transformation as it is encoded for publication; the technical properties of the medium - television or newsprint, for example and the ways in which they are used, are strongly effective in this transformation. Both 'selection' and 'transformation' are guided by reference, generally unconscious, to ideas and beliefs. (203)

John Hartley in his book, *Understanding News*, very constructively places the usual contemporary accounts of the news as a social and ideological produce within the framework of general semiotic theory, and this seems to me the proper intellectual context for the analysis of media.

According to the American linguist Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf, and of the British linguist M.A.K. Halliday "there is the casual relation

between semantic structure and cognition: that language influences thought; in the sense that its structure channels our mental experience of the world” (Fowler 205). As the people prefer to know the political events in the isolation of their house through the media than active participation, news can have wide range of effects. To control media manipulate the mass for their vested interest and misuse of the press freedom strong ethical values should be maintained.

Because of the limitations and drawbacks of the news reporting, there is always a possibility of misrepresentation. Taking this fact in consideration, different organizations like American Society of Newspapers Editors (ANSE), Hutchins Commission, International Federation of Journalism (IFJ), Society of Professional Journalist (SPJ), along with Nepal Press Council (NPC) have forwarded its ethical values and journalistic code of conduct taking consideration of the press freedom as well as social responsibility of the press in center. Thorough consideration of the journalistic ethics will minimize the chance of misuse of press freedom for petty selfishness and manipulation of the mass. Yet, there are still loopholes and still there are chances of misuse of press freedom by the journalists. As the news representation is the linguistic representation there is always either way of saying the same thing where ideology, belief system, and position of the journalist works. Roger Fowler’s statement further proves this fact when he writes:

News is a representation of the world in language; because language is a semantic code, it imposes a structure of values, social and economic in origin, on whatever is represented; and so inevitably news, like any discourse, constructively patterns that of which it

speaks. News is a representation in this sense of construction; it is not a value-free reflection of 'facts'. The final theoretical point to make heard is that I assume as a working principle that each particular form of linguistic expression in a text – wording, syntactic option etc. – has its reason. There is always different ways of saying the same thing, and they are not random accidental alternatives. Difference in expression carries ideological distinctions and thus difference in representation. (Fowler 205)

Hence, in the discursive practice of 'construction' of news, belief system, values, position, economic, social and racial background play the crucial role. *The Kathmandu Post* belonging to the mainstream privileged position of the society; the ideology differs with the ideology of the subalterns and the Maoist- freedom-fighter. *The Kathmandu Post* misrepresenting the People's War creates propaganda to defame the latter to maintain the status quo and secure their privileged position, domination and exploitation.



### **CHAPTER THREE: Representation of People's War in *The Kathmandu Post***

When we analyze news printed in *The Kathmandu Post* that is concerned with the Maoists, we find most of them tilted to the ex-King's propaganda campaign. Though *The Kathmandu Post* directly did not take part in spreading the ideology of the King, in its underlying level we find no difference between the King's ideology, government-funded Newspapers and Television, and the ideology of *The Kathmandu Post*. Ex-King Gyanendra's ideology is explicit in the Royal proclamation of February 1, 2005 that was telecasted by Nepal Television.

In the live telecast of highly controversial Royal proclamation through Nepal Television, Ex-King Gyanendra declared himself the head of state and took all state power in his own hand. He dismissed the then government under the prime ministership of Sher Bahadur Deuba, declared state emergency and seized all fundamental rights of people. The security forces remanded political leaders and independent press was somehow taken into control by the army. Though ex-King Gyanendra said this move was for "restoration of sustainable peace and exercise in meaningful democracy" (Feb. 1, 2005), his real intention behind the coup was overtly political ambition and continuation of domination, exploitation and semi-feudalism by maintaining the status quo. He said the move was mandatory and blamed all the leaders of political parties for "bloodshed, violence and devastation [that] have pushed the country to the brink of destruction" (Feb. 1, 2005). He was referring to the Maoists insurgency that hit the country since February 13, 1996. He not only blamed the Maoists for pitiful condition of the country but also equally charged all the political parties for their irresponsible

behavior in settling the problems; though, contrarily, he himself was the real problem of the country.

Ex-King Gyanendra tried to get legitimacy of his move by pointing that it was necessity for effective tackling of the Maoist “terrorist” who, in his own words, “missed the way taking up arms against the nation and people, and are engaged in criminal activity against democracy” (Feb. 1, 2005). He was wrongfully committed to crush the Maoists by deploying the army, as guessed by many people. Though in his proclamation he called them to return to the mainstream of national politics peacefully at the same moment he declared them ‘terrorists’ and warned: “Nepal is committed to eliminating terrorism in her own interest as well as in the interest of democracies around the world. Nepal aspires for peace -of herself, her neighbors and south Asia and to rid the world from the threat to peace.” (Feb. 1, 2005)

It was explicit in his rhetoric that he wanted to secure legitimacy from neighboring country and the so-called super power (United States of America). He was spreading his ideology in such a way that his interest was the interest of the globe, which was copy of George W Bush’s declaration in White House, that war against Iraq was the war against terrorism. When Bush’s act was an evidence of neo-colonialism, Gyanendra’s act was evidence of intra-colonialism. Both moves were motivated by their petty selfishness. Yet, different media houses in the country carried King’s ideology directly or indirectly.

Government funded Nepal Television, *Gorkhapatra Daily* and *The Rising Nepal* after the Royal regression became the mouth piece of government. King, Royal family and the ruling party were in the first priority on news coverage.

These media made ruling ideology as their directive principle for agenda setting in news. They took for granted the King's statement that the Maoists "missed the way" are "engaged in criminal activity against democracy," "took up arms against the nation, people and therefore were terrorists." (Feb. 1, 2005)

As *Nepal Television*, *The Rising Nepal* and *Gorkhapatra* were the government assisted media; it was natural for them to work as ideological state apparatus for King to exercise his anti-Maoists propaganda campaign. But, like these, different other independent professional media houses became complicit to king's propaganda campaign directly or indirectly. And among these, who involved in king's propaganda campaign, *The Kathmandu Post* stands on top.

Almost all the news coverage about the Maoists by *The Kathmandu Post* violates the basic ethical principles. As most of the codes concentrate on matters related to reliable information and on avoiding distortion, suppression, bias, sensationalism; *The Kathmandu Post* violating ethical values distorted the reality with a bias and created propaganda against Maoists.

*The Kathmandu Post* has reported a statement issued by Maoist chairman, Prachanda, to media dated 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2006 entitled "ICRC OHCHR vehicles wont be attacked" where the spirit of statement is distorted in its lead. News is:

KATHMANDU, MARCH 15 (PR) - Maoist Chairman Prachanda said on Wednesday that his party wouldn't attack any vehicles of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights during any Maoist-called strike.

In a statement issued to the media, Prachanda said, “we want to make it clear that there will be no obstruction from our side in the movement of ICRC vehicles, ambulances of Nepal Red Cross and OHCHR vehicles during general strike, banda, blockades, and chakka jam called by us in any part of the country.”

The Maoist supremo has also said his party would also allow ICRC and OHCHR to meet with persons taken under their control.

On the second paragraph of the news the spirit of the news is coded where Prachanda has clarified: “we want to make it clear that there will be no obstruction from our side in the movement of ICRC vehicles, ambulances of Nepal Red Cross and OHCHR vehicles during general strike, banda, blockade, and chakka jam called by us in any part of the country.” But distorting the statement *The Kathmandu Post* made the lead: “Maoist chairman Prachanda said on Wednesday that his party would [not] attack any vehicles of [...] during any Maoist called strike.”

When a journalist writes that Maoist supremo has declared, “...his party would [not] attack any vehicles of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and UN offices of the High Commissioner for Human Rights during any Maoists called strike;” there is an implicit connotation or presupposition that Maoists themselves agree that previously they used to attack vehicles of these organizations. Here, the ideology of *The Kathmandu Post* is explicit. *The Kathmandu Post* wants to expose Maoists a ‘terrorist group’ who intentionally violate the internationally recognized code of conduct of ICRC and UN and terrorize the people.

Though *The Kathmandu Post* was not able to express explicitly like that of government assisted media, it was complicit to the then government's ideology and strategy of proving Maoists 'terrorist.'

Apart from this, the news itself is contradictory. Prachanda's statement as stated by *The Kathmandu Post* itself does not give the hint that they have attacked any vehicles of UN and ICRC. It has simply clarification in the statement issued to the media by Prachanda that they will not 'obstruct' the vehicles of UN and ICRC. But *The Kathmandu Post* used the term 'attack' in place of 'obstruct' in the lead. 'Attack' can never be synonymous to 'obstruct.' Attack carries heavily negative connotation. As stated by Roger Fowler in his book *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press*, selection of one term over another and transformation of news are guided by the belief system and ideology of *The Kathmandu Post*. These sorts of distortion, though, are not noticed by general reader, it imparts wide range of effects upon them.

Likewise, in another report of bomb explosion dated 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2006, *The Kathmandu Post* has blamed Maoists for explosion without any evidence. In one paragraph of the news entitled "Two die in Maoist raid at Kakarbhitta" there is a report of bomb explosion where 13-year-old Rajan Rajak is said to be injured. *The Kathmandu Post* takes it for granted that the bomb was left behind by Maoists. Neither there is view of Maoists with regard to the explosion nor any eye witness.

It is not that Maoists only have access to bombs and bullets in the country, rather Army and Armed Police Force also use it. Why *The Kathmandu Post* blamed without any evidence that the bomb was left behind by the Maoists? Why not by army and armed police force? Though the incident was an accident, these

sorts of reporting gives a message to the people that Maoists are burden by whom innocents are victimized, though they claim that they are fighting for the liberation of the people. Is it not the responsibility of security force to control such accidents by public awareness and mobilization of security force? If the government is not able to provide security to the people, is it right to remain in the government. Why did *The Kathmandu Post* never raise this issue? The news bulletin reads: “In another reports of violence from around country 13-year-old Rajan Rajak was injured Thursday, when a bomb left behind by Maoists exploded near the entrance gate of Jay Prithvi Campus in Bajhang. He was rushed to Nepalgunj for treatment.”

According to the report, the site of accident is very sensitive, i.e. the college gate, which easily catches public attention. So, is it not possible that government sponsored vigilantes left behind the bomb to terrorize people and make propaganda that Maoists left it behind, which will defame the Maoists and will lose public favor?

The source of the news is not disclosed in it, and it could be that reporters collected it from security forces. How does news provided by security force about Maoists be valid one? The news is one sided, imbalanced and prejudiced that rejects the basic ethical principles of reporting. It is none other than the example of continuation of propaganda campaign. And the motive of spreading such propaganda is to defame and abort the revolution and thereby continue domination and exploitation by maintaining status quo.

Similar type of whimsical and baseless news report is presented in *The Kathmandu Post* dated 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2006 entitled “Maoists burn 3 vehicles.”

Though the two tankers being vandalized is stated with vague source, the incident of passenger bus being burnt is not stated clearly. *The Kathmandu Post* without any evidence blames Maoists for the act. News is totally one sided and imbalance as it reads: “Meanwhile rebels burnt a passenger bus near Kanepokhari area along the Mahendra highway. The vehicle registered Ko 1 Kha 1626 was in route to Kakanbhitta from Dharan.” Though the incident might be true, involvement of Maoists is baseless and imaginary as evidence does not support.

It is an attempt of stereotyping the Maoists to be a terrorist group. This act of stereotypic representation of Maoists by *The Kathmandu Post* defies the norms of internationally recognized commission on freedom of the press formed in 1947 known as Hutchins Commission that has made clear provision in its code of conduct that “the press should offer a representative picture of constituent group in society, that is, no stereotyping” (268). The news also equally defies IFJ code of conduct that believes: “the journalist shall report only in accordance with facts of which s/he knows the origin. The journalists shall not suppress essential information or falsify documents.” (268)

To defame the Maoists and thereby abort People’s War, *The Kathmandu Post* continuously gave flow of baseless news. Such whimsical and imaginary news were basically associated with public concern, which can have wide range of negative impact about Maoists upon people. This type of news is evident in *The Kathmandu Post* dated 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2006 entitled “Maoists cut-off electricity to Dailekh.” The news accuses Maoists that they cut-off electricity supply to Dailekh from Surkhet District by damaging the national grid at waraha VDC along the Dailekh-Surkhet border. The news reads:

DAILEKH, March 19 (PR) – Maoists Saturday cut-off electricity supply to Dailekh from Surkhet district by damaging the national grid at Waraha VDC along the Dailekh-Surkhet border. Workers from District Electricity Authority who reached Waraha to repair the damage on Sunday were sent back by the rebels.

Though *The Kathmandu Post* blamed Maoists, reliable source is not mentioned explicitly. It is said that “workers from District Electricity Authority who reached Waraha to repair the damage on Sunday were sent back by the rebels.” If they were sent back by the rebels then who were the rebels? Name and post of the rebels is not mentioned clearly. Who were these workers from District Electricity Authority? Who told the reporters that the Maoists cut-off the electricity? (Any eye witness or Maoists views taking responsibility) If workers from District Electricity Authority were sent back by rebels, then, what is the name and post of those rebels? What was the Maoists view with regard to the act? All these significant questions are not answered in the news. Can it be not possible that government funded vigilantes did everything to defame the Maoists and minus the public favor?

When we read the news report with regard to Maoists, we find all the news items composed within similar stereotypical format. Maoists are always presented as villains who cut-off electricity-supply to the public, who beat people to death for no reason, who vandalize buses for no reason, who are involved in terrorist activities and many others. But on the other, government, army and government officials are presented as rescuer, savior, and as a romantic hero, who always works for the public benefit. If they were the heroes, savior, rescuer, then who



stopped them to make nation prosperous, peaceful, and developed? Who stopped them to ensure rights of *dalits*, *janjaties* and Women?

*The Kathmandu Post* always highlighted effects of war in its news item but never paid attention on its real cause which government tried to suppress. This is the blunder of *The Kathmandu Post*. William Ranadolph, a media person, views that “news is something that everyone wants to suppress. Everything else is advertising.” When we analyze the news from the vantage point of William Ranadolph then none of the news items represented by *The Kathmandu Post* with regard to Maoists bear the quality of news; all are advertisement.

When we read news items, it seems as if everything is gossip and imaginary and it reminds us Biagi, a media person, who in *Media Impact* argues: “Members of the press sometimes print gossip as truth, disregard the impact they have on people’s lives, and are ready to believe the worst about people because the worst sells... we in the media have much to answer for.” (327)

In another so-called news report entitled “Maoists set ablaze govt. offices” dated 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2006 *The Kathmandu Post* one-sidedly blames Maoists for setting fire to the custom office Bhithamod. The area of incident is Mahottari where many criminal gangs as well as unified armed robbers, from inside and outside the country, were active in robbery. Most of the time robbers were taking benefit in the guise of Maoists People’s Liberation Army; and we used to hear that Maoists took action against such armed criminal and looter gangs. In such a scenario, without taking the view of Maoists charging them is irresponsible behavior of *The Kathmandu Post*.

Apart from this, it can also be possible that the officials of the custom office set fire on the office and looted the sum of 15 thousand. There might be involvement of those looters, too. As the news lacks Maoists view and proper source, the news coverage is imbalanced, prejudiced and invalid. It not only rejects the code of conduct of International Federation of Journalism, American society for Newspaper Editors and Hutchins Commission but also of Nepal Press Council itself.

The way *The Kathmandu Post* is creating discourse about Maoists as ‘the other’ is a part of power struggle that is complicit with government’s ideology and Ideological State Apparatus. This ‘othering’ of *The Kathmandu Post* and indirect charge to the Maoists being involved in criminal activity is the evidence of *The Kathmandu Post* being part of ideological state apparatus. Like that of government led by the ex-King, *The Kathmandu Post* took it for granted that the Maoists ‘missed the way’ are ‘engaged in criminal activity against democracy, took up arm against the nation, people, and therefore are terrorist.’

*The Kathmandu Post* not only worked as ideological state apparatus but also worked in coordination with repressive state apparatus with regard to discourse formation against Maoists. *The Kathmandu Post* solely relied on the Public Relation Directorate (PRD) of the then Royal Nepal Army on Maoists related news coverage which is the strong proof of *The Kathmandu Post* working in complicity with repressive state apparatus.

These distortions of news story were part of *The Kathmandu Post*’s discourse formation. This discourse formation has enabled institutions to wield power and dominate by defining and excluding ‘the other.’ Discourse is related

with power structures operating in society. Discourses are rooted in social institutions and that social and political power operates through discourses. The Royal regime of ex-King Gyanendra used social institutions like press, radio, television, religious forums for creating discourse and discourse practice; and many independent professional media like *The Kathmandu Post* actively worked with complicity to the government's power struggle against marginalized people.

*The Kathmandu Post* by distorted representation of news coverage about Maoists reproduced the discourse that Maoists have 'missed the way...' Such discourse formation enabled *The Kathmandu Post* to wield power and dominate by defining Maoists, though indirectly, as 'terrorist' and exclude them as 'the other.'

When we study the news presented in *The Kathmandu Post*, we find it written, most of the time, in the same stereotypical format which seems boring and hackneyed. In its format, either there is first attack by the Maoists and in the process of defense there is huge casualty on the side of Maoists, or there was paroling of the army 'to maintain peace and security' and there was sudden attack from the unseen place and in the process of defense there was huge casualty in the side of Maoists. Armies are always shown victorious. Almost all the news stories are of similar pattern, monotonous, boring, falsified and imbalanced; none of the news stories includes the view of the Maoists.

If there is huge lose in the side of Army, Armed Police Force and Police they claim that it was a surprise and hidden attack and an act of defeated mentality and *The Kathmandu Post* takes it in the face value.

There is a report of clashes from different part of the country in *The Kathmandu Post* entitled “24 Maoists, 10 security men, 1 civilian among dead” dated 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2006 which is reported in the same stereotypical format.

The first section of the news is the evidence of boastful claim of Army being victorious which *The Kathmandu Post* takes in the face value. The news reads:

In Dhading district, 21 Maoist rebels died during a major offensive launched by the Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) Chautara Tuesday morning in Darechowk VDC-6, an area bordering Chitwan district, the Ministry of Defense (Mo D) said.

Security forces carried out the operation, acting on a tip-off that the Maoists were intensifying their activities in the area, Mo D added.

According to a press communiqué from the ministry, 21bodies of the rebels have been recovered so far and losses on the rebel side could be much higher.

This news is completely one-sided and *The Kathmandu Post* takes it as the authentic one. It is stated that “21 bodies of the rebels have been recovered so far and loses on the rebels side could be much higher.” What is the meaning of “the losses on the rebels’ side could be much higher” in the news? Is it not just propaganda?

Ministry of Defense was spreading its propaganda through various ISA that Maoists are fighting losing battle and they easily can tackle them. This propaganda was disseminated on the one hand to recover the defeated mentality of the Army

and decrease the confidence of PLA; on the other, to collect support from handful of upper class people, international community and from the parties of parliamentary system. By showing larger number of PLA being dead they wanted to prove that they are likely to win the battle and Maoists revolution is in the verge of abortion in the near future. By taking the press communiqué as the main reliable source of the news *The Kathmandu Post* proved that it is against the majority people's desire for freedom, end of exploitation and corruption. In almost all news, it never gave space to Maoists' views.

As stated by Roger Fowler in *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press* with regard to what generally happens in media representation, representation of Maoists is not also a value free reflection of reality rather it is patterned by the structure of values, social and economic in its origin; and these values are non other than bourgeois. All these news stories are just discourse practices. News in *The Kathmandu Post* is representation in this sense of construction; it is not a value free reflection of 'facts.'

The final theoretical point to make heard, from this analysis, is that each particular form of linguistic expression in *The Kathmandu Post*—wording, phrasing and syntactic option etc. has its reason. That reason is to suppress the voices of proletariats and poor peasants. Though there were other alternative ways of saying the same thing, *The Kathmandu Post's* particular choice has significance.

As stated in the document adopted by the central committee of the party in September 1995 entitled “Plan for the Historical Initiation of the People's War,” People's War was waged out “by uniting all strata and categories of anti-feudal and anti-imperialist masses of the people under the leadership of the party” (3).

Writing against anti-feudal and anti-imperialist masses of the people clearly means that *The Kathmandu Post* wants to maintain feudalism, imperialism and thereby exploitation and corruption. It is against general people and poor peasants.

Meanwhile, in another incident of the same news it is written:

Meanwhile, nine police and three Maoists were killed when the rebel stormed an area police post in Birtamod of Jhapa district, the same day. A local woman was killed in the crossfire.

Police stationed there retaliated after they came under the rebel “surprise attack” around 7:20 a.m. The crossfire, which lasted an hour, left 22 other policemen injured. The condition of three of them is reported to be critical. They are undergoing treatment at Mechi Zonal Hospital and BP Koirala Institute of Health and Sciences (BPKIHS), Dharan.

The dead policemen have been identified as sub-inspectors Shyam Karki (traffic police) Khem Basnet and Bir Bahadur Tamang, and constables Ramesh Pokhrel, Yubaraj Gurung, Shrawan Shrestha, Manoj Rajbanshi, Bindeshwor Mandal and Hari Katuwal.

According to locals, the woman killed was a beggar.

In the second part of the same news "surprised attack" is highlighted with inverted comma. What does this mean? War between Maoists' PLA and RNA is the war between exploited and exploiter as king was the head of the army and all other repressive forces and government. And this surprised attack from Maoists side is highlighted because in the war PLA is victorious. That's why; this highlighted phrase "surprised attack" gives impression that police and army were

able to tackle the Maoists; this heavy loss in the side of government is exceptional case because it was a surprise attack; which is the main message of syntax. Tone of this news is non-other than the continuation of tone of news where Maoists are represented as terrorists fighting a losing battle and army as rescuer and savior of the state who is going to establish lasting peace and eliminate the threat of terrorists in Nepal then south Asia through Asia to all over the globe. We can clearly claim that this voice carried out by *The Kathmandu Post* is the ideology of repressive government led by the king.

A media house is supposed to take neutral position in news representation according to the ethical principle of journalism. But this is not applied to *The Kathmandu post*. *The Kathmandu Post* is always tilted towards government's propaganda which treated Maoists as 'other,' 'non human' and 'terrorist.' For King Maoists were not the people rather they were "missed the way," "anti-national," "traitor," and "terrorist." King treated Maoists as if their religion was terrorism and prayer to terrorize people. Maoists were merely terrorists, not people, as he believed terrorists have neither nationality nor religion; and the same voice was carried by *The Kathmandu Post*.

In the very news it is said that 22 other injured policemen were taken at Mechi Zonal Hospital and BP Koirala Institute of Health and Sciences for treatment. But *The Kathmandu Post* is not bothered about the condition of injured in Maoists' side.

Maoists were not Nepali citizens for *The Kathmandu Post* therefore it was not its concern. But it would be better if it had paid little attention about the condition of them from humanitarian ground. *The Kathmandu Post's* denial to pay

concern even from humanitarian ground might be due to the difference in species, i.e. terrorists.

Generally humans are identified with their names and posts, but nowhere in the news Maoist are identified with their name and position. The dead policemen are represented as sub-inspector Shyam Karki (Traffic Police), Khem Basnet , Bir Bahadur Tamang whereas dead Maoists are identified as either rebels or terrorists. Their individual identity is denied by *The Kathmandu Post*.

Likewise, though the source did not prove, *The Kathmandu Post* in its lead blames Maoists for the action that can provide negative impression about the Maoist. This kind of news is evident dated 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2006 entitled "Maoists beat man to death." In the lead of the news it is said that "In clear violation of a ceasefire announced by them, Maoist cadres on Friday night beat to death Prem Bahadur Thokar, 40, of Jagatpur- 6 Nayabasti."

But again in next paragraph it is said that "according to Man Kumari, wife of the deceased, two unidentified men" took him from his house." Again in the very news, at last paragraph, it is mentioned that "in complain registered at district police office Thokar's relatives, however, mentioned that he was killed by an unidentified groups."

This news is totally contradictory as the evidence does not support that the Thokar was beat to death by Maoists. Even eye witness Thokar's wife is clearly saying that he was abducted by unidentified groups. *The Kathmandu Post's* declaration of Thokar being killed by Maoists is baseless and false. Even Maoists view is not stated in news report. Therefore, it is one sided, invalid and prejudiced. It is written with clear violation of ethical principles of journalism.



This act of *The Kathmandu Post* is motivated with the intention of defaming Maoist by showing them beating innocents to death. This is the hidden politics of *The Kathmandu Post* behind violation of journalistic ethics and misrepresentation of Maoists. And at the root of this lies *The Kathmandu Post's* difference in economic position and thereby ideological distinction.

Similar type of baseless news is reported in *The Kathmandu Post* entitled "Five Maoists arrested in valley" dated 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2006. It is said that five Maoist cadres active in Kathmandu were arrested on Monday and Tuesday, a rebel leader said in press. But, who is this rebel leader? What is his name, and position is under curtain. When a press statement is released name, position and signature of the concern authority is clearly mentioned. But in that statement probably there was no name and post of concerned authority as *The Kathmandu Post* does not mention. If there was name and post of releaser and *The Kathmandu Post* did not bother to mention that, there must be reason behind doing so. This reluctance of *The Kathmandu Post* to mention the name and post proves *The Kathmandu Post's* denial of the existence of Maoist. For *The Kathmandu Post* Maoists are not individuals and thereby humans. Rather they are of different species, i.e. terrorists. Their religion is terrorism and prayer to terrorize the people.

*The Kathmandu Post's* effort to prove Maoist to be a terrorist group is evident even in news dated 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2006 entitled "Maoists open fire in crowded bus park." Bus Park is a sensitive area where general people gather to spread different parts of the country. In the context of 12 points agreement meted out between Seven Party Alliances (SPA) and Maoists, the act of making open fire might be of the government vigilantes intended to defame Maoists and break tie

between SPA and Maoists. There is no strong proof presented by *The Kathmandu Post* that supports Maoists' involvement. It lacks even basic principles of news story writing, i.e. accuracy balance and credibility which even layman knows.

Neither eye witness nor strong evidence from the police to prove Maoists involvement, nor Maoists' opinion taking responsibility is presented in the news. From this ground, we can claim that the news is baseless, invalid and propagated one which is intended to defame and break the tie between Maoists and SPA. It is another attempt to prove Maoists a terrorist group.

More than this Bara is a sensitive area where different armed criminals and underground looters are active. The person making open fire could be one of the members of those looter gangs. But *The Kathmandu Post* takes it for granted that the incident was made by Maoists. Another similar type of event is included under the same title that lacks evidence. It seems as if all the news is prepared in a closed room only to defame the Maoists. News is: "in Dhading 9 years old . . . from school.

Source of the news is not explicit in the news, yet the claim is made that the bomb was dropped by the Maoists. Did Maoist call journalists before dropping the bomb? If not, how can journalists claim that the bomb was left behind by Maoist? It is none other than *The Kathmandu Post's* propaganda to break knot between SPA and the Maoist.

Similar types of baseless incidents are reported from different parts of the country like Bake where *The Kathmandu Post* takes the view of Defense Ministry as valid one.

With the 12 points understanding meted out between Maoist and SPA dated 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2005 both SPA and Maoist were rebels as they defy the governments whip actively rejecting to involve in the election of municipality. They not only defied to involve in the election but also initiated People's Movement-II against the government.

All 8 parties stood at a same ground after 12 point understanding of 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2005. But *The Kathmandu Post* treated SPA and Maoists differently. *The Kathmandu Post* has used term 'Maoist rebels' to refer to Maoists and other parties are referred like Nepali Congress and CPN (UML) and like wise. Why *The Kathmandu Post* did not use 'rebel' to other parties also as they defied the government's whip.

As *Oxford Dictionary* defines rebels are those " who fight against the government of their country or person who opposes somebody in authority over them within an organization, a political party etc.' As 7 parties were also fighting against government they were rebels. But they are not referred.

Nepali Congress, CPN (UNL) and other Parties of SPA are not rebel because ideology of SPA and *The Kathmandu Post* is similar as they believe in bourgeois democracy. As newly emerging proletariat power, Maoists were threat not only to king but also other parties and Bourgeois exploiters.

People regard word 'rebel' in derogative sense and it may cater negative impression to people when Maoists are referred as rebels. It is a process of *othering* and exclusion. Nomenclature of Maoists as rebel by *The Kathmandu Post* has significance in stereotyping them.

Humans are identified with their name and social and organizational position. Their name and position is their identity and existential forces. Only animals are reported collectively as cows, horses, dogs etc. We have not seen post and names of animals. By giving collective name to Maoist activists, *The Kathmandu Post* dehumanized them. *The Kathmandu Post* has used terminologies like 'Maoist rebels,' 'rebel leader,' 'rebels' and so on. This collective representation of Maoist is a strong proof of being dehumanized. And this dehumanization is rooted in their ideological and economic distinction.

In another news entitled "Maoist STF in valley: RNA," *The Kathmandu Post* reports false news as true one. RNA spread a rumor that Maoist special task force has been active in valley. Intention of RNA behind this rumor was to abort strike by deploying army; and for that, rumor could be a reason. *The Kathmandu Post* also became implicit to this propaganda campaign by reporting news as said by RNA. In new it is said that RNA has "credible information" that a special Maoist forces has arrived in Kathmandu valley to infiltrate the upcoming, general strike called by SPA. But, nowhere in the news, that credible information is reported. Even *The Kathmandu Post* does not bother to take views of leaders of SPA and Maoist. Even in news it is said that "RNA accused Maoist using human rights activists and organizations to spread negative information. But nowhere human right activists and organizations' views are mentioned.

Here *The Kathmandu Post* has worked as a mouth piece of regressive government of monarch and this proves that *The Kathmandu Post* is against the people. This whimsical, one sided, invalid, imbalance stereotypical representation of Maoists after 12 points understanding between SPA and Maoist is continued

even after mass movement-II. Though people's movement-II was possible due to active involvement of Maoists and, though it was unimaginable to restore *loktantra* without its involvement, *The Kathmandu post's* attitude towards Maoists did not change. Rather it continued stereotypical and falsified representation of Maoists. Even after Peoples Movement –II Maoists are represented as rebels.

Though Maoists were not in government, they had agreed that they will make journey further through *loktantra* to republic joining hand in hand with SPA. In this context of consensus and cooperation among parties, to refer Maoists rebel is unethical and an ample evidence of othering.

Even after People's Movement-II, *The Kathmandu Post* has been relied upon Directorate of Public Relation of Royal Nepal Army for news story. It refers to *The Kathmandu Post's* nostalgia to maintain status quo. *The Kathmandu Post's* imbalance, one-sided, invalid and stereotypical representation of Maoists has been continued even after People's Movement-II that can be traced in the news entitled "Rebels abduct 5 APF men" dated 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2008, Maoists continue abduction" dated 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2006 and others.

## CHAPTER FOUR: Dehumanization and Ideological Othering of Maoists

This dissertation analyses the representation of Maoists in *The Kathmandu Post* since 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2006 to 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2006 which was the period during and after the People's Movement-II. Political and ideological role behind the representation of Maoists in *The Kathmandu Post* the way they are represented is the main thrust of this research.

Ex-King Gyanendra, the representative of feudal class of Nepal, in his Feb. 1, 2005 speech declared himself the head of the state and took all state power backed by military coup and wrongfully committed to crush the Maoists by deploying the Army. His ideology was explicit in his speech where he has declared that 'his move was necessary for the effective tackling of the Maoist "terrorist" who missed the way taking arms against the nation and people and are engaged in criminal activity against democracy.'

Daily dose of nationalism, democracy and national sovereignty expressed through different government agencies and independent media affected *The Kathmandu Post*, and consciously or unconsciously it became complicit to Gyanendra's ideology, though time and again *The Kathmandu Post* was getting threatening by the Army not to write against the government.

Moreover, *The Kathmandu Post* became complicit not because it was in favor of coup but because it was against Maoists who were holding different ideology. So *The Kathmandu Post* by distorted representation of news coverage about Maoists reproduced the discourse that Maoists have 'missed the way...' Such discourse formation enabled *The Kathmandu Post* to wield power and

dominate by defining Maoists, though indirectly, as ‘terrorist’ and exclude them as ‘the other.’

Like that of King it started propaganda campaign for which it solely relied in the Directorate of Public Relation of Army. Moreover, Ministry of Defense was spreading its propaganda against Maoists through various ISAs that Maoists are fighting losing battle and they easily can tackle them. This propaganda was disseminated on the one hand to recover the defeated mentality of the Army and decrease the confidence of PLA; on the other, to collect support from handful of upper class people, international community and from the parties of parliamentary system. By showing larger number of PLA being dead they wanted to prove that they are likely to win the battle and Maoists revolution is in the verge of abortion in the near future. By taking the press communiqué as the main reliable source of the news *The Kathmandu Post* proved that it is against the majority people’s desire for freedom, end of exploitation and corruption. In almost all news, it never gave space to Maoists’ views.

The ultimate point of this researcher in this thesis is that, as generally happens in media representation, Maoists representation is also not a value free reflection of reality rather it is patterned by the structure of values, social and economic in its origin; and these values are none other than bourgeois. All these news stories are just discourse practices. News in *The Kathmandu Post* is representation in this sense of construction; it is not a value free reflection of ‘facts.’

The final theoretical point to make heard, from this analysis, is that each particular form of linguistic expression in *The Kathmandu Post*– wording,

phrasing and syntactic option etc. – has its reason. That reason is to suppress the voices of proletariats and poor peasants. Though there were other alternative ways of saying the same thing, *The Kathmandu Post*'s particular choice has significance.

As stated in the document adopted by the central committee of the party in September 1995 entitled 'Plan for the Historical Initiation of the People's War,' People's War was waged out "by uniting all strata and categories of anti-feudal and anti-imperialist masses of the people under the leadership of the party"(3). Writing against anti-feudal and anti-imperialist masses of the people clearly means that *The Kathmandu Post* wants to maintain feudalism, imperialism and thereby exploitation and corruption. It is against general people and poor peasants.

*The Kathmandu Post*'s ideology is explicit in its choice of particular term over the other. *The Kathmandu Post* has used the term 'Maoist rebels' to refer to Maoists and 'democratic parties' to other parties like Nepali Congress and CPN (UML) and others. After 12 point understanding meted out between Maoists and SPA in Delhi, they stood at the same ground and defied the government whip. In this context, not only Maoists were rebels but also parties of SPA.

As *Oxford Dictionary* defines rebels are those "who fight against the government of their country or person who opposes somebody in authority over them within an organization, a political party etc." As 7 parties were also fighting against the government they were rebels. But they are not referred like that.

Nepali Congress, CPN (UML) and other Parties of SPA were not rebels because ideology of SPA and *The Kathmandu Post* was similar as both believed in



bourgeois democracy. As newly emerging proletariat power, Maoists were threat not only to king but also other parties and Bourgeois exploiters.

People regard word 'rebel' in derogative sense and it can cater negative impression to people when Maoists are referred like this. It is a process of *othering* and exclusion. Nomenclature of Maoists as rebel by *The Kathmandu Post* has significance in stereotyping them.

This whimsical, one sided, invalid, imbalance and stereotypical representation of Maoists after 12 points understanding between SPA and Maoist is continued even after People's Movement-II. Though People's Movement-II was possible due to active involvement of Maoists and though it was unimaginable to restore *loktantra* without its involvement, *The Kathmandu post's* attitude towards Maoists did not change. Rather it continued stereotypical and falsified representation of Maoists. Even after People's Movement –II, Maoists are represented as rebels.

Though Maoists were not in governments, they had agreed that they will make journey further through *loktantra* to republic joining hand in hand with SPA, at this context of consensus and cooperation, to refer Maoists as rebel is unethical and an ample evidence of othering.

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