

I. Introduction

Dalan, a tele-serial, portrays the prevailing caste discrimination and the system of untouchability in our societies. The word 'Dalan', which means the age old domination, oppression, exploitation, victimization, and subjugation in terms of the caste hierarchy, carries the essence of the tele-serial. Such *dalan* is still prevalent in the Nepalese societies ranging from the nooks and corners of the remote villages to the Capital city Katmandu. *Dalan* incorporates the social history of Nepal from the end of the Rana Regime in 1951 to the beginning of the People's War in 1995. Even after the establishment of democracy in 1951, the domination and exploitation on the Dalit communities continued.

The endorsement of democracy in 1990 constitutionally abolished the untouchability system and declared that "any person making such discrimination would be punished and the state would not discriminate its citizens on the basis of their religion, caste, gender, ethnicity, ideological faith" (4). Political awareness and access to education brought some changes in people regarding the caste issues. But, only the constitutional and legal provision could not bring drastic changes as expected. Since it is deep-rooted in our society culturally, constitutional and legal provision could not be implemented in the society.

This sort of caste discrimination prevailing in the Nepalese societies pervaded because of the Hindu religiosity that is practiced even now. Our societies are highly dominated by the Hindu-varna system and its fundamental norms and principles are applied here. The caste system and the practice of untouchability have remained as 'black spots' or aspersions of Hindu religiosity since long. Before the announcement of secularism (on 4th Bhadra 2064), the country was known as "the only Hindu Kingdom" of the world. Before this, the Constitution of Nepalese Kingdom–2047 had

defined the country as the “Hindu Kingdom” at its very proposition. From this notion, it can easily be imagined how blindly the country had adopted the Hindu religious system which is contaminated by the inhuman practice of casteism and untouchability.

In the ancient Hindu Vedic period the philosophers and sages had not thought of such discriminatory system. They had categorized the people of the society on the basis of their labor and had given them different names. The sole purpose behind such category was to run the social function smoothly. The social division was made on the basis of the work one does. In *Rig-Veda*, it is mentioned only about the formation of four persons from the four bodily parts of Barhma. There is no symptom of caste discrimination as such. But later on people began to misinterpret the ancient philosophies and their work-based caste system turned out to be a birth-based system, and there entered the practice of untouchability. As per the Hindu religiosity our societies have been stratified mainly in terms of the four castes: Brahmin, Chhetri, Baishya, and Sudra. The Brahmins are at the top of the social ladder. They are thought to be holy and, therefore, powerful. Most of them are involved in the works of reading and writing. Among the four castes Chhetris and Baishyas are in the middle. They are destined to work as the protectors and business-workers respectively. The shudras or presently Dalits were totally banned to do the jobs allocated to the upper castes. But the last one Shudras are thought to be ‘untouchable’ and are destined to work the low-paid jobs. *Manusmirti*, a guideline to the present form of Hindu religiosity at a place clearly mentions “if any person from lower castes tries to do the job of upper caste, the king should confiscate his all property and send him into exile at once” (qtd. Shastri 243, My trans.). Such tendency came into practice after the Vedic period and has lasted till now to some extent in various forms. Nowadays our societies have been

so complex that the caste-based discrimination is internalized by the every social being and it is very difficult to avoid the mentality rooted in casteism. *Dalan* has portrayed the Nepalese social history which was unacknowledged earlier. Its story begins from the depiction of the pathetic plight of the major character Harihar.

Harihar Nepal, the protagonist of the tele-serial, is ready to shave his head four sidedly and be banished away from the village but is not ready to desert his beloved Tulki. It is Harihar Nepal, a boy from the upper caste Brahmin family, who has fallen in love with a so called 'lower caste' Dalit girl Tulki Damini and also has impregnated her. By knowing this, the chief of the village (Jimbwal) and his priest father decide to send him away to Banaras but he returns back from the midway and happens to save Tulki from committing suicide and decides to marry her. The conservative people of the village think that their inter-caste marriage will spoil the religion, and the whole village may collapse into an abyss of sin, and, therefore, decided to chase them away across the Bheri River.

After crossing the Bheri River, Harihar and Tulki reach to a village near Parbat and Baglung. Tulki gives birth to child on the way and the trio happens to take a shelter at Dhambare Damai. Dhambare helps them to get a job of domestic slave at the Jimbal of the village. In the feudalist Jimbwal's farm they work very hard and earn their lives. After some years Tulki dies there due to her inability to give birth to her second child. Due to the trouble, pains, and diseases Harihar too dies a heart-rending death while ploughing the paddy field of the Jimbwal.

Then after, son of Harihar and Tulki, Juthe is enslaved to pay the debts of his parents. Living at the Jimbwal's in a separate cottage he marries Kali. They give birth to a son named Mane. He is successful to study upto SLC. Until this period, the history comes to the years of 2046. Along with the restoration of democracy, Mane

unites some of his friends and youths and raise voice against the discrimination, oppressive behaviors and the injustice upon them. But when they become unsuccessful in their mission, Mane becomes sad and goes away to the Capital, Kathmandu with a revengeful vision of rebellion, but is disillusioned with the worse condition in the city too.

Mane becomes Manav and begins to live in Kathmandu by hiding his caste identity. He has a love relationship with an educated girl Ava Basnet, a non-Dalit progressive girl. He bears mental and physical torture due to his dual identity as well as the lack of income. At last, he is disillusioned on his own thinking. He realizes that his act of hiding the caste identity was an escapist way. Lastly, the serial ends with his realization that Dalit people's liberation is not possible without making the unified struggle against the polluted system of casteism and seeking for individual liberation by escaping and hiding one's reality is suicidal for the very dominated class i.e. age-old suppressed Dalits.

Harihar's bitter life stories along with his upcoming three generations and their painful relationship with the feudal lords like the Jimbwal is the major subject matter of the serial. It covers the struggle, trouble, pains and the unending domination of the Dalit people. It has historically presented the caste discrimination, Nepalese society and the condition of the Dalit people. The higher caste people go on victimizing the lower caste ones. The first generation (lower caste people) accepts every discrimination as their fate provided by their caste. But the context of the revolution by Ragraje Kamis in a remote village hints at the upcoming rebellious consciousness among the Dalits. Gradually, Dalits are becoming conscious about their pathetic condition not because of their fate but because of the socio-economic system. The rebellious consciousness in their unconscious mind comes out at their drunken

situation. Dhambare comes out with khukuri after his daughter Ramva is raped. Juthe too comes with a stout when the feudal grumbles day and night blaming him as a work-cheater though he was bedridden with sickness. Kali, Juthe's widow, shouts and scolds at the Bistas, when their atrocities are unbearable. These actions are not seen whom they target but they are the true manifestations of their growing rebellious consciousness. Dalits like Dhambare deny managing the animal carcass. Then after the second generation of Dalit starts to go to school and attempts to enter into the temples where they are prohibited.

Dalan shows that caste discrimination is prevalent everywhere else in Nepal. It has maintained typical characters to present the evil practice of Casteism. Sivaram from Terai, Manav from hill and Dhanalaxmi from the capital city represent the darker side of casteism in their respective places. *Dalan* is successful to show the wicked practice of casteism as a communicable fatal social disease which reminds the groundbreaking statement made by B. R. Ambedkar in *Class, Caste, and Gender*: "As long as caste exists, Hindus will hardly intermarry or have any social intercourse with outsiders: and if Hindus migrate to the other region of the earth Indian caste would be a world problem" (132). In fact caste discrimination has become 'uniquely' a 'black spot' on the face of Hinduism. Bishwamani Subedi in an analytical article 'Damdar *Dalan*' published in *Janadisha Daily* synthesizes the significance of the tele-serial *Dalan*. 'Dalan' or a weighty title made up of five (in Nepali three) letters speaks the 'age-old discrimination'. We have seen in our won localities how unbearable is the 'burden of discrimination' not only for the society but for the whole human civilization. The policy makers run after 'personal benefit' instead of the 'benefit of the backward class and caste'.

Dalan shows the developing social consciousness and activities against the untouchability and discrimination. It is not blindfolded towards caste since it simultaneously explores the characters both good and bad in Dalit and non-dalit communities. It involves a Dalit character like Maniram who earns *dollar* on the agenda of Dalits but does not do any thing for the sake of Dalits. On the other hand, it also portrays non-dalit characters like Nandaprasad, who gives up his job and participates in an underground movement that aims the abolition of all the discriminations including the evil of casteism. Here, *Dalan* makes crystal clear that belongingness of the same caste doesn't matter rather what sort of class consciousness one does have for the total liberation of people from all sorts of inequalities matters most. *Dalan* implicitly hints at the failure of communist movement regarding the issue of casteism in Nepal. Since the inception of the first Nepalese communist party in 2006 B.S. to the ending time frame of *Dalan* i.e. 2051 B.S., the communist leaders and the cadres participated in many sacrificial movements for the total liberation of the proletariat i.e. suppressed and ruled class. But the position of the Dalits remained the same even in the communist parties. The leadership could not grasp the Nepali socio-economic structure and they practiced Marxism in a dogmatic way. They ignored casteism and other suppressing factors which lie even within the same class. *Dalan*, as an electronic media could show this and other unexpressed psychological factors that create a long and established distance between and among Dalits and non-Dalits in a dynamic way.

Dalan depicts the social hypocrisy of the non-Dalits who hate the Dalit women as the untouchable in the broad daylight and get lured to sleep with them at night or when they are found alone. Brahman Harihar Nepal publicly welcomes his love with Tulki Damini. His revolutionary love results in his ostracism. But the rapists

like Hombahadur, his friends and sons, who rape the Dalit and Janajati ladies are rewarded instead of being punished. This is the contradiction within casteism that behaves people differently as per their power and approach. From the very beginning of the tele-serial class consciousness is seen in a subtle form. The love marriage between Tulki Damini and Harihar Nepal in the heyday of the caste discrimination can be regarded as the product of class consciousness. Because of his marriage with the Dalit girl, Harihar has to experience hellish downfall but he is never heard regretful for his love. Moreover, he tries his best to keep his love alive even in the deathbed.

The script of the serial *Dalan* is written by Aahuti, a well known name in the literary field of Nepal. He is the writer of successful novels like *Naya Ghar* (New Home) and *Skhalan* (Fall). He has also written popular poems like ‘Gahun Goro African’ and ‘Maila Dai Maile Ghans Khana Sakina’. He is a political activist and has in depth understanding of the Dalit Movement of Nepal as well as the World Communist Movement. The script writer of the tele-serial, Ahuti has been writing script for motion pictures. His profound knowledge and the realization of the pains and pathos of the Dalit communities paved the way to construct the new kind of discourse. Since he himself is from the Dalit community his creation has realistic flavor on the matter of Dalits, their inhuman discrimination and the imbalanced relationship with the non-Dalit power holders. *Dalan*'s representative producer Purna Singh Baraili has said “though films and television are the perfect means of expressing people’s freedom and advocating their rights, Nepali media has always lagged behind; and with this endeavor the much-oppressed and neglected Dalit community would be given a vehement voice”(7).

This research work is based on an extensive study in the theory of core Marxism and philosophy presented by Karl Marx, after whom the ism is dubbed, his contemporary comrade Frederick Engels and practioners and enhancers of the Marxist philosophy like V.I. Lenin, Mao and so many others theoreticians along with the study of the audio-visual of the film *Dalan* and its script as well as the published articles in different newspaper and journals. The researcher have gone thoroughly on many religious books like *Mahabharat, Manusmirti, Ramayan, Vedas, Geeta* and dozens of caste-based books like *Hindu Dharmaka Utthan Aur Patan, Sudroka Prachin Itihas, Laws of Manu* etc. This research is the product of analytical reading of the history of Hindu religion and caste discrimination through the lens of Marxism.

The research is categorically divided into four chapters: Introduction, Tool Analysis which has been divided into two parts, Textual Analysis and Conclusion. The second part of tool analysis basically includes the history of class and caste which tries its best to show the same-like quality of class and caste. It is not tool as such; it is almost like 'back up' of this thesis.

Since it is a sort of cultural study, there were various difficulties during the study. The main source of the study is its script and the audio-visual of the film and limited articles about it. Translating the script written in typical Nepali language that contains the unique cultural things became really a problem during research since identifying the equivalent sense in English was really challenging because of cultural diversities. The research includes the dialogues from the script by translating them ownself. The research tries to go behind the psychology of the characters along with their linguistic expression. At last, the researcher arrives at the conviction that *Dalan* is resourceful text which offers the strong possibility of identifying the fusion of dialectical materialism with casteism.

II. a. Marxism vis-à-vis Caste and Class: A Methodological Framework

This research basically relies on the core principles of Marxism. Though many theorists have put forth new versions of Marxism, this research does not go behind them as such. Nepali theorists, who have actively participated on Marxist movements, have been highly privileged since matter of caste and class is concerned with Hindu society like Nepal. This research diagnoses Nepali society which is divided into multiple castes. Their ideologies have a solid ground of vivid experience and thus could be an appropriate tool to eliminate caste-based discrimination. Nonetheless, any Marxist and other theorists have been frankly cited if they assist the research.

Marxism, a broad and complex subject, is an essential core of social and economic theory. Marxism is a theory that gives ways to liberation for proletarians. Dialectic and historical materialism, class-struggle, necessity of use of force in the course of history, proletarian dictatorship or scientific socialism and classless society or communism are the fundamental assumptions of Marxism. It analyzes and supports the struggle of men and women against the oppression and exploitation existing in the human society. Marxism is a grand narrative that aims at the establishment of egalitarian society by emancipating oppressed people from all sorts of (class) oppressions. Marxist philosophy basically refers to the socio-political and economic theories of the German philosopher Karl Marx. Marxism has a profound impact on contemporary culture and modern scholars. Most of modern socialist theories circle around Marx's ideas.

Marx is all but a 'prophet' for many of the oppressed. On the contrary, he is a mischievous fiend for oppressors. He interpreted human history in terms of dialectical materialism, by reconstructing it in the conceptualization and evolution of human society along with the involvement of the forces and relations of production. He was able to

establish a linear relationship between forms of exploitation associated with a particular production system and the nature of struggle against such exploitation. He envisions the idea of human emancipation from suffering, oppression, dehumanizing distortion and exploitation against the working class in the contextual state of 19th century Europe. Marx was a great humanist in the sense that his entire writings are primarily focused on the mass emancipation of the working classes prevalent in the economic milieu of the time.

As a disciple of Hegel, Marx extended Hegelian dialectics to the historical process, which he called 'dialectical materialism' and this is the basic philosophy of Marxism. Marx and Engel posit a materialist account of history that focuses up on the struggles and tensions within society. They conclude that every thesis carries within its own antithesis, after the anomalies mount within it which while destroying it creates a synthesis leading to a new thesis.

Marx's opponents in the socialist movement during the 1870s and 1880s first exploited the term Marxism. Neither Marx nor his friend Engel used it. Towards the end of Engel's life, the term began to be used by the followers as well as opponents of Marx.

Marxism has also had tremendous effect on academia, influencing disciplines from economics to philosophy and literary theory. Marx is well known for his theories of socialism best expressed in the *Communist Manifesto* (1848). For Marx, economic, political and social dimensions are the determinants of human consciousness. In *German Ideology*, he says "life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life"(625). The economic status of the people determines how they develop language, law, politics, religion and even art.

Further, Marx says:

The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men,

the language of real life. Conceiving, thinking the mental intercourse of men, appear at this stage as the direct efflux of their material behavior. The same applies to mental production as expressed in the language of politics, laws, morality, religion and metaphysics of the people. (625)

The above cited extract refuses to believe in the existence of pure, independent and abstract consciousness. According to Marx, consciousness is an effect of the engagement and involvement of conscious being in socio-economic activities. The gist of the above citation is that no consciousness is free from the pressure and practice of socio-historical horizons, which is solid and materialistic.

The Manifesto was the first programmatic state of the communist movement. In the evolution of the thought of Marx and Engels, it was an exposition of the theory of historical materialism in a developed form. Lenin summed up its significance:

With the clarity and brilliance of genius, this work outlines a new world-conception, consistent materialism, which also embraces the realm of social life; dialectics, as the most comprehensive and profound doctrine of development; the theory of class struggle and of the world-historic revolutionary role of the proletariat-the creator of a new, communist society. (Collected Works 48)

The manifesto becomes a milestone in the revolutionary movement of communism; it synthesizes the communist philosophy and thus turns out to be a revolutionary charter for the anti-capitalist revolution: it equips the working class and other oppressed sections of society. The manifesto indeed sets out the way to overthrow capitalism and establish socialism based on the actual conditions of society and historical development.

Prakash Karat in the introductory part of a book *'Essays on the Communist Manifesto'* says that the Manifesto 'places the working class in the central role' in the making of socialism. For him, the Manifesto highlights the role of the working men as the 'grave diggers' of the bourgeoisie. Karat finds the Manifesto as the document that formulates the way to end the capitalist mode of production that produces 'surplus value' at the cost of working men. Manifest vibrantly proclaims that the working class can no longer liberate itself without liberating the whole society from the exploitation.

Aijaz Ahmad, is attentive to the diversities within the proletarian class. In a seminal essay *The Communist Manifesto in its Own Time, and in Ours* included in the book *Essays on the Communist Manifesto* sums up the significance of the consciousness for the transformation of the class struggle that is forever going on in 'material transformation of economic conditions of production' into the a properly 'political struggle'. He says that all the aspects of conflicts-legal, political, religious, aesthetic, or philosophical forms-need to be addressed together. Otherwise, those issues of subjective consciousness and objective stratification which divide the working classes of the can not be addressed. He further says:

For, as the scope of proletarianization has escalated rapidly, every 'political struggle' has become accordingly more complex, encompassing a greater variety of 'forms' ('religious, aesthetic' etc). For, one bitter lesson we have learned in the course of this process is that the fact of immiseration itself does not produce a consciousness of class unity. For that, the domain of consciousness has to be addressed in the very forms in which it experiences the world, and those forms are social and ideological in nature.(58)

According to Ahmad, if the social and ideological diversities are not put into consideration there is much more possibilities to arrive different directions on the part of proletariats. Marxist ideology should not be dogmatic since the society has become much different than the period of the Marx, the propounder of Marxism. Since the proletariats are the product of the very society they are affected by religious and aesthetic aspects of the societies which may become the main reason behind the intra-class discrimination. So the religious, cultural, aesthetic, geographical, linguistic, and all the other social aspects have to be addressed to maintain the class unity. For this the first and foremost thing is class consciousness. Marxism as such has no hard and fast rule and copycat method of revolution anywhere else. It welcomes the diversities of the society and deals them as per the necessity. For example, the Hindu societies do have caste discrimination which is alien to European societies. That's why if we only think about the practices made by Lenin and other great Marxist activist and forget about our social reality we may not reach into the destination of class liberation. Marxism, to define simply, is a way to emancipation of all sort of human inequalities.

In the 'primitive phase' of social evolution, the epoch of barbarians, people lived in small kinship groups working together common necessities. There was no class division, no exploitation and no need of state. Lenin says, "There was no state, no special apparatus for the systematic application of forces and the subjugation of people by force" (State 6). According to Lenin, the 'commune' had a feeling of sharing. All the bodied persons would have engaged in obtaining food, and every one would share in what was produced by 'hunting and gathering'. There was no class division, no exploitation and no need of state.

Earlier Frederic Engels had summed how such 'commune' was scattered due to the division of labor. Engels says, "From the division of labor arose the first great cleavage of society into two classes: master and slave, exploiters and exploited" (The Origin 194). By this

division, the society has entangled into an insoluble contradiction within itself. Masters owned all the means of production, the land and state power, but also owned people.

The First World War marks a watershed in the development of Marxism. Lenin revitalized Marxism as a revolutionary philosophy and formulated principles of political organization, which have had an enduring influence. *New Departures in Marxian Theory*, a book co-edited by Stephen A. Resnick and Richard D. Wolff goes through the changes and developments that have happened in the doctrine of Marxism. They write:

Marxist theory is sharply distinguished from other theories or sciences by the combination of its dialectical materialist position and its concept of society. Marxist theory's specific difference cannot be reduced to either the matter of epistemological standpoint or the matter of the concept of society or to any subset of concepts. Since each theory, including Marxist theory, is a set of mutually over determined concepts, the differentiation between theories must finally concern the entirety of their respective knowledge. (48)

Resnick and Wolff maintain that the distinguishing feature of Marxism is its dialectical approach to the evolution of human history. In addition, the materialistic conception of society is another foundational basis of Marxism. It is these two features that make Marxism distinct from other theories.

Because of its over emphasis on the materialistic conception, Marxist theory tends to sound deterministic. Marxist theory is a ceaseless process of posing and transforming its particular way. Each and every Marxist elaboration of class and over determination toward more concrete, that is, more determinate, specifications of particular social formations, is understood to react back upon and change those

abstract concepts themselves. Marxist theory recognizes no essence either in society or in itself.

It can be understood that application of Marxism has no hard and fast rules, rather it can be applied relatively as per the socio-economic condition of the particular place. Marxism is not a dogma rather a dynamic philosophy that can be modified if emancipation is likely to be possible in another way. What matters most is class-consciousness. Class-consciousness refers to the self-awareness of a social class and its capacity to act in its own rational interest. Marx was the most advanced economist, sociologist and supreme ideologist who formulated the most revolutionary and scientific theories in the time of tremendous socio-economic changes resulting from the scientific discoveries and establishment of large scale production industries. Marxism treats literature as expression of socio-economic life and judges it on the basis of how far it has fulfilled this function. For Marx, it is material production and material intercourse that produces human thinking. The way we think and the way we experience the world around us are either wholly or largely conditioned by the way the economy is organized.

Marxism is about how the social circumstances determine much of, not all of life. For Marx base determines the super structure of the society. The base is the economic system on which the superstructure rests. Cultural activities such as philosophy or literature belong to the superstructure. Jostein Garder writes in *Sophie's World*: "The way a society thinks what kind of political institutions there are which laws it has and not least what there is of religion, morals art, philosophy and science Marx called society is superstructure" (393).

The earliest class society can be seen in this master-slave relation. Frederic Engels sums:

with its increase of the productivity of labor and therefore of its wealth and its extension of all field of production was bound in all general historical condition prevailing to bring slavery in its train. From the division of labor arose the first great cleavage of society into two classes; Master and slave, exploiters and exploited. (The Origin 194).

In the primitive phase of social evolution, the epoch of barbarians, people lived in small kinship groups working together for their common necessities. All the able bodied persons would have engaged in obtaining food, and everyone would share in what was produced by "hunting and gathering". What was produced was quickly consumed (no surplus). There was no class division, no exploitation and no need of state.

Lenin, who vitalized the process of systematizing Marx's thought and extending it to new areas writes in *State*, " there was no state, no special apparatus for the systematic application of forces and the subjugation of people by forces"(6). Marx is most famous for analysis of history in terms of class struggle as summed up in the opening line of the introduction to communist manifesto," The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle"(21).

Indeed academic theorizing on Marxism is so massive that there are a number of different schools of Marxism in addition to the classical Marxism of Marx himself and Engel. Similarly the use of Marxist theory in politics, including the social movements in twentieth century Europe, the Soviet Union, Chinese Revolution and Nepali People's war has broadened classical Marxism. Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, one of most prominent communist figures in Nepal writes in *Rato Jhilko* about the changeability of Marxism:

Marxism is not simply a well-structured theology rather this is a thought process and science to understand and transform the universe; and to

understand the human society. Therefore, as this universe and society are dynamic and mobile in their nature the science is naturally dynamic and changeable. It would be illogical to claim that human conscience; a product of such a changeable and dynamic physical world is stable and permanent. Therefore, despite taking Marxism as a deeply rooted pillar like unchangeable theology, it demands to view it as science running with constant speed to understand the thinghood and spirit of the real existence in the world. (My trans. 2)

Bhattacharai's main purpose behind such claim is to make readers clear that Marxism can be applied in different ways in different contexts without losing its essence. He distinguished the scientific and the dynamic dimensions of Marxism from its so-called orthodox and theological nature.

Marxism is not exceptional to life, development and death process. It may sound humorous. But Marx himself had spoken that the thing that is born faces death inherently. Then, how it can't be claimed that the same thing is not applicable to Marxism itself? To claim that Marxism does not die is metaphysical. Naturally the death of Marxism implies that something advance will substitute it.

Krishna Chandra Sharma, a Marxist critic in an article in *Prajyanik Sansar* writes about the shortcomings of Marxism. He writes:

Marxism observes the whole world from economic point of view. Other factors are not less important- but Marxism ignores all such factors like discrimination based on gender, race (and/or caste) and colors. If we study the history of past two hundred years, a dalit (untouchable) can't take a place of chhetri or Brahman on the basis of race, gender or economic

equality. Similarly it is also a fact that a white man has more social privilege than a black man because of his color and if we see from feminist eye, discrimination between male and female is basically established and nourished culturally than economically. To see the world only from economic point is to one-eyed. (My trans. 24)

Sharma views the underpinnings of the Marxism in having monolithic focus on the economic factors by sidelining other equally important factors like race gender and caste that discriminate the societies unalterably and create more dangerous discrimination than the class based one. Sharma is right in the sense that Marxism categorically doesn't define gender, race and caste based discriminations, but it is not true that it totally neglects such discrimination. After all Marxism is a way to human emancipation from all sorts of discriminations and inequalities. Sharma further explains how rightist critics in the west made rumors after the fall of USSR as the downfall of communism as a whole. According to Sharma, Marxism is monolithic and one dimensional since it bears close resemblance to the spirit and essence of determinism.

After the fall of USSR and other socialist movements in the west, rightist critics often announced the end of utility of Marxism. It is quite remarkable to note notorious literary critic Terry Eagleton who deals with such charges against Marxism in his *Marxism and Literary Criticism*. He forwards his arguments that political struggle is the struggle of thought: When a factor of political practice fails, we shouldn't understand it as the failure of whole thought (ideology). Ideological struggle is a relentless process (23). Revolution has no ready made setting. Various tactics may come into practice as per the socio-economic condition of the country.

It is childish thinking to copy the tactics of a 'successful' revolution of somewhere else. This is why Tilak Pariyar, a political activist and social critic assimilates the issues of caste inseparable to class struggle. He in *Prajyanik Sansar* writes:

In addition to class suppression, social, geographical, gender and cultural suppression remain fundamental to capitalist society. Despite this, privilege of Hinduism is prevalent because of the support of feudal state-authority. In fact, without establishing the state authority (*Rajya Satta*) in the leadership of proletariat thought along with the unified dictatorship of people dominated in terms of class, caste (and/or race), geography and gender emancipation and privilege of dalit, female and ethnic groups has no certainty. However dalit problem looks like social and cultural problem apparently, essentially it is a problem related to class which represents economic and political system. (My trans. 58)

Pariyar sought to unify casteism with the notion of dialectics. Movement for class liberation doesn't get completion until the process of illumination of dalit problem is not launched systematically. In case of South Asia, dalit issue has become an inseparable component of class struggle. Movement for dalit liberation remains incomplete if we don't attach it to the movement for class liberation.

To strengthen his argument, he cites Marx and explores ideas on how the oppressed people including dalits get emancipation from all sorts of exploitation. The close survey of the development of society of Indian subcontinent dialectically makes it crystal clear that the Dalit communities who have been excluded from ideological, political and economic right since 3500 years are the historical proletariat class. Since this community bears maximum features of modern proletarian class, if we provide conducive environment and opportunity to make ideological base, it is easy to develop feelings and ideology and also leadership

based on class consciousness and proletariat collectiveness among the people of dalit communities. Until and unless Dalits become aware of historical material world view, proletariat class-consciousness and political tactics, their participation in the government has no meaning and utility. A proletariat gets liberation only after the total liberation of all ignored, excluded, oppressed and exploited class. It is not a big matter who gives what sorts of policy, plan and slogan. Ideology and leadership belonging to the proletariat class matters the most.

Close to Pariyar, Dev Gurung, a Marxist critic and political activist views that total liberation of dalits and other excluded and marginalized communities is only possible if their liberating movement gets attached to class struggle finally. He concludes:

Finally while reaching at the phase of socialist economy, existing borders of nations become obstacles. And, a situation comes where a unified state is created. Then only stateless community is formed. Feeling that whole human kind is equal is evolved. To reach at this stage, according to dialectical materialism, we have to raise the same issue, which has to be solved (as a problem). For example, we want to dismantle state authority in the future and establish a stateless society but in the present we are fighting for the same state authority. Communists are naturally pacifists. To get peace, we have to destabilize war through the means of war itself. (My trans.14)

Gurung tries his best to prove how it is essential to lead any struggle with class-consciousness. He tried to blend the concept of class struggle and casteism to the level of revolutionary dynamism. The contextual elaboration of the essential crux of Marxism is to be modified and redefined so as to address the emerging problematics of the new era.

Another social critique Partha Chatterjee, in a seminal essay 'Caste and Subaltern Consciousness' included in *Subaltern studies VI*, presents:

When a Marxist is confronted with the question of caste, his or her basic response is to try and conceptualize caste relations within a theoretical framework in which class is the central concept. This is perfectly understandable, since the Marxist must contest any argument which claims that while class stratification may be the relevant principle in understanding the history of Europe, Indian society is based on a completely different principle, namely hierarchy, and that consequently caste must replace class as the fundamental explanatory framework. To admit an argument like this would be to discard the generality of class as the central concept for describing the dialectical movement of human history and to throw the Marxist method into the welter of relativism. Most have argued that caste is a feature of the superstructure of Indian society, and ought to be understood in terms of its efficacy as an ideological system which reflects the basic structure of material (i.e. productive) relations, the latter of course being characterized in terms of class relations. (174-75)

Partha Chatterjee opines that Marxism is the product of European society. Marxism as a perspective is typically Euro-centric. It can be adopted for the sake of understanding the entire spectrum of European society. In sharp contrast to the European society, the Indian society is vast, heterogeneous and historically exotic. Many factors are to be taken into consideration prior to applying the hardcore Marxist paradigm in understanding the heterogeneous and fragmented, loosely organized society of the Indian sub-continent.

Manoranjan Mohanty in his seminal article entitled *Introduction: Dimensions of Power and Social Transformation* defines class as a political economy category. He writes:

Class is a political economic category referring to a social group embodying certain relations of production. As a social group it is located in a mode of production. The ruling class or classes are the owners of the means of production. Means of production ranges from land and factories to technology and knowledge and other forms capital. The ruled are those who are engaged in labor and are subject to exploitation by the owners. Thus, class is not an income group or a simple economic category. It is a political economy category that is placed in production relations as well as power relations. (25)

After defining what class is, he summarizes human history from primitive communism to the present development. The concept of class is based on the application of the Marxist method of dialectical materialism to the understanding of history. History of human society is conceptualized in terms of how humans have explored nature and have engaged in producing things for satisfying human needs. While defining the concept of class, Mohanty makes a 'simple' conclusion that class roots in economy and power. Power and economy play vital role vital role in penning the history of human civilization. So the mainstream history of human civilization automatically speaks on behalf of the winner class like 'Brahmin' and 'Chhetri'.

Marxism observes life and art through a very different point of view and reaches a conclusion that philosophers have focus on how life is instead of putting their concern in changing the society. Marxist criticism is not merely sociology of literature, concerned with how novels get published and whether they mention the working class. Its aim is to explain the literary work more fully; and this means a sensitive attention to its forms, styles and meanings. But, it also means grasping those forms, styles and meanings as the products of a particular history. Marxist criticism primarily focuses on the issue of class struggle between

the 'haves' and 'haves not', ruling class and ruled, oppressor and oppressed, exploiter and exploited.

Haribol Gajurel in his recently published philosophical book *Marxbadi Darsan Ra Janayuddha* deals with the development of human civilization minutely:

If we go through the history of humankind, we see there was no symptom of untouchability and discrimination until caste-based society came into existence. After society was divided into the physical laborers and non-physical laborers, manual laborers were treated badly with hatred. Manual workers were made untouchables. (My trans. 265)

In Nepal, Dalit communities alone cannot achieve emancipation from exploitation fighting against feudalism. Since feudalism is protected from expansionism and imperialism, domestic and external Dalit communities, oppressed class and minorities should go together for achieving total emancipation. By presenting a scientific analysis, he further more elaborates that issues of caste-discrimination can not be handled if we exclude it from class problem. Problem of Dalits is not only the issue of caste but also the issue of class. Because of the past system of Nepal that disallowed Dalits to possess private property, Dalits are economically extremely underprivileged. Large portion of landless people belongs to Dalit. Dalits as a whole belong to an oppressed class from the beginning of human civilization. Therefore, their emancipation from the case of caste hierarchy depends on the strength and unity of the oppressed class. Dalits who have been living desperately from east to west of Nepal should be aware that pure Dalit movement detached to the class movement misleads them from the sentiment of the oppressed people. And such attempt becomes supportive to the capitalist and imperialistic policy of 'divide and rule'. Dalit communities who have been living dispersedly from east to west of Nepal should be aware that pure dalit movement

separate from class movement only misleads them. And such attempt is product of imperialist capitalist thought.

Bourgeois are those who have the means of production and the owner of the production and the labor power too. Proletarians are those who have only the labor to sell as a commodity. Thus dalits are undoubtedly proletarians who were compelled to do dirty and manual work and banned to possess private property forcefully and in a homogenized way.

Antonio Gramsci one of the Marxist theoreticians recognizes that culture and art as forms of superstructure are not simply the expression of underlying economic relations. Rather, Gramsci argues that culture, politics and the economy are recognized in a relationship of mutual exchange with one another. To this process, he gives the name, 'hegemony' to mean the ways in which a governing power wins consent to its rule from those it subjugates. Gramsci's understanding of social power is not simply a matter of domination on the one hand and subordination or resistance on the other.

The present researcher analyses the text by using Antonio Gramsci's notion of hegemony to expose the politics of dispossession and dislocation of the non-Aryans by the Aryan hegemony. Cultural [hegemony](#) is neither monolithic nor unified; rather it is a complex of layered [social structures](#) (classes and castes). Each has a "mission" (purpose) and an internal logic, allowing its members to behave in a particular way that is different from that of the members of the other social classes, while also coexisting with these other classes. Because of their different social missions, the classes will be able to coalesce into a greater whole, a [society](#), with a greater social mission. This greater, societal mission is different from the specific missions of the individual classes, because it assumes and includes them to itself, the whole. To be more specific, the researcher concentrates upon the politics of dehumanization and dislocation of dalits by the hegemonic ideology of the Brahmins.

Commenting Gramsci's view of the relationship between hegemony and ideology

Terry Eagleton writes:

Hegemony is also a broader category than ideology: it includes ideology, but is not reducible to it. A ruling group or class may secure consent to its power by ideological means; but it may also do so, by, say, altering the text system in ways favorable to groups whose support it needs, or creating a layer of relatively affluent, and thus somewhat politically quiescent, workers. (112)

Hegemony is a dynamic whereas ideology is static. Hegemony through the consent of the people disseminated throughout the texture of social life and thus 'naturalized' as a custom, habit, spontaneous practice. But coercion is reserved to the state, which has monopoly to legitimize the violence. Governing power is thus forced to engage with counter-hegemonic forces in ways which prove partly constitutive of its own rule.

To define a caste is harder than to give the derivation of the term. It is a collection of families or group of families bearing a common name claiming a common descent from a mythical ancestor, human or divine, professing to follow the same hereditary calling and regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogeneous community. The division into various castes is that most significant system of social stratification in Hindu society.

Casteism has traditionally been perceived by social critics as a hierarchy based on the binary opposition of purity and pollution. Challenging this notion of binarism, sociologist Dipankar Gupta argues that it is, in fact, the mechanics of power, both political, that set the ground rules for caste behaviour, which also explains how traditionally opposed caste groups find it possible to align in the contemporary political scenario. Gupta, in his

provocative and finely argued remarkable work, *Interrogating Caste*, de-exoticizes the caste system and provides fresh insight into caste as a social, political and economic reality:

Most contemporary societies, whether developed or developing, give evidence of a high order of stratification at various levels and of various kinds. There is the question of inequality of course, that looms large in much of our thinking of stratification, but there is also the issue cultural diversity. The prevalence of tensions between diverse languages, religions, colours and sects arise because of the conflicting ways by which each community wants to rank the others in real operational terms. Unlike our utopia people are not always prepared to let differences flourish for their own sake without hierarchizing and labelling them in terms of good and bad, refined and crude, or civilized and uncivilized. (16)

Gupta finds the economic realm (of Marx) as determining, or at least as setting the limits for all others. He furthermore brings into light how the clash of cultural and economic interest leads to the social unrest which ultimately poses a threat to the social homogeneity, integrity and coherence.

Gupta finds multiple hierarchies within caste system. Such hierarchies have no scientific ground and are the result of power imposition made on less powerful and powerless. Caste as we discussed earlier, should be understood first in terms of discrete categories. Hierarchy obviously comes in, but as castes resist being placed together in a continuum, there is not one hierarchy but several. No caste considers itself to be actually made up of base and impure substances, no untouchable community believes that is rightfully occupies such a lowly position. This is in spite of the fact that all castes, no matter where they may be placed in terms of the existing structures of power, believe strongly in impurity and purity, and in all the other basic beliefs that inform the caste system.

Kancha Ilaiah pens a thought-provoking critique of Brahmanism and the caste system in India, while anticipating the death of Humanism as a direct consequence of, what he says is, its anti-scientific and anti-nationalistic stand. In *Post Hindu India*, he establishes Hinduism as a 'backward' religion that suppresses the latent scientific and productive potential of those Dalit communities.

The tribal and Dalit-Bahujan spirituality and the god and goddess images were worked out around the productive process of their lives. [...] The Shudras, who have now lost their distinct identity, have had a strong cultural history of anti-Brahmanism, that is, anti Hinduism. In countries where Buddhism, Christianity and Islam advanced the economic base and the cultural superstructure, strong inter-linkages and friendly alliances were built. That was the reason why the economic culture and the spiritual culture did not become contradictory to one another. Those countries could easily overcome the Marxist postulation that the religious culture, science and technological advancement would oppose one another and in the process the religion would die out. (245-46)

Here, Ilaiah undercuts the Marxist idea that the religion and the advancement of the science and technology are contradictory to each other in case of Christianity, Buddhism and Islam. He regards Hindu religion as the antithesis of global religious culture because Hinduism produced the 'most negative' institution called caste that went on negating the socio-scientific advancement. Ilaiah sounds critical of the Marxist notion that 'religion is opium' in the case of above mentioned three religions and negates total materialistic worldview. But he strongly points out that Hinduism has contradiction in between religion and the science and technology. He even views that the creator of images of the god are the very Dalits but after the formation of the same images they are deprived of touching them. Dalits are the

producers of economy but are always kept far away from its utility. Ilaiah finds the contradiction between the Hindu cultural system and its economic system which is the reason behind the backwardness of Dalit communities. Though the ideas of Ilaiah sound contradictory to Marxist ideas and rigidity towards the Hindu religion as such, his analysis of Dalit backwardness is realistic.

Similarly, Irfan Habib in *Marx's perception of India*, an analytical essay included in *Marx on India* analytically quotes Marx's views on Indian caste based society.

On the other hand, there was a development on the opposite extreme: the establishment of 'an untenable divisions of labour'. This was realized through the caste system supplying, the hereditary the individual artificer, the smith, the carpenter, and so on. The economic basis for this was the 'unchanging market' that the community provided to the artisan, prohibiting any alternation in the social division of labour once fixed. Trough the classic statement of this division is formulated in Capital I, Marx had surely from the beginning been aware of the hereditary occupations and the system of caste with in the community. (xxiv)

Beside common land ownership, Marx saw in the Indian village community two phenomena that were apparently contradictory but well integrated into it. On the other hand, there was a lack of development of division of labour ,which resulted in 'the domestic union of agricultural and manufacturing pursuits observation occurs in one of the *Tribune* articles of 1853, but it continued to occupy central position in Marx's analysis and recurs in *Grundrisse* and in *Capital I* as well as elsewhere.

Marxism in totality is a philosophy that aims the total emancipation of all kinds of oppressions, suppression, extortion and discrimination. Country like Nepal has a complex

structure that has hierarchies. So far the case of class and caste, one can not be isolated from another since these two are co-mingled. Caste-issue alone can never meet its aim of émanicipation. Like that if we only prioritize class issue neglecting the caste issue which is rooted with in class, our struggle for total emancipation reminds journey of Sysipus.

Caste an class issues are vibrantly reflected in many literary texts and visual texts recently wiht the emergence of new global circumstances. While talking about the changed scenario in Nepali context, *Dalan*, by Aahuti is one of the examples that has captured the class and caste issues at the core of the text and the audio-visual that shows these issues similar in terms of multiple ways. *Dalan* basically deals with issues of caste discrimination in Hinduism and its repercussion in Nepal. It shows how caste and class are the two interconnected social constructs and the liberation of the Dalit communities is possible only if they are guided by the consciousness of the both caste and class discrimination. By valorizing only the caste ultimately results in the fragmentation among the working class since it does not concern with class discrimination. Similarly, forgetting the caste issue and valorizing only the class cannot rightly delve into the subtle discrimination of the casteism since it is a matter of convention and hegemony that cannot be totally eliminated if not gone critically into it.

II. b. Class and Caste as the akin Social Constructs

The class and the caste are two social products. Both of their origin lies in economy and occupation. If we critically analyze the historical development of human civilization there was no class formation in the primitive societies. People from the same linguistic community and interest used to live in a 'commune' sharing their earnings. As their interests got differed they started to dominate each other. In the course of time the powerful ones subordinated the weaker ones and thus formed the ruling class and the ruled in the same society. It is appropriate to quote Karl Marx from *Marx Engleska Sankalit Rachanaya (Collected Creations of Marx and Engles)* to show how class formation divided the society eternally: "The ideologies of the ruling class people are similar in every age i.e. the class which is materially a ruling class automatically turns out to be the intellectual ruling class" (55). The class which possessed the means of production had a control over the intellectual products too. Moreover, the people who did not have the means of intellectual production generally were under the control of the ruling class.

From the scientific exploration as well as the study of religious books, it is known that there was no any caste system in the beginning of human civilization. Since there was no caste system there was no any caste discrimination or the practice of untouchability. The word 'caste' refers to any of the four Varnas i.e. Brahmin, Chhetri, Vaishya, and Shudra of the Hindu Varna-system. *The Laws of Manu* mentions that the four Varnas are born of the four parts of Brahma – the Brahmins from the mouth, the Chhetri from the arms, the Vaishyas from the thighs and the Shudras from the feet. (131). The claim is quite unscientific and bogus discourse just created by the power holder Brahmin and Chhetris in order to inferiorize the lower caste people by the help of religiosity. In the hierarchical division of the society on the

basis of the caste in which the former one is put at the top of the social ladder, the middle two are put in the middle, and the last one is put at the bottom. If we see historically, the so-called Shudras didn't have any fixed community. Ramsharan Sharma in *Shudroka Parachin Itihans* says that the origin of the four Varnas from the body of Barahma has been mentioned in *Rig-Veda* for the first time (29). But he clearly views that in the Vedic era, there was no discrimination on the basis of Varna. The practice of discrimination was induced in the society by misinterpreting the Varna-system that had originally a sole purpose of running the day to day social function smoothly.

According to the scientific discovery, human existence had begun 2.5 million years ago during the Lipistoin Age and their Ancestor were the Apes whose existence had begun 24 million years ago during the Meosin Age. (*Nepal ma Dalit Samudayako Sthiti 2*). So, the origin of all the human beings was same. But, in course of time the physical structure, shape, size and color in the human beings became different due to the difference in their physical works, food habits, climate, the region they live, environment and so on. Thus the social discrimination of the caste system has no any original, natural and scientific reason. Caste-system was an invention of ruling class to dominate the working class.

Many historical facts say that if the kings or the rulers wished one could be degraded or upgraded in the caste. Prithwi Narayan Shah had upgraded the Dushar (a lower caste) to the Putahar (an upper caste) for they had helped him in his Kirtipur invasion. Similarly Jang Bahadur Rana had made the so called 'untouchable' Meche caste a touchable. Janga Bahadur's *Muluki Ain* (national rules) had categorized the people of the society in different stratification of honour as per their castes. Before it,

the Lichchhavi king Supuspadev Barma and later Jayasthiti Malla had categorized the Nepali society as per the Hindu Varna-system.

Chaitanya in his book *Marxbad ra Sanskriti (2066)* sees a close link between socio-economy and Dalit oppression. For him the “economic victimization” is the basic one among several forms of such victimization. He says, “The Dalit problem has been one of the social and cultural oppression that is based on the class” (113). He views that Dalit community, in fact, is such a distinctive proletariat class that has been victimized historically by the ruling class feudals for ages.

It is said that in the early Vedic times, different members of the same family used to undertake different occupations of Chaturvarnas (four classes) as per their inclination and abilities. Every member of the family enjoyed the liberty to adopt any profession he liked best. All men were equal and there was no trace of untouchability as we see it today. In the Vedic era no man was considered too high or too low in the society. K. D. Purane in his book *Untouchability and the Law: the Ground Reality*, writes, “But this healthy spirit of equality resulted, in course of time to the tradition bound caste system and to the institution of untouchability which divided the Hindus, warped their thinking and eroded the structure of the community” (67). It means that each caste came to be associated with the professions like administration, trade or manual labour, and developed a high degree of exclusiveness among the professional classes. Depending on the nature of one’s work, certain lowest sections of the community came to be regarded as untouchable and were kept more or less segregated even within villages.

V.T. Rajshekhar in his book *Dalit: the Black Untouchable of India* minutely observes how there is the role of power struggle behind the practice of untouchability.

He writes, “The natives who fought against the invaders and were defeated were called untouchable and those who rushed to the jungle and hills became the indigenous people” (78). Those who were defeated in socio-economic conflicts would be pushed towards the downward castes. The so called untouchables didn't have any fixed community. They were wholesome products of defeated ones in the power play.

Rajshekhhar's analysis clearly depicts how power played crucial role on the formation of the caste. It shows that the 'untouchables' and 'touchable' are two broad classes existing in the Hindu society. His argument sounds stronger and logical if looked at the verse of Manusmirti, a Hindu religious book that formerly begins casteism. *Manusmirti* provisions: *dhwajotho bhaktadaro grihaja: crita-datrimau, paitriko danda-dasascha saptite dasayonya* (Shastri 228). This verse means that the people who are imprisoned in the war, servant, son of the servant, bought man etc are the people from Shudra Caste.

From the study of different religious books we find out that the system of caste discrimination and untouchability was a mere human construction. The word 'caste' refers to either of the four Varnas (group): Brahmin, Chhetri, Vaishya, and Shudra of the hindu Varna-system. In the *Hindu Jatika Utthan or Patan (The Rise and Fall of Hindu)*, the religious explorer and scientist Rajanikanta Shastri has written that there was no any caste discrimination among the primitive Indian Aryans. According to him, there would be the Brahmin, Chhetri, Baishya, or Shudras in a single family too as per the works they did. The people who would recite Veda-mantras or worship the god were called Brahmin, the people who would take the weapon and fight against the enemies were called Chhetris, the people who would be involved in farming were called baishyas, and the people who would work as the slaves were called Shudras. So, the ancient caste system was just a naming system of the people as per the work

they did. It had no any correspondence with the birth or origin of a person. The line of Rig-Veda also justifies this thing, such as, *Karuraha tato vishgupalaprakshini nana, Nanadhiyo Basooyabonu go iba tasthimendrayendro parishrava (Shastri 227)*, which means Hey soma I, the reciter, am a sage. My father is a herbalist, my mother crushes the can on stone... We worship you through the different works" (My trans.). From this, we discover that in a single family too there would be different Varna of the people as per the work they did. A person was not called Brahmin just because he was born in the Brahmin family. Rather he might be a Brahmin as per his deeds even if he was born at other families then Brahmin family. For example, several sages (rishi), who were accepted as Brahmin due to their works, were born in other castes. Byas Rishi was born out of a fisherwoman, Bashistha was born from a prostitute, and Bishowmitra was born out of a chhetri woman. *Mahabharata* at a place clearly discloses the fact that the great rishi Bashistha was born out of a prostitute but he achieved the Brahmin quality due to his penance. Here the reason of being a Brahmin or chhetri was the work one did. But, opposite to it, in the age of Ramayan, the great person Ram had beheaded Shambuk blaming him for having done a penance being a Shudra too. Thus in the matter of touchability and Varna system the theology itself has contradictory ideas.

The caste system and the practice of touchability has no any logic and original cause rather it is based upon the whims of the power holders and the rulers. It can be proved at the hand of *Vishnu Puran*. There is one line: *Pranarthastha Davan Brahmanasthe nibedayet; sa Shudrajativovjya syadavojya: shesh vahyate* (Shastri 254). The meaning of this verse really sounds opposite to the moral philosophy of Hinduism itself. The verse reads that the Shudra which devotes his own life, property and wife in the service of Brahmin, his food is edible. But other Shudras are

untouchable. It is a hateful and treacherous opinion that demands an untouchable offer his life, property and wife to touchable one.

The economic deprivation of the 'lower' caste people was intentional. It was based on the tactics of making them economically underprivileged so that they could not raise their voices against the ruling class or caste of the society. The religious scripture Manusimirti bands the shudras, the 'lowest' Varna to earn and keep properties. It also allows the 'upper' caste Brahmin to capture Shudras' property whenever they wished or needed. *Shaktenapi hi shudren ne karthyo dhansanchya; Shudro hi dhanmasadhya bramanawe badhate* (Shastri 260). It means that Shudras must not possess wealth however he is able to do so. If he possesses it, he troubles the Brahman. The reason behind such restriction is crystal clear. If the manual workers shudras became wealthy, there would be no one to serve the Brahmans. The provision of Manusimirti marks the importance of economy as the main tool to power. This is the region Marx gives much more importance to the economy. He says that eventually political revolution is economic revolution and political revolution has no meaning if economic revolution could not take place. By considering this very fact, Chaitanya concludes that economic suppression is the fundamental suppression among the suppressions bestowed to the dalits i.e. 'lower castes'. Since economic deprivation has been grinding the dalits into the grindstone of suppression, oppression, dehumanization, etc their access to the economy should be guaranteed for caste-liberation. Rajanikant Sastri makes a conclusion in his book *Hindu Dharmaka Utthan Or Patan* that the whole Hindu society is divided into two classes-ruling class and the ruled. Brahman and Chhetri belong to the ruler and the rest two Varnas, Baishya and Shudras belong to the ruled for they lack right to economy and earth and economy. Rajanikant also proclaims that Varna system is unscientific and improvable from both

the aspects of birth and deeds. It is unnecessary and hypocritical that it has made the Hindu religion pendulum and unprogressive.

Senart Emile observes these fourfold division in a different way. He says, "The names of Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra represent not four primitive castes' but four classes. These classes may be exceedingly ancient; it is only in later times that they have been super imposed on the castes" (117). Senart and Chaitanya agree on the thing that class and caste are just inseparable parts of a coin. Chaitanya moves a step ahead and proclaims that "many people take it as a sole cultural problem or a problem of untouchability but basically it is a problem of class persecution" (110). Chaitanya views that caste liberation is only possible if it is attached to class liberation. No caste liberating movement can be fruitful if it lacks class-consciousness.

In the same line, J. Bheemaich gives a marxist touch to the mythical ages. He writes "The age of the Brahmanas, Upanisads and Buddhism has been, a period of fierce class struggle" (51). Bheemaich is mostly concerned with the power struggle between Bhramins and the Kshatris. The religious documents like the Upanishads were mostly written on account of the class struggle between the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas. Later, it was realized that if these two castes fought each other, the other caste people would get benefit and it was religiously coined that these two castes should be united so that no other caste could surpass them. According to *Manumiriti* "Brahmachhutram chha samprictmiha chamutra bendate" or if the Brahmin and chhetris are united they can win both the world and underworld. Whether it is bedic age (age of god) or kali (era of human cruelty) according to hindu philosophy what matters most is power. This reminds us again what Marx has long before said "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles". (21)

In *Shudro ka Prachin Itihas* (The Ancient History of Shudras) its writer claims that “the reality is that the proletariat working class within aryan or non-aryans had emerged due to their economic and social inequalities and those working class people consequently were called as the Shudras” (38). The writer has shown the salient feature of the caste system to be the close association between caste and occupation. In the beginning, occupation was the measuring rod to caste and now it is vice-versa. Since caste system is ascribed by birth, it naturally led to the occupation being fixed and transmitted hereditarily from father to son. Occupation began to be a rigid category so that dalits could not enhance their economic status since they had no any option rather than manual and enslaving works. The means of production always remains inaccessible to them. In *Dalan*, the dalit characters are involved in manual works like ploughman, potter, and some other slavery jobs like *balighare*. They seem to be pouring their blood and sweat day and night on the field. However they are unable to join their families’ hands and mouths properly. They are indebted to the landlords and can not come out of the web of borrowed money and its interest.

The close relationship between caste and occupation eventually contributed to the stability of the caste system, a closed and static society, and militated against any possibility of social mobility, the association between caste and traditional occupation between so strong that even when a person has given it up, he will be known by his traditional calling. The occupation of untouchables is degraded beyond expression.

The system of untouchability in the Hindu society has psychologically hegemonized the Dalit people who themselves often think of themselves as the lower class people. It also has made discriminations among the Dalits themselves. Such as the Kami community thinks the Sarki community untouchable, the Sarki to Damai, Damai to Gaine, Gaine to Badi and Kumal, etc. This shows that, at one side the rulers

used to behave the dalits as untouchable and they had adopted the policy of divide and rule among them too. In the tele serial *Dalan*, Katuwal is the epitome of such characters who is from a lower caste but acts on behalf of the rulers. He ironically sounds crueler to the dalits than the real oppressors. He spies to the ruler against the would-be unity of dalits.

Dr. B. R Ambedkar, one of the most vibrant social reformers who himself was a Dalit, finds casteism as the worst stigma of Hinduism. He calls Manu a ‘tyrant’ and tackles Manusmirti. He shows that the caste system is a legal system maintained at the point of bayonet. If it has survived, it is due to prevention of the masses from the possession of arms and denying to the masses the right to property. Dr. Ambedkar, in his book *The Untouchables, Who are They?*, discusses the origin of untouchability. He starts with his proposition that, “the Hindu Civilization could hardly be called a civilization. It is a diabolical contrivance to suppress and enslave humanity.” (8) For Ambedkar the caste system far from being natural is really an imposition by the ruling classes upon the downtrodden classes. He declared that even though he had been born a Hindu, he wouldn’t die a Hindu. He was so disappointed at the system of untouchability that he became a Buddhist by changing his original religion Hindu.

In the same line of Ambedkar, Dr. G.S. Gharye, in his book *Caste and Class in India*, comes heavily on casteism. He says, “The special rights for the higher classes and disabilities for the lower ones was almost a universal feature of class society (182). He sees similarities between the two concepts of class and caste. Untouchability didn’t arise out of any personal fault of idiosyncrasy on the part of an individual. Practically it was an attitude on the part of caste Hindus. In fact, exploitation or slavery was not unknown to any society in the past because economic

needs in different forms were present in all countries. However untouchability was a unique problem that was confronted only in Hindu society.

Ambedkar wanted to establish a caste less society and devoted his whole life for the same effort. On the other hand Karl Marx wanted to establish a classless society and formulated a simple catchy theory “Workers of the World, Unite.” Here, Marx uses the common word workers which can capture all the strata of suppressed, oppressed, dominated and marginalized laborers who live on their sweat and shoulder. Since the basic feature of Dalits matches with this category they can be called proletariat or working men and their liberation can be possible only when class liberation is achieved.

From aforementioned arguments, it becomes crystal clear how caste ground on occupation, power-play and economy. In the beginning, caste formation had some how good purpose of maintaining social necessity. It could be changed as per the person's occupation. Unfortunately, in the course of time it was formed on the basis of birth and become unalterable. This rigidity made people bound to certain occupation and divided people into different categories like touchable and untouchables, lower castes and higher castes etc. This predicament of casteism reminds us Marx who in one context compares ‘religion with opium’ (*Marx and Engles: Dharmake Bareme*, 47). As the intoxication of opium provides temporary relief to the addict the construction of casteism maintained a social settlement for a while but in the course of time it resulted into untouchability that has adverse repercussions in human civilization. The caste-system thus is a class problem. At this point, it becomes remarkable to cite lines from *Jatiya Utpatti, Samsya Tatha Bikash* by Nabin Gurung. He says, “Ethnic (or\and caste) struggle eventually takes the form of class struggle. ...If not done so, ethic (or caste) struggle ironically supports the interests of the

exploiter, feudals and imperialism and creates hindrance to the function of people's liberation” (35). He compares the liberation movement with driving a car. If one drives properly, s\he reaches and makes other reach to the destination. Otherwise it falls downhill and destroys many lives and properly. Gurung’s ideas, though simply presented, carry the essence of total liberation of class and caste.

Class struggle is the primary thing behind total liberation of people from any sort of persecution, extortion, discrimination, dislocation, alienation, deprivation and, in general, dehumanization. All sorts of oppressions in general are the parts of the class oppression. So, the first and foremost thing for any kinds of liberation is class consciousness. But it does not mean that the parts should be neglected. So, both class and caste issues need to be taken simultaneously. While dealing with class struggle we should also consider the movement against caste discrimination and vice versa. Neither class liberation is possible nor the caste by sidelining either of them. On the basis of this conclusion the issues of class and caste is explored in *Dalan*. *Dalan*, a vibrant tele-serial, has come as a social document that shows how liberation from caste discrimination is impossible without a unified struggle that has both caste and class consciousness.

III. Class and Caste in *Dalan*: a Marxist Reading

Dalan projects the strong possibility of blending the Marxist ideology of dialectics and the ethos and spirit of casteism as the progressive model of abolishing all forms of discrimination, domination and dislocation of the marginalized Dalit by Brahmins in the society whose foundation is based upon heredity and hierarchy. Pursuing the emancipation of Dalits solely on the basis of casteism stands in the favor of imperialist, reactionary forces, and the bourgeois. Similarly, struggling for the freedom of working class people on the basis of class based ideology may not lead to the total elimination of the prevailing forms of domination. Therefore, giving primary importance to class based politics, the issue of casteism also should be taken into consideration in parallel to growing politics of class struggle. Thus, the present researcher postulates the pragmatic alternatives of creating a fusion of class and casteism as the progressive revolutionary model for the overall transformation of society.

Dalan, a tele-serial, produced by Jagaran Media Center, presents the plight borne by the so called Sudra i.e. Dalit communities, quite realistically. Nepalese discourses, either written or audio-visual, have long been representing the Nepalese societies from the perspectives of the monolithic and orthodox feudalism. But, *Dalan* makes its viewers realize how shamefully the age-long feudal history has made the Dalit people the oppressed, exploited and dislocated culturally, economically and socially. Various elements of the soap opera such as the setting, characters, plot construction, theme etc. are designed in such a way that each of them has contributed to the crucial necessity of blending the voices of the working class people as well as

the marginalized Dalits. As the researcher has discussed in the chapter two, the soap opera has rightly utilized the theory of dialectics to hint at restructuring the structure of Nepalese society.

At the very opening, the tele-serial represents the period around the 2007 BS during which time there was the hangover of the tyrannical Rana regime and the remote villages had its explicit impact in the form of the Kaji's dictatorship. It starts from presenting an illegal love relationship between a Brahmin boy Harihar Nepal and a Dalit girl Tulki Damini. Love relationship between a non-Dalit Brahmin boy and an 'untouchable' Dalit girl at that time was almost unthinkable and such type of intercaste marriage too was a thing of beyond imagination. But the rebellious character Harihar, who bears severe torture in his whole life later, dares to present the unthinkable matter into practice. In the first few scenes we come to know that Harihar Nepal, a son of a Brahmin Priest, had impregnated a Dalit girl named Tulki Damini and, therefore, in order to hide the thing the chief of the village and Harihar's family manage to send him away to Banaras. But Harihar returns back from the way and happens to rescue his beloved Tulki from a cliff where she had a narrow escape in an attempt to commit suicide since pregnant she was prepared to marry with a dumb person. Harihar decides to adopt Tulki as his wife on the condition that he has to be ready to be shaved four sidedly on his head and be banished away from the village forever. Harihar and Tulki's marriage is itself a revolution against the inhuman caste system. Their union is a sample of the unification of the similar class irrespective of the caste and their families. This reminds us of Chaitanya's statement that a revolutionary should be ready to disaffiliate himself from his relatives if they can not take the change positively (Chaitanya 48). Harihar does not regret even if he has to face mountains of trouble for deciding to marry Tulki, a Dalit girl.

The major characters in the film are from the same Sudra community who deserve our sincere sympathy. The protagonist Harihar Nepal, a son of Brahmin Priest, being ostracized after getting married to Tulki Damini, a Dalit girl, happens to take a refugee in the plantation of a landlord and chief (Jimbwal) of the village. Along with Harihar, his whole lineage is subdued under the hegemony of the landlord in such a way that they cannot see any way out except accepting the Jimbwal's rule over them.

Dhambare: Jadau (namaste) Baraju.

Sherbahadur: Oh, did you come? Rane, did you hear?(Rane looks down from the shed, Juna comes out to the yard) Now manage their settlement. You can share your kitchen. Listen to me Hari. Here is no problem of fooding and lodging. But you cannot cheat in the work. For expense I will provide you 2/4 mohor(penny) of a year.

Harihar: (*joining hands*) Of course, Sir. (Episode 2, Scene 15, My Trans.).

This scene marks the second fall of Harihar. When he was shaved four sidedly and banished away from the birthplace, for the first time he was entrapped in the web of the victimization on the basis of caste. This ostracism ultimately leads him to surrender to the chief of the society across the Veri River. Then after he never can come out form the entrapment of oppression, alienation, domination, suffering, dehumanization, and dislocation caused by the caste based feudalism. His whole lineage has to bear the same fate he bears. He dies a heart-rending death while ploughing the paddyfield of the Jimbwal. His son juthe too has the same fate. He is severely scolded when he is unable to involve in the work at the Hombahadur's

plantation due to his poor health. The generation has been changed on the both part but the destiny remains the same. He too dies falling off a high cliff while carrying the aluminium plate (jastapata) for the school. But it is his grandson, Manav who finally dares to run away from the intricate web of the caste discrimination. He has a storage of dehumanization, extortion, and oppression experienced by his whole lineage. He sees his own elder sister being impregnated by the son of the Jimbwal who deserts her against his commitment with her:

Kali: Give justice to this widow, Baraju (She weeps covering her mouth)

Katwal: What a matter of justice? Let's abort her foetus and let her go away with anybody. Then the tension gets finished.

Kali: Why to abort? Why don't you slain her off? You too have your daughter. (*Hombahadur infuriates*)

Hombahadur: Then what? Do you want to get your daughter marry with my son? You.[...]

Thuli: What wrong have I done to abort? Should you listen what commitment he (Lalit) has done to me? (*Mane stares at them*)

(Episode 13, Scene 18, My trans.)

Instead of realizing the mistake of his son Hombahadur threatens Kali and forces her to marry with a fifty years' old drunkard man. Mane who witness the entire incidents gradually develops the feelings of revenge yet he cannot challenge the established norms. After he gets another stroke as he cannot marry his beloved (Katawal's daughter) he runs away toward the capital city. His sole aim in moving to the city is to escape from the caste based torture. But in the city too he sees caste discrimination and the practice of untouchability and gets more troubles:

Yadav: May I come in brother?

Manav: Come in please (*Yadav, Manav's houseowner, comes into Manav's room and sits on a log, Manav sits on the bed*)

Yadav: I myself teach science in a campus. But our society has compelled us to live under the conservative tradition. My mother is strictly superstitious. Someone has told her that you are a Dalit boy. It's enough for her. She hasn't taken meal since yesterday. Therefore, though I am ashamed to say this, I am compelled. Excuse me brother. You need to search another room somewhere else. What to do...

(*Manav becomes speechless*). (Episode 8, Scene 22, My Trans.)

This dialogue implies the deep rooted practice of untouchability even in the city and how the educated people too are not free from it. Though Yadav, an intellectual person of the city, is himself a science teacher, he is helpless in front his conservative mother's superstitious and unscientific ideology. Manav's trouble at this time is quite unbearable and inhuman.

He has to leave the room just for being a lower caste person. Weakening his own emerging rebellious sense he is compelled to hide his original identity and disguises himself as if he is an upper caste man. Due to the lack of the class consciousness he adopts the escapist way to survive and delves into the contamination of the capitalism that prioritizes money even at the cost of own identity, family and society. Manav doesn't respond any enquiry from his village rather tries his best to forget his traumatic past experiences. The more he tries to live a new life the more he is haunted by the practice of the untouchability and the inhuman caste discrimination. He is even haunted by the emerging activities against the untouchability. He is in the

condition of what to do and what not to do. He knows caste discrimination but lacks the class consciousness.

The former exploitators often manipulated the 'lower caste' people by providing the Dalit leaders a bit opportunity. In *Dalan* too Shreelal Bishwokarma is seen to be given a ministerial position during the royal regime. Because of this individual opportunity he has forgotten his duty towards his class and has full loyalty towards the monarchy; the sole of feudalism and untouchability. He is thankful towards the king for he was made a minister in the Panchyat system. He has made a big building in Kathmandu. His son Maniram earns a lot in the name of Dalit Salvation, and does nothing for Dalit. When a progressive thinker Nagendra Basnet asks Shreelal what he did for the Dalits while being a minister, he angrily replies that Kami and Damai (Dalits) do not have any intelligence, they don't see what is said and done but only seek for golden flakes at hand. Shreelal and Maniram, though they are from lower caste, are intoxicated with the juice of caste-based feudalism. They look after their personal progress and property and contacts which is the basic feature of bourgeois mentality. By their activities it becomes clear that it doesn't matter which caste one belongs to, but it is class consciousness which matters most for the total liberation of Dalits and downtrodden. The following part of the dialogue gives a sharp insight into the nature of class consciousness:

Nagendra: what change did you carry out on the part of Dalits by being a minister, Shreelal dai?

Shree Lal: Look brother, the matter of change and dynamism is different thing. The Kamis and Damis' mind is shaped in such a way that they don't see the action but just desire for gold in their own hand. My relatives are so much jealous in my progress. I built my house with

great difficulty. But they curse me for it rather than praising. (Episode 20, Scene 13, My Trans.)

Here the non-Dalit intellectual Nagendra asks a former Dalit minister Shree Lal about the achievement he brought into the life pattern of the Dalits. Shree Lal, who is proud of having been a minister during the Panchayat system, is grateful to the monarchy that is an icon of feudalism but has a sense of hatred towards his own Dalit communities. Nagendra, although is a non-Dalit person, has a sincere sympathy and concern on the Dalit liberation movement. While Shree Lal is proud of being minister and having built a house, he accuses the Dalit people for having a narrow mindedness since he has no class consciousness as he is satisfied with his individual prosperity but has no concern on the upliftment of the lower caste victimized people of his won community. On the contrary, Nagendra respects Manav, his daughter's lover, even after knowing that he is from a lower caste and encourages her to marry with him. From this what we come to know is that what matters the most is class consciousness rather than belonging to the same caste.

Just as Lenin says if any proletariat supports the bourgeois instead of his caste (class) that necessarily produces an unfaithful situation and it weakens the international unity of the proletariat class. Lenin himself was from the Great Russian caste but he protested against itself. Similarly, Mao was form Hann caste but he protested against the arrogance of the Hann casteism. He has said that from a long time, the reactionary people, exploitators from the Hann caste, have planted the seed of division among the different caste and have forcefully ruled upon the marginalized castes. It is the quality of a Marxist who self criticizes about the weakness of his own class and of himself. In our country, there are certain group of Brahmin and Chchetri people who always exploited and ruled over others. But it does not mean the every

Brahmin and Chhetri is the ruler and exploiter. There are exploited Brahmin and Chhetries who settle mainly in the hilly region and have always been poor and are deprived of fundamental needs. So, whether Brahmin and Chhetries are solely the exploiter castes or not, it is a topic of a hot discussion. In *Dalan* Nanda Prasad, (a teacher and a political cadre), Narendra (a progressive writer), and Ava (an educated girl), although from the higher caste, are the characters who go against the behaviours of their own castes and advocate for the abolition of the higher caste people's hegemony on the lower caste people. They time and again encourage the lower caste people for their struggle for emancipation from the age-old exploitation and domination. They are guided by the progressive ideology and want to establish a society of equilibrium. The theme of these characters, scene and dialogue is that being only a similar caste, one cannot be intimate and being only of a different caste one cannot be an enemy.

Caste-struggle eventually takes the form of class struggle. Caste problem equates the problem of different occupation, status and class. In *Dalan* too the pathos of the lower caste people are sympathized by the upper caste people too. There is a sort of class consciousness in the Dalit as well as non-Dalit people. Even if they are from different caste they are from the same class therefore decide to unite in order to change established system. For example, in Episode 9, Scene 7, the Dalit and non-Dalit characters discuss:

Satman: Why about only Dhambare's daughter? Such crimes, injustice and tortures are countless. For the proper solution of them we need to be involved in politics.

Rachyane: What should we do in our village then? If it solves the problem we are ready to do anything.

Nanda Prasad: Organization is primarily needed to do anything. We should do it... (17, My trans.).

When Dhambare's daughter Ramva is raped by the non-Dalit boys the Dalits do not get justice rather the criminals are saved by the feudal lord. So the people from different castes but similar class are united. Here the Dalit and non Dalit character come together for seeking the solution of the problems created by the feudal monopoly. They ultimately come to the conclusion that politics and organization is essential to address any of discrimination like casteism. Satman and Nandaprasad are noble characters from the higher caste but they are against the discriminatory practices and help the Dalit communities in their difficulties because of their class consciousness. In Episode 10, Scene 1, *Dalan* presents the consequences of the caste discrimination even in communist though communist must naturally avoid any sorts of discrimination like casteism. But in a programme, rightly after the re-establishment of democracy, Rachyane, a communist cadre who had a significant contribution in re-establishing the democracy, is not called on the dais though his counterparts are seen on the dais. Though it may be a minor case if seen in isolation, it reflects the unconscious discriminating nature of the communist revolutionaries who are producth of caste based society. The same tendency of discrimination gets repeated while Satman, president of the VDC does not go to manage the rift between dalits and non-dalits created in the issue of entrance of dalits into the temple. He does not go there because he has ideological crisis for he cannot support either of the caste.

Likewise, in Scene 12, Episode 22 Narendra, a progressive writer but from upper caste talks to Manav, an educated Dalit who hides his own Dalit identity, on the issue of Dalit Liberation. Nagendra opines that the access to politics and land matters most in any kinds of liberation in countries like Nepal. He rightly points out that the Nepalese Dalit communities neither have access to politics nor have enough land. He sees problem in political system and advocates for the change which is only possible through struggle. Nagendra's focus on the land and politics reminds us of Marxist notion that control over means of production is the major step for the liberation. Here, we can see the close nexus between the Marxist notion and the reality of Dalit.

Almost all the Dalit characters in the serial are hunched by extreme poverty. Harihar didn't have his own land to settle his house, the predicament continues till his third generation, Manav. Mahalxmi, a Dalit Newar woman in Kathmandu, who is married to a non-Dalit rich Newar is betrayed by the husband after he went bankrupt and she couldn't support him with her maternal property. In Episode 5, Scene 7 Rachyane, a Dalit young man, is cheated by making him confused about the meaning of two synonymous words *hali* and *jotaha* (ploughman) and is deprived of his right of *mohi* (right to get land after ploughing for a long time). In course of the history the Dalits are not given their rights so are often left backward. The Dalit communities like Chamar living in Tarai, a storehouse of corn, are made landless and are compelled to live on slavery. Whether it is city or village, Terai or Hill, the Dalits do have the same problem and suppression because they have no access to the economy. The lower caste people are always kept under a severe kind of economic deprivation deliberately by the power holder higher caste people. Feudalism has made the economic system so complex that the Dalit can never come out of the abyss of their debts and interest. They also don't know how their sweat and shoulder produces the 'surplus value'

and becomes their means of their own exploitation at the hand of the feudals. For example, Rane, a slave in Sherbahadur's plantation, runs away at night as he sees no future in it and realized that he will never be able to pay back the ever increasing debts.

Under the casteism the lower caste untouchable people's mind is hegemonized in such a way that they have inferiority complex and see godliness in the higher caste people. They do not have class consciousness so that they do not know what exploitation is and how it is exerted upon them. For example in Episode 2, Scene 14, Dhambare says to Harihar that the Jimbwal (the feudal chief of the village) is like a god (25). Whether wise or unwise, higher caste people like Sherbahadur are taken as god despite seeing their devilish nature of exploiting others unjustly. Whether the upper caste people are moral or immoral right or idiot, brave or coward, guilt or innocent, their position is always great in the society. It implies that other people belonging to other castes can never be in higher stratification. Such provision never let the lower caste go up in the social ladder though they may have much better qualities, skills and ability. Birth becomes the measuring rod of a man's capacity not the potentiality and virtues. Rajanikant Sastri in his *Hindu Jatika Uthan Ra Patan* vehemently criticizes caste-System. He says: whether seen from the point of view of birth or occupation, caste is unnecessary, hippocratic and unproved. Caste has made Hindu people pendulum and unprogressive forever. He forwards a logic, that is, in ancient time, caste was a flexible and soft matter, which could be relegated or promoted on the basis of one's performance (233).

Dalan shows the predicament of Dalit at its bare form. Manav, though he is a learnt, handsome and somehow has good earnings, cannot reveal his own Dalit identity because he is haunted by the repercussions of the revelation of his identity

which ultimately would result in vanishing his all 'achievements'. His sole attempt for individual freedom cannot be long lasting. Rather he need to have the class consciousness and a good organization for his liberation from the system of untouchability along with his class emancipation. He gets a big blow and great insight from his colleague Prakash Bishwokarma's speech in a program. Prakash views that the practice of untouchability itself cannot be abolished if it is seen in isolation from other social factors like education, economy, politics, land, and administration. Prakash is aware of the fact that giving high sounding slogans is not sufficient to avoid the evil of untouchability. He says:

For the liberation of Dalit we should make an orginazed plan for solving the overall problems like political, economic, social, administrative, cultuual problems. Until we cannot make such plan and implement it , we need to struggle, hard [...] within ourselves, various Dalit talents have been escaping from ourselves. We are discriminated on the basis of caste, we don't struggle rather we attempt to live higing our caste identity [...] The meaning of lying our caste identity is a sort of hatered toward own caste, it is an acceptance of our cate to be inferior. Isn't it a matter of pride and dignity to be a part of the leanage of the labourers? It is an quite essential to tear the curtains of false belief, and disclose ourselves to our true identity. (Episode 25, Scene 1, My trans.)

The speech carries one of the most stircking ideological aspects of *Dalan*. Prakash has full class consciousness i.e. awareness of social class and its capacity to act in its won rational interest. He encroaches in the mind of the protagonist Manav that liberation is not possible by hiding own identity. Prakash's thinking assimilates with Marxist

notion that one needs to accept one's reality to make a change in it. Liberation of class in Marxist concept is possible if it is addressed in all the levels of exploitation like economic, political, cultural, social, and administrative and so on. As Prakash has accepted himself and his whole lineage as the worker class, he reminds of us Marxist notion that all the workers of the world should be united.

In the same program, the progressive writer Nagendra Basnet focuses on the unity of the exploited class. He undercuts the notion of the ruler i.e to 'divide and rule' to the minorities or the ruled class and caste. He brings the reference of the news from Siraha where there is a tussel between the *janajaties* and the untouchables and points out the fact that the division between the working class becomes counterproductive. He worries about the political parties who do not show any concern to tackle the problems of the more than 4 millions of the Dalit people. Hence, the foundation of his speech lies in Marx's slogan 'let all the workers be united.'

Similarly, Ahuti creates juxtaposition of the two characters Manav and Prakash so as to highlight that liberation is not possible with escapism rather it is only possible by facing the challenges with won direct involvement. After the program these two characters coincidently encounter. Their conversation prepares a background for taking new and progressive step by the Dalit youths including Manav. Here, Prakash synthesizes the development of class awareness from 'hegemony' to defensive and 'defensive' to 'offensive' stage.

Manav is in extreme duality of whether to disclose his Dalit identity and fight for the liberation or continue the present disguised identity. His encounter with Nanda Prasad, an underground political cadre makes another strike on his escapist way of life. Nanda Prasad urges him to think minutely as:

Manav, there is no any option to the Nepalese people except following my path i.e. to set fire in 'jungle' (i.e. the present feudal state system). Ultimately, people without arms have nothing to say their worn, which you too have experienced and me too. What do you think about this thing? Let's have a discussion about it. [...] What I think is that if we have to make a change we should create an new tides and upheavals. The nation will be set in fire soon, Manav. (Episode 25, Scene 10, My trans.)

Nanda Prasad sounds pure Marxist. Though he doesn't use the word Marxism, his implication is towards the then ongoing People's War. He is well known about the fact that Marxism is the philosophy of the liberation of all proletariats. The fundamental theoretical assumption of Marxism are dialectical and historical materialism, class struggle, role of use of force in the history, proletariats dictatorship or the scientific socialism in the class society or communism (qtd. Chaitnya 3). In the course of history of class struggle the ruling class always dominate the ruled by misusing the state owned weapons. Even in *Dalan* the feudals are always seen with the weapons and they misuse the state power against the people. But Dalits are bare handed. So, Marxist notion is that there can never be fight between bears hands and the armed hands. So, the proletariat Dalit should have weapons and fight against them. Nanda Prasad speaks the very fact. So the caste liberation is possible through the way that Marx points for the class liberation. Therefore caste and class are two inseparable entities.

At the end of the serial, Manav happens to watch Oedipus Rex, a drama, along with his beloved Ava. This dramatic scene is very symbolic in the life of Manav. Oedipus was living the life of illusion Manav too is inside such illusion. Oedipus is

seen piercing his eyes in his disillusionment and similarly Manav also should change his viewpoint and be free from his old escapist viewpoint. Manav records his identity and his reality in a tape so as to make Ava known about it he says:

I was trying to get the liberation by escaping a away from the struggle life ad my own identity, which was totally wrong. Although, it is late, I have decided to return back to my village with any of true identity book I am going amides the explicators victimized and Dalits, I will try to achieve that without the struggle the living is bogus. (Episode 25, Scene 19, My trans.)

Manav seems to be assimilating the very fact that ‘the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle.’ Now, Manav is going to face the challenges sand accept the reality in a Marxist way i.e. liberation is not possible by escaping or keeping oneself under illusion. Rather it is only possible through a conscious struggle made by an organization with the notion of class and caste liberation. Here, once more his action reminds the researcher the dialogue between Satman and Manav earlier in which Satman questions Manav about the output of living in isolation forgetting own originality, deserting own relatives and leaving the struggle and just riding the *vatvate* (motorbike) alone (Episode 24). Manav was delving into the bourgeois culture by forgetting his root and duty towards his class. He had a bit better apartment, good salary, good position, and a capitalistic mode of life. Manav ultimately comes to realize that how much he earns individually does not count, if his whole lineage (caste) and class is in limbo of suppression, domination, and exploitation. This change in Manav’s live can be a good example of love for own class.

Manav’s decision to go back to own village which is under caste discrimination exploitation and dehumanization is not whimsical rather it is the

product of his consciousness that until and unless the class and caste domination is abolished he can never be free wherever, however he lives. His action of going back to village signifies that in the days ahead all the marginalized, Dalits, proletariats and the learnt people put their hands together for fighting against the establishment. Unity of all the downtrodden *Madheshi*, *Janajati*, Dalit, Women, Backward and Excluded people should get united for achieving a total liberation. If they only care about their own problem their union may get shattered. For the total emancipation unity of the diversities is a must. But it doesn't mean that they should ignore their problems. The main thing is that problem of particular people is a part of the whole problem. They, therefore, should be put into consideration and handle simultaneously.

Dalan emphasizes on the unity of all the exploited people. It gives a long history of exploitation and shows how people rebellious mind is getting prepared for giving a final blow against the status quo. Earlier in the serial the characters are seen to be hegemonized under the caste based feudalism. But along with the development of the plot the characters seem doubtful towards the system. Rane runs away, Mote breaks the earthen jar for depriving of drinking the water, Jute scolds at Hombahadur in an intoxicated condition (Episode 6), Kali shouts at the Bistas in a drunkenness, Dhambare comes out with a *Khukuri*, Deusara (Dhambare's wife) burns the money provided by the Jimbwal (Episode 9) and the whole Dalits reject to collect the carcass. Such types of rebellious voices which are carried out individually and in isolation do not seem having significance at hand but help prepare the final and decisive revolution against the system. The whole serial depicts the stage of preparation for the struggle for liberation. The liberation has not been achieved yet, but liberating movement has been started. The liberation is possible only when the backward class and caste co-mingle.

IV. Conclusion

Dalan, the annals and archives of historical actualities and social eventualities, demonstrates in a vibrant and lifelike way the pathetic and poignant plight of Dalits. At the core of *Dalan* the issues like dispossession, discrimination, dislocation and degeneration of Dalits occupy the forefront of the text. It does not univocally condemn the disgrace and damage done by casteism to the timeless harmony and moral fabric of society. On the contrary, it emphasizes that the total transformation of society is possible in revolutionary way. Blending the political doctrine of dialectical materialism with the hierarchical spectrum of casteism, *Dalan* makes a bold claim that class and caste can go a head in parallel and in a complementary way so as to bring a total change in society.

After going through the text (script) and the scenes of the audio-visual of the tele-serial in the lime light of Marxist perspective, the researcher frankly concludes that class-consciousness and anti-casteism should go hand to hand. The serial displays the issues of caste and class simultaneously. It strongly presents that abolishing casteism through socio-political and economic empowerment ultimately accentuates and strengthens class emancipation. *Dalan* forcefully establishes the fact that class and caste are two similar social products, and these two categories should not be dealt separately.

The tele-serial *Dalan* comes heavily on the tendency of separating class and caste as if caste is a matter at a distance. But, *Dalan* creates a discourse that caste-based discrimination is not an apolitical matter, it has no solution outside politics and state system. The discourse created by *Dalan* is a true representation of the Nepalese Dalits and their hardships and their submissive relationship with the non-Dalit power

holders. *Dalan* reveals the fact that the dalits were deliberately excluded from the mainstream historical as well as the other discourses and the tele-serials as well.

As the word 'Dalan' suggests deprivation and alienation from societal structures, political systems, especially towards the Dalits, the tele-serial basically comes on behalf of the age-old suppressed, dehumanized and exploited Dalit people of Nepalese society. *Dalan* carefully depicts the issue of untouchability and discrimination as having inseparable relationship with class-problem; it views casteism dialectically with the issues of class, and finds the role of the social, economic, cultural, occupational and linguistic, and many other factors in the formation of caste discrimination. The tele-serial highlights the Dalit people primarily as working class people and thus, as belonging to the proletariat class. So, it tries to find out the solution to the casteism in relation to Marxism. Moreover, in *Dalan* the vision of emancipation of Dalits from the century-long discrimination and untouchability emerges from the state of uncertainty, doubt, agony and marginalization.

Dalan, as a popular and pragmatic text, was produced on the principle that a text originates from its specific socio-historico-cultural location. It vibrantly denounces the concept of art for art sake as its focal point is the representation of a certain class of people historically subjected to discrimination, dehumanization and oppression. In keeping with the connection of *Dalan* with its relevant context, it can be claimed that *Dalan* is a social manifesto that has mission to show how Dalits are exploited and dominated in the society.

Dalan perfectly captures the essence of the Marxist doctrine of art. *Dalan* is not a work of imagination rather it is a product of bitter experience of Dalits of Nepal

which aims to display the evil practice and its repercussion in a realistic way. *Dalan* has realistically captured the historical, political, cultural movement and transformation of consciousness.

Even the textual and visual productions of *Dalan* give every evidence of being true to the social lives of Dalits during the era in which caste-based hierarchical society turned its deaf ear to their heartrending outcry. While presenting the pains, pathos, troubles, difficulties, tortures, and extreme type of exploitation of the lower caste Dalit people *Dalan* foregrounds the strong necessity of blending of the two social phenomena class and caste in order to abolish casteism for the rapid progression of Nepalese society.

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