

I. Introduction

Sushma Joshi, a writer from Nepal, presents social issues through her creative writings. The story collection *The End of the World* is also a perfect example of it. Through this, she brings out the bitter reality of the working, downtrodden people who are struggling to make ends meet. The stories included in the collection present characters from a house servant boy of ten years from a village to a young boy working in India to support his family. The collection is true depiction of subaltern and marginalized people always dominated due to their financial crisis, regional and social practices.

The subaltern people do not have their voices so they cannot protest the domination and exploitation imposed upon them. They also do not have access to the hegemonic power the way elite people have. They only can resist to elite people and their domination simply disobeying their orders and being submissive to the elite people. The characters presented in the stories such as Gopi, Bishnu, Harka Tamang and Hasta Kathayat seem to be conscious of their rights and resisting to the elite's prejudice and exploitative behaviours. So there are evidences to prove that subaltern characters in the stories come with their consciousness to establish them as subject and agency by challenging elite's domination and creating own social identities.

I'm reading this story collection from subaltern perspective. Indeed, the voice of subalterns are unheard in a hierarchical society because of elite's appropriation. The subaltern people are away from mode of production and elitists present them as inferior and submissive to them. But subaltern people are struggling for greater social status with their own initiatives. So, the consciousness of subaltern people over the mode of domination and marginalization has been taken as a subject matter of this research study.

The End of the World exposes the existing condition of exploitation, domination and marginalization in term of class and caste along practice in Nepal. The stories expose human being enduring different types of hurdles on the way to get freedom against caste and class discrimination. Therefore, the struggle made by them against domination and prejudice help to bring out the consciousness of subaltern people for social and cultural identities. But the elite intellectuals represent subaltern voice filtering with their own perspective. As the privileged position of the elite intellectuals limit their integrity to work as a spokesman of the subaltern class and appropriate the subaltern struggle of social identities.

The story collection has made various transgression of class, social and cultural domination prevailed in Nepalese society. For instance in story "Cheese", Gopi is a character who waits passionately that one day his house lady's behaviour would change and do equal behaviour to him not only in word but also in deed. But her behaviours with him become cruel day by day. He knows her asking him to call her 'Mom' only to exploit his labour in cheap price and hide her own cruel behaviours imposed upon him. She makes him work till late night and wake up early not giving him chance to sleep more that he needs. Even he does not get good clothes and salary at time. So he has to walk with bare foot and torn cloth. But his expectation never turns into reality rather he has to see discrimination in distribution of cheese brought from Switzerland. He does not get, though other members get it. It is final event that makes him conscious of his own situation and he departs from his owner's home.

There are other stories which deal with subaltern and poor class people who are invisibly exploited and discriminated. But such discriminations are known to them at last movement when they have no option to get except revived their lives. But through the event occurred, we can say that they wouldn't be further victimized. With

the change in political system, they get chances to analyse before involving in such activities. In story "Wait for Rain", Harka Tamang an indigenous poor person was victimized in panchayat system and his land was confiscated by Ram Chandra Bista, Panchayat member accusing him of cutting trees from national forest. But now, he can deny Ram Kumar Bista to select as a leader and rather make others too aware of his disguising face by telling injustice and exploitation imposed upon him in the past. He also refuses others suggestion to work for him, by saying that he could no further want to remain under his domination. Rather he is ready to work in his barren field though its production is not sufficient for a month. His determination of this kind shows his great hatred towards Ram Kumar Bista.

The same nature can be observed in the story "Blocked" in which Harka Kathayat who is working in India comes back to Nepal hoping that political leaders would be conscious of people who are dying in Kalikot and other remote region being without food and especially Maoist party was believed to have fought to protect right of marginalized class, and sensitive to their problem. But his expectation remains unfulfilled. He sees they are gambling for power paying no attention to upgrade life style of downtrodden people inhabited in far western region. Even he finds Maoist cadres collecting donation from poor people like him. So the story exposes his struggle in his own way independently of elite class people. At the same way, it shows his awareness of how political parties exploit poor people exposing their petty interest to grab powers and forgetting poor people struggling for food like him even in the 21st century.

Stories included here exposes ill-treatment and inhuman behaviour imposed upon working class people as well as it contrasts them with the life style that high class people have. Then it also shows their passive consciousness to get out and avoid

them. For instance, Gopi while he doesn't get cheese at last moment and last piece of cheese is given to landlord's niece second time, he only scolds silently as "she doesn't know I'm here, Bitch" (17). In the same way, Harka could not directly face Ram Kumar Bista by telling he has confiscated his land. Instead he tells his friends about it. Despite, it includes subaltern consciousness and their resistance as a whole.

Thus, the story collection under the title *The End of the World* is powerful, depressing but hopeful stories are collected for empowerment of subalterns. It reflects the plight of poor people of various indigenous group during Maoist conflict and while being unemployed. Various critics thus have scrutinized *The End of the World* from psychological, Marxist and social realistic aspect to clarify its content.

The End of the World is the story of hunger and nature of existence it creates against social backdrops. The hunger is interpreted physically and psychologically especially of working class people and tried to make it heard. In this regard, Sophia Furber finds the *End of the World* as the story of longing and hunger of knowing and realizing something valuable but such hunger of human heart remains ever unfulfilled. She further reveals her view in this way:

Hunger, both literal and metaphorical, is the driving theme behind Sushma Joshi's *The End of the World*. A diverse caste of characters [. . .] grapple with their desire, resentment and everyday suffering and are dealt with against a variety of social backdrops. Sushma also reveals psychological treatment while going throughout stories and is able to capture the mixture of awe, curiosity, excitement and envy evoked in her characters. (7)

Other critics have interpreted the stories by exposing Marxist aspect. Among such critics, Rich Bhattarai has come forward showing the class conflict found in Sushma's stories. She says:

There are different cast of characters from a child of 10 years just hailed from village to upper-class household in Kathmandu and through materialistic people from city to characters from remote region like Kalikot having spiritual love to own birth place depicts it is a famine stricken place. (21)

Thus the characters from subaltern groups are obsessed with the life style of ruling and upper-class people who root in them various desires for which they spend more than 20 years but can't get satisfaction that they had imagined they would get by having and approaching them. Most stories involve characters as protagonists from oppressed to write the history of poor and marginalized one.

The End of the World also foregrounds social realism of Nepali society by taking characters from day to day life and weaving stories around them addressing their hardships, suffering inflicted upon them by political instability, Maoist insurgency and government indifferent to the problems of far-region and then individual attempts to overcome problem such as famine. Deepak Adhikari as critic further elaborates:

Characters coming from daily and common life do what other general people do and move with own dream, desires and sufferings.

Furthermore, the specter of political violence hang over in sleepy afternoon at the village teashop, discussion on forthcoming election and buying voters make stories more vivid. So Joshi views political turns through the prism of suffering, desire and foibles of individuals.

While the specific weakness of political parties, the state and the insurgency ultimately merge into the background. Truly these stories reflect the contemporary society. (18)

Above mentioned critics have analyzed the text from different perspective but the present researcher is going to explore the subaltern consciousness which has not been explored yet. And without exploration of this very issue, the text is incomplete. In this regard, it becomes clear that though the text has been analyzed through various perspectives, the subaltern issues have not been raised yet. So there exist a strong need to carry out research on this text from perspective of subaltern consciousness. Without a proper study on this issue, the meaning of the text will remain incomplete. Having this fact into consideration, the present researcher proposes to carry out research from the perspective of subaltern and their consciousness.

The first chapter is presented as the introduction of the thesis. In the introduction section, the researcher tries to introduce his thesis. In second chapter, this researcher has briefly discussed about subaltern studies, where this researcher mainly focused in general subaltern, caste subaltern in brief and their consciousness. In third chapter, the present researcher analyzes the text with the theoretical eye which he has talked in chapter II. The chapter four is the conclusion of the thesis.

II. Subaltern Studies as a History from Below Approach

More than twenty-five years ago, a small group of South Asianists challenged the bourgeois-nationalist historiography of Indian nationalism. They aimed to recover the occluded histories of what Antonio Gramsci calls “subaltern social group” and to put into question the relation of power subordination and “inferior rank”. Subaltern Studies in disciplines as diverse as history, anthropology and literature to recognize the force of recent postcolonial criticism. This study formally appeared in 1982 with the aim to provide the subaltern people who were ignored by colonialist as well as bourgeois nationalist historiographies. This criticism has compelled a radical rethinking of knowledge and social identities authored and authorized by colonialism and Western domination. The dissemination of Subaltern Studies as an intervention in South Asian historiography and developing into a vigorous postcolonial critique, must be in such a complex and catachrestic reworking of knowledge. The challenge it poses to the existing historical scholarship has been felt not only in South Asian Studies but also in the historiography of other regions and in disciplines other than history. Subaltern Studies has committed itself “to rectify the elitist bias characteristics of much research and academic work in particular area” (Guha 7).

With the formation of Subaltern Studies group, it aims to provide a systematic study of oppressed groups of society through a new historiography that rewrites a new history from below. This group was led by Ranjit Guha. He describes his project as an attempt to study:

The general attribute of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, cast, age, gender and office or in any other way [...] Subaltern Studies group Sketched out, its wide ranging concern both with visible history, politics, economics and sociology of

subalternity and with the occluded attitude, ideologies and belief system – in short, the culture informing that condition. (Guha 210)

Guha contrasts “politics of the people” with elite politics and privileges the former over the later. He thinks that politics of the people “was an autonomous domain, for it neither originated from elite politics, nor did its existence depend on the later” (4). Subaltern Studies plunged into this historiographical contest over the representation of culture and politics of the people. Accusing colonialist, nationalist and Marxist interpretations of robbing the common people of their agency, it announced a new approach to restore history to the subordinated.

Subaltern Studies aim to promote, as prefaced by Guha to the first volume, “the study and discussion of subalternist themes in South Asian Studies” (215). Guha suggested that subaltern studies would not ignore the dominant, because the subalterns are always subject to their activity however its aim was to “rectify the elitist bias characteristic of much research and academic work” in south Asian Studies (243). The act of rectification sprang from the conviction that the elites has exercised dominance, not hegemony, in Gramsci’s sense, over the subalterns. A reflection of this belief was Guha’s argument that the subaltern had acted in history “on their own, that is, independently of the elite politics nor did its existence depend on the latter” (4). Subaltern Studies forthright claims about the subaltern subject and set about demonstrating how the agency of the subaltern in history had been denied by elite perspectives anchored in colonialist, and or Marxist narratives. Arguing that these narratives had sought to represent the subaltern’s consciousness and activity according to schemes that encoded elite dominance, Guha asserted that historiography had dealt with “the peasant rebel merely as an empirical person or member of a class, but not as an entity whose will and reason constituted the praxis called rebellion” (2).

In *Selected Subaltern Studies*, Guha enumerates the dangers and limitations of the historiography of colonial India and suggests a new way to read official and administrative colonial archive records. His treatment of institutionalized colonial dishonesty is dynamic and successful as he offers analytical tools that enable historians to “read against the grain as they cull colonial archives, and recognize the code of pacification” that obscures the power and intent of subaltern insurgency (59). Using concepts of hegemony and resistance first articulated by Antonio Gramsci, Guha makes a profound contribution to the academic effort to separate the historian’s perspective from that of the state. In his article “Subaltern Studies and Postcolonial Historiography”, Chakrabarty explains Subaltern Studies a radical departure from Marxist historiography and offers a reasonable defense of Subaltern Studies in the face of recent criticism. Chakrabarty lists the Subaltern Studies points of departure from previous historical interpretations of power and agency: (a) power is multidimensional and separated from capital (b) power bases exist outside of the center-periphery paradigm (c) the nation/state is not the best basis for definitions of political activity. Chakrabarty further says:

With the foundation for Subalternists’ perception of power and agency, the reader comprehends the radical paradigm shift represented by this new interpretation. If peasants are not backward and ‘pre-political’, but instead active agent in their own political destiny, experiencing dominance without hegemony and consciously inverting colonial codes of behavior and destroying colonial symbols of power, then their previously dismissed forms of resistance gain legitimacy. (22)

The weakness in this approach stems from the types of archival sources available to scholars looking for evidence that the Subaltern was the maker of his own destiny.

Often at a loss of written transcripts of Subaltern experience such as diaries or letters, Subalternists must look at the actions of the Subalterns to access the “collective imagination inherent in the practices of peasant rebellion” (23). When historians interpret the actions of a wide swathe of largely illiterate individuals and define their intentions and experiences, they run the risks of producing scholarship rife with assumption, projection and ultimately, elitism.

Thus, while reading records against the grain, these scholars have sought to uncover the subaltern’s myth, cults, ideologies and revolts that colonial and nationalist elites sought to appropriate and that conventional historiography has laid waste by the deadly weapon of cause and effect. Ranjit Guha’s “Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India” (1983) is a powerful example of scholarship that seeks to recover the peasant from elite projects and positivist historiography. In this wide ranging study full of brilliant insights and methodological invention, Guha returns to the nineteenth century peasant insurrection in colonial India. Reading colonial records and historiographical representations with a uncanny eye, he offers a fascinating account of the peasant’s insurgent consciousness, rumors, mythic vision, religiosity, and bonds of community. From Guha’s account, “the subaltern emerges with forms of sociality and political community at odds with nation and class, defying the models of rationality and social action that conventional historiography uses” (27). Guha argues convincingly that such models are elitist insofar as they deny subaltern’s autonomous consciousness and they are drawn from colonial and liberal nationalist projects of appropriating the subaltern:

It is true that the effort to get back the autonomy of the subaltern subject resembled the “history from below approach” developed social history in the West. But the subalternist search for a humanist subject-agent frequently ended up with the

discovery of the failure of subaltern agency as the moment of rebellion always contained within it the moment of failure. The desire to recover the subaltern's autonomy was repeatedly frustrated because subalternity, by definition, signified the impossibility of autonomy, subaltern rebellions only offered fleeting moment of defiance. Veena Das says that "it is possible that in the face of massive institutional structures of bureaucratic domination, subaltern rebellions can only provide a night time love, to use the evocative phrase of the Greek philosopher Castoriadis, it cannot be transformed into a life time love" (315). While these scholars failed to recognize fully that the subaltern resistance did not simply oppose power but was simply constituted by it, their own work showed this to be the case. Further, complicating the urge to recover the subject unlike British and the United States social history, subaltern studies drew on anti-humanist structuralist and poststructuralist writings.

Ranjit Guha's smart reading to colonial records, in particular, drew explicitly on Ferdinand de Saussure, Claude Levi-Strauss, Roman Jakobson, Roland Barthes, and Michel Foucault. Partly, the reliance on such theorist and the emphasis on textual readings arose from as Dipesh Chakrabarty points out "the absence of workers diaries and other such resources available to British historians" (102). Indian peasants had left no source, do documents from which their own voice could be retrieved. But the emphasis on readings of text and the source to theorist such as Foucault's, whose writing cast a covering to doubt over the idea of the autonomous subject, contained awareness that the colonial subaltern was not just a form of general subalternity. While the operation of power relations in colonial and metropolitan theaters had parallels, the conditions of subalternity were also irreducibly different. Subaltern studies therefore, could not just be the Indian version of the history from below approach, it had to conceive the subaltern differently with different histories.

A subaltern study of the operation of dominant discourse leads it necessarily to the critique of the modern west. For if the marginalization of other sources of knowledge and agency occurred in the functioning of colonialist and in its derivative nationalist, then the weapon of critique must turn against Europe and the modes of knowledge it instituted. It is in that context there emerges a certain convergence between Subaltern Studies and postcolonial critiques originating literary and cultural studies. Chatterjee says that “not only did Edward Said’s orientalism provide the grounds for critique of Indian nationalism, Said also wrote an appreciative foreword to a collection of Subaltern Studies essays” (x). It is important to recognize that the critique of the West is not confined to the colonial records of explanation and profiteering but extends to the disciplinary knowledge and procedures it authorized above all, the disciplines history.

Dipesh Chakrabarty offers a forceful critique of the academic discipline of history as the theoretical category laden with power. Findings premature the celebration of Subaltern Studies as a case of successful decolonization of knowledge, Chakrabarty writes:

Insofar as the academic history, that is, history as a discourse, produced at the institutional site of the university is concerned, Europe remains the sovereign, theoretical subject of all histories, including the ones we call India, China, Kenya, and so on. There is the peculiar way in which all these other histories that tend to become variations on a master narrative could be called the history of Europe. In this sense India history itself is in the position of subalternity; one can only articulate subaltern subject positions in the name of this history. (I)

It is important to note that Europe or the West refers to an imaginary though powerful entity created by a historical process and authorized as the home of Reason, Progress, and Modernity. To undo the authority of such an entity distributed and universalized by imperialism and nationalism requires, in Chakrabarty's words "Provincialization of Europe". But neither a nativism nor culture relativism animates this project of project of provincializing Europe; there are no calls for reversing the Europe/India hierarchy and no attempts to represent India through an Indian not Western perspective. Instead, the reorganization that the "Third world historian is condemned to knowing Europe as the original home of the modern whereas the European historian does not share a comparable predicament with regard to the past of the majority of humankind" serves as the strategy that seeks to find in the functioning of history as a discipline, the source of another history (19).

Subaltern studies a powerful intervention in South Asian historiography has turned into a sharp critique of the discipline of history; this is because South Asia is not an isolated arena but is woven into the web of historical discourse centered in modern west. Gyan prakash in his essay "Subaltern Studies as a Postcolonial Criticism" writes:

Through the long histories of colonialism and nationalism, the discourse of modernity, capitalism and citizenship has acquired a strong though peculiar presence in the history of the region [. . .]. The institution of higher education in South Asia, relatively large and thriving, have functioned since the mid-nineteenth century in relation to the metropolitan academy, including centers for South Asian studies in the west. (1489)

To its credit, Subaltern studies turned South Asian's entanglement with the modern west as the bias for the rendering its intervention in South Asia history into a critique of discourses authorized by western domination.

Subaltern Studies has arrived at its critique by engaging both Marxism and poststructuralism. But the nature of these engagements is complex. If the influence of Gramsci's Marxism is obvious in the concept of subaltern and in treatments of such themes as hegemony and dominance, it should be noted, however, as Spivak points out:

In my reading of the volumes of Subaltern Studies, this critical force or bringing-to-crisis can be located in the energy of the questioning humanism in post-Nietzschean sector of Western European structuralism, for our group. Michael Foucault, Roland Bathes, and a certain Levi-Strauss. This structuralist question humanist by exposing its hero-the sovereign subjects as author, the subject of authority, legitimacy, and power. There is affinity between the imperialist subject and the subject of humanism. (337)

Subaltern Studies obtains its force as postcolonial criticism from a characteristic combination of Marxism and poststructuralism, Gramsci, and Michael Foucault, the modern West and India and, archival research and textual criticism. Gyan Prakash in his essay "Subaltern Studies as Postcolonial Criticism" Writes:

As this project translated into other regions and disciplines, the discrepant histories of colonialism, capitalism, and subalternity in different areas would have to be recognized. It is up to the scholars of these fields, including Europeanist, to determine how to use Subaltern

Studies insights on subalternity and its critique of the colonial genealogy of the discourse of modernity. (1490)

It is worth bearing in mind Subaltern Studies itself is an act of translation.

Representation a negotiation between South Asian historiography and the discipline of history centered in West, “its insights can be neither limited to South Asia nor globalized” Trafficking between the two, and originating as an ambivalent colonial aftermath. Subaltern Studies demands that its own translation also occur between the lines.

Subaltern Studies have developed into a cultural theory as it is based on the culture of the subaltern people. It has moved away from people’s politics to the study of the culture of the subaltern people. Now it tends to take resort to cultural as well as literary modes to know history. The first emancipatory act that Subaltern Studies project performs in our understanding of tribes, castes, or the other such groups as Veena Das writes in his article, “Subaltern as Perspective”, “is to restore to them their historical being” (314). In all, its commitment to restore history of subaltern people is rather genius aspect about Subaltern Studies. Indeed David Ludden says that a subaltern study has become “an original sight for a new kind of history from below, a people’s history free of nation constraints” (12).

The word “Subaltern”, borrowed from Antonio Gramsci and sometimes used to refer a concept as vague as the “people”, is usually defined by Subaltern Studies scholars in contrast to the term “elite”, which is colonial or postcolonial situation signifies “dominant groups, foreign as well as indigenous” (Said 44). Said further says:

The ‘subaltern’ that represents the demographic difference between the total Indian population and all those [. . .] describes as ‘elite’. Some of

those classes and groups such as the lesser rural gentry, impoverished landlords, rich peasants and upper middle-peasants who ‘naturally’ ranked among the ‘people’ and the ‘subaltern’, could under certain circumstances act for the ‘elite’, as explained above, and therefore be classified as such in some local or regional situations-an ambiguity which it is up to the historian to sort out on the basis of a close and judicious reading of his evidence. (44)

Although Subaltern Studies focuses on South Asia, its historical discourse has resulted in the term “subaltern”, generally referring to groups of inferior rank in other areas of the world as other historians/seek to locate and reestablish the agency of these groups. Subaltern equals the people who exist “on their own, that is, independently of the elite” (2). As explored here, the problem with such a definition of subaltern is that it imagines the existence of two totally separate political realms, one belonging to the elite and the other to the subaltern.

The term ‘subaltern’, which comes from Latin root *sub* that is “under” plus *alter* means “other”, literally refers to any person or the group of inferior to rank and station. The subaltern has now become a typical way to assign the colonial people who employ this discourse. The whole idea of subaltern subject is now to resist this European discourse rather than obey with it. The term ‘subaltern’ refers to the marginalized or exploited people, whether in terms of class, caste, age, religion, ethnicity, and gender. The most well-known violation perpetrated over the subaltern people, is the effacement of their identity in the official account. The subalterns are marginalized thinking that they can not speak though they are conscious of the control or marginalization. They lack the language of their own which can express their pain

and sufferings. Not only the language, they lack the theoretical strategies, thus, the marginalization becomes a continuing process.

The very term 'subaltern' was first used to refer Vassals and Peasants in Medieval period. By seventeenth century, it was used to position for the lower ranks in military signifying them as peasant origin. By eighteenth century, the writers and the historians started writing novels and histories about military operation in India and America from the subaltern perspective. Later on, the very term got a rather genuine voice, when Antonio Gramsci adopted the term to refer those groups in a society "who are subject to the hegemony of the ruling classes" (76). Peasant, workers and also other groups may fall under the term subalterns, who are denied to access to hegemonic power. These subaltern classes are forced to stay away from the hegemonic power and suffer the exploitation of the ruling class.

It is widely recognized the religious beliefs and practices of subordinate caste group. Dipankar Gupta has recently attempted a historical explanation of the transition from Varna to jati; and practically every cultural region of India has its share of studies relating the regional caste structure with changes in production structures over particular historical periods. Similarly, we can make determinate distinctions by quantity among all castes if we have a similar definition-for-self of caste. The most powerful candidate in sociological literature for this definition of casteness is hierarchy. Partha Chatterjee argues, "Hierarchy fixes a universal measure of casteness so that, at any given time and place, the immediate quantitative diversity of jatis can be ordered as a quantitative ranking in scale of hierarchy "(179). The universal measure appears for each particular caste as a determinate position, quantitatively fixed and hence comparable, in the hierarchy of all castes.

Dumont does something more, which also happens to be the next step in our immanent critique of caste. The being-for-self caste, namely hierarchy, can be shown to imply a contradictory essence. As soon as we try to arrange the determinate, here-and-now, evidence of the ethnological material in a sequence of change, we will discover in place of the immediacy of being, on the one hand the reflected or mediated self-identity of caste and on the other a self-repulsion or difference. In Dumont's argument, "the force which holds together the different castes within the whole of the caste system is the ideological force of dharma" (25). It is the construction of 'dharma' which assigns to each 'jati' its place within the system and defines the relations between jatis as the simultaneously unity of mutual separateness and mutual dependence.

Kane notes the agreement of all medieval dharmasastra texts on this point and cites the *sustasamhita* which states explicitly that the "several castes are like the species of animals and that caste attaches to the body and not to the soul" (52). The point, however, is that as soon as these discrete jatis are recognized as particular forms belonging to the same class of entities, i.e. they are all recognized as castes, the finiteness of discrete qualities will be negated by a being-for-self of caste embodying the universal measure of casteness. There is in popular beliefs and practices of caste, an implicit critique which questions the claim of the dominant dharma to unify the particular jatis into a harmonious whole and which puts forward contrary claims. Partha Chatterjee argues, "Just as the effectiveness of the claims of the one dharma is contingent upon the conditions of power, so also are the possibilities and forms of the contrary claims conditioned by those relations of power" (185). In their deviance from the dominant dharma, the popular beliefs draw upon the ideological resources of given cultural traditions, selecting, transforming and developing them to cope with

new conditions of subordination but remaining limited by those conditions. Partha Chatterjee further argues that “the negativity of these contrary claims is an index of their failure to construct an alternative universal to the dominant dharma and is thus the mark of subalternity” (185). The object of subaltern project must be to develop, make explicit and unify these fragmented oppositions in order to construct a critique of Indian tradition which is at the same time a critique of bourgeois for equality.

Marxists have chosen two approaches. 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 relations, the latter of course, being characterized in terms of class relations. Others have suggested that caste is in fact the especially Indian form of material relations at the base, with its own historical dynamic; caste, in other words, “is the form in which classes appear in Indian society” (175). Ramakanta Chakrabarty says “the assertion of Brahmanical dominance in a religious movement which was rooted in mysticism, and which was anti-caste and anti-intellectual, inevitably led to the growth of deviant orders” (324). He then gives an account of the origins, mostly in the eighteenth century, of some of these orders which were usually founded by Vaishnaves from the touchable Sudra castes and which usually has a following among the trading and artisanal castes, the untouchables and sometimes tribals converted to the new faith.

Subaltern Consciousness as the Voice of Resistance

Subaltern consciousness is a hotly debated issue in Subaltern Studies. Spivak, in her seminal essay “Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography”, gives a deconstructive reading to the activities of the Subaltern Studies Group up to their third volume. She tries to assess their work in her writing. Like other many critics, she, too, finds a problem with their compartmentalized views of consciousness. While assessing

their work, she comes to realize that it somehow resembles deconstruction, which puts the binary oppositions like elite/subaltern under erasure. Their project, in her view is rather positivists one as it aspires to investigate, discover and establish a subaltern or peasant consciousness. Spivak, however, thinks that “consciousness, here, is not consciousness-in-general, but a historicized political species, subaltern consciousness” (338). She, therefore, regards their effort to recover peasant consciousness as strategic use of positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest. She suggests, “its own subalternity is claiming a *positive* subject-position for the subaltern might be reinscribed as a strategy for our times” (345).

Subalterns writers endeavour to establish the subaltern people as the subject of insurgency. That’s why they propose to focus on subaltern consciousness as their central theme. Otherwise, the subaltern people’s experience of insurgency would be turned into a history of events without a subject. Dipesh Chakrabarty in his essay, “Invitation to a Dialogue” writes:

The central aim of the subaltern studies is to understand the consciousness that informed and still informs political actions taken by the subaltern classes on their own, independently of any elite initiatives. It is only by giving this consciousness a central place in historical analysis that we the subaltern as maker of the history s/he lives out. (374)

Guha holds the view that the alleged ‘peasant consciousness’ is a strategy they have got to adopt of establishing subaltern people as an autonomous domain having their own history. Spivak finally suggests Subaltern Studies group off the dangerous hook of claiming to establish the truth and knowledge of the subaltern and his consciousness” (356).

In his essay “Elementary aspects of peasant insurgency” Guha, too, depicts tribal revolt as the subaltern rebellion, which is completely different from nationalism. Subaltern Studies, in David Ludden words, “entered the academic scene by asserting the complete autonomy of lower class insurgency” (10). It is equally remarkable that the scholars from inside and outside Subaltern Studies have established subaltern’s people’s everyday resistance against elite classes as basic feature of life in the politically decolonized spaces like India.

Subaltern consciousness has been always a critical point of subalternity. The peasants or subaltern groups tend to resist the elite domination. It emerges as an invariant feature about subaltern group, which makes the discussion on the subaltern mentality fruitful. The subaltern people resisted the bourgeois nationalist as well as indigenous elite leaders by disobeying their orders. They would take part in the anti-imperialist movements in their own traditionalist way. They would derive the terms from the idioms of their everyday life so that they could make these struggles their own. Hence, ‘defiance’ is not the only characteristic behaviour of the subaltern classes but also “submissiveness to authority” equally important feature of their behaviours. The question of unrealized potential arises out of the distinct articulation characterizing insurgencies at the grass root as Ranjit Guha writes “all mass struggle will tend inevitably to model themselves on the unfinished project of Titu, Kanhu, Birsa, and Magher Singh” (336).

Religion often is an important in subaltern protests against an order that perpetuates operation and distress. As observed by Sumit Sarkar, “a crucial feature of the concept of breakdown of authority in its more extreme form is it’s predominantly magic religious character, natural and indeed inevitable in a peasant society which has not undergone the process of ‘disenchantment of the world’ partially bought about in

the west in the post-reformation era” (308). For peasant, religion is an essential and integral part of their everyday lives. It also mediates between themselves and those forces, for good and evil, appears to lie beyond their control. The workers become more conscious regarding their welfare and rights. It is observed that there is an urgent need of working class organization, which would fight for the betterment of the entire workers. The workers should become united so that they could give pressure to the authority. The government in Dipesh words has described this labour force in 1933 as “perhaps the largest and the most compact group of workers with identical interest in the world” (116). It was not just the “higher frequency of strikes however that make the authority take notice of them; the authorities were also sometimes worried by their longer duration” (118). He provides an answer to the question of why trade unions made little headway despite evidence of the urge for protest among workers.

The emphasis on subaltern autonomy and consciousness demonstrates variable reactions and results as the subject encounter different historical experiences. For example, the Devi movement of 1922-23 in South Gujarat was distinguished by the tribal solidarity secured substantial gain for the indigenous in their struggle against exploiters. The same movement, however, represented a stage in the growth of a class of richer peasants within the ‘adivasi’ community. The subaltern classes believe that those who hold power over them, whether money lenders, grain traders, land holders or officials, should not abuse their power but be responsible to subaltern needs. So the protest is accordingly directed not to overturn the super-ordinate classes but to reminding them of the proper use of their power. But when the authority ignores the peasant “they constitute a continuing form of protest acting together in small bonds, against it” (Arnold 90). Thus, Subaltern Studies has focused on need for resistance

against elite classes as a basic feature of life in the politically decolonized spaces like India.

III. Textual Analysis

Sushma Joshi's story collection *The End of the World* not only talks about the subaltern's suffering and plight they faced at the time of Maoist insurgency but also tries to show the subaltern people's consciousness resisting against domination and raise voice for their rights. Throughout text, characters protest against domination, ask for their rights and act as conscious agencies against the dominating and exploitative behaviour and law. So, the research explores the subaltern consciousness and attempts to speak on behalf of the common people. Though some critics think that subaltern cannot speak but here in this text, Joshi presents such characters as Gopi, Mahesh and Gautam, Harka Tamang and his wife Sanumaya, Bishnu, Dil and Kanchi and Hastabhadur Kathayat who are not only conscious about their rights but also speak against the domination and exploitation. It includes tribal castes so they are conscious about their upper caste domination and about their culture. As a whole they all act as a conscious agency. Gopi, a ten years boy hailed from village to work as household servant remains silent but with an incident of not having chance to taste 'cheese' brought from Switzerland, becomes conscious of his right and domination imposed upon him. With this he is also aware of his family, culture and economic changes occurred around him. He calls house owner lady 'Mami' as he is asked but aware of that he is not equally treated like her other sons. The narrator presents as:

But they were so much older than him and he was more the age of her grandchild than her own sons. But he still called her "Mami", an artifice of the wealthy in Kathmandu to give the illusion that their poor cousins were treated like family, not servants. Gopi said "Mami" with the wryness of a ten year old who knows his own place in the world, and who can barely wait to get out of it. (5)

This establishes how upper class people are exploiting poor and subaltern people by showing other that they behave even their servant like a son. But in reality they never treat them equally. Here in this story, too, Gopi neither gets good salary nor sleep. He works till late night and wakes up early in the morning. If he wakes up late, old lady starts crying at him. Even in winter morning he does not get time to sleep late. The narrator comments:

Prakash Babu came back on one of those chilly winter mornings where all Gopi wanted to do was curl up and go back to sleep again. But the old woman wouldn't let him. "Gopi !!" She shouted, tucking her wool shawl around herself with frantic haste. "Go fetch a taxi !, Go, Go !It's almost time for the plane to land." The plane was scheduled to come in at ten in the morning, and it was only seven. (4)

It is cleared that he is asked to call her "Momi" only to disguise her exploitation upon him. Despite his being smaller than her grand children, she has no pity over him. He walks bare foot wearing her son's old clothes in exchange for his labour. She elaborates it further:

The old woman gave him five rupees a month, along with dal-bhat, lodging and her son's old clothes in exchange for his labour. The five rupees which turned to ten, twenty, fifty, hundred, two hundred and then five hundred over the next decade, was swallowed up for the daily substance of his big family back in the village, from the mustard oil and salt of the daily meals to the tobacco that packed his grandfather's hookah. (18)

Through this paragraph, Gopi seems to be aware of his duty and responsibility towards his family. He though does hard labour, cannot fulfill his desire and necessity

of his family too. Subaltern are exploited by their upper class elite people but they can't raise voice against them. They only consciously resist their domination as Guha argued. Gopi also as a subaltern character bears humiliation and prejudice in every steps throughout his life.

Gopi once goes to fetch a taxi as he is ordered by his landlady. He is humiliated by taxi drivers observing his cloth and shoes. They do not believe that he can hire taxi. So, they are not ready to stop taxi for him. He is conscious of their humiliating as well as cheating behaviour.

Several taxi drivers, their back seats empty, drove by the waving boy in his scruffy shoes before one small, dented turquoise taxi slowed down before him. "Where to, boss ?" Said the driver. He looked down at Gopi's worn Chinese sheakers, then up at the shirt meant for a grown man hanging as the ten year old body, and spat on the ground. (5)

Gopi's consciousness is found towards his family too. He gets a piece of golden folk wrapped with a shiny, crinkly golden treasure and he cannot control himself with joy. He unwrapps chocolate and keep it into his mouth. When he finds chocolate wrapped with golden like treasure, he dreams as the way narrator unfolds.

Gopi ten year old and hungry for experience, couldn't wait until they handed him, with grudging stinginess, his little square of the chocolate. Gopi unwrapped the foil, a shiny, crinkly, golden treasure. Gopi wondered if this paper too was gold, real gold, 24 karat. He could sell it and send the money back home for his sister's wedding. (13)

It exposes Gopi's innocence as well as his extreme poverty. He has been compelled to work in Kathmandu due to economic crisis. He is sensible to his parent's hard labour in village. He wants to share family problem and assist from his side.

Gopi is also rebellion but express it in verbal form. While he is waiting to have taste of 'cheese' even though he is not clear whether it is 'chij', as he has heard most people of his neighbor talking of its taste and purity. Gopi is sure he will get a piece of it while landlady distributes as "there were a lot of little white wedge in the plate in front of the old woman' (16). He finds everybody getting their share and munching them. He is there alone who has not got it. But old woman gives it to her grand child Roshana while she asks second time. He become furious as narrator says:

Gopi felt disappointment through his body as the little girl shoved the cheese into her mouth in triumph. Bitch. She knew he had been waiting with longing all evening long. She knew it and yet she had ignored him like he wasn't even present in the room. Like he didn't even exist. (17)

This paragraph exposes his consciousness of discrimination that old woman made towards him though she pretends herself to be his 'Momi'. After then, he leaves that home and starts covert job at a hotel for twenty years. His rebelliousness can be seen while a old cook tries to deter him from going to buy 'cheese' by explaining it as 'demonic food that 'smells like rot and taste like vomit' (20). He responds to her as:

"I've been waiting for this for almost twenty years, Didi. He confided.
"I don't know how these things happen, but they do. You long for something, but somehow you find that time has passed, and you haven't done anything about your longings. I never got around to eating cheese. Today is the day, I am not going to stop now." (20)

It shows his struggle to fulfill his longing in his own way. He seems to be conscious of his own longing after 20 years later too and resists to them who speak against him and his desires. In another story entitled as 'Betrayal' one can find subaltern voice have raised against dominant class that tries to exploit and mistreat them. Both

characters Mahesh and Gautam meet each-other in Bombay. They have gone there as both of them are deceived by their female partners. Both work at construction site.

The story includes all the upheaval and suffering they face in the course of their life.

In Bombay, their 'thekedar' keeps them with others in the same cramped room without concerning their health. It brings out condition of working class people. They are conscious of profit seeking tendency and inhuman behaviour of their thekedar.

That is exposed through Gautamay's explanation:

Our thekedar had put us in the same cramped room where the cockroaches rah around like a brown and shifting army and the room smelt of unwashed clothes and dried cum as the men massaged their youth and dreams away in the dreary wetness of their own tired hands.

I slept on the floor like on a dari. (29)

This paragraph highlights the condition of workers and their relationship with their owner in capitalistic market. In this market, owner also exploits their workers not only in their wage but also are not ready to provide them with other basic accommodation they need. So they are obliged to work in hostile place that if they die, no one there to claim upon them. The death of Netra 'falling off the scaffolding of the new building' (29) and thekedar's unwilling to provide money for compensation exposes at all subaltern's consciousness of their tragic death and voice against this inhuman behaviour towards the workers. Their resignation is also the result of their consciousness that if they still live there working, the thekedar will cheat them too by giving no compensation. Mahesh talks with Gautamay shows their better experience while he says "if we stay with this thekedar, the only way we will get home is wrapped in a white shroud" (30).

After leaving construction work, Mahesh and Gautamay go to Colaba place and stay in Mahesh cousin's room where eight people were living there before they entered. After coming there, Gautamay starts to work as security guard in the 'oberoi' one of the bigger hotels in Marine Prive and Mahesh as a reception boy at the grand wheatley's hotel. While working there, they become conscious of differences in life style between upper class people and subaltern like them. They find hotel as "a venerable institution with marbled stairs and colonial era furniture that catered to romantically inclined continental tourists" (32) but their life was going downward despite they did hard labour from day to night. They couldn't fulfill all the basic needs with their little wage. Their living room 'dera' reflects it more vividly as:

All of this would be trashed out in the tired, zero watt light of the kitchen where the sink was full of dirty dishes, and where food was gobbled down quickly and without ceremony to leave tongue free for more important activities. (33)

Mahesh and Gautamay are well aware of their plight and pathetic condition in the occupation. They protect and earn for their hotel owner bearing risks but owners do not seem kind to their pitiful condition. Then realizing insecurity, they come back to Nepal and open a restaurant in Kathmandu with their savings. They are aware of competition in market so they manage to get bank loan to spread their business. But they are cheated by their new found partner. Gautam becomes suspicious at his behaviour and warns Mahesh to be careful. They are betrayed as "he had taken not just the petty cash form the till, but also three lakh rupees he had managed to get as a loan [. . .] after a month, the fledgling restaurant went bankrupt" (36). Then story presents political consciousness of the characters too. They join in political movement to restore democracy thinking that it will bring change to make their life comfortable.

The democracy is established in Nepal but after years, they can't realize changes rather find political party started to fight like "pack of street dogs" (38) and there was even more corruption then when there was no democracy. Their political consciousness further is reflected as:

[. . .] underground whispers about the Maoist started to float by us, and we both decided to enlist. Becoming an insurgent sounded like a good idea, especially in our present, deplorable conditions of unemployment where our status as political activists had been undermined by the sheer hunger and misery of our conditions. (39)

It shows why Mahesh and Gautamay joins Maoist movement. When political changes can not address their problem of unemployments and misery of hunger, they cannot simply exist being only political activist. Like they, there are other people to join Maoist party to solve their hand to mouth problems instead for ideological support. Mahesh and Gautamay also go there even not knowing much about the Maoist uprising.

The exploitation and discrimination are prevailed in every place that Mahesh and Gautam realize after entering into Maoist movement. They think first that there is not any exploitation. But they see everywhere hierarchies and feel that "being a revolutionary was no mean feat" (39). Gautamay as well is aware of lifestyle of their leaders, most of them are Brahmin's who are hungry for power and attempts are made to achieve it. Gautamay expresses it as:

You know what I mean ? I mean after fifteen years of eating good rice in Bombay you don't want to go back and be eating some stinking shit stolen from an army barrack-especially when you hear that the Brahmin leaders of the Maoist movement, please note, are eating the

best and finest Basmati rice. This is enough to piss off any hale and hearty revolutionary and, I, being only four feet ten, had even more of a reason for grievance. (41)

This paragraphs shows that subaltern people though are conscious of their exploitation and domination, they cannot voice against it as there is no way for them to live. They are choosing the path of death due to their obligation. But Gautamay becomes conscious of their leader's luxurious life and fleeds from there. His escapement can be regarded as protest against their exploitative nature.

Gautamay then comes to Bhatbhateni supermarket and gets job as security guard. He there becomes aware of urban life. He finds people more interested in western goods and less in favour of Nepali products. He sees bloated figures of urban privilege load up with their cheese and their chocolates. It makes him aware of that money is everything and it is possible to accumulate only when one goes aboard. He realizes the job of security guard cannot make his life worthy. He describes his job as:

All these posh people would come driving up in their pajero and I got to direct their cars to the left or the right of this tiny parking space, after which they would unload their spoiled children and their loaded wives-and the women and the children and their men, all overweight, would walk into the temple of consumption to buy the latest western goods. (42)

The subaltern people are far from such luxurious things and even law cannot protect their life. Because such laws are made by elite people therefore representation of marginal voice is not found there. It is the cause of their exploitation. Even subaltern people are conscious of power that spoils elite children and cause them to indulge in illegal activities. They are ruined by misusing the state power.

In the story "Waiting for Rain" Joshi presents misuse of power and domination over tribal people like Harka Tamang and his wife by elite Ram Chandra Bista, a member of Panchayat, the time before democracy came in Nepal. Partha Chatterjee argues, "Just as the effectiveness of the claims of the dharma is contingent upon the conditions of power, so also are the possibilities and forms of the contrary claims conditioned by those relations of power" (185). So Jatis are constructed to present them as victim and upper class as perpetrator in the form of discrimination. Harka Tamang also becomes in this sense, a subaltern sub-missive to authority. His resistance is not direct but rejection to come in favour of Ram Chandra Bista, an independent candidate of parliament member in upcoming election.

People have right to property so they can decide whether it is to be sold. But Harka Tamang has no right over his land. He is not ready to sell it for Ram Chandra Bista who wants to buy and develop it as tourist resort. He is conscious of his right to property therefore he denies to sell it "And they don't even know it's him" (59). Harka neglects Ram Chandra Bista's proposal to sell his land. Bista is ready to pay Harka two thousand rupees for a ropani of land.

Ram Chandra Bista has plan to buy Harka's land and develop it into tourist resort that would cater to all environmentally sensitive, ecologically minded, high budget tourists who would walk among his plants and admire his permaculture. But Harka's refusal to sell it makes Bista angry with him. Harka is aware of Bista's anger that he could cause him damage that may be physical or mental torture. But Harka has no option to protect him from Bista's attack. He endures it:

It had been eight in the evening. Harka said Ram Chandra had driven up one night in a van full of rangers, dressed in their green Army uniforms. They had slammed the door of the van and come in, all nine

of them. Harka and his family had just finished eating the evening men. Sinki and rice. The fermented, dried redishes drowning in their own sour juice. He had invited them in, offered them some rakshi. (64)

It exposes that Ram Chandra Bista who is misusing his power for his own personal benefit, threatens Harka and his family coming at night with rangers. By it, we can understand that subaltern people are always victim of power and subject to exploitation.

Harka is aware of his ancestral land to which he loves inwardly and doesn't want to miss. It is his true identity and to construct it Harka really works day and night. Harka anyhow wants to preserve his identity. The narrator gives detail of his house as "The House that he had built with his own hands. That had taken him seven months and six big pine trees to build" (63). But deceitful Ram Chandra Bista to drive Harka out of his land accuses him of cutting woods that belonged to government and say they would save him from other legal punishment if he became ready to sell his land. However Harka is reluctant to accept their demand. Subaltern people have no their own voice and their voice is represented through the perspective of elite class people so it is always misrepresented as Spivak argues in her essay "Can subaltern speak?" Harka Tamang is conscious of Ram Chandra Bista's domination and tries to raise voice against him. As a result, Harka Tamang is physically controlled and got him to put black thumb print on the paper so that legally land would be Bista's then. The narrator explains:

Harka knew. He also knew the choice was between him accepting the price or going to jail. He had looked up at them, nine men in green uniforms and big boots walking all over his house, and known that it was all over. They had taken his hand and made him put his thumb

print on the document. The gentle pressure of the fat man's had pushed his thumb deeper into the thick bark paper [. . .] he felt his entire being, his ancestor's and his history being reduced to that one black mark onto a piece of paper that would from now on belong to Ram Chandra Bista. (66)

The paragraph explains Ranjit Guha's claim that subalternity is the result of without hegemony. So subaltern people do struggle to resist its domination especially in two forms: one by being defiant and other by being submissive to authority. Harka as subaltern is struggling against such domination being defiant to authority. With the beginning of election after ten years Harka Tamang becomes rebellion against Ram Chandra Bista and rejects his friend Deependra's request to vote him. Rather he shows his favour to Maoist "I can see why people want to follow Prachanda" (59). It is not only evidence Harka is becoming politically conscious but also he rejects Ram Chandra Bista's request to work together for the election. Ram Kumar Bista has doubt that men like Harka could be recruited by all kinds of political forces therefore he desires to take Harka's hand as "we must work together for this election now, right, Dai? You must help me in the coming days" (69). Harka is conscious of Ram Chandra Bista's fraud that he just wants his support to be saved from possible attack made by oppressed people. Harka also refuses to work for Ram Chandra Bista on his field as he is aware of his dignity that he doesn't want to lose. He thinks if he works in Bista's tourist resort, he would walk before him hanging head always down so that he never would be free from his slavery. The narrator elaborates:

Harka would work the land knowing that he held plants worth thousands of rupees in his hands, plants grown on his ancestor's land. He would have to bow to Ram Chandra each time he comes by. He

would have to turn away a little bit and meld into the background when he came by with his group of international visitors. (69)

Harka's decision not to work under Ram Chandra Bista is a strong protest against his exploitation. Harka further determines rather to work in his own small patch of land that he had bought half way up a valley even if it was dry and crusty', proves his strong resistance and his desire to come out of his domination. Subaltern people's struggle in their own way independently of elite class people is also reflected in this story. Harka Tamang, a tribe of Nepal is being marginalized in day to day politics by bourgeoisie such as Ram Chandra Bista however he is continuously conscious to his own exploitations. Indeed, the practice of castism has become a form of exploitation in South Asian countries like Nepal and India.

Similarly "Law and Order" expose subaltern consciousness presenting a subaltern character Bishnu who is involved in police force. Through him, story writer Joshi reveals domination and exploitation prevailed inside police force. It also observes outer world through the eyes of a policeman who came from village that is his consciousness of discrimination between upper class and lower class people.

British government recruits in its army youths from developing countries like Nepal. As an imperialist country, it gathers qualified youths after hard examination of physical exercise and medical test and sent them to different countries which were once colonized by it such as Hong Kong, Singapore and Brunei. Subaltern people like Bishnu are conscious of familial love that gets broken up due to the economic crisis. They endeavour to strengthen themselves economically. For they need to make themselves as demanded by their employers. Bishnu also was harboring a dream of joining British Army and then becoming wealthier than all the rest of his village compatriots put together. The narrator presents it as "if he had been accepted, he could

have built a house in Kathmandu bigger than the Laptan's bungalow. He could have married the Laptan's daughter" (71). It reveals subaltern consciousness of Bishnu who thinks by following upper class people, the exploitation can come to the end. In subaltern consciousness, two kinds of trends are found – one is appreciating upper class elite people and their culture and second total rejection of them.

Bishnu is a police with low status becomes close to his friend Bhola who has worked in police force without having any promotion. While Bhola expresses his worry looking at his nondescript uniform, he consoles him saying "well, at least they provided the uniform" (77). It shows that subaltern consciousness they can be happy in simple things and express solidarity even in suffering.

Bishnu as a police, has duty to secure people from being robbed but he himself inclines to steal vegetables at night and abuse girls. He is posted in Nexal headquarter. There he was with his friends in narrow room 'cell' painted with gray cement. Near to it, there was neighbor garden encircled with big walls. Bishnu couldn't control himself out of hunger and went to steal vegetables. It shows police of low rank are living without basic needs. This stealing activity reinforces subaltern consciousness that they can't respect law and order if they have to die from starvation. Bishnu's consciousness also explores the difference in the quality of rations distributed in headquarter and police mess. He shares his experience:

They had been well fed at the police Academy – in large heaping serving of cornmeal dhido, and once a day a meal of parboiled rice, dal and yellow cabbage and potato curry, doused in salt and turmeric. But headquarters was different. The mess, where they all, ate, made food which was never wholly satisfactory. (80)

It reflects that high officials in police force are enjoying facilities but low level police are exploited and discriminated. Bishnu compares himself with a dog of rich people which is well-fed that indicates their pitiful situation. When his friend J.B. Warns him of a biting dog kept in neighbor, Bishnu expresses its death as, "May death take that dog soon so I can get a good night's sleep but doesn't look like its going to die soon. He gets fed better than we do. I see them dumping chunk of meat on his bowl every morning" (86). In this way, "Law and Order" reflects subaltern consciousness that subaltern people are not living a better life than that of a dog. But by rejecting such profession, they are not sure of getting another one. So they are obliged to continue it despite being aware of their exploitation.

Joshi's another story entitled "The Blockade" brings forward a subaltern struggle to protect his family who are dying of hunger. It also deals with subaltern people and their struggle to survive while living in remote region like Kalikot.

The subaltern character Hasta Bahadur Kathayat has gone to India to earn breads for his family. But he returns to Nepal taking a paper about 12 points agreement made between democrats and Maoist rebels. This agreement was made after king cornered all political parties. With the agreement, Maoist blocked to choke off the landlocked country that brought absolute monarchy the to knees. After the political change, a young boy of seventeen years has hope that his people would not die from starvation. But his hope remains unfulfilled and he loses his family members finally.

Hasta Bahadur Kathayat is sensitive to the death of his people. His people are dying due to lack of foods. These people are living in famine stricken place Kalikot. The production made by those people is not sufficient for more than two months. Therefore most of the youths have gone out of the country and other places of Nepal.

He thinks that if he got some idea from Ram Bomjan, a meditator, he could control the death of people. As he had heard that Ram Bomjan is meditating beneath a tree to call for stopping violence for a half a year without food and water. His eagerness of finding solution to eliminate food shortage exposes that he is conscious of the current situation they faced though it is not possible to control individually. But it indicates that he is resisting government's indifference to the problem of remote area as:

Hasta Bahadur had come with one specific purpose – to find out if the young boy was indeed not drinking or eating, as the reports claimed. If a sixteen year old boy could do that, then he held the key to the suffering that plagued Hasta's village in Kalikot. Then all he had to do was ask Bomjon to reveal the secret. The people of his village, facing a famine, would be saved. People would no longer die from hunger because they would no longer need to eat. (157)

The story embodies the subaltern consciousness and attempts to speak on behalf of the common people. Hasta Bahadur's curiosity shows that they are helpless to resist government. His consciousness of government's indifference to the right to food indicates the scenario of possible movement.

Hasta Bahadur is also conscious of how such situation of food shortage emerged in his area. He sees political parties for their vested interests to reach in power are demolishing food depot constructed in remote area. But he cannot resist.. The narrator explains dire situation in this way:

The phone call from his brother had warned him that the circumstances were dire. "Hasta, the whole village is dying", he had said in a quite voice. The blockades of food had slowed down the food delivery. But more damaging had been the demolition of the food depot, which the

state used to run once upon a time. But then the Maoists had come and blown that up, and now, in the lean season, there wasn't even a sack of rice to beg from the depot. His voice held the echo of prophecy. (159)

The phone call between two brothers reflect their horrible situation emerged with the irresponsibility of government and political parties. Subaltern people are conscious of their ill-treatment meted upon them but cannot go against them because they are weak and their individual voice does not matter to the people in power. The conflict between state and insurgent group that directly affects ordinary people and its less impact on upper-elite class.

With this dire situation, he feels instability in himself and goes to meet different political parties and try to remind them of their 12 points promise. It shows his political consciousness. Hasta Bahadur believes that political parties indifference to remote region is main cause of its backwardness though it is resourceful and economically viable to support whole economy of the country. His attempt to meet leaders and make them aware of it, is the result of his political consciousness.

Hasta Bahadur gets disappointed not being able to meet leaders and make aware of his extra-three points demands, returns his home to Kalikot. After reaching there, he finds the death of his mother, grandmother and little son not getting food to eat and his wife's elopement with a merchant exposes subaltern consciousness of their region that they cannot leave it due to the affection to their own land. Further his determination to live there "May be I will stay here" (176) highlights his consciousness of own birth place as well as it is a challenge to the state resistance to the domination, prejudice and exploitation.

In this way, the characters are conscious about the domination and for their rights. They resist passively against domination and act like conscious agencies

against the dominating ideologies. To sum up, Sushma Joshi is successful in presenting the conscious characters like Gopi, Bishnu, Harka and Hasta Kathayat with their own voice to resist all sorts of dominations over them.

IV. Conclusion

In story collection *The End of the World* Sushma Joshi presents the marginalized people and domination lashed upon them by dominant elite class and institution. She involves different cast of characters representing social complexities from a boy of 10 years from village obliged to work as household servant in Kathmandu through a tribal Hasta Tamang exploited by an elite with political power to a character from remote region of Nepal compelled to work in India whose family lived in famine stricken Kalikot. Presenting such characters from subaltern group and their consciousness of exploitation and prejudice imposed upon them, Joshi foregrounds subaltern voice and their resistance to domination throughout her stories. The characters seem to be submissive and imitating the elite class people and their behavior but they become rebels while stories move to the end. Joshi portrays subaltern consciousness and their agency to avoid subalternity, brings them together, shows how the subaltern people are exploited in the society and finally shows their resistance against the authority often being aware of their rights.

Joshi presents Gopi of 10 years boy as house servant and shows him as a conscious character struggling against his owner's domination and exploitation. Gopi works as she is asking him to say 'Momi', he starts defying her. Before he is realizing hidden cause of it, he was working in less payment and wearing her son's cloth though it is unfit to his body. Gopi further gets irritated while he does not receive piece of cheese brought from Switzerland to taste. He is expecting that house owner would give him but she gives her child twice and other members of her family. Then he quits his job refusing to work under the command of his owner and starts to work at a hotel. It shows his resistance and subaltern consciousness of his own right to be treated as family member while he is asked to call her 'Momi'. Correspondingly Mahesh and

Gautamay seems to be conscious of exploitation made by their 'Thekedar' while working in construction site in Bombay. When they see the death of Netra falling off the scaffolding of the new building and Thekedar's deny for paying compensation to his wife who is expecting her third child and has no money even to cremate his deceased body, they become conscious of their own plight they would have in future and exploitation done upon them by their thekedar, they decide to leave construction working. This decision to quit the Thekedar and construction working shows that they are aware of making their life secured and as well as it performs their resistance to the Thekedar's exploitation.

Joshi similarly deals with political consciousness of subaltern people in her stories. Mahesh and Gautamay are fed up off with political instability and leaders struggling for power after political change in 2046. They see the growth of unemployment and corruption, everywhere in the country and hear that maoist party is struggling against such evil backdrops. Then they decide to join maoist party being conscious of disparity and exploitation prevailed in their society. It proves that they are politically conscious of their own right to be free from state domination.

Joshi is also able to present through her stories the tribal awareness of the people living in remote region and their gradual awareness of own right and discrimination made upon them from rulers. Harka Tamang whose field was confiscated by a panchayat member Ram Kumar Bista in Panchayat time is now conscious of his exploitation and decides to raise voice against him. He then rejects Ram Kumar Bista's request to help him in current election. Similarly, Hasta Kathayat goes to meet leaders with 12 point agreements made in India by seven political parties and maoist alliance and with his extra 3 points demands shows people of remote region are aware of political right and conscious of changes happening around them.

Thus by showing struggle of subaltern people of various types, Joshi makes subaltern voice heard in her stories.

Joshi characterizes a subaltern character working in police force named Bishnu and reflects his struggle to come out of domination. His desire to marry lapten's daughter after being a British army and to construct huge building than lapton's shows he wants to be free from lapton's domination and challenge him. He joins police force after he fails to be a British army where he finds discrimination in food distribution among officers and other like him. He equally seems to be aware of elite people and their behavior with a dog. They are ready to serve delicious food to a dog but hate poor people. He feels his life is no better than a dog kept in elite people. It shows subaltern consciousness and resistance made by subalterns in their own way independently.

Thus, the story collection *The End of the World* can be taken as a document presenting the consciousness of the subaltern people against the domination, exploitation and prejudice meted out upon them. So it does not only shows the sufferings of the subaltern people but also projects them with consciousness that shows voices against the operating powers. It thus establishes their agency to resist the mode of domination.

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