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Representation of Dalit Identity Crisis in Selected *Nepali Newspaper Articles*

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By

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Letter of Recommendation

Sarmila Joshi has completed her thesis entitled “Representation of Dalit Identity Crisis in Selected *Nepali Newspaper Articles*” under my supervision. She carried out her research from June 2016 to April 2017. I hereby recommend her thesis to be submitted for Viva voce.

.....

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Representation of Dalit Identity Crisis in Selected *Nepali Newspaper Articles*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Sarmila Joshi has been approved by the undersigned members of Research Committee.

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Abstract

This research attempts to explore the lapses of media representation of Dalit identity crisis from the theoretical perspective of Subaltern Studies. This research critically examines Dalit news and articles in national dailies; The Kathmandu Post and The Rising Nepal of 2015. The hollow representation of Dalit issue seems insufficient to fight against caste based discrimination and untouchability. Steven Folmer's theory befits here, where problem of Dalit identity is taken similar to the identity problem of other social group which is not appropriate for actual representation. This research also contributes to unveil how the state and private media represent Dalit issue in the print media. The ideology of The Rising Nepal seems to serve and become the manifesto of the government and The Kathmandu Post is helping the elite to collect the capital. These print media thus fail to cover the issue regarding Dalits. Thus the issue of Dalit does not get sufficient space even in the republican period of New Nepal. With the help of articles, news and editorials, the research proves that the print media have simply generalized the different marginalized communities all together and turned back to the genuine issue of subaltern people like Dalits. Thus print media should cover the issue of Dalits from different perspective than that of other ethnic minorities.

Key Words: Casteist subalterns; Dalits, untouchability, media, hegemony, discourse, trauma and so on.

Steven Folmer in his research "Problem of identity for Hill Dalits and Nepal's nationalist project" argues ". . . Dalit status is misconstrued as an ethnicity, the assumption that politics will achieve the same degree of success for Dalits as it does for the indigenous nationalities is untenable" (786). However, writers writing on

Dalit issue in national print media of Nepal are not aware of what Folmer asserts. Because they do not give emphasis on the fact that Dalit identity is not similar to other ethnic minorities as they share only the space of minority or of margin and the backwardness in nationality. Likewise, the activists and the writers talk on behalf of Dalit issue without recognizing the fact that Folmer has said.

People of minorities and the Dalits cannot get success through the same movement of identity politics because Dalits are more dominated, more pathetic and even excluded from those ethnic groups. Moreover, within the ethnic groups there are Dalit in Newar community, Sherpa community, and the Madhesh except high castes; Brahman and Chhetri. They are more suffered, at the bottom of the marginalised and need a different solution for their upliftment. This thesis examines the representation of Dalits issue of identity crisis in national dailies; *The Kathmandu Post* and *The Rising Nepal*. Through critical examination of Dalit news and articles, this research makes a comprehensive study of Dalit identity from the theoretical perspective of Subaltern Studies. But in order to justify the claim some insights from trauma studies, Racism, cultural studies, discourse, and hegemony is brought.

The caste based discrimination is one of the most serious issues of national harmony. A vast group of people who have been suffered under the domination and sub-ordination of caste based discrimination are feeling alienated from the national policies. They feel themselves in a state of ambivalence between belong and not belong to the state policies which make them “inclusive outsiders”. The case is not only associated to the caste based discrimination, there are many other forms of group of people who feel outside of the mainstream. The issue of discrimination and frustration of discriminated groups of people weaken the national harmony and integrity. This research concentrates on the caste based discrimination and

untouchability in the context of issue of dalit community in Nepal and in particular it concerns on how the issue of caste based discriminations are raised through media (newspaper articles and news). For instance, why do they use the term Dalit, why do not they use their name instead. It shows the discrimination. If a Brahman or Chhetri did something good or bad their name is mentioned but for the people of Dalit community the media use only the term Dalit as if they have no name and surnames. Every individual are generalized under the term Dalit. Their caste are not given importance whether they be Bishwokarma, Damai, Kami, Pariyar, Sunar, or any other they are called Dalit in the headlines of news and articles. For instance, a Dalit student has topped the university, a Dalit pedestal has been killed in a bus accident, a Dalit candidate has won the election, etc. Their identity becomes Dalit for the nation whether they are rich or poor, ruler or ruled, actually suppressed or not.

Caste system is the basic foundation of Hindu society. Caste system is based on Varna system. In context of Nepal, social structure is based on the Varna system where different caste groups are inter dependent upon each other. The caste system is based on four major classification. They are the Brahmans, the Kshatrya, the Vaishya and the Sudra. Ramsharan Sharma in “Ancient History of Sudras” states that “People were made Sudras after they defeated with Aryas before 500 BC and are taken as property to make slave” (83). Before that caste system was not in practice. Sharma further mentions “During pre Maurya period (600-300 BC) social order was completely based on caste system and Sudras were made deprived of every rights regarding socio-economic, political, legal and religious” (83). As a report by Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization states “[t]he source of proof for this setup is the Bhaagbat Geeta , one of the Holy book of Hindu religion” (10). It is said that caste system was more formalised and ritualised by some famous Hindu sages like

Manu and his disciple, Bhrigu formed Manusmriti by memorising the words of his Guru (father), Manu. The Lichhavi king divided the people into four Varna and eighteen castes under certain belief. Their occupation is of Priest (Brahman), Warrior (Kshyatri), business owner (Vaisya) and laborer (Sudra) according to the Dharmasutra and Manusmriti. The Sudras are divided into two types; touchable and untouchable. It was formalised under the law in fourteenth century on the basis of occupation. The rules and orders are followed according to “Scripture of Human Justice” (Manav Nyayasashtra) during Malla period. At that time, water touchable Sudras were allowed to worship the gods and water untouchable Sudras were not allowed to worship.

In the history of Nepal, the caste system came into existence in the early period but national harmony was balanced in society before and after the unification by King Prithivi Narayan Shah. He addressed Nepal as a “common garden” of four caste and thirty-six sub-castes. According to Dor Bahadur Bista “ [t]o describe the caste hierarchy wide formulated as the *Muluki Ain* (The Civil Code) the totality of this caste universe had been paraphrased in the code as *Char Varna Chhattis Jaat* (four Varna and thirty-six castes)” (38). This shows the familiarity of Nepali society with the caste system and it is regarded as a main basis of social division.

As described in the myth of Hindu religion, the Brahmans were created from the mouth of god Bramah, Chhetri from the arms, Vaishya from the waist and Sudra from the feet that is why considered to be lowest as possible. As D.B. Bista states:

This was the Varna or Caste system introduced, in part, by the Guptas. ...under the Guptas a small number of Brahmin appeared and were appointed as temple priests, while the king took the title of Kshatriyas... so that only references to Brahmin and Kshatriyas have

been found and the caste system remained a localised, isolated, and exotic plaything of the elite group. (20-21)

Maximum numbers of the citizen were illiterate till the end of Rana regime. “Though the school (Durbar High School) was theoretically open to all, in effect it remained open only to those in the Rana family and the upper class close to them” (Bista 119). Though the caste division was for the proper regulation of nation economically and socially, division of caste means division of work which is later made a system by the powerful people. The Civil Code of 1910 BS can be the proof of Ranas’ support of caste based discrimination. There was no voice raised for Dalits issue and identity strongly before the revolution of 2046/47 BS though many social movements took place from 2007 BS. Constitution of 2004 BS prepared by Chandra Shamsher Rana secures few fundamental rights “. . . this constitution guarantees to citizens of Nepal freedom of person, freedom of speech, liberty of the Press, freedom of assembly and discussion. Freedom of Worship, complete equality in the eye of the law, cheap and speedy justice . . .” (part II 612). It has not particularly mentioned any right for different ethnic minorities and Dalits which means being taken as a whole. The concept of equality has not developed or been taken seriously by the law makers. But Dalits struggle for inclusion get serious turn over after the fall of Rana regime. As Folmer states “the end of Rana period witnessed the establishment of identity based organisation of minorities, most of which fell into the category of ethnic group, but also included Dalits, who established the first Dalit organisation in 1947. . . They advocate for inclusion and call for an end to marginalisation and discrimination” (789).

Being voiceless, silent and feeble is to follow the rule. In terms of Antonio Gramsci the uneducated and powerless people are hegemonized by consent and by

power. In *The Prison Notebooks* Gramsci argues “it is also to be noted how lapses in the administration of justice make an especially disastrous impression on public: the hegemonic apparatus is more sensitive in this sector, to which arbitrary actions on the part of the police and political administration may also be referred” (246). They are made to believe that the system is made by god and will be punished in hell if unfollow them. Therefore, caste system becomes social order.

Among the people of minorities Dalits are the most dominated, most tortured and out caste. The Dalit untouchables are at margin, considered miserable, and dirty(eat beef) because they are born in lower caste “but it is doubtful that Brahmins are aware of this taboo. . . it is not eating beef that makes the Sarki *Achut*, but his untouchability that allows him to consume it” (796). Here, the caste determines the identity of people. Mrigendra Karki in his article of “Social Movements and Identity Politics in Nepal” mentions that:

Nepal is enduring rapid and massive social and cultural changes or shifting across the periodizations in the reciprocal transactions of social movements and identities- inclusive and exclusive. Since 1990, particularly the post-Maoist insurgency, various forms of social movements and identities are replacing the role of political parties or somehow overcoming set political ideologies- socialism, liberalism and democracy... . (1)

Being aware of the discrimination, after centuries of silence people started raising voice about the issue of Dalit Sabalterns. The government has issued a different commission for Dalits (Dalit Aayog) in the Constitution of Nepal 2015 also which include Rights of Dalit for the first time in the Fundamental Rights of citizen along with Right to live with dignity, Right to equality, Right relating to justice, Right

against torture, Right against untouchability and discrimination and so on. For instance, The Constitution of Nepal 2015, part three, article number twenty four insures Right against untouchability and discrimination “[n]o person shall be subject to any form of untouchability or discrimination in any private and public places on grounds of his or her origin, caste tribe, community, profession, occupation or physical condition” (10). Because of various movement Dalits get some rights and recognition and privileges but they are still outsiders in practice. It is because of the legacy of Hindu nationalism.

Writers and scholars are writing on the issue of Dalits since long ago. Many thinkers have put their opinions and arguments forward to eliminate the issue of caste based discrimination and untouchability. In such order, Subodh Raj Pyakurel in his article “Vastunista Soch Ko Khancho” (Need of Effective Thought) maintains “state should organise programmes considering more on those who are far behind in accessibility and are backwarded to develop skill in its citizen. Only such programmes can develop capacity to grab the opportunity” (My trans. *Nagarik*, 7). Pyakurel focuses more on the policy of nation with suggestion to the people to change their attitude for Dalit people. He says “time has come to accept our faults, harmony among the citizen is necessary” for which he seems optimistic in near future. “As people have been living in one apartment sharing one kitchen in foreign countries they should continue such life style after their return to Nepal. Castism mentioned in the holy book, *Karmakanda* should not be followed by the people imagining of 22nd century” (My trans, 7).

Likewise, C.K Lal, a renowned journalist and political analyst believes that “plural politics seeks to address the quest of dignity in a country through the politics of diversity” which includes but not confined to “institutionalization of jus soli

citizen, proportionate inclusion, representation based on population, federal structure and autonomous unit of local government” (Political anxiety disorder, 7). He means to say that Nepal needs effective inclusive constitution not for the sake of the country but for empowering the powerless communities and ensuring equity and justice. In his view, federalism does work to empower the marginalized communities especially for madhesies and other ethnic groups. But in case of Dalit issue federalism does not play significant role. Because dividing states according to the ethnic communities is ground level solution for the most oppressed Dalits. They are scattered from hill to mountain- terai and share same cultural norms and social orders similar to so-called higher castes, Brahman and Chhetris.

“Rethinking Local Governance In Nepal: A Case Of Dalit Participation” a research by Upendra Bahadur BK opines:

[P]olitical right does not merely mean equality in decision making, but a spirit of inclusion in equal terms. All must have equal rights to express their interests and concerns, at the same time, they should be at the position to question one another and equal effective opportunity to comment and view others arguments and proposals. However, all this cannot be met until there is free speech without any domination. (11)

BK emphasizes on the participation of Dalits in local level. As Dalits lack direct access in national level governance he argues for the paradigm shift of power for the awareness, upliftment and involvement of marginalized citizen from local level to have sustaining inclusiveness. “Participatory planning inclusive of all segments of society and local stakeholders generates more power and makes local governments more accountable to the concerns of local people, thus reducing elite capture and strengthening local democracy” (12). In the course of democratic practices,

democratic institutions are likely to be elite dominated and power tends to be captured by these affluent groups offering popular slogans. Therefore, now the time is to ensure the provisions of broader participation in local governance that curbs elite capture practically.

“Representation and Issue of Dalit in Nepali Newspapers” a chapter from the book *Dalit in Nepali Media: Participation and Subject Matter* Khagendra Sangraula exclaims:

Problems faced by Dalit community in everyday basis of remote areas are not totally covered by the newspapers. Societies full of superstition and evil values have ruined the life of Dalit people. The reporters of Kathmandu have not even successfully cover the discrimination and oppression of Dalits inside and nearby the valley. (33)

Media people are the gatekeepers who select subject matter to publish in the newspapers. Representation of Dalit community effects the subject matter formation of newspapers. Even it depends on the editor or editorial desk to select and publish the types of news and articles. Some do not care whether Dalit issues are represented in effective way or not. Many of them think it is a great thing for Dalits to get space in the national level newspaper. But objecting this thought C. K Lal asserts “to address the pain, agony, problems or dreams, longings, and necessities of Dalit people in national council, their unbiased representation in national media is important” because “in spite of sympathy, a knife cannot express the pain of the chopping board. That is why, the board itself should get space (right) to speak” (42). Here, knife is the higher caste and dominant people and the chopping board is the oppressed Dalit. In the government run by higher caste small voice of Dalit is not heard. In fact they are not

given chance to speak. So their voice should be genuinely articulated by the media person.

“Those who console ‘it takes time to change; the day for Dalit will come one day, do not panic, keep patience’ are not true defenders of the Dalit community. Actually they are misleading the Dalits from becoming intellectual and leader of their community” (*Kantipur* 7). Tara Lal Shrestha in his article “Kati Kurne Dalit le Chahi?” (For How Long Should Dalit Wait?) does not see emancipation of Dalits by the upper caste elites. Dalits are made intellectually weak and physically strong by this society. They are made dependent, totally ‘yes men’ to the upper caste people. So, Shrestha disagrees the false consolation from the leaders of dominant group to eradicate the poverty and discrimination and says “the change will slowly happen keep patient means it will never change because time waits for no one if Dalits wait for the time their situation is constant forever” (7). He suggests not expecting much from others for their upliftment no one will fight for others. Change is possible only through self awareness.

Khagendra Sangraula in “Dalit, Mandir Prabesh Ra Sanskritik Kranti” (Dalit, Temple Entry and Cultural Revolution) expresses his dissatisfaction over media representation. He says:

It has been two weeks Dalits in Parwat district have entered the temple but this event has not got enough space in media. Only liberalists’ newspaper has published little news on this event except that nobody bothered to write and talk on this issue. As if it is not that serious matter to write and publish in media. Temples are like personal property of upper caste Brahmans and Kshyatriis what if Damai, Kami and Sarki entered into it. What is the matter to be serious, to talk, to

write and to publish? The event of Dalit entering temple is made non issue by all but why? (394)

Obviously, this event seems avoided by the media people. It is a great effort of Dalit community to enter the temple challenging two thousand years old dominant norm of society. But it is made non issue and not given important space in the headlines.

Those who claims themselves liberalists do not bother to talk and write on this issue. Such condition in media shows that the society is not Dalit friendly. Sangraula further adds “why those parties did not see this event that bear tears in the pain of Dalit and promise to fight for them against the discrimination? Is it just for selfishness? Is it just like a bubble which appears instantly and disappears in no time?” (394).

There are many other areas except above mentioned writers’ views where Dalits need positive representation, fair judgements and equal results one of which is media. And this research makes significant contribution in the area of critical analysis of media discourse by the help of subaltern theory. This study shows how the national dailies *The Rising Nepal* maintains the dominant voice in the news and articles regarding Dalit issue and *The Kathmandu Post* though raise common voice of people seems more like mouth piece of elite group. Thus, the subaltern group, Dalit in Nepal is under the vicious circle of print media. The prime concern of this thesis is to show how the writers on Dalit issue write inadequately and ineffectively in mainstream print media. To be more precise, this project sheds light on how these national dailies publish the news that take the issue of Dalit as similar to other social groups. Whether they lack the vision to see the different status of Dalit and other ethnic groups, culturally, socio-economically, and politically in the nation or they lack the seriousness in the writings regarding Dalit issue.

Media is a prime way of communication and print media is taken as more trustable source of information. It has greater impact on the readers and to influence the mindset of the individuals. So, the media should not be biased toward any person, party or religion. But the news that supports for the upliftment of the Dalit community is hardly given just coverage. This research paper analyses the news and articles regarding the Dalit issue where the dominant print media like *The Rising Nepal* and *The Kathmandu Post* could not write adequately and effectively about Dalit issue as they are operated by state and elites respectively who consider Dalits as inferior and pretend to fight against caste based discrimination and untouchability.

The term 'Subaltern' is derived from the Latin word 'sub' and 'alter' which means under and other respectively. The term subaltern refers to those who are deprived of the opportunities and access in each and every part of their nation. It represents the most marginalised people or oppressed people whose actions and deeds are not recorded in the mainstream politics. Likewise, the word Dalit comes from the Sanskrit root 'Dal' which means 'broken, ground-down, down-trodden, or oppressed'. Those previously known as untouchables are today increasingly adopting the term 'Dalit' for themselves, which refers to ones caste rather than ones class. It applies to member of menial castes which have borne the stigma of 'untouchability' because of the extreme impurity and pollution connect to their tradition. Because of the socio-economic, political status, and state representation Nepalese Dalits are naturally a part of Subaltern Studies. The term 'Subaltern' is firstly propounded by Antonio Gramsci and later the notion of 'Subalternity' is borrowed by Ranjit Guha to describe those who have limited means of representation. As an outcome, subaltern studies provide subaltern people with their own history and own voice. Subaltern studies try to find out their real existence and their contribution in all aspects.

Ranjit Guha is known as the father of Subaltern Studies, however, it has its own history from medieval period to present time. The term subaltern was used in the medieval age which was used to represent for the vassal and peasants. In eighteenth century, it came to denote inferior rank in military suggesting peasant origin. In nineteenth century, the historians and writers commenced writing about military campaigns from the subaltern point of view. Later on, Antonio Gramsci adopted it to designate those groups in the society who are subjects to the hegemonic exploitation of the rulers.

The subaltern studies started in the early 1980s as intervention in South Asian Historiography and emerged as a model for the sub continent which quickly developed into a vigorous post-colonial critique. Guha captured an inspiring thrust of India in the arena of writing historiography and literature of the marginalised people from 1982. Guha describes “the word ‘subaltern’ is a ‘name for the general attribute of subordination in South Asian Society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender, and office or in any other way” (305). From Guha’s point of view, it is clearly seen that subaltern studies is firstly regarded in South Asia. It helps in providing the subaltern with their own voice. Guha and his fellow members tried to establish Subaltern studies as an autonomous body. From this time onwards, the concept and scope of the subaltern studies has crossed the boundary towards broader view that it started to involve all who are deprived of basic rights and privilege because of their class, caste, age, gender and office. From this movement, the awareness of marginalised groups has broadened.

John Beverly in his research “Subalternity, Representation, and Politics” mentions:

For Gramsci, in his initial formulation of the idea of Subaltern social classes in the *Prison Notebooks*, the subaltern includes not only the working class and peasants and agricultural laborers, but also sector of the so-called ‘middle’ strata and identities that are not specifically marked in class terms. . . . Guha sees ‘the terms “people” and “subaltern classes” . . . as synonymous. (309)

In the view of Gramsci, except the working class, middle class people are also under the subaltern group not because of the class for which Guha sees people and subaltern classes similar.

The colonialists and bourgeois nationalist historiographies did not incorporate and acknowledge the contribution made by the subaltern not even for the betterment of the nation. Guha in “The Small Voice Of History” asserts “there are small voices which are drowned in the noise of statist commands. That is why we don’t hear them. That is also why it is up to us to make that extra effort, develop the special skill and above all cultivate the disposition to hear these voices and interact with them. For they have many stories to tell . . .” (3). Because state is not only to benefit the bourgeoisies which were guided by the old age mentality and to deconstruct that Guha comes forward with his group and lays the foundation of subaltern studies.

Subaltern studies moved towards all over the countries and Nepal does not remain untouched by it. Nepal is a multicultural and multiethnic country where various castes exist. There are lots of subaltern groups whose voices are still a far cry. Among them castist subaltern are more victimized. Dalit community voices cannot come fore to us easily. Dr. Tara Lal Shrestha, a Phd. scholar in Subaltern Studies addresses subaltern as:

Voiceless people since the colonial period to democratic nation who are made powerless in spite of strength and ability. Subaltern does not have their own history in spite of their contribution. They are ignored everywhere that is why subalternity is present everywhere. Subaltern studies is important to create a real and proud for those very subalterns not having such history. (14)

Subaltern studies is an approach to uplift the history less and voiceless people from the bottom. It is a concept started in South Asia and flourished in all over the world. The voice of margin should be brought to the mainstream level. And it remained in the central position in the recent time too where the development is taken as a primary concern.

In present scenairo, this study has paved the way toward multiple discipline. This study has contributed lot in the study of history, economic, social science, literature and culture. It has established as a milestone for writing the history of oppressed people therefore, it is also regarded as the 'history from below approach'. It means that, one can write the history of the voiceless people from marginalised point of view.

Media is the fourth organ of State that broadcasts the news and messages to the public. Edmund Burke quotes "[T]hree Estates in Parliament; but in the reporters' there sat a Fourth Estate more important far than they all" (261). According to Denis McQuail, "the term mass media refers to the organised means for communicating openly and at a distance to many receivers within a short space of time"(Mass Communication and Journalism, 21). Media is called 'mind guiding' instruments over human being due to its persuasive role towards the general public. Persuasion involves making influence on others' mind and also motivates to take sides in

particular issue. Print media attempt to persuade readers through its editorial and commentaries. Along with persuasion media plays significant role to socialize in global context. To socialize means “to teach people to behave in ways that are acceptable to their society” (31). And, in the context of global village, a person today is international citizen and one need to know many norms and values of different parts differently. In this sense, mass media help to develop togetherness and commonality. Media play significant role in modernization. They are the opinion maker in the society. But do they always show the true path, are they free of partiality? Media definitely helps to change the society but not try to change by themselves. One’s writing shows their belongingness, their influence towards particular thing, not totally impartial and that is the fault in new era.

As this research paper is analysing the newspaper; news and articles, information on print media is obligatory. Print media is the oldest and believed to be accurate source of information. According to the press theory there are four types of theory; the Authoritarian Theory, Libertarian Theory, Soviet or Communist Theory and Social Responsibility Theory. Among them ‘The Social Responsibility Theory’ is applicable in Nepal and most of the other democratic nations. This theory is developed under US initiative in 1940s. According to this theory, Print media has some obligations to society of “informativeness, truth, accuracy, objectivity, and balance” (257). Unfortunately, Nepalese print media do lack these things. Basically media is a bridge between government and public but the state owned newspaper *The Rising Nepal* seems more authoritarian where government is dominant over the press because it publishes the news and articles, which are in favor of the government. Despite any influence of political party it lacks balance regarding news. The instability of government influences the news and informativeness. Public voice is

rarely count by the editors that disappears in the press house and remains a far cry to public.

Roger Silverstone in *Media and Morality on the rise of Mediapolis* addresses the flaws in media and suggests challenging those imperfection.

The world is shareable but not necessarily shared. Not only does communication palpably breakdown, but it is structurally flawed. Distances are maintained . . . There is noise and dissemblance; there are falsehoods and absences; there are biases and exaggerations; there are exclusions. Against the albeit still flawed gold standard of the face-to-face, all mediated communication is lacking. In the world of mediated communication, as in all others, we have to learn to live with imperfection. But we also have to challenge those imperfections and our tendency, perhaps unwittingly, but structurally, to magnify them.

(27)

The true spirit of the news and articles has to be covered by the media but it violates the rules and ethics of media. Thus it is obvious to remain bias upon the subaltern group where mediated communication is structurally flawed.

State ideology shapes the culture of representation. The power holders are the main responsible to the subaltern by not raising the voice for them distinct from other ethnic groups. Critics like Herman and Chomsky argues that “the powerful are able to fix the premise of discourse to decide what the general populace is allowed to see, hear and think about and to ‘manage’ public opinion by regular propaganda campaigns” (59).

In case of *The Rising Nepal*, which runs through the fund of government always focuses the news of ruling parties and governmental activities. This has

become a platform to represent their voice for the people. This is a kind of indirect hegemony by controlling the information. And in *The Kathmandu Post* too, they give priority to advertisement and other general events but neglects the subaltern voice not only in the content but in the editorial too. Myung-koo Kang in “The Struggle for Press Freedom and Emergence of ‘Unelected’ Media Power in South Korea” talks about the absence of orthodox journalism and journalists. Kang maintains:

. . . rather than providing a variety of information and discussion on the mechanics and direction of social reform the press has distorted and resisted reform from the view point of capital with vested political and economic interests. As a result, journalists and newspapers that endeavor to be true as their proper role are being criticized as opportunists and conspirators. (88)

Kang talks about free market competition which causes the distortion of the press market. He comments “the collective prearrangement of the prices of advertisements and newspapers, and privileges in taxation have enabled the press to grow at a rate double that of manufacturing industry” (87). Excessive income from advertisement and other events regarding power holders makes a huge profit. It automatically sidelines the marginalized issue like of Dalits in private media house. “Free competition and excessive investment which have characterized the newspaper and broadcast industries- (in particular regional commercial broadcasting) is the sign of inevitable consequences of the absence of management and market that grew on political favor” (87). Thus, the newspaper will exclude the message against the government officials and those politicians who are in power.

In this context, Michel Foucault, a post-structuralist theorist, formulates a theory of discourse in relation to power structure in society. He assumes that

discourse is involved in power. These types of discourse are deeply rooted in social institution so that social and political power operates through discourse. Such discourse also plays a significant role in the media while formulating the news. Media person creates certain standards which neglects the subaltern people. The intellectuals and the political authority lay down certain issues that are considered as truth but in the case of subaltern they are regarded as trifle objects. In this case, Foucault “simply identifies truth with the power so that whatever discursive practices are operative or have powers in a given society are true or constitute regime or truth” (102). The meaning of truth is also shaped by the power holders and when subaltern come up with truth their voices are sure to be ignored.

Caste based discrimination is still seen in practice even after the abolition of it by parliament passing the bill of it in 2011. That is why issues regarding Dalit rights are challenging to the new constitution. *The Rising Nepal* on September 30, 2015 “Effective implementation of new constitution a big challenge” writes:

Speaker of legislature parliament, Subas Nembang has said that the effective implementation of newly promulgated constitution was equally challenging as was its promulgation. . . . Refuting the accusation the new constitution lacked the endorsement from the Constitution Assembly (CA) members belonging to Madhesi, indigenous communities, Dalit and Tharu community, Nembang argued that the new constitution was inclusive as it represent all sections of society, including Madhesi and Tharu. (1)

While publishing the news on defending the accusation data and reports should also have been presented for accuracy. It seems as if government media publish news in order to run the press without giving detail information to the audience or mass. In the

case of Dalit issue, it lacks objectivity and balance of news. It almost proves that media representation is the reason for the crisis of Dalit identity. Without a logical reason how could one argue that the new constitution was inclusive only because it is said by the chairman of CA.

Another editorial article on the same broadsheet, “Nepali Congress And Dalits” by Tribhuwan Chandra Wagle on June 21, 2015 which shows its influence towards the Nepali Congress:

This event goes to show how the NC (Nepali Congress) embraced the Dalit community from the early period of its establishment. Therefore, the Dalit community should take pride in the history of the NC . . . though words like reservation and quota were not in practice in the country and in the NC’s constitution, its pioneer leader BP Koirala was sincere towards the Dalit, indigenous communities, women and marginalized people. The 5th convention of the party was a milestone in terms of inclusion of Dalits, against caste-based discrimination and social movement in the country. It was the first formal political resolution related to Dalits by a Nepali political party. (5)

The Rising Nepal is a government based publisher no doubt known to people but glorification of a political party while representing Dalit community does not seem an art of wisdom. Furthermore, it writes:

Going through the history of the Nepali Congress, it is said that NC is the party of Dalits and marginalized people, who have significantly contributed to making the congress a national political force. History shows that Dalit and congress have a deep and inseparable relation,

which is characterized as a relationship as close as the nail and flesh of a finger. (5)

This article valorizes the contribution of NC for the upliftment of Dalits. It seems biased and mouth piece of dominant party in government. It does not represent the Dalit issue genuinely. Rather valorizing the NC it should have presented the upcoming agendas of the party regarding Dalits, their new strategy for upliftment of Dalit lives, educational programmes, health and sanitation, poverty eradication and most of all untouchability should be kept in consideration. Aren't these things essential for equal justice? Providing few Dalit members opportunity in the parliament is not sufficient, their problems should be recognized or let say realized by the people in power and attempt to solve them. Steven Folmer stresses, the representation of Dalits in politics is inadequate. "Political representation has increased, but is seen as inadequate and not completely trustworthy since politicians might serve the party over their caste fellows or only those of their own caste while ignoring the issue that cut across Dalit castes" (788).

Gautam Bhadra in "The Mentality of Subalternity: Kantanama or Rajdharmā" states:

. . . what may be called the subaltern mentality. The defiance is not the only characteristic of the behavior of subaltern classes. Submissiveness to authority in one context is as frequent as defiance in another. It is these two elements that together constitute the subaltern mentality. . . . combination of that the poor and the oppressed have, time and again, and in different histories, made voluntary sacrifices in favor of the rich and the dominant, at least as often as they have rebelled against the latter. (54)

The assumption of Bhadra's statement seems that domination, subordination and revolt are linked together because their revolt is of no use. They are compelled to sacrifice for the dominant people which are their subaltern mentality. Until and unless ground citizens do not overcome this mentality they are dominated, subordinated and obviously cannot revolt. Subaltern are not free of their old mindset to resist against the predominant norms. Thus Dalit Subalterns are represented not as ideal citizens but as docile and submissive ones who can be useful in coming future as earlier.

Government policy is taken as the backbone of development of a nation and education of its citizen comes in major priority. And if it is about the poor citizens to grant some facilities! sounds quite pleasing. *The Rising Nepal* posts news on "Scholarship for civil servants' children" on 17th feb 2015:

The government has decided to award scholarship to the children of civil servants in the line with the needs of inclusive education, prioritizing traditionally excluded and marginalized group. . . . As per the new directive endorsed by the cabinet, 45 percent of the total scholarships will be awarded to children of civil servants from marginalized groups. 33 percent of the scholarships under the reserved quota will be awarded to girl students and 27 percent to the students from indigenous nationalities. Of the total scholarships, 22 percent will be allocated to Madhesis, 9 percent to Dalits, 5 percent to physically challenged and 4 percent to students from backward region. The remaining 55 percent will be awarded to students on the basis of free competition. (1)

School participation of Dalit children is found minimal because of various regions. For instance, household chores, school distance inability to keep track of school time

and also the fact that they have to face discrimination from fellow students of high caste as well as from the teachers. A student's statement from "Caste based discrimination of Dalit children" reports "teachers don't give proper attention to us. We have to sit on the ground. It's very difficult. The quality of food (mid-day meal) is also very poor. We also get very little food for lunch as we are served last, our stomach is never full. We are never allowed to use toilet in the school" (1). In this condition where children are not properly getting primary level of education government is awarding scholarships to excluded and marginalized groups in higher education. No doubt the scholarship will be provided to the excluded ones but not to the needed one. Poor Dalits' children cannot complete the primary education to compete for the higher education scholarship therefore it is obvious the well to do Dalits grab the opportunity. And most of all how can the poor Dalits be civil servant in Nepal. Dalits are rarely civil servants. The percentage of reserved quotas mostly goes freeze. The news further mentions "civil servants' children in the first year of bachelor's level studies are eligible for such scholarship. Only those students who have passed School Leaving Certificate examinations and intermediate level in second division are eligible for government scholarship" (1). How can Dalit students despite of sound educational environment achieve such marks? It is a joke on their status. Government's decision on such rule should be published as protest instead of a favorable opportunity regarding Dalit issue. Protest on government decision and support on Dalits right from *The Rising Nepal* seems beyond imagination. Such situation of media is not a sign of democracy and development. The people in government are dominant elites and formulating such scholarship award for Dalits is "Machha, Machha, . . . -Bhyagutta (Fish, Fish, . . . -Frog). This game is a metaphor for Dalits' relationship to the national community of the 'new Nepal' in which,

ostensibly, there is to be greater inclusion of previously marginalized groups” (Folmer, 85).

Unlike *The Rising Nepal*, *The Kathmandu Post* does not prioritize government sector, it gives space to the common voices but does not truly represent Dalit issue. *The Rising Nepal* being a state owned media lacks equal, promotional news and articles, accurate and balanced representation of its own citizen, however, *The Kathmandu Post* is a private asset gives coverage on Dalit issue but not untouched by elitist view. Its representation is a bit more serious regarding Dalit issue than *The Rising Nepal*.

The Kathmandu Post on August 9, 2015, “The Dalit march” talks about the situation before the promulgation of “The constitution of Nepal 2015”. The Dalit march of August 4 was a very visible incident but made invisible by the people of government. The demonstration by Dalit activists and law makers was a historical civil right march, a momentous occasion. But the police interference and excessive use of force was brought and was remained ignored.

Police intervention at a peaceful demonstration organized by Dalit law makers and right activists on August 4 has triggered a debate on the need to include provision that guarantee Dalits’ rights in the constitution. . . . The alleged excessive use of force by the police last Tuesday, instead of dissuading protestors, has caused the protests to grow in size and as a result, it has been widely covered by the media.

(5)

Dalits try to secure their rights in national policy by demonstrating on the streets. Though the police interference and excessive use of force has brought what remains ignored, into light. Getting into the headlines and media focus is not sufficient to

solve the issue. Medias' role does not finish here. The incident should have been investigated and the hidden truth should have brought at fore providing justice to them. Blaming upon the government, media space its role. Media persons could have played the role of pressure group but they speak a little in favor of Dalit issue blaming solely upon government act.

The Kathmandu Post seems sympathizing on Dalit lives, their pain and struggle and also speaking on behalf of their wounds reviving their trauma. "If the issue of the Dalits and the extend of the discrimination they have suffered are not addressed while finalising the constitution, the Nepali state is bound to suffer the consequences of such historical amnesia" (5). Here, the media house works as a carrier group and tries to focus on reviving the traumatic past of Dalit communities otherwise, their identity and the pain they have lived with throughout their life would be forgotten. The pain and wounds were suppressed for long ago and now it's time to express. Let the pain come out, let the grief share, let the tears flow, let the lips speak, let the hand raise, let the head held high and let the trauma be collective not individuals'. Because when a group of people feel that the event is really traumatic that becomes cultural trauma. Jeffery C. Alexander in *Trauma: A Social Theory* comments "cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways" (1). Moreover, Alexander gives cultural trauma an ethical dimension, although he does not explicitly use the notion ethics:

Insofar as they [the collective] identify the cause of trauma, and thereby assume such moral responsibility, members of collectives define their solidarity relationships in ways that, in principle, allow

them to share the suffering of others. Is the suffering of others also our own? In thinking that it might in fact, societies expand the circle of the we. By the same token, the social groups can, and often do, refuse to recognize the existence of others' trauma and because of their failure they cannot achieve a normal stance. Refusing to participate in the process of trauma creation, social groups restrict solidarity, leaving others suffer alone. (1)

Trauma is the reflection of neither individual nor actual events rather it is constructed by society. However, one of the key questions is how to "expand the circle of we" and still withhold the ethical vital importance. Thus, the editor suggests "it is very important to address Dalit rights while finalizing constitution otherwise, it will be stalled for ages again as feared by many of Dalit activists" (7).

Media is the important organ of nation and development. It plays vital role in representation therefore if the media becomes the speaker of elitist ideology Dalit subalterns' voice would remain unheard. For instance, traumatic memory should be brought in front of mass. "Structural violence is inseparable from Dalit experience and is today recalled vividly in collective memory through tales that recount, for example, the practice of pouring molten lead into their ears when they overheard the recitation of sacred texts they are forbidden to hear"(Folmer, 92). Such traumatic incidents should be brought more in media so that others would feel the pain, feel guilty on discriminatory thoughts and help changing ones' insight individually. The past should not be forgotten it should be brought in front of every single person through the help of media.

"Publicly humiliated Dalit Couple seeks justice" news on 2nd Feb 2015, *The Kathmandu Post* reported by Dilli Ram Khatiwada writes:

A complaint against caste-based discrimination has been filed at the District Police Office by the son of a Dalit couple humiliated in public. . . Despite being invited to attend the ceremony, the couple was subjected to severe humiliation by the Magar duo, accusing them of being ‘untouchables’ who would ruin the ceremony. . . Magar duo had threatened to expel them from the village itself, saying that Dalits should limit themselves into the confines of social strata as defined by the society. Caste based discrimination and Untouchability (Offence and Punishment) Act (2011) bans caste-based discrimination, provisioning tough punishment for those following anti-human practices. (4)

It would be true representation if it would be ‘publicly humiliated Dalit couple get justice’ because news are heard and published for mass information. In case of Dalits only surfacial information does not have any importance. They need profound and accurate investigation with the motto of providing justice. It needs media support to know whether they really get justice or they are forced to draw back their case. So, they need to scratch the surface despite of providing the basic fact.

Padam Sundas, the Chairperson of Nepal Dalit Literature and Culture Academy is asked “why aren’t there legal actions taken against those guilty of practicing untouchability?” in an interview by *The Kathmandu Post* on 9th June, 2012. He answers:

who is to implement the law? You could not imagine a Dalit judge. There is currently one in the appellate court, but that’s it. The implementers are the police. There’s no Dalit officers, so naturally the

cases about untouchability get ignored. Either the cases don't reach the court, or the lawyers and judges didn't give it proper attention. (6)

Such is the condition of Dalits in New Nepal.

Another article from *The Kathmandu Post* "Different but equal" on January 02, 2015 Rajendra Ghimire writes "adopting the principle of legal pluralism could make the justice system more inclusive and accessible to all of Nepal's diversity"(7). Defining a pluralistic legal system Ghimire means "a legal system is pluralistic in the juristic sense when the sovereign commands different bodies of law for different groups of population varying by ethnicity, religion, nationality or, geography . . ." (7). By talking about the legal pluralism he suggests to embrace such principle for inclusive and accessible justice without recognizing the fact that among the varying groups of population Dalits are neither different nor similar to them because Dalits belong to a scattered community without a particular identity and geography. This analysis is flawed by the view that minority groups can all be treated as ethnicities. Dalits being the scattered community all over the country, they cannot meet the criteria for territorial federal set-up, they follow the same religion as Brahmin and Chhetri, they have no distinct language and culture, no different clothing and fooding, they are similar to high caste Hindus but also excluded and the most oppressed group. Steven Folmer in Problems of identity for hill Dalits argues:

Scholars have set the relationships between minorities and majorities solely in the framework of identity politics, a political space in which identity as outsiders is used to justify equal treatment. Because Dalit status is misconstrued as an ethnicity, the assumption that identity politics will achieve the same degree of success for dalits as it does for the indigenous nationalities is untenable. (786)

Dalits' identity is in association with Brahmans and Chhetris rituals and culture. They follow the same life style; religion, festivals, language, culture, though standard varies and they do not have separate community. They are basically in every communities; hill high caste, Sherpas, Newars and Madhesh. If Dalits would have separate community they would have separate identity. Their identity is in uniformity with Brahmans and Kshyatries. Thus, principle of legal pluralism does not work for Dalits' upliftment and equal justice. They will remain excluded insiders.

Exclusion simply can be seen in political process, decision making, employment, social activities, access to information, public sphere, resource and services, institution and self-esteem. Parbati Sunar in her research "Dalit Women and Social Exclusion in Nepal: A Concern for Social Justice" mentions:

Social exclusion is a multidimensional process of progressive social rupture, detaching groups and individuals from social relations and institutions and preventing them from full participation in the normal, normatively prescribed activities of the society in which they live. Social exclusion and racial/caste based discrimination have been part of human history. Stratification of human beings on the basis of color, caste, class, creed, region, religion, occupation and language has remained a historical phenomenon. (103)

Dalits of Nepal in this sense are excluded insiders who are in ambivalence of belong and not belong. Ignoring this very fact media published news in Dalit issue appears inadequate. Identity crisis of Dalit issue in Nepalese national media is because of the lack of this awareness. Dalits cannot be benefitted by the similar policies made for other ethnic minorities. They need special recognition by the state

heads and mainly by the media representation as they are the mind setters and influence maker of the society.

There are limited texts written on Dalit Women in these broadsheets. Their issues are mentioned in few paragraphs at the end. Dalit womens' are not addressed separately. Their problems, pain and difficulties are not given enough coverage in the National Dailies in today's world. Women are still identified with their male partner. U.S based scholar, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak links the cultural perspective of the women's condition with subaltern studies. She depicted the subaltern women in the colonial and the patriarchal society. In her essay entitled, A Literary Representation of the Subaltern: Mahasweta Devi Stanadayini, where she connects women with a divine. In her words:

A historians confronts a text of counter insurgency of gendering where the subaltern has been represented. He unravels the text to assign a new subject position to the subaltern, gendered or otherwise. A teacher of literature confronts a sympathetic text where the gendered subaltern has been represented. She unravels the text to make visible the assignment of subject position. These two operations are similar but not identical. (91)

Here, Spivak links the subaltern to the issue of gender. In the past scenario subaltern studies was confined to a limited subject. But with the arrival of Spivak in to the realm of subaltern studies, it has connected with feminism as well. For Spivak, "the subaltern is akin to what Kristeva understands by the abject: that is beyond the possibility of representation, because simply by emerging into representation- the symbolic in the Lacanian sense- it loses the character of subalternity" (310). The voice of female also comes in forth during 1980s but only of the elite, white women's.

Female subalterns' trauma remained unrepresented and unheard. Later, critic addresses "some of the problems arising from the privative modes of not-listening, turning a deaf ear to, turning away from . . . the small voice speaking in a certain undertone, as if in pain" and questions "what was it that the women were saying in undertones of harassment and pain? They spoke, of course, of their disappointment that the movement had not lived fully, up to its aim . . ." (309).

Dor Bahadur Bista while discussing Caste System in Nepal asserts "caste divisions and stratification are most pronounced among caste Hindus in the districts of Eastern Terai" (*Fatalism And Development* 50). Talking about the Madhesi Dalits *The Kathmandu Post*, July 28, 2015 "The Neglected South" reads:

According to the Nepali multidimensional Social Inclusion Index- a 2014 report published by Tribhuvan University's Central Department of Sociology/ Anthropology- the Madhesi Dalits are at the very bottom of social, political, economic, and gender indices among 97 caste/ethnic groups. These indices calculate the rate of child survival, use of modern toilets, adult literacy, completion of basic schooling, size of land holding, food sufficiency, representation in the central committees of the political parties, violence against women, among others. Eight out of the ten most excluded caste/ethnic groups in the country belong to Tarai Dalits. (5)

Madhesi Dalits are undoubtedly at the bottom of marginalization. There are more visible complications for the Madhesi Dalits. Not only because of caste but from geographical, economical and socio-political aspect too they are in vicious circle of domination. Madhesi Dalits are taken under the Madhesi citizens. Their problems and issues are addressed as a whole by the media. They have less approach to change

and betterment. They are Dalits and Madhesi at the same time in the society of domination of hill upper caste. They are poor; landless and homeless in comparison to Hill Dalits.

Gerard Toffin, Research Professor at the National Centre for Scientific Research, opines:

All together the Madhesi Dalit population amounts to 1,167,000, i.e., 4.4 percent of Nepal's population, compared to 2,151,000 Hill Dalits (8.2 percent of the whole population). . . it is still difficult to breakdown caste barriers and even more so in the Tarai than in the Hills... . (*The Kathmandu Post* 6)

Despite of the diversity in Madhesi Dalits they are recognized as Madhesis. There are Islamic Musulman Dalits, Hindu Dalit in Madhes but are noted Madhesis.

One of the most important aspects of the analysis of the news and articles in *The Rising Nepal* and *The Kathmandu Post* is aspect of ideological flaw presented in each paper as seen through the texts. Lack of seriousness, detailed information and deficit concept of dispute settlement can be seen in these papers. These papers simply present the basic facts but does not begin to scratching surface on the issue fails in portraying a detailed and in-depth analysis of the topic.

In terms of ownership, *The Rising Nepal* is affiliated to Gorkhapatra Sanghasthan which is a government funded paper. And *The Kathmandu Post* is affiliated to Kantipur Publication which is run by the private ownership. Both newspapers have scholastic and ideological differences in terms of publishing news and selecting articles. *The Rising Nepal* publishes news favorable to the government and presents the vision of leading political party whereas, *The Kathmandu Post* selects elitist and populist news and articles. *The Rising Nepal* seems covering only

major incidents, provisions provided by government to Dalits, and high profile writers writing valorizing the power holder groups and minor events are covered assembling public voices most of elitist in the later one along with commercial benefit.

Dalits do not need federalism or separate state as other ethnic minorities like Limbuwan, Rajbansi, Madhesh, and Newa Rajya, because they do not need preservation of their culture and language. Dalits are part of Aryan race similar to upper caste Brahmans and Chhetries. They share same rituals and languages. As Padam Sundas suggests:

We want proportional representation and additional 'special' rights as a compensation for past injustice. We didn't want a state, or a non-territorial state, because once the Dalit issue is over- the community of hill Dalits are going to dissolve (antarghulit) is with the Khas community. Similarly, the Terai Dalits will dissolve within the Madhesi community. Same with the Newari Dalits, etc. it is because the cultural and linguistic traits are the same, and once the problem of untouchability is over, the communities will become one. Unlike the Janajati Movement, which is to preserve the culture and language, the Dalit Movement is not forever. (6)

Dalits are not asking for special provision like other social groups. They are pleading to bring to an end of anti-human practices that are made social order since long ago. They want equality with dignity which is their right. This awareness should be brought out by the media person.

To sum up, media representation of Dalits dearth the proper depiction of Dalit issue. The print media have not represented the issue of Dalit identity crisis as strongly as they should have done because they put the identity issue of other ethnic

minorities and Dalits in similar ground. People from Dalit community cannot properly represent themselves in mass media thus the concept of 'de-elitization' should be brought in these broadsheets. If the subalterns cannot speak for themselves the other should feel responsible to represent them. They should be provided favorable space and environment to present them. Because no one can speak for any other, no one can represent any other exactly if one claims that they are mapping the oppressed people they are misrepresenting. Let them make speak, let them make heard in this society. Because representing others can be a new form of hegemony. Increment in involvement of Dalit scholars' themselves in media can be a way out for actual representation. Until and unless Dalit Subalterns can represent themselves it is the responsibility of others being human to represent their issue positively and effectively

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