

I. Introduction: The Trend of Lhasa Trade and the Concept of Diaspora

This research is an interactive study of the diasporic situation of a Lhasa Merchant, the protagonist of the novella *Letter From A Lhasa Merchant to His Wife* by a Newar writer Chittadhar Hridaya who operates business in Tibet and conducts trade between Nepal and Tibet. The present study aims to dig out the diasporic personality of the Lhasa Merchant who faces the diasporic situation after leaving home country Nepal to the host country Lhasa. In Lhasa, he gets the hybridity and suffers from the sense of loss of his cultural root and at the end feels the identity crisis. During the time in Lhasa, he develops the double vision on looking the Nepalese culture as well as the Tibetan culture.

In the past, it was the trend to go to Lhasa and towns such as Shigates, Gyantse, Kyrong and Kuti. In Lhasa, the Newar traders adopt the Tibetan culture, heritage and the way of life along with their typical Newari culture. By birth, they belong to the Nepalese culture and tradition; and their identity is shaped and formed according to the Nepalese socio-political environment. On the other hand, when they enter into the different culturally significant territory Tibet, their identity becomes plural and partial. In that case, they develop the dual attitudes towards their homeland culture and the host country culture. Because of the intermix of two different cultures and identity, the Lhasa Merchant gets hybrid position. He says, “To my surprise the head porter saved the leftovers for our lunch for the next day. From then on, I was told there would be no caste discrimination amongst us Newars” (18).

Newars are said to be the oldest inhabitants of Kathmandu valley with their own typical language, culture and tradition. Traditionally, the Newars are urban people with farmland and farmhouse located on the outskirts of the cities and towns. According to Paul Hataaway, “The Newars are believed to be the original inhabitants

of Nepal. In fact the name Nepal is derived from Newar. They founded the city of Kathmandu and have a written history going back 2500 years, recording their rich and diverse culture” (198). Hataaway focuses on the fact that Newars are the oldest inhabitants of Kathmandu with their rich cultural background. Newar people are seen to be involved in diverse occupations from farming to trade. Among the different occupation of Newar people, trade is also an important one. In the olden days, they are seen to be involved in trade in Kathmandu as well as Tibet.

Nepal-Tibet relation can be seen with the legend of the origin of Kathmandu valley. According to the Buddhist legend, more than two thousand years ago, Manjushree, the Buddhist monk, came all the way from China to Nepal. He cut the mountain with his sword in Chovar and created the Kathmandu valley. Nepal’s first recorded official relation with Tibet occurred near the middle of the seventh century. It is said that Nepal -Tibet trade was established when princess Brikuti was married with the Tibetan king Srongsten Ghampo in the seventh century A.D. She was accompanied by a large number of traders and artesians. The traders were the pioneers who set up shops in Tibetan capital and became known as the Lhasa traders. Their successors, accustomed in wearing Tibetan clothes, adopted Tibetan way of life, kept long hair and some even married Tibetan women. In time, people referred to these traders as Lhasa traders.

Chittadhar Hridaya, a renowned Newari writer, is born into a Kathmandu based Tuladhar family with a long tradition of trade in Tibet. As a young man, he managed not to follow his father’s footsteps that he should later choose the life of a Newar trader in Tibet as a literary subject. Chittadhar went on to have a long and impressive literary career, receiving the title *Kavi Kesari* from the king of Nepal and publishing over a hundred works before his death in 1982. The present novella, *Letter*

From A Lhasa Merchant to His Wife, is in letter form written by a Lhasa trader for his wife in Nepal. The trader goes to Lhasa and adopts the Tibetan culture along with his own. Later, he feels beyond from his own cultural root and displacement. So, to give solace his disjointed mind, he writes the letter that addresses his wife Maim in Nepal. The central conceit of this book is that it is meant to be read by one reader only, the letter writer's wife.

The narrator and the protagonist of the novella *Letter From A Lhasa Merchant to His Wife* is a Lhasa trader who goes to Lhasa from a Newar family of Kathmandu. It was the tradition in Newar community to go to Lhasa for trading and exchange goods such as gold, salt, fur, shawl, yak tail and so on. The narrator's father goes to Tibet for the purpose of the trade and the narrator also follows his father's footsteps and decides to go to Lhasa to replace his father. By birth, he belongs to a Newar community which has its own typical cultural heritage and the way of life. When he arrived in Tibet, he was highly influenced by the socio-cultural environment of the Tibet. So, he adopts the two different cultures and develops the diasporic position.

In Tibet, the Merchant suffered from the memory of his homeland Kathmandu, his family members like mother, sister and the newly married wife Maim. In that sense, he says, "At every downward step I thought of home. It was true not only for me but for my companions too. Your face haunted me all the time. My eyes became moist and I saw my own feelings reflected in my companions' eyes" (18). As a new comer in the foreign land Tibet, things do not seem easy to him. In the new horizon, he has to face a new scenario which is different from his homeland. He finds difficulties to adjust himself in terms of culture, language and food in the new terrain Tibet.

In Tibet, the Lhasa Merchant keeps him busy in various cultural as well as economic activities. He knows the Tibetan language customs, their ritual and way of life. Though, it is difficult to adjust him in the completely new scenario, he slowly established himself as a member of the Chinese society. Now he comes into in-between position of two different cultures and societies. He cannot totally forget his cultural root nor adjust fully in the Tibetan socio-cultural scenario. So, he develops the hybrid personality. The hybrid personality moves on into identity crisis. Identity is mainly related with the cultural root which determines the person's identity.

According to the cultural change, identity is also changed. After arriving in Tibet, the Lhasa Merchant loses his cultural root. He comes into the hybrid position and gets new hybrid personality. In Lhasa, he neither totally observes the Nepalese culture, tradition and way of life nor fully adopts the new culture of Tibet. So, he is in the in-between position and feels identity crisis.

The Lhasa Merchant gets married with a Tibetan girl named Bhamula. Later, she dies with fever. On the other hand, his wife Maim waits for him in Nepal. He loves her very much. But after knowing about his another wife in Tibet, his Nepalese wife does not love him and becomes a nun. During the course of time, he loses the love of his wife in Nepal and loses his Tibetan wife too. His dual attitudes bring him into the state of identity crisis. He further discloses his condition after losing the love of his wife and Bhamula too. "I had arrived at a point in my life when I spent most of my time in the room upstairs, leaving the business to Bamjahs. Only few people who wanted to see me particularly came up. I would show them a few special items or on occasions Bamjahs bring up something for them" (108).

When he loses the love of his wives, he comes in such a point that he does not see any right way to relief his mind. He suffers from the alienation, disjunction

and displacement. He cannot go to his homeland Nepal nor does he remain there calmly. So, he feels rootlessness and identity crisis.

Diasporic writing basically focuses on the issue of migrated people who leave their homeland either forcefully or voluntarily. In the present novella, the Newar traders leave their homeland Nepal voluntarily. They go to Tibet for the purpose of the trade and exchange merchandises. The diasporic situation occurs when one confronts the different cultures and tradition in different territory. In this regard, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin remark, “A fundamental ambivalence is embedded in the term diaspora: a dual ontology in which the diasporic subject is seen to in two directions-towards an historical cultural identity on the one hand ; and the society of relocation on the other” (425). That is, diasporic subject bears the hybrid personality along with the dual characteristics. So, the diasporic condition is the result of the embodiment of the two different cultures, traditions and ways of life. Talking about the diaspora, the concept of power comes into fore. The powerful cultural group always dominates and hegemony the minorities group that always feels the sense of domination and the loss of originality.

In Lhasa, the Newar traders try to maintain their own typical Newari tradition and the way of life. They establish the social, religious and the economic institutions for preserving the originality of their heritage. The Merchant says:

Coming so far away we are still organized in Palas and we continue to undertake different *pujas* and sing the old religious songs called *caca*. We have also taken up the cause of our tongue Nepal *vasa*. In the year 1886, the merchant Harsaman had wooden blocks made for the Newari script and books were printed. Our own ancestors had books written in gold. (98)

Here, according to him even in the foreign land Lhasa, they are able to perform their religious activities through *Pala*. *Pala* is the social, religious and commercial association of the Newars in Tibet which similar to the *Guthi* in Nepal. They also use their mother tongue Nepal Bhasa in their everyday talking. But, they fail to maintain their typicality in front of the massive socio- cultural environment of the Tibet. When they come in touch with the other language, customs and way of life, they become hybrid and lose their originality and feel the rootlessness and displacement. He further states “So I am afraid to return to Nepal. Nor did you write asking me to return. Then tell me Maim, what would make me to return home?” (33). Here, the Lhasa Merchant comes in the confused mode, he cannot decide whether go to Nepal or not. He feels alienation and estrangement in the frontier of the two cultures. He can neither adopt totally the Tibetan culture nor forsake it.

In diasporic condition, the diaspora’s identity is in motion and ever changing. There is not the coherent and stable identity rather it is fluctuating and changeable. The identity, in diaspora, is constructed and it is situational. Ashcroft Griffiths and Tiffin argue, “Diasporic identity demonstrates the extent to which identity itself must be constructed and reconstructed by individual in their everyday life” (425). The culture plays the powerful role in constructing the identity of an individual. In homeland, the people’s identity is tightly linked with their culture and tradition. When they come in the diasporic situation, their single identity is blurred and disrupted. They come in the two fold situation.

Another tool to approach this thesis is hybridity. Hybridity is mostly known as a post-colonial phenomenon. It has occurred since the time of cultural mixing of hundreds of years ago. Cultures are cross local and involve globally. Hybridization actually occurs out of recognition of difference and produces something new as

saying Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin say: “Hybridity commonly refers to the creation of new trans-cultural forms within the contact zone” (118). Hybridization takes many forms: linguistic, cultural, political, racial and so on. When people from one cultural background come in touch with people from other culture, they assimilate the features of both cultures; there occurs the cultural hybridity.

In Lhasa, the trader develops the hybrid identity. He assimilates the Chinese culture which is not equivalent with his root culture. He intermixes both the Nepalese and Chinese cultures and create the third one. At the end, he comes into ambivalent position. He has the two different attitudes for looking at the cultures of his hometown Kathmandu and Tibet. In Tibet, he faces the identity crisis and tries to escape from the confused and ambiguous position through the religion. So, the trader goes to Kolkata and many religious places in Tibet. As the diasporic writer, he writes the letter to his wife in Nepal.

The trader develops from an earnest and lovesick husband to a bitter, confused and uprooted man. At first, he had great fond for his cultural root and he is conscious for his national identity. He focuses on their cultural activities saying: “We were proverbially entangled in so many social and religious affairs in Nepal related to our *Guthi* that we never had time to do well in other activities” (32). Here, his depiction of Newar’s life in Lhasa shows that they are engaged in endless ritual, feasts and gathering according to their own typical Newari system. But, on the other hand, they are influenced and affected by the standard socio-cultural behaviours of the Chinese people. The Lhasa Merchant is envious of the more relaxed social interaction he witnesses in Lhasa: “Among Tibetans, the couples are inseparable, even when they go trading. As these melancholic thoughts occupied me, a sigh escaped involuntarily”

(55). Here, he is highly impressed by the life style of the Chinese people and involves himself in applying such life style in his life.

As a diasporic man, the Merchant mimics the Tibetan way of life inferiorizing his own cultural root. When he applies the two different cultures and tradition, his identity becomes hybrid and feels the sense of loss, displacement and at last identity crisis. In this sense, a critic Mark Turin clarifies the condition of Lhasa Merchant: “Without divulging the dramatic conclusion of his letter, in the course of writing, the trader develops an earnest and lovesick husband into bitter confused and uprooted man deeply suspicious of organized religion” (13). That is, the Lhasa merchant changes from a lovesick and homesick man to more confused man having dual identity.

This research uses the methodology of diaspora based on the criticism of Homi. K Bhabha’s *The Location of Culture* as well as Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin’s *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*. It also captures R. Radhakrishnan’s *Diasporic Meditation* as the methodological tool. In addition, reference from library, encyclopaedia and internet resources will be an additional asset. Moreover, suggestions and guidelines from the seniors will be incorporated in this thesis.

In this research work, there are three chapters; the first chapter contains general introduction of the novella from the point of view of diasporic experience of the central character and the protagonist, “Lhasa Merchant”. It also includes the introduction to the methodological tool. The second chapter contains the concept of diaspora, hybridity, identity crisis and his experience of sense of loss and displacement. Finally, chapter third is about conclusion that provides the summery of the research and closes the thesis.

II. Diasporic Experience of Lhasa Merchant in *Letter From A Lhasa Merchant to His Wife*

The novella, *Letter From A Lhasa Merchant to His Wife*, deals with the diasporic condition of the protagonist Lhasa Merchant who remains in a liminal zone where he gets hybrid position. When he enters into Lhasa, he assimilates the Chinese culture. As a member of Newar community in Kathmandu, he has also the rich cultural background of his own community. His diasporic condition always haunts him and he always feels the sense of loss, displacement, dislocation and nostalgia. The Lhasa Merchant gives solace to his disjointed mind by writing the letter to his wife in Nepal.

Diaspora is the movement of people from known location (their homeland) to the unknown location (new region). Hence, it creates the sense of dislocation and alienation because they would not adjust themselves in new location and culture. Dealing with the diaspora, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin argue:

Diaspora, the voluntary or forcible movements of people from their homelands into new regions, is a central historical fact of colonization. Colonialism itself was a radically diasporic movement, involving the temporary or permanent dispersion and settlement of millions of Europeans over the entire world. The widespread effects of these migrations continue on a global scale. (68-69)

Diasporic condition can be the result of voluntary movement as well as forcible movement. When people leave their homelands to search their career in a foreign land, their movement becomes voluntary. But when people are forced to leave their homeland that becomes forcible movement. That is to say, diaspora refers to the people who have left their home and community in many countries for many reasons

to find themselves in this new land; their activities, memories and sense of identity have been changed. The Lhasa Merchant, in the novella, *Letter From A Lhasa Merchant to His Wife*, goes to Tibet voluntarily. It was the tradition that Newar traders, from Kathmandu, moved to Lhasa for trading goods. In his translation note, Kesar Lall writes:

Many of the merchants stayed for some years and were replaced by their brothers or sons in turn, so that there was always a member of the family to turn the business in Tibet. The Newars never took their wives to Tibet but many of them openly or otherwise also took Tibetan women as wives, and by law, the sons born to them became Nepalese citizens while the daughters remained citizens of Tibet. (2)

Here, migration is the major factor to create the diasporic situation of the people. People leave their homeland and moves towards the foreign land for various reasons. They are emotionally attached with their homeland which is the center for their culture and tradition. When they come in touch with different cultures in the foreign land, their diasporic condition can be seen. That is, migration is the cultural factor and postcolonial discourse that intensifies the hybridity and create alienation and identity crisis. It has problematized more because many people are uprooted and forced to leave their homes behind that invite the humanitarian challenges. The voluntary and unwanted migration accelerates to challenge the cultural and demographic stability of the targeted land and the other region. Migration breeds the state of cultural and geographical rootlessness, leading to the feeling of alienation and estrangements. Thus, migration is also one of the major factors which invites the diasporic experience such as hybridity, dislocation, alienation, identity crisis and so on.

No sooner does he enter into Tibet, the Lhasa Merchant is influenced by the Tibetan culture. In the beginning, he suffers from the homesickness and is haunted by the memory of his family. He remembers his childhood days when he was with his family in Kathmandu. In his letter, he expresses, “As we were leaving our motherland, I was overwhelmed with emotion. In my mind, I pictured at once my country, mother and you. However, there was little I could do, so I paid a tribute to the river with my tears before ascending on the other side” (20).

After his arrival in Tibet, the Lhasa Merchant suffers from the diasporic experience like sense of loss, belongingness and rootlessness. In this diasporic condition, the Merchant finds himself into transit position where he cannot relate his identity neither with his past life alone nor with the present life. This transit position of diaspora makes his identity complex. Homi K. Bhabha explains about the diasporic condition in this way:

The ‘beyond’ is neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past. Beginning and ending may be the sustaining myths of the middle years; but in the fin-de siècle we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion. For there is a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction, in the beyond: an exploratory, restless movement caught so well in the French rendition of the words *au-dela*- here and there, on all sides, *fort/da*, hither and thither, back and forth. (1-2)

Bhabha explains that diasporic people’s moment to foreign land is not a new horizon for them. They can neither leave their past life totally nor can they accept new location as a new horizon. Diasporic people always find their position in-between of

two cultures. Due to their existence in two cultures, their identity becomes complex. They find their position hybrid. The hybridity, in hybrid culture, means creating cultural dilemma and conflict. Hybridity means the mixture of different cultures in societies due to the influence of colonization, emigration, commercialization and so on.

Diasporic people cannot totally leave their past and indulge in a new horizon. They always move between the past and the present. In Tibet, the Lhasa Merchant swings in the new horizon as Bhabba says. During his stay in Lhasa, he finds a Tibetan girl named Bhamula with whom he falls in love. Immediately, he realizes that he is already married. So, he himself decides not to become so irresponsible towards his wife. But on the other hand, slowly he inclines towards the Tibetan girl. In his letter to his wife, he confesses his own dilemma saying:

I am telling you the truth, my Maim, but do not take it too much to heart, if sometimes I forget your very existence in Nepal, Bhamula had substituted you for me here. As you had loved before, so she loved me here in Lhasa. To be honest, it seems that our Newar women were not equal to Tibetan woman as far as the care and concern for the family were concerned. Once they have found a husband they did not behave like the mistresses kept by the men in Nepal. (87)

After his father's funeral, the Lhasa Merchant returns from Kathmandu. In Lhasa, he comes in touch with a Chinese woman named Pema Dolma. Her husband Tang -sen Sung was a Chinese soldier, later murdered by Tibetans on an ethnic clash between Tibetan and Chinese descent. Pema Dolma has a daughter with whom the Merchant falls in love. Slowly his love towards Bhamula is increased instead of his wife in

Nepal. He gives priority to the Tibetan girl and says, Newar woman would not be equal to the Tibetan.

Diasporic people have hunger for their cultural root, race and nationality.

When a person feels strange in a foreign land, he tries to search for his cultural root because his culture can give him solace and comfort to his feeling of sense of loss and displacement. The sense of nationality arouses in the mind of Lhasa Merchant time and again. When he arrives in Kuti, he feels the sense of nationality. He further says:

When we arrived at Kuti we felt as if we had come home. We were still in Tibetan territory but there was a Nepalese atmosphere as groups of porters wearing the cap and jacket and speaking Tamang and Khas languages were seen. When we saw Newars in native dress, *lam surawal or bhotosuruwal* and heard our own language spoken, I felt as if I was wandering about in the valley of Nepal. (65)

Here, the Lhasa Merchant gets pride in his national identity. He feels his owns in the Nepalese culture and territory. He is aware about the languages, customs and ethnicity as he says; “Since I had returned home I had to require my identity as a Newar” (66). Here, the longing for cultural root is exposed in his statement.

People’s identity is constructed with their cultural roots. Whenever one travels, his identity changes according to the cultural changed. Talking about the travelling nature of culture, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin state:

Diaspora highlights the global trend of creating, constructing and reconstructing identity, not by identifying with some ancestral place, but through travelling itself. While the diasporic subject travels, so does culture. A traveling culture means a culture that changes, develops and transforms itself according to the various influences it encounters

in different places. Thus, while diasporic change their countries of arrival, so are their cultures changed in turn. (427)

Here, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin argue about the travelling nature of culture.

Culture cannot be fixed and stable; rather it is changeable and fluctuating. Culture can be influenced and affected by the changes that occur in the world. Globalization is the important factor that affects the originality and stability of the culture. People are compelled to change their culture, tradition and the way of life according to the environment that they confront. Here, in the novella, the life style and the thoughts of the Lhasa Merchant are affected and in some extent guided by the Tibetan culture and tradition.

At the beginning days in Tibet, the Lhasa Merchant feels quite strange due to the different socio-cultural practices. At that time, when he meets the Newar community in Lhasa, he feels proud of his nationality and culture. The Newars have their own religious and social organizations in Tibet and they conduct their rituals. But latter, when he assimilates himself to the Tibetan culture, he gives more priority to it and tries to maintain his life style accordingly.

Diasporas have true feeling of love and attachment towards their ethnic groups, after their voluntary movement from their homeland. In the new country, they try to maintain and preserve their culture, ethnicity and national identity by following it. The Lhasa traders also have great fond for their culture, language and tradition. They try their best to maintain it even in the foreign land in Lhasa. The Newar traders as a whole establish the different social, cultural, religious and economic institutions to conduct their own activities. They establish *Guthi* for their economics activities. They perform the different rituals and *Jatra* according to the Newari tradition. The Lhasa Merchant further writes:

We Newars are certainly strange fellows; we keep true to our character wherever we go. We behave in the same way whether we live in the village outside the Nepal Valley or come so far away as Lhasa.... Upon our arrival at Cyanakhyah near Lhasa, we found a crowd of Newars some of whom I knew. Some were members of our Pala, as the social association of the Newar is called, others were relatives and yet others had business dealing with our *Kothi*. (23-24)

That is, the Newar traders in Lhasa try to maintain their ethnic identity and culture by keeping the Newari customs continue. The ethnic diaspora has great love for ethnic identity and culture. Even after coming to foreign land, they try to preserve their communal solidarity as well as cultural identity. It means that one cannot totally forget his ethnic identity even after being far from it. Due to ethnic diaspora's link with their ethnicity, they love it. The Lhasa Merchant has the complex relationship with his host country Tibet, he loves Tibet but he cannot forget his homeland Kathmandu. In this way, Gabriel Sheffer says:

An ethno-national Diaspora is a social political formation, created as a result of either voluntary or forced migration, whose members regard themselves as of the same ethno-national origin and who permanently reside as minorities in one or several host countries. Members of such entities maintain regular or occasional contact with what they regard as their homeland and with individuals and groups of the same background residing in other host countries. (10)

That is, modern diaspora are ethnic minority groups of migrant origin residing and acting in host countries but maintaining strong, sentimental and material links with their countries of origin- homelands. Sheffer states that diaspora have minor position

in host country. Diasporas are treated as members of minority groups. The Newar traders are also in minority position in Lhasa. Sometimes, there occurs the cultural and ethnical clash between two ethnic groups in Lhasa. The Lhasa Merchant further says:

Plans had been made to massacre all Newars and loot their property. A warning was given to the merchants not to make an effort to conceal whatever they owned in Lhasa. Yet one of our own bamjahs had heard a conversation among the Tibetans. "How can we murder the innocent Newars and take their property?" was the question posed by one of them. (70)

That is to say, because of their cultural difference, sometimes there occurs the clash between two different communities. The Newar traders are treated as the minority groups and they face various problems as the foreigner in Lhasa. Race is another factor that brings the untruth between the different racial groups. It is taken as the important sector of postcolonial theory, which categories people by certain constructed identity. It becomes an issue of superiority and inferiority when colonizers blurred the boundaries and created a hybrid and multicultural society. Racial identity has complex structure, having some relation with political, cultural, social and psychological aspects of human being. And any disturbance in this complex structure brings the identity crisis and insecurity of self. In this context, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith and Helen Tiffin further explain, "Racism can be defined as a way of thinking that considers a group's unchangeable physical characteristics to be in a direct, casual way to psychological or intellectual characteristics and which on this crisis distinguishes between superior and inferior racial groups" (119).

Here, race is determined by two factors: physically and psychologically. Physically, people are different on the basis of color and psychologically, they are divided as upper and lower in terms of their culture, character and power. In addition, the term implies the mental and moral behavior of human beings and individual personality, ideas and capacities. That is, race intensifies the clash between two different racial groups.

In Lhasa, the hints of cultural clash between racial groups can be seen. Lhasa is dominated by a racial group that considers itself as superior and more civilized rather than others minorities groups. So, sometimes there occurs the racial clash between Tibetan and Chinese groups. In this context, the trader writes:

Bhamula's father was a Chinese merchant named Tang-sen- Sung who had lived since long next to our own place. He was murdered by Tibetans when she was one year old. Her mother, Pema Dolma, being a Tibetan and living among the Newars, was saved. Otherwise, she too would have been brutally to death like other Chinese nationals. The war between the British and the Tibetans had just ended then. ... Those who failed to leave were killed by the Tibetan. (76-77)

Here, the Lhasa Merchant notices the cultural as well as racial clash among ethnic groups. The majority cultural and ethnical group always dominates the minority and the minority group feels the sense of othering and alienation. The Newar Traders in Lhasa represents the minority racial group which always feels the sense of marginalization and domination.

Moreover, a particular ethnic group becomes Diasporas coming in to contact with another more dominant ethnic group and the issue of preservation of ethnic identity becomes prominent where the resultant identity is never pure, rather it

becomes hybrid. It gives a sense of lacking of represents and the subject is marginalized under the dominant ethnic groups.

The memory plays an immensely important role for the diasporic people. As a diasporic character, the Lhasa Merchant is frequently haunted by the memory of his homeland and his family. In Lhasa, he links the incidents with his former experience in Kathmandu. He sees his wife's image in the face of his girlfriend Bhamula. Once, he says:

Brought up with great love and care her daughter Bhamula had grown up as a gentle, young lady by the time I came here again. She was just like you, not only her look but also in behavior, the only difference was the dress. If she wears the parsi with her calves exposed, she would look extremely beautiful! (77-78)

The diasporic people voluntarily or forcibly, leave their homeland and go to new region. In the new regions, they feel forlorn as they cannot assimilate themselves fully with the foreign culture. Then, they start looking back to their culture; which is far distant but closely tied up with identity. Consequently, they are frequently haunted by some sense of loss. Actually, their identity is swinging like a pendulum since they can neither uphold the foreign culture as their own nor they can return to their homeland which they already left. So, they have some urge to reclaim and to look back their homeland. Here, regarding the situation of diasporic people, Salman Rushdie states: "It may be that when the Indian writer who writes from outside India tries to reflect that world, he is obliged to deal in broken mirrors, some of whose fragments have been irretrievably lost" (429).

The Lhasa Merchant, time and again, uses memory as a tool to solace his mind. Such diasporic people use memory only as the means to link them into

their native culture. Regarding such issues Salman Rushdie says:

It may be that writer in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge- which gives rise to profound uncertainties- that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will in short, create fictions, not actual cities or village, but invisible once, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind. (428)

That is, according to Rushdie, the diaspora are haunted by some sense of loss and they look back their past which is far unaffordable for them. They are not capable to achieve their past concretely. So, the memory is only the means that enables them to reach their homelands. So far, the diasporic writers like him create their homelands in their mind by means of memory, the Lhasa Merchant also plays with memories. The Merchant, in Lhasa, imagines his hometown Kathmandu and plays with it. In his letter, he further says:

My imagination changed me into the mythical partridge and I felt I was really like this bird at bedtime. Belief has it that the partridge was separated from its mate during the night with a river in between the birds were within visible distance, whereas I had to live here alone separated from you by many rivers and mountains. Then I sighed involuntarily and yearned for you.

(35)

Here, the Merchant becomes fantastic and tries to construct an ‘imaginary homeland’ of his own. His memories of Nepal become raw material to connect him with his root. But these memories are fragmented like broken mirror because the distance of time and space prevent him to access with his native land’s culture.

Memories establish a connection between a collective and individual past, between origin, heritage, and history. Those who have left their place of birth to make homes elsewhere are familiar with the question, ‘where do you come from’? And respond innumerable well rehearsed ways. For giving the answer of such question, they link themselves with their cultural root while living in host country. The diaspora are out of their root or origin. They are frequently haunted by the memory of real homeland and suffer from the sense of displacement and rootlessness. They feel nostalgic, so as a solace to their disjointed self, they attempt to create a homeland by means of memory.

In the novella, *Letter From A Lhasa Merchant to His Wife*, the Lhasa Merchant also plays with the memory. In Tibet, he suffers from nostalgia and links him into the past. He recollects his past memory when he was with his wife in Kathmandu. The Merchant says:

At bedtime, while I contemplated the various image in the light of the *dewa*, a breeze would suddenly fan the flame and I would have a vision of your face as I saw it soon after your ritual seclusion. I remember it because it was on the day of the annual ritual bath of janabahadyo.

With this picture in my mind, I would sleep all alone by myself. (32)

Here, the Lhasa Merchant only uses the memory to solace his disjointed self. Now, he is out of his culture in Lhasa where he feels the sense of alienation and rootlessness. In his youth, he was with his family in Kathmandu. He got married in this early life

and his love for his wife always haunts him. So, to forget the bitter reality, he recollects the past memory.

Memory plays an important role for the migrants people. The memory is the only means that connects them with their native land. The unfamiliar environment and the strangeness of the foreign land forced to the diasporic man to go to his past memory. Throughout the novella, the Lhasa Merchant recollects his past memory to forget the present strangeness in Lhasa. The Merchant further says:

Whenever the boats glided calmly, my companions enjoyed themselves, joking or engaged in a game which, like dice, was played with a throw of a piece with six dots. I didn't know how to play it nor did I speak the language fluently enough to join in their jokes.

Therefore, there was nothing for me to enjoy expect to keep mum and think of you. (35)

In Lhasa, the Merchant cannot adjust him in the different socio-cultural scenario. The languages, customs and other cultural activities of Tibet are different from those of Nepal. His companions engage in different activities, but he cannot keep busy in the new environment. So, as an ultimate solution, he keeps mummy and his wife in his mind.

When the people leave their homeland and emigrate to the foreign land, they feel the sense of loss of their cultural root. Though the migrated people are away physically, they are emotionally attached to their homeland. They use their past memory as the bridge to link them with their country. In this context, Salman Rushdie says:

It may be argued that the past is a country, from which we have all emigrated, that its loss is part of our common humanity. Which seems

to me self evidently true; but I suggest that the writer who is out of country and even out of language may experience this loss in an intensified form. It made more concrete for him by the physical fact of discontinuity of his present being in a different place from his past, of his being elsewhere. (429)

Here, for Salman Rushdie, past is the useful tool which helps one to get solace from his bitter present. So, the diasporic writers use their broken memory for the literary creation or create their imaginary homelands. In the novella, the trader uses his past memory when he was with his family in Kathmandu. Throughout the novella, he compares his bitter present and confused situation with his playful and coherent past.

The Lhasa Merchant develops the hybrid position when he enters into the culturally significant territory of Tibet. By birth and upbringing, he belongs to the typical Newar culture and tradition but he attaches to the new Tibetan culture by his diasporic condition. As a result, he finds himself in such a zone where neither he totally forsakes his own culture and way of life nor fully adopts the Tibetan culture as his own. As a diasporic character, he longs for his past and recollects the past memory to console his present strangeness in the new terrain. In the span of time, the Lhasa Merchant gets him in the in-between position of two cultures, the culture of Newar community and the Tibetan culture and develops new one.

Hybridity refers to the creation of trans-cultural forms within the contact zone produced by the diasporic situation. The term trans-culture refers to a process whereby subjugated people cannot rapidly control what originates from the dominant culture. And cultural identity always emerges in the borderless, contradictory and ambivalent space. So, trans-culture creates a borderless and hybrid culture where fixed, independent and absolute identity is impossible.

Trans-culture depicts many forms, not only cultural but also political, racial, social and linguistic. It has frequently been used in postcolonial discourse to mean cross-cultural exchange. The idea that only the colonized people may mimic the colonizer's culture is more narrow at this time. The rapidly increasing interest in globalization reflects a changing organization of worldwide social relation in various ways. Globalization is the process whereby individuals lives and local communities are affected by economic and cultural forces that operate worldwide. It is the process of the world shrinking; becoming a single place. The alien people like the Lhasa Merchant in the *Letter From A Lhasa Merchant to His Wife* may also mimic the culture that they come in touch with the culture of other country. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, write in the *Post-Colonial Studies Reader*:

Hybridity occurs in post-colonial societies both as a result of conscious moments of cultural suppression, as when the colonial power invades to consolidate political and economic control, or when settler, invaders dispossess indigenous peoples and force them to 'assimilate' to new social pattern. It may also occur in latter periods when patterns of immigration from the metropolitan societies and from other imperial areas of influences continue to produce complex cultural palimpsests with the postcolonized world. (137)

The colonizers forcefully invite the new territory and force the indigenous people to assimilate the colonizers culture. The movements like migration exile or supply of labor lead to the creation of hybrid culture and identity. Migration is the major factor that leads towards the cultural hybridity.

In the history of Nepal, many Newars went to Lhasa for the purpose of the trading of different goods. The fathers were replaced by their sons and the

descendants had continued the trend of going to Lhasa for the purpose of business.

During the business in Lhasa, the Newar merchants won the trust and built the harmonious relation with the Tibetan. In this sense, the Lhasa Merchant says:

A strong belief still prevailed among the Tibetans that if there were no men who wore the red cap and marked their brow with red powder not only the Lhasa River would inundate the city but the mythical ogres would reappears and create havoc. Having won their trust, our ancestors had engaged is trade in Lhasa since ancient times. The Tibetans speak of the Newars respectfully as *balpo*. (26)

Many people and societies have the different response to the hybrid situation. Cultural hybridity brings the sense of alienation, isolation, rootlessness and displacement.

Hybridity cannot allow a person to see the life from the perception of only one culture but also from the perspective of the other culture too. Hybrid existence lies between two edges, i.e. between the pure and impure and between past and present. Since it inherently encompasses the opposite categories, hybrid hyphenations emphasize the incommensurable elements as the basis of cultural identifications. By destabilizing the established boundaries of singularity and plurality, it sets the limits of any claims to a singular or autonomous using of differences be it class, gender or race.

Hybridity includes person's awareness of cultural past and root; and the needs of the present to find a location of identifications. In this way, hybridity is related with the past and its present responses. By entering into a fruitful dialogue about the past, a person can revive the fossil that are buried within oneself and are part of one's ancestors. By referring to primal spaces a diaspora tries to invoke the ancestors in order to establish the continuity of his past cultural root. Cultural encounter is also characterized by ambivalent expressions. Such expression comes from the realization

of the lack of cultural root, cultural identity and the space to locate the consciousness as well as form of the profound desires in writer to articulate their affection.

When a new culture penetrates and tries to assimilate with indigenous culture, the condition of hybridity emerges. In hybrid culture, powerful culture and its images suppress and invade local culture. The minority identities lose their ground and get mixed with new cultural experiences. Therefore, hybridity concerns various problems in which people are dislocated and displaced from their familiar social environment and indigenous culture where they are compelled to assimilate with new social patterns. When people enter into the liminal zone, the new kind of cultural identity is developed. Regarding such issue Sturat Hall says:

Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. (435)

Here, Sturat Hall argues that people originally belong to their own typical culture which they get from their social belongingness. In this sense, culture is the matter of becoming. On the other hand, culture can be the matter of being if one assimilates himself with other culture or the people of other nationalities. As a member of Newar community in Kathmandu, the Lhasa Merchant comes up with the rich cultural environment. In this context, Lhasa Merchant, the narrator of the novella, writes in his letter addressing his wife:

Therefore all the relatives, anxious for my safety, sent me the *Sagun* as farewell present. The boiled eggs alone filled a large bowl. But you

kept sobbing all the while in the room. Finally it was time to bid me farewell and you came up, supported by two women. You looked up at me and I put a one rupee coin into your trembling hand. (37)

The Newar communities have their typical culture and tradition among other cultural communities in Kathmandu. They perform various *Jatras* and organize cultural ceremonies on their own way. So, they are rich in their cultural root which reflects their identity. Culture determines and shapes one's identity. So, being a member of the Newar community, the Lhasa Merchant also internalizes all the cultural heritage of Newar community. In his childhood days in Kathmandu, he involves in all the religious as well as cultural ceremonies, which shapes his identity.

Identity is bound with the culture and it shapes our further development as well as further progress. The cultural values are related with our identity and loss of cultural heritage emerges as a dominant problem among modern people especially to diasporic people. The role of the culture is considerably important in defining the behavior of people. The Lhasa Merchant as Nepalese Newar grows up in Nepalese culture and it shapes his identity. When he moves towards Tibet, he faces the Tibetan culture which is a new culture for him. As the letter progresses, the Lhasa Merchant moves subtly away from Nepal in general and Newar social life in particular, towards more noticeably Tibetan tradition. Though the Newar merchants have established some commercial and social institutions in Lhasa, they are severely affected by the tradition and the culture of the Tibet. The Lhasa Merchant further writes:

I had a busy time on the following days in receiving Tibetan acquaintances. They did not bring the gifts of confectionary, boiled eggs and cakes, as it was customary in Nepal. They would just drop in and say. "Ah, *sota*, how do you? How did you fare on the way? I hope

you had no trouble”. With a smile, I would reply in my poor Tibet oh I am all right. (25)

It was his first trip to Lhasa where he feels difficulties because of the cultural differences. In his letter, the Lhasa Merchant shares his experiences with his wife in Kathmandu. He feels difficulties to assimilate him in the Tibetan culture and way of life because he was from different cultural background. The language and behavior of the people, their culture, traditions, foods, environment and new territory makes him more strange and ambivalent.

Like the protagonist of the *Letter From A Lhasa Merchant to His Wife*, diasporic people move between the host country culture and their native culture due to the relation to both countries’ culture. In the host country, they are living and struggling to achieve success but their real identity is bound with their homeland which they left. The dispersed people are deeply rooted in ethnicity, culture, and language of home country. They cannot forget their cultural root rather take it as a source of their identity and history. In fact, the ethnic groups who are losing their ethnic identity and origin have begun their cultural activities to revive it.

Thus the mutual cultural flows between Nepal (the Newar community in Kathmandu) and Tibet develop the situation of cultural hybridity. Hybrid identity is always a place of flexible territory rather than fixed and stable. In his essay “Cultural Diversity and Cultural Difference”, Homi K. Bhabha argues:

Hybridity as a fluctuating movement of occult instability could not be articulated as practice without an acknowledgement of this indeterminate space of the subject of enunciation. It is that third space though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive condition of enunciation that ensure the meaning and symbol have no

primordial unity or fixity; that even the signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read new. (208)

That is, culture is always changeable and fluctuating where there is no fixity or indeterminacy. It creates a third space that is the place of intermingled subject: third space of enunciation.

Though hybridity is mostly known as a postcolonial phenomenon, it has occurred since the time of cultural mixing hundreds of years ago. Cultures are trans-local and involve globally. Hybridization actually occurs out of recognition of difference and produces something new. It refers to the creation of new trans-cultural forms. To be more precise, hybridity is associated with the independence and mutual construction of the subjectivity. It is the in-between space that carries the burden and meaning of culture. The mutual cultural flow between two different terrains develops the situation of cultural hybridity. Hybridity is always a place of flexible territory rather fixed and stable.

The Lhasa Merchant, in the novella *Letter From A Lhasa Merchant to His Wife*, is in the liminal zone. He faces the cultural fluctuation in Lhasa. He realizes the difference between the culture of Tibet and the culture of his hometown Kathmandu. In his hometown, he conducts one type of culture and in Tibet he faces the different kind of culture. Such type of cultural fluctuation can be noticed in his letter to his wife. He further writes:

It reminded me of similar kind pilgrimage during the festival of Yemyah and Koneyah in Yem (Kathmandu). The only difference was that in Yem we carried incense sticks in our hands and left lighted wicks in little clay saucer in the streets whereas here (Tibet) we poured the butter from the lamp in our hand in to the bigger lamps. (29)

In this way, because of the cultural intermingleness, fluctuation comes in the culture and identity. The Lhasa Merchant is from the strong cultural background and rich in culture and religious activity. Throughout the year, they engage in several festivals. They have their own typical way of living and promoting activities. Being a member of such culturally significant community, the Merchant is also introduced to his culture. When he arrives in culturally significant territory Tibet, he tries his best to sustain the typical Newar ritual but cannot preserve it because of his diasporic condition.

The diasporic condition brings one to the condition of ambivalence.

Ambivalence is the product of diaspora. When a person come in touch with the other culture and assimilates the foreign culture, there occurs the ambivalence in his life. He comes in such a zone where he neither totally belongs to his own native cultural heritage nor adopts the foreign culture. Diasporic people love their homeland very much and attempt to adjust themselves within the criteria of their culture. But when they come in touch with the foreign culture, they compel to change their cultural behavior. Talking about the ambivalence in diasporic position, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin argue:

Adapted in to colonial discourse theory by Homi K. Bhabha ‘it describes the complex mix of attraction and repulsion that characterizes the relationship between colonizers and colonized. The relationship is ambivalent because the colonized subject is never simply and completely opposed to the colonizers. Rather than amusing that some colonized subjects are complicit and some resistant, ambivalence suggests that complicity and resistance exist in a fluctuating relation within the colonial subject. (12-13)

Here, Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin describe the ambivalent condition of diasporic people. They clarify that in the colonized country, people are in the ambivalence condition. They are in the dilemma whether adopt the colonizer's culture or oppose it. Sometimes they resist it and sometimes they apply it in their life. In that case resistance and support exist together in the colonized people.

When a person is in the ambivalent condition, he/she bears dual attitudes and not clear about his/her attitude towards the situation. The Lhasa Merchant too is in the ambivalent condition when he is in Lhasa. He takes parts in both country cultures; the cultural ritual of Tibet and his own culture. He says:

Even when I returned from Lhasa the first time while I was still wearing a Tibetan dress and ritually remained a Tibetan, your attitude was much warmer. Now, it was so cool and indifferent as if I was an untouchable. Why you would treat me in this way I had no idea but my feeling were deeply hurt. I did not want to stay there a moment longer. Your cousin must have sensed my discomfort and she said, "Aren't you going home now? You really must". (102-103)

The Lhasa Merchant desperately confesses that they are in ambivalent position. In the *Svanti* festival, they take part enthusiastically along with the Tibetan. But they are obliged to give up the Kibaju puja because they are in the foreign land. They could not celebrate it because they did not have their sister in Lhasa, they could only remember their sister.

The concept of cultural hybridity brings the sense of identity crisis. Identities are created in the field of socio-political, racial, ideological and national position. It is constituted by means of representation and discourse. The identity of every human being engages in a dynamic interchange of beliefs, attitude, ideology, sentiments and

other states of consciousness. At home, a person belongs to his homeland's culture and his identity becomes single. But when he becomes a diasporic figure, his identity cannot be pure rather his identity becomes plural. Diasporic people cannot relate their identity solely with their homeland rather their identity depends on both countries culture due to their existence in the both culture.

As a diasporic character, the Lhasa Merchant is bound with the dual identity. On the one hand, his identity is belonged to his homeland's culture and root. He has the sense of love towards his own typical culture and tradition. So, he tries his best to preserve it even in foreign land Tibet. Tibet, on the other hand, is another culturally rich country. It has its own typical culture and way of life. At this condition, the Merchant's identity is hybridized and he has started to feel sense of loss his originality and suffers from the sense of loss and identity crisis. In his letter, he says:

Perhaps, Main, you might get the idea now that I am coming home and going to be problem. You needn't worry, I am not coming back to stand in your way. I shall not remind you that I am still here in Lhasa or elsewhere; nor make you search for me I would hand over the property and the business here to the *bamjahs*. If they are honest, they will certainly bring your share of the property. But even if they didn't, you do not need the money for your livelihood. All you need to do it to think that you have given it away to the *bamjahs* themselves. Within a month or so, I am going away where I know none and no own knows me. (113)

After the death of his girl friend Bhamula, the Lhasa Merchant becomes frustrated and feels the sense of loss. He does not want to go to his home, Nepal. During the course

of time, his wife too discourages him to come in Nepal. The Lhasa Merchant loses the love of his wife and decides not to return to Nepal. He suffers from the identity crisis.

The identity never moves in constant and stable way. Identity of every human being engages in a dynamic interchange of believes, attitude, ideologies, sentiment and other states of consciousness. The culture of a particular community greatly shapes and determines the person's identity. That is identity change according with the culture change. In this sense Stuart Hall says:

If identity doesn't proceed in a straight unbroken line from some fixed origin, how are we to understand its formation? We might think of black Caribbean identities as framed by two axes or vectors, simultaneously operative the vector of similarity and continuity and the vector of difference and rupture Caribbean identities always have to be thought of in terms of the dialogic relationship between these two axes. The one gives us some grounding in some continuity with the past. The second reminds us that what we shares is precisely the experience of a profound discontinuity. (436)

Identity is cultural phenomenon that provides different characteristics to a person. On that sense, identity is determined by culture, which covers not only culture but also race, gender, class, language and sexuality. Identity creates spaces and subject position according to the culture. But when subject position can't hold stable and coherent space, it brings doubt, uncertainty, fragmentation and identity crisis.

Identity crisis simply refers to the lack of specific culture position. It means identity of a person neither belongs to one nor to another. It shows the condition of being estranged and isolated. In the novella, *Letter From A Lhasa Merchant to His Wife*, the Merchant feels that he shares some elements with his cultural groups but

does not belong completely to it. Therefore, the Merchant exhibits uncertainty, distrust, psychological dissatisfaction and alienation from his cultural community as well as from the culture he has encountered. He remembers his childhood days in Kathmandu and his died girlfriend Bhumula to solace his disjointed mind. He further says:

In the circumstance, I could not believe that you would consider me any longer as your husband. I did not return, but, whenever I was left alone, my eyes sought Lamo in the inner room, and tears welled up.

Although I had lived in Lhasa for so many years, I was unable to speak Tibetan fluently enough to converse about religious matters with the monks. (100)

The Lhasa Merchant is in confused mind. He cannot decide whether his wife loves him or not. In his loneliness, he remembers the past incidents to forget his crisis in identity. He takes the religion to escape from the bitter reality. In that sense, he says, “I thought of going on a pilgrimage. It would give him the impression that I had given heed to his words and at the same time give me some peace of mind”. (101)

The dissatisfaction and alienation appear in the mind of the Lhasa Merchant when he is out of his belonging culture. The Merchant falls in identity crisis because he cannot stand in fixed position or location. He has hybrid culture and in the hybrid culture, identity is in motion. They are not absolute or constant of nature but changeable. Thus hybridity renders mixed culture, not fixed identity, which gives birth to the identity crisis. The Lhasa Merchant, at the end of the novel, loses his Tibetan wife as well as the love of his own wife from Kathmandu. In this sense, the Merchant says: “But what sort of a person am I? I asked myself. To abandon you and come so far away to earn a paltry sum of money! The profession of the trader is

indeed to be condemned” (41). Here, the Merchant confesses his crisis in defining his self.

At the beginning, the Merchant is fond of his culture and homeland. He suffers from the love of his wife, mother and other family members. He loves his wife so much that he cannot forget her at any cost. But during the course of time, the homesick merchant becomes the confused and uprooted man. The Lhasa Merchant loses his identity as a Newar and cannot totally adopt the Tibetan culture too. He is in confused mood; sometimes he feels loves towards the Tibetan girls and says:

During this difficult period and despite the fact that she was a widow, Pema Dolma bravely kept her business going with the support of a relative belonging to the novelty and the Newar and Tibetan merchants. Brought up with great love and care her daughter Bhamula had grown up as a gentle, young lady by the time I came here again. She was just like you not only in her looks but also in behavior, the only difference was the dress. If she wore the Parsi with her calves exposed, she would look extremely beautiful. (77- 78)

Here, he arouses the love towards the Tibetan girl and compares her with his wife. Later his confused mind more change. He tries his best to show his responsibility towards his wife saying “My consideration for you prevented me from speaking to her within greater familiarity” (82).The given extract shows that the Lhasa Merchant is in ambivalent position. Sometimes, he shows his inclination towards the Tibetan girl and decides to marry with her. In the same way, he shows his love towards his own wife in Nepal. But at the end, he loses both his girlfriend in Tibet and the love of his wife in Kathmandu. So, he feels alienation and disjunction in his life.

The hybrid condition brings the Lhasa Merchant in the in-between position. In Lhasa, he follows the Tibetan way of life and his own. As a Newar in Lhasa, he takes part in several religious as well as social practices related to the Newar culture. In Lhasa, Newar communities have established the various cultural as well as social institutions. In his letter, the Merchant says:

Upon our arrival at Cyanakhyah near Lhasa, we found a crowd of Newars, some of whom I know. Some were members of our *Pala*, as the social association of the Newars is called, others were relatives and yet others were business dealing with our *kothi*. (23-24)

The Newar merchants have established the religious institution in Tibet that organized and managed the religious activities in Lhasa. The *Kothi* in Lhasa is the commercial organization which manages their economic problems. Similarly, the Lhasa Merchant takes part in cultural activities in the Lhasa. In his letter, he further says:

The Newars in Lhasa may be said to have virtually become Tibetan, since they had given up all restriction on inter caste dining at the Lagaco pass. They regained their status in the social hierarchy upon their return to Nepal only after undergoing a cleaning ritual called *ni* and the payment of forty-two and half rupees to the *Dharmadhikar*, the chief Barhmin of the kingdom. (39)

In this way the Newar merchant is in the in-between position of the two cultures- the culture of Newar community of Nepal and the Tibetan culture.

When the Lhasa trader leads his diasporic life in Tibet, he develops two different feelings at the same time: the love of his homeland and his family and the positive attitude towards the Tibetan culture and particularly towards his girlfriend Bhamula. His dual attitude sometimes brings him into identity crisis. At the

beginning, he has great fond to Nepalese culture and heritage. In his letter, he exposes his love towards his homeland Nepal saying: “What religious zeal! How did a love for art of Nepal could justly be proud of is artistic heritage; because of it, the country is held in respect by the world” (92).

Moreover, the Lhasa Merchant is greatly influenced by the Tibetan culture and especially by the Tibetan girl Bhamula. During the course of time, he denies return to Nepal. He says: “Nor did you write asking me to return. Then, tell me Maim, what would make me return” 93. These two different statements show his dual attitudes towards his homeland and the host country Tibet. Such dual attitudes mostly come in the mind of the diasporic people like Lhasa Merchant. In the essay, “*Imaginary Homeland*”, Salman Rushdie says:

We are Hindus who have crossed the black water; we are Muslims who eat pork. And as a result-as my use of the Christian notion of the fall indicates-we are now partly of the West. Our identity is at once plural and partial. Sometimes, we feel that we straddle two cultures; at other time, that we fall between two stools. (431)

Here, Salman Rushdie clears the position of diasporic people in foreign land. Salman Rushdie thinks, through his own experiences as an Indian emigrant in England, that the emigrants want to live a full life enjoying the double benefits of belonging to two different cultures. The diasporic people for him are not willing to be excluded from any part of their heritage. Their identity is at once plural and partial. Sometimes they feel that they straddle two cultures.

After totally assimilating him in the Chinese culture, the Lhasa Merchant gets double vision for his root and host country culture. He gets married with the Tibetan girl and his love towards his former wife also continues. He says:

As we visited markets with some Lhasa Newars, naturally we talked about those women whose husbands were in Tibet. Some women sought a way out of their suffering by finding other men for themselves. Yet, Maim, despite your recent unkind treatment, I could not forget you. I remembered as if it was but yesterday that you ceremoniously offered me a basketful of flowers and betel leaves upon my return to Nepal long ago. (104)

Due to the hybrid identity, diasporic people cannot define themselves clearly and it raised the problem of definition which leads diaspora to conflicting and dual feeling for homeland and host country. At home, a person belongs to his homeland culture and his identity becomes single. But when he becomes a diasporic figure, his identity cannot be pure rather his identity becomes plural. Diasporic people cannot relate identity solely with their homeland rather identity depends on both countries culture due to their existence in both cultures. R. Radhakrishnan, in this context, exposes his view about the double consciousness of the diasporic people:

And in a way, the diaspora is an excellent opportunity to think through some of the vexed question: solidarity and criticism, belongingness and distance, insider spaces and outsider spaces, identity as invention and identity as natural-subject positionality and politics of representation, rootedness and rootlessness. (213)

Radhakrishnan believes that diasporic condition gives a chance to understand the problem of multiple identities. Diasporas are rooted in one culture and they also feel rootlessness in foreign culture. So they go through blongingness as well as distance from their culture. Radhakrishnan states that diasporic condition gives a chance to understand the fact that our identities are the matter of invention.

That is, the Lhasa Merchant develops his 'double consciousness' regarding the language, custom, the way of life of his own homeland and the host country Tibet. At the first stage of his life in Lhasa, his attitudes and emotions are highly guided by his own cultural root. But such attitudes cannot remain stable in the mind of such a diasporic person. So, his intermingleness and assimilation in Tibetan culture is inevitable. Such changeable personality and attitudes mark his inclination towards the Chinese culture and the way of life. Talking about such fluctuating personality of Lhasa Merchant, Mark Turin reveals in his literary review: "Mimmanahpau is all about change and transformation. While the writer takes great pains to articulate his undying devotion to his wife in the first fifteen pages of the letter, by page 25 the reader begins to doubt his sincerity" (13).

Mark Turin reveals the changing behaviors of the Lhasa Merchant regarding his attitude towards his wife and homeland. Later his notice and description of the locals in Lhasa shows his inclination towards Tibet. The scribe, for example, is impressed with the standard of housekeeping in a typical Lhasa room. The Lhasa Merchant says, "The kitchen was clean unlike our Nepal. The maid servant fetched water and saw that there was no accumulation of dust or dirt" (32). Likewise, he is envious of the more relaxed social interaction, the witness in Lhasa. He sees harmony and civilizing behaviors among the Tibetans. So, his longing towards the Nepalese culture and root is somehow diverted and a dual attitude is developed.

III. Conclusion: Memory as a Means to Escape from Reality

Immigration and globalization are the major factors for the emergence of diasporic experience like sense of loss, displacement, nostalgia, sense of nationalism and so on. It is difficult to adjust diasporic people in the new environment because of the differences of socio-political scenario. In their homeland, people are guided by one type of socio-cultural environment, but when they come in touch with the different culture and tradition, their self becomes hybrid and later feel identity crisis. In the novella, *Letter From A Lhasa Merchant to His Wife*, the letter writer goes to Lhasa from the Newar community of Kathmandu valley. In Tibet, he feels difficulties to adjust in new scenario. He feels estrangement and alienation because of the crisis in identity in host country Lhasa.

Diasporic condition brings the concept of hybridity and identity crisis. Hybridity occurs when people from one culture and tradition confront with different socio-cultural heritage. The identity of people is shaped and formed by their own culture and tradition. But because of the assimilation of host country's culture, their identity becomes hybrid. Hybridity brings the sense of loss, identity crisis and nostalgia. In the global context, people do not belong to one culture and identity only. They are defined by multiple identities. Globalization gives rise to cultural hybridity, which refers to the movement and transference of people. Hybrid subject creates a trans-cultural form in new place. They try to preserve their self and learn to assimilate new and unknown culture. In this way, the process of assimilation is not perfectly successful that they have lost something valuable and attempt to gain something new. They neither fully adjust in new culture nor get their known culture and value. As a result, identity crisis and the feelings of alienation have come like in the mind of Lhasa Merchant.

In the novella, *Letter From A Lhasa Merchant to His Wife*, the Merchant mimics the Chinese way of life along with his own typical culture and tradition. For him Tibetan life style is much more standard than the life style of Newar people in Kathmandu. So, as a diasporic man, he applies the Tibetan norms, values and tradition in his own way. He even marries a Tibetan girl Bhamula. That is, his identity becomes hybrid. After his hybrid identity, he searches for the stable and coherent identity which is far unattainable for him because he is in the frontier of two cultures. Neither he totally applies the Tibetan way of life nor forgets the Nepalese identity. So, he swings like a pendulum and suffers from the sense of identity crisis. Identity also shifts with the position of the person like Lhasa Merchant. Certainly identity is bound with culture where we belong but the culture itself is not pure, fixed and coherent. So, searching for fixed identity in mixed culture gives birth to identity crisis. After the death of his Chinese wife Bhamula, the merchant suffers from the sense of loss and displacement. He searches for his fixed identity as a Newar boy but cannot hold his fixed and stable identity because of the intermix of the both countries culture. So, he suffers from identity crisis.

Identity is fluctuating because of today's flow of migration, mass media and other elements notably globalization; so hybrid subjects face the identity crisis. Therefore, the cultural values and identity have been transferred to other cultural groups and the cultural loss appears to be a major question among people. They find themselves in new culture, geography and among culturally different people, although they belong to neither group. They realize their identity, which becomes more significant. The cultural mixing gives rise to new hybrid identity that distracts modern subjects. Therefore, the hybrid subject falls in identity crisis. At the same time, a

sense of nostalgia always haunts them as they feel difference between past and present time.

When people suffer from identity crisis, they use memory as an ultimate solution. They take memory as a tool to escape from the bitter reality. They create the 'imaginary homelands' in their mind by using the memory. In the novella, *Letter From A Lhasa Merchant to His Wife*, protagonist Lhasa trader suffers from the sense of loss and displacement. He loses his stable identity and originality in Lhasa. His self is divided and he develops the dual attitudes towards the Nepalese culture and the Tibetan one. Throughout the letter, he uses memory to escape from his present crisis of identity. After the death of his Tibetan wife Bhamula, he faces the negative response from his Nepalese wife too. At that time feeling alienated and disjointed, he searches for the single and stable identity but unable to gain it because of his hybrid identity. So, he feels the sense of loss and suffers from alienation and dislocation. In this condition, he chooses the religion and goes to pilgrimage to Kolkata. That is, cultural hybridity brings the sense of identity crisis. After suffering from the condition of identity crisis, one uses memory to escape from present estrangement and dilemma.

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