



## Nationality, Plurality and B.P. Koirala

This research work intends to show the interrelations among the Koirala's vision of a harmonious Nepal with multiple languages, cultures, castes, religions, nation states and his philosophy on nationalism as depicted in his novels *Sumnima* and *Modiain*. Moreover the research also aims at establishing the relationship between the Koirala's concepts of harmonious nation-state and crippling philosophical backbones of Hindu rituals.

Koirala, in *Sumnima*, portrays the conflict between the desires of body with the attempt of purification of mind very beautifully and Somdutta, the protagonist, becomes the loser in the end. In *Modiain*, Koirala presents a passionate plea against the philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita, which assumes that the world is but an illusion and thus makes life and death a meaningless phenomena and that the observance of one's own duty is the ultimate priority. Koirala, positing himself against war, and looking at the Vedanta philosophy from a war widow's point of view, challenges the prevailing notion of the Nepali literature which generally tends to accept the Vedic idea of karma (fate). The power of victors always wants to control the losers in the name of god, religion and culture. Similarly, the lust of power, hatred for another race, groupism that he shows through the novels *Sumnima* and *Modiain* is still relevant in the present scenario.

In such context, Koirala's concept on nationality is very relevant. It doesn't mean that Koirala's notions on nation and nationality will address all kind of complexities seen on the scene of restructuration of nation, language and literature. Somdutta, the main character of *Sumnima*, is suffering from his blind faith and has psychological pressure against general norms and values of the society. He has suppressed his sexuality, youth, interest of his life, and love because of his

dogmatic philosophy of religion. Similarly *Modiain*, the main character, becomes widow in her youth because of the ruler's lust for power and conspiracy. The research probes that Koirala, by presenting the common people as his characters, has revealed that recognition of heterogeneity, plurality, and multiplicity required for a nation to reconcile the conflicting forces.

The necessity of the time frame is that there is historical necessity of inclusiveness of all languages, cultures, religions and so on. His vision of inclusive nationalism is still relevant for the present situation where he keeps people at the center rather than individual interest. Koirala also focuses on hollowness of the society and the alienation of the characters because of the prevailing philosophical life style.

Through *Modiain*, Koirala shows that our religious history itself has delimited the very definition of "love" and "god". Koirala, artistically and allegorically, presents the mythical elements to redefine the established concepts of Nepalese socio-political ideology that has love for "own" group, race, culture, tradition, language etc. and intentionally isolates the rest as "the other" and "barbaric" because of which the Hindu philosophy, society and individual life has crippled itself. Koirala's creation of surrogate world indifferent to contemporary Panchayat polity through modernist mode of expression resembles his pluralistic concept of nationalism liberated from communal violence, ethnic tension and religious strife and thus projects beautiful blending of modernism and nationalism. The power of being common citizen has been presented through literary text in literary and artistic way.

During the sixties, B.P. Koirala was writing novels in Sundarijal Jail. His response to panchayat utopia as a writer was one of indifference and was characterized by a desire to create a surrogate world of art like that of other modernist

novelists and poets. Koirala's yearning for generating substitute world in aesthetic realm is an objection to Panchayat thoughts and moralities.

Commenting on artistic quality of *Sumnima*, Abhi Subedi, a leading critic of Nepali literature, writes, "Koirala was creating a new world in his novel *Sumnima*. The utopia he was creating in his novel was one of the states where an orthodox Brahmin's hollow ideals get dismantled when he encounters a *kirati* girl named Sumnima. Somadutta, the Brahman and Sumnima become two different symbols"(88). *Sumnima, and Modiain* for example, keep the characters at the core and stresses on 'here' and 'now' rather than on 'there' and 'then' and makes a passionate plea against such philosophy which assumes that this world is just an illusion and thus makes life and death a meaningless phenomena and that observance of one's own duty is the ultimate priority.

According to Abhi Subedi, the modernist writers who opposed Pachayat utopia were "influenced by their education in western literature and arts as well" (155). He further writes, "these writers created the utopia not only through the exploration of the creative possibilities of language but also through the creation of personal myths by using a number of allusions as important components of this surrogate vision of life" (156). These writers chose modernist mode of expression in a context when it was not possible to write what they wanted to write.

A nation, according to Ernest Renan, is "a soul, a spiritual principle" (19). It is a conglomerate of people who share a common past and have derived a strong bond, with an agreement to stay together and be governed by mutual consent in the future. Hence, 'a nation' is a historical product; a tradition. Nation is a form of narrative. It is a concept of shared values, mutual interest and culture. It is the habit of living together: a habit depended on consciousness, consent, willingness, will. A

nation, therefore, is a “constant act of faith” (Guerard 122). The long-established custom of living together creates a momentum which a single generation finds it hard to overcome. Had that faith been rekindled; hadn’t that momentum completely lost its force, secession wouldn’t have been inevitable. Nation, as “an imagined political community”(Anderson6), is solidified through discourses. The writers, in their discourses, project a temporality of culture and social consciousness and help in the construction of nationhood.

According to Ania Loomba, a renowned postcolonial critic, the nation is “a ground of dispute and debate, a site for the competing imaginings of different ideological and political interests” (173). It is no doubt true that a nation consists of people from different culture, religion, language, ethnicity, ideology etc. It is almost impossible to imagine a nation with the people having uniformity in every sphere. Diversity is the reality of modern nation. Within the diversity, people’s desire to live together makes a nation. Misrecognition of this diversity causes ethnic violence and religious strife. That’s why Ernest Renan rightly says that “a nation is a soul, spiritual principle. [...] To have common glories in the past and to have common will in the present; to have performed great deeds together, to wish to perform still more- these are the essential conditions for being a people”(59).

There are different approaches to nationalism and ethnicity. They are primordial, instrumentalist and constructionist. The theorists of Primordial approach argue that the emotional ties of individuals to ethnic groups, identities of inhabitants are defined in cultural terms exclusively. It also focuses on a presumed primordial need for shared identity that is fulfilled by culturally defined groupings; nations too are products of the primordial ties of race, ancestry, religion, language and territory. The primordial’s conception of nation postulates that nations are real, not imagined,

entities. To primordial's, national identity is immutable. It cannot be created or altered through social construction or through purposeful manipulation. Craig Calhaun says, ethnic identities are "in some sense an ancient primordial, possibly even natural or at least prior to any particular political mobilization" (207). For him, these categorical identities also shape everyday life, offering both tools for grasping pre-existing homogeneity and difference and for constructing specific versions of such identities.

Concept of nation is wholly subjective, dependent on psychology rather than on biology. The constructivist position, on the other hand, sees nothing that is fixed or predetermined in the concept of the nation. Hugh Seton-Watson writes "I am driven to the conclusion that no scientific definition of a nation can be devised. All that I can find to say is that, a nation exists when a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to be a nation"(17). This process of recognition occurs as a result of a complex labyrinth of social interactions. It shows that national identification can change if these social interactions change. This approach emphasizes the socially created nature of nationality and of shared interest.

The spiritual and social linkages do not just happen for instrumentalist conception; they are shaped and nurtured specifically for political and material advantages. Traditions are emphasized, sometimes invented to correlate a group's collective identity and endow it with historical continuity. Ernest Gellner, for example, takes similar position when he says, "It is the preexisting, historically inherited proliferation of cultures or cultural wealth, though it uses them very selectively, and it most often transforms them radically"(72).

According to instrumentalism, emphasizing ethnic distinctiveness is to gain some political or economic advantage. Instrumentalists assume that ethnicity and

nationality provide convenient and resonant bases for competing elites to mobilize large numbers of people for the pursuit of partisan interests of wealth or power.

On the other hand, Thomas Hyland Eriksen takes ethnicity as a concept of socio-cultural phenomena constructed in relation to gain and loss. To quote his own words:

...ethnicity refers to the social reproduction of basic classificatory differences between categories of people and to aspects of gain and loss in social interaction. Ethnicity is fundamentally dual, encompassing aspects of both meaning and politics. (264)

Taking primordial stand, J. Milton Yinger assumes ethnicity to be a minority group. He regards race, ancestral homeland, language, myth and culture as defining elements of ethnic group and says:

...ethnic group [ . . . ] as a segment of a larger society whose members are thought, by themselves and/ or others, to have a common origin and to share important segments of a common culture and who, in addition, participate in shared activities in which the common origin and culture are significant ingredients. (11)

In fact, communal feeling is necessary to form the concept of ethnic group, and that is what we call ethnicity. The elements that create feeling of oneness among dispersed people and bind them under a group can be from shared culture, language, religion, territory myth of origin and class to race and caste. In other words, all psychological, physical, cultural and even biological aspects are responsible in giving birth to the sense of solidarity that leads to the concept of ethnicity. Thus, Anthony D. Smith is right in arguing that every ethnic category has the following six categories: “a

collective name, a common myth of descent, a shared history, a distinctive shared culture, an association with a specific territory and a sense of solidarity” (48).

Different sociologists’ understanding and the ways of defining nationalism are similar to the case of ethnicity, that is, they regard it differently. One’s way of defining ‘Nationalism’ differs from others’. To take some of them, Earnest Gellner analyzes Nationalism as a cultural phenomenon dependent not only on state formation and industrial society, but also on certain transformation of culture, such as the creation of “high culture”. At the same time, Gellner is clear in arguing that nationalism is distinctively modern and that it is not strictly the result of prior ethnicity:

...nationalism is not the awakening and assertion of these mythical, supposedly natural and given units. It is on the contrary, the crystallization of new units, suitable for the conditions now prevailing, though admittedly using as their raw material the cultural, historical and other inheritances from the pre-nationalist world. (22)

He also says, “A high culture pervades the whole society, defines it, and needs to be sustained by the polity. That is the secret of nationalism”(18). These lines suggest that nationalism is a pervasive high culture. It defines other social categories itself. But it cannot remain pervasive forever if polity doesn’t protect it.

Thus, Smith rightly says, that nationalism is “a doctrine of the history and destiny of the ‘nation’, an entity opposed to other important modern collectivities like the ‘sect’, ‘state’, ‘race’, or ‘class’”(13). He considers nationalism to be mostly an elite project, elaborated by politicians and intellectuals who indoctrinate the masses. The power of nationalism, argues Smith, should be attributed to the fact that membership in nation provides “a powerful means of defining and locating individual



selves in the world through the prism of the collective personality and its distinctive culture” (17). Richard W. Miller also supports that “nationalism is political favoritism towards whose inherited cultural background makes one feel at home with them or towards the cultivation of that cultural background” (168).

Nations are created, nourished and sustained through the telling and retelling of their pasts. Nations are essentially narrations. This process includes the myths, the heroism, the unsurpassed achievements; the many obstacles that are confronted and overcome; the flowing of literature and language; the self-inflicted wounds; the civil wars, massacres, and human atrocities. It is such a grand narratives, which are embodied in purposeful historical and literary representation, mold the imagined collective identity called nation.

Homi K. Bhabha also emphasizes the importance of communication, language and writers in the construction of nationalism. He also suggests that nationalist narratives are comparable to most other discourses. For Bhabha, the nation is a text, much as Anderson suggests in his discussion of ‘Imagined Communities’.

“Nationalisms, like narratives, lose their origins in the myths of time and only fully realize their horizon in the mind’s eye” (1). Bhabha goes beyond Anderson and insists that the narrators of this text must deal with contradictions and alien supplements that can never be fully coherent nation. He says, “What I want to emphasize [...] is a particular ambivalence that hunts the idea of nation, the language of those who wrote of it and the lives of those who live it” (1). The text of the ‘nation’, like all other texts, relies on unacknowledged sources of assumptions, represses issues or ideas of people that would call its assertions into question.

The negative aspects of nationalism define the separateness and exclusiveness of a group and stress antagonism to others. The positive aspects try to give meaning to

the community of interests of a given group and to define the rights of membership in the group of all who belong to it. It is a doctrine of social solidarity based on the characteristics and symbols of nationhood. As David Stevens remarks:

Myths tell the story; rituals re-enact it. Thus memories and stories of historic events and parades, remembrances ceremonies, celebrations, monuments to the fallen oaths, anthems, coinage, uniforms, flags - all the aesthetics of nationalism - are the things that provide a strong community of history and destiny. (256)

Steven's observation is that nationalism and ethnicity have binary relation like minority/majority, while others as just the continuation.

But while it is impossible to dissociated nationalism entirely from ethnicity, it is equally impossible to explain it simply as a continuation of ethnicity. Thomas Hylland Eriksen states:

Ethnicity can, if sufficiently powerful, provide individuals with most of their social status, and their entire cultural identity can be touched in an ethnic idiom. . . By implication, nationalists and ethicists will, in a situation of conflict, stress cultural differences vis-à-vis their adversaries. The distinction between the two may therefore appear to be one of degree, not of kind... (264-265)

The conceptual differences between ethnicity and nationalism are not obvious to the naked eyes. Most nationalism builds on the ethnic identity of the majority while rejecting or containing minority identities. Nation always tries to homogenize the cultural differences and build a 'High culture'. National identity is related to the culture and tradition of ethnic minorities. Where a group is large enough to dominate a given political unit, or may reasonably aspire to form its own, we have a nation.

Where we are dealing with a minority, it is labeled as an ethnic group or community. But ethnic groups always seek their own individual distinct cultural traits and identity.

Generally ethnic groups are considered to be minorities. But some sociologists apply the term to all distinctive groups, even majorities. By this later criterion the dominant “Hill Area People” of Nepal - the Brahman, Thakuri, and Chhetri castes - and their associated low status castes- are also ethnic groups, though it is certain that they did not usually think of themselves as such. Whelpton argues:

... “Hill Area People” was already in use as a lingua franca before the Gorkha conquest, though formal declaration of Nepali as the official language was only made under Maharaj Chandra Shamser. The case is similar with Hinduization [. . .] by Maharaj Chandra Shamser’s 1913 description of the country as ‘an ancient Hindu kingdom. Nepal was only formally proclaimed a Hindu kingdom in Mahendra’s 1962 constitution, but this is merely modern expression to a long-lasting reality, as witnessed by Prithvi Narayan’s *asal Hindustan* formulation. (48-49)

Prithvi Narayan Shah described his kingdom as an *asal* (real) Hindustan. In their efforts to centralize and to expand their polity, Shah and Rana rulers created a Hindu state, combining diversity with hierarchical organization.

The founder of the modern state of Nepal, Prithvi Narayan Shah, called his new kingdom as ‘a garden of four *Varnas* and thirty-six *Jats*’. *Varna* refers to the four scripturally sanctioned status group of Hinduism: the *Brahmans* (priests), *Kshatriyas* (rulers or warrior), *Vaishyas* (traders or herdsmen), and *Shudras* (servants). *Jat* means caste. Conventionally Prithvi Narayan’s this phrase is taken as endorsing a policy of ethnic harmony and coexistence. Goal behind Prithvi Narayan’s statement, as David

N. Gellner says, “. . . was to keep Indians out of the country. To this end he wanted to prevent his kingdom from becoming a garden of ‘every sort of people’: only then it would remain ‘a true (*asal*) Hindustan of the four *Varnas* and thirty-six *Jats*’” (24).

The National Legal Code, promulgated in 1884, imposed Hindu caste rules on various ethnic groups. The main significance of the *Muluki Ain* was its scope, the fact that it encompassed all people under the Gorkhals’ rule. It also reflected the political dominance of three “Hill Area People” namely Brahman, Thakuri and Chhetri. State advocacy was the primary vehicle for the spread of Hinduism in Nepal since punishments prescribed in the *Muluki Ain* were according to the caste ranking. John Whelpton says:

A sense of community generated by religion can provide the basis for a distinct ethnic or national identity, and, even if religious faith diminishes, the explicit ideology of nationalism can offer the sense of continuity through history which religion formerly provided. The fuel may change, but the same flame remains. (70-72)

By consolidating their political and economic power, the dominant Hindu elites in the centre were creating a specific ideological framework which linked prestige to high-caste Hindu status. Within the framework of the emerging Hindu-polity, ethnic population, notably ethnic elites responded with the adoption of specific cultural symbols of those in power.

Anderson’s definition of nation has anthropological spirit. He defines it as an “imagined political community and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (6). Anderson himself clarifies why he calls the nation ‘imagined’ and ‘community.’ According to him, “it is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even

hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion”(6).

Anderson’s idea of nation is conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Images, shared identities that link the people play crucial role in giving impression that the people of that ‘limited’ community imagine each other as members of the same community. The developed relationship of fraternity ultimately binds all of them in a strong emotional rope. They even get ready to die for each other.

Anderson traces the history of development of nation and argues this process of imagination, in the past, was due to religious community and dynastic realm. Religion was the earliest factor that motivated people to imagine themselves as the members of a community. The mediums to connect were “sacred language and written script” (13). He further explains: “all the great classical communities conceived of them as cosmically central, through the medium of a sacred language linked to a super terrestrial order of power” (13). This means the religion, in the ancient time, worked not only as connective between people but it was able to keep people at the same place by giving the impression they are being connected to divine force.

Religious community was then replaced by dynastic realm as the actor to ‘imagination.’ The legitimacy was derived “from divinity, not from population, who, after all, are subjects, not citizens” (19). The monarchical states expanded by warfare and sexual politics. People’s choices were not valued. Monarchy was taken as the power centre that had connection with divinity. Such states were defined by centres.

In the definition of nation given by Anderson, a nation is sovereign. Being sovereign, a nation is free in itself. It is inspired by Enlightenment that destroys “the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm” (7). It rejects the central supremacy. The supremacy in a nation is of people. A state is a nation if the

people can imagine themselves as the members of the same community. When this nation is given political expression, it gets the name of nation-state.

Ernest Renan's views on nation are close to Anderson as both of them focus on common spirit in the construction of nation. To Renan, a nation is a soul or a spiritual principle:

Two things, which in truth are but one, constitute this soul or spiritual principle. One lies in the past, one in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form. (19)

In Renan's definition of nation, memory and present day consent are equally important. Past is summarized and desire to live together give the expression that the populace gets ready to live their future together. He further argues nation encompasses "large-scale solidarity, constituted by the feeling of the sacrifices that one has made in the past and of those that one is prepared to make in the future" (19). He focuses on the supremacy of people. Modern nation is people centered. In this respect, Renan is close to Anderson though Renan does not talk about the role of print capitalism in forming the stage for modern nation. The supremacy of people in the construction of nation suggests that the concept of modern nation is an outcome of Enlightenment. Both the theorists have mentioned it in their writings.

Renan considers human beings essentially the same. For him the human characteristics like reason, justice, the truth, and the beauty are same for all. He argues: "the zoological origins of humanity are massively prior to the origins of culture, civilization and language"(15). His strong rejection of race, language,

religion and geography as the basis of nation is because he believes people are at first human.

Regarding the role of ethnicity, it might be suitable to draw upon the ideas of Anthony Smith whose ideas John Breuilly cites in his essay. Smith's idea of *ethnie* refers to human population having shared ancestry myths, histories and cultures, specific territory and a sense of solidarity. He does not see any determinist links between these *ethnies* and modern nations because "modern nations possess, in addition to the characteristics of *ethnies* identified above, legal, political and economic unity"(150). The argument of Smith not only complements Renan's idea but also strengthens.

Renan thinks language "invites people to unite but it doesn't force them to do so" (16). He argues there are many countries like America and England speaking the same language but cannot be united just because of same language. But in Switzerland, many languages are spoken but still the country is one. Language's inability to unite people makes it less important factor in nation construction. 'Will' is more important. Furthermore a nation is also a matter of feeling and sentiment. Same sentiment can be expressed and understood in different languages.

Renan rejects religion because it is an individual matter. According to him "religion has become an individual matter, it concerns the conscience of each person" (18). Different citizens of a nation may follow different religions. Regarding geography, he opines geography may play an important role in the division of nation but strongly rejects geography as the basis of nation construction. He focuses on the consent and will of people.

Both Anderson and Renan accept existence of emotional part in nation construction. Anderson argues that the imagination of community has emotional

attachment. That is why the members of the community or nation are “willing to die for such limited imaginings” (7). On the other hand, Renan’s idea on nation fosters a large-scale solidarity. The members get emotionally attached to each other. In view of Renan, all human beings are internally the same, that they are ready to make sacrifice in the future.

Relating Anderson and Renan’s notion of nation with that of Koirala is in three main areas i) focus on people ii) spiritual or emotional connection and iii) feeling of unity and sense of belonging to the nation or in the word of Anderson, ‘community.’ Koirala rejects the supremacy of monarchy and speaks for participation of people in the main stream politics. He has always argued that unless and until people get participation in the governing system, this country Nepal cannot be a nation. Koirala’s notion of nation comes in connection with his individual involvement in Nepalese politics. But the idea of nation by Anderson and Renan do not focus on any specific country, they rather focus on European context but their idea of nation as will and supremacy of people is similar to that of Koirala. Both the European theorists have refuted the divine and monarchy centred nation in modern context.

Spiritual and emotional connection among the citizens to form a nation is another similarity found in all those three writers. Renan gives the names ‘soul’ and ‘spiritual principle’ for the nation. Koirala also gives a high focus on feeling of being one among the citizens of a country. In Koirala’s view, nation comprises people and feeling of being one.

Since all these three thinkers offer feeling and spirituality as a key to construction of nation, they refute human boundaries like religion, race, and ethnicity as the basis of nation formation. Renan and Koirala clearly state those as negative



factors. Renan calls them 'narrow and perilous.' Koirala thinks of the end of ethnicity and race for 'welfare of humankind.' Though Anderson does not clearly talk about race and ethnicity but talks about religion, his focus on people imagining as the members of the same community signifies that he is even against race and ethnicity as the basis of nation. The strong presence of racial and ethnic sense cannot put together people of diversities in the same community. All these three writers agree on a point that humans are internally the same; they are capable of being one and forming a nation.

Sense of unity and belongingness to the state or community is another similarity. Without sense of belonging, unity is not possible. The focus on people by Anderson, Renan and Koirala indicates people focused system guarantees people's participation that ultimately gives the sense of belonging. People take the community as their own. Though the members may not know each other, the tie of nationalism knots them. Koirala pleads for inclusion of people in the governing system through democracy, that, he believes, can give the sense of belonging. To Anderson, print-capitalism gives sense of belongingness to the members of a community. To Renan, both past and desire to live together act as indicators of sense of belonging.

A nation then is a matter of common spirit. The concept of nation receives significance in order to tie the people of modern society. Secular nature of nation has power to encompass people of diverse background and identities. Equal treatment, position and rights mark the formation of a nation. Backing compromise and forgetting as requisites to nation construction, it aims at establishing humanitarian values by rejecting ethnic, religious, and linguistic supremacy.

Nations are historical products. Over time, historical conditions change and so do the cultural contexts - the base of social construction. Nepal's notions of national

identity, as promoted by successive rulers/governments have differed in the course of history. Pfaff-Czarnecka says:

Cultural change whether consisting in assimilation to a new, dominant culture or revitalization of one's own old one, or in combination of both, relates to social dynamics at four different levels. First, within the ethnic group themselves struggles occur over their material and symbolic resources. This does not only involve defining the group's boundaries and its rules for inclusion and exclusion; struggle may occur over defining a proper public image of given culture as well as over establishing who is in charge of defining and promoting a specific image of an ethnic minority group. The second level pertains to the enter-ethnic competition for rights, privileges, and resources where, among, other things, culture can become a 'political currency'. Thirdly, struggle occur between the state and the groups that dominate it, on the one hand, and the population that inhabit its territory when attempts to participate in the state's resources and the decision-making process are counter balanced by the state that seeks to maintain and to extend its control. Finally, ethnic representations are increasingly being geared to promote images not only in the national context but also to 'fit' into valid international models . . . or publicly to resist them. (420-421)

Categorizing the citizens into castes, the pre 1951 rulers united large section of Nepalese population under Hindu ritual framework for diversity. After 1951, the Nepalese political outlook changed considerably. Then Nepal entered a democratic process: equality of all citizens under the constitution. With civic rights such as

freedom to organize and freedom of expression seriously restricted, the members of Nepalese ethnic groups were prevented from displaying any diverging visions in public. But now that has drastically been changed. People play vital role in decision making process, freedom of expression, right to vote and multiple natural and constitutional rights.

The homogenizing efforts of the high-caste Hindu elites have been increasingly opposed throughout Nepal for a variety of reasons. It is precisely in systems claiming to be egalitarian that those dominant groups presenting themselves as guarantors of equality at the expense of others are increasingly taken into task. Concluding with Prayag Raj Sharma's remark, "To the ethnic activities, Hindu rule amounts to internal colonization. The Hindus are regarded as refugees fleeing from India and as followers of the religion and culture of India" (487).

Several social thinkers and philosophers have defined the term independence in their own words. While Carl Schmitt defined independence as "the power to decide the state of exception" (Schmitt 1); for Agamben, independence is not exclusively a political concept but also an ontological one. An important factor of independence is its degree of absoluteness. An independent power has absolute independence if it has the unlimited right to control everything and every kind of activity in its territory. This means that it is not restricted by a constitution, by the laws of its predecessors, or by custom, and no areas of law or behavior are reserved as being outside its control.

Theorists have diverged over the necessity or desirability of absoluteness. Historically, it is doubtful whether an independent power has ever claimed complete absoluteness, let alone had the power to actually enforce it. The other key element of independence in the legalistic sense is that of exclusivity of jurisdiction. Specifically,

when a decision is made by an independent entity, it cannot generally be overruled by a higher authority, usually another state.

Anderson's argument on the narration of modern nation begins from eighteenth century by two representing forms: the novel and newspaper. These two forms were the actors that made the anonymous people imagine the members of the same community. This time Anderson calls "homogenous empty time...marked by temporal coincidence, and measured by clock and calendar" (24). This "homogenous empty time" replaced mediaeval conception of simultaneity-along-time (past and future in an instantaneous present). Renan obviously is against race, ethnicity and religion as the basis of writing the narrative of nation, but he does not talk about abolishment of those. He just speaks for shared identities that can only ensure will or desire to live together. Accepting another's existence is the key. The concept of coexistence protects own identity, and doing so encourages the sense that one's identity exists under the condition that another's identity is safe. Now there develops the need of some collective identities that everyone can be proud of. Sense of the need of collective identities also motivates to forget and the desire to live gets strengthened.

Bhabha's writing of nation also focuses on people. The fusion of people both as 'object' and 'subject' writes the narrative of a nation. People's historical signification should be represented. History plays important role in forming people. They have learnt much from their past; they are affected by the past. In this sense they are the 'objects.' But the present situation gives the people certain roles. They have to act. In this sense they are the 'subjects.'

Bhabha clearly mentions that modern society is the site of writing the nation. Modern society is marked by diversity and pluralism. Bhabha, Anderson and Renan meet at the same point regarding the need of bringing together the people of diverse

identities and backgrounds. Anderson talks about imagination of people of diverse backgrounds as the members of a single community and Renan has talked about the need of 'will' and 'desire to live together', it is not difficult to assume that Renan is aware of the existence of people of diverse identities in a society. Then how can diversity and pluralism be addressed? Bhabha has the solution of it. Spiritual connection or the feeling of unity is another essential part of the narration of nation. Diversities and pluralism among human beings can be linked only with spiritual connection. Renan has given the names 'soul' and 'spiritual' to the nation. In the case of other three writers, the unity that they want among the people asks for relationship of feeling and spirit; new narratives help the people to get tied by feeling or spirit. By shattering the Aryan's sense of ethnic and religious supremacy, by making the voice of humanity, spoken through *Sumnima*, victorious and ending the novel happily with commitment between the two cultures to go ahead with collective effort, Koirala tries to awaken Nepalese people to the significance of coexistence, reconciliation and cultural harmony in the construction of nation through *Sumnima* and *Modiain*.

*Modiain*, deals with the condition of woman while their husbands went for war during the "Great Mahabharat". *Modiain*, the protagonist of the novel, tells the story to the narrator who is reminiscing his visit to one of the places in India. The narrator, presumably Koirala's mouthpiece in the novel, remembers how he went with Misri Ji to Darbhanga and how he listened this story of disparity and desperateness. The story told by *Modiain* deals with the historical events of Mahabharat. Mahabharat is the Great War fought in between two families. We remember so many events and circumstances of Mahabharat. But we rarely remember the small soldiers who gave their life for the rulers, for the sake of war. But what did they get from the war? This novel questions us with the condition of those poor

women whose husband went in war. Who remembers their desperateness? Having lost the only source of their happiness, who have ever thought about their condition? Due to the war, there were no males alive in the numerous villages, there was blood shed, rivers of blood flowing, but no one ever thought about that. In this situation, Koirala questions the meaning and role of people, ethnicity, race and nation.

Koirala's *Sumnima and Modiain* highlight the necessity of recognizing all sorts of diversities existing within the nation to reconcile the opposites. The union between life and hollow ideals results into the creation of the offspring who have to charter a course of action independently. But there is a celebration of life over the void ethics and orthodoxies in the novel.

Both novels display the necessity of transformation in rigid and idealistic mindset and philosophy into practical one to herald a new, prosperous and progressive nation where people can have better understanding, co-operation and social harmony. Sumnima, Bijuwa and Modiain are spokespersons of the novel and display high level of maturity and wisdom to recognize and reconcile ethnic diversity to maintain mutual trust and confidence among the people. Koirala's creation of surrogate world indifferent to contemporary Panchayat polity through modernist mode of expression resembles his pluralistic concept of nationalism liberated from communal violence, ethnic tension and religious strife.

Yuba Nath Lamsal says Koirala is among the few politicians in the world who has pursued both politics and writing hand in hand [ . . . ] His policy of national reconciliation and peaceful movement for respect of multi voice inspired all. B.P. is a democratic champion for open society and free flow of ideas and freedom of expression. He has twin personality; a visionary politicians and a legendary writer.

The project of nationhood proposed by the Panchyat polity homogenized the cultural diversity. Commenting on this practice Krishna B. Bhattachan illustrates that this system promoted, "one king, one country; one language, one dress" (21) which compelled ethnic groups to speak Nepali language in the public places and official duties. All these were done in the name of unification and homogenization of Nepal.

Multi Voice, a guiding principle of respect of multi voice, is part of human society and the voice of the opposition should always be heard. So he has always favored compromise, instead of negation of opposites. Frequently, either in speech or in written forms, he has advocated for the need of respect of multi voice and consensus. Understanding his consensus and reconciliation and his daring attempt to go even with his oppositions, it is necessary to understand what he means by a nation.

Koirala's concept of nation explains the people having qualification of human desire to live together and have respect for pluralism, democratic spirit of respecting opposite voices. Koirala negates ethnicities and geography as the basis in the construction of nation. His view is similar to Ernest Gellner's view "Men differ in their externals not their internals" (109). Geographical demarcation remains valueless in nation formation in the absence of collective sense of oneness among the people. The sense of collectivity can only lead to the solution of problems. Feeling of unity is another key element in that definition of nation offered by B.P. Koirala.

Koirala's voice corelates Nepalese context, he is always against politics based on ethnicities. In *Rajnitik Abhilekh*, he clarifies "this is the country of minorities"(260). He asks, "this country is like a boat. On that, people get across the river. What happens if the passengers fight against each other? Who can survive if the boat sinks?" (27). Through this example of travelling in a boat, Koirala concludes that he wants humanitarian and spiritual relationship among the citizens of a nation.

It looks unbelievable but is true that Koirala always wanted the relationship of coexistence and desire to live together. The concept of desire to live together is evident in Koirala's political thoughts and activities. This is because of his firm belief that by negating the existence of any group or factor of the country, formation of a nation-state is impossible. Respect of multi voice has been the primary requisite, for Koirala, to form a nation. It favors pluralism. It urges to respect the opposite voices. Everyone has pride in one's thought. Koirala argues a democratic character has a sense of respect for the opposite side. In *Jail Journal*, he states, "sense of revenge does not have any place in democracy"(155). He has always fought for respect of multi voice because it can only incorporate diverse ethnicities, cultures and thoughts to form a nation.. Respect of multi voice ensures the participation of people in the politics and governance of a country. Since he has always believed in coexistence and desire to live together as the basic requisites of a nation, he further believed that only respect of multi voice can construct a nation and thus strengthens the feeling of nationalism.

Scholars of nation and nationalism believe that respect of multi voice can solve this tension. Koirala illustrates constitutional principles of human rights and respect of multi voice can solve this ethnic tension. Koirala's life long fight for respect of multi voice and nationalism has been always with the aim of strengthening the nation by providing equal rights and thus keeping harmony among the cultures. In a country like Nepal where there are multiple ethnicities, all in minority, with a possibility of ethnic tension, there is strong reason why Koirala urges for democratic system for the construction of nation and for strengthening the feeling of nationalism. Pluralism, the basic nature of human character can only be addressed by respect of multi voice.



Only the feeling of nationalism can form a nation. Nation is the concept that focuses on people. Collective feeling to go, work and live together gives rise to the feeling of unity that ultimately is the feeling of nationalism. The concept, as forwarded by Koirala, should take together all the population of a country. Formation of a nation asks people of a country to rise above human boundaries like ethnicity, culture and religion. They should have feeling of being human. They should develop not only collective feelings but also collective and shared uniqueness. People should have respect for each other's views and uniqueness. Such democratic feeling can only create harmony so that people of a country will be inspired to develop the desire to live together.

Koirala's *Sumnima* is a sketch of two dissimilar cultures- Kirat Culture represented by Sumnima and another is Brahmin Culture carried by Somdatta. Sumnima is presented as an open minded lady whereas Somdatta represents orthodox rigid Hindu culture. They are childhood friends and have both attraction and desire for each other, but cannot go together as the inflexibility that Somdatta has acquired from his culture always stops him to hate the culture that Sumnima belongs to. He gets separated between his rigid culture, his ascetic character and the biological need that his body asks for. His repression of biological desire and the rigidity that his culture has taught him lead to his psychological disturbance and indifference to family. But the scene changes in the next generation. The failure that Somdatta faces in his life no more continues to the next generation. After his death, his son gets married to the daughter of Sumnima. The daughter of Sumnima and the son of Somdatta are no more concerned with their cultural distinctions and develop desire to live together. This reconciliation of two cultures turns out to be a success. The philosophy that Koirala

carries in his literary, political, and day to day life has been concluded with the conclusion of this text.

Scholars, researchers and critics have put their multiple voices on for and against, positive and negative parts of *Sumnima* and *Modiain*. In *Sumnima*, Koirala says, "...this story is an account that cannot be measured in the balancing scale of truth or untruth. Its importance is mythological, symbolic, indicative"(1). Analyzing Somdatta's psychological condition in general and his repression of sexual desire in particular has been the main motto of many critics.

Taranath Sharma, in the foreword of the novel, explains it in relation with the history of this country. He also analyzed the novel in terms of the nation and its cultural basis thus:

It is an attempt at re-interpreting the development of the modern Nepalese nation. The novelist is firmly convinced that the Nepalese people of modern times are a historical product of the physical and cultural amalgamation of various communities, particularly the Kirat and Khas races. (i)

Sharma's criticism explains the text's connection of diverse ethnicity, culture with the formation of nation.

Critic Krishna Dharawasi, in his book *Bishweswor Prasad Koiralaka Upanyasharu*, argues the novel tries to depict the background of Nepalese culture. For him the novel "shows that this country has its own cultural and ethnic combination even before this country was named" ( 32).Gyanu Pandey explains *Sumnima* as the symbol of existentialism. She says that *Sumnima* has existential meaning "existential approach on existential relationship" (207) between body and soul.

There have been attempts to analyze the novels from psychoanalytical and existential perspectives. Critics like Sharma and Dharabasi have also looked at the novels from the perspective of nation and nationalism. Suggesting that formation of nation is possible with co existence, unity and collective effort of different cultures and ethnicities and a person can ultimately feel one with the situation where one can have shared and spiritual connection. Despite not having direct talk of Nepalese politics in the novels, this thesis is guided to analyze the novels *Sumnima* and *Modiain* because of the novelist's hints in the preamble of *Sumnima* that it has "mythological, symbolic and indicative" signification. His hints encourage thinking the novels in terms of the significance with Nepalese history and political matters. Symbols used in the novels connote something else than the literal meaning of the plot of the novels.

## **II. Propagation of Inclusive Nationality in *Sumnima* and *Modiain***

The nation envisioned by Koirala in *Sumnima* is based on hierarchical caste system ranked on the basis of Hindu religion and finally it is blurred. Brahman is kept at the topmost step of the social ladder and his main responsibility is to give continuity to the Hindu religion or Aryan culture, like cow protection, worshipping Hindu god and goddesses and performing different Hindu rituals. Somdatta complains Kirat of slaughtering cows, he cares very much and takes her to graze every day. Somdatta and his wife address cow as 'Mother' ! They also use cow dung and cow urine to purify the place where they perform their rituals. The very cow is given to him by local Kirat and by the end of the novel, after Somdatta's death, she is taken by Sumnima. But how much Kirats care the cow is not mentioned.

Kshatriya is given ruler's role, and to serve Brahmin respectfully is his duty. The prince himself says, "this Brahmin family living here establishing its hermitage is highly respected by us. Therefore, our main objective is to provide protection and comfort to this family by all means at our disposal" (12). Prince always addresses Somdatta respectfully as "Your Reverend superior Brahmin! Divine Brahmin !"(10-11) and as such. He doesn't hunt in the jungle just for Brahmin though his main purpose of coming there is no other than hunting. In this way, he gives more priority to preserve Hinduism and serve Brahmin than his own hobby. He declares the ban on slaughtering cow in front of the Kirat and Bhilla ethnic groups. "From today on you are notified the King's order that killing of cows is prohibited in this area. From today on any kind of violence or killing cow near this land of religious penance is declared illegal by the king's order" (12). He also expresses his determination not to accept any opposition and declares that royal order is inviolable. Which indicates the Hindu notion that 'King is messenger of God and shouldn't be opposed'.

Not only Kshatriyas but also other ethnic groups namely Kirat and Bhillas, representative of Mongol, are found to be engaged in helping Brahmin. Bijuwa of the Kirat says:

Since the time this Brahmin family came to this land of ours we have been extending protection and whatever help we could. We helped the family establish this hermitage. It was again we people who cleared the jungle and prepared the things required for the hermitage and constructed and erected all these cottages with our manpower. We offered them the black cow, which gave the largest amount of milk in the Bhillage [. . .]. And we have been providing whatever things this family needs all the time. (*Sumnima*12)

Koirala, being himself a politician, also hints towards political issue as the element of nation-building but not only Hinduization or religion. We can feel it through prince's statement stated to other ethnic group: "Bhilla and Kirats present here, our ancestors have conquered the whole land extending up to the Himalayas and, therefore, it is under our protection" (*Sumnima* 12).

Koirala also fictionalizes the process of celebrating Chatara as religious place - a process of nation building. In response to the local ethnic groups' resentment against Hinduization, prince states:

All right if you specifically need the place for religious purposes of traditional worship, let that particular space remain yours. But do not butcher pigs there. The place will now on be called the Varahakshetra or the region of the boar-god [. . .] and it will be a pilgrimage site symbolizing the incarnation of Vishnu as Varaha as propounded in our religious texts. (13)

Brahmins were, and still are in some communities, regarded as superior ethnics who should not eat the things touched by others and make them their companies. Koirala hasn't missed to bring such social tradition into the light. When Sumnima wants to offer him something to have, Somdatta replies that he doesn't feel the necessity of any food at all. So, Sumnima hints at social hierarchy set religiously, "Or is it that being a Brahmin you feel that you cannot eat food items touched by a Kirat ?"(63) Similarly, Puloma's friend, a Bhilla boy, was scolded by Puloma's mother and was not allowed to play with Puloma even to call her and give any fruit to her. As a social reformer, Koirala blurs such social hierarchy and forms a single family.

Koirala presents ethnicity in such a way that it has its existence only in relation to another ethnic group. These ethnic groups are always in struggle for their existence. In the novel, we find specially two ethnic groups, namely Brahmin and Kirat, which are always in struggle to pervade directly or indirectly their own cultural and religious traits on others. Somdatta, representative of Aryan or Brahmin, tries to continue Hinduization but Sumnima opposes it. Finally, Somdatta's pure Hinduism falls into crisis. Binary relationship between different ethnic groups change into relation of compromise as Sumnima tells Somdatta's son:

Today, you have made a Kirat's daughter your wife. [...], if you understand her ethnical tradition and see the way she is traversing, you can understand my daughter very well. The daughter, too, by understanding your ideas must be prepared to abandon her path somewhat. In the same way, you must also try to compromise, being prepared to abandon some of your ways. May you prosper! May your descendants be such to be able to find out the ways of compromise!

(114)

Koirala reconciles these two ethnic groups and writes, “A Brahmin had mixed his blood also in the ethnic blood current of the Kirats”(115).

In this novel, ethnic groups have hierarchical relationship based on conventionally well known four categories: Brahmin as priest at topmost, Chhetriyas are rulers and others’ role is to perform such activities which help above mentioned groups.

Kirat and Bhilla ethnic groups are treated as inferior groups by Somdatta. Brahmin is assumed to be civilized, educated, cultured and rational who possesses “wonderful power of memory” and is “Very intelligent” (3). Somdatta boasts that they (Brahmin) are able to acquire divine power through their cultural performance. They are also able to get freedom from human weaknesses. But the members of other ethnic groups, namely Kirat and Bhilla, are unknown about all these things. Somdatta says, “Sumnima you ignorant girl, we are Brahmins who can achieve divinity by the power of penance. All our fire sacrifices, religious activities are fused together for achieving salvage from human weaknesses” (8). Sumnima also accepts her ignorance: “I am not a well read and well informed person like you” (10). However, Kirats are presented as more nationalist than Brahmin, since most of the Kirat women, gathered in front of the prince in his royal order, have “thrust bright red rhododendron flowers into their hair” (11).

Koirala also presents Aryans being more patriarchal in comparison to Mongol or Kirats. While Sumnima wants to know who he is, Somdatta introduces himself as ‘Son of Suryadatta, a Brahmin belonging to the Aryan stock’ (7). He further explains that “a son receives his life as a gift from his father and, therefore, we never commit a sin of neglecting this liberal relation of the gift of life. This is the way we express our gratitude [towards father]” (7). But when Somdatta gives emphasis on father’s role

and importance, Sumnima says, “You are given birth by your mother and, therefore you have to respect her, [ . . . ]. It is for this reason that we Kirats first get to know our mother and the man she shows becomes our father” (7). It means, father is secondary person and it can be any “male shown by mother” (7). As Sumnima gives priority on mother to father, he accuses Sumnima of being ignorant. He also brands Kirat as a wild community devoid of culture. To state his own words, “We are the descendants of the Aryans, we are well cultured. You are wild Kirats, a community devoid of any good culture. Therefore, your concepts are different from ours”(7). And he further adds that “Mother is field, you stupid girl. The master of the field is father. You are ignorant of this truth [and] the system of introducing oneself from mother is beastly” (7-8). Puloma, his life-partner, is also treated as if she is just a servant whose duty is to keep Somdata satisfied at any cost. Even the innately personal matter like sexual intercourse is not consumed according to her will. Once, when he takes such physical relationship with her, she is suggested not to take and feel physical satisfaction but just to think that they are going to fulfill their religious duty.

Koirala presents the Aryan as very dynamic and well cultured ethnic group whereas the Kirat as static. He narrates about Vishwamitra’s penance, his hermitage, its disappearance, revival of the hermitage with Somdatta’s penance, his life, his death and again destruction of his hermitage. With the passage of time he becomes more liberal and accepts Kirats’ advices. But other ethnic groups like Kirat and Bhillas are quite static. There is no change in their culture, life style or religion through generations. “The Kirats in the northern mountainous region continued on in their old situation [ . . . ]. Exactly the same happened to the Bhillas who were in the South Eastern region. Their smaller settlements that thrived with the jungle went on in their old ways as always” (2). Kirat people, who do not know wearing clothes, allude to



their primitive state. In fact, they don't like to see any change in their culture and customs. So, Sumnima says, "I feel ashamed when I cover my body, it's quite uncomfortable [ . . . ]. I feel that I have added make-up and so I feel shy !" (22-23) In contrast Somdatta suggest, "You should feel ashamed only when you are naked" (23). In this way Kirats are presented to be very primitive and uncultured who have not developed the culture of wearing clothes. But Somdatta, who claims himself to be well cultured, suggests Sumnima to use clothes and cover the natural body.

Brahmin regards any act of taking one's life as violence but Kirats gives emphasis on the reason behind it but not the act itself directly. Once when Somdatta saves a pigeon from hawks attack, he is satisfied and proud of it. But Sumnima is very worried about it as he violates the natural phenomenon - hawk, being carnivorous, is naturally compelled to prey small birds to survive. But if the hunting is just for enjoyment, it's violence. So, she remarks, "A hawk doesn't commit any violence, even the killing of cows by us [Kirat] is not violence. But the hunting for sport by your princes is real violence" (21). In response, Somdatta expresses his anger and dissatisfaction, "Hey, ignorant Kirat girl! This is the result of your lack of cultured upbringing that you don't have any knowledge of the difference between violence and non-violence [ . . . ] That's why you say the slaughter of cows is also acceptable" (21).

Sumnima gives focus on physical satisfaction and beauty whereas Somdatta regards 'spirit' as truth. Thus, when Somdatta sees Sumnima's naked body, he accuses Sumnima of being obstacle in his penance. Your body is an obstacle to the development of my soul"(30). Even during the act of sexual intercourse, they avoid sense of physical pleasure and regard it just as act of fulfilling religious duty.

Somdatta says:

Only for fulfilling our religious duty the occasion for our bodily union has presented itself today just to get a son. According to our Vedic canons and religious scriptures we must perform the fire sacrifice and special ritual to fulfill that particular religious duty [ . . . ] the bodily union performed for getting a son doesn't have the physical element. If there is even a slight awareness of physical element and of physical pleasure the duty of the union vanishes, religion melts away. (44-47)

He also confirms Puloma that she didn't enjoy the physical pleasure and didn't become attracted to sensual passion during intercourse. Sumnima says her daughter, "They [Brahmin] are the creatures of air [ . . . ] they are even prepared to abandon luxurious physical pleasure and their body [ . . . ] and your blood is of different kind. We Kirats are creatures of soil, we love soil. We are fully absorbed in the enjoyment of the pleasures of life"(114). The rejection of natural phenomena is the reason behind failure of their Hinduization and they, ultimately, should live as refugee in Kirat's house. "The more they find their bodily conjugation's failure, the more they increase their religious activities and the fire sacrifice [ . . . ] but even then all their efforts failed" (49).

Brahmin and Kirat ethnic groups think the ways of making God happy in different ways. Thus they raise question on others' way of worshiping god. Kirats offer piglets to appease god. But Somdatta argues, "god and goddess will be pleased if you perform fire sacrifice and other charity" (18).

A number of Hindu cultural and religious rituals are performed by Somdatta. From his childhood Somdatta is taken to hermitage for abstinence. Before starting penance "the sacred thread ceremony befitting the Brahmin tradition" (3) is performed. He is well educated and recites Veda's verses before and during any

activities like bathing, having meal, sleeping, and even having sexual intercourse. He follows his religious discipline of not uttering anything through his mouth before taking a bath in the river. Then he prays to “The sacred river Ganga and put[s] on three lines of Sandal paste on his forehead and smear[s] holy ashes all over his body and sit[s] down on his *kush* grass seat on the clean sandy bank of the river facing the east on the lotus pose in a calm manner to repeat the sacred words of *Gayatri* for a long time” (5). As soon as the sun rises he prays to the Sun God.

Somdatta is religious devout; and he doesn't like even very slight change in the cultural pattern. Even putting oil on hair and inserting flower into hair is not allowed to his wife. Once when he finds her doing so he scolds, “Having abandoned self-restraint and patience and using oil in your head and inserting a red azalia flower [. . .] you have turned into a savage like a non-Aryan Bhilla woman [. . .] The whole Aryan culture, religious instructions and moral teachings have disappeared from you; God has abandoned you, “(98) even the natural happenings in female like menstruation is regarded as religiously unacceptable period. Thus Puloma is not allowed to touch anything in hermitage and she hides herself in the cowshed during the period. Related to such religious belief Puloma says, “During the fourth quarter of the night I happened to have a menstrual flow, and so according to our religious custom I am staying in a secret place” (44).

Aryan family also indicates that one must have a son to get salvation after death. The ‘ghostly food’ offered by female is not, according to Hindu religion, accepted by spirits. So daughter or female are not allowed to offer ‘ghostly food’ after one's death. It is the reason until and unless a couple doesn't have a son, its duty is said to be unfulfilled. That is why Somdatta calls the act of having son as their

religious duty. Puloma also tells Somdatta, “You need a person to offer you your ghostly food after death that I am going to give you that person” (100).

However, he is not able to success in giving birth to a son and goes to take help from the very Kirat whom he has previously branded as ignorant and uncultured. Only when he finds himself “exhausted, zealous and incapable after the efforts of getting the son through their regular monthly act of torture, the desire of appeasing the Kirat gods awaken[s] in his mind” (53). Finally, he is able to give birth to a son with the help of Kirat, mainly Sumnima and her father. As Sumnima’s father suggested him, he goes with Sumnima and take a dip into the man’s pond. She decorates Somdatta and changes into the form of Bhilla. Only then he is sexually motivated and is able to make his wife pregnant.

Ultimately such a very strict Aryan culture happens to face crisis. After Puloma’s death, Somdatta is not able to prepare his food himself due to old age. Thus, he depends on food sent by Sumnima for survival. After the ritual of burning the dead body of Somdatta, Sumnima takes Somdatta’s son to her Bhillage with her. She asks people to carry the pots and pans, clothing and all and even the cow of the hermitage is united and taken to mix with her cattle in her shed. The hermitage ruins and there is no fire sacrifice and the other religious rituals also are no more performed.

Aryan culture is no more regulated then. When Sumnima asks Somdatta’s son whether he wants to keep the things like loin cloth, water jar, the string made of *Kusha* grass, straw scat, seat made of *Kush* grass as the memory of his father, symbolically Aryan culture, and he denies keeping any of them.

Kirats seem to follow middle path. Bijuwa is in favour of preserving their ethnical culture and customs but not with violence. He favors peace and compromise.

He tells Bhilla:

We have been defeated several times in war. Due to that our community is getting thinner and going to go extinct [. . .]. Therefore, the advice to go to war is like a message of all out destruction of our people [. . .]. If they do not permit us to kill cows within their boundaries, it's not proper for us to try to be butchered ourselves for standing in favor of our act of slaughtering cows. Let us move the place of our cow slaughtering a bit higher up away from their borders. Their prohibition cannot work there. And if we do not want to move our settlements away let us stop killing cows, too. (15-16)

Sumnima also expresses her wish to her daughter, "May your descendants be such to be able to find out the ways of compromise" (114).

A Bhilla is of the opinion that they should not discard their customs and traditional manners of life they have been following. They should rather destroy the hermitage and drive the Brahmin family away. He says, "if the Kshatriya returned there to keep them (Brahmins) we must declare war, yes, we must fight back [. . .]. It is better to face extinction rather than sheepishly up with injustice" (15). In this way, Bhilla ethnic group is presented to be more radical than Kirat.

Every nation is composed by people who live in societal forms. Modern societies are not homogenous. They are characterized by pluralism in cultures, religion, race or ethnicity. The concept of nation is a modern phenomenon. Its conceptual elements have made it modern. Its focus on people, their coexistence, humanitarian attitude, development of shared identities and spiritual connection to

develop the feeling of unity have dissociated the concept of nation from traditional notion of people's unity on the basis of religion and monarchy. Traditional notion, though talked about unity of people, presumed the supremacy of religion and monarchy.

Societies marked by pluralism cannot 'imagine' themselves as the members of the same 'community' without developing shared identities. Religion, monarchy, race, ethnicity and language are the dividing forces in human development. A modern nation rejects religion, monarchy, race, ethnicity or language as the uniting factor. Moreover the people of modern society rate themselves by freedom and equal rights. Obviously now the people need some new relations that can give them equal rights, freedom. It is impossible until and unless the people themselves develop 'desire to live together'. Everyone is human at first but people are identified by their cultures, religion or races which are narrow and perilous.

Cultural identities come up as serious issue in developing shared identities. The people should be ready to lose their cultural identities in public sphere. A modern person cannot live under the identity of someone else. Developing shared identities is not an easy task. Nation means people's collective move ahead to win but to do so they should be ready to lose as well. The people should be ready to 'split'. This 'splitting' of subject gives solution to people's fear of losing identity. 'Double time narrative' in the writing of nation encourages the people to move ahead with new national culture but by giving respect to 'pedagogical' dimension of one's culture. The new national culture should have performative dimension. People can perform together if they have sense of belonging to the nation. Only shared identities in the form of new national culture can do so.

Koirala's notion of nation is similar to what has been discussed above. His stress is on people and their collective effort. He believed collective effort of people to solve a problem develops a feeling of unity that inspires people to live together. Like other theorists on nation, he also discards the determining role of ethnicity, religion or race. The reason behind his wish of eliminating them for the welfare of human kind is they are human made demarcations and are dividing the people.

Koirala was very much aware of cultural dimension of Nepalese people, that it is the country of multi-cultural and ethnic groups, and none of them in majority. Construction of nation based on ethnic and cultural identity can create the problem of identity. Along with political sphere, even in societal sphere, he has always spoken for 'consent' and 'reconciliation'. Even in his notion on nation, he has never stressed on cultural and ethnic identities. His call for 'consent' and 'reconciliation' give rise to people's 'collective effort' that can take its shape after the people realize that they first are humans. Koirala narrates this notion of nation by using symbols and images in his two well known novels *Sumnima* and *Modiain*.

*Sumnima*'s two characters Sumnima and Somdatta not only represent the Kirat and the Aryan cultures but the conflict and the debate between them is the reflection of the dialectic of Nepalese society, that it basically is composed of two main descendents- the Mongols and the Aryans with plenty of cultural differences. By making Somdatta bow down before Sumnima and her culture to have a son, Koirala tears away the feeling of superiority evident in Somdatta. His boasting of being close to divinity is shattered. But Koirala makes humanity and compromise the winner in this battle. The successful married life between Somdatta's son and Sumnima's daughter indicates ethnic tension can and should be resolved only by forgetting, compromise and humanitarian attitude. Through the voice of Sumnima, Koirala

speaks humans should behave like human. They should have natural behavior. The nature is same to every person. Every person should be treated on humanitarian ground. Ethnic, racial or religious demarcations are artificial ones.

In connection with the construction of nation, the significance of the novel is it asks all the ethnic and cultural groups to have the feeling of coexistence. They should move ahead creating new national identity along with understanding each other's traditions. That can only develop collective feeling to unite all the people. By presenting dialectic of Nepalese society, Koirala tries to make his readers feel that the 'internal time' of the novel matches with the 'external time' of reader's everyday life. This feeling makes the readers believe it is their story- the characters are from their imagined community.

On the other hand the novel *Modiain* constructs the imagination of nation focusing on spiritual and humanitarian side. Like *Sumnima*, it does reflect dialectic of historical or cultural tension. It imagines the nation through the actions and movements. Similar to *Sumnima*, the novelist makes spiritual love and humanitarian values the ultimate winner. *Modiain*, who stands for nation due to her humanitarian values in general and spiritual love for her husband in particular, does not get her husband back. *Modiain* is successful novel in giving the message that humans can be happy and successful in their attempts characterized by humanity and spirituality because such characteristics give the feeling of collectivity and unity.

Against the argument of this thesis, questions might arise arguing there are other factors like political system and institutions which play crucial roles in the process of nation building. No doubt political system and institutions also play role in the construction of nation. The idea behind choosing the model of Anderson and Renan is they focus on the role humanity, compromise and shared identities which I



think should come before political system and institutions. After the people of a country get emotionally attached and united, they can adopt suitable political system which can institutionalize governmental as well as non-governmental organizations. But it can be an area of further research in the works of Koirala.

Finally, these two novels are Koirala's narration of his vision on nation without talking directly about political matters. Through these novels, Koirala urges all Nepalese people to understand the significance of unity and new narrative that can be achieved only through humanitarian values, cultural coexistence, compromise, desire to live together, collective effort and unity. In *Sumnima* too, daily activities of the ethnic groups are disturbed by the presence of nation. Sumnima and Somdatta go to Koshi bank every day and share their feelings. But once, with the arrival of prince, Somdatta is not able to go to the river bank as usual. Sumnima is restless on such unusual event, that is absence of Somdatta and their separation.

Koirala also shows Kirats' resentment against Sanskritization. Somdatta uses the Sanskrit term '*mata*' instead of '*aama*'. He also says that the Sanskrit language is "language of gods" (8). But Sumnima doesn't like the use of Sanskrit term for such a relative person like mother. She blames Somdatta, "Instead of calling a person so dear as mother, mother you call her *mata* and distance her" (9). She also accuses Somdatta of distorting others' real identity and creating false one. To use her own words "You people put clothes on anything and cover their real identity. You hang a mask on the face of an undamaged person with recitation of sacred words, penance and rituals of fire sacrifice and fasting" (9).

'Internal colonization', the term most of the minority groups' use and minority groups' resentment against it are also clearly depicted in the novel. Chatara is presented as minority group's habitation. Bijuwa of Kirat, Sumnima's father, claims

the land belonging to them (Kirats and Bhillas) and the people living there are his: “this Brahmin family came to this land of ours [and] the he Kirats gathered here are all my community brethren” (12). They do have their culture of slaughtering cow and worshiping god. But with the arrival of Somdatta Hinduism is tried to be imposed upon them. Kirats and Bhillas are forced to give up their traditional religion. But Bijuwa opposes prince’s declaration of ban on slaughtering cow arguing that there will be a great obstacle in their traditional customs if they accept this order. Further a Bhilla male stands up and resists, “On the top of the small hill up there both our communities perform special worships. We have been sacrificing piglets according to our religious customs. Honourable prince, if we are disallowed to offer our sacrifices divine anger will fall on us” (13). Sumnima’s father also says Sumnima, “Sumnima! Your Somdattas are quite well, rather its us who find it extremely difficult to continue living here because of them” (14).

Prince, who has come to the jungle for hunting with his armed followers, treats the different ethnic groups differently. He treats Brahmin as a group whom one must serve neglecting all others. He is keenly devoted to facilitate Brahmin. When the prince comes to know that there (in the jungle) is a hermitage of an ascetic Brahmin, he keeps his followers, body guards and chariots at a safe distance with a view of not disturbing the peace of the place and he goes to meet the ascetic alone. He wants to know whether Brahmin’s fire sacrifice and other rituals are going on without any obstacle; whether there are any oppositions and restrictions in his activities from the non-Aryans ! He says, “Please. . . allow me to offer my service to you as befitting from the son of a king” (10). When the Brahmin complain about the slaughter of cows and other violent actions by the non-Aryans, he orders his followers to call chiefs of

Kirat and Bhilla. Further he says, “It is the religious duty of a Kshetriya to serve the Brahmin, and as such I will certainly fulfill my duty” (11).

Utopian world of harmony, love and inclusiveness as he envisions in both novels have interrelationship between ethnic groups and nation. Local ethnic groups are not satisfied with the king’s declaration of ban on cow slaughter. Thus, even after prince’s declaration that the killing a cow is illegal act and is prohibited, the Bhillas and Kirats hold meeting whole night on the very subject matter. They also feast by slaughtering a cow and drink the home brewed beer to their fill. The relationship is always that of struggle and compromise.

In the lines of the prologue of *Sumnima*, Koirala clearly states the novel has ‘mythical, symbolic and indicative’ significance. This means the novel has other meanings apart from what clearly seems in the novel or the characters, events and objects in the novel also act as symbols. This indication of Koirala has prompted to come to the idea that the novel might have connection with Koirala’s political career and especially with his idea of nation.

Every expression of a subject is associated with psyche. In this respect, it can be argued that Koirala’s narrative construction of nation in his narratives is the expression of psyche. But this argument should not be confused with psychoanalytical perspective on a literary work that dream works or literary works are expression of unconscious desires. The thesis does not aim to make psychoanalytical analysis of Koirala’s narratives. But still the analysis may reflect some analytical modes of psychoanalysis. The thesis assumes the novels are his expression of conscious mind. By employing ‘condensation’ meaning “representing dreams, that is, into images, symbols and metaphors” (Barry 95), Koirala expresses his thought of nation. He does not express them in apparent manner but through symbols and images. This research

moves with the claim that the novels are narrative and symbolical construction of Koirala's notion of nation.

Narrated by the omniscient narrator, the novel actually is the story of two families of different ethnicities. The main character of the novel, Somdatta, belongs to Aryan culture whereas another main character, Sumnima, belongs to Kirat or Mongolian culture. The country Nepal itself is basically composed of Aryan and Mongolian group of people. Arguing from this angle, both Somdatta and Sumnima represent Nepalese people or in another words Koirala here is symbolically representing Nepalese culture and people through these two characters.

The novel is about dominating attitude that Somdatta shows upon the culture of Sumnima, but ultimately his attitude gets defeated and Sumnima's voice based on humanitarian ground wins. Somadatta grows up in a family that cannot see other than religion, divinity and religious scriptures. Somdatta's parents aim to provide him with "true religious culture appropriate to a Brahmin as well as instructions to lead a higher way of life" (3). But their vague and unclear understanding of 'higher way of life' appears as a problem. They just have the thought that this higher way of life is connected with the god, of whose existence only imagination can argue. In the quest of this ambition, they leave their Bhillage and live in a hermitage in a jungle in present eastern part of Nepal. Somdatta's school is his own hermitage. His father teaches him religious values and ways of life . Bound by strict rules and regulation, Somdatta gets up early in the morning, goes to Koshi River for bath without uttering even a single word. He would then pray to the sacred river Ganga, sitting on a kush grass and repeating the sacreds words of Gayatri for a long time. The act would be followed by returning home and creating "fire by rubbing and churning wood and placed it at the sacrificial place and by uttering sacred words in a loud voice put the

oblation of rice, barley and sesame mixed with clarified butter to the fire” (6). In this way the schooling of Somdatta given by his father aims to make him an ascetic. His knowledge is totally based on religious scriptures.

Another problem with the schooling of Somdatta is narrow attitude towards the people of other cultures and ethnicities. Especially to the Kirats, he understands them as “wild Kirats, devoid of any good culture” (7). He criticizes the non-vegetarian character of the Kirats. He draws differences between the Aryans and non-Aryans to show his superiority. He believes: “Non-Aryans follow the religion of beasts, but whereas we believe in the religions propounded by gods” (8). Here lies the fault in Somdatta’s thought. He does not look at the Aryans and non-Aryans from humanitarian ground. He considers the Aryans and particularly him and his family above the level of human and the non-Aryans at the level of animals or beasts.

On the other hand, the novelist presents Sumnima very favourably, speaking the language of humanity. She belongs to Kirat\Mongolian descendent. She speaks the voice of nature and humanity. She has learnt this voice of humanity and nature from her family. She meets Somdatta at Koshi Bank as he often comes there for the purpose of grazing his cow. She wants to develop a friendly relationship with him. For her, he is also a human and thus they can be friends. But Somdatta time and again tries to show the difference, he belongs to superior culture and Sumnima the inferior. He says he speaks the language of god and it makes difficult for her to understand him. But Sumnima does not like this superior attitude shown by Somdatta. She replies: “Then, why don’t you speak in a human language being a human yourself? In my view being human beings we should not follow god’s behavior. Somdatta, we should practise human customs as we are human beings” (8). This urge of Sumnima to Somdatta is very similar to Koirala’s stress on abolishment of race and ethnicity

and urge to behave on the basis of humanity. Sumnima's urge to behave like human leads to the idea that the novelist expresses his views through Sumnima in the novel.

Sumnima is infused with humanitarian values. She quickly forgets the debate with Somdatta and comes to compromise. She has very good understanding of Somdatta and his family that "they are the creatures of air-trying to move about in the air" (114). Such evaluation made by Sumnima gives us hint to her character that despite being uneducated, she has strong wisdom. On the other hand, Somdatta is always after the ambition of getting close to god, leaving behind his standpoint of being human. Due to this nature of both the characters, Sumnima wins the battle and Somdatta loses.

The novel features theoretical aspects of nation and its narration. Renan argues a nation cannot be based on religion, race, ethnicity and language. Similar views are given by Anderson and Koirala, the novelist as well. Anderson has argued a modern nation can no more be based on or imagined through religion and monarchy. Likewise Koirala has spoken against religion and ethnicity as the basis of nation.

Religion's inability to bind the people within the rope of unity and nation is exemplified in the novel. Somdatta quits the childhood company of Sumnima as both of them tread on youth. As he feels being tempted by the youth of Sumnima, he realizes getting diverted from his aim of becoming an ascetic. His religion has taught him to overcome physical desires and passions. He tries to develop hatred attitude towards the body of Sumnima. Moreover as once he feels defeated by uneducated Sumnima, he leaves his hermitage and goes on penance with the aim to control his senses fully. In fact religious pedagogy that he has acquired create distance between him and Sumnima. The knowledge that he acquires regarding human body is unnatural one.

Somdatta's schooling is responsible behind his hatred towards the cultural and religious practices of Sumnima. Along with religious supremacy, he also has sense of male supremacy. He knows what his culture has taught him. He understands a mother as a field and the father as the master of that field. He argues a son is known by the father, the master. Sumnima refutes what Somdatta says. She argues mother has prime position, the father is the man shown by the mother. Somdatta defends saying: "the system of introducing oneself from mother is beastly. Due to the absence of virtues of chastity and fidelity in females of brutes (beasts) their children are introduced through mother" (8). The pedagogy taught to him has Brahmin sense of superiority along with derogatory attitude towards other cultures. He views Brahmins as those who can achieve divinity by the power of penance but the Kirats are those who follow the religion of beasts.

In the relationship between Somdatta and Sumnima religious practice has been the dividing force. Both of them have different cultural or religious practices. Due to cultural differences they cannot go together. But the later events of the novel especially the married life between Somdatta and his wife Puloma depicts it cannot be guaranteed that religion can be a binding force. After a hard penance, Somdatta feels he has overcome his sensory organs and they are in full control of him. He declares: "my penance has proved meaningful. I'm able to conquer my sense organs" (38). He feels he is devoid of passion and desire. He can now remember Sumnima but without desire for her. This Somdatta now gets married with a Brahmin girl who is also religious oriented and devoid of any passion. Their only purpose of the marriage is to have a son who, they think, can salvage them and their ancestors, according to their religious belief.

But the sexual intercourse without any emotion and desire cannot give them any son. Both of them start to suspect each other for having committed any sin as the cause of not being able to have any son. Their suspicion is due to what they were taught by their religious practices. Logically we do not see any connection between the birth of a child and any sin having been committed in one's life. The religious connection in relation with not conceiving now initiates a gap of communication. Only after they get emotionally excited, a son is conceived, but the excitement comes when they imagine someone else as sexual partner. Somdatta imagines Sumnima as the partner. On the other hand Puloma imagines a Bhilla boy who used to be her childhood friend as her partner. Even after the birth of the son, the couple lives in the state of huge communication gap. Occasionally they attempt to talk to each other but the talk ends in a row. The row gets out of their control. The row gets so hot that they use intolerable expressions for each other. Puloma calls her husband "vulgar" and "lascivious" (95) whereas Somdatta charges his wife to be "shameless", "uncultured" and "savage" (95). In their case, the relationship is not strengthened despite being strict followers of the same religious and cultural practice. In fact it is proved that religion does not guarantee the unity.

Both Somdatta and Puloma get happy in their imagination rather than in each other's company. He enjoys the imaginary company of Sumnima, so does Puloma imaginaing the Bhilla boy. Both Somdatta and Puloma belong to same Brahmin community. But still they cannot be united. Both of them enjoy imaginary company of the person of another ethnicity. Then where is the position of this ethnicity in the imagination of nation? Renan is right in his comment on ethnicity as narrow and perilous. If the above mentioned event is studied in connection with Koirala's view on ethnicity that the abolishment of ethnicity for the welfare of human kind, it can easily



be concluded that Koirala in this novel speaks against the demarcation of ethnicity in human relationship. It can further be proved by other two events from the novel. One is Somdatta's talk with Sumnima after both of them have been married. In reply to the question of Somdatta that if she is happy with her marriage, she confesses: "when I spend my night with him (her husband), I feel that I am with you" (69). Sumnima, though married to the man of her own ethnicity, is not happy. The case of ethnicity cannot unite the individuals. Being one with someone else is beyond ethnic or racial issue. The ending of the novel also has similar sort of significance. It ends with the marriage between Sumnima's daughter and Somdatta's son. The novelist says this union of the individuals has been a success. He focuses on the importance of spiritual connection. The relationship tied by love and spirit gets stronger than the relationship of ethnicity and religion.

The pleasure and identification received by both Sumnima and Somdatta in imagination reminds Anderson's notion of nation as imagined community. Anderson's argument that a nation is imagined because though the members of a nation do not know each other, yet they imagine each other as the members of the same community. But this does not mean that people who know each other cannot imagine belonging to the same community. Somdatta imagining Sumnima, Puloma imagining Bhilla boy and Sumnima imagining Somdatta reveal that imagination of being close to each other turns out to be a very strong binding force. People may be far from each other, yet they can feel close and belonging to the same through this process of imagination. Religion cannot be barrier in this imagination, nor can be the ethnicity. Emotional connection is important. Anderson talks about shared identities to connect people of diversities emotionally. Renan talks about shared memories. In the above description of imagination, shared memories emotionally connect them.

Regarding language, Renan argues language can invite people to get united but it cannot force them. Renan is correct in the case of this novel. Same language cannot unite Somdatta and Puloma. Despite differences in language, he gets attached with Sumnima, Puloma with Bhilla boy and Sumnima with Somdatta. Moreover Somdatta's son's successful married life with Sumnima's daughter clearly tells us that language cannot ensure unity. People can share same emotion and thought despite difference in language whereas still there can be gaps in understanding and sharing though the participants speak the same language.

The marriage between Sumnima's daughter and the son of Somdatta can be argued as a miniature nation. This couple is not tied on the basis of religion or ethnicity or caste or language. They are tied by love and feeling. They wrap each other, do not utter even a single word but still communicate their feelings. They communicate from their heart. They have strong emotional communication that they do not need to utter anything. Apart from emotional connection, the desire to live together brings them closer and closer. Sumnima cannot reject the desire expressed by Somdatta's son after the death of his father that he wants to "live with *Yawa* (Sumnima's daughter)" (108). The desire to live together also comes from the side of Sumnima's daughter. By narrating a successful married life of this couple, the novelist expresses his notion of nation that a nation can exist if people in the country have spiritual connection and desire to live together. The couple symbolically stands for people of a country and their successful life stands for a united nation.

Apart from desire to live together, collective effort, likely to develop only after compromise, is another factor to establish a nation. The relation between Sumnima/Somdatta and Somdatta/Puloma do not succeed or let's say they cannot go collectively because of lack of compromise. Somdatta's dominating attitude has

always led him away from compromise. He does not accept even the strong logics given by both Sumnima and Puloma during his debates with them. Once Sumnima and Somdatta fall in a debate on what is violence and what not. Sumnima argues natural killing like a hawk kills a bird for food is not violence. But hunting in the name of sports is violence. War described in Hindu religious books like Mabharata is real violence. Somdatta cannot tolerate it. In a calm voice he replies:

Hey, ignorant Kirat girl! This is the result of your lack of cultured upbringing that you don't have any knowledge of the difference between violence and non-violence. Therefore, without comprehending the essence of non-violence as accepted by religion you insult it and don't regard the violent beast's behavior incited by savage instinct blamable. That is why you say slaughter of cows is acceptable. (21)

In this reply of Somdatta, his use of the words like 'ignorant', 'lack of cultured upbringing' makes it easy to understand that he wants to defeat Sumnima not by logics but by hurting her culture and lack of attending any school. Somdatta gets uncompromising. He rather prefers to keep the distance rather than accepting his mistake and coming to compromise.

Uncompromising character of Somdatta continues to even in relationship with his wife. His sexual relationship with his wife (as already mentioned, it happens as he imagines Sumnima in the place of his wife) arouses emotion in him though for lifelong he has worked hard to overcome sensual pleasures. Later again he wants to have intercourse with his wife. He tells her he is "desirous of love" (94). But Puloma refutes. She has also been taught that there is no place for love in their relationship. This makes Somdatta angry. In angry tone he claims "his right of sexual union" (94) with her. Puloma also gets angry, unties the knot of her cloth. Displaying the naked

body, she angrily invites him to quench his thirst. The environment get so fierce that the emotion aroused in Somdatta gets down and returns to his room. Puloma quickly realizes she should not have behaved with her husband that way. She wants to make him happy. She puts oil in her hair, combs it, inserts a fresh flower into her hair and goes to the room of her husband. Somdatta sees realization in his wife but does not cool himself down. He does not forget the event happened just before. He rather starts to attack Puloma verbally:

Contracting his lips a bit Somdatta said in a satirical tone, “What kind of dress is this today Puloma? And what type of hair style is this? This red flower! I see that someone has inserted a red azalea flower into a dry tree.”

Somdatta kept on his attack and said, “You have lost all the sense of propriety. The feeling of sin has awakened in your old body, Puloma, sin!” (97)

The uncompromising nature of Somdatta is responsible behind his failure in his relationship. Had he forgotten the row with his wife and understood the realization of her, their relationship could have taken a decisive turning to happiness and unity. In fact his own nature becomes his enemy.

Another important factor in the construction of nation is humanity. Renan has called for the realization among the people that they first are humans. Human originated first in this world before other demarcations like religion, race, or ethnicity. Koirala has also spoken for the need of same realization. One of my arguments in this thesis is that Koirala expresses his thought of humanity through the voice of Sumnima. Her dialogues pleading for humanitarian values match with the ideas of Koirala.

During the conversations and debates with Somdatta, Sumnima cannot understand the words used by him. Asking for the reason behind using such words, he replies the words belong to “the language of gods” (8). Disliking the use of such words, she asks him:

“Then, why don’t you speak in a human language being a human yourself? In my view being human beings we should not follow gods’ behavior. Somdatta we should practice human customs as we are human beings.”

“...it’s not good to try to become god being human being. It’s not the duty of a man. No human behavior remains with you, and your habits are corrupted. If we try to live like gods we don’t remain human....”

(8)

This prediction of Sumnima turns out to be very true. Living away from human society in search of “salvage from weaknesses” (8) takes him no where nearer to the god. Rather he lacks normal human courtesies, characters and behaviours, due to which he even cannot live with his wife. Ignoring humanitarian values and focusing only on religious ethos keep him in a ‘narrow’ space from where he cannot come out.

Cultural aspect is a key to construction of nation. Human beings, though argued to be same internally, but ,in reality, they are identified by the factors such as race, ethnicity, caste, culture, religion etc. They have their own history and background. But a modern nation cannot belong to any particular ethnicity, religion or race. Human movement like immigration is leading countries to pluralism in terms of culture. Moreover though basic natures of humans are called to be same, their thoughts are marked by pluralism. Given the existence of the modern world, nation based on homogenous cultural background cannot be imagined.

Koirala's notion of 'cultural reconciliation' has signification in the construction of nation, especially to win by losing. For him, cultural reconciliation is so important. Koirala has given the analogy of 'travelling in a boat' for nation, particularly Nepal which is a multicultural and multiethnic country and all of them in minority. He wants cultural coexistence and reconciliation among the cultures, if not, the boat sinks. Somdatta remains unhappy throughout his life due to his inability to have reconciliation with Sumnima but in the next generation his son gets happy as he gets reconciled with Sumnima's daughter.

Sumnima's experience that she delivers to her daughter and Somdatta's son on the verge of their marriage clearly reflects Koirala's notion of cultural reconciliation and compromise. She reminds her daughter about the cultural differences between the Kirats and the Brahmins:

His blood is different. His mind is taken by some unknown things.  
 They are the creatures of air-trying to move about in the air. They are never satisfied with the fullness of life. They are attracted by its emptiness [ . . .]. We Kirats are creatures of soil, we love the soil. We are fully absorbed in the enjoyment of the pleasures of life, we don't see its lack. For us our body alone is the most loving thing. We regard the Brahmins like the kites with broken strings and they may think us like the earthworms. (114)

The difference between two cultures described by Sumnima reveals these two cultures as the poles of two different sides. But she still thinks the union is possible. She believes humans are internally the same. She thinks her daughter and Somdatta's son can live a happy life. But for that they should realize the difference and should accept each other's existence. They should realize the liminal character of cultural identity

that culture cannot be fixed ever. Every culture is subject to change. Gradual change is inevitable. They should understand cultural coexistence as a minus-sum game. In an attempt to win by living together, they might have to lose something. Only then cultural harmony can be established. Sumnima goes on giving advice based on her experience:

Today, you have made a Kirat's daughter your wife. Her Kirat character is vivacious. She doesn't recognize anything except her body. I don't know how far could she give you company in your flights. But, if you understand her ethnical tradition and see the way she is traversing, you can understand my daughter very well. The daughter, too, by understanding your ideas must be prepared to abandon her path somewhat. In the same way, you must also try to compromise, being prepared to abandon some of your ways. May you prosper! May your descendants be such to be able to find out the ways of compromise! (114)

'Compromise' is the word Sumnima focuses. The word asks for giving up something to gain something. Sumnima's request to both of them to understand each other's ethnic traditions, in broader level, suggests cultures and ethnicities have to understand each other's past and background to develop the environment of harmony, to imagine as the members of the same community and to develop desire to live together.

The sense of compromise or accepting another's existence is something Sumnima has acquired from her culture. Once the Kirats as well as the Bhillas are ordered by the Prince of that area not to make any slaughter and sacrifice in that land. The order comes because Somdatta's father complains his penance is getting disturbed by the slaughter and sacrifice made by the Kirats and the Bhillas. The

Bhillas are in mood to declare war rather than accepting the royal order. But Sumnima's father who is the head of the community decides to change the place of sacrifice and slaughter rather than inviting the conflict. Sumnima, small girl then, becomes so happy with the decision of her father. The possible danger is thus wiped away with compromising nature of the members of the Kirats. Along with the features of nation, the novel *Sumnima* has use of narrative techniques to make the novel writing of a nation.

Anderson's argues the narration of a nation uses 'images' that connect the 'interior' time of the novel to the 'exterior' time of the reader's everyday life. The connection makes the readers imagine themselves as members of the same community. The novel has certain features that stand for Nepal and its people. First, the setting of the novel, the present eastern part of Nepal makes it visible that it is the story of this particular territory. The territory symbolizes shared 'history' and 'image.' Two cultures described in the novel represented by Sumnima and Somdatta symbolically stand for people of this territory. This territory is basically composed of Aryan and Mongolian descendents. The Aryan culture represented by Somdatta and Mongolian culture represented by Sumnima, in larger scale, is the reflection of the basic situation of the territory.

The debates and conflict between Somdatta and Sumnima have connection with what Nepalese people or the readers feel in reality. People of Brahmin community argue themselves as superior among Nepalese people. This debate and conflict is given a positive turn at the end of the novel. By tying Somdatta's son and Sumnima's daughter in a nuptial knot, the novelist gives the message that the ethnic distinctions are human made and they can be unmade as well. Through the voice of Sumnima, Koirala presents the solution of ethnic friction that it can be solved by



trying to understand each other's tradition and coming to the point of compromise. The solution is an attempt to arouse a feeling of solidarity among all the Nepalese people of Aryan and Mongolian descendents, this feeling of solidarity invites people to imagine as the member of the same community. The novel tries to awaken all the people to the fact solidarity and togetherness are possible with reconciliation and compromise among cultural groups.

Still the differences mentioned in the novel are not out of practice when the novel was written. Still then and even now Brahmins are associated with religion and practice of reading and writing. But the Kirats and other Mongolians are thought to be the consumer of earthly pleasures but it should be accepted that these cultures are changing. During the time of Koirala and even now, Nepalese society is moving through dialectic of historical differences between the Aryan and Mongolian cultures. Koirala in the novel tries to synthesise the dialectic by uniting Sumnima's daughter and Somdatta's son. Bhabha speaks for the need of paying attention on the 'double narrative' movement of both sides. By double narrative Bhabha means to say creating new collective narrative without ignoring the historical cultural identity. Sumnima's advice to her daughter and Somadatta's son before their union speaks for the same. Sumnima asks both of them to understand properly their cultural differences and ethnic traditions. They should be able to come to the point of compromise, for that they may have to give up their certain ways of behaving.

The novel *Sumnima*, based on the above discussion, can be argued as the expression of Koirala's vision of nation. The victory of humanitarian values upon the ethnic and religious discriminations and the rejection of ethnic and religious supremacy give the novel a feature of nation construction. By shattering the religious and ethnic supremacy of Somdatta and ending the novel with happy union between a

couple belonging to both Aryan and Kirat culture, the novelist does not only try to match the 'interior life of the novel' with the 'external time of the reader's life' but also makes it clear that nation construction moves through, what Bhabha calls, 'pedagogical' and 'performative' dimensions. The novel delivers message to all Nepalese people that their solidarity can be strengthened only by accepting cultural coexistence, and creating new national culture.

The novel emphasizes on 'compromise' and 'collective effort,' the requisites to nation formation. Sumnima and Somdatta cannot go ahead due to uncompromising nature of Somdatta. But Sumnima's daughter and Somdatta's son are able to live happy life as they compromise, forget the bitter differences between their cultures and make joint effort. They get 'split' or adjust with new identity. Their happy conjugal life is a miniature nation. The characters symbolically represent cultural combination of Nepalese society. This nation refutes ethnic, linguistic and religious supremacy. With respect to each other's historical background, the couple creates new culture that can bind them together to move ahead. All these features make the novel symbolic and narrative construction of nation.

The background of the novel *Modiain* includes confession of the novelist about the psychological dimension of every author, particularly a fiction writer. His confession clearly resembles what Sigmund Freud, from whom he is very much influenced, argues about psychological dimension of a literary work or dream work that it involves the "transformation of the latent content into the manifest dream" (Green 149). It is not difficult to conclude that the story of the novel has connection with his psyche and other real life events.

It is of course the matter of the job of a critic, to relate the events depicted in a novel with that of the novelist and interpret the novel. This writing assumes the story

of the novel may not have link with only a particular event of the novelist's life. Some characters may resemble one part of Koirala's life, whereas some other events and characters might have equivalence with other parts of his life. Modiaian resembles someone who comes back realizing only spiritual connection can construct a nation. Modiaian stands for what Renan calls a nation as soul or spiritual principle, defined by 'shared history' and 'desire to live together.' because she is connected to him by soul or spiritual principle. The extent of the strength of this relationship is exemplified from the behavior of Modiaian. She believes he has resided in her soul that he never goes away from there. Those who see her talking like that think she has been abnormal after the death of her husband. But she is right considering her attitude towards her husband. Her want of her husband has always been above physical desire. In the novel, we do not see any situation where her want of her husband can be associated with lust. She lives her life with the memories of her husband.

Modiaian is metaphorically a nation. Nation as 'imagined community' has equivalence with the home of Modiaian. Her home represents her shared 'history' and 'culture'. In the later part of the novel, Modiaian is another name of the home. After all the family members leave the home either due to death or migration, she is alone at the home, takes all the responsibility. She alone preserves all the shared 'history', 'images' and 'cultures.'

The 'internal life' depicted in the novel matches with the 'external life of the reader's life'; this feature of the novel makes it a narration of nation. *Modiaian* is the character through which a reader can imagine it is the story of none but of a member of same community. A reader can associate with *Modiaian* through her actions and movements. The novelist's description of the setting, the eastern part of Nepal, Terai work as shared images the Nepalese people can identify with.

Apart from another name of home, Modiain has enough features to be associated with ‘imagined community’ or nation. She is a nation, an imagined community where relationship is bound by love and mutuality. More than that, this imagined community is bound by spirituality. She loves him from heart, beyond physical. Anderson and Renan agree with the point that members of a nation get emotionally attached that they are even ready to make sacrifice for each other. The sense of sacrifice is evident in Modiain. Throughout her life she has sacrificed her individual interests and is ready to do so in the life to come.

The members create new ways of living, new images and cultures that they all can identify with. Only collective effort by the members can take the nation ahead.

The novel can be argued as the expression of nation in general and Koirala’s concept of nation in particular. The novel at the same presents the story of Modiain who symbolically stands for a nation not only because she is infused with spirituality and humanitarian feelings but also someone who preserves the ‘imagined community’ to which Modiain belongs to. The use of setting and festive celebration like eastern part of Nepal, Terai, act as symbols and images and relate the ‘interior life’ of the novel with the ‘exterior life of the reader’s life.’ The interplay of the relationships between Modiain and other characters reveals the relationship based on spirit, coexistence and humanitarian is valuable, immortal and very capable of germinating a sense of collectivity and unity that even makes someone ready to sacrifice for others. Such are the features of a nation or a national discourse that characterize the novel *Modiain*.

### **III. Cultural Reconciliation: Koirala's Envisioned Utopia in *Sumnima* and *Modiain***

Both *Sumnima* and *Modiain* by B. P. Koirala reinterpret the ethnic as well as national identities and have been written from the perspective of the inclusiveness. Koirala's concept of nation, as envisioned in *Sumnima*, emphasizes on common spirit and joint effort of people that give rise to the feeling of unity. He foregrounds humanitarian values and backgrounds ethnic, religious supremacy. His notion and idea of nation is focused on humanitarian ground, emotional connection achieved through either 'shared history' or 'images' and 'symbols', and a sense of collective effort or desire to live together.

Koirala, aware of ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity of Nepal, focuses on compromise and new culture or narrative that can incorporate people of diverse background together to raise the sense of collective effort to knit them together in the fabric of nationhood. Koirala constructs nation with an attempt to awaken Nepalese people to the significance of coexistence, reconciliation and cultural harmony.

Similarly *Modiain* dramatizes historical war that took place during Mahabharat Period. Ethnic people have their emotional or spiritual unity and they assume their ethnic identities as more precious than their own lives. Giving focus on the religious aspect of the ethnicity and the nationalism, Koirala presents process of Hinduization and Sankritization, and other non-Hindu ethnic groups' resentments against such processes. Koirala also ironizes to the Brahmin culture. He gives emphasis on the spiritual aspect to physical pleasure. Finally, as a social reformer, he tactfully merges these two different ethnic groups into a single family blurring all social hierarchy.

The power of victors always wants to control the losers in the name of god, religion and culture. Similarly, the lust of power, hatred for another race, groupism that he shows through the novels *Sumnima* and *Modiain* is still relevant in the present scenario. Somdutta, the main character of *Sumnima*, is suffering from his blind faith and has psychological pressure against general norms and values of the society. He has suppressed his sexuality, youth, interest of his life, and love because of his dogmatic philosophy of religion. Similarly *Modiain*, the main character, becomes widow in her youth because of the ruler's lust for power and conspiracy.

The research probes that Koirala, by presenting the common people as his characters, has revealed that recognition of heterogeneity, plurality, and multiplicity required for a nation to reconcile the conflicting forces.

Anderson traces the history of development of nation and argues this process of imagination, in the past, was due to religious community and dynastic realm. Religion was the earliest factor that motivated people to imagine themselves as the members of a community. Ernest Renan's views on nation are close to Anderson as both of them focus on common spirit in the construction of nation. To Renan, a nation is a soul or a spiritual principle. In Renan's definition of nation, memory and present day consent are equally important. Past is summarized and desire to live together give the expression that the populace gets ready to live their future together. Both Anderson and Renan accept existence of emotional part in nation construction. Anderson argues that the imagination of community has emotional attachment. That is why the members of the community or nation are "willing to die for such limited imaginings.

Bhabha clearly mentions that modern society is the site of writing the nation. Modern society is marked by diversity and pluralism. Bhabha, Anderson and Renan

meet at the same point regarding the need of bringing together the people of diverse identities and backgrounds. Both novels display the necessity of transformation in rigid and idealistic mindset and philosophy into practical one to herald a new, prosperous and progressive nation where people can have better understanding, co-operation and social harmony.

Koirala's concept of nation explains the people having qualification of human desire to live together and have respect for pluralism, democratic spirit of respecting opposite voices. Koirala negates ethnicities and geography as the basis in the construction of nation. Scholars of nation and nationalism believe that respect of multi voice can solve this tension. Koirala illustrates constitutional principles of human rights and respect of multi voice can solve this ethnic tension. The concept, as forwarded by Koirala, should take together all the population of a country. Formation of a nation asks people of a country to rise above human boundaries like ethnicity, culture and religion. They should have feeling of being human. They should develop not only collective feelings but also collective and shared uniqueness. People should have respect for each other's views and uniqueness. Such democratic feeling can only create harmony so that people of a country will be inspired to develop the desire to live together.

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