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“Bodhi” (बोधि) is a Sanskrit word, which means "enlightenment" or "awakening." It implies the same in Pali and a number of other languages including Nepali and Hindi. Though ‘Bodhi’ also has religious connotations, it is used in number of philosophical schools as a term representing the quest of knowledge. It is with this latter meaning that we had named the publication.

The first issue of *Bodhi* was published in 2007. From the second issue (2008), it was named *Bodhi: An Interdisciplinary Journal*. The third, fourth, and fifth issues of the journal were published in 2009, 2010 and 2011 respectively, whereas the sixth issue came in 2013. Due to some problems, the journal could not be published in the following years. Meanwhile, academics from Nepal as well as abroad had been asking us for resuming the publication. It took half a decade for us to materialize the plan in this regard.

Finally, *Bodhi: An Interdisciplinary Journal* is now ready for its renewed journey. The Department of Languages and Mass Communication at the Kathmandu University School of Arts continues to be the editorial home of the journal. The editorial board includes the founding members as well as new faculties from the Department, whereas new group of Professors and other scholars from Nepal and abroad have joined as reviewers. We invite the academic fraternity across the world to contribute for the journal thereby promoting the quest of knowledge from the inter/multi-disciplinary perspective with special reference to communication and media.

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# The Root of Indian Communication Theory in the Ṛig Veda: Practical Vedānta

Anne Melfi

## Abstract

What is the source of the power of speech and eloquence and fulfillment in life? Though communication and rhetoric departments in most Indian universities have been focusing their teaching and research agendas on Western models, a growing body of scholarship is developing communication theory that approaches the big questions from an Indian perspective, drawing on traditional sources (Adhikary, 2014), which claim Veda as their ultimate source. This paper explores the Vedic worldview on speech and communication proclaimed in the *Ṛicho Akṣare* verse of the Ṛig Veda, and others, drawing on sage Bhartṛhari (c. 450-500 CE), Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (1975; 1971), and Sanskrit scholars of the philosophy of language, who reference these hymns. They describe a Vedic cosmology of speech that bears striking resemblance to the universe according to string theory of quantum physics. The science serves to corroborate the premise of Vedic levels-of-speech theory that the universe is structured and governed by laws of nature/language of nature from within an unmanifest unified field of all the laws of nature, which Ṛig Veda 1.164 calls *Parā* and identifies as consciousness. This inquiry helps to illuminate how speech is Brahman, the source and goal of understanding, eloquence, and fulfillment. The Vedic texts enjoin the *sanātana dharma* of yoga, opening awareness to the transcendental source of

speech. I conclude that Vedic communication theory embedded in the hymns is integral to practical Vedānta. As Muktitkā Upaniṣad 1.9 proclaims: “As oil is present in a sesame seed, so *Vedānta* is present in the Veda.”

**Keywords:** Vedānta, Indian communication theory, levels of speech, R̥g Veda 1.164.39, Vedic rhetoric

### **The Root of Indian Communication Theory in the R̥g Veda: Practical Vedānta**

The basis of Vedic-based communication theory is integral to Vedānta, as the Vedic hymns and commentaries suggest. Funnily enough, some commentaries consider the Vedas and Vedānta to have opposing views of reality since the Vedas feature a multiplicity of gods while Vedānta gives a unitary perspective, Brahman. The binary is a false one, an error in logic analogous to a claim the fact that there is a multitude of words contradicts the notion of speech, that dynamic unity of all words. Speech is Brahman in the Vedic view. Within the hymns can be found a vision of what could be called in hindsight “practical Vedānta,” the practical benefits of living the state of knowledge and experience called Brahman. This paper finds the theme within certain hymns on the field of speech, which verify what the Muktitkā Upaniṣad (1.9) proclaims: “As oil is present in the sesame seed, so Vedānta is present in the Veda.” To be fair, the unitary vision can be elusive amidst the richly analogical/metaphorical expression, the sophistication of thought, and the profusion of gods the hymns display, but R̥g Veda 1.164.46 explains: “Truth is one; the wise call it by many names.”

One name is Brahman. Another is Vāk (Speech), also known as Saraswatī, who has a thousand names, each foregrounding a special attribute (Prasoon 2009, pp. 163-164); and Speech is Brahman, as certain hymns suggest: The *Ṛicho Akśare* verse (1.164.39), the Hymn of Knowledge—the *Jñāna Sūkta* (10.71)—the Bāghāmbhṛṇi hymn to Vāk (10.125), and other hymns about the nature and power of speech hold the seeds of Vedānta philosophy within them, which is integral to the Vedic view of speech and communication. Indeed, the *Ṛicho Akśare* verse appears verbatim in the Shvetāshvatara Upaniṣad as verse 4.8, thus asserting the vedāntic stance of this Vedic verse. *Ṛiṣi* Bāghāmbhṛṇi, in her hymn to Vāk, where she identifies fully with the goddess Vāk, describes the depth, breadth, and power of speech as the all-inclusive substance and governor of the universe. She proclaims:

... I spread through all beings and touch this heaven with my body (7)

I breathe forth like the wind, giving form to all created worlds; beyond the heaven, beyond this earth (am I), so vast am I in greatness. (8)

This may be as close to a portrait of Brahman as word can convey. The hymn demonstrates both the direct experience and the conscious awareness that “I am That,” thus validating Bāghāmbhṛṇi’s mature state of Brahman consciousness, the fulfillment of Vedānta.

She proclaims that her source, the source of speech, is in the transcendental field of consciousness: “My birthplace is in the midst of the waters” (10.125.7), a frequently-used metaphor for the ocean of consciousness, the imperishable wholeness.

This metaphor also appears in 1.164.42, where the word *akśara*, imperishable—which also means letter, word, and sound—is used to mean “water,” playing with the obvious association of speech and its imperishable source (Monier-Williams, 2014). Vāk proclaims that “He who sees, who breathes, who hears what is spoken, does so through me; those who are ignorant of me perish” (4). Thus, transcendental consciousness is the basis and means of understanding, the ability to be conscious *of* anything, to experience and, indeed, to live and thus cannot be neglected to good effect.

The principle of a transcendental level of speech is embedded in the Vedic worldview and ubiquitous in the literature, implicitly or explicitly, but levels-of-speech theory has its first extant mention in the hymn that contains the *Ṛcho Akśare* verse: Ṛig Veda 1.164.45 proclaims that there are four levels of speech; men see (/hear) just one level; the other three are hidden (Padoux, 1990, p. 167). Speech is both manifest and un-manifest, like the universe. Indeed, according to this hymn and later theory, speech virtually *is* the universe; speech is Brahman. By the fifth century C.E., sage Bhartṛhari helpfully elaborated levels-of-speech theory in his *Vākyapadīya*, building on long-standing tacit theory. He named the levels and described them, for the hymn names only the transcendental level, *Parā*.

The figure below depicts the mind as an ocean of consciousness. The arrow labeled W2 shows the full range of the mind—and of speech—from its active surface expressions to its silent depth. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (1967) explains that thoughts bubble up from *Parā* in the depths of the mind, come to conscious awareness, and burst forth as speech. The

most-expressed level is *Vaikhari*, speech one can hear or read, the range indicated by the short arrow labelled W1, indicating the small range of speech theorized in Western theory. W2 represents the full range of mind/speech theorized in the Vedic literature (Maharishi, 1967 p. 470). Deeper than the *Vaikhari* level is *Madhyamā*, silent speech-in-thought. Less familiar is the deeper level, *Paṣyantī*. “*Paśya*” means “see.” On this fine feeling level, the impulse of thought is sensed as a gestalt, all in a glance, more felt than articulated. Unlike the linear flow of language word after word on the *Madhyamā* level of the mind, *Paṣyantī* is nearly free of space-time (Coward & Goa, 2004 p.38). Beyond *Paṣyantī* lies *Parā*, infinite silence.

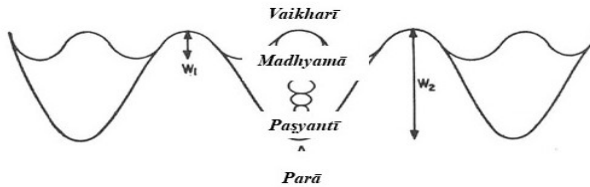


Figure: The Levels of Speech (adapted from Maharishi, 1967 p.470)

Yet, as the *Ṛcho Akśare* verse reveals, *Parā* is also dynamic, a reservoir of creative intelligence. The verse proclaims:

The verses of the Veda exist in the transcendental field,

Which the *devas*, responsible for the whole universe, inhabit.

He who is not open to this field, what can the verses accomplish for him?

Those who know this are established in evenness.

The silence is lively with virtual sound, the *devas*, *mantra*, which, vibrating in different frequencies, structure and govern the universe. This aggregate of all the laws of nature is *Rta-Brahman*, and the verses are composed of this field; one must open conscious awareness to this field to benefit from their content. Implicit in the verse is a call to action, the duty, the *sanātana dharma* to attain knowledge/experience of the Reality so that wholeness may be known and lived.

Sage Bhartṛhari describes the Reality similarly, starting his *Vākyapadīya* by affirming: “Brahman ... whose very essence is the Word, who is the cause of the manifested phonemes, ... from whom the creation of the world proceeds” (1.1). Similarly, for Indian music theory, the universe is nothing but *spanda*, pulsations of the sonic absolute, Brahman: *He* is the *rasa* that the artist strives to convey to give the viewer a taste of Brahman (Ubhyakar in Desai, 2009 disk one, 00:09:30 & 01:56). For some, such a perspective may sound fanciful; however, recent advances in physics tend to validate the Vedic view of the universe.

Though not part of Western language theory, this unitary vision does bear striking resemblance to the way that string theory of quantum physics describes the universe. In a TED talk, *Brian Greene: Making Sense of String Theory*, the physicist explains that the universe according to string theory consists of “a huge number of ... filaments of vibrating energy, vibrating in different frequencies. Different frequencies produce different particles. The different particles are responsible for all the richness in the world around us. And there you see unification” (Feb. 2005, 8:57-14:54). This

seems a close paraphrase of the *Ṛicho Akśare* verse; however, in a later interview Greene (Jan. 30, 2014) excludes consciousness, arguing that the purview of physics is the physical universe alone, which he has nevertheless described as non-physical virtual vibrations. But the world’s most-cited string theorist, John Hagelin (Dec. 8, 2007), argues for a conscious universe, which he describes as a symphony of creative intelligence, and, he says, “That’s what we’re made of.” Hagelin’s assertion echoes the Upaniṣadic Mahāvākyas: “I am the totality” *ahaṃ brahmāsmi*, “Thou art that” *tat tvam asi*, and “All this is that” *sarvaṃ khalv idaṃ brahma*, and “that totality, wholeness, is consciousness” *prajñānaṃ brahma*. Indeed, the Katha Upaniṣad proclaims, “Manifest diversity is unmanifest—there is nothing else” (2.1.11). It bespeaks the imperative to open one’s awareness to this field as the verse proclaims in order to benefit from the total potential of Natural Law available deep within. This will be the source and fulfillment of eloquence. Thus, the aim of Vedānta, to realize Brahman, brings practical side-benefits that are essential to living the full value of life and make the most of speech.

The Hymn of Knowledge, the *Jñāna Sūkta* of the Ṛig Veda (10.71) makes the same point, but helpfully describes just how one’s state of consciousness affects eloquence and success in everyday life. First, the hymn identifies “the best part of Speech” as Brihaspati, the *guru* of the gods (Ṛig Veda8.100.10 in Timalisina, 2009, p. 403), who is associated with Brahman, with wisdom, and with speech (Griswold, 1999 pp. 172 & 174). In richly metaphorical terms, it proclaims that, attuned to “the best part of Speech” (1), which is structured in transcendental consciousness, *Parā*, ... “then



friends know friendship; good fortune is placed upon their word (2). ... They do not exclude him from (the society of) the powerful (in knowledge)” (5). But one who has not duly cultivated “the friendship (of Speech) ... wanders with an illusion that is barren, bearing Speech that is without fruit, without flowers” (5). The hymn explicitly elaborates on the consequences of failing to cultivate the “friendship of Speech”:

He who has abandoned the friend who knows the duty of a friend, in his speech there is not a particle (of sense); what he hears, he hears amiss; for he knows not the path of righteousness (6)

...devoid of wisdom, attaining Speech, having sin-producing (Speech) (9)

Intelligence and understanding, then, depend on having awareness open to the full range of speech/consciousness. Bhartṛhari writes that when awareness is open to the deep level of speech Pashyanti, then the full meaning of words stands revealed (in Coward and Goa, 2004, p. 40) but that when conscious awareness is limited to a surface level of perception, then understanding is limited (p. 41). He explains:

When the absolute [transcendental *Parā*] is awakened, and meanings are manifested through words, then the knowledge and power that is intertwined with consciousness can be clearly perceived and known. Because consciousness is of the nature of word-meaning, the consciousness of any sentient being cannot go beyond or lack word-meaning. (qtd. in Coward, 1989, p. 167)

In other words, “knowledge is structured in consciousness,” as Maharishi Mahesh Yogi summarizes the *Richo Akṣare* verse—a sutra, if you will. Meaning/knowledge is everywhere available; lack of understanding is only due to “ignorance or absent mindedness [that] obscure[s] the meaning inherently present” (Bhartṛhari qtd. in Coward, 1989, p. 167). Thus, what had come to be seen as a monastic pursuit, the attainment of the highest state of knowledge/experience, is proclaimed in the hymns to be a requirement for living the full value of life in society.

But what is “the duty of a friend” which the *Jñāna Sūkta* (6) enjoins? Clearly, it argues that attunement to *Parā* is crucial, yet the hymns are not clear on the means of gaining that desirable state. The *Jñāna Sūkta* seems to suggest that *yajña* plays a role: “(The wise) reached the path of Speech by sacrifice, they found it centred in the *Rishis*” (3), but this line also seems to direct attention beyond the *yajña* to the state of consciousness, the enlightenment of the *ṛṣis* who produced the verses of the rite. Moreover, the *Richo Akṣare* verse states flatly that the verses are ineffectual without the requisite consciousness to enliven them.

Method of attainment may well be tacitly assumed in the hymn due to the long-standing tradition of Yoga as well as the revered role of the guru in Vedic civilization as mentor for the process of enlightenment. Indeed, Yoga has been considered an essential element of practical training and success in a wide variety of fields, not only communication, but also others ranging from dance to medicine (Maharishi, Aug. 12, 1971, p. 195; Gautama in Bhattacharyya, 2010 p. 87; Kothari and Om 00:55:59; Chatterjea, 1996 p. 73). At the same time,

diverse fields of knowledge claim that their practices are designed to lead to *mokṣa*. Bhartṛihari made that case for the study of grammar in the *Vākyapadīya*, and Patañjaliposited that “the grammarian is a Yogi whose inward vision enables him to look within to see the eternal flow of pure consciousness” (in Chaitanya, 1962 p. 53). Gautama’s *Nyāya* method of debate similarly states its ultimate goal as *mokṣa*, just as Bhārata *Nāṭyaśāstra* declares the arts to be a means to know Brahman. In turn, all of these disciplines take Yoga as integral to attaining their ultimate goal and extoll it as the direct and efficient path. Thus, the duty that the *Jñāna Sūtra* (6) enjoins would be the practice of Yoga. If the affordance of Yoga were not assumed, the Sanskrit proverb, “No leaves, no branches without the root,” would dismay rather than inspire.

Steeped in the *guru-śiṣya* tradition, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (Aug. 12, 1971) takes the *Ṛcho Akṣare* verse as a call to learn and practice Yoga, meditation that allows the mind to transcend the surface level of the *mantra* (word) and experience its source because, he says, “This hymn itself very clearly brings to light that the Veda is not knowable on the basis of the words, it is knowable on the basis of the foundation of all words, that basic unmanifest sound, pure being, consciousness. In that material, the words of the Veda are structured” (p. 201). Patañjali described the letters (*akṣara*) of the alphabet of which the hymns are composed as “not mere phonetic types, but glowing sparks of Brahman illuminating the entire sphere of existence” (Chaitanya, 1962 p. 53). Maharishi (1967) explains the significance to human life:

The conscious mind becomes powerful when the deeper levels of the ocean of mind are activated in the process of Transcendental Meditation, which leads the attention from the surface of the conscious mind to the transcendental field of Being. The process of diving within is the way to become established in Yoga. (p. 136)

Therefore, Maharishi (2019) takes Yoga to be a necessary complement to the practice of *yajña*, which the *Jñāna Sūktā* indicates plays an important role in living the full value of life (10.71.3, 10 & 11). However, if *yajña* were effective, wars, disease, and misfortune could not endure; health, prosperity, and harmony would prevail. But, Coward and Goa (2004) point out, that if “the pashyanti level is obscured from ‘sight,’ then the uttering of the mantra will indeed seem to be an empty exercise” (p. 40). Maharishi (in Katz, 2011) posits that the speaker must be established so “the whole speech of his is the vibrant consciousness, vibrant Absolute. ... An unenlightened man [sic], repeating the same thing, does not produce those ... ripples of the full value of knowledge” (vol. 2, p. 245), much as the *Jñāna Sūktā* suggests. Yoga and *yajña* are complementary.

The hymn moreover proclaims that cultivating “friendship” with this field results in “mental apprehensions which are conceived by the heart (of the wise),” in other words, the wise have attained a mature state of intelligence that can “wander at will in the meanings of the Veda” (8). It is precisely such a ripe intellect that is capable of activating the power of the *Mahāvākya*, the final stroke of teaching necessary to catalyze the state of knowledge called Brahman consciousness (Katz,

2011, vol.1 p. 54 & pp. 315-318). In other words, the message that “Thou art that,” results in final realization when the experiencer is ripe to hear it fully; the communication can then bear the intended fruit. Thus, Vedānta and Yoga are complementary (see Maharishi, 1967 p.473).

In the final analysis, the seeds of Vedānta are evident in the *Ṛcho Akṣare* verse and the *Jñāna Sūkta*, which proclaim the practical value of Vedāntaphilosophy and the ultimate fruit of communication. They proclaim the “X factor” for eloquence, the crucial condition for winning all treasures both earthly and divine, a process that entails *mokṣa* and unlocks the *śakti* of all speech, the sacred speech of *yajña* as well as the speech of everyday life in all its manifestations. Maharishi (Jan. 17, 1975) foregrounds the practical value of Vedānta when he explains that, “When one is using speech and one is well connected to the source of speech, which is unbounded, infinite, eternal, all comprehensive, then speech will always be flowering into those values of unboundedness and widest comprehension and greatest focus, which will accomplish the maximum value of communication” (“Enlivening the Full Range of Life” p. 155). His words, in effect, summarize the hymns, which, I have argued, implicitly enjoin the practice of Yoga, of opening the awareness to the full range of the mind—practical Vedānta for living total knowledge and attaining the goals of communication, earthly and divine for immediate practical fulfillment and for realization of the ultimate goal which the Vedic worldview envisions.

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# **Applications of Right Speech in Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning**

Kalpana Mishra (PhD)

## **Abstract**

The focus of this research is more on the applications of Right Speech (RS) in Knowledge Management (KM) and Organizational Learning (OL) in the context of Nepal. The primary motivation of the researcher is to see whether people at the managerial level do use right speech in relation to KM and OL. We would agree the fact that the job of quantifying values into numeric system is not an easy one; therefore, mixed-method has been carried out as a tool so as to interpret the quantitative, qualitative, and the content of Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). The mixed-method is the integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or program of inquiry, and this is what the researcher has done here in the Nepalese organizations that deal with various sectors such as education, finance, human resource development, profit and non-profit etc.

**Keywords:** Right Speech, Knowledge Management, Organizational Learning

## **Introduction**

The researcher, in this study, has studied the applications of Right Speech (RS) on Knowledge Management (KM) and

Organizational Learning (OL) in Nepalese organizations. It was, particularly, based on mixed-method. Mixed-method is defined as ‘the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study’ (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Quantitative information was collected with 220 respondents from different Nepalese organizations. The qualitative sample consists of 10 participants using triangulation method. All participants involved in Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were managerial level staffs, with the knowledge on Buddhism, who were in the capacity to influence their subordinates. A purposeful sampling strategy was used. An interview was conducted with 10 participants who were already included for the quantitative study.

According to Hanh (1999), the Noble Eightfold Path (NEP) is practiced to achieve joy, peace, and insight in the mind. The eightfold practice contains the gist of many thousand discourses scattered in Buddhist scriptures (Bodhi, 1994). Right speech is one component among eight components of NEP. The application of right speech in the domains of KM and OL has been one of the interesting topics of study in the context of Nepal. There are several moments and situations in which people working for the different organizations tend to follow the elements embedded in the NEP, but those who do it realizing its value, and for the good of the organization and that of its staff members, would achieve better results in terms of productivity, excellence, and quality. The fact of knowledge, whether ancient or modern, is a matter of constant sharing and management with flexibility in understanding and complete mindfulness. An organization is expected to grow

up along with the discipline formed in its atmosphere that is more conducive to exchange ideas and experiences amongst its staff members and also with the one at the managerial level. The right speech, despite being simple in its theme, has now been considered to be scientific and practicable to the people of many organizations. But to those taking up the responsibility of managing things in an organization, the RS enhances KM practices and does strengthen OL (Mishra, 2018).

Most of the managers involved in the research task mentioned that they directly or indirectly applied the RS in their organizations. A manager with awareness in Buddhist values and disciplines can better practice them in the respective organization which would eventually be an opportunity for others to learn and grow up psychologically.

### **The Right Speech**

The classical explanation of Right Speech is: i. Speaking truthfully: When something is green, we say it is green, and not purple; ii. Not speaking with a forked tongue; iii. Not speaking cruelly. We don't shout, slander, curse, encourage suffering, or create hatred. Even those who have a good heart and don't want to hurt others sometimes allow toxic words to escape from their lips; iv. Not exaggerating or embellishing (Jack, 1995).

Saying what one means and meaning what one says is only part of right speech. Avoiding harmful or divisive speech is also essential to those who admire Buddhist values (Rahula,

1974). Employing right speech does not justify sharing information about others even if the information is true. If the words hurt someone's feelings, revealing the information to others should not occur. Thoughtful leaders will address any professional shortcomings to the employee directly, not to the employee's peers. Sarcasm is another trait to be avoided under right speech. While the person who makes sarcastic remarks might think him or herself very clever, the cleverness is often at the expense of someone else.

Another part of right speech is to rejoice in the virtues and good qualities of others, while avoiding idle chatter (Ibid). Engaging in wholesome conversation earns leaders a good reputation. No one respects people who spread stories about others. Eventually, the stories will take a very negative tone that reflects badly on the carrier. Many people have lost jobs and careers because they confided in the wrong person.

### **Knowledge Management (KM)**

There is no universally accepted definition of KM. But there are numerous definitions proffered by experts. Put very simply, knowledge management is the conversion of tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge and sharing it within the organization. Putting it more technically and accurately, KM is the process through which organizations generate value from their intellectual and knowledge based assets.

According to Filemon and Uriarte (2008), a complete knowledge management system must contain four elements. These are: (a) knowledge creation and capture, (b) knowledge sharing and enrichment, (c) information storage and retrieval,

and (d) knowledge dissemination. The processes of KM involve knowledge creation, acquisition, refinement, storage, transfer, sharing, and utilization. The KM function in the organization operates these processes, develops methodologies and systems to support them, and motivates people to participate in them. The goals of KM are the leveraging and improvement of the organization's knowledge assets to effectuate better knowledge practices, improved organizational behaviors, better decisions and improved organizational performance (Alexopoulos, 2008).

According to Filius et al. (2000), knowledge management consists knowledge creation, acquisition, application, storage, and dissemination.

### **Organizational Learning (OL)**

Generally organizational challenges call for learning and creativity, there is no consensus around what organizational learning is or how to best facilitate it. Kim (2003) defines OL is simply the sum of what individuals in organizations learn, Levitt, & March (1998) contend that OL is a reflection of the collective ideas, activities, processes, systems, and structures of the organization.

Thomsen and Hoest (2001) see that the learning and OL as two sides of the same coin considering that the OL is the central activity in the learning. However, it is very important to understand the meaning of OL. Garvin (1993) definition of OL relies on the requirements that an organization must satisfy in order to become a learning organization. He defines the learning organization as an organization that is skilled at

creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights.

Although researchers have defined organizational learning in different ways, Easterby-Smith and Lyles (2003) definitions is that organizational learning is a change in the organization that occurs as the organization acquires experience. The question then becomes changes in what. Although researchers have debated whether organizational learning should be defined as a change in cognitions or behavior, that debate has waned (Easterby-Smith & Lyles, 2003). Most researchers would agree with defining organizational learning as a change in the organization's knowledge that occurs as a function of experience (Fiol and Lyles 1985). This knowledge can manifest itself in changes in cognitions or behavior and include both explicit and tacit or difficult-to-articulate components. The knowledge could be embedded in a variety of repositories, including individuals, routines and transactive memory systems. Although we use the term knowledge, our intent is to include both knowledge in the sense of a stock and knowing in the sense of a process (Cook & Brown, 1999).

## **Objectives**

Overall objective of this study was to make an investigation of the applications of RS in KM and OL in the context of Nepalese organizations using mixed methods.

## **Research Questions**

Following are the research questions of this study:

- i. Is Right Speech (RS) applicable in Knowledge Management (KM)?
- ii. Is Right Speech (RS) applicable in Organizational Learning (OL)?
- iii. Do managers believe that they can use RS in (KM) and (OL)?
- iv. Do managers have a role in supporting the applications of RS in their organizations?

First and second questions have been specifically answered by the quantitative study. Data has been collected from the structured set of questionnaire. Descriptive, correlation, and regression analysis have been applied to test the proposed assumptions.

Qualitative component of this study is to answer the third and fourth research questions. Qualitative data has been collected through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Open-Ended Question (OEQ) methods.

## **Methods and Samples**

The population of interest, in this research study, included managerial level employees of various organizations



representing the decision making capability regarding the organizational work.

Hence, the target population included minimum officer level staffs, with the working experience of more than a year, from the organizations having a minimum of ten staff members. An extensive search for potential participant organizations was first conducted by informal talk with employees of the respective or selected organizations. The aim was to gather information about whether they can meet the required criteria to participate in research work or not. An initial pool of organizations fitting the criteria for the target population was selected.

The researcher worked on the quantitative data initially, but for the qualitative section, the researcher mainly put priority on the individual participants with some knowledge and experience on Buddhism. For the purpose of quantitative part 220 employees of different organizations were included. For the purpose of qualitative sample, ten respondents were included as KIIs.

## **Results and Discussion**

The purpose behind using mixed-method is to identify the applications of RS in the Nepalese organizations, based on the quantitative and qualitative findings, in relation to KM and OL. Since the Buddhist teachings are more about the psychological aspects, it is almost hard to completely depend on the quantitative findings for the end results. It is for this reason that the researcher applied the mixed-method,

considering this to be the best one. The mixing of qualitative and quantitative data has offered a better sense for the research outcome.

According to Creswell (2014) mixed methods research requires integration or mixing of quantitative and qualitative data at some point during the research process. Researchers should clearly explain and depict in a visual model where data integration is to occur. In addition, researchers should clarify whether it is methods, data, or findings that are being combined (Punch, 1998).

Table 1 was developed to illustrate findings from the quantitative and qualitative sections of the research. These findings were related to the findings obtained from the questionnaire survey.

### **Descriptive Statistics of Right Speech**

Table 1: Matrix on Qualitative and Descriptive Response Status

Questions	Mean	SD	Response
RS	5.98	0.720	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RS is core of the Buddhist teachings, specially one component of NEP; it is useful because they are based on the Nepalese/eastern culture. They should be brought into practice in day to day living of</li> </ul>

			<p>an individual. Staff members have the chance to be more decent by following NEP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The NEP including RS is partially applied in my organization and it has still to walk a long way ahead.</li> <li>• RS is an effective tool to apply in an organization because it helps make a person less violent while practicing his/her power and authority.</li> </ul>
KM	5.18	0.94	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intensive and frequent meetings, discussions, sharing, exchange of ideas, receiving feedback, comments, timely corrections, involvement of all stakeholders are practiced in my organization. We have the culture of getting things done in a team.</li> <li>• Indeed, we are implementing various strategies for KM like staff meetings, group counseling for staffs and documentation of the activities</li> </ul>

			<p>accomplished, planned or scheduled.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One of the best things I always appreciate of my organization is that everyone here sit together and share their individual experiences which is an opportunity for everyone to get acquainted with something new and different kind of learning.</li> </ul>
OL	5.04	1.06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizational learning occurs through team work, brainstorm, and trustworthiness among the human resources at all levels.</li> <li>• I strongly categorize my institution as a learning organization because employees get ample space for learning by means of tea-talk, workshop, meetings, seminars etc</li> <li>• I don't get confused to rate my institution as a learning organization where all the staff members sit together in order to discuss and share important issues and challenges in order to</li> </ul>

			find a better way forward. Everyone has an opportunity of sharing problem of any kind during the time the duty is assigned.
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*Source: Mishra, K. (2018)*

Table 2 presents the findings from correlation and regression between study variables and comments from the Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) that correspond to those questions. The quantitative result is sufficiently supported by the qualitative responses received through KIIs.

**Table 2: Qualitative and Quantitative Response Status**

	Correlation and regression with RS	Response
KM	$r = 0.296$ $\beta = .387, p < .000$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RS helps to manage knowledge and also encourages for learning opportunity in the organizations.</li> <li>• The RS, when applied by managerial level employees, is really helpful in KM and OL, but the leaders need to</li> </ul>

		<p>act as a role model, for the others to follow them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RS is useful everywhere and for everybody, for instance, if people fail practice right speech the organization eventually tends to shrink.</li> </ul>
OL	$r = 0.236$ $\beta = .345, p < .001$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The RS properly guides not only in KM and OL, but also to be a true human being.</li> <li>• When we help people cultivate values and morality, they might learn more quickly and effectively.</li> <li>• Although, KM and OL have not been maturely established on the background of NEP, it is deemed an important driving force to achieve a success in the present day globalization.</li> <li>• Learning requires cooperation among the staff members and it grows along</li> </ul>

		with the use of RS which is why I am happy.
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*Source: Mishra, K. (2018)*

Significant at 0.000 level (2 tailed).

## Conclusion

KM and OL have been covered in the existing literature, but to date, no research has been linked with NEP and its components for the enhancement of KM and OL, and the interactions between these concepts have been taken for granted. As of now, good deal of researches has been conducted on the external aspects relating with KM and OL, but not the internal and psychological ones; for example, right views, right thinking, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. Considering this to be a central concern, the researcher has tried to find out the applications of RS in the domains of KM and OL in Nepalese organizations, and also the attitudes and beliefs of employees at managerial level, for the applications of such teachings in their institutions.

RS is not only for monks and nuns, but also for the people working in different organizations working for the good of the society. Right speech leads towards positive inquiry, positive action, positive learning, love, peace, and eventually brings change in the organizations as well as employees working in the organizations. Moreover, all these positive actions that replaces the hatred, disharmony and the tendency to harm

others, and will facilitate for the enhancement and applications of KM and OL in the organization.

Literature reviews as well as the research findings show that RS has significant contribution in each and every walk of life including several different organizations. Specially, managerial level employees, being responsible for the organizational activities, can support their subordinates to follow the NEP and its components in their organizations.

On summing up the responses provided by the research participants it was learned that almost all the managers agreed the fact that RS is crucial factor to lead the organizations to the right directions as they have the power to influence, use creativity, provide decisions etc.

Furthermore, from the discussions in previous section, following conclusions are drawn on:

- Right Speech refers to abstaining from harsh speech, slander, lying, and idle speech or gossip. It has a mean value of 5.98 that means, respondents do “agree” with this variable.
- The 7-point Likert scale was used with the respondents indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statements they were presented. KM practices have a composite mean of 5.18.
- OL practices in Nepalese organizations generally show an average level of status. OL have mean values 5.04. It indicates that there are OL practices, but needs to be enhanced more.



- The correlation results between RS and KM is ( $r = 0.296^{**}$ ); Such a result of correlation analysis is confirmed by the regression analysis conducted which showed RS ( $\beta = 0.387$ ,  $P < 0.000$ ), implying 38.7 percent of the change in KM might be accounted by RS.
- RS showed low but positive significant correlation with OL. Finding of correlation is ( $r = 0.236^{**}$ ); the simple regression analysis results was significant for RS ( $\beta = 0.345$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). Implying 34.5 percent of the change in OL might be accounted by RS.
- The implication of such a finding is that the institutions which have applied RS are more likely to experience improved KM and OL. This finding supports the proposition that RS has a significant influence on KM and OL. It is supported by the results of the Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) also.

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# **Media Autonomy in Cross-road in Post-Conflict Democracy of Nepal**

Sudarshan Prasad Dahal

## **Abstract**

Nepali media intend towards neutral projections of their institutional stance covering politics in a balanced way despite a long practiced political parallelism in the country. The media also project both dark and bright sides of Nepalese politics for strengthening democracy in post-conflict period of Nepal. This study has examined editorial contents covered by two leading Nepali newspapers: The Kathmandu Post daily and Nepali Times weekly, both published in English language.

The focus of this research has been to examine the editorials appeared during election campaign of Constitution Assembly, 2008. The study has chosen two dominant framing concepts: thematic vs. episodic framing, in order to explore the phenomenon of media autonomy in the Nepalese context. The findings show a mixed result where the media appear more likely to an instrumentalized phenomenon while projecting government/political parties' policies and decisions. Their issues and activities were framed thematically putting public issues in general context, and also detracting political issues from negative stereotyping in their institutional viewpoints. At the same time, media portray the issues and activities focusing on particular events and occurrences while framing political parties/governments and their leaders with negative attributes of conflict and personalization frame. It can be

argued that some external forces such as increasing dispute among political actors and increasing volume of impunity against journalism could be the consequences of media's less likely instrumentalized appearance to political forces.

**Keywords:** democracy, editorials, media autonomy, media framing, political parallelism, post-conflict Nepal.

## Introduction

Media institutions support political parties to achieve organizational rights like right to publication and freedom of expression for institutional development. Political parties on the other hand, intend to take support of media for political gain particularly to play democratic exercises deliberating political messages without any barrier for gaining public support. Hence, covering political news in the media means it provides political information to the public and vis-à-vis projects Newspapers' own rights to the institutional autonomy (Schudson, 1995) where media projects detached position to the political activities.

Assessing media autonomy involves two dominant logical tools, i.e. media logic and political logic (Altheide & Snow, 1979). Media logic seeks newsworthiness of the information for the benefit of the institution and the public, while logic of politics intends to cover news/views as per interest of the political parties/leaders. Such media practice projects their responsibility towards either political parties/governments or the public and also project the level of independent of media institutions (Stromback, 2008). The media coverage with

critical perspective towards the events and issues of the politics is less likely to project dependent position of the media. Similarly, the news/views that frame politics without assessing, evaluating and exploring facts and figure, reveals more likely to perform detached position from the political parties and the leaders (Stromback, 2008).

In this background, the history of media and politics across the globe show that almost every political party whether they were in advanced or in new democracy, have their own media institutions for dissemination purpose of political information (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Media had contributed to establish democracy and in return, gained political and legal autonomy. Consequently, the circumstances changed from political parallel institution towards politically detached institution (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2002). Today, media houses are not only the instruments of political parties; they perform their autonomy framing politics in line with the logic of media to achieve organizational benefit (Stromback, 2008). Since 2008, the political scenario of Nepal also shifted from authoritarian to republic state. In such context, how Nepali media are performing their responsibility to political parties/leaders in the republic systems is the crucial but unexplored research area. To reduce the gaps, the aim of this study is to assess the role played by Nepali media for strengthening democracy in the country. Hence, how the media in Nepal are practicing their institutional autonomy while covering politics is the research question.

### **Autonomy and media coverage**

Media autonomy, the concept, intends to describe the situation of media organization that relates to know the

question of how media utilizes the publication rights while projecting news in a democratic society. Media autonomy encourages them to cover politics with the notion of media logic where media evaluates news value of political issues or actors considering benefit of the media (Altheide & Snow, 1979). The political logic, on the other hand, influence journalists giving priority to the political parties/governments evaluating news value in line with political support (Stromback, 2008). Political parties, government and the leaders who are in power, intend to control media instrumentalizing its powers to reach out among the public supplementing positive coverage of their issues and events (Hallin & Mancini, 2004).

There seems a kind of cohesive tendency that shows when the level of autonomy in the media houses decreases, the level of tight row of political parties increases (Schudson, 1995). Losing media autonomy corresponds with the increasing news value of political issues or actors giving benefit to the political parties/leaders (Stromback, 2008).

Researches show that the changing political and legal system toward liberal democracy of a country reveals a high level of media autonomy and also serves the interests of organization for building 'public trust' (Schudson, 1995). Scholars found that media lost their political legacy in the highly advanced democratic countries (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). In newly established democracy in the European countries, Gunther and Mughan (2000) observed that the independent news media were aligned against the authoritarian regimes by fostering political pluralism. News media of these countries were presenting diverse opinion and perspectives rather than

the statement made by the particular political parties or power holders (Gunther & Mughan, 2000).

In a democratic society, non-instrumentalized media can perform social functions playing the roles of civic forum, watchdog and mobilizing agent (Norris, 2000). Media's civic forum focus serious and extended political coverage for all voices in society; as a watchdog they can frame politics checking abuses of civil and political liberties; and, as a mobilizing agent, the media encourage public to learn, stimulate their interest, and encourage public to participate in political affairs (Norris, 2000).

### **Framing theory**

Framing is becoming a significant theory to study the relationship between media and politics (Bryant & Miron, 2004). Framing involves 'selecting and highlighting some facts of events and issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution' (Entman, 2004, p. 5). Hence, framing is the way of presenting texts, images or issues in journalists' interpretation and evaluation projecting their autonomy in which the media can influence how people think about that event or issues (Iyengar & McGrady, 2006). It assists to examine how media are presenting their autonomy while covering political issues (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) describes that to frame politics is to select some aspects of a perceived reality of political issues and activities and make them more salient in



communicating text in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, moral evaluation or treatment recommendation for the item described.

There are several types of framing in use for analyzing media content, for instance, thematic vs. episodic news frame (Iyengar & McGrady, 2006); horse race vs. strategy game frame (Patterson, 1993); and issue frame vs. strategy frame (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997). These framing types can be categorized according to response value of news content to politicians and the public as responsible and less responsible framing dimensions (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). This notion is similar to Iyengar's (1991) arguments that media coverage of political issues comes into two distinct genera of presentation corresponding to thematic and episodic news frames. Iyengar (1991) suggests the following operational attributes while analyzing framing. Accordingly, the thematic news frame response a political issue in a general context and usually takes the form of in-depth coverage emphasizing context and continuity with detracting from negative stereotyping. On the contrary, the episodic frames, depicts political issues in terms of individual instances, focus on describing single events or occurrences and tended to involve the use of negative stereotypes (Iyengar, 1991). The thematic framing attributes responsibility for issues to political parties, government and society and the episodic frames, on the other hand, attribute responsibility not to societal or political forces, but to the actions of particular individuals or groups (Iyengar & McGrady, 2006). In this process, Iyengar and McGrady (2006) argue that the episodic frames for political news activate cynical responses to politicians, politics, and governance and projects independent situation from politics.

Besides two thematic and episodic framing, numerous other framing types can be described as conflict frames and personalization frames (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). It can be assumed that news that relate to conflicting issues between individuals, groups, institutions, regions or nations to capture the audience's attentions; for instance, issue of violence, kidnapping, fighting, threatening and creating terror, can be categorized in the conflict frame (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Personalization frames include the portraying political leaders as active subjects in the news stories, for game perspective, strategies and scandals (Iyengar & McGrady, 2006). Both conflict frames and personalization frames can be studied with the coverage pattern of the news that projects media logic rather than the political logic (Stromback, 2008).

Framing is inescapable and can be done by the media crafting a message whether it is in news format or editorial according to institutional goal (Rees, 2001). Hence, media unavoidably selects and presents media texts either in political logic, or, in media logic, which make it possible to analyzing editorial according to framing framework in Nepali context.

### **Editorials in Nepali media**

Unlike news, for which the basic principle is to tell facts as they are; the editorial is the collective opinion of the newspaper (McQuail, 2003). Moreover, newspaper editorials are the media's own views and stands on relevant topics or issues, their positions on particular policy options, their opinions about certain events or actors and arguments in support of these (van Dijk, 1992). Due to the distinctive

characteristics between news and editorials; Nepali media, like other news media in democratic countries, also present their organizational opinion through the editorials as regular editions (Kharel, 2010).

Structurally, editorials can be observed into three schematic categories (van Dijk, 1992). They define the situation and give a summary of the news event. They present and evaluate the situation - especially of actions and actors. They advance pragmatic conclusions in the form of expectations, recommendations, advice, and warnings. Thus, editorials not only represent the opinion of the particular media organization; they present news events, evaluate the situation and conclude with the opinion (van Dijk, 1992). It can be assumed that newspaper's editorials in Nepali media also present the news events, evaluate the contemporary situation, and comment the events or issues on behalf of the media organizations.

### **Media and political landscape of Nepal**

While talking about the development of media and politics of Nepal, there is a parallel consequence between the two entities. During *Rana's* period (1854-1951), there was only one print media 'Gorkhapatra' (1901). It was a state-owned newspaper under the control of the autocratic *Rana* family regime. Function of media in this half century period (1901-1951) was basically a medium of dissemination of government notices and information (Malla, 1983).

The revolutionary movement of 1951 against *Rana* regime changed the country's political setting from autocratic to democratic system and established King with absolute power in the throne (Thapaliyal, 2006). With the imitation of the very first electronic media, Radio Nepal started to air from 1951 consequently opening media space for private print medium under new found system of governance (Malla, 1983). Some however, observed differently as Savada (1993) marked the tense relationship of media with governments in this open democratic political system; journalists performed a responsible societal role in the first time in Nepali society (Ramprasad & Kelly, 2003).

Unfortunately, the new found democracy could not last long and peoples' political rights was forcefully ended in 1960, when the King Mahendra terminated democratic government and imposed authoritarian non-party *Panchayat system*. However, the *Panchayat system* was defined as the preliminary democratic form of government where a pyramid system of local bodies actively worked. Savada (1993) noted the *Panchayat era* restricted citizen's political freedom and the press freedom. Many newspapers were shut down in this authoritarian political system (Ramprasad & Kelly, 2003). Media were obliged to either support the systems or close the operation of the production. Journalists' self-censorship tool was to escape the financial and personal consequences of defiance including denial of state subsidies and newsprint quotas as well as imposition of jail terms (Savada, 1993).

After the referendum in 1980, some scholars argue that media's restriction gradually replaced with liberal press and publications related legal provision that removed most of the

past restriction on the press (Pokhrel & Koirala, 1995; Ramprasad & Kelly, 2003). However, journalist's partisan alignment was divided into *pro-Panchayat* and the *anti-Panchayat system*; the number of newspapers grew dramatically. In the same period nations first ever television broadcast, a state-owned national television, Nepal Television was established in 1985. In such partly press-free environment, pro-democratic media organizations supported the opposition's struggle for multi-party democracy and gave voice to its leadership (Paudyal, 1995).

People's successive democratic movement against *Panchayat system* established multi-party democratic systems in 1990. Under the constitutional monarchy, people were free to elect their representatives for the parliament. Constitution of Nepal 1990 guaranteed press freedom restricting the cancellation of newspaper registrations, censorship and newspaper closures. For the first time after 1990, National Communication Policy was formulated in 1992 and promoted to establish private print and broadcast media (Aditya, 1996).

### **Constitution Assembly Election 2008**

Agenda of Constitution Assembly was one of the major demands of every political movement of Nepal since 1950 when the country for the first-time cherished democracy. Unfortunately, the political analysts claimed that the demand of Constitution Assembly was not fulfilled due to active monarchy in the country. People's second political movement (2006) opened a platform for dialogue between align of seven political parties<sup>1</sup> and the rebel Maoist for peace deal, as a

result, these parties signed a 12-point agreement that later culminated into signing of a Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA)<sup>ii</sup> on 21 November 2006 taking the country into the path of sustainable peace. This included scheduling for CA election for writing a new constitution. The Maoists included Interim Parliament suspended the monarchy and announced the country as a republic state in 2006.

The Constituent Assembly is the body of representatives authorized by the Interim Constitution 2007 to draft a new Constitution for Nepal. The purpose of CA election was to restructure the nation according to the aspirations of the People's Movement-II (2006). Hachhethu (2007) points out the aspirations, among others were as to reach a decision on the future of monarchy, to ensure democratic rule of law, to ensure proportional representation in all the bodies of state, to institutionalize the people's sovereignty and to create an atmosphere for all the citizens to exercise equal rights (Hachhethu, 2007). The Interim Constitution legislates for the creation of a 601 member Constituent Assembly<sup>iii</sup>, with 575 of these members being directly elected (335 through Proportional Representation and 240 through First-Past-the-Post) and 26 being appointed by the Cabinet after the election.

### **A glimpse of Nepali media**

Media systems of Nepal marked dual model; newly established private owned commercial media and a century old state-owned public service media. State possesses print as well as broadcasting media, for instance, Gorkhapatra Corporation (1901) published several newspapers including

Gorkhapatra national vernacular daily and the Rising Nepal in English medium. Nepal Television and Radio Nepal broadcast news with wider reach in the country.

Despite strong state-owned media system in Nepal, a great number of private owned media came in front after 1990, when the Constitution has guaranteed right to publication for the first time in the country. Press Council Nepal reports that there were fewer than 300 newspapers including two government-owned newspapers during 1990s beginning. But, by April 2008, more than 600 newspapers and periodicals were publishing regularly along with 136 radio stations and of which 5 percent have satellite uplink. Similarly, seven private television stations were operating in the country.

Such increasing numbers of media institutions not only indicate their concentration for attracting private investor rather shows wider reach of media programs disseminating political information across the country. Several leading media institution's daily editions were publishing from different places within the country and abroad. For instance, the Kantipur Publications House is publishing same news edition from several urban areas like Kathmandu, Biratnagar, Bharatpur and Pokhara inside country; and abroad, from the Gulf country - Qatar. Other media houses like the Kamana Prakashan Samuha, the AAPCA Group, and the Himalmedia were publishing several newspapers within the country.

However, there exist geographical and literacy barrier; radio, television and newspapers are the main communication mainstream medium to reach into the mass public for political parties and the government. It was obvious that the practice of journalists on political communication was limited; media

played a significant role in the Parliamentary elections of 1991, 1994 and 1999 in multi-party democracy (Kharel, 2010). There was a common practice even in public radio and television for political parties who got free space and time during election campaigns.

### **Research question and hypothesis**

Reviewing the available literature in the field, the present research intends to explore the relationship between politics and media in Nepali context. Hence, the research question is:

- To what extent private media of Nepal are instrumentalized while covering politics in their editorials in post-conflict period of Nepal?

Prior researches on news media framing effect suggest that the media frame has thematically enabled the viewers being responsible to the issues of political parties, government and society. The viewers attribute responsibility not to societal or political forces, but to the actions of particular individuals or groups in episodic framing (Iyengar, 1991). In Nepali context, the news media are performing a critical stance on projecting politically detached position, enabling viewers' responsibility not to political parties and the governments despite mission-oriented journalism culture. Hence, we can assume that the editorial contents, that intend to show their independent position, would like to make the political issues salient attributing responsibility not to the political parties and the leaders. Thus, the first hypothesis is:



*Hypothesis 1:* the editorials related to CA election 2008 will be dealing more in number with episodic rather than thematic framing of the issues of the political parties/leaders.

Since the King's takeover from October 2002 and later on the royal coup of February 2005, the issue of monarchy was very controversial (Thapaliyal, 2006). These events opened up a new political equation in Nepal. In this new power equation, the democratic parties and the Maoist came together against the monarchy. The result was the restoration of House of Representatives and stripped the monarchy of all powers and announced the country as a republic state (Hachhethu, 2007). Hence, we can assume that the contents which support to monarchy or appear with positive consequences of the King's activities that will demolish the power of the political parties and the leaders who had taken decisions earlier to establish republic state. Such media projection can also be interpreted as an independent media not being responsible towards political parties and the governments. Thus, the second hypothesis is:

*Hypothesis 2:* There will be more positive than negative frame description of monarchy in the editorials.

The Constitution Assembly was the first election in free press environment after a decade long Civil-War (1996-2006) when 17 thousand Nepalese people including 24 journalists were killed (Freedom House, 2007). After the election announcement, however, peace deal was on the process; there were several pressure groups, for instance, Tarai based regional political parties<sup>iv</sup> were protesting against

government, demanding separate federal state, and during their movements, 21 people including 2 journalists were killed (CS Centre, 2009)<sup>v</sup>. Furthermore, it is a common trend in Nepali press that there is a heavy number of content coverage of conflicting issues in the political news (Lloyd & Howard, 2005). Conflict cases can be found between cadres of political parties, individuals, social groups, and securities personals in local, regional and national level. Obviously, election related conflicting issues such as blocking leaders' campaign activities, and threatening opposition's supporters were the common practices during election of Nepal (Kumar, 2010). In CA election 2008, there were several casualties such as one CPN-UML candidate of Banke District was killed in the campaign<sup>vi</sup>. Despite such incidents, we can assumed that it is a responsibility of the press that conflicting issues, though was coverage in news reporting, such issues should not be make salient in editorials in politically dependent organization. Because political leaders who were committed to democracy and participating to CA election in order to establish peace, in such a situation referring to them with conflicting issue in editorial content might create cynicism to public towards political parties and the politicians (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997). Thus, observing such effect of media content, it can be assumed that editorials content, which is opinion section of the media organizations, may give more importance to conflict frame referring to the political leaders, while projecting their organizational autonomy. Thus, the third hypothesis is:

*Hypothesis 3:* There will be more number of coverage related to conflict framing in reference to political leaders in the editorials.

## Methods

This study used content analysis as methods for analyzing the hypothesis. The same approach was applied in for getting answer to the research question. In this context, the editorials were selected on the basis of quality, circulation, language and availability of the newspapers. Those newspapers which were available on the online version with coverage of Constitution Assembly Election of 2008 related editorials, was availability criteria. For newspapers quality and the circulation; the paper selection criteria followed the annual report of Press Council of Nepal, which is an authorized government's institution that evaluates media's quality and circulation. For this criterion, two independent leading private media houses: the Kantipur Publications, Pvt. Ltd.<sup>vii</sup> and the Himalmedia Pvt. Ltd.<sup>viii</sup> were selected. It was assumed that these media houses may represent other media houses of Nepal because of their leading roles for other media organization to build up media agenda in the country.

According to the language criteria, English medium was chosen because it was available and easy to identify the key words of framing concept. There were hardly any researches have been conducted before based on the framing concept in Nepali media. On these criteria two newspapers from each media houses were selected: the 'Kathmandu Post' daily and the 'Nepali Times' weekly. The Kathmandu Post is a sub-publication of the leading private media house the Kantipur Publication, which has a television channel: Kantipur TV, radio: Kantipur FM, and the highest circular national vernacular: the Kantipur Daily, weeklies and fortnights. The Nepali Times is another English language weekly news

magazine of the Himalmedia, which is one of the reputed publication houses in Nepal. The circulation of the weekly can be observed with a sizable number among elite readers in the country and abroad in South Asia. The publication house also published other newspapers like online daily: himalkhabar.com, an online vernacular; Himal, a fortnightly magazine in Nepali language; and the Wave, the monthly magazine for youth in English language.

Both newspapers - the Kathmandu Post and the Nepali Times - were available on the Internet in electronic version. According to the circulation record of the Press Council of Nepal (2007)<sup>ix</sup>, both newspapers possess 'A' category, which means the newspapers have wider reach and reputation in the country. Ideologically partisan alignment cannot be observed directly in these media houses but the content of both newspapers can be examined with tilting towards pro-democratic alignments. It is obvious that the owners and the journalists of these media houses were taking part in the democratic movements even in 2006 political move making align with the political parties.

Similarly, newspapers editorials, by their content and placement presentation variations (van Dijk, 1992), can be expected to express entire media organizational views, whether the content is daily published or weekly, because the views is important rather than the number of frequencies of the news and the published editions.

Editorials were selected from a seven-week time period from Feb 21 to April 10, 2008. The date was selected because this was the high time when Election Commission of Nepal had officially announced CA election campaign period. Hence,

the purpose of the study was to analyze editorials which published during election to identify the relationship between politics and the media.

In terms of the article's selection, editorials that contained with one of the following references as the 'CA election' or to 'CA polls' or 'Election Commission of Nepal' were key words that were included for the study. It was assumed that election related all editorials can be covered with these key words. According to the criteria, 22 editorials were selected out of 49: seven editorials from the Nepali Times magazine and 15 from the Kathmandu Post. The column of editorials was easily founded in each newspaper's homepage, where hyperlink assisted to follow the concerned full text pages.

## **Coding**

The coding sheet included with the number of framing variables mentioned above, following the several steps. First, it was coded for title of the newspaper, exact date of publication, and title of editorials. Next, editorial's each paragraph was coded on the basis of presence and absence of framing identification. To identify the frames, for instance, Cappella and Jamieson (1997) mentioned that 'it is especially evident in news media content which is replete with metaphors, catchphrases, and symbolic devices that provide a shorthand way suggesting the underlying storyline' (p.49). Then, a number of predefined framing variables were included in order to capture the framing of editorials. Two of these variables – thematic framing and episodic framing –

were coded on a dominant frame basis, as explained earlier. The unit of analysis was each paragraph of editorials.

With regards to the conflict framing, first, editorial's each paragraph was chosen with presence and absence of political parties and the political leaders. Second, it was coded for the 'conflict framing' based on predefined propositional attributes on the editorials referring to political parties and the leaders whether the content was conflict framing or other framing, since it is possible to have presence of political parties and the leaders without conflict framing. The editorial's analysis unit was referential unit following Krippendorff's (1980) and Holsti's (1969) approach of content analysis of each paragraph (i.e. introduction, body and conclusion). The referential unit 'involves some physical or temporal unit (e.g., event, people, objects, etc.) referred or alluded to within content that measure the meaning attached to a particular person, event or issue' (Riffe et al., 1998).

In regards to personalization framing of the King; first, the referential content of king or monarchy was chosen in the framing paragraph of the editorials. Second, it was coded the referential unit with three variables whether the theme of content refer to the King possesses with positive attributes (any event or consequence which support to king's rule or his name and fame - in Nepali society the King was understood as a 'symbol of unity', 'cultural identity' and 'the absolute power holder'), negative attributes (any incidents, or consequences which do not support rather criticize the King's rule or name and fame), or neutral attributes (the content which do not clearly state neither positive nor negative). The analysis unit was a referential naming text of the King or

monarchy that emphasized the things or people being discussed.

Because of small number of editorials pieces and the author has involved in all steps of the coding process no reliability test was conducted.

## Findings

The *first hypothesis* of this study predicted that the editorials relate to CA election 2008 would be dealing more in number with episodic rather than thematic framing. It was assumed that instrumentalized media would give more preference to episodic framing coding political issues in order to social responsibility frame in their editorial content. The findings clearly show that the English medium Nepali newspapers' editorials content portrays the politics with thematic framing that accounted 54% and episodic framing 46%. Hence, the first hypothesis which predicted more coverage to episodic framing is not supported (see Table 1).

Table 1: Coverage of thematic framing and episodic framing in editorials of English medium Nepali newspapers

Description	Number of framing*	In total Percentage**
	(n = 107)	(n=22 items)
Thematic framing	57	54%
Episodic framing	49	46%

- \* Number of framing is accounted with each paragraph of the editorials
- \*\* Percentage is calculated from 107 number of framing item as a 100% of 22 editorials.

*Source:* The Kathmandu Post and the Nepali Times; editorials coverage of CA election; date of publication: February 21 to April 10, 2008.

*The second hypothesis* predicted that there would be more negative than positive personalization frame of monarchy in the editorials. Regarding kings or monarchy reference, the news media of Nepal should have to be portrayed king's negative image for positive treatment with the political parties because seven political parties and the rebellion, the Maoist; aligned government had suspended the King and announced the country as a republic state through Interim Constitution 2007. In such a case monarchy's positive description might not be supporting to political leaders, who were committed to democracy and decided according to public's interest of republic state and also depicted media's autonomy projecting no responsibility to political parties and the leaders. The findings show that the Nepali media do not support to monarchy. The negative portrayed of the King is accounted 84% and the neutral description is only 16%. No positive description about the monarchy was found in the editorials. Hence, the second hypothesis is also not supported. (See Table 2)



Table 2: Personalization framing of monarchy in English medium Nepali newspaper's editorials coverage:

Description	Personalized framing of monarchy* total framing	
**		
of monarchy	(n = 25/in percent)	(n = 107)
Positive	-	-
Negative	21(84%)	21%
Neutral	4 (16%)	4%

\* Each naming text of king or monarchy is included as a separate item of analysis

\*\* Percentage is calculated from 107 numbers of items as 100%.

*Source:* The Kathmandu Post and the Nepali Times; editorials coverage of CA election; date of publication: February 21 to April 10, 2008.

*The third hypothesis* predicted that there would be more conflict framing in reference to political parties/leaders in the editorials. Prior research shows that independent media give more importance to news values as per media logic rather than the political logic (Stromback, 2008). It was assumed that the political parties' particularly the leaders with negative attributes like conflicting issues such as kidnapping, blocking, killing and fighting, correspondence with more news value. While projecting the relationship between media and politics, the political leaders' involvement in conflicting cases might

be spread cynicism to the public towards political parties and the leaders themselves. The findings support the hypothesis. Presence of conflict framing in reference to political parties and the leaders have more in number that accounted 67% followed by 33% with absence of conflict framing. However, the item of conflict framing that accounted 29% out of total number of 107 framing of editorials; the presence item of conflict framing in reference to political parties and the leaders was extremely high that accounted two-third coverage in the editorials. Thus, the third hypothesis is positive. (See Table 3)

Table 3: Presence and absence of conflict framing with reference to political parties and political leaders in editorials of English medium Nepali newspapers

Description	Conflict framing*	In total conflict framing
(%)**	(n = 48)	(n = 107)
(In reference to political parties and leaders)		
Presence of Conflict framing	32 (67%)	30%
Absence of Conflict framing	16 (33%)	15%

\* The number of item is included the each paragraph of naming item of political leaders and the political parties

\*\* The percentage is calculated from 107 paragraphs item as a 100 percent from 22 editorials.

*Source:* The Kathmandu Post and the Nepali Times; editorials coverage of CA election; date of publication: February 21 to April 10, 2008.

## **Discussions**

This study was focused on to investigate the editorials of two Nepali-English medium newspapers i.e. the Kathmandu Post daily and the Nepali Times weekly during CA Election 2008. The main purpose of this investigation was to know how the media of Nepal frame politics in order to acknowledge their organizational autonomy. The content was investigated between episodic and thematic frame; issues of monarchy whether the monarchy is depicted in positive, negative or neutral frame; and the conflict frame where political parties and the leaders whether refer to conflict issues or non-conflict issues. The results presented above clearly show the mix results.

The significant presence of thematic framing in newspaper's editorials, reveal a clear picture that Nepali media give more priority to political information for public issues and place it in the form of in-depth coverage. Editorials content concentrate on the context with continuity in volume giving priority to public issues. However, in advanced democracy media are depicting issues in terms of individual instances, focusing single events or occurrences tending to involve the use of negative stereotypes (Iyengar & McGrady, 2006; Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Patterson, 1993). Nepali media support political parties and leaders giving more space

making salient political issues and agenda in line with political logic in the opinion pages like editorials in the post-conflict period of Nepal.

However, the monarchy has witnessed centuries long cultural tie up with Nepalese society; the media of Nepal support the governments/parties' decisions that had seized king's power and announced the nation as a republic state. Actually, kingship was the 'symbol of unity', and 'symbol of culture' before the announcement of republic state, but, the King's active power was also depicted as 'Black Law' in Nepalese democratic history (Hachhethu, 2007), and media portrayed such anti-democratic ruler with negative attributions. It indicates that there is no place for anti-democratic forces whether they possessed glorious history or respected in all sector of society.

However, the kingship or monarchy was not the case of Hungary or Poland; media practice during democratization process of these countries had also depicted former anti-democratic leaders with the negative attributes (Gunther & Mughan, 2000). Hence, it might be argued that Nepali media more likely to project supportive role to the political move rather than promoting so called cultural symbol like monarchy.

However, media of Eastern European countries such as Spain, Portugal and Greece, supported political leaders in the democratization process of the country (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Interestingly, in Nepalese context, media organizations do not support to political parties and their leaders remaining biased on their misdeeds. There is a limit space for positive description about political parties specially their leaders who

involved in conflicting issues. Media portray the leaders with the negative consequences even they were committed to democracy and peace.

Nepali media have covered the activities of political actors who were, in different aspects, involved in violating, threatening, misbehaving, kidnapping and demonstrating of weapons during the election time. The actors have themselves mentioned their personal involvement in the misdeeds without a feeling of fear and bias on the news. Such personalization practice of individual candidate with conflicting issues is relevant in neutral professionalism (Mughan, 2000). Due to high news value journalists often intend to attach to conflicts with the political leaders as per media logic (Stromback, 2008; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). However, Iyengar (1991) has a differing argument; he mentions that 'during the heat of crisis, journalists tend to cover the story exactly as it is given to them' (Iyengar, 1991, p. 87). The above statement is common during the War reporting.

## **Conclusions**

Nepal has been moving ahead after a decade long conflict. In such post-conflict context, covering the activities of political parties and their conflicting issues needs to be observed in the media. However, it is noted that Nepali private owned news media are practicing institutional autonomy detaching themselves from the political parties and their actors in the democratization process of the country. In such case, the findings of present study open the door for further

investigation of the news media practice towards neutral professionalism. The author, therefore, highly recommends for further investigation to explore the news media practices towards neutral professionalism in the Nepalese context.

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<sup>i</sup> Seven political parties are: Nepali Congress (NC), Nepal Communist Party -Unified Marxist and Leninists (CPN-UML), Nepali Congress Democrats (NC-D), Nepal Workers and Peasants' Party (NWPP), Janamorchha Nepal (JN), Nepal Sadbhawana Party (Anandidevi) (NSP-A), and Nepal Communist Party – Marxist and Leninist (NCP-ML).

<sup>ii</sup> [http://www.peace.gov.np/admin/doc/CPA\\_eng-ver-corrected.pdf](http://www.peace.gov.np/admin/doc/CPA_eng-ver-corrected.pdf), retrieved on 30 May, 2009.

<sup>iii</sup> [http://www.undp.org.np/constitutionbuilding/constitutionnepal/constitutionfile/Interim\\_Constitution\\_bilingual.pdf](http://www.undp.org.np/constitutionbuilding/constitutionnepal/constitutionfile/Interim_Constitution_bilingual.pdf), Nepali version is original and English version is translated copy from United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) Constitution Building Programme, retrieved 30 May 2009.

<sup>iv</sup> The regional political parties were Madheshi Janadhikar Forum (MJF), Nepal Sadhhabana Party (Aanandidevi) (NSP-A), Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (Goit) (JTMM-G), and Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (Jwala Singh) (JTMM-JS) and Terai Madheshi Loktantra Party (TMLP).

<sup>v</sup> Conflict Study Center is an independent non government organization of Nepal. Online retrieved [http://www.cscenter.org.np/uploads/book/110623070128\\_War%20and%20Human%0Rights.pdf](http://www.cscenter.org.np/uploads/book/110623070128_War%20and%20Human%0Rights.pdf)

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<sup>vi</sup> <http://www.nepalelectionportal.org/EN/news/details.php?id=604>, online retrieved from Election Commission Portal of Nepal on 30 May 2009.

<sup>vii</sup> <http://www.kantipuronline.com/aboutus.php>, online retrieved on 30 May 2009.

<sup>viii</sup> [http://www.himalmedia.com/about\\_us.html](http://www.himalmedia.com/about_us.html), online retrieved on 30 May 2009.

<sup>ix</sup> <http://www.presscouncilnepal.org/files/ka.pdf>, online retrieved on 30 May 2009.

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# **Debating Identity: Reflections on Coverage of *Dharaharā* and *Kāṣṭhamanḍap* Post Gorkha-Earthquake 2015**

Abhas Dharananda Rajopadhyaya

## **Abstract**

The 7.8  $M_w$  *Gorkhā*-earthquake in April 2015, took 8,857 lives, injured 21,952, destroyed 755,549 buildings, 581 heritages and cost an estimated approximate \$513.38 billion. Many heritage sites, including those enlisted in the World Heritage Site, were damaged due to this disaster. The fall of *Dharaharā*, among all cultural-historical sites, was given (un-) due attention by many national media, owing to high number of deaths and as a popular landmark of the city. This modern elite tower structure was presented as symbol of national unity and of 'rising back'. But there are other important public heritages too — many centuries older than *Dharaharā* and they too had stories of deaths, of injuries and of survivals, but received a very small space or almost none in the national media. I take an example of *Kāṣṭhamanḍap* that hosted over 54 people during the earthquake. I have used the method of qualitative content analysis to discuss the construction of identity by national media.

**Keywords:** *Gorkha* earthquake, heritage, *Kasthamandap*, *Dharahara*, media coverage, qualitative analysis, reconstruction, identity

## Background

Nepal has, for centuries, been prone to disasters, including earthquakes with major ones hitting almost once every century. Earthquakes, from the historically recorded 1223 AD (1280 BS) earthquake<sup>1</sup> or that of 1255 AD (NS 375 or 1312 BS) claiming life of reigning King *Abhaya Malla* (reign: 1216 – 1255 AD) and one-third of the city population to as recent as those in 1834 AD, 1934 AD and now 2015 AD are major ones of the respective centuries that proved disastrous for the nation.

The recent 7.8  $M_w$  *Gorkhā*-earthquake is the biggest of the century, claiming 8,857 lives and injuring 21,952<sup>2</sup>, destroying 755,549 buildings, 581 heritages and costing a damage and loss worth \$513.38 billion. It has been followed by 418 number of aftershocks with local magnitude of greater than or equal to 4.0  $M_w$ <sup>3</sup>, including major ones of 26 April (at 12:54:08 measuring 6.7  $M_w$ ) and that of<sup>4</sup> 12 May (at 12:50 measuring 7.3  $M_w$ , followed by another 6.3  $M_w$  shock only

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<sup>1</sup> Pant (2013) enlists a total of 22 recorded earthquakes before 1934 AD one over a span of 1223 to 1881 AD.

<sup>2</sup> Retrieved from [www.drrportal.gov.np](http://www.drrportal.gov.np), official website of *Nepal Disaster Risk Reduction Portal*, under *Government of Nepal* (GoN), data as of 16 July 2015. Also tweeted officially by *EarthquakeNepal-MoHA* (Twitter handle: @NEoCOfficial) at <https://twitter.com/NEoCOfficial/status/621649889047347201/photo/1> (district map of those dead by Nepal Earthquake) and <https://twitter.com/NEoCOfficial/status/621645187366850560/photo/1> (district map of those injured).

<sup>3</sup> As of 14 November 2015 at 6:19 pm, retrieved from [www.seismonepal.gov.np](http://www.seismonepal.gov.np), official website of National Seismological Centre (NSC), GoN.

few minutes after). It also triggered Himalayan avalanches at Mount Everest and landslides at various parts of Nepal making the disaster deadlier, and rescue and relief efforts more challenging.

## Heritages Lost Forever

The *Gorkha*-earthquake proved disastrous for many heritage sites, affecting structures and ancient settlements of *Kathmandu*, *Bhaktapur*, *Lalitpur*, *Sankhu*, *Bungamati*, *Panga* and many others, including those enlisted in the UNESCO World Heritage Site list<sup>5</sup>. Several temples in the valley completely collapsed — *Kāṣṭhamaṇḍapa*, *Māju-devala*, *Kāmadeva*, *Trailokya-Mohana Nārāyaṇa*, *Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa*, *Nārāyaṇa* temple (Hanumāndhoka Palace), *Anantapur*, *Śāntipur* (Svayambhu), *Jaṅgahirāṇya Nema Nārāyaṇa* (*Tripureśvara*), *Jalavināyaka*, *Jaiśīdevala* in *Kathmandu* district, *Cāra-Nārāyaṇa*, *Hariśaṅkara*, *Maṇimaṇḍapa pātī* (Lalitpur Palace), *Jagata-nārāyaṇa* (*Sankhamul*), *Macchindranāth*, *Bhairavanāth* (*Bungamati*) in *Lalitpur* district, *Vatsalādevī*, *Phasī-devala*, *Kedāranātha* (*Bhaktapur* Palace), *Lakmi Nārāyaṇa*, *Ga-Mahādeva* (*Changu*) in *Bhaktapur* district — and many others were left severely damaged categorized under "partially collapsed" (95) and "partly damaged" (493)<sup>6</sup>. Also completely collapsed

<sup>5</sup> For the full list, see: [whc.unesco.org/en/list](http://whc.unesco.org/en/list).

<sup>6</sup> A list issued by Department of Archaeology (DoA) provides the following statistics:

were *Tripurāsundarī* temple (*Dolakha*), *Taleju* temple (*Nuwakot*), *Gorkhā* Palace, *TetāngchusāngGumbā* (*Mustang*) outside the valley. Most number of heritages in *Kathmandu* were lost (229), followed by that in *Lalitpur* (121) and *Bhaktapur* (73) — a combined total of 423 heritage loss inside the valley alone. Considering such a huge, irreplaceable loss of precious heritages, historian Purushottam Lochan Shrestha states:

We have lost most of the monuments that had been designated as World Heritage Sites in Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur. They cannot be restored to their original states.<sup>7</sup>

S. N.	City	Total Heritages Affected	Collapsed	Partially Collapsed	Partly Damaged	Remarks
1.	Kathmandu	229	43	50	136	Most damages in a district
2.	Lalitpur	121	13	20	88	
3.	Bhaktapur	73	20	10	43	
Kathmandu Valley		423	76	80	267	
4.	Gorkha	35	8	5	22	Epicenter of major earthquake dated 25 April
5.	Dolakha	29	9	0	20	Epicenter of numerous aftershocks following <i>Gorkha</i> earthquake
<b>Total</b>		<b>721</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>493</b>	All over Nepal

\* Credit to Er. *Om D Rajopadhyaya* for sharing this table by DoA, GoN.

<sup>7</sup> In an interview for *The Kathmandu Post*, quoted by *The Nation* (2015 April 26, 6:18 pm). Retrieved from [www.nationmultimedia.com/breakingnews/Historical-monuments-lost-forever-30258805.html](http://www.nationmultimedia.com/breakingnews/Historical-monuments-lost-forever-30258805.html) on 14 December 2015 Monday.  
Bangkok: The Nation Multimedia.

For the purpose of this article, I focus on two major and popular structures of *Kathmandu*, viz. *Kāṣṭhamanḍap* (henceforth *Kasthamandap*) and *Dharaharā* (henceforth *Dharahara*). I fully acknowledge that these two heritages only do not entirely represent the essence of all other heritages that were lost to the *Gorkha*-earthquake.

### *Kasthamandap* and the Name '*Kathmandu*'

The Kathmandu city derives its name from *Kasthamandap*, the former being a corrupt of the latter Sanskrit word '*kāṣṭha*' meaning wooden and '*manḍapa*' meaning a pavilion or temple as well. The temple of *Kasthamandap*, befitting its name, is a master-piece of traditional architecture and exquisitely-carved wooden arts. Risal (2015:1) describes it as "the largest structure ever built in the traditional triple-tiered roof style... [with large ground floor space] until the eighteenth century". Thapa (1968:42) describes the structure as:

... a temple ... on a square plinth, built of bricks, that measures 65 ft. 11 in. on each side[,] ... the superstructure resting on the single-terraced plinth ... supported by four massive wooden pillars of square cross-section, that arch [arch?] upto the ceiling of the roof. Two successive floors of receding sizes rest on the basic pillars. The main deity enshrined in the *sanctum sanctorum* at the



ground floor is that of Shri Gorakhanatha  
(carved in stone).<sup>8</sup>

Regarding the construction of this wooden pavilion, Wright's *vaṃśāvalī* (1877:211) presents the following account in 1595 AD (NS 715)<sup>9</sup>:

In his [Lakshmi-narasinha Malla's] reign, on the day of Machchhindra-nātha's Lagan-jātrā ... Kalpa-briksha (the tree of Paradise) was looking on in the form of a man, and, being recognized by a certain Bisēta, was caught by him, and was not released until he promised the Bisēta that ... he would be enabled to build a satal (pāṭī) with the wood of a single tree.

Local lore claims that the temple was built of wood of a single tree, granted by heavenly *Kalpabrikṣa* himself. The wish was fulfilled on the fourth day to build '*Madu-satal*'<sup>10</sup>, but the temple "was not consecrated, because the *Kalpabrikṣa* had told the *Bisēta* that, if it were, the wood would walk away."

<sup>8</sup> Thapa (1968:39) refers this as *Loyipāda Siddha*, while Pant (2015a) recognizes it as *Lūpā*, referring to a monograph entitled '*Śrīnāthātīrthāvalī*' compiled by the *Rājā* of Jodhpur, *Mānasingh*.

<sup>9</sup> Pant (2015a) adds a line "This was constructed in NS 715" from the folio 126 of MS in the collection of University of Cambridge. But an English version of Wright (1877) in my collection, unfortunately, does not have this line.

<sup>10</sup> Wright (1877:211). The name is popular as *Maru sattal* or *Kasthamandap* now.

(Wright, 1877:211). In view of this *vaṃśāvalī*, commonly, and mistakenly,<sup>11</sup> many consider this *sattal* to date back only to *Lakṣmī-Narasimha Malla*'s reign. Pant (2015a), however, disagrees in the following points:

1. The reign of *Lakṣmī-Narasimha Malla* dates from 1621AD (NS 741)<sup>12</sup> to 1641 AD (NS 761)<sup>13</sup>, which does not match the afore-mentioned date of 1595 AD (NS 715). Historically, the validity of this date 1595 AD (NS 715) is thus hereby nullified.
2. A total of 15 evidences that *Kasthamandap* existed before the reign of *Lakṣmī-Narasimha Malla* has been published in *Itihāsa-Saṃśodhanako Pramāṇa-Prameyaby* Vajracharya (ed.) in 1962.<sup>14</sup> Among them, the very first mention of *Kasthamandap*,<sup>15</sup> as research till date suggests, has been found in an MS entitled "*Nama-sangiti*" copied in 1143 AD (NS 263) during the reign of *Narendra-deva II* (regnal year: 1140 – 1146 AD).

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<sup>11</sup> See: Pant (2015a) for details.

<sup>12</sup> Pant (2015a) cites Tiwari, Ramji et.al. (1964). *Eitihāsika-Patrasaṅgraha Vol. II*. Nepal Cultural Council. p. 1-2. Slusser (1982), however, approximates this date to 1619 AD.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid* cites Vajracharya, Dhanavajra. (Ed.). (1962). *Itihāsa-Saṃśodhanako Pramāṇa-Prameya*. Lalitpur: Jagadamba Publications. p. 81.

<sup>14</sup> Also enlisted by Thapa (1968:37-38).

<sup>15</sup> *cf.* Thapa (1968:41) and Risal (2015:4).

In addition, Risal (2015:4) cites Mary Slusser and Gautama Vajracharya (1974) to have discovered an MS *Astasahasrika-Prajnaparamita* with a colophon dating it to 1090 AD (NS 210) in possession of a local *guthi* associated to *Kasthamandap*. However, he laments that "it was not made available to the authors [Slusser and Vajracharya] for more than a brief perusal" (Risal, 2015:4). Nevertheless, on basis of what Slusser and Vajracharya state, Risal (2015:10) asserts:

Kasthamandap was at least 900 years old and possibly more than a thousand, at the time of the 2015 earthquakes. It was therefore the oldest building in Kathmandu and anywhere in the entire surrounding Valley. It was also the largest traditional building.

A recent excavation campaign by a team of Nepalese and foreign archaeologists co-led by Professor Robin Coningham from Durham University, UK, Kosh Prasad Acharya (former Director-General of DoA) and Ram Bahadur Kunwar (Head of Excavation Branch, DoA) found that the temple was constructed in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, around 400 years earlier that it was traditionally thought (Neupane, 2016).

The large wooden pavilion was also used as a rest-house for traders through the city, and the surrounding *Maru tole* has for centuries been a popular market-place. "*Kasthamandap* occupies a central location in Kathmandu valley, at the intersection of two ancient towns known as *Koligrama* and *Daksina* (south) *Koligrama* (and later as *Yambu* and *Yangal*). Moreover, *Kasthamandap* sits squarely at the crossroads of

the ancient trade route that connected India with Tibet and the principal North-South road of Kathmandu." (Risal, 2015:2). A historic water-color painting by British surgeon at British Residency in Kathmandu, Henry Ambrose Oldfield, in the 1860s during Jung Bahadur's rule, reproduced in Risal (2015:2), also supports the claim.

With phonetic similarities between the two names, it is clear that *Kasthamandap*, as "an important shrine in the [social and cultural] life" (Thapa, 1968:43) of the ancient and medieval Kathmandu, "lend its name to the locality that grew around it, including the royal palaces" (*ibid.*) and subsequently the name "gradually acquired a much wider connotation with the passage of time" (*ibid.*). Thapa (1968:43) adds:

[A]s the original city should have been small, with the temple and palace as the central nucleus, it is reasonable to extend the application as well as applicability of the name of the royal city to the localities that grew up around it .... Thus it was the literary form of the name of the most important wooden pavilion that gradually ... [grew and] encompassed (1) the shrine (2) the locality and (3) the capital in gradual progression.

My focus here is that the *Kasthamandap* is a public heritage with a social, cultural and economic dependence of a large group of locals, especially from the southern half of the city. This heritage is one of the oldest ones known in the ancient city and was still in public use up to the time of its collapse.

### **The *Kasthamandap* Collapse**

On the day of the earthquake on 25 April, a local financial institution, by the name of *Nimbus Savings and Credit Cooperative*, had organized a blood-donation camp inside *Kasthamandap*. Altogether 54 people were reportedly "preparing to take a group photograph when the ground beneath them started shaking and brought down the ... temple, killing ten."<sup>16</sup> One survivor, *Amit Awale*, shares the following account:

Everything and everyone seemed to be moving. Bricks and mud started falling down ... nearby temples began going down one by one.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Nepal Samacharpatra (2015) published in *Nepali Times* (No. 757). The death toll has risen to 45 afterwards (and probably more?), as rescue efforts continued days after the quake (Pokhrel, 2015:56).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

With unavailability of any footages of the area, the understanding of the collapse depends on stories of the survivors and accounts of eye-witnesses. Another survivor, *Laxman Ranjit*, 30 of *Chikanmugal, Kathmandu* and also a weight-lifting national champion, shares this account during blood donation:

First, Kasthamandap and the earth started shaking slightly... I got [deep] into Kasthamandap thinking it safe. Those inside started running out ... Taking out the needle, I carried my son outside. Nilu [his wife] remained in. I was only few steps outside when the Kasthamandap collapsed with a large sound. I had never expected it.<sup>18</sup>

There were no close-circuit cameras installed at this place and, thus, our (and media) knowledge of its collapse are based on these stories. It, however, had many stories to unfold, which were much later (almost after more than a couple of years of the *Gorkha*-earthquake) recognized and covered in national media. But these materials do not come under the purview of this article.

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<sup>18</sup> Ghising. (2015). Translated by the author.

## Post-Earthquake Media Coverage of *Kasthamandap*

For the purpose of this article, I have analyzed the contents of five national dailies after the *Gorkha*-earthquake, viz. *Annapurna Post*, *Nagarik Dainik*, *Kantipur*, *Naya Patrika* and *Rajdhani* to see the coverage of *Kasthamandap*. The following table enlists few of the news, opinion articles and/or photographs regarding *Kasthamandap* used for this study. It also reflects the coverage pattern of the historic *Kasthamandap* temple by the Nepali national dailies:

Figure 1: Table showing media coverage of *Kasthamandap*

News paper	Date	Byline/ Writer	News Headline	Description	Remarks
Annapurna Post	11 Jestha (25 May)	Gopikrishna Dhungana	<b><i>Dharaharā durustai banāine</i></b> [Dharahara to be rebuilt exact]	News value due to a minister's visit	Only a reference to Kasthamandap
Nagarik Dainik	13 Baisakh (26 April)	KP Dhungana	<b><i>820 ko mṛtyu puṣṭi, arbaṁ kṣaṭi, uddhar jārī, vivaraṇa āuna bākī</i></b> [820 death confirmed, billions loss, rescue	Hard news, double-line banner headline, details relating to	Includes reference to Dharahara and Kasthamandap

			continued, details yet to come]	cover story	
		Prakash Timalsina	<b><i>Kāṭhmāṇḍu upatyakākā adhikāṃśa sampadā dhale</i></b> [Many heritages in Kathmandu Valley collapsed]	Hard news, details relating to cover story	Only a reference to Kasthama ndap
Kantipu r	9 Jestha  (23 May)	Raju Ghising  (with a photo by Kaushal Adhikari)	<b><i>'Āṣailāi pardā thāhā hudo raheca'</i></b>  ["We know only when it befalls on us."]	Soft news, story of a survivor	
Rajdhan i	13 Baisakh  (26 April)	Dabbu Chhetri	<b><i>Aitihāsik dharohara dhvasta</i></b> [Historic monuments devastated]	Hard news	Only a reference to <i>Kasthama ndap</i>
	23 Jestha  (7 June)	Nabin Luitel	<b><i>Pahilekai svarūpamā Kāṣṭhamaṇḍa p banne</i></b> [Kasthamanda p to be	Hard news, reconstru ction attempt	



			reconstructed in old style]		
	(23 June)	Rajdhani Correspon dent	<b>Vatkiyeko Kāṣṭhamaṇḍa p bhittecitramā</b> [Destroyed Kasthamanda p in mural work]	Hard news, related to sentiment of reconstru ction	
	31 July	Mahes Raj Pant	<b>Kāṣṭhamaṇḍa pa kati purāno? Kasale banāyo?</b> [How old is Kasthamanda p? Who constructed it?]	Opinion article on history of <i>Kasthama ndap</i>	Pant, 2015a
	1 Septem ber	Mahes Raj Pant	<b>Kāṣṭhamaṇḍa pasāga Līlavajrako sambandha</b> [Relation of Lilavajra with Kasthamanda p]	Opinion article on history of <i>Kasthama ndap</i>	Pant, 2015b

\* All years in 2072 BS or 2015 AD.

The scholarship of Nepali media on *Kasthamandap* was much limited only to what Wright's *vaṃśāvalī* and local lore states — that it was constructed of the wood of a single tree — and that it gave *Kathmandu* its name. But the very entry in the *vaṃśāvalī* has already been questioned by Pant (2015a) as stated above. Only two articles on history of *Kasthamandap* have come into light (Pant, 2015a and 2015b). In addition, *Sukrabar* weekly (editor: Rajan Nepal) dated 15 May or 1 *Jestha* published by *Nepal Republic Media* has an article by *Dinesh Raj Pant* on "Kāṣṭhamāṇḍapa (Marusattala)" (p. 8), reflecting the claim that unlike popularly believed, the structure existed way before the reign of *Lakṣmī-Narasimha Malla* from 1621 to 1641 AD.

The story of the actual collapse of *Kasthamandap* is only available via the version of a survivor, *Laxman Ranjit*,<sup>19</sup> who lost his wife at blood-donation and himself suffered leg injury. Additionally, a story in *Nepali Times* (not included as a sample for this study, but cited elsewhere due to lack of other documented evidences) has a story of another survivor, but he fails to give a detailed account of the collapse of the age-old structure. A commoner's observation of the large central pillars that supported the colossal structure of the *Kasthamandap* that were left ungarded at the Big Bell, Kathmandu shows the breaking and decaying of tongue of the pillar, causing the structural failure.

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<sup>19</sup> Refer to footnote #18.

## The *Dharahara* Tower: New Polity of Modern Nepal

As a popular landmark of *Kathmandu*, *Dharahara* is more known to all than other structures of traditional inner cities. The *Dharahara* is a nine-storey tower built in 1832 by *Mukhtiyār Bhimsen Thapa* (1775 – 1839 AD). The tower has a spiral staircase of 213 steps, with a balcony at eight-floor and a 5.2 meter (17 ft.) bronze mast on the roof. Two *Dharaharas* actually existed during *Bhimsen Thapa*'s time, called *Maharani Dharahara* and *General Dharahara*. The former was constructed in the name of *Queen Lalit Tripurasundari* (1794 – 1832 AD, regent rule: 1806 – 1832 AD) and was, by name, taller and wider than the latter, built in the name of *Bhimsen Thapa*. The devastating earthquake of 1834 AD saw the collapse of *General Dharahara*, while *Maharani Dharahara* survived with need for repairs. A century later, again in the earthquake of 1934 AD, the *Maharani Dharahara* collapsed and was rebuilt by *Juddha Shumsher JBR* (regnal years: 1932 – 1952); this later became popular as *Bhimsen Stambha* (*Bhimsen* column, or more popular *Dharahara*).<sup>20</sup>

Constructing tall columns had been popular in traditional architecture of the valley as well; reference can be seen from that at *Changu Narayan temple*<sup>21</sup>, the oldest temple in Nepal or at all medieval royal palaces and even those in the *Shah* rule (e.g. at *Guhyeśvarī*) — all aimed at depicting the height of power of those atop. Likewise, *Dharahara* named after

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<sup>20</sup> op.cit. Dhungel (2015).

<sup>21</sup> I refer here to the *Garuda* column of *Changu Narayan*, of which only a small stump now remains and the *Garuda* icon, of course.

Queen *Lalit Tripurasundari* and *Bhimsen Thapa* marked their power in the modern Nepal for over three decades.

The major idea is that *Dharahara* was a very late heritage and symbolized elite groups — those in power, without any cultural-economic relation with the locals. The Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC) opened it to general public taking a specific entry fee and was maintained by an external partner, Sidewalkers Pvt. Ltd., with whom the Kathmandu Metropolitan city had a Memorandum of Understanding to manage the area. It was later, thus, more commercial than cultural.

### **The Fall of the Tower**

In Nepali, *Dharahara* stands for tall tower. Many papers almost synonymized *Dharahara* with another phonetically-similar Nepali word '*dharohara*', meaning somewhat close to heritage. Most papers (including those taken as sample in this study) have also used *Dharahara* to represent the idea of heritage overall.

It fell for the first time in 1834 AD earthquake, only two years after its construction, and collapsed to 1934 AD earthquake. Later, *Juddha Shumsher JBR* repaired it, but it fell to the recent 2015 earthquake. Some reports also accused that reconstructions were not made in time and properly ("*Bhūkampale 5 saya 81 sampadāmā kṣati*" by *Rajdhani* dated 17 May). Its fall to 1834 earthquake, however, clearly marked *Bhimsen Thapa*'s fall from power, especially after the death of the regent Queen. Historian *Ramesh Dhungel* adds:

After the fall of *General Dharahara* (of Bhimsen Thapa), his power in the rule started decreasing. Thus, the *Dharahara* named after him could not be reconstructed at that time.<sup>22</sup>

Many versions of the fall from *Kasthamandap* and other accounts by eye-witnesses have been reported (e.g. "*Dharaharāko tuppobāta khasdā pani bāciyo*" by Babita Sedhai in *Annapurna Post* dated 30 April, "*Jyāna Jogiyeko Janmadina*" by Gopikrishna Dhungana in *Annapurna Post* dated 23 July and "*Dharaharā cāra tukrā vaera dhalyo*" by Bijay Chamling in *Rajdhani* dated 14 May). The weekly-holiday on Saturday added the flow of people inside the tower. Some videos of the fall from *Dharahara* also went viral in YouTube<sup>23</sup> as well. Overall, we have more documentation of the fall of *Dharahara* as compared to that of *Kasthamandap*.

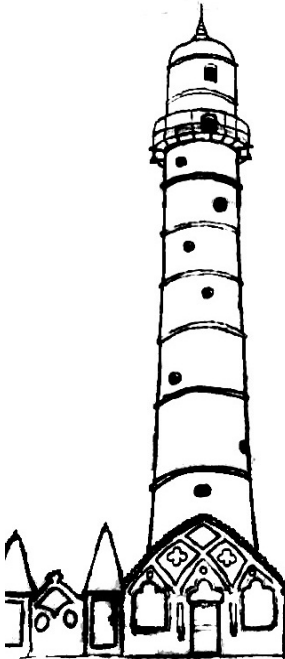

The following table gives a comparison of *Dharahara* and *Kasthamandap*; the figures are for representational purpose only and do not exact in measurements.

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<sup>22</sup> Historian Ramesh Dhungel speaks for *Naya Patrika Dainik* (2015).

<sup>23</sup> See: "Dharahara Falling Live Nepal Earthquake 2072/2015"  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qwr3bIjnzPo>.

Figure 2: Comparison of Dharahara and Kasthamandap Coverage (Images for representational purpose only)

200'		
150'		
100'		
50'		
0		
	<u>Dharaharā Tower</u>	<u>Kāṣṭhamandap</u> (Wooden Pavilion)
Alternate name(s)	Bhāmsen Stambha	Maru Sattal, Madu Sattal

<i>Type</i>	Tall tower / minaret	Public building
<i>Architecture</i>	Mughal style	Traditional pagoda-style
<i>Storey</i>	9	3
<i>Height</i>	203' (61.88 m)	65' 4"
<i>History</i>	1832 by Bhimsen Thapa	c. 8 <sup>th</sup> century
<i>Purpose</i>	Military watch-tower, information-dissemination <sup>24</sup>	Public / religious / cultural, market-place
<i>Re- construction</i>	After 1934 earthquake	Several times, including recent ones
<i>Fall</i>	First at 1934 earthquake, now collapsed to Gorkha- earthquake	Previously undocumented; now completely collapsed
<i>No. of affected people</i>	150 <sup>25</sup>	54 <sup>26</sup>
<i>Death toll<sup>27</sup></i>	60	45

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<sup>24</sup> Nepal (2015)

<sup>25</sup> Dhungana (2015). He reports 240 tickets had been issued before the incident occurred.

<sup>26</sup> NepaliTimes (2015)

<sup>27</sup> Pokhrel (2015:56)

<i>Present status</i>	Only a 33' (10 m) stump now remains, reconstruction commenced	Completely grounded, reconstruction commenced
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**Post-Earthquake Media Coverage of *Dharahara***

Similar to the previous one on the coverage of *Kasthamandap*, I have analyzed the contents of the afore-mentioned five major national dailies after the *Gorkha*-earthquake, to see the coverage of *Dharahara*. The following table shows quantitatively a large coverage of less than two centuries-old *Dharahara* in various aspects.

*Figure 3: Table showing the media coverage of Dharahara*

Newspaper	Date	Byline / Writer	News Headline	Remarks
Annapurna Post	13 Baisakh (26 April)	Gyanendra Khadka	<i>Nepālamāśaktiśālī bhūkampa, Dharaharā dhalyo, bhayānaka kṣati</i>  [Strong earthquake in Nepal, Dharahara collapsed, large destruction]	
	17 Baisakh (30 April)	Babita Sedhai <i>(Presented by Rajkumar</i>	<i>'Dharaharāko tup pobāta khasdā pani bāciyo'</i> [Survived the fall	News Feature



		<i>Dikpal and Kirtan Adhikari)</i>	from the top of Dharahara']	
			<b><i>Durvala Dharaharā Durvala Netṛtva</i></b>	
18 Baisakh (1 May)	Devendra Prasad Sitaula		[Weak Dharahara, weak leadership]	Opinion Article
			<b><i>Jagadambā Steelsle Dharaharā punarnirmāṇa garne</i></b>	
21 Baisakh (4 May)	Annapurna Correspondent		[Jagadamba Steels to reconstruct Dharahara]	
			<b><i>Dharaharā durustai banāine</i></b>	
11 Jestha (25 May)	Gopikrishna Dhungana		[Dharahara to be rebuilt exact]	
			<b><i>Jyāna Jogiyeko Janmadina</i></b>	
7 Shrawana (23 July)	Gopikrishna Dhungana		[Narrow escape on birthday]	News Feature
			<b><i>Mahābhūkampak o dasaū dina somabāra rājadhānīmā Dharaharāko</i></b>	
Kantipur	22 Baisakh (5 May)	Prakash Timilsina		Photo

			<b><i>bhagnūvaśeṣa</i></b> <b><i>herdai</i></b> <b><i>sarvasadhāraṇa</i></b> [People watch the ruins of Dharahara on 10 <sup>th</sup> day of earthquake on Monday]	
	22 Bhadra		<b><i>Dharaharālāṭhūḥ</i></b> <b><i>o nai rahana diaū</i></b> [Let Dharahara be left a stump]	Opinion article
	(8 September )	Rupa Joshi		
			<b><i>Darjanaū dhakkā,</i></b> <b><i>hajāraū hatāhata</i></b> [Dozens shocks, thousands injured]	Cover Feature
		-		
	13 Baisakh		<b><i>820 ko mṛtyu</i></b> <b><i>puṣṭi, arbaū kṣati,</i></b> <b><i>uddhar jārī,</i></b> <b><i>vivaraṇa āuna</i></b> <b><i>bāḱī</i></b> [820 deaths confirmed, billions loss, rescue continued, details yet to come]	
	(26 April)			
Nagarik Dainik		KP Dhungana		
	22 Baisakh		<b><i>Dharaharā</i></b> <b><i>banāune rahara</i></b> [A wish to make Dharahara]	Soft news
	(5 May)			

Naya Patrika	29 Baisakh (12 May)	Gopinath Mainali	<i><b>Punarnirmāṇamā rāṣṭriya abhiyāna</b></i> [National campaign in reconstruction]	Opinion article, drawing of Dharahar a with national flag
	31 Baisakh (14 May)	Rabi Adhikari	<i><b>Kālo bādalavitra cādiko ghera khojdā</b></i> [Searching silver line in black clouds]	Opinion article, drawing of broken Dharahar a
	14 Baisakh (27 April)	Shreelochan Rajopadhyaya	<i><b>Dharaharāko avaśeṣa dhamādhama ghar lagīdai</b></i> [Ruins of Dharahara being taken to home]	
		NA	<i><b>Bhagnāvaśeṣamā pariṇata bhayeko Dharaharā herneko ghuīco</b></i> [Crowd seeing the ruins of Dharahara]	Photo

		Gyanmani Nepal	<i>Sucanā dina baneko dhiyo Dharaharā</i>	(Presente d by Sujit Mainali)
	29 Baisakh		[Dharahara was constructed to give information]	
	(12 May)		<i>Duitā Dharaharā thiye Kathmandumā</i>	(Presente d by Sujit Mainali)
		Ramesh Dhungel	[There were two Dharaharas in Kathmandu]	
			<i>Aitihāsika dharohara dhvasta</i>	
	13 Baisakh	Dabbu Chhetri		
	(26 April)		[Historic monuments devastated]	
			<i>Jagadambāle Dharaharā punarnirmāṇa garne</i>	[Jagadamba to reconstruct Dharahara]
Rajdhani	22 Baisakh	Rajdhani Correspon dent		
	(5 May)			
			<i>'Dharaharā cāra tukrā vaera dhalyo'</i>	
	30 Baisakh	Bijay Chamling		
	(14 May)		[Dharahara collapsed after	

		breaking into four pieces]	
2 Jestha (17 May)	Nabin Luitel	<i>Bhūkampale</i> 5 <i>saya</i> 81 <i>sampadāmā kṣati</i> [581 heritages affected by earthquake]	Photo of Dharahar a
31 Baisakh (14 May)	Ganesh Adhikari	<i>Dhvasta</i> <i>Dharaharā ra</i> <i>Siudo Puchiyeke</i> <i>Kāṭhmāṇḍu</i> [Devastated Dharahara and unbeautified Kathmandu]	Opinion article
6 Jestha (20 May)	Nabin Luitel	<i>Bhūkampa</i> <i>pratirodhātma</i> <i>Dharaharā banne</i> [Earthquake- resistant Dharahara to be built]	

\* All years in 2072 BS or 2015 AD.

The table shows that *Dharahara* found comparatively a larger space than any other heritages. It was portrayed as the ornament of Kathmandu (in Ganesh Adhikari's opinion piece, see Appendix 3), as the representation of all other historic monuments that fell to the earthquake (in the news, feature

and photos by almost all media, see Appendix 3), as a subject of emotional appeal (by Kantipur, see Appendix 4) and as a symbol of national unity (see Appendix 4). Slogans of rising back from the disaster also included the portrayal of *Dharahara* for almost all Nepali national newspapers.

### Attempts at Reconstruction

News have been disseminated announcing the undertaking of reconstruction of *Dharahara*, but almost no such news of *Kasthamandap* was seen in Nepali national dailies. *Dharahara*, as popular landmark of the city, received due importance with commitments of reconstruction by government ("*Bhūkampa pratirodhātmaka Dharaharā banne*" by Nabin Luitel in *Rajdhani* dated 20 May). Even the corporate sectors were interested in its reconstruction. One such included that by *Jagadmba Steels*, which brought mixed reactions — some reacted that *Dharahara* should be left as it is (e.g. *Rupa Joshi* in *Kantipur*, 8 September, p. 7), while some complained no corporate houses should be allowed to use *Dharahara* for their advertisements.

The reconstruction attempt at *Kasthamandap* received almost none media attention. Far the mainstream media interest, alternative ways were initiated by the locals only. For a campaign on rebuilding *Kasthamandap*, Risal started a website [www.rebuildkasthamandap.com](http://www.rebuildkasthamandap.com) in an attempt to bringing it back. Risal (2015) is also concerned in finding the lost inscriptions to save history, especially those attached to the temple woods. Some local organizations also announced *Campaign for Reconstruction of Kasthamandap*, while

Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC) also took few steps for the cause. Currently, a team of archaeologists are undertaking excavation works at the devastated site. An artistic representation of *Kasthamandap* was made in mural art at *Babarmahal, Kathmandu* by *Hatemalo Campaign* and was inaugurated by Chief Secretary *Lilamani Poudel* on 22 June 2015. A modelled 3-D design of *Kasthamandap* was prepared by artist *Hira Ratna Brahmacharya* and was handed to the KMC. Meanwhile, Ar. Wolfgang Korn also handed over his structural drawings on 7 November 2015, Saturday that he used for his book (Korn, 1998) asserting its importance to the national identity.

Nonetheless, the attempts at reconstructing *Dharahara* also used alternative artistic ways. A miniature replica of *Dharahara* is also placed at a traffic triangle at *Sahid Gate, Kathmandu* commemorating the tower that is now no exist. Several other replicas were also made at different places of the valley too.

## Theoretical Epilogue

*Dharahara* found more space in national dailies, symbolic of enormity of the earthquake (as reflected in the photos of the devastated site), and was later reproduced to represent call to rising (e.g. see appendix 4) and to national identity (appendix 5: *Nagarik* dated 12 May). The tower-structure was portrayed as identity of Kathmandu and entire Nepal; portrayal of Nepal's rising back included *Dharahara*, an elite heritage of modern times, while public heritages were completely neglected by the mainstream media.

Ganesh Adhikari's version that Kathmandu lies tearful at the loss of its ornament *Dharahara* ("*Dhvasta Dharaharā ra Siudo Puchiyeke Kāṭhmāṇḍu*", Rajdhani, 14 May) asserts this single heritage as what matters to the Kathmandu (and subsequently to Nepal). Other heritages that went undamaged or only partially damaged were not in the mainstream media. This too had to take alternative course in the form of a hash tag "#notallgone" that gained little popularity along this line.

The much-criticized idea of unity in diversity that was enforced during Panchayat regime of King Mahendra (1920 – 1972, regal years: 1955 – 1972) that gave supremacy to one culture, language and symbol over the other. The Nepali media too was guided by the same idea to give supremacy to *Dharahara* over all other heritages, no matter however significant they are. Pushing aside the historic, socio-cultural and economic significance of *Kasthmandap* for the local and all those traders, who once travelled through this ancient open square, the Nepali national media desperately put ahead or enforced *Dharahara* as a symbol of national identity.

The elite ruler notion can also be seen in the light of ethnic notion, where the ruling-class Brahmin-Chhetri built *Dharahara* gained supremacy over the now ethnic locally-owned *Kasthmandap*. The fact that Nepali media itself is owned and operated by majority Brahmin-Chhetri too accounts for this bias. It was the ruling Shah-Thapa class, who built the *Dharahara* and was later named upon the ruling class, but the story of *Kasthmandap* is otherwise — it is essentially public and lore has it that it was built by a local Lilavajra (though it is questionable).



The Foucauldian idea of subjectivation (or subjectivization) comes into play here: the identity is not self-internalized but enforced by various, what Althusser would say, ideological mechanisms. No matter how much local newspapers (mostly in *Nepal Bhasa*) would assert the essence of *Kasthamandap*, the identity was shaped for elite tower-structure *Dharahara*. Technically, both are national heritages, both collapsed and both claimed many lives — both deserve to stand as a symbol of unity and of respect for age-old heritages.

The idea that Nepali media lacked evidences of *Kasthamandap*, while those of *Dharahara* were plenty too helped such portrayal. The evidences of *Kasthamandap* are scattered — the very first evidence dating to 12<sup>th</sup> century and many others following that have been currently found at *Sakya* monastery in *Tibet* (Pant, 2015a). Such biased media reporting and loss of *Kasthamandap* would also mean loss of a heritage that has survived so centuries, of medieval and of modern Nepal.

As discussed earlier, *Dharahara* represented a new symbol for modern Nepal during the Shah period, against the traditional *Kasthamandap*. As a popular heritage of early medieval Nepal, *Kasthamandap* had represented the identity of the city and even lend the expanding city its name.<sup>28</sup> This identity-making has been overpowered owing to the dynastical shift, and as the city and in-migration grew more, the new polity shed traditional identity of *Kasthamandap*, which was once popular as public rest-place. It might be interesting to examine further how the collapse of both these

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<sup>28</sup> op.cit. Thapa (1968:43)

structures — artistic master-pieces of their times — can give symbolic interpretation to the course of history.

A constructivist<sup>29</sup> national identity of *Dharahara* in the modern Nepal seems to have followed a nationalistic model, characterized by "national homogeneity under the aegis of ... those in power"<sup>30</sup>, in the post-earthquake context. With government, public and corporate commitments on reconstruction of *Dharahara* (e.g. "*Bhūkampa pratirodhātmaka Dharaharā banne*" by Nabin Luitel in *Rajdhanidated* 20 May, "*Jagadambā Steelsle Dharaharā punarnirmāṇa garne*" by *Annapurna Post* dated 4 May and "*Jagadambāle Dharaharā punarnirmāṇa garne*" in *Rajdhani* dated 5 May), the step has already been taken. But, nevertheless, people are still divided over what should be prioritized *Dharahara* (an elite, commercial heritage) or *Kasthamandap* (a cultural public one).

As *Dharahara* has been presented as a national symbol for unity, Sitaula (2015) rightly warns:

*Dharahara* had collapsed to 1934 earthquake, and after mere 82 years it again collapsed. Now if it is to be raised, it must be considered — how powerful and strong it should be. It has other symbolic meanings too. *Dharahara* must not be raised weak, as national leaders of today. Now *Dharahara* must nurture strong

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<sup>29</sup> See: Gellner (1997).

<sup>30</sup> See: Pfaff-Czarnecka (1997).

leadership in symbolic meaning for the nation  
and for its future.

The above call stands true, even if *Kasthamandap* shares a similar position.

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## Appendices: Illustrations

### 1. Dharahara: Then and Now



A poster comparing photographs of *Dharahara* before 1934 earthquake and in the new century, against the background of the post Gorkha-earthquake 2015 remains of *Dharahara*

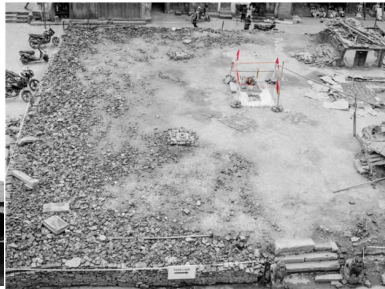
Source: Tweeted by @anshuedc (1 June 2015, 11:53 am)

## 2. Kasthamandap: Then and Now [Compilation]

Then



Now



Source: Rajdhani Daily (1 September 2015)

Source: Risal (2015:4).

Photo by: Sameer Tuladhar.

## 3. Dharahara as symbol for enormity of earthquake devastation



Source: Nagarik Dainik (14 May 2015 | 31 Baisakh 2072, Thursday)

Source: *Naya Patrika Dainik* (28 April 2015 | 15 Baisakh 2072, Tuesday)

#### 4. Dharahara as symbol for revival



A photo of remaining stump of *Dharahara* was used by *Kantipur Dainik* in its announcement of *Kantipur National Tragedy Support Fund*. Source: *Kantipur Dainik*.

(Right): Tall *Dharahara* as symbol of reconstruction, revival of life. The text reads in simple English as follows:

*Dharahara will rise back from ruins, if we make a common determination.*

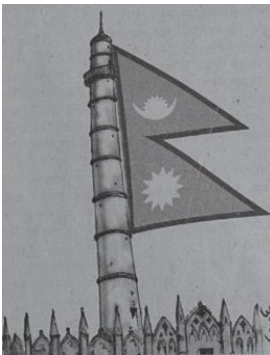
*But, ask yourself, what have we done for the country at the time of this disaster?*

*A campaign of Naya Patrika for national self-determination.*

"Source: *Naya Patrika*



## 5. Dharahara as a uniting force



Source: *Nagarik Dainik* (29 Baisakh 2072 | 12 May 2015) in an article by Gopinath Mainali

## **End note**

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# **Sadharanikaran Model vs Mathematical Model: Analyzing their Relevance in Context of Social Media**

Priya Shaw

## **Abstract**

The communication process varies according to cultural, political, economic, social, psychological, socio-economic factors from one country to another. The term 'communication', however, has been accepted globally though the pattern of communication differs from one society to another. Communication scientists have tried to define communication in a particular context of a particular society. In this study, therefore, Sadharanikaran model from the Eastern perspective and Shannon and Weaver model from the Western perspective have been chosen to study the difference in the pattern of communication. The elements of the models have been studied along with the context of technological communication with particular reference to social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Skype.

**Keywords:** Sadharanikaran Model of Communication, Mathematical Model of Communication, Social Media.

## **Introduction**

The term Sadharanikaran has been rooted in Natyasastra of Bharata. Rasa Sutra in Natyasastra is the basic concept on which the theory of Sadharanikaran has been developed. There have been attempt to extend its history up to the Vedic

period (Adhikary, 2007a, p.108) but scholars widely believe that Bhattayanka introduced the concept of Sadharanikaran (Vatsyanan, 1996, p.146). He did so while explaining the rasa sutra of Bharata's *Natyasastra*. The term Sadharanikaran has been derived from the Sanskrit word Sadharan, and has been translated into English as "generalized presentation" (Vedantatirtha, 1936, p.35) "simplification" (Yadava, 1998, p.187) and "universalization" (Dissanayake, 2006, p.4).

Dr. Nirmal Mani Adhikary gave the Sadharanikaran Model of Communication (SMC) in 2003 and it was revised in 2010. According to the model the elements of communication are:

1. Sahridaya (Preshaka- Sender and Prapaka- Receiver)
2. Bhava (Moods and Emotions)
3. Abhivyanjana (Expression and encoding)
4. Sandesha (Message or Information)
5. Sarani (Channel)
6. Rasaswadana (Firstly receiving, decoding and interpreting the message and finally achieving the rasa)
7. Doshas (Noise)
8. Sandharbha (Context)
9. Pratikriya (Feedback)

Sahridayas are those who are having "common Sympathetic heart" (Yadava, 1998, p.188). Preshaka (Sender) and Prapaka (Receiver) must attain sahridaya in order to have a coequal emotion towards the message. In a society where asymmetrical relations exist, there sahridayata is the only way of two-way communication and mutual understanding. Thus, sahridayata can be achieved irrespective of castes, languages, cultures and religious practices and this type of

communication process qualifies to be considered as Sadharanikaran.

Sahridaya preshaka (sender) who has bhava (Moods and Emotions or Thought) in mind is the initiator of the process. The Sender has to pass the process of abhivyanjana for encoding the bhava in a perceivable form. It is the Sahridaya prapaka with whom the bhavas are to be shared. He must go through the process of rasaswadana. The prapaka is engaged in receiving, decoding and interpreting the message to achieve the rasa i.e. the essence of aesthetic enjoyment.

The position of Sahridaya preshaka and prapaka is not static. Both parties are engaged in the process of abhivyanjana and rasaswadana. A successful sadharanikaran leads toward the universalization. If there is no bhava there is no need of communication. The sandesha which the preshaka wants to convey to the prapaka must arouse bhavas and go through the process of abhivyanjana and the sandesha will be received by the prapaka after going through the process of rasaswadana and at the conclusion sahridayata will be attained.

For transmission of sandesha, sarani (channel or medium) is required through which sandesha travels across space. The message sent by the sender cannot reach the receiver without the channel or medium. The channels may be natural such as hearing, touching, visual as well as mechanical such as telephone, radio, computer etc. perfect communication is impossible to achieve. There are continuous forces at work, doshas or noises which tend to distort the message and leads to miscommunication. If we look at Hindu poetics the concept of rasa-bhanga (disruption in rasaswadana) is there. There may be many causes of this. For instance, a mismatch between

sender and receiver. The noises are like semantic, mechanical and environmental.

For effective communication sandarbha (context) is needed. It helps the prapaka to decode the sandesha which has been sent by the preshaka. The effectiveness of any message depends on communication environment. Same message may have different meaning in different context. The importance of context is such that the meaning could be provided to the receiver even if the sender is not identified to the receiver. Thus, due to context a text can retain to its objective meaning”.

Pratikriya refers to the responses of the receiver after receiving the message. It is the process of feedback which allows the receiver to have an active role in communication process. Sadharanikaran demands sahridayata in which both sender and receiver are taken into consideration. It is not that feedback is always affirming. However, it makes the communication process ongoing. In every sphere, feedback is not necessary. If the sender and receiver are able to understand and experience the same equally, there no feedback is required.<sup>1</sup>

In 1949 an engineer and researcher at Bell Laboratories, named Claude E. Shannon, founded an information theory based on mathematical theories which was about signal transmission with maximum telephone line capacity and minimum distortion. For the first time, he introduced the qualitative and quantitative model of communication as a

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Nirmal Mani Adhikary ‘Theory and Practice of Communication- Bharata Muni’ 2014

statistical process underlying information theory. The aim of Shannon was signal transmission from source to destination through transmitter and receiver across the channel with minimal interference or error. The information theory initially developed to separate noise from the signals carrying the information. Later on, Weaver extended and applied Shannon's information theory for different kinds of communication. While Shannon was focused on engineering aspect of his theory, Weaver developed the philosophical aspects of this theory related to human communication. Shannon and Weaver model of communication has 7 main elements which are:

1. Information source
2. Transmitter (encoder)
3. Channel
4. Noise
5. Signal
6. Receiver (decoder)
7. Message
8. Destination

The information source, selects a desired message out of a set of possible messages. The selected message may consist of written or spoken words, or of pictures, music, etc. The transmitter changes this message into the signal which is actually sent over the communication channel from the transmitter to the receiver. The receiver is a sort of inverse transmitter, changing the transmitted signal back into a message, and handing this message on to the destination. In the process of being transmitted, it is unfortunately characteristic that certain things are added to the signal which

was not intended by the information source. These unwanted additions may be distortions of sound. All of these changes in the transmitted signal are called noise. The researchers identify three levels of problem in communication those are technical problem, semantic problem, effectiveness problems.<sup>2</sup>

Social media refers to the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into an interactive dialogue. In the words of Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein, social media is "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content." Kaplan and Haenlein created a classification scheme for different social media types in their Business Horizons article published in 2010. According to Kaplan and Haenlein there are six different types of social media: collaborative projects (e.g. Wikipedia), blogs and microblogs (e.g. Twitter), content communities (e.g. YouTube), social networking sites (e.g. Facebook), virtual game worlds (e.g. World of Warcraft) and virtual social worlds (e.g. Second Life). Technologies include: blogs, picture-sharing, vlogs, wall-postings, email, instant messaging, music-sharing, crowdsourcing and voice over IP, to name a few. Many of these social media services can be integrated via social network aggregation platforms. Currie (as cited by Hysenlika, 2012) defined social media as "the various electronic tools, technologies, and

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<sup>2</sup>[http://waste.informatik.hu-berlin.de/Lehre/ss11/SE\\_Kybernetik/reader/weaver.pdf](http://waste.informatik.hu-berlin.de/Lehre/ss11/SE_Kybernetik/reader/weaver.pdf)

applications that facilitate interactive communication and content exchange, allowing the user to move back and forth easily between the roles of the audience and content producers”. Social media is becoming such an integral part of business operations that its use is now commonplace for product launches, developing consumer loyalty and sharing. Currie (as cited by Hysenlika, 2012) defined social media as “the various electronic tools, technologies, and applications that facilitate interactive communication and content exchange, allowing the user to move back and forth easily between the roles of the audience and content producers”. Social media is becoming such an integral part of business operations that its use is now commonplace for product launches, developing consumer loyalty and sharing news (Walaski, 2013).

## **Review of Literature**

Adhikary (2003) has introduced an article on Sadharanikaran Model of Communication. The Sadharanikaran model illustrates how the communicating parties interact through the process of sadharanikaran to attain saharidayata (commonness or oneness). The model "offers an explanation of how successful communication is possible in Hindu society where complex hierarchies of castes, languages, cultures and religious practices are prevalent" (Adhikary, 2008a, p. 67). The model has been observed as a representation of communication process from Hindu perspective. The model is a non-linear one. Importance has been given on the interrelationship between communicating parties and encoding and decoding are fundamental activities of this



model. The model also deals with physical, mental and spiritual level and the main aim remains in achieving commonness.

Adhikary (2008) wrote an article to study the fundamental differences between the *Sadharanikaran* model and Aristotle's model of communication. The main aim is to bring out the concepts of communication process which have envisioned in two different models from the East and the West. The general objective here is to comprehend the fundamental differences between the concepts of communication process in Aristotelian and *Sadharanikaran* view. The specific objectives include having comparative understanding of the concept of communication process from Aristotelian and *Sadharanikaran* perspectives in terms of structure and scope of two models, the human relationships in the process and the goal of communication. To conduct the study, purposively the models have been chosen.

Barua (2012) has researched on the effectiveness on social media as a tool of communication. The aim was to study the impact, usefulness and potential of social media. The study has based on qualitative and quantitative analysis of the role and importance of social media as a tool of effective communication. Survey method and observation method were used to gather data from 200 respondents from Guwahati. Respondents agreed that social media is a good platform to communicate with large number of people in limited time.

Choudhury and Bhattyacharya (2014) have conducted their work on communication from Indian perspective in which special reference was given to *Natyasastra*. The main importance has given to *sadharanikaran* which is an Indian

perspective of communication. Dramatic representation of Sadharanikaran process enhances the relation between communicator and communicates. Sadharanikaran enhances intra personal communication too which has been described here.

### **Reason to Conduct the Study**

Sadharanikaran model is important to understand the eastern perspective of communication whereas Shannon and Weaver model is to understand western perspective. Both models are practical enough to be fitted in present scenario. Human communication is the base of SMC and human communication with the help of technology is the base for Shannon and Weaver model. So, it is a sort of curiosity from my side to know what possible conclusion can be drawn by putting these two opposite models together in present situation and how these two models differ in their elements. The advancement of communication is blessed with advanced technology. Social media is a platform to communicate with many people at a single time. Relevance of these models in social media platform is also a matter of concern. Whether or not the elements of human communication models are equally applied on technology based media is an important area to study.

**Objectives:**

- To distinguish the elements of Sadharanikaran Model of Communication and Shannon and Weaver Mathematical Model of Communication
- To analyze the relevance of these two models in the context of social media.

**Research Methodology**

- Purposively Sadharanikaran model from eastern perspective and Shannon and Weaver Mathematical Model of Communication from western perspective have been selected
- Basically, theoretical approach has been adopted and the study is based on secondary data though the conclusion which has been drawn is an exploratory one.

**A Comparative Analysis between the Two Models:**

Let us now make a comparative analysis between the two models.

- The Sadharanikaran model is a non-linear one. It is resulting in two-way communication. In this case, both inter and intra personal communication is possible whereas Mathematical Model of Communication is a

linear one. Here, only one aspect of communication has been notified. The whole communication process is controlled by the sender only.

- Sadharanikaran model is stressed mostly face to face communication whereas Mathematical Model of Communication focused on mechanical aspect of communication.
- In Sadharanikaran model the sandesha of the preshaka is filled with bhavas and it helps the sender to pass through the process of abhivyajana whereas in Mathematical Model of Communication there is no discussion on bhavas. The model is a technical one. No emotion is attached in this communication.
- Sadharanikaran model illustrates the Hindu perspective of communication..A dissertation (Adhikary, 2003), taking insights from both Natyashastra and Vakyapadiya and integrating them, presents a unique communication model – the Sadharanikaran model of communication, which was the first ever model of communication in diagrammatic form proposed from Hindu perspective. On the other hand, Mathematical Model of Communication depicted the Western perspective of communication as the model does not have reflection of classical Sanskrit text.
- In Sadharanikaran, the receiver must go through the process of rasaswadana in order to achieve the true essence of the sandesha and to understand the rasa behind sending the message. But in Mathematical Model of Communication a transmitter is decoding the message and reaching to the destination; no rasa is associated with it.
- In Sadharanikaran model, the emphasis has also been given on sandharbha i.e. the base on which communication will be started. The source of

communication is present there. In Mathematical Model of Communication, the concept of context is missing. The model has not mentioned what will be the source of communication.

- In Sadharaikaran the main motto is to achieve the oneness or commonness and after achieving sahridayata the communication will be proven successful. Again, in case of Mathematical Model of Communication there is no emotional connection between the sender and the receiver so there is no question of oneness is coming into account. The inter-relationship between two parties are top most important. And in Sadharanikaran oneness can be achieved irrespective of asymmetrical hierarchies. In Mathematical Model of Communication, it is not clear what will be the hierarchy between the sender and the receiver whether it will be equal or asymmetrical.
- Sadharanikaran model is also talked about pratikriya means what will be the feedback of the receiver after receiving the message which may lead to further communication. To have a successful communication feedback is needed. But in Mathematical Model of Communication no possibility of feedback is available. It is impossible to measure the reaction of the receiver after receiving the message. Somehow, the road of further communication has been blocked. Through the process of pratikriya the effectiveness of the communication can also be measured.

<b>Sadharanikaran Model</b>	<b>Mathematical Model</b>
Sender (Preshaka) (Sahridaya)	Source
Moods or emotions (Bhava)	-----
Expression or encoding (Abhivyanjana)	Transmitter (encoder)
Message or information (Sandesha)	Message
Communication code (Sanketa)	-----
-----	Signal
Channel (Sarani)	Channel
Receiving, decoding and interpreting the message and finally achieving the rasa (Rasaswadana)	Receiver (decoder)
Aesthetic enjoyment (Rasa)	-----
Noise (Doshas)	Noise
Context (Sandharbha)	-----
Receiver (Prapaka) (Sahridaya)	Destination
Feedback (Pratikriya)	Feedback <sup>3</sup>

## Observation

On the basis of the above discussion, linear, one-way communication processes have been described in the Shannon and Weaver's mathematical Model of Communication. Mainly, Western aspect of communication has taken into consideration. No possibility of feedback was available before 1970. The model was expanded with the feedback by the theoretician Melvin DeFleur, adding further parts and introducing the term "meaning". This is transformed by the source into "information", sent by the transmitter into the channel and again changed by the receiver to the destination. It is the feedback that plays a significant role for checking the quality of information service. Sadharanikaran model of communication has described all possibilities which occur at the beginning and stretch up to the end of a successful communication process. The actual essence of communication is visible in Sadharanikaran model of communication which leads to the inner satisfaction which one can hold after having a proper and complete communication.

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<sup>3</sup> There was no provision in the original model for *feedback* (reaction from the receiver). Feedback enables speakers to adjust their performance to the needs and responses of their audience. A 'feedback loop' was added by later theorists, but the model remains linear. (<http://visual-memory.co.uk/daniel/Documents/short/trans.html>)

### **Critical Analysis of Models**

Feedback is essential if one wants to keep the communication on and it is associated with the receiver's part. In these models, it is not mentioned that feedback may also associate with the receiver's mood, interest and attitude towards the topic of communication. If a receiver is unable to identify himself with the sender's idea at that time, no "pratikriya" will be available from the receiver's side and there is a possible chance of having a full stop over the communication. Interest is also an integral part for molding feedback such as opinion, suggestion and so on. Maybe the source is delivering an important message but the receiver does not have any interest to listen that; the process of feedback will be hampered.

The concept of mood must also be taken into consideration while discussing about feedback. If the throw of a message is in temperament or in anger the receiver may refuse to listen the message or may not pay heed towards the message or may disconnect the telephone line again feedback will be in risk. In this case, there will be a serious jerk in between sender and receiver as well as in the whole communication process. Here, the hierarchy between the two must be taken into account. If the flow of the message is from top to down; the receiver is forced to listen that whether he is interested or not. Here the chance of feedback is also not available.

Again, in case of interpersonal or group communication the possibility of feedback is available but in case of mass communication feedback is not possible. According to Shannon and Weaver Model, one information source and one destination is necessary for completion of the communication



process. In case of telephonic communication, there may remain more than single sender and receiver.

In case of Sadharanikaran model of communication, the emphasis has also given on 'sandarbha' which depicts that both the parties must be aware of the context on which the communication will be proceed further and the receiver will pass through the process of 'rasaswadana' in order to achieve the rasa which has been included at the time of constructing the message. It is clear that both are aware of the context of the communication but the receiver may have no opinion on that context, in that case rasaswadana is not possible for the receiver and no feedback will be available which results an abrupt discontinuation during the communication.

### **Relevance of the Models in Technological Context**

From the ancient time, there is a need of communication whether in oral or written format. Interpersonal communication plays a major role in order to have a direct and instant response on certain context. If we judge in today's context, usually two types of interpersonal communication are there:

1. Face to face communication
2. One-to-one communication with the help of technology

Society is fast changing and in every moment an old technology is being taken up by new and advanced one. Everyday new applications are launched for improving

communication. I would like to judge the relevance of Sadharanikaran model of communication and Telephonic model in the context of social media communication taking Facebook, WhatsApp, Skype in this account.

Social media is flexible enough to communicate with a large number of people at once in a limited time. Both interpersonal and group communication can be done through it. Sadharanikaran model of communication talks about only face to face communication which can be attained only between sahridayas. We use social networking sites for interpersonal communication but in a written format. Here, sender is having time flexibility to response. The possibility of feedback is entirely depending on the receiver's mood while there is a time flexibility the receiver may response after a long time or may be in between he leave the conversation. The process of abhivyanjana and rasaswadana may not be fully achieved here.

The bhava which the sender has included while framing the message may not be decoded by the receiver properly as they are not present there physically. Interpersonal communication at a distance leads to less chance of arousing the same feeling between the sender and receiver. It is very clear though social media is providing opportunity of interpersonal communication but the actual motto of sadharanikaran model of communication is not followed here fully. Again, the communication with video calling will provide the highest possibility to provoke the same mood and achieving the rasa and result of a proper communication.

Shannon and Weaver had brought technology for interpersonal communication in its account. Today, simple

telephonic communication has been replaced with iPhone, tablets, and laptop which have given new shape of interpersonal communication. All these gadgets give us the equal chance for having interpersonal communication with the help of social networking sites. The gadgets are improving the possibility of communication but again the feedback depends on the receiver's mood entirely. All the elements of Shannon and Weaver model are present here. Semantic and technological error are also present in communication while is being done through social media.

## **Conclusion**

Sadharanikaran model of communication talks about moods, abhivyanjana and rasaswadana which clearly depicts that emotional attachments are necessary whereas in Shannon and Weaver model the focus has only been given on communication part no emotional attachments are there between sender and receiver. Both models are having different perspective of depicting communication.

Sadharanikaran model of communication entirely speaks about intra and face to face interpersonal communication. To achieve rasa it is necessary to have a continuation of conversation. In case of theatre performance individual artist try to connect him/herself with individual audience in order to have a complete flow of emotions and feeling which results achieving the same rasa. Sometimes, the individual goes into the process of interpersonal communication where he/she relates his situation with the character.

Shannon and Weaver model of communication is technology oriented. As in, sadharanikaran model focus is on face to face communication; here encoder and decoder are human beings. In case of technology, encoder and decoder is transmitter. The picture is clearly understood whether we are in a telephonic communication or web communication. As a conclusion both models are relevant according to their situation to achieve the best possible communication.

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# **Introduction to Narrative Phenomenon Model: A Framework for Mapping War Stories that Travel through Generations**

Chandi Raj Dahal

## **Abstract**

This article relies upon cultural trauma theory for the basic understanding of storytelling in a post-traumatic situation and presents its findings based on researcher's own observation of a post conflict situation of decade long armed conflict in Nepal. It introduces a communication model to explain the storytelling phenomenon that emerges during and after any violent situation and that exists through newer generations. First, the article discusses some theories related to trauma stories and sociology of generational differences. Second, it proposes Narrative Phenomenon Model as a new tool that can map the journey of trauma stories created by those exposed to war or violent events. Third, it discusses how narratives get created, modified or transformed into multiple truths.

**Keywords:** Communication, Narrative Phenomenon, Post Conflict, Storytelling, War stories

## **Introduction**

Storytelling exists in many forms and formats. Some stories are told verbally in person, which remain undocumented but pass through generations in the form of artwork, folklores,



songs, other forms of performing arts and through passing on family stories to children. Likewise, storytelling has many formats such as drama, testimony, interview, actuality, news report, discussion, game, demonstration among others. Any of these forms and formats of storytelling involves certain kind of filters, noise and intended or unintended gatekeeping. When it comes to the domain of mediated communication, stories are also somehow dependent upon the type of channel or medium because the channel comes with chances for noise and often with in-built features that distort or emphasize the content being delivered.

Storytelling is a common phenomenon that people involve in almost every day; they consume media news which tell stories of the day or any new information related to them and their society at large. However, some stories are more important than others; for example, trauma stories generating from the war, conflicts or other major violence not just impact people of the generation who faced such atrocities but also builds upon their perceptions that their past was full of traumatic experiences. No matter how immediately, storytelling during war impacts peace process based on how and what stories are told to the public whereas in the post conflict situation, it impacts the peace building as a whole. Storytelling can be a healing process for some people while it can also be a sensitive issue which if ruined can lead to the worst situation instead. Thus, 'who tells a story with what motive' is something that matters.

In this regard, it is equally pertinent to study how stories get created, modified and transformed. Scholars have tried to explain some of these issues through theories of cultural and

collective trauma. However, this article attempts to provide a holistic picture to understand the phenomenon of post-conflict storytelling.

### **Cultural Trauma Theory**

Scholars like Jeffrey Alexander, Ron Eyerman, Bernad Giesen, Neil Smelser and others have produced substantive literatures on cultural trauma and collective trauma. Cultural traumas, as “processes of meaning making and attribution” explain how trauma dramas get created (Eyerman, 2012). Such traumas are based on the narratives about some powerful and shocking experiences or occurrences, which may possibly be shaped by the narrators’ emotional reactions. According to Eyerman, there are two sides to a cultural trauma—an emotional experience and an interpretative reaction. Within such narrations, the determining variables are victims, good/evil, perpetrators. Similarly, collective traumas are the sufferings from symbolic rendering that emerges from the collective reconstruction and imagination of historical events. These traumas are formed as schemas, among a group of people, with social meanings to any events that a generation of certain community, society or a country had historically faced. Thus, collective traumas are reflections of neither individual sufferings nor of actual events, which are heavily driven by fictional statements or narratives within a context of cultural sociology (Alexander, 2012). Often used as tools for analyzing social construction of significant traumatic events, this theory helps in mapping previously occurred sufferings or events; extreme political repression, war or outrages.

Although within the same contemporaries of all ages are exposed to the same events, the older age groups will already have formed their own natural view of these events. As a result, what is a shared experience becomes stratified by multiplicity of perspectives that are, so to speak, generational. Each age group brings its own point of view to bear on these events (Roberts & Lang, 2001). As cultural traumas are built through the narratives of the past events, they can only be retrospective. “It is only after the passing of time—how much exactly is uncertain— that we can know if the effect of a traumatic occurrence is still felt, still alive” (Eyerman, 2011, P.32). Here are some concepts from the works of Eyerman on cultural trauma:

<b>Concept</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Traumatic events	Powerful or shocking incidents or violence
Trauma drama	Discursive process that makes visible, articulates, and gives meaning and words to what is strongly felt but not grasped
Chosen trauma	the shared mental trauma that the group's ancestors suffered
Carrier groups	collective agents of trauma process who communicate the collective pain of their group.

### **Sociology of generations**

The term generation has many connotations. All the meanings implied in the works of writers, journalists, authors and other

communicators all over the world are difficult to trace out as most of the times they are context specific. Sometimes the term 'generation' is used to denote certain age-groups while in some other instances, it refers to certain cohort groups born within some historical timeframes. The most influential works on the study of generations was initially led by Karl Mannheim, who was mostly inspired by social movements initiated by young people since the 18th century. He argues that generation forms an identity during the formative years of an individual's life, i.e. youth (Mannheim, 1952). According to Mannheim, there are three important characteristics to forming a generation: a) generation as a location; b) generation as an actuality and c) generational units. Mannheim (as cited in Alwin & McCammon, 2003, p.24) argues that "having shared the same formative experiences contributes to a unique worldview or frame of reference that can be a powerful force in people's lives"; meaning that a group of people sharing same socio-cultural phenomenon will have similar understanding about their lived experiences in relation to the time and space as they grow up. This can be further understood as the idea that members who encounter certain social changes within a given timeframe will likely construct similar understanding of the social circumstances but different than of those who do not. However, understanding and interpretations of such circumstances depend on individual's prior knowledge and experiences. Likewise, Mannheim (1952) points out that generations emerge only under special historical circumstances and are thus something 'more' than simply age cohorts; they are a group of people of similar age bonded by a shared experience.

## **Methodology**

The framework introduced in this article is based on the findings of a narrative research conducted during a ten-day long visit to Rolpa district of Nepal for collecting data from among the people who witnessed or experienced the decade long Maoist conflict. The respondents were identified based on their willingness to share their perceptions about the traumatic experiences they witnessed or the stories they heard about from their earlier generations. Ten respondents from older generation and five from newer generation participated in the unstructured interviews where they shared their stories. The interviews were audio-recorded and later verbatim transcription was done. The analysis techniques borrow the concepts of cultural trauma and generational differences as discussed in the theoretical framework section. Based on those ideas, priori themes were generated to analyze the qualitative data.

## **Respondents from older generation**

Out of the total respondents, three women had lost their husbands; two of them being involved in the war themselves and third as a victim of the war. Fourth respondent woman comes from a victim's family because her father was killed during the war and she had to migrate to the headquarter.

Deukala Kumari Gharti used to be a rebellion woman who got actively involved in the war during the internal armed conflict in Nepal. She shared her experiences as “the deadliest scenes” that had happened in front of her eyes. In 2003, there was a

fight in Dang. It was second year of her marriage. When a group of combatants was returning from Lamahi via a guerrilla route, they confronted the army in the village. There were small bazaars in that place. The battle started. While retreating, Deukala's husband died. At that time, she was in the village with her daughter who was just nine months old. Deukala was in the party (Maoists) constantly since 1999 and there were many women like her.

Another woman Geeta Thapa Acharya is from Rolpa municipality. She was born in a poor family 36 years ago. When she was around 10 years old her father died and her mother left her and her siblings. They were five siblings. Her grandfather was already dead but she had grandmother. She was 16 years old when she was linked to a women's association in 1996. She joined the rebellions as a volunteer where she was asked to sing and dance in the cultural groups to motivate the combatants in the fight. She was made an area cadre of the Maoist party. Later during the war, she lost her husband just five months after their marriage.

Unlike the previous two cases, Meena Nepali is a victim of the war because her husband was killed by the Maoists though her family was not involved in the war from any side. Her husband used to be a school teacher in a village. Meena Nepali was 23 years old when her husband was killed. She did not consider for a second marriage. She was neither into Maoist party nor supporting the Nepal Army.

Another respondent Shree Kumari Roka is from a victim's family. She was 18 years old and unmarried when her father was killed by Maoists during the insurgency. Later she got married and now she has two children. She was in Thawang

during the time of war but later she migrated to the district headquarter in 2003. The researcher also talked to Deuki Gurung and Dhan Kumari Budha, other two female witnesses of the war. Deuki Gurung is around 80 years old. She experienced the conflict as a witness. Some of her relatives died in the war. She was often forced to let the Maoist combatants eat in her house during the war. Dhan Kumari Budha is 22 years old now. She is a full-time teacher at Balkalyan School in Liwang. She was 12 years old when the conflict finally ended. However, she recollects her memories of war. Likewise, a senior teacher from Balkalyan School in Liwang and lawyer, writer and a member of Nepali Congress *Mahasamiti* were interviewed as two male witnesses of the war. The teacher has been teaching for a long period of time in Balkalyan School. He was a teacher when Krishna Bahadur Mahara (one among the key leaders from the Maoists during and after the conflict) and his colleagues started the war from Rolpa. He has faith upon the Maoist party which used to be the rebellion group. Another witness Madhav Prasad Acharya lives in Rolpa. He is a lawyer by profession. But associates himself to Nepali Congress. Currently, he is a member of the party's *Mahasamiti*. Besides, he is a writer who has written several stories of the wartime. One of his books, *Rolpa ma Dhurudhuru Royera*, contains a letter from Meena Nepali's husband, who was killed in the war.

Among other two respondents from the older generations are those directly concerned with the war; one was a commander of Maoists' "People's Liberation Army" and fought the war during the time of the armed conflict whereas another is a victim of the wartime. Mitra Lal Thapa used to be in the Maoists' "People's Liberation Army" during the wartime. He

was involved in it since 1998. Thapa is 46 years old now. He was one of the commanders of the "People's Liberation Army". He used to lead 750 combatants. Now he is in the village, working as a farmer. Kalam Rokaya, often known as Kalam Baje, from Thawang is a victim of the war. He has been living in Liwang most of the time. He was displaced from Thawang due to insecurity. In 1996, various print media published news accusing him of killing people. People of Thawang called him as a member of Nepali Congress at the time when he did not have much knowledge about politics. His house was captured and destroyed by the Maoists.

### **Respondents from new generation**

Salina Gharti (name changed) is 18 years old and she has completed tenth grade this year. She studied in a Martyr's Memorial School in Dang as being a daughter of a martyr. While her parents were into Maoist party, involved in the war, she stayed in Jungkot with her grandparents and studied there up to grade three. Later in 2012, she joined the school in Dang. Sangita Budha (name changed) is 15 years old. She was with her mother until she was two years old. Then she came to Liwang because her parents were into Maoist party. Another respondent Siwani Acharya, name changed, is 17 years old. She studies in grade 10 in a school in Liwang. She has a broken family. She grew up in the district headquarter. Likewise, Roshan Budha is 18 years old. He temporarily lives in Liwang as he is studying in a college in Liwang. He comes from a remote village in Rolpa. Likewise, some children were found playing football in a ground in Liwang. After the game completed, they were asked in a group about what war meant



to them and if they knew anything about Maoist insurgency that had happened in Rolpa in the past. After a while in the conversation, the children opened up a little and expressed their impressions about the war which they had not seen but heard about. These children were between 12-15 years old. Similarly, another group of children were found grinding pebbles in Gurung village. These children were of age between 10-13. They were asked if they had heard about the People's War or conflict or Maoists' war. This group of children also slowly talked about what they knew had happened in their village. Some other respondents like the Chairperson of the Gurung Village Homestay, the house owner lady of the homestay and her father were interviewed as well. However, their answers have been used to substantiate the researcher's knowledge and observation but their narratives have not been included in this article.

### **Findings and discussions**

Stories of war originate as traumatic events in the lives of the people who encounter any sort of violent occurrences that bring emotional experiences to them. This group of people who consciously live through the period of conflict or war represent the first generation in the narrative process. The emotional experiences then travel in the form of narratives where following elements are visible:

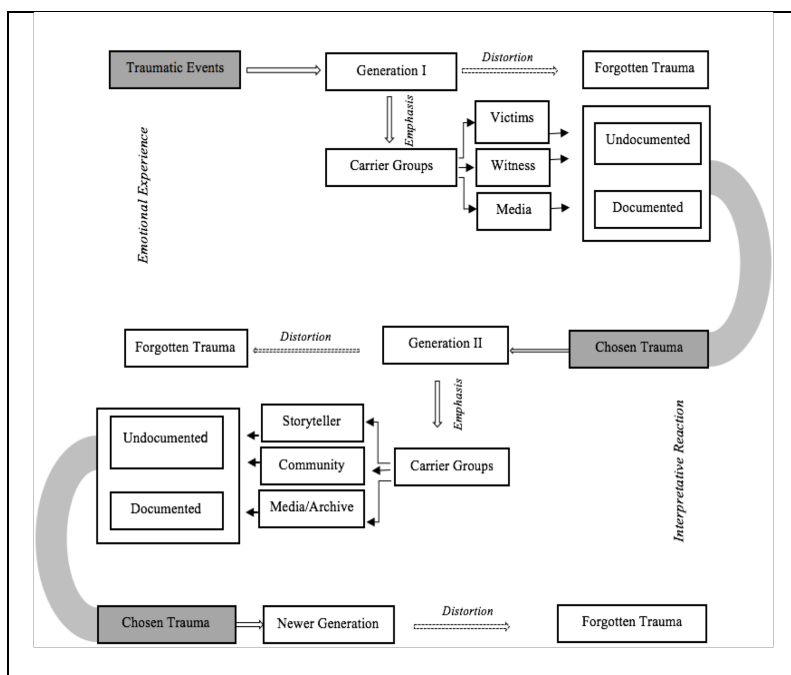


Fig1: Narrative Phenomenon Model

The people who live during the time of war represent the *first generation* to collect the firsthand experiences of the occurrences of war, conflict or a violent activity. This generation includes only those people who can comprehend the story or at least build some mental pictures of the occurrences. Thus, infants or children who cannot comprehend the trauma do not represent the first generation in the narrative process.

*Traumatic events* are violent activities that occur during war or conflicts. These events create traumatic impacts in the lives of the people who live through the wartime. They are fights,

killings, suppressions, moments of pride, short-lived happiness, victory, or any sort of encounters related to the conflict. Most of the respondents interviewed for the purpose of this study accepted that the war naturally demands violence as the only means to solve the problems of the parties involved. Their responses clearly indicated that war brought them the unexpected and strange experiences; particularly to those who became the part of the context. Some who were directly involved in the war and others who become neutral third party as the observers had shared different levels of violent activities. Thus, all of those people who lived through violence have their different experiences and accounts regarding the traumatic occurrences or events. Deukala Kumari Gharti from Rolpa who fought from the rebel group during the war recalls some of her experiences:

It was a disastrous fight in Beni. Many of our friends died. We took many injured friends to the hospital. We had to play a whole new trick for the army if they followed or knew our tracks. In Dhorpatan, they (the Army) attacked us from choppers. It was like a downpour of bullets. Then, we diverted towards Rukum and survived (personal communication, May 18, 2018).

Another respondent Gita Thapa lost many friends in Myagdi. They were attacked from helicopters while their other injured friends were being taken to the nearby hospital. The Army shot and killed the injured as well. She shares some incidents that happened in front of her eyes:

I was also directly involved in the war in Khara, Myagdi, and in Sishne. I had never seen dead people

before, but I saw people getting killed in Khara. My friend was shot right in front of me (personal communication, May 18, 2018).

Shree Kumari Roka is from a victim's family. Her father was killed by the rebellions. A Maoist member killed him while he was on his way to Liwang from Sulichaur. Roka describes the traumatic experiences that her family encountered:

It was known that my father was attacked by sharp object in his eyes. He was beaten to death at first. There were bruises on his body. His head was separated from the body and taken 40 meters apart. I was totally broken by this inhumane death (personal communication, May 19, 2018).

A senior teacher from Bal Kalyan School in Rolpa shares the events he witnessed during the time of war. Many people, including him, who saw the battle were very scared. The teacher shares:

Once a Maoist hit a policeman here. He shot him with 20 bullets. It was about 10:45 am. Soon more firings started everywhere. Some Maoists even came dressed as students. They collected their weapons and when the policeman chased them, they ran away and disappeared into the jungle (personal communication, May 19, 2018).

Stories of Deukala, Gita Thapa, Shree Kumari and the teacher from Bal Kalyan, as shared to this researcher, have travelled all the way to become *documented stories* now. But their real-time experience that these stories represent were the traumatic events they have experienced.

Among all the traumatic events encountered by an individual during the war, only part of the experiences is given *emphasis*; not all the events are remembered or considered important enough to be told to others. Thus, in this phenomenon of storytelling, the first generation tells the story to other people of the same or upcoming generations only if they think the stories are worth telling. For example, Deukala said that she likes telling the stories to the newer generation. Although her daughter does not already know most of the things that happened in the past, she has been studying in Martyr's Memorial School in Dang so she somehow knows a little about her parents' involvement in the war. Deukala said that her daughter sometimes asks how her father died:

Sometimes she asks me and I tell her about everything. She has left home for the last two years and now she has curiosity to know new things. She asks about how I got into the party. She asks how her father died. And at such times, I answer to her all the questions (personal communication, May 18, 2018).

Likewise, Mitra Lal Gurung believes that his daughters will like to hear the stories from him. He says that his daughters were born during the war and that the eldest one knows some of the war stories (personal communication, May 18, 2018).

Another respondent Kalam Rokaya has plans to tell the stories of war to his children. However, some of his children have seen the war already so they have some idea about it while some others are still unaware. Rokaya shares:

The new generation doesn't have any experiences related to civil war. I will tell them someday about the war and the problems we came across. Sometimes they ask about the war. I do share with them my experiences (personal communication, May 18, 2018).

If any stories or traumatic experiences, for any reasons, do not get adequate emphasis or attention, they get distorted. Such *distortion* may include any kind of noises that do not let the stories to transfer; either forgetting or untold, told ineffectively or with any kind of technical or purposeful hindrances. Such distortion leads to forgotten trauma. Unlike Deukala, Mitra Lal and Kalam Rokaya, Shree Kumari Roka considers that victims of war hesitate to talk about their past incidents. She argues that ex-soldiers are threatened and mistreated for their past activities they did at the time of war to the villagers. So, she does not want to tell all the stories she knows about the wartime to her offsprings. Roka says, "I don't tell and they don't ask much as well" (personal communication, May 20, 2018).

Some victims of the war who responded to this research also considered hiding some stories of the wartime because the stories are too sensitive. Gita Thapa said that her siblings knew the stories as they encountered the war. But her children are very young. Thapa said, "my eldest daughter who is 13 years old discusses about Maoist with friends. But we cannot

share all our stories with children" (personal communication, May 21, 2018). Likewise, Meena Nepali does not tell her children much about the war because they do not ask. She has a son and a daughter. The son, elder child, studies in Kathmandu and the daughter stays with her grandparents. Nepali thinks that her children do not understand much about what had happened to their father and how she has been living since then:

My son does not understand much. He stayed away from a very young age so he does not feel my love much. I am not sure if my son has read the letter written by his father a day before he was killed (personal communication, May 21, 2018).

Any stories of the war that do not travel to the second person or any of the upcoming generations die as *forgotten trauma*. The new generations in this study know only few stories about the war because they are either not much interested into it or they are not told. While the news during the war might exist in the form of media archives, the possibility of them being read is too little unless they are interested. So, the tendency of forgetting the traumas experienced by their parent generation increases. Salina Gharti says that the story told by her mother is not adequate enough to understand what exactly had happened to their family during the war. She shares:

I don't have much interest in such things as how war used to take place. My mother also doesn't tell me much about father and how he was involved in the war and all. If I have to write any essays on the conflicts

that happened, I don't think I can write much (personal communication, May 21, 2018).

While the undocumented stories need storytellers to travel through generations, the newer generations do not seem to comprehend the descriptions and details of what had happened. Sangita Budha knows only little about what had happened to her father though she has been studying free of cost in a school for being from a martyr's family:

I don't know anything about what happened then. My dad became a martyr. The government opened a school for the children of war victims. I was lucky enough to get to study there. So, I feel good. My mother sometimes talks about what she had been through during the war. But I remember nothing much. Our teachers never spoke anything of these things (personal communication, May 21, 2018).

In case the traumatic events are given emphasis by the first generation, they travel as war stories through different types of storytellers which is collectively called *carrier group*. There can be different types of carrier groups; victims or victors, witness and media. *Victims* are those who experience the events as directly involved people in the war. Sometimes, the storyteller may become the *victor* instead. Another carrier group termed as *witness* may include anyone who were not directly involved or affected but saw the traumatic events. *Media* can also be the storyteller of the wartime. They bring



stories in the reported form which may remain as documented or undocumented stories depending on the nature of media and their archival features. All of these carrier groups may use their own filters, biases, and gatekeeping, which ultimately become the part of *emphasis* or *distortion* in transferring the stories from one generation to the other.

*Emotional experiences* are the real-time experiences filled with feelings and emotions during traumatic events, which form the context for war stories. These experiences come from the first generations because they are felt as events happen.

*Second generation* includes people who were born during the war but were too young to comprehend the events by themselves and thus needed interpretation from the earlier generation or those born in the post-conflict period. In other words, these people are those who hear the stories from a second source and are not the ones having first-hand experiences of the traumatic events or occurrences.

The traumatic interpretations contained in the stories that have been transferred from previous generation are termed as *chosen trauma*. In the study, most of the children from the newer generation, who did not encounter the war incidents were not grown up enough to comprehend the traumatic occurrences, describe the graphic schemas that are built in their mind through the stories they have heard from other sources. Their impressions about war are related to 'who did what to whom' where at least one from either Maoist or the state party become perpetrator while the other side become the victim. Sometimes, the stories are also based on how one

side did harm to the people. Many stories the new generation know are based on their family's sufferings during the war:

My father was into Maoist. So, police used to chase him. Many people died. My father and his friends used to hide inside the dens. While coming home police would attempt to kill him. Grandparents were at home in Liwang. They broke my grandfather's hand. They also thrashed my grandmother. My father used to visit us at night and returned before the dawn (Sangita Budha, personal communication, May 20, 2018).

But some respondents were also aware about the consequences to the wider society. The younger generations have heard many stories. Based on those, they have made impressions about how the whole society suffered due to war.

I have heard that the poor had to suffer the most. Many poor people had to die and the state also did not give much attention to their sufferings. Others died too. Mom's friends also died. But, those who were directly involved in the war were the most vulnerable ones I think (Roshan Budha, personal communication, May 18, 2018).

Some children also explained that Maoist combatants forced people to tolerate them by entering into the houses and consuming all the food available in their grocery and the farm. Roshan Budha shares the story he knows about the insurgency: "Maoists used to enter the houses and finish all

the grocery. If someone raised a voice, they were beaten up" (ibid).

*Storyteller* is anyone who learnt about or heard the stories of war or traumatic events of the past generations. They are not the actual victims or victors of the war or conflicts. Thus, communicators of the learnt stories are called storytellers. Sometimes the *communities*; schools or some collective groups become the storytellers which may also try to create discourse as preferred by them. Likewise, media in the second generation either tell the stories of the history or provide the evidences of previously told stories in the form of *archives*. Such media can be any channel of communication; from a personal letter to media of mass communication. In the third step of the narrative phenomenon, every element is common to that of the second generation including the interpretative reaction. However, every next generation is termed as the *newer generation* in the narrative phenomenon. Different generations may create different levels of emphasis or distortion depending on the context; meaning that some war stories are told better hundreds of years later while some other may die untold.

The chosen trauma are not the experiences of the communicators or storytellers but they come as *interpretative reaction* to what they have heard about the past. These chosen traumas have the tendency of being interpreted. Thus, this second step of the narrative phenomenon have many things in similar to that of first generation; emphasis, distortion, forgotten trauma, documented or undocumented stories. However, chosen trauma replaces traumatic events and

storyteller replaces victims/victors, witness is replaced by communities, and archives added in place of media.

## Conclusion

Stories of war travel from one generation to another when the people who experienced the traumatic events want to share their stories to the newer generations. Most often, particularly due to new and emerging media environment, the stories are told in the reported form by contemporary media. However, some stories die as they remain untold—which do not travel to the upcoming generations.

In the process of storytelling, storytellers; victims, victors, witness, media, community—all the carrier groups, as described in this model, use certain kinds of gatekeeping, biases and manipulative frames while they share their stories with different levels of emphasis. However, the filters or manipulative frames may also be understood as the distortion for the stories that do not pass onto the next generation.

Thus, evaluating the Narrative Phenomenon Model helps to understand that stories of conflict or war get created, modified or transformed. Stories get *created* with the occurrence of any violent events, if they are told. However, for any reasons; either due to distortion, emphasis or any kind of biases of the carrier groups or due to technological factors, if the facts get twisted or any untold facts get emerged, the stories get *modified* introducing newer or multiple truths. This is also possible due to the newer perspectives the storyteller may take

into account while interpreting the facts. But, if the stories negate the existing facts or truths, they get *transformed*.

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# **Navigating Gendered Space with Special Reference to Lil Bahadur Chettri's *Mountains Painted with Turmeric***

Dr. Tamishra Swain and Ms. Shalini Shah

## **Abstract**

It is rightly put by the French philosopher Simone De Beauvoir in her book 'Second Sex' that "one is not born but made a woman". So, women are treated secondary as compared to men for a long time. Similar view has been propounded by Judith Butler in her book 'Gender Trouble' that female identity has been created by repetitive performances and further, gender identity is not fixed rather it is created. There are certain agencies through which these ideologies came in to function. One of such agencies is "space" which is not necessarily physical and fixed but can be mental/psychological and fluid. This space can also use as subversive technique to control certain part of the society. This paper tries to analyze a Nepali fiction 'Mountains Painted with Turmeric' by Lil Bahadur Chettri to understand the subversive practices of space and how it controls gender identity.

## **Introduction**

In postmodern age the concept of space came into the forefront challenging the importance of time in narratology, which was always given more importance than geographical space. Fredric Jameson has the opinion that, "our daily life,

our psychic experiences, our cultural languages are dominated by categories of space rather than by categories of time" (Jameson, 1991). Space, hence, has moved into the foreground of critical discussion these days. Earlier chronological narration was important, now the space where any particular event happened too is equally given importance. Postmodernist thinkers strongly opined that space is created socially by power structure and knowledge. They are of the opinion that space is never neutral but always discursively constructed, and shaped by the dominant power structures. In other words, the manifestation of space is both created and expressed through cultural discourse, so, in this case of gender discourse, fixed gender role is culturally disseminated and internalize from generation to generation. This paper tries to analyse the gender construction within the dialectics of space and time existing in Lil Bahadur Chettri's *Mountains Painted with Turmeric* by making use of theories given by Henri Lefebvre, Michael Foucault and Edward Soja.

### **Lil Bahadur Chettri: A Brief Biography**

Lil Bahadur Chettri is a Nepali writer, recipient of Sahitya Academy Award for his book *Brahmaputra ko Cheu Chau*. His other book *Basain* is included in the curriculum of Tribhuvan University, Nepal. Lil Bahadur Chettri was originally from Nepal but settled in India later on. He was born in 1923 and a migrant himself, he understands the pain and plight of migrants who were uprooted from their own country and doesn't belong to the new country as well. He is considered as one of the most successful and popular novelist of Nepali language as he minutely observes the people and

condition and portrays them realistically as well. Chettri has sensitive eyes who could see the sufferings of marginalised and narrated the experiences vividly which can touch the human emotion and through this, he sensitizes and force the readers to think ethically. Though Chettri not only narrates about the darker sides of feudalism but also talks about the patriarchy that denies the women their basic rights.

### **Summary of the Novel**

The novel *Mountains painted in Turmeric* is set in the hills of far-eastern Nepal. It depicts the natural beauty, scenes from villages, life of village peasants and agricultural cycle along with the socio-cultural life style of the village peasants. The main character Dhane Basnet, is a farmer and stays in village with his wife Maina, sister Jhuma and a two- year old son. However, the life of a peasant is never easy; it has its own struggles and sufferings for existence. Dhane's happy life too is shattered when a tragedy falls into his family. The narration begins with the problem of Dhane who buys a buffalo hoping to feed his son with milk and earn some money. However, as ill luck would have it his buffalo dies and he is unable to repay the debt to moneylender. As observed by Hutt, "Chettri portrays the Dukha or suffering and sorrow, endured by ordinary peasants; the exploitation of the poor by the rich and powerful and the social conservatism that twists a community into punishing a woman for being the victim of a crime. Chettri also describes the impoverishment dispossession and banishment of Dhane's family to expose profound divisions between those who prosper and those who are slowly stripped of their meager possessions." (2008, Cover page).



Simultaneously, there is another narration with Jhuma who meets a soldier, a migrant from the neighbouring village and gradually she falls in love with him. They share a very close relationship which was not liked by Karki, another boy from the village who likes Jhuma very much and always tries to save Jhuma from any kind of trouble. Unfortunately, Jhuma an innocent village girl could not understand the ill motive behind the soldier and falls into his trap. Though Karki tries to help Jhuma and his brother but fails to do so. With lots of monetary burden Dhane loses his livestock, his field and house to repay the loan. In the meantime Jhuma too is ditched by the soldier who leaves impregnating her. Discovering this Jhuma goes to commit suicide but is ultimately saved by Karki who not only offers her shelter but also proposes her to marry him. The novel ends with Dhane leaving his village with the family hoping for a better future somewhere else. In this sense the writer, Lil Bahadur Chettri provides a voice to the subaltern voiceless.

### **Theorizing Space: with Special Reference to Postmodernism**

The postmodern concept of space challenges the Cartesian dialectics; space as physical, static and fixed, rather it supports Foucauldian notion of space as fluid, multidimensional and always in flux. Space is not necessarily a geographical entity rather it can be mental/psychological. However, may it be physical or psychological, space is never innocent as it is always replete with human desire and aspiration, and hence it is always controlled by certain ideologies. As rightly said by Gramsci to create “hegemony”

one needs to naturalize certain dominating ideologies and this is true in case of Indian patriarchal society where women are negotiating every day to sustain themselves in a male dominated culture. In Postmodern era specifically, since 1960s scholars started questioning the space. Any understanding between human agency and social structure necessarily involves space and hence, space is never innocent as it is always replete with human desire aspiration etc. and above all it marginalizes certain groups. As aptly conveyed by Rose "No space is free from human intent, desire or imagination." (1996). Foucault once said 'a whole history remains to be written of spaces '(quoted in Gordon 1980:149). Space is a value filled entity. Hence, space becomes a passive locus/container for social action, events and processes, the 'unchanging backdrop against which life is played out' (Lefebvre 1991, quoted in Mitchell 2000: 215). Additionally, Edward Soja, the writer of *Third Space* said, "space has to be increasingly perceived as humanly constitute and socially produced" (Soja, 1989).

Space can have multiple connotation/meanings. Similarly, at times female body too acts as space which is always controlled by men's ideology. Women always try to claim a space for themselves where they can enjoy the liberty, freedom and can have their own identity. However, seeking a space in society especially patriarchal society is not easy as space is normally gendered, of course gendered space is not natural but socially constructed. For example, private and public spaces are normally accepted as female and male space respectively. Women must occupy the private space, for example, look after one's family and household things and men will go out to manage outside business especially they

have the responsibility to earn money working outside. Though this segregation is not natural but man-made provisions, but it is preached and practiced for years in such a way that it has become a natural phenomenon. Saraswati Raju is of the opinion that "most of the activity spaces, inside/outside, private/public, home/markets, etc., are neither simple sexually segregated geographical locations nor are they mutually exclusive- the binaries are interchangeable and in constant flux and yet across cultures, these spaces are replete with meanings connoting a hierarchical order of power in which women get associated with inside, private and home... " (Introduction,1).

The superior position of man is prominently visible in the text and at the same time the concept of outside or public space is aptly discussed by the writer. The male characters may it be Dhane or the soldier or the landlord or Karki, all of them are involved in public space and important decisions are made by them as well. So, mostly women are restricted to an enclosed space of house and normally do not have access to public space and especially that space which is highly valued in any society for example space for education which a woman is deprived of for since a long time. So, they hardly contribute anything to the decision making process.

### **Female Body as Physical and Mental Space**

As already mentioned space is not necessarily geographical space, but sometimes it is psychological and yet at another level it is a physical body. Women's body too is considered as space as she has to act according to the moral values set by

patriarchy even though the physical space is divided into private and public space and private space is meant for female while public space is meant for male but the decision what to do and how to do is decided by male. The Physical movement of the woman is always supervised and controlled by the male. Body is always perceived as sexual object by men. Men control the women sometimes by coercive majors and exploit her body. Rape is one of the ways to suppress and subjugate woman. The popular Indian myth of Ramayan too has the similar evidence. When Surpanakha expressed her love for Ram her nose and ears were chopped off by Laxman and her body was disfigured just to make her helpless and docile because women's expression of self is never tolerated in a patriarchal society. Similarly, Jhuma's aspiration for freedom is never encouraged.

Physical space is also created socially and thus behaviour, household chores, family hierarchy become utmost importance. Men/women are divided into inside /outside binaries. Here, the concept of threshold comes into existence. Many myths and stories are associated with it. One of the myths/symbol which is much discussed and popular is Laxman Rekha. In jungle before leaving Sita alone Laxman drew three *rekhas* /straight lines and instructed Sita not to go beyond that. However, when Ravan came as a disguise of a hermit she crossed the three lines to give him alms and she was abducted by Ravan. She faced terrible problems after that. This myth is used to teach women the inside/outside binaries. If a lady crosses the limit of Laxman Rekha she has to suffer. It denotes a strong sense of that which is 'inside' and that which is 'out there'. The similar thing we observe in Jhuma and Maina's case. Jhuma tries to go beyond the

Laxman Rekha by befriending with and dating a soldier and as a result calamities befall upon her. This is what Maina shouted at her when she came to know about the plight of Jhuma. As rightly said by Gramsci “hegemony” is created through ideology and that ideology was made naturalized by certain ways where people imbibe those things as natural and act according to that. In this case Maina too believes that Jhuma transgressed the boundaries meant for women and thus faced all the sufferings.

“Unable to restrain herself, Maina went outside and began to hurl abuse at Jhuma...Then the friends who once embraced her would abhor her. Voices would surround her, saying “Sinner! Sinner!” (2008, p.79). However, in this inside/outside boundary the concept of threshold became the utmost importance. It is a real as well as a symbolic bar marking a critical transition. “Men have, traditionally; passed over the threshold unchallenged and partaken of both worlds where as women have been expected to inhabit only the one world contained by the boundaries of home. For women, a step over the bar is an act of transgression. Having committed that act, they may never re-enter their designated first world making the other world their permanent space. And alien to the previous world. The law therefore allows multiple existences for men, a single for women.” (Lal, 12). As is evident in the case of Jhuma, sister of Dhane. Threshold as dichotomies will be there and she has to decide whether to remain inside or go outside to find her freedom and identity. But once she discovers that she is pregnant she goes to commit suicide and is saved by Karki. Instead of coming back home they decide to create their own home somewhere else, as they strongly believe that Jhuma would never be accepted by neither the

villagers or by the family members. Thus, they leave the village for good along with it the hegemonic social order where tradition, custom, rituals were important than the life of a human being. The space outside is thus a male domain which Jhuma is unable to negotiate and she has no other alternative but to submit to the male dominance.

In her book, *Living the Body: Embodiment, Womanhood and Identity in Contemporary India*, Meenkashi Thapan contends that, “We are embodied socially through our location in a socio-cultural and political space. In this sense, we are located in time and space, race, ethnicity and gender, and history and culture which shape and limit us in different. Our embodiment is therefore experienced in our everyday lives as lived *and communicative bodies*....we use our bodily senses to both perceive and give voice to our experience” (2-3).

The female bodies in action in the given *Mountain painted with Turmeric* are not only reified spaces where men execute their violence and control but they are also sites of contestation, resistance, transformation and negotiations. Where Jhuma represents ‘resisting’ and ‘deviant’ body; Maina represents ‘regulated’, ‘constrained’ and ‘disciplined’ bodies. Patriarchy, under the excuse of ‘norms’ and ‘cultural values’ makes sure to discipline and control the ‘overflowing’ and ‘dangerous’ female sexuality. Further, when Jhuma was pregnant and ditched by her lover, she didn’t bow down before the social and familial pressure rather she thought of leading a life of independence. The helplessness of her sister-in-law who treats her like a daughter could be seen significantly when she said, “What else can I do, Child? If her brother discovers this, he’ll throw her out! When I look at her

face, I do love her so. The tears slipped from Maina's eyes" (2008, p.75). And in return the patriarchy is seen in her brother's attitude who didn't take any initiative to find out his sister who left home, "Dhane answered her bluntly and then was silent: "if she is dead, we will hear of it. There's no need to search for her" (2008, p.87).

### **Body as Space of Resistance**

But it is also true that women constantly show resistance through these geographical and bodily spaces. "Resistance in fact is a double edged sword in women's lives, one with which they constantly articulate and exhibit their struggle but one which does not always enable complete success. Resistance, nonetheless, remains central to their lives whether or not it achieves social transformation" (Thapan 15). Jhuma's audacious and unapologetic discourse and her choice of explicit sexual innuendos regarding her body and its desires itself hint towards her resisting against patriarchy 'resisting body' to a 'submissive body' who gives up to her misfortune at last and instead of choosing over her desire, she succumbs to suffocating patriarchy and drifts deep into the forest. Jhuma did not object and the pair of them walked away from the bazaar towards a nearby hollow" (p. 33).

### **Conclusion**

The text *Mountain Painted with Turmeric* by Lil Bahadur Chettri shows how gender is socially constructed and how it

is constituted through repetitive, performativity of body. There is nothing natural and certain dominating ideologies are passed on from generation to generation through certain cultural discourses. One needs to understand and questions this subtle, implicit, hidden ideology that has been disseminated to a larger group since ages legalizing and naturalizing certain ideas that empower a certain group by marginalizing certain other.

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# **Polarized pluralistic model: Characteristics of Nepalese press**

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## **Abstract**

This paper presents a comparative study of Media System in the context of Nepal on the basis of Hallin and Mancini's study. The paper shows that the characteristic of Nepalese press match with the polarized pluralistic model, which is prevailed in Southern European states. This study also helps to understand the effect of political parallelism in professionalism of Nepalese press.

**Keywords:** Political system, Media, Polarized pluralist, Political parallelism, Professionalism.

## **Introduction**

Choosing a political system to large extent is like choosing a communication system (Sommerland, 1975). Nepal's political system has witnessed changes and continuity from autocratic ruling system to the democratically elected form of governance. It has witnessed the direct rule of the King Until April, 2006 and turned into a republic state with democratically elected government from 2008. Nepalese media have faced the brunt of censorships during the autocratic form of governing system, whereas it has also been

able to enshrine ‘full press freedom’ after adopting the Constitution of Nepal in 2015. Thus, the changing forms of political system in Nepal have resulted different approach of communication. So, understanding political system in the context of Nepal is also a way of understanding the media system. However, it is difficult to identify the model of press system that Nepal follows because it requires an intensive research. Research in the international front has identified similar patterns of model that has been adopted in Nepal. The model proposed by Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini (2004) in their work *Comparing Media System* is indeed a resourceful document in the context of Nepal to understand the media model. Based on the models proposed by Hallin and Mancini (2004) this paper seeks to understand that whether Nepalese media system can be incorporated under the model as defined or it requires some changes with respect to different society and political system of Nepal.

The study finds that Nepalese media system is highly similar to the Polarized Pluralistic model identified by Hallin and Mancini (2004). Nepalese media mark the similar characteristics of weaker historical development of commercial media and a strong role of the state. And other similar aspects are low circulation, high political parallelism, weaker professionalism, government subsidies and strong government intervention at times.

## **Media and Politics**

Scholars have attempted to understand the relationship between media and politics. They have tried to understand the

function of the press based on the political ideological grounds in the international front. One of the study, which remained highly influential was *Four Theories of Press* by Frederick S. Siebert, Theodore Peterson, and Wilbur Schramm in 1956.

It has been argued that the press takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structures within which they operate. Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm assumes that media is a dependent variable in relation to social system which it reflects. Media is also viewed as reflective or independent influential, especially in the political system. Therefore, Hallin and Mancini (2004) argued that *Four Theories of the Press should be given a decent burial* and move on to the development of more sophisticated models based on real comparative analysis.

Hallin and Mancini (2004) used the comparative analysis in their study to understand the relationship between media and political system of the United States, Canada, and most of the Northern and Western Europe.<sup>1</sup> They have identified three models in media system in their study; Liberal, Democratic Corporatist and Polarized Pluralist model.

Liberal Model prevails over Britain, Ireland, and North America and is characterized by the dominance of market mechanisms and commercial media, information oriented

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<sup>1</sup> Countries selected for the study are United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada, Ireland, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Netherland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain.

journalists, internal pluralism, professional model of broadcasting, self-regulation and market driven journalism in which, state can't interfere the media.

Democratic Corporatist Model is found in the countries of northern continental Europe i.e. Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. In these countries, media and commercial media were historically coexisted and tied to organized social and political groups in which the state has relatively active but legally limited role. Other features of this model are higher circulation of newspapers, external pluralism, development of commercial press, strong party press, strong state intervention with protection of press freedom, government subsidies and the existence of strong public broadcasting service.

Finally, Polarized Pluralist Model prevails in Mediterranean countries of southern Europe i.e. France, Italy, Greece, Portugal and Spain. The major characteristic of this model is the integration of media into party politics, with weaker historical development of commercial media and a strong role of the state. Other characteristics are low circulation, elite political orientation, high political parallelism, external democracy, commentary oriented journalism, government model of broadcasting, weaker professionalism, government subsidies and strong government intervention.

However, studying the characteristics of developing countries based on the models identified by Hallin and Mancini (2004) is not an easy task. Voltmer (2008) points out that the relationship between the media and their political, economic and cultural environment suggests the emerging democracies develop unique types of media system that significantly

differs from those of established democracies. On the other hand, partisan journalism also influenced the news content. Partisanship intrudes on news decisions to a measurable degree among both print and broadcast journalists at both the national and local levels (Patterson and Wolfgang, 1996).

Colin Spark talking about different model for Russia and China states that it is pretty obvious that most of the system in Central Europe fit well into the polarized political model that they identify as present in Mediterranean Europe, and it is fairly simple to generate a new, fourth, model-authoritarian corporatist-that can be used for Russia and, perhaps, even China (Spark, 2010).

Richani (2012) argues that the media market, political parallelism, state role and professionalism as identified in the West world as key component of media system may fail to reveal any pattern when applied to rest of the world.

Bringing into understanding of a model in the context of Nepal that suits as per the model discussed by Hallin and Mancini (2004), it is necessary to understand the historical press and political system and the society through which media has evolved.

### **Nepalese Politics and Media Environment**

Mass media in Nepal made its debut through state initiation. Nepali mass media have always been influenced by the political changes in the country (Adhikary, 2007). The development of mass media environment in Nepal can be

divided into different phases; a) Before 1951, b) from 1951 to 1960, c) from 1960 to 1979 d) from 1979 to 1990 and e) after 1990. It was only in 1851 with the arrival of printing press and publication of weekly newspaper Gorkhpatra in 1901 that marked the beginning of media in Nepal. This is the period of authoritarian Rana regime (1846-1950), that suppressed diverse opinion and opposition politics. Press which were allowed to run its affairs apart from state run, had to obtain license and criticism of the ruler was forbidden. Until the fall of Rana regime printing presses and publication houses were beyond the reach of people. Presses were in the grip of Ranas, their relatives, gurus and few rich individuals having pleasant relationship with the Ranas (Adhikary, 2007).

In a true sense, with the overthrow of the Ranas the press in Nepal started only in 1950, although crusading literacy journalism had started long before among the exiled Nepalese in India and a small-Nepali language press was also set up at the turn of the century among the Nepali diaspora in North and North-Eastern India (Adhikary, 2003).

Dahal (2015) argues that the practical history of newspapers began after the fall of Ranas in 1951, when several pioneering journalists took to publishing newspapers in a transitional democracy. After the revolution of 1951, opinion about for and against in Nepali Journalism started to flow freely (Dahal, 2015). However, thirty years period after the royal takeover in 1960 represented a repressive press system. The political parties were banned and active leadership of King prevailed. From 1979-1989 although the political parties were continued to be banned but newspapers became bolder and started to give an alternative political view. During this time, press

enjoyed limited rights and lobbied, to some extent, for a multiparty democracy that could guarantee press freedom (Kharel, 2006). Journalism was taken as a mission during the party less Panchayat era (Khanal, 2001). The Nepali press as it was then had very little room for criticism (Shrestha, 2003). Private media were also used to get advertisement and certain discount in newsprint from the government. Few journalists, who had close relationship with the government got printing press.<sup>2</sup> Mission journalism, which supported the democratic ideology got hindrance from government time and again. The private sector media had to struggle for survival at times even by compromising their interests with those in power.

Journalists were divided into two fractions; to support extremely and to do advocacy of people's right and freedom. Previous groups used government facilities whereas next groups faced physical attack, defame and punishment (Dahal, 2015). Self-censorship could have existed among journalists working in the privately-run media at the time. But, because most of these papers often had an ideological bent, it would be logical to assume that the content was not only influenced by government rules but also by the party affiliations of the editors and reporters (Bhattarai & Mainali, 2014).

The seed of political parallelism was thus sowed during this period, where journalists near to the political elite and supportive to the state were allowed to function. Media professionalism known as such today was irrelevant and press freedom was out of reach. Despite the rise in quantity in number of newspapers and media outlets, Nepalese press still

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2 Tirtha Koirala, personal communication, 2 May, 2013.



suffers the accusation of being partisan and lack of professionalism. Nepalese media scholars have observed that partisan press have affected Nepalese journalists and their professionalism where Nepal continues to have partisan media because media willingly function in such manner (Aditya 1996, p. 66-67; Kharel 2010, p. 67-68). After 1990, print industry becomes one of the competitor industry and increases professionalism in contents too (Acharya, 2014).

Until 1990s mass media in Nepal was considered to be a national project. The change in political system in 1990s from party less Panchayat System to multiparty democratic system heralded the rise of media outlets<sup>3</sup> in Nepal, with private investment. The political change came as a major landmark in opening up a new era of liberalism and freedom in the country (Shrestha, 2003). After the restoration of democracy in 1990, the environment of professional journalism with large investment in media sector developed. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal (1990) formally guaranteed the freedom of press and publication as fundamental rights in Article 12 and 13. It change in legal system: second is the increasing involvement of private party and NGOs in both media production and education; third is cumulative growth in the media advisement market; fourth is the growth in the number of Nepal is who consume media products; and fifth is the imperative of the Nepali Language (Onta, 2006). And daily

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3 Media outlets in Nepal: according to Press Council Nepal report 2017, 863 published newspapers among with 183 are daily and 636 are weeklies with total registration of 3865; according to ministry of communication and information technology (accessed January 8, 2019) radio granted license is 740 and television license granted number is 116.

papers like Kantipur and Kathmandu Post begin to publish from 1993. The restoration of multiparty democracy in 1990s has boosted media industry in Nepal. It was since this period media houses were granted licenses which resulted to mushrooming growth for newspapers, Frequency Modulation (FM) radio and private television channels in Nepal.

However, Nepal was caught in the civil war since 1996 when armed rebel Communist party of Nepal (Maoist) announced war against the state. The effect of Maoist rebel started to be felt since 2001 after its attack on army barrack in Dang district. Later the state declared state of emergency, where fundamental rights of the citizens were curtailed. Journalists those who supports the Maoist were either arrested or killed. During the emergency period, more than 106 journalists were arrested and nine journalists were killed (Kafle, 2003). Nepalese press faced problems and challenges both by the state and the Maoist rebel during this period until 2006. The frequent skirmishes between the leaders of political parties and the press tell of deep distrust between the two. Time and again reporters have been taken into custody, arrested or detained on flimsy grounds and journalists have been harassed, manhandled, maimed, kidnapped and even murdered. The accusations against the state media regarding news blackouts, falsifying information and muffling the public voice, instead of dying out gradually has ironically, reached new heights (Shrestha, 2003).

Despite all the constitutional guarantees, violations continued. The press was gagged when King Gyanendra took direct control of power in 2005, citing that the government could not maintain law and order situation and Communist

Party of Nepal Maoist which had waged People's War since 1996. The Royal government passed Media Ordinance in October, 2005 to silence media in Nepal. The royal regime treated journalists and press in an uncivilized and imprudent way. Independent Nepalese media became victim of such a treatment of the royal regime directly (Gaule, 2006).

The People's Movement-II of 2006 that restored the Parliament, Constituent Assembly election turned Nepal into a republican state. Now the country is governed by a new Constitution, which guarantees the press freedom and freedom of expression as people's fundamental rights<sup>4</sup>.

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4 Right to communication: (1) No publication and broadcasting or dissemination or printing of any news item, editorial, feature article or other reading, audio and audio-visual material through any means whatsoever including electronic publication, broadcasting and printing shall be censored.

Provided that nothing shall be deemed to prevent the making of Acts to impose reasonable restrictions on any act which may undermine the sovereignty, territorial integrity, nationality of Nepal or the harmonious relations between the Federal Units or the harmonious relations between various castes, tribes, religions or communities, or on any act of sedition, defamation or contempt of court or incitement to an offence, or on any act which may be contrary to public decency or morality, on any act of hatred to labour and on any act

The launch of private news media has changed the mediascape in Nepal. The last two decades show corporate and business interest has risen than ever before, “almost all major media in Nepal are the result of diagonal (conglomerate) ownership, with proprietors already having other businesses before venturing into the media business” (Kharel, 2012).

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of incitement to caste-based untouchability as well as gender discrimination.

(2) No radio, television, on-line or other form of digital or electronic equipment, press or other means of communication publishing, broadcasting or printing any news item, feature, editorial, article, information or other material shall be closed or seized nor shall registration thereof be cancelled nor shall such material be seized by the reason of publication, broadcasting or printing of such material through any audio, audio-visual or electronic equipment. Provided that nothing contained in this clause shall be deemed to prevent the making of an Act to regulate radio, television, online or any other form of digital or electronic equipment, press or other means of communication.

(3) No means of communication including the press, electronic broadcasting and telephone shall be interrupted except in accordance with law.

On the other hand, there remains political parallelism and lack of professionalism in the Nepalese press.

In its strict sense, "profession" refers to a certain small class of occupations with special characteristics that set them apart from mere trades or business. These professional occupations are afforded special privileges and high status (Hodges, 1986). According to Bacon (2000), professions are historically understood as a "privileged class of occupations," characterized by discourses that suggest highly trained expertise, selection by merit, and peer surveillance of ethical or rigorous application of that expertise (Bacon, 2000).

The articulation of this social and cultural authority through an institutionalised formation of journalism as a "profession" has underlined contemporary attempts to privilege the role of the journalist and its responsibilities. Understanding of journalistic professionalism has revolved around the acknowledgement of the centrality of news production to contemporary political, social and cultural governance (Bossio, n.d.).

Party journalism will create various side effects on a capable journalist among which five major effects are given below; first, there will be no self-conscious in party journalist. They have to analyze the in portal subject matter on the basic of party thought. The party will teach to criticize the truth which is not in favor of the party. Slave psychology will be developed slowly in these journalists. They will never believe in their capacity rather dream to rise above on someone's favor of (Acharya, 2017).

Politicization continues to overwhelm the media sector. The media, no matter state-owned or privately run, have not been able to make departure from political obligations (Khanal, 2001). The media looked and analyzed these events and issues in their own way but sadly mostly from partisan angles (Shrestha, 2003).

Media is getting increasingly aligned with one or the other side of the political poles, will have far less positive impact that a professional and objective media could have contributed in the process (Ghimire, n.d.). Parties press also flourishes. There is some truth in the belief that if one is to get reliable information on a particular issue, then one must read papers that are mouthpieces of the ruling party, the opposition and those that are presumably neutral and then form an opinion (Shrestha, 2003). Shrestha stated that even a casual look into its present state of affairs shows that it is still afflicted by two basic maladies namely, the long-felt absence of a truly independent and competitive media in the private sector; and the other, the dominant role of the state-owned media.

Political affiliation has affected professionalism. The lack of professionalism, resulting from partisanship and low capacity, is another factor leading to self-censorship (Bhattarai and Mainali, 2014).

At present, Nepal has a new constitution, adopted after the elections of second phase of Constituent Assembly Elections in 2013. The Constitution of Nepal 2015, in its preamble has guaranteed 'full press freedom.' Nepal has also adopted the federalism as envisaged by the Constitution and has held three tiers of elections at the Federal, Provincial and Local level.

Nepalese media saw division during the elections of three tiers of government. The monitoring reports of elections on the three tiers of government by Center for Media Research Nepal (2017) shows that online news media was highly partisan flow of news whereas mainstream print media were quite neutral. It points out to the fact that political parallelism was widely witnessed in the online news media outlets in Nepal.

The government at the three tiers is in the process of drafting new laws regarding media. In the process of forwarding the draft media laws at different levels, there are some points in drafts laws which are against the articles about press freedom mentioned in the constitution (FNJ Annual Report, 2018). According to FNJ, there were 58 cases of press freedom violation noted in 2018 which is less than previous year. Although, this year became challenging because of legal side.<sup>5</sup>

### **Characteristics of Nepalese Press: Polarized Pluralistic Model**

Observing the historical phase of Nepalese media, the major characteristics of Nepalese press can be based on polarized pluralistic model of Hallin and Mancini. The historical development of media in Nepal clearly shows the emergence of Nepal's democratic transition from authoritarian system. Democracy was lately introduced despite some events which

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5 Condition of Nepalese press in 2018. Retrieved January 12, 2019 from <http://fnjnepal.org/en/>

have played a crucial role in the past by the King in affecting the democratic system. During the 39 years of democracy in the history of Nepal, none of the government could ever work for full five years' time due to the lack of political culture in political parties. After the Declaration of Constitution of Nepal from Constitution Assembly in 2015, holding local level, province level and federal level election and formation of present government in 2018 shows that political parties have succeeded to end political transition in the country.

Strong state interventions have been observed in the past, with restriction and censorship by the state authority in times. If we analyze the newspaper industry, political parallelism, professionalism, role of the state in media system we can observe the characteristics of Polarized pluralistic model in Nepal that are described below:

Characteristics	Nepal
Newspaper Industry	Low newspaper circulation; elite politically oriented. No exact data of circulation. According to Press Council Nepal, 3665 newspapers were registered but only 607 newspapers publish regularly. <sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Press Council Nepal Annual Report. Retrieved January 1, 2019 from <http://www.presscouncilnepal.org/np/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/final-report-48-final.pdf>



Political Parallelism	High Political parallelism; 13,050 journalists are affiliated with the Federation of Nepalese Journalist, however, more than 24000 journalists are affiliated to partisan media organization group.
Professionalization	Weaker professionalization; Big media houses are comparatively better than small and partisan media. Even though, they have problems. Journalists have difficulties in getting minimum wage in media houses.
Role of the state in Media system	Strong state intervention has been observed in the past as there were period of censorship. State provides subsidies in newsprint and also provides advertisements to the media houses. State is the largest advertiser occupying one fourth of the total advertising industry.
Political History Patterns of Conflict and Consensus  Individual Vs Organized Pluralism	Late democratization Polarized pluralism, Mixed (consensus among major political parties and rest are polarized) politics.

State has been providing subsidies to the media houses, more liberal to the press than the broadcast. Government provides subsidies to the press, deduction of tax for press in the newsprints, also by providing advertisement to the media. Nepal government is the largest advertiser in Nepal that occupies one- fourth of the total advertising industry, with amount of Rs.1 billion in advertisement (Prajapati, 2013).

Another characteristic is low newspapers circulation. Only some professional papers have high circulation. Kantipur Daily, largest selling newspaper of Nepal, claimed circulation 448,000<sup>7</sup> which covers 1.69 percent of the total population. The overall print circulation is low because of the difficult geographical terrain, the high recurring costs for both publishers and readers, and the adult literacy rate at only around 60 percent of the population. Newspapers are mainly sold in the Kathmandu Valley and cities, thus having a greater impact on political and policy issues (Acharya, 2016).

Publishers often exaggerate their claimed their circulation. The top circulating dailies are generally oriented towards the center of the political spectrum, but no newspapers in Nepal publicly declare their political leaning.

In term of ownership, there are two types of media in Nepal; government and private. There are three categories in private media; commercial/professional, community and cooperative. Government runs Television, Radio,

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7 Kantipur. Retrieved 31 December, 2018 from <http://kmg.com.np/kantipur-publication/#Kantipur>.

Newspapers and News Agency. Ideally, these are autonomous but they are not autonomous in practice.

Some big media houses in Nepal like Kantipur Group, Nepal Republica House which dominates the mediascape are claimed to be professional. However, in certain instances their stance in certain news content are politically biased, and in most of the instances economic factor influences the news content of the media.

According to the study of Prajapati, those who received advertising from Dabur Nepal, ignored the news about the allegation that the Dabur Nepal products were substandard, whereas those who did not get advertisements highlighted and extensively covered incidents that proved the Dabur Nepal products to have been of low quality. In both cases the news media were trying to protect their corporate interest (Prajapati, 2012).

Former News Chief of Kantipur Television argues that the main stream media are in illusion. They have no clear destination. There is one kind of anarchism.<sup>8</sup> And many small media, community media and cooperative media are also not free from partisan interest. These have affected the professionalism of the press. Another problem that has marred the media industry is that journalists are unpaid for months, which have increased the tendency of highly paid news which are observed in the broadcast media houses.

Another factor that has affected professionalization is political parallelism. It is high in the context of Nepal, because

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8 Tirtha Koirala, personal communication, 2 May, 2013.

of high level of partisan interest in the news media. Research showed that journalists associated with weekly newspapers support a political ideology and political parties (Pathak, 2007), but its impact in the newsroom of daily newspapers are difficult to be addressed despite some claims made by the editors, who say there are political parties' cadres working in the daily newspapers.<sup>9</sup> Another study showed 17 percent journalists, who have political beat in daily newspapers, had parties' affiliation (K.C., 2014).

Many journalists are affiliate with the political parties' wing. The data of Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ) shows that 13,050 journalists are member of the organization.<sup>10</sup> According to the data provided by the political parties affiliated journalist organization reveals a shocking picture. Press Chautrari Nepal and Press Center Nepal affiliated to Communist Party of Nepal has 17,000 member journalists, Press Union affiliated to Nepali Congress has 7300 journalists as member.<sup>11</sup> Almost all political parties have journalist's organization. Politically Journalists were directly divided in FNJ election and political parties and government had keen interest and interferes in election. Alliance of Press Union (Journalists' organization who support Nepali Congress) and Press Center Nepal (Journalists' organization who support Nepal Communist Party -Maoist (Kendra) and others defeated

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9 Yuvaraj Ghimire claimed that journalists in the daily newspaper in Nepal were affiliated to political parties. Paper Presented in a program organized by Outline Media January 27, 2014.

10 Members. Retrieved 31 December, 2018 from <http://fnjnepal.org/en/page/members>

11 Ganesh Basnet, President of Press Chautari Nepal, Ajaya Babu Shiwakot, General secretary of of Press Union, personal communication in January 1, 2019.

the Journalists, who supported Nepal Communist Party (UML).

There is weaker development of rational-legal authority. Press council Nepal has major responsibility to monitor journalistic code of conduct. It does not have sufficient infrastructures and manpower to monitor Television and Radio. There is not strong self-regulation mechanism. Many Media houses don't prepare own code of conduct for the journalists and don't keep ombudsman. Therefore, there are problems in media.

Government run Rastriya Samacha Samitee (New Agency, Radio (Radio Nepal), Television (Nepal Television), News papapers (Gorkhapatra, The Rising Nepal). These media play of mouthpiece of state. Government provides financial support to different organizations of Journalists. In 2017 Government allocated RS.3.8 million for Journalists and publishers' organizations.<sup>12</sup>

The Nepali government spends a considerable amount of public funds each year in the name of public welfare advertising. According to the Red Book of 2014-2015, it earmarked NRs 16, 16, 25,000 to distribute to the Nepali media in return for carrying welfare advertising across multiple mediums (Maharjan, 2014). The study showed that the various policy measures related to welfare advertising have used public welfare advertising as a front for financially supporting the various media institutions. The disregard for

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12 The lists of organizations to whom Ministry of Communication distributed RS.3.8 million (Sanchar Mantralayale 38 lakh Ka Kaslai Badeo (Suchi Sahit). Retrieved January 1, 2019 from <https://www.onlinekhabar.com/2017/06/602037>.

the true purpose of welfare advertising and the benefits it can offer to the general public has meant that large amounts of the public funds have been misused (Maharjan, 2014).

## **Conclusion**

Media and political system have strong relationship with each other because one system has impact on another and vice versa. From the very beginning of the development of media and political system till date both have faced ups and down. The overall study shows that the characteristics of media is basically very much similar to the pluralist polarized system. But, time and again the characteristics of other models like tendency of corporate media system and liberal model has been noticed. Most of the Nepalese media and journalists have direct or indirect connection with political parties. Majority of journalists have affiliation with the journalists' organization which are proved and guided by political parties. The number of journalists taking membership of organization guided by political parties is far more than the membership of Federation of Nepalese Journalists. Ruling parties and opposition parties used to have direct interference in the candidate selection process and during the election period of Federation of Nepalese Journalists. State runs news agency, radio, TV and newspaper by itself and. The changes in government have impact in leadership and content of government run media. In crucial situation, media and journalists who claim to be professional show political biasness.

The constitution has guaranteed the press freedom but there is problem while practicing it. The act of violation of freedom is

seen time and again. Media have faced censorship during the royal takeover period. This shows that media and government have tussle between them. While there was threat to democracy and democracy was collapsed by the king media have also conducted mission journalism to support democracy. In the recent time, various media related laws and policies is being formulated at central, province level and local level but there are some provisions which curtails freedom of expression and press.

In conclusion, Nepal highly falls under the pluralist polarized model, with weaker historical development of commercial media and a strong role of the state, which has low circulation, high political parallelism, weaker professionalism, government financial support and strong government intervention at times. Although Nepal is now a republic country and there is provision of press freedom in constitution the study shows that it is very difficult to maintain standard and professionalism in journalism

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# **Secularism - An Impractical Idea**

Govinda K. Shah

## **Abstract**

The article explores the various meanings and concepts of secularism presented by famous ideologues and sociologists of their time. Two contrary concepts of the secularism - one that defines secularism as denial of existence of religions or supernatural forces and another that defines secularism as concept of peaceful co-existence and mutual harmony has been discussed here. The difference of application of secularism on the individual human being and a state is also explained here. The article concludes that no state of human being can remain isolated or indifferent from the influence of religion even if they want. None of the concepts of secularism apply in real life performances; neither on individual nor state.

**Keywords:** Secularism, Religion, Christianity, Church, State, Communist, Atheist, Humanity

## **Introduction**

Defining secularism is a very complex task. Secularism is not simply a concept, as understood widely, where the government of nations and their entities keep religion separate from state affairs. Secularism is something much more complex than this widely advertised definition. Does secularism mean elimination of religion? Is it merely a

separation of state and religion? Could a human being really be secular completely denying the existence of god? Even if one denies the existence of religion, could he/she live a life completely detaching himself/herself from the judgments, which is shaped by religion? Numerous questions can be raised when it comes to define secularism.

Defining the word - secularism has become a complex task because on the one hand, secularism has been emerging as an idea of denial of religion while on the other hand, secularism has been also emerging as an idea of tolerance and mutual coexistence among the various religions of the world. The first idea tries to completely eliminate the existence of god. This idea tends to develop the concept of secularism in the way where there is no place for any supernatural power at all while the second idea does not reject the idea that there is the existence of gods in this world. Hence, this idea attempts to explain the secularism in the way, which beliefs in creating a state of peaceful and mutual co-existence between the followers of the different religions within a single society. These two ideas are opposite of each other, but both ideas are being practiced in current scenario simultaneously in the globe. This very fact makes the task of defining secularism a complex one and challenging for thinkers/scholars. The latter part of this article attempts to explain the various concepts of secularism and present a clear picture on it.

## Overview

Professor of National University of Singapore TEN CHIN LIEW defines secularism with two different views, which are

conflicting with one another. The first view is of the 'perspectival secularism' and the second is of the 'state secularism'. Heng & Ten (2010) describe perspectival secularism as it is an alternative to the religious perspective in that it finds no place for the God. In contrary, scholars like Liew defines state secularism as an idea, which does not seek the elimination of religion; rather it confines the scope and application of the application.

Perspectival secularism is indeed hostile to religion and is an alternative to religious perspectives in that it finds no place for the God of traditional religions or the afterlife. The secular perspective regards itself as superior to all religious outlooks, which will eventually disappear. But state secularism is a different view that defines the proper functions and limits of the state. It does not seek to eliminate religion, but to confine its scope and application in various ways and for various reasons (Heng & Ten, 2010).

French Philosopher August Comte in his doctrine of Religion of Humanity passes a similar idea with 'Perspectival secularism'. He stressed on building a kind of the society where there is no place for god and supernatural power. "While the different forms of deism preserve the idea of God and dissolve religion into a vague religiosity. Comte proposes exactly the contrary: a religion with neither God nor the supernatural" (Bourdeau, 2008). Explaining further the doctrine of Religion of Humanity, an influential British Philosopher John Stuart Mill further said that there is no need of supernatural belief. The main thing is in the development of humanity and, serving and worshiping humanity is the religion of humanity. Moreover, he accuses that the

unfortunate tendency in supernatural religion hinders the development not only of our intellectual, but also of our moral nature. Mill argues that much of the apparent social utility of religion derives not from its dogma and theology, but to its inculcation of a widely accepted moral code, and to the force of public opinion guided by that code. The belief in a supernatural power may have had some utility in maintaining that code, but is no longer needed and may indeed be detrimental (Wilson, 2002).

A prominent English philosopher of seventeenth century, John Locke in one of his popular write-up, 'A Letter concerning Toleration' also gives an idea of secularism but contrary to the former ideas. He believes in the existence of gods or supernatural power and so advocates for respecting the different opinion on religion. "Tolerating those who differ from us in matters of religion is so fitting to the Gospel and to reason that it seems monstrous for men to fail to see this clearly" (Locke, 1689). He wrote the said letter during that period when all over in Europe, the rulers were forcing all their citizens to adopt Christianity. The rulers also had been even using the coercive methods to force people pray to Jesus and perform the Church rituals. During that critical period, Locke raised his voice against ruler in order to aware them to not impose a specific religion to every citizen of their governing territory because if the rulers do that, it is very much possible that they may impose a wrong religion. Until there are no other different opinion makers existing in society, the invention of better ideas is impossible. His idea of respecting different religious groups is similar to the idea of secularism termed as 'state secularism' by Liew, which

accepts the existence of god but advocate for mutual co-existence of different religion.

However, there are numbers of other prominent philosophers and sociologists who, unlike the idea of Locke, out rightly reject the existence of God or any kind of supernatural power. Most revered thinkers like Comte, Durkheim, Freud, Marx, and Weber all have a common thought on religion. All of them reject of the idea of the existence of religion in the wake of their own analytical grounds.

During the age of the industrial revolution in the 18th Century in England, the society was changing rapidly towards modernization, capitalization and urbanization. Mode of production, which has changed due to technological advancement, has also changed the perspective of human towards religion. The growing dependency and belief in science, a new system of financial management led Durkheim to forecast the inevitable disbelief on supernatural religion in future. “Durkheim described it as an age in which the influence of the old gods of traditional religion was being replaced by new, more scientific ways of understanding the world” (Lynch, 2012).

It must also be mentioned here that the complexity of secularism also dragged the revolutionary philosopher Sigmund Freud, who is famous for eroticism, to have a say on it. Freud has also strongly opposed the existence of religion. Until his lifetime, he lived being an atheist. He never believed in any kind of religion or faith system. He has mentioned his strong objection to a religious belief system in many of his works. One of his highly popular works 'In the Future of an



Illusion', he described belief in God as a collective neurosis: he called it 'longing for a father' (Edmundson, 2007).

Karl Marx, who is considered the father of communism is also famously known strong opponent of religious system. He explained religion as a tool of oppression in the capitalist system of production. According to Marx, religion is something created by the bourgeois to exploit the proletariat. Religion is one the superstructure resulted due to the capitalist mode of production. He suggests that the abolition of religion is necessary to end the domination. He even pronounced religion as opium.

Religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people. The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is the demand for their real happiness. To call on them to give up their illusions about their condition is to call on them to give up a condition that requires illusions. The criticism of religion is, therefore, in embryo, the criticism of that vale of tears of which religion is the halo (Marx, 1844).

Poet and philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche's insight towards religion is that "without blood, torture and sacrifice, including 'disgusting mutilations', what we know as 'modern psychology' would never have arisen. All religions are at bottom systems of cruelty" (Nietzsche, Ansell-Pearson & Diethe, 2006). He opines that every man should be kept sovereign. No religion should direct a man how to live. There are no rules for human, no absolute norms and no certainty

upon which human should rely. People would be more moral, more honest and more disciplined in the world without religion as all religions are at bottom systems of cruelty.

French writer Voltaire has made a straightforward statement in support of religious tolerance in his letter on England. If one religion only were allowed in England, the Government would very possibly become arbitrary; if there were but two, the people would cut one another's throats; but as there is such a multitude, they all live happy and in peace (Voltaire, 1778).

This response of Voltaire was against the Kingdom of England, who was trying hard to establish a single religion as the religion of its entire citizen. His statement not only criticizes loudly the attempt of making a state of a single religion but also justifies the necessity of multi-religion in order to maintain peace in society.

Max Weber in his work 'the sociology of religion describes, "Secular philosophy was a very important component of religious development. Hence, we must now examine more closely the mutual relationships of priests, prophets, and non-priests" (Weber, Roth & Wittich, 2013)

Wrapping up the famous ideas presented by the above-mentioned ideologue and philosophers, secularism could be defined in two ways. The first way is denial of god and second way is not denying the existence of the god or any kind of similar divine entity, rather to accept and respect all other ideologies on god. The concept of secularism should be distinguished as 'secular human' and 'secular state'. Being secular human and being secular state are two different things. Individuals and states must be considered separately while

defining secularism. To be a secular human being, s/he must deny the existence of God completely. To be a secular state, she can adopt two ways. Either she can completely deny existence of god and dissociated herself with religion or she can accept the existence of god and adopt the secularism as a way of peaceful co-existence and mutual harmony. In conclusion, there are two different essences of secularism. First essence is to completely eliminate the god and supernatural factors. There should not be any position for supernatural religion in the world. An individual secular human being mainly follows this essence while the second essence of secularism accepts the presence of religion; but not only one religion. It stresses on mutual co-existence of different religions in world. A secular state follows this essence.

But, in my personal opinion, secularism is mere an ideology, it is not pragmatically possible. Neither a human being, nor a state could actually be secular. An individual or a state may claim itself secular, but it's not possible to be secular to the extent defined by above philosopher. Let think of a human being who claim him/herself secular. S/he may deny the existence of god. S/he may not believe on any supernatural power. S/he may also not follow the religious ritual. S/he may not visit any temple, mosque, church or any center of devolution. But s/he could not deny the way of living in which his/her society is living. Human lives in a family. Families live under a social structure. Every family and every society have certain rules under which they survive. The rules dictate the different roles and duties of family members. From birth to death, an individual should perform his/her duties according to a set rule created by society. One should marry,

give birth to a child, grow up the child, look after the old parent and this cycle is performed by every generation. And an individual cannot perform this all duties in the absence of a faith, which basically has been inculcated by religion in the society. Even one wants, it's not possible because the source of the rules comes from religion.

A society creates rules and duties for an individual on the basis of religious faith. It doesn't matter how much secular one is, no one could isolate religion from the society. Society always defines the way of living life, making religion the base. Thus, all individuals who live under a society cannot isolate him/her from the influence of religion. S/he may claim him/herself secular, but could not be secular in real life performance.

Similarly, talking about a secular state, it is also not practically possible. First of all, we must look into the fact that there are many states in this world those have an official religion. According to Pew Research Centre, there are at least 30 countries in this world those should have a head of state from a particular religion (Theodorou, 2014). These are the states, which have declared a particular religion as her official religion. But, let us look at the differences in theory and practices of the countries which constitution says them secular state.

There are many countries representing from Europe, East Asia and South-East Asia, Middle East and Africa including America whose constitution says that their state will not discriminate her citizen on the basis of religion, all the religion will be treated equally. But, it is not true in practice. Every state having official secular constitution also follows a

particular religion. Secular states must have to follow the religion of the majority of her citizens. After all, the majority always decides the state affairs. Taking about the oldest and most powerful democracy United States, The President always should use the Bible in oath taking ceremony. Constitutionally, it is not necessary to take oath on the Bible, but every president did the same. President Thore Rosevelt was only exception, who did not take oath on Bible in 1901. Similarly, also in the world's one of oldest democracy; the Great Britain, there is still a role of the Church of England. "The Church of England also has a law-making role in Britain. Twenty-six bishops (including the two Archbishops) sit in the House of Lords and are known as the Lords Spiritual. They are thought to bring a religious ethos to the secular process of law" ("BBC - Religions - Christianity: Church of England", 2011). Let us analyze the Article 53 of the Polish Constitution, it says that freedom of conscience and religion shall be ensured to everyone. Furthermore, in the same article, it is mentioned, "the religion of a church or other legally recognized religious organization may be taught in schools, but other peoples' freedom of religion and conscience shall not be infringed thereby" ("The Constitution of the Republic of Poland", 1997). We must notice that it gives special focus on religion of the church. Also, Polish Government provides public holiday during whole Christmas, but not in Jews or another minorities' festival. Most of the other European Nations do the same. Why? The simple reason is that Christianity in Europe is a religion of the majority.

Similar things happen in Nepal. Nepal has been a recently declared as the secular country. Despite its declaration, the president of Nepal participates in all the festival of Hindus as

it practiced earlier in non-secular situation. In some festival, Presidents' participation is mandatory. One may ask about People's Republic of China, which prohibits religion by the constitution. But, is it possible to eradicate the thoughts of Tao or Confucius, which is still inherent in the life of Chinese people? No, it is not possible to simply eliminate the faith of a society. Thus, I would say that like a human being, a state being secular is also not possible.

## **Conclusion**

Any of a human being can claim him/her a secular human being. Any of a state claims herself a separate. However, none of any states of human beings can actually remain secular in real life world.

Still it does not mean that all the explanations made on secularism by afore-mentioned great ideologue and philosophers should be avoided out rightly. Though, their conclusion of complete denial of god and keeping faith on many religions is less effective; the context and the analytical framework, based on which the philosophers have floated their ideas, must be considered positively. Locke and Voltaire's argument for respecting all other religion and multitude comes on the forth ground where the states were aggressively spreading Christianity, enforcing her citizens to believe in one god and adopt a certain way of praying or faith keeping. In this context, the argument made by them was a very much necessary argument of the time. Similarly, Marx's interpretation of religion as tool of suppression, Durkheim forecast of the end of religion because of development of

science and Freud explanation of religion as something like longing for father have strong analytical framework. The basis of their conclusion is not wrong. But, real life world does not seem to follow the way defined or forecasted by any of these philosophers. Even in the height of the scientific era, human beings as well as states like to be associated with religions.

However, the above ideas of secularism have a great contribution in changing the political system in many countries across the world including Nepal. Raising the awareness of people led people to revolt against the states, which tried to enforce religion on the state affairs. During the medieval period, goals of states and goal of Churches used to be the same. States and the Churches had been closely tied-up. The decision of state affairs was used to be made according to direction from churches. Gradually, people started to revolt against the Church, which gave the birth of the new idea of separation of state and Church.

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# **Situation of Intimate Partner Violence among University Female Students in Nepal: Findings of a Cross-Sectional Survey**

Bhagabati Sedain

## **Abstract**

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is one of the most common forms of violence in our society. Intimate partner violence among Nepali female university students, in particular, has not yet been studied. Therefore, across-sectional survey was conducted among female students studying in bachelors and masters level at Padmakanya Campus using structured and semi-structured questionnaires. A total of 370 participants were randomly selected and data were collected from the 1 December 2013 to 30 January 2014. One-thirds of the respondents were married. Married participants reported about their violence experience perpetrated by their husbands. The prevalence of emotional violence 40% was higher than physical 33% and sexual violence 20%. Women with land-ownership, employed, members of community groups and those who were married to husbands with the higher level of education were less likely to experience physical violence. Women who did not own land (OR=2.92), unemployed(OR=1.21) were more likely to experience violence than those who owned land and were employed. Similarly, lower level of husband's education (OR=3.35) and unskilled jobs (OR=1.56) were associated with the higher occurrence of violence compared to their husbands having university level of education and government job or working abroad. Prevalence of IPV is common among educated girls.

Efforts to reduce IPV should give priority for educated women in Nepal.

**Keywords** - Emotional violence, Intimate Partner Violence, physical violence, sexual violence, survey, university female students

## Introduction

Highly educated Nepalese girl's and women's experience of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is lacking. There are some studies on experience of IPV, which have been undertaken in the recent years (Asia Foundation, 2010; Adhikari, & Tamang, 2010; Government of Nepal, 2012 & Puri et al., 2015). However, these studies presented data on the violence experience of rural, poor uneducated female respondents. This gap of information has created difficulties in getting the real picture of the IPV among educated girls and women in Nepal. The study by Hawkes et al. (2013) quoted that lack of education is the cause of IPV in Nepal.

Women and girls experience gender-based violence throughout their life from a fetus, infancy, childhood through adolescence, and adulthood to old age. Intimate Partner Violence is one of the most challenging and common forms of violence against women perpetrated by a husband or other intimate partner (Watts & Zimmerman, 2002). IPV severely impacts many girls and women in various forms including physical, psychological and sexual regardless of age, religion, ethnicity, culture, economic status, and geography and severely impacts many girls and women; yet this issue is

significantly under-reported (Palermo, Peterman & Peterman, 2014).

World Health Organization has defined IPV as "behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including acts of physical aggression, sexual coercion, and psychological abuse and controlling behaviours" (Butchart, Garcia-Moreno&Mikton, 2010). The physical violence ranging from slaps punches and kicks to assaults with a weapon and homicide and sexual violence includes forced sex and other forms of sexual coercion (WHO, 2012). The psychological violence has taken in different forms such as prohibiting a woman from seeing her family and friends, ongoing belittlement or humiliation, or intimidation; economic restrictions such as preventing a woman from working, or confiscating her earnings; and other controlling behaviours by an intimate partner (WHO, 2012). Multiple risk factors including early marriage, low level of education, low level of economic status, history of abuse during childhood, alcohol use, drug abuse, unequal power relations and conflicting marital relationship have been found to be associated with the IPV (Speizer& Pearson, 2012; Gass,Stein, William&Seedat, 20011). IPV has a severe negative impact short and long-term physical, mental, sexual health problems and social well-being of the victims as well as their family, with an adverse effect on parenting skills and on educational and employment outcomes (Staggs &Riger, 2005). Regarding its detrimental consequences on women's health, social life and economic welfare IPV is recognized as a global problem (WHO, 2005).

IPV is the most common hidden form of violence against women (Palermo, Peterman & Peterman, 2014). Prevalence of IPV varies by age; studies shows that adolescence and early adult married or cohabiting women are at high risk of intimate partner violence (Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise, Watts, 2006; Decker, et al.2014; Stöckl, March, Pallitto, & Garcia-Moreno, 2014). WHO's Multi-Country Study on women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women presented that globally 15-71 %of women experience intimate partner violence at some point in their lives (Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise, & Watts, 2006). The variation depends on factors such as cultural norm, social settings and laws that are favorable/unfavorable to gender inequity.

Intimate partner violence, particularly by a husband is one of the major violence in South Asia. Research findings indicated that poverty, low level of education, unemployment, alcohol consumption, witnessing violence in childhood, acceptance of violence, quarrelling between partners, work stress were the key factors associated with perpetrations of intimate partner violence (Jewkes,2002; Adhikari & Tamang, 2010; Fulu, et al.2013; Ellsberg, et al.2015).

World Health Organization's global and regional estimate of IPV showed that 30 % of all women who have been in a relationship have experienced physical and sexual violence by their intimate partner. According to Fulu, (2013), the lifetime prevalence of IPV among ever-partnered women was ranged from 25 %to 68 % in Asia-Pacific region. Similarly analysis of the South Asian countries' Demographic Health Surveys data revealed that 43%of women experienced intimate partner violence (Solotaroff & Pandey, 2014). Although information

on the IPV in the developing countries is limited, literature shows that Nepal is 11<sup>th</sup> among the 15 countries with the highest prevalence of physical intimate partner violence in the world (Solotaroff & Pandey, 2014). The Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) 2011 also found that one-third of Nepalese females suffered any form of violence 12 months preceding the survey. The data also revealed that about 28 % of ever-married women experienced sexual and physical violence from their husband (Tuladhar, Khanal, Ghimire, & Onta, 2013).

Most of the violence against women cases remains unreported, and the cases are settled without legal intervention due to social pressure on victims (Asia Foundation, 2010). Despite these challenges, some of the empirical evidence on violence against women presented that about 50% of Nepalese women experienced violence at some point of time; 75% of them were from intimate partners and 60 % of the victims never expressed their experiences to others (Government of Nepal, 2012). Likewise, another study on the prevalence and determinant of sexual violence against young married women by husband revealed that 46% of young married women experienced sexual violence by their husband in their life, and 31% experienced sexual abuse within the last 12 months of the study (Puri, Frost, Tamang, Lamichhane, & Shah, 2012).

Importance of research on IPV has been getting attention in Nepal. It is believed that the problem is prevalent largely among rural, poor and uneducated females. However, the level of education was not found to be significant determinant of intimate partner violence and violence transcend both

educated and uneducated women (Puri, Frost, Tamang, Lamichhane,& Shah, 2012).Therefore, this paper aims to provide evidence based information on the prevalence of IPV among university level female students in Nepal.

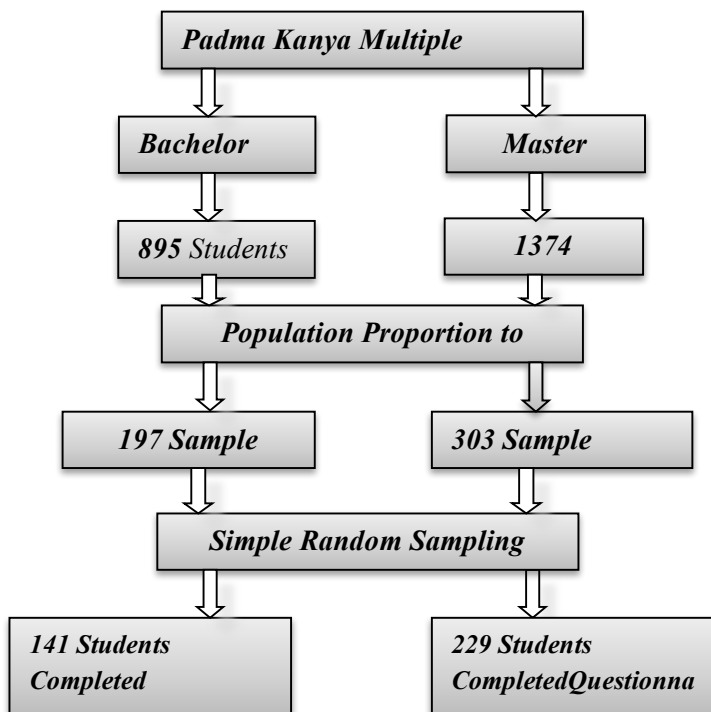
## **Methods**

### *Study area*

The cross-sectional study was carried out in among the sample students studying at Bachelor's and Master's level at Padmakanya Multiple Campus. About 3,000 female students from different parts of the country with different socio-economic status in Bachelor's and Master's level in 2013/14 academic year. Considering the higher representation of the educated Nepalese female population Padmakanya Multiple campus was selected.

### *Sample*

The sample population was selected irrespective of the age, ethnic group, and religion, place of residence, socio-economic status and marital status. The study sample size was estimated by using the government's estimation of violence against women 48% (Government of Nepal, 2012) as a proportion at 95 % confidence interval, 5 % margin of error and 30 % non-response rate. A final sample size was 500 female students.



**Figure 1. Sampling technique and study flowchart**

A detailed list of names, address, place of residence and phone number of all 2,269 students enrolled in Bachelor's and Master's level was accessed from the campus administration. The sample students were randomly selected by using random selection method for Bachelor's and Master's level separately. Population proportional to sample size was used



to select the respondents from Bachelor's and the Master's level (Figure 1).

Selected students were personally contacted in their respective classrooms, hostel and through telephone calls. Students who were not available in the first contact were contacted again for the questionnaire. Due to irregular attendance, it was hard to get the completed questionnaire from all sample students. About 26 %questionnaires were not returned; only 370 out of selected 500 female students returned the completed questionnaire.

### *Data collection tools*

Over the course of questionnaire development various international and national surveys questionnaires on IPV was taken as reference (WHO, 2005; Ministry of Health, 2011). This study further included some questions relevant to the context. The survey questionnaire was tested among 10 female students studying at a different Campus in Kathmandu. Questionnaire was finalised by incorporating the feedbacks from pilot testing of the tools, opinions of survey experts and the mentor. The finalised English version of the questionnaire was translated into the Nepali Language. The final version of the questionnaire comprised of 7 sections with structured and semi-structured questions. The questionnaire had clear instructions and informed consent script for the participants. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect the information.

*Data analysis*

Descriptive statistics was used to describe the background characteristics of respondents and their partner. Logistic regression technique was used to identify the factors associated with the likelihood of experiencing physical and emotional violence. Place of residence, land ownership, employment, member of community groups, husband's education and types of work were taken as independent variables. Land ownership, employment was dichotomized for analysis and the place of residence was taken as rural and urban. Husband's education was grouped into four categories; primary, secondary higher education and others. Similarly, the types of works that husband involved were, not employed, labour/farming, government, business and other.

Emotional and physical violence were analyzed as dependent variable. The physical violence was measured by six items and emotional violence by five items. The respondents exposed to such violent behaviour within past 12 months or earlier were listed. The respective reference categories composed of the participants with urban residence, having own land, employed, husband's primary schooling and husband's type of the work.

Different independent variables and violence exposure (%) and frequency of acts were used to indicate the prevalence of various forms of violence. To explore explanatory risk factors, intimate partner violence (experienced intimate partner violence or did not experience intimate partner violence) was modeled with binary logistic regression as a function of each independent variables. The risk factors were

estimated with their 95 %confidence interval by binary logistic regression analysis.

### *Research ethics*

Ethical approval was obtained from Tribhuvan University, Office of The Rector, Research Division at Kirtipur and from the Padma Kanya Campus Administration. Moreover, the participants were requested to give their written consent to participate in the survey.

## **Results**

### *Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents*

The majority of the sample students (62 %) were from rural areas of Nepal, over half (53%) of them were living in a rented room in Kathmandu, 21% lived in their home, and 33% were married. About 11% of them had solely/jointly land ownership in their original address, and 36% were currently employed - partially or fully (Those students studying in the morning shifts can have time to work for full time). About three-fourth of the employed participants mentioned that their salaries were insufficient to cover their expenses; therefore, they depended on their family members for financial support. Only 38% were involved with community group/organisations (e.g. civic/ political union, social work/ charitable organisations, economic/ micro finance, women's organisation, religious organisations, sports/arts/ crafts),

where 12% reported that they were prevented from participating in any community group activities (Table 1).

***Table 1. Distribution of university female students by their background characteristics***

<b>Respondents Characteristics</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Education</b>		
Bachelor	141	38.1
Master	229	61.9
<b>Place of Residence</b>		
Rural	241	65.1
Urban	129	34.9
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Unmarried	247	66.7
Married	123	33.2
<b>Sole or jointly Land Ownership</b>		
Yes	40	10.8
No	330	89.2
<b>Employment (Including part-time or full time)</b>		
Yes	133	35.9
No	237	64.1
<b>Source of Income*</b>		
Family members	279	75.4
Self-employment	135	36.6
Agriculture/house rent	10	2.7
Scholarship	24	6.5
<b>Living Arrangement</b>		
Rented room	196	53.0

Friend's or relative's house	39	10.5
Hostel	56	15.1
Home	79	21.4
<b>Member of Community Groups**</b>		
Yes	141	38.1
No	229	61.9
<b>Prevention in Participation in the Community Groups</b>		
Yes	17	12.1
No	124	87.9

*Source: Field Survey*

### *Respondent's husband's characteristics*

Overall characteristics of the married respondent's husbands are presented in Table 2. Fifty-Nine %of the respondent's husbands were of the age between 25 and 34 years. A smaller proportion of them were in the younger (20-24) and the older (45-49) age groups 6.5% and 8% respectively. A majority (71.5%) respondent's husbands completed higher (university) education. More than one-third (37%) of the respondent's husbands were government employee/ foreign workers, and about one-fifth (19%) of them were involved in daily labour/ farming. Similarly, 4% were not involved in any income generating activities.

About 4% of the respondent's husband consumed alcohol daily, and one-quarter of the respondents reported that their

husbands consumed alcohol once a month. The majority of the respondents reported that their husbands (57%) were non-alcoholic. Similarly, about one-fourth (24%) respondents suspected that their husbands may have an extra-marital relation, and 5% were sure about their husband's extra-marital relations. Among these married respondents, one-fifth reported that sometime they quarreled with their husbands.

***Table 2. Distribution of the respondent's husbands by their background characteristics***

<b>Husband's Characteristics</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Age</b>		
20-24	8	6.5
25-29	37	30.1
30-34	36	29.3
35-39	20	16.3
40-44	12	9.8
45-49	10	8.1
<b>Education</b>		
Primary	17	13.8
Secondary	12	9.8
Higher education	88	71.5
Others	6	4.9
<b>Types of Work</b>		
Not employed	5	4.1
Labour/farming	23	18.7
Government/Foreign worker	45	36.6
Business	30	24.4
Other	20	16.3
<b>Drinking Habit of husband</b>		
Daily	5	4.1

1-2 Times in a week	16	13.0
Once in a month	30	24.4
Never	70	56.9
Don't know	2	1.6
<b>Extra- marital Relation</b>		
Yes	6	4.9
No	81	65.9
May be	36	29.3
<b>Frequency of Quarrelling between Respondents and their Husband</b>		
Never	98	79.7
Sometime or often	25	20.3

*Source: Field Survey*

### *Prevalence of violence*

Table 3 elucidates proportion of the respondents victimised by their husbands at any point of their life and within 12 months before the interview. Respondents mentioned that commonly occurring forms of emotional violence were being insulted or made feel bad (31%), did things to scare or intimidate on purpose (7%) and belittled or humiliated in front of other people (1.6%). Being slapped or thrown something, pushed or shoved or pulled, hit or with something else that hurt and kicked or dragged or beaten; 22.0%, 3.3%, 7.3% and 0.8% respectively were some common forms of physical violence. Regarding two forms of sexual violence usually occurring were forced to have sexual intercourse without consent to (20.3%) and followed by had sexual intercourse when did not

want to because they were afraid of what their partner might do if they refused (11.4%).

***Table 3. Experience of intimate partner violence (IPV) by the married female university students***

<b>Types of Violence*</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Emotional Violence</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>39.8</b>
Insulted you made you feel bad	38	30.9
Belittled or humiliated you in front of other people	2	1.6
Did things to scare or intimidate you on purpose	9	7.3
Never commit emotional violence	74	60.2
Any type of emotional violence in the past 12 months	41	33.3
<b>Physical Violence</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>33.3</b>
Ever slapped or thrown something	27	22.0
Ever pushed or shoved or pulled hair	4	3.3
Ever hit or with something else that hurt	9	7.3
Ever kicked or dragged or beaten	1	0.8
Never commit physical violence	82	66.7
Any type of physical violence in the past 12 months	32	26.0
<b>Sexual Violence</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>20.3</b>
Ever been forced to have sexual intercourse when did not want to	25	20.3
Ever been had sexual intercourse when did not want to because you were afraid of what he might do if refused	14	11.4

*Source: Field Survey*



*Factors associated with violence*

Binary logistic regression was used to study the association between independent background variables with emotional and physical violence experience of the participants. Table 4 shows that land ownership and husband's higher level of education were significantly associated with the experiencing low level of emotional and physical violence. Respondents who did not have land ownership (OR=1.46, 95%CI = 0.63-3.38), and not employed (OR = 1.74, 95%CI = 0.95-3.17) were more likely to experience emotional violence. On the other hand, married respondents who were member of community organizations (OR = 0.83, 95%CI = 0.46-1.51), whose husband had higher education (OR = 0.38, 95%CI = 0.14-0.99), government/ foreign employed (OR = 0.47, 95%CI = 0.19-1.12) were less likely to experience emotional violence.

Similarly, Table 4. shows that rural (OR = 1.55, 9%CI = 0.83-2.89), married respondents who do not have own land (OR = 2.92, CI = 1.24-6.85), not employed (OR = 1.21, CI = 0.65-2.27) were more likely to experience physical than urban, women with own land and employed respondents. Respondents whose husband have secondary level education experienced the higher level of physical violence (OR = 3.35, CI = 1.02-10.96) compared to other background variables. Moreover, respondents whose husband worked as a labour worker or involve in agriculture were more likely to experience physical violence by their husband compared to those respondents whose husband were government/foreign employed.

**Table 4. Binary logistic regression analyses for the factor associated with ever experienced emotional and physical violence by a husband.**

Variable	Emotional Violence			Physical Violence		
	OR	95%CI	P	OR	95% CI	P
<b>Place of Residence</b>						
Urban	Reference					
Rural	0.99	0.54-1.76	.940	1.55	0.83-2.89	0.170
<b>Land Ownership</b>						
Yes	Reference					
No	1.46	0.63-3.38	.375	2.92	1.24-6.85	0.014
<b>Employment</b>						
Yes	Reference					
No	1.74	0.95-3.17	.072	1.21	0.65-2.27	0.544
<b>Member of Community Groups</b>						
No	Reference					
Yes	0.83	0.46-1.51	.548	0.94	0.51-1.75	0.851
<b>Husband's Education</b>						
Primary school	Reference					
Secondary school	1.84	0.57-5.92	.307	3.35	1.02-10.96	0.045
Higher education	0.38	0.14-0.99	.049	0.65	0.24-1.78	0.400
Others	0.62	0.11-3.59	.594	0.25	0.02-2.62	0.250
<b>Types of Work</b>						
Not employed	Reference					
Labour/farming	0.74	0.08-6.49	.782	0.56	0.06-4.65	0.591
Government/Foreign worker	0.57	0.06-4.81	.609	0.33	0.40-2.63	0.291
Business	0.43	0.05-3.65	.438	0.37	0.04-2.96	0.346
Other	1.04	0.11-9.65	.973	0.72	0.81-6.32	0.763

*Source: Field Survey*

## Discussion

This study found that experience of IPV among women who were more educated than their husband; particularly higher educated women having the husband with secondary school level education was higher. A similar level of husband's and wife's education has protective effects on IPV. The experience of violence among female university students was similar to the violence against young married rural women by their husband in Nepal (Lamichhene, Puri, Tamang, & Dulal, 2011). This study concludes that about one-third of university level female students have experienced violence by their intimate partner in Nepal. The data shows that educated women were open to discuss GBV issues. IPV was the prevalent problem in Nepal and educated women had also experienced all forms of violence in their life time as well as within past 12 months of the interview by their husband.

Prevalence of the physical 33.3% and sexual violence 20.3% among educated women was almost similar to the violence experienced by the disable women in Nepal (Puri, Mishra, & Hawkes, 2015) and intimate partner violence among general and urban population in Kathmandu (Oshrio, Poudyal, Poudel, & Jimba, 2011). This finding suggests that all Nepalese women are vulnerable and have greater risk of violence. Emotional violence was one of the common forms of violence, and one-third of women had experienced emotional violence in the past 12 months. This study found that about one-fifth of educated women had experienced some forms of sexual abuse in their life. Similarly, findings on physical or sexual violence against women of childbearing age within marriage in Nepal, based on nationally

representative data set reported 14% of women experienced sexual violence by their husband (Pandey, 2014). Whereas the similar type of study conducted in rural part of Nepal (Achham, Gulmi, Rupendehi, & Ilam) showed that about three in five married women experienced any forms of sexual violence in their life (Watts, & Zimmerman, 2002). The result of the studies on the experience of IPV was mixed for rural/urban, educated/uneducated women. However, all Nepalese women are at the risk of IPV. It may also be due the existing similar cultural, religious norms and values among all Nepalese women.

Moreover, this study concludes that access to wealth (i.e. land ownership or cash from employment) had a protective effect on the experience of all types of violence from their husband compared to those who did not have, similar findings were from some studies (Pandey, 2014; Oduro, Deere, & Catanzarite, 2015). For example; a study conducted in Nicaragua and Tanzania on women's landownership and relationship with violence against women documented that when women owned land they gained power and were less likely to experience violence (Grabe, Grose, & Dutt, 2015). Finding of this study also shows that respondents who were involved in civic/ political union, social work/ charitable organizations, economic /micro finance, women's organization, religious organizations, sports/arts/ crafts were less likely to experience all three types of violence than those who were not involved. Probable reasons could be those women were open on the GBV matters, aware of the violence act upon them and tried to establish their basic rights within a husband-wife relationship. Husband's higher level of education was a positive factor for the lower level of IPV.

## **Limitations**

This study used self-administered questionnaires which might have limited the lower response rate (about 75%). Students were purposively selected from one of the Tribhuvan University's female college in Kathmandu for the cross-sectional survey and analyzed only the response of 123 married respondents. Therefore, it is not assumed that the findings represent the overall prevalence of violence against higher educated women. Despite these limitations, this study provides initial evidence of intimate partner violence among higher educated Nepalese university students. So, these findings require further investigations. Further research should be continued to identify the national representative evidence of IPV among educated women.

## **Conclusion**

This study found that intimate partner violence is prevalent among married university female students in Nepal. Emotional violence was the commonly occurring form of violence. However, physical violence was high for the women living in rural residence and with no employment.

Moreover, this study highlights that urban residence; employment and land ownership of the women were important variables for the low level of IPV among women. Similarly, husband's higher level of education and government employment were the positive factors for low prevalence of IPV. This study also finds that similar level of educational and employment status between husband and

wife associated with the lower level of IPV. Findings of the study revealed that education only is not the factor to prevent IPV in Nepal. The educational programmes (courses) should be designed in a way that the graduates get employment easily hence to improve financial security for women reducing prevalence of IPV.

### Competing interests

The author declares no competing interests.

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# **Experiencing Transformative Learning: An Autoethnographic Journey through Ethical Dilemma Story Pedagogy (EDSP)**

Kashiraj Pandey (PhD)

## **Abstract**

I believe our cultural heritage has so much potential for creating new forms of knowing about the self, others, community, and environment while also revealing the interconnected spaces and realities that reside between cultures and people. The Nepalese heritage encompasses through a rich tradition of narratives in storying. For the purpose of present research, I composed two ethical dilemma stories and discussed them in classrooms with a critically reflective understanding of the subject matter where I utilised the local, lived contexts and characters from the Nepalese society. The results have shown that this study, with the use of ethical dilemma stories as a key tool to interact with the research participants, gave sufficient challenges and possibilities for transformative learning. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to explore the unification of my personal, professional, and cultural spheres that are focused on the importance of transformative learning using an autoethnographic methodology. The paper also tries to document my lived experiences through stories as the understanding of my own self, other selves, and cultures around me.

**Key words:** Autoethnography, Ethical Dilemma Story Pedagogy, Life History, Reflective Practice, Transformative Learning

## Introduction

Educators who seek to implement transformative perspectives are not confined to their classrooms. Transformative learning, according to Mezirow (2012, p. 76), refers to the process by which “we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective”. Transformative learning inspires learners to reflect and review their existing values to reconstruct and shift these understandings; it involves continuously revisiting and revising assumptions from multiple points of view. It involves all aspects of “head, heart and hands” (Bruehlmeier, 2010), and training different sides of the brain; it is an approach closely related to self-participation, real-life application, learners’ willingness to support each other, and to critically reflect in order to foster personal development and knowledge empowerment. Thus, transformative learning is about interruption and re-positioning assumptions, beliefs, values, practices and perspectives; it is a desire to change the way things are in order to imagine alternative possibilities.

As an autoethnographer, I have an unyielding commitment to connect education with my lived experiences in social and political contexts, and our daily lives filled with spirit, love and courage. Hence, I begin to see the potential of transformative learning through an autoethnographic methodology and try to demonstrate this connection through stories composed within cultures around me. Autoethnography is defined by Garance Marechal (2010) as an autobiography with a social-political interest. Marechal (2010, p. 44) adds that this mode of research serves as an

effective approach based on one's self-critical reflection seeking to encompass one's:

... self-observation and reflexive investigation in the context of ethnographic field work and writing. The term [autoethnography] has a double sense, referring either to the reflexive consideration of a group to which one belongs as a native, member, or participant (ethnography of one's own group) or to the reflexive accounting of the narrator's subjective experience and subjectivity (autobiographical writing that has ethnographic interest). This distinction can be blurred in some research traditions.

Autoethnography is sometimes made synonymous with self-ethnography, reflexive ethnography, or performance ethnography, and can be associated with narrative inquiry and autobiography.

Autoethnography links our autobiographies, as windows for reflection, to the existing social contexts and motivates us towards refreshing performance and change. Autoethnography moves beyond the confines of conventional academic practices where short stories, poems, and our inward looking conversational scripts as self- narratives hold their prominent space during the research process and documentation. The major part of this paper, therefore, has been based on the narratives of my own becoming as a transformative learner as well as on the experiences of teaching two ethical dilemma stories in a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) classroom.

## **Research Site and Participants**

I identified Mountain Multiple College, Nepal, as my research site which is situated 65 kilometres away from Kathmandu, and located in a rural setting. I chose B.Ed. students as research participants who were well-suited to my research project. I presented written information to the participants, which involved informing them of the aims, procedures, and their roles in the research, and my intention to allow them to make informed decisions about whether to participate in the research process. The participants came from different socio-cultural and economic backgrounds. Although some students worked part-time in nearby private schools, the majority of them were pre-service teachers of English who aimed at finding a teaching position upon their graduation. They were selected for their knowledge, relationship and expertise with my research subject in such a method which belongs to the category of purposive selection techniques. The participants had a special relationship with the phenomenon under investigation, relevant to the nature of my research, and their active involvement in it. Yet, I was aware of the fact that not all who promise to join a project necessarily can attend the component sessions. The research participants included me (male) as teacher-researcher, the usual class teacher and four pre-service teachers, all enrolled in the B. Ed. English Language Teaching course. All participants regularly attended activities during the fieldwork teaching period and have remained in touch afterwards.

## **Reflection in Transformative Learning**

Some of the strategies I have sought to apply in this research are writing as inquiry, performativity of metaphoric languages, and literary images in multiple genres. My reflections are interwoven within the transformative contexts of my own lived experiences, as acknowledged by Connelly and Clandinin (1994, p. 155):

We imagine as we try to give accounts of our own lives that we undergo cultivation, awakenings, and transformations throughout our lives. People's lives are composed of many narrative unities, some of which, at any one time, may be thought of educationally in terms of cultivation, others in terms of awakening, and still others in terms of transformation.

This research undergirds my role, as a researcher, and my participants' real-life journey given our active involvement in the research based upon a mutually beneficial relationship. Life history in many ways resembles life-story and biography which William Tierney and Randall Clemens (2012, p. 266) clarify as, "[t]o one researcher, biography, life story and life history may be perfectly synonymous; to another interchanging the terms may indicate methodological laziness". When we include our biography in the research, it enables us to move towards thinking about our life history, toward the narrative of our own life worlds, toward our autobiography, and toward values and beliefs within our own cultural, socio-political contexts. Tierney and Clemens (2012, p. 270) further suggest that "the value of life history is to provide a portrait of lives over time". Things that we



considered insignificant or even that are seen as over-emotional at one point can have sufficient reason to be revisited and be useful to document as a literary or researchable record that can be meaningful for others to look at and reflect upon. Such writings have allowed me to reach near reality; and, the poetic logic has helped me to move away from the traditional, deductive way of understanding truth. Recalling my own school days 35 years ago in my village, I would walk to my school every day and attend classes in a regular basis. When our teachers found us on playground during the school hours, they would ask us to go back to our respective classrooms and read books even when the teachers stayed back in the office-room or played. Now, there are 'different students (or should I call them children?)' in many Nepalese village schools playing the role of us, the young children of those early days, and there are still a similar number of teachers, schools, books and the live like the ones we experienced. Such realization has allowed me to create an artistic cross-stitch and channel the tension between my past personal/professional memories and present understandings in writing.

Research into transformative learning requires a reflective mind and an awareness of the researcher's contribution to the construction of meanings throughout the research process. I recall Lev Vygotsky's (1978) ideas in social constructivism for the community-cultural contexts to play a vital role in our learning process. Learning is a process of adapting and creating meaning from human experience and interaction within the culturally shared ways of understanding the world. Our lived experiences carry meanings in context to situations. In this research, I have come across many emergent

experiences where our “bodies, emotions, and lived experience [have] become texts to be written” (Gannon, 2018, p. 23). These personal experiences allow us to access the participants’ day-to-day life including local culture and history and the ways in which these components constitute their identities in the learning. Although they may sound a bit excessive, issues such as cultural extinction, climate change and violence, are always productive for an educator to prepare young people for the challenges of a volatile and uncertain world. I argue that pivotal to this task is the need to create a new set of transformational tools capable of accommodating personal, social and political change.

### **Ethical Dilemma Story Pedagogy (EDSP) in Transformative Learning**

The Ethical Dilemma Story Pedagogy has explored interpretative and creative spaces for transformative learning both personally and with the research participants. The use of ethical dilemma stories was employed to engage participants in learning based on personal values about particular aspects that had appeared in their lives. This experience has been the power of culturally appropriate and contextual pedagogy that also accounts my experience of transformative learning as a researcher and practitioner. The pedagogy describes the practical aspects of presenting ethical dilemma stories to participating pre-service teachers to see the impact of transformative learning. Edward Taylor and Patricia Cranton (2012, p. 5) acknowledge that “[t]ransformative learning theory is based on the notion that we interpret our experiences in our own way, and that how we see the world is a result of

our perceptions of our experiences”. The EDSP, as an active means of transformative learning, has encouraged learners to think about prior beliefs and biases that prompted their active participation in dealing with everyday issues, and to propose solutions to societal disparities. It can provide relatable scenarios to challenge and unsettle learners’ thought processes leading to acknowledging multiple viewpoints. The EDSP also provides the context in which I/we engage in a transformative learning journey with the goal of prompting dialogue and educational change within Nepalese schools.

Previously, my way of thinking about education and research delivered in universities was limited to more traditional ways of being and knowing. I used to think that there was only one dominant paradigm of learning and research that had a set of central beliefs and norms to follow, which were disconnected from my life. On reading Mezirow’s (2003, p. 58) work on transformative learning as discourse, I was encouraged to see teaching and learning as a process that “transforms problematic frames of reference — sets of fixed assumptions and expectations (habits of mind, meaning perspectives, mindsets), to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change”. This research provided me with opportunities to explore how teaching and learning might be more open to human curiosity, value-based awareness, and learners’ natural passion (Mezirow, 2003). With this idea in mind, I sat quietly and reflected on how I listened to, and considered, the truth claims of experts and their appeal to science and objectivity. Then, I felt fortunate to have had the opportunity to come across an alternative transformative approach to research. This new approach allowed me to encounter places and people from

diverse backgrounds and cultures which gave me the confidence to feel for myself, relish new challenges, and narrate them as my own form of knowledge production.

Juanita Johnson-Bailey and Mary Alfred (2006, p. 55) acknowledge how the majority of educators fail to make a connection between what they “claim they value and the values their practices demonstrate”. Transformative learners, however, see an opportunity in every situation to conceptually construct knowledge from experience, negotiate meaning, and draw conclusions from a unique interpretation of the world. One constant message which came from the research participants, was that traditional ways of teaching and learning were not providing them with opportunities for transformative learning. In the successive research communications, participants shared the value of the ways in which ethical dilemma stories highlighted various contemporary social issues such as: democracy, freedom, sustainability, political chaos, remittances, family responsibilities, inter-personal behaviours, hygiene and cleanliness, enhancing food security, and dietary requirements of people of different ages in the community. This message demonstrates the importance of research of this nature where the ethical dilemma stories have strong resonance with local teaching and learning contexts. I also consider the essential values of the inner orientation of my autoethnographic research and the ways in which it has enabled me to develop a more critical orientation to my teaching and writing. Freire (1998, p. 31) comments on this realisation, saying:

There is, in fact, no teaching without learning. One requires the other. And the subject of each, despite their obvious differences, cannot be educated to the status of object. Whoever teaches learns in the act of teaching, and whoever learns teaches in the act of learning.

Transformative learning seeks to develop constructive, learner-centred practices in the face-to-face classroom environment. It is about raising awareness so that “the learner understands that there is value in learning and appreciates the learning process” (Adams, 2007, p. 153). Therefore the format should be more learner-centred to elicit responses from students by drawing on their language, culture, experience and interests as the starting point for learning; it should not be: this is what you will learn.

The practice of critical reflection to create a more socially just world involves the realisation of mutual respect, collaboration, care, and trust. Although this research incorporates many personal truths from my own life, its findings will serve to inform other educators who wish to utilise socio-cultural contexts connected to students’ lives as a transformative pedagogy in their learning process. In my role as a transformative educator, I have always been mindful of asking more reflective kinds of questions such as:

- Are the contents of my teaching relevant and meaningful to learners?
- To what extent am I learning from and producing knowledge with my students?

- To what extent “am I [are we] willing to transform myself [ourselves] in the process of helping my [our] students transform” (Taylor, 2006, p. 92)?

When I wrote two ethical dilemma stories, “*The dilemma of life and how we live*” and “*The dilemma of leaving home*”, for this research purpose, I was mindful in making both the stories appear realistic, and not complicating the narratives. I chose the easily relatable characters where the participants were able to connect themselves with the story characters during class discussions. They kept asking questions such as, “How do you come to know the story characters?; How long do you know them for?; Did they really leave the village (please, sir: Tell me)? Where are they now?” such questioning provided the proof that I was able to arouse curiosity while composing and telling the dilemma stories to the participants. I also found that the exposure opened reason for participants to actively communicate their ideas and concepts among each other in the classroom and even with their parents, family members, and other people outside their classrooms. The power of their simple words as valuable resources in relating to and potentiating their experiences, interests, and imaginations led our discussion towards thinking beyond the classroom, and relating to the world outside. Both the ethical dilemma stories had a strong influence on the imaginative activities of my participants.

During the research process, there were also some features of great importance, such as the participants’ personal development, and their strong enthusiasm for their learning. These interactive elements allowed me to do things differently and vary the strategies. I realised that, for a successful

learning experience for my students, as their teacher, I needed to be flexible and accommodating enough to familiarise changes according to their learning situations. Acknowledging that students are the true partners in the learning process, we need to raise our voices and move towards learner-centred, transformative approaches in which students are the central part of learning process. Transformative learning plays an active role in contrast to “the teacher-centred learning wherein the teacher remains at the centre of the learning process” (Sherine, 2015, p. 242). The EDSP has allowed the participating pre-service teachers to become more mutually collaborative, critically reflective, and emotionally mature as they gained the ability to show empathy and thoughtfulness. Interestingly the German root word for empathy is *Einfuehlung*, meaning feeling into/within for others (Simpson & Weiner, 1989). This is especially pertinent for interaction between the reader and the characters in the dilemma stories. I believed that EDSP also afforded my participants opportunities to identify with the story characters and make decisions on the respective character’s behalf. The participants often reported that this research experience, which was supported by their own activities, has changed their ways of thinking. All of them shared a similar experience; their reactions varied depending on personal context and connection. I was delighted to see that the participants were engaged in both the dilemma stories as I was initially uncertain of their reactions to this method. My present research, therefore, resonates with a rich tradition of transformative education.

I found EDSP a more dynamic experience where learning can emerge from students’ own cultural contexts and knowledge

can be fostered from their own critical self-awareness; the students know what they are doing. Similar responses of contemplation, reflection, and realisation have been reported by my participants, the pre-service teachers, in their interview responses as counter-narratives. The participants shared that they learnt more effectively when they were actively involved in the learning process and with their own local, cultural contexts. I have found that these participants were continuing to work hard to incorporate, into their own teaching, the transformative ideas about analytic discussions in class that they acquired from this research project. The participants formed study groups that met at regular times, as they were inspired by the benefit of sharing in my research, to help their students grow through cooperation and coordination. By doing this, the participants realised that working in a group and pairs helped their students to learn better than using the traditional teacher-centred, didactic methods. They shared that some part of the textbook that seemed confusing to one student could be quite clear to another student. Thus, the struggling students too learnt quickly by simply asking questions to their friends, instead of puzzling over the difficulty, spending much effort and time to solve it, or sometimes giving up. Also, their observation revealed that the smarter students enjoyed explaining their perspectives and gained confidence by helping other students to overcome their difficulties by reaffirming what they had already understood. The participants also shared that they exchanged their favourite stories, reflections, and study tricks in the topic discussed. Despite their prior beliefs, gender, ethnic background, and social class, all participants experienced a similar amount of learning.



In this context, I reflect on my own self-interactive journey along with the experiences of my teaching of ethical dilemma stories to my research participants. They were encouraged to engage with EDSP which also opened the door for transformational opportunities. I hope this research will also encourage other researchers to bring their expertise to the table around a cultural-contextual topic that values learners' prior experience, their inherent orientation to critical approaches, empathy, and desire to change for the positive.

Hence, this research records my new understandings and insights about the benefits of transformative learning as evidenced by my own personal-professional growth and that of my participants. The present research, therefore, allowed us, myself and the research participants, to challenge some deeply embedded assumptions about teaching and learning for the purpose of revitalising our own professional judgments and practices. I am sure the ethical dilemma story pedagogy will be applied practically in future research to further refine the idea of transformative learning with new insights.

## **Conclusion**

This research involved the task-oriented learning activities which provided opportunities for individual learners to communicate their desires, needs, feelings, and interests. The ethical dilemma learning experience was emotionally engaging to my participants. They themselves have developed skills beyond their disciplines while they interpreted and reinterpreted their experience with the issues they dealt with (Mezirow, 1991). In addition to taking the class and getting a grade, the research included a series of additional activities that encouraged the participants to reflect and realise who

they are, how they have grown, what they have learnt and what they value. They have developed common meaning through reflection to better understand each other. The participants have effectively developed the ability to work cooperatively with others for a specific purpose, collaboratively as a team member. The participants' written and verbal communication skills allowed them to thoughtfully identify what information they need before they put the issues in discussion; they developed a good sense of empathy with the characters and local contexts.

'Practice makes perfect' is a shibboleth that appears valid in the case of the pedagogy I am seeking to advocate. In practice, I found the EDSP to be effective in aiding the students to express their ideas in coherent English propositional forms as a means of self-expression and of sharing ideas with classroom peers and with the teacher. The overall experience, indeed, became productive in helping the learners to connect their "individuality to larger historical and social issues; to encourage students to examine how their experience relates to academic knowledge, to power, and to inequality in society; and to approach received wisdom and the status quo with questions" (Shor, 1992, p. 16). This is goal of transformative learning pedagogy and I am sure such attributes have enabled the participats and myself to successfully reach our pedagogical goals. Now, I hope that further discussion of transformative learning in the classroom can have a positive inspiration in teaching English in Nepal, and, by extension, to other school subjects in many parts of the world.

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## पं. कुलचन्द्र गौतम र प्रपञ्चचर्चा

डा. रामचन्द्र पौडेल

सार :

यस लेखमा पं.कुलचन्द्र गौतमको जीवनयात्रालाई प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । यसै सन्दर्भमा उनको जन्मसमय, स्थान, परिवेश, नामकरण लगायतका विषयमा प्रकाश पारिएको छ । यस क्रममा विषयपरिचय, पं.कुलचन्द्र गौतमको जीवनयात्रा, जन्म, जन्मस्थल र नामकरण, जीवन-परिवेश, रचना र पुनः प्रकाशन, प्रपञ्चचर्चाको अध्ययन, कथानक, परिवेश विधान, भावविधान, केन्द्रीय कथ्य, कथनपद्धति, छन्दविधान, अलङ्कारविधान, भाषा, शैली, शीर्षकविधान, निष्कर्ष, सारांश आदि विषयलाई २१ वटा शीर्षकमा विभाजन गरी अनुशीलन गरिएको छ ।

**कुञ्जी शब्दहरू** : विद्वच्छिरोमणि, मनोवृत्ति, प्रपञ्चर्चा, कलुष, प्रायश्चित्त, पापः, गोत्रहत्या, प्रभूतपापा, शठ, रोदनध्वने, निपिता, दुर्भगा, दशगात्र ।

### १.विषयपरिचय

पं.कुलचन्द्र गौतम बहुमुखी क्षमता भएका विशिष्ट प्रतिभा हुन् । उनको प्रतिभा संस्कृत र नेपाली साहित्य तथा आयुर्वेदको क्षेत्रमा पनि विस्तारित छ । उनी कोशकार, कुशल कविराज, साहित्यकार, दार्शनिक चिन्तक तथा आध्यात्मिक व्यक्तिका रूपमा परिचित छन् । उनले नेपाली भाषासाहित्य, कोश, अध्यात्म, सामाजिक सेवा र आयुर्वेद तथा समाजका अन्य क्षेत्रहरूमा उल्लेखनीय योगदान दिएको पाइन्छ । मानवको ऊर्ध्वगामी शक्तिप्रतिको अमोघ आस्था, अदम्य स्वाभिमान, विलक्षण साहित्यिक योगदान, आध्यात्मिक र आयुर्वेदिक व्यक्तित्वका कारणले उनी श्रद्धेय, स्मरणीय र प्रणम्य छन् । संस्कृत भाषासाहित्य, पूर्वीय दर्शनशास्त्र तथा नेपाली भाषासाहित्यमा उनले प्रस्तुत गरेको विद्वत्ताका कारण उनलाई विद्वच्छिरोमणिका रूपमा लिने गरिन्छ । यस लेखमा उनै विद्वच्छिरोमणि पं.कुलचन्द्र गौतमको जीवनयात्रा तथा प्रपञ्चचर्चा काव्यको अध्ययन गरिएको छ ।

## २. पं.कुलचन्द्र गौतमको जीवनयात्रा

पं.कुलचन्द्र गौतम लामो जीवन बाँच्न र त्यस जीवनलाई सिर्जनात्मक काममा लगाई मानवजीवन र समाजलाई सकारात्मक प्रभाव पार्न सफल व्यक्ति हुन् । उनको जीवनी आफैँमा एक रोचक आख्यानसरहको देखिन्छ । उनको जीवनयात्राका आरोहअवरोह र त्यस क्रममा उनले देखे, भोगे, सुने, गरेका कर्महरूको विवरणले मानव जीवनको एक विशिष्ट पाटाको उद्घाटन गर्छ । व्यक्तिको जीवनका अनुभूतिहरूले उसका सिर्जनाहरूमा स्थान पाउने गर्छ । साहित्यिक कृतिको यथार्थलाई बुझ्न स्रष्टाको जीवनीले सघाउने गर्छ । पं.कुलचन्द्र गौतमका कृतिहरूमा उनको जीवनीका मोडप्रतिमोड र अनुभवको भूमिका अवश्य छ । उनको जीवनीको अध्ययनले उनका कृतिहरूको अध्ययन गर्नमा सघाउने भएकाले यहाँ उनको जीवनीलाई क्रमशः प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ ।

## ३. जन्म, जन्मस्थल र नामकरण

पं.गौतमको जन्म सौरमानअनुसार वि.सं १९३४ साल असार महिनाको १५ गते आइतबारका दिन भएको हो । चान्द्रमानअनुसार आषाढ कृष्ण द्वितीया उनको जन्मतिथि हो । लेखकलाई यस कुराको जानकारी कुलचन्द्र गौतमका नाति प्रसन्नचन्द्र गौतमद्वारा उपलब्ध गराइएको उनका मृत्युका विषयमा गरिएको टिप्पणी सम्बन्धित कागजातबाट प्राप्त भएको हो । पं.रमाकान्त गौतम र श्रीमती सावित्रीदेवी गौतमका तेस्रो सन्तानका रूपमा कुलचन्द्र गौतमको जन्म भएको थियो । उनलाई मातापिता र परिवारका अन्य सदस्यहरूले पनि 'कुलनिधि' भनेर बोलाउने गरेको उल्लेख पाइन्छ (गौतम, २०७० : ६) । उनी जति बेला जन्मिए त्यति बेलाको समयको वास्तविक घडीपला प्राप्त हुन नसकेकाले वास्तविक नाम यही थियो भन्न कठिन छ । कुलचन्द्रका चिना र टिप्पणी पनि उनका पार्थिव शरीरसँगै जलाइएका हुनाले वास्तविक नाम यहीनै हो भन्न गाह्रो छ । माथि उल्लेख भएका गते, बार र तिथिलाई आधार मान्दा त्यस दिनमा आद्रा नक्षत्र नपरेकाले उनको वास्तविक नाम कुलचन्द्र हुन सक्दैन । वि.सं.१९३४ सालको पञ्चाङ्गअनुसार असार महिना १५ गते आइतबार सप्तमी/नवमी तिथि नपरेर द्वितीया तिथि परेको देखिन्छ भने त्यस दिन आद्रा नक्षत्र नपरेर अन्य कुनै नक्षत्र परेको देखिन्छ । यस तथ्यलाई आधार मान्दा उनको वास्तविक नाम 'कुलनिधि' हुन नसक्ने स्पष्ट छ । त्यसैले 'कुलनिधि' उनको बोलाउने नाम मात्र हो भन्न

सकिन्छ । काशीमा अध्ययन गर्ने क्रममा पं.गौतमको अध्ययनप्रतिभाबाट प्रभावित भएर गुरुहरूले उनलाई कुलनिधिको सट्टा कुलको चन्द्र अर्थात् कुलचन्द्र भनी बोलाउने गरेको देखिन्छ । मातापिताले प्रेम र ममताले उनलाई 'कुलचन्द्र' भनेर बोलाउँदा बोलाउँदै यही नाम नै पछि सबैले बोलाउने र चिन्ने नाउँ हुन पुगेको देखिन्छ ।

पं.कुलचन्द्र गौतमको जन्मस्थान तामागुरु टोल हो । यो ठाउँ वर्तमान सङ्घीय गणतन्त्रनेपालको ३ प्रदेशको धादिङ जिल्लामा पर्दछ । यस ठाउँको दक्षिणपट्टि नौबिसे गाउँ, उत्तरतिर महेशखोलाको साँघ र दक्षिणमा कोल्फुखोला पर्दछन् । पूर्वमा देउराली गाउँ र पश्चिममा केवलपुर गाउँ पर्दछन् । पूर्वमा नागार्जुन वनदेखि पश्चिममा त्रिशूलीनदीसम्म लमतन्न भई सुतेको देखिने डाँडो लामीडाँडा नामले प्रख्यात छ । जीवनपुरको परिचय कसैलाई दिनुपर्दा 'लामीडाँडा जीवनपुर' भनेर दिने गरिएको पाइन्छ । उपरोक्त चार किल्लाभित्रको गाउँ नै जीवनपुर गाउँ हो । यही जीवनपुर गा.वि.स.वाड नं.४ मा पर्ने तामागुरु टोल नै पं.कुलचन्द्र गौतमको जन्मस्थान हो (गौतम, २०५५ : ११) ।

पं.कुलचन्द्र गौतमको जन्मवर्षको समयलाई लिएर विभिन्न विद्वान् तथा समालोचकहरूका बीचमा मतमतान्तर देखिन्छ । माधवराज गौतमले पं.गौतमको जन्मवर्ष वि.सं.१९३२ भनेर लेखेकाछन्, तर वि.सं.२०१२ सालमा तत्कालीन राजा श्री ५ महेन्द्रको राज्याभिषेकमा आफू ७९वर्ष भएको कुरा पण्डित गौतम स्वयंले नै उल्लेख गरेका हुँदा उनी जन्मिएको वर्ष वि.सं.१९३४ लाई नै मान्नुपर्ने बलियो आधार देखिन्छ । ईश्वर बराल र शिवराज आचार्य कौण्डिन्यायनले पनि पं.गौतमको जन्मवर्ष १९३४ नै हो भनी उल्लेख गरेका छन् । अम्बिकाप्रसाद अधिकारीले वि.सं.१९३४ लाई नै मान्नुपर्ने बलियो आधारका रूपमा राज्याभिषेककालीन कविवचनलाई नै अगाडि सारेको देखिन्छ । स्वयं कुलचन्द्र गौतमको आत्मोक्तिलाई आधार मानेर उनको जन्म वि.सं. १९३४ साल मान्नु उचित देखिन्छ ।

पं.कुलचन्द्र गौतम पं.रमाकान्त गौतम र सावित्री गौतमका कान्छा सन्तान हुन् । उनी मातापिता र दाजुहरूका माझमा प्यारा थिए । उनको बाल्यजीवन मातापिता र दाजुहरूका स्नेहका कारण सुखमय रहेको बुझिन्छ । उनका सहोदर दाजुहरू भद्रनिधि र दण्डपाणि हुन् । पं.गौतमकी एउटी दिदी पनि थिइन् । ती दिदी काशीवासका लागि पिता रमाकान्त गौतमसँगै बनारस गएकी र उनको मृत्यु उतै भएको देखिन्छ । पं.गौतमका अरू कतिवटी दिदीबहिनीहरू थिए भन्ने कुराको



तथ्यगत जानकारी भने प्राप्त छैन । उनका नाति वा नातिनीहरूबाट निकट भूतकालकै (दुई पुस्ता मात्र अघिको) यथार्थ तथ्य थाहा पाउन नसकिनु केही आश्चर्यको विषय लाग्छ ।

#### ४. जीवन-परिवेश

पं.कुलचन्द्र गौतम जन्मेको समयमा अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय स्तरमा साम्राज्यवादी शक्तिको नेतृत्व गर्ने बेलायत र अन्य शक्तिराष्ट्रले फैलाएको उपनिवेशीकरणका कारण संसारका अधिकांश देशहरू उपनिवेशवादको चक्रमा फसेका थिए । नेपालको छिमेकी राष्ट्र भारत पनि बेलायतको उपनिवेश थियो । त्यति बेलाबेलायतकी महारानीविक्टोरिया विजयिनी भारतकी साम्राज्ञी थिइन् । नेपालमा पनि वि.सं.१९०३ सालमा कोतपर्वका कारणबाट एकतन्त्रीय राणाशासनको सूत्रपात भयो । प्रथम राणाप्रधानमन्त्री जङ्गबहादुरले अङ्ग्रेजलाई रिझाएकै कारण उनी नेपालका प्रधानमन्त्री बन्न पुगेको इतिहास पाइन्छ (शर्मा, २००८ : ३४) । उनी मात्र होइन, उनीपछिका भाइभतिजाहरूले पनि अङ्ग्रेजकै आशीर्वादले नेपालको शासनसत्ताको बागडोर आफ्नो हातमा पार्न सफल भएको ऐतिहासिक सत्य नेपालको इतिहासमा उल्लेख छ (शर्मा, २००८ : ३५) । यस्तै परिवेशले गर्दा राणाशासनकै पहिलो पुस्ताका जङ्गबहादुरका भाइ रणोद्दीप त्यति बेलाका नेपालको प्रधानमन्त्री वा श्री ३ महाराज थिए । यसप्रकारको राजनैतिक परिवेशका कारण पं.कुलचन्द्र गौतमको परिवार पनि राणाशासनको चकचकी र जगजगीबाट प्रभावित भएको सहजै अनुमान गर्न सकिन्छ ।

पं.कुलचन्द्र गौतमको जन्मसमयमा पं.रमानाथ गौतमजस्ता पण्डितहरूले संस्कृत शिक्षातर्फ विशेष ध्यान दिएको पाइन्छ । राणादरबारमा भने अङ्ग्रेजी शिक्षाले प्रवेश पाइसकेको र त्यसको प्रभाव नेपालका अन्य सम्प्रान्त वर्गमा पनि बिस्तारै परिसकेको थियो । जङ्गबहादुरले युरोपको भ्रमण गर्दा नेपालमा पनि अङ्ग्रेजी शिक्षाको आवश्यकता ठाने । उनले आफ्नो थापाथली दरबारमा दरबार हाइस्कूलको स्थापना गरी अङ्ग्रेजी विषयको पढाइ सुरु गराए (शर्मा, २००८ : ३६) । त्यति बेला राजधानीभन्दा बाहिर पूर्वी नेपालको भोजपुर जिल्लाअन्तर्गत दिङ्लामा श्रीषडानन्द ब्रह्मचारीको प्रयासबाट वि.सं.१९३२ मा एउटा संस्कृतपाठशाला खोलिएको थियो । काठमाडौँमा पनि राजधानीको वरपर बस्नेहरूका लागि अनुकूल हुने गरी रानीपोखरीको उत्तरतर्फ एउटा संस्कृत पाठशाला खोलिएको थियो । यो संस्कृत

पाठशाला रणोद्दीप सिंहले वि.सं.१९३४ सालमा खोलेको देखिन्छ (शर्मा, २००८ : ३६) । त्यस पाठशालाको राम्रो व्यवस्था प्रधानमन्त्री वीरशमशेर (कार्यकाल वि.सं.१९४२-५८) बाट भएको थियो । काशीराजकीय संस्कृत महाविद्यालयबाट सम्बन्धन प्राप्त भएको यस पाठशालामा अध्ययन गर्ने विद्यार्थीहरू वि.सं.१९५५सालदेखि नै काशी राजकीय संस्कृत महाविद्यालयमा परीक्षा दिन जाने गर्दथे (ढकाल र अरू, २०४० : ९९-१००) । यस पाठशालामा पढेका विद्यार्थीहरू काशीमा बसेर पढ्ने र पुण्य कमाउने परम्परामा अभ्यस्त हुन्थे ।

पं.कुलचन्द्र गौतमका पिता रमाकान्त गौतमले पनि काशीबाट शिक्षा प्राप्त गरेका थिए भन्ने बुझिन्छ । उनले काका विश्वेश्वरबाट नेपाली वर्णमाला क, ख, ग तथा रुद्राध्यायी सार र अष्टाध्यायीको अध्ययन गरेकाले उनलाई संस्कृतको प्रारम्भिक शिक्षा र शैक्षिक परिवेश घरबाटै प्राप्त भएको देखिन्छ । यिनै जीवनपरिवेशमा उनको जीवनी क्रमशः विकसित हुँदै गएको देखिन्छ ।

#### ५. प्रपञ्चचर्चाको अध्ययन

कुलचन्द्र गौतमले आफ्ना कृतिहरूमा धर्म, संस्कृति, पुराण, आयुर्वेद, व्यक्तिस्तुति जस्ता विषयलाई महत्व दिएका छन् । तिनका अतिरिक्त उनले सामाजिक विषयहरूका बारेमा पनि वर्णन गर्दै कृतिहरू रचना गरेका छन् । आफ्ना कृतिहरूमा चयन गरेका विषयलाई उनले काव्यात्मक बनाएर प्रस्तुत गरेका छन् । उनका प्रकाशित कृतिमध्ये **प्रपञ्चचर्चा** (१९९३) काव्य विशेष रूपमा चर्चित कृति हो । उनले प्रस्तुत कृतिमा राणाशासनमा सामाजिक, धार्मिक, राजनैतिक, आर्थिक एवं साँस्कृतिक क्षेत्रमा देखिएका विकृति र विसङ्गितिलाई प्रस्तुत गरेका छन् ।

#### ६. रचना र पुनः प्रकाशन

गौतमद्वारा रचित प्रपञ्चचर्चा उनकै सक्रियतामा 'लक्ष्मीनारायणमुद्रणालय काशी' मा मुद्रित भई वि.सं.१९९३ सालमा पहिलोपल्ट प्रकाशित भएको उल्लेख छ । यस काव्यलाई **कुलचन्द्र गौतम स्मृति संस्था २०६४** ले वि.सं.२०७० सालमा विशेष परिमार्जन गरी दोस्रोपल्ट प्रकाशित गरेको देखिन्छ । डा.टी.काराम

अधिकारीका अनुसार जुन समयमा यस काव्यको प्रकाशन भएको थियो, त्यस समयमा नेपालमा कृतिप्रकाशनका लागि अनुकूल वातावरण थिएन । कुनै पनि लेखकका कृतिको प्रकाशनका निमित्त तात्कालीन **नेपाली भाषा प्रकाशनी समितिको** स्वीकृति अनिवार्य चाहिन्थ्यो । यस्तो विषम परिस्थितिमा पनि गौतमको **प्रपञ्चचर्चा** काव्यलाई सो समितिबाट स्वीकृति प्राप्त भयो (अधिकारी, २०५६ : १३०) । प्रथमपल्ट प्रकाशित भएको प्रस्तुत काव्यको पृष्ठसङ्ख्या ८४ थियो भने श्लोकसङ्ख्या ६१ भएको बुझिन्छ । **कुलचन्द्र गौतम स्मृति संस्था २०६४** ले आवश्यक संशोधन गरी यस कृतिलाई द्वितीय संस्करणका रूपमा प्रकाशित गर्दा यस काव्यको पृष्ठसङ्ख्या ६० र श्लोकसङ्ख्या ६१ रहेको देखिन्छ । लेखक गौतमको भनाइअनुसार यो कृति **युगलचर्चा**को पूर्वाद्धखण्डको एउटा अंश मात्र हो । यसको उत्तरार्द्ध खण्ड **परमार्थचर्चा** हो ।

प्रस्तुत काव्यमा गौतमले राणाकालीन मानिसका आध्यात्मिक मान्यताको अभिव्यक्ति दिएका छन् । आध्यात्मिक मान्यताअनुसार मानिसले आफूले गरेका नराम्रा कामहरूको प्रायश्चित्त गरेमा मात्र ती नराम्रा कामहरूबाट उत्पन्न हुने पापहरू नाश हुन्छन् । यस कुरालाई पूर्वीय अध्यात्मदर्शनले पनि स्वीकार गरेको छ । यस कुरालाई **प्रपञ्चचर्चा** काव्यले पनि आत्मसात् गरेको देखिन्छ । गौतमका अनुसार सांसारिक प्रपञ्चको सिकारबाट समाजका विभिन्न व्यक्तिहरू बच्न सकेका छैनन् । त्यसरी प्रपञ्चको सिकारबाट बच्न नसकेको पीडितमध्ये आफू पनि एक भएको गौतमको कथन छ । प्रपञ्चको सिकारबाट बच्नका लागि उनले समाजको प्रतिनिधि भएर भगवान् गोविन्दलाई गुहारेका छन् । जस्तै : 'क्षमस्व गोविन्द! मम व्यतिक्रमम् ।' (हे गोविन्द! मेरा पापहरूका निम्ति मलाई क्षमा गर्नुहोस्) । गौतमले यस काव्यको नाम **प्रपञ्चचर्चा** राख्नुबाट पनि यसमा सांसारिक विषयको चर्चा भएको सङ्केत मिल्छ ।

### ७. कथानक

प्रस्तुत काव्यमा राणाकालीन समाजका मानिसहरूका प्रवृत्तिहरूलाई तीन किसिमले विभाजन गरिएको छ । दुराचारी शासक, पौरोहित्य पेसाबाट जीवनयापन गर्ने ब्राह्मण र धनवान्हरूको सेवा (चाकरी) गरी धन कमाएर त्यो धनलाई असत् मार्गमा लगाउने मानिसहरूका प्रवृत्तिलाई कविले **प्रपञ्चचर्चा** काव्यको मुख्य विषय बनाएका छन् । शक्तिका आडमा मनोमानी गर्ने शासकहरूको योग्यता र विधि

विना नै पौरोहित्य पेसामा संलग्न भई स्वस्तिशान्ति गराउँदै हिड्ने लोभी ब्राह्मणहरूका प्रवृत्ति यस कृतिको मुख्य कथ्य विषय हो । गौतमका अनुसार तत्कालीन समाजका एकथरी मानिसले कर्तव्य नै नगरी चाकरीकै बलमा पैसा कमाउँथे । त्यस पैसालाई उनीहरूले खराब काममा खर्च गर्दा राष्ट्रको क्षय भएको उनको कथन छ । यस्ता मानिसबाट राष्ट्रलाई बचाउन र ती मानिसहरूलाई सत्मार्गमा ल्याउन प्रेरित गर्ने उद्देश्यले उनले यस काव्यको रचना गरेको बुझिन्छ । कविले यसमा विकृतिबाट मुक्त हुन प्रायश्चित्तका लागि भगवान् गोविन्दको प्रार्थना गरेका छन् । अर्थात् वाच्यार्थ कवि आफैँ हुन् भने समाजको प्रतिनिधि लक्ष्यार्थ बनेर उनी बोलेका छन् । पूर्वोक्त ३ प्रकारका पापहरूमा दुराचारसम्बन्धी पापहरूलाई कविले ३ अवस्थामा विभाजन गरेको देखिन्छ । ती हुन्—बाल्यावस्था, युवावस्था र वृद्धावस्था। यी तीन अवस्थालाई नै यस काव्यमा आख्यानान्तमक सूत्र बनाई कथ्यको अभिव्यक्ति दिइएको पाइन्छ।

### (क) आदि भाग

काव्यको कथानकअनुसार जीव अनेकौँ जन्म पार गर्दै मानिस भएर जन्मन्छ । जन्मेपछि उसका बाल्य, यौवन र वृद्धावस्था गरी तीन अवस्था हुन्छन् । मानिसका यी तीन अवस्थाका प्रवृत्तिका बारेमा शास्त्रमा विशेष चर्चा भएको पाइन्छ । मानिसका तीन अवस्थामध्ये पनि कविले बाल्यावस्थालाई तीन अवस्थामा विभाजन गर्दै ती अवस्थाबाट उत्पन्न हुने प्रवृत्तिका बारेमा चर्चा गरेका छन् । कविका अनुसार बाल्यकालका कौमार, पौगण्ड र किशोर अवस्था मुख्य अवस्था हुन् । बाल्यावस्था अज्ञानी अवस्था हो र यस अवस्थामा नरोई खान पाइँदैन । यस्तो अवस्थामा हुन जाने पापको प्रायश्चित्तका लागि कविले भगवान्सँग यसरी क्षमा मागेका छन् ।

जस्तै:-

प्रभूतपापाध्वनिबद्धचेतसः स्वबन्धुताशंसितरोदनध्वनेः ।

अजानतः शैशवदूषितात्मनः क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम् ॥

(श्लो. २, पृ. २)

बाल्यावस्था पार गरिसकेपछि आउने अवस्था भनेको कौमार अवस्था हो । यस अवस्थामा मानिस अतिशय चञ्चल र अशान्तिले व्याकुल हुन्छ । केवल खेल्नु,

सुत्तु र खानुमा मात्र उसको बढी ध्यान जान्छ । यस्तो अवस्थाबाट उत्पन्न हुने पापको क्षमाका लागि उनले भगवान् गोविन्दसँग क्षमा मागेका छन् ।

जस्तै:-

नितान्तलोलस्य कुमारतावशादशान्तताव्याकुलितस्य केवलम् ।

विहारनिद्राभ्यवहारवेदिनः क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम् ॥

(श्लो.३, पृ.२)

कौमार अवस्थापछि आउने पौगण्ड अवस्था हो । पौगण्ड अवस्थामा पनि मानिस अनेकौं साथीहरूसँग प्रेमविभोर भएर घुम्न थाल्दा परिश्रमको पनि वास्ता गर्दैन र उफ्रंदै हिँड्छ । यस अवस्थामा भएका पापहरू नाश गर्नका लागि कविले भगवान् गोविन्दसँग क्षमा माग्दै यस्तो अभिव्यक्ति दिएका छन् ।

जस्तै:-

समं वयस्यैः प्रणयैकसंश्रयैमुहुर्मुदैवोच्छलतो गतश्रमम् ।

प्रचण्डपौगण्डनिदेशवर्तिनः क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम्॥

(श्लो.४, पृ.३)

पौगण्ड अवस्थापछिको अवस्था किशोर अवस्था हो । यो अवस्था अरू अवस्थाभन्दा पनि जटिल हुन्छ । उनकाअनुसार किशोर अवस्थामा मानिसमा आफ्ना गुरुहरूलाई पनि ठग्ने प्रवृत्तिको विकास भएको हुन्छ । यस अवस्थामा उत्पन्न हुने पापहरूलाई क्षमा गर्ने शक्ति केवल गोविन्दमा छ, भन्ने कविको कथन रहेको देखिन्छ ।

जस्तै:-

गुणित्वसाकाङ्क्षगुरुप्रतारणाप्रवीणतासाधनलब्धशर्मणः ।

असाधुकैशोरदशावलम्बिनः क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम्॥

(श्लो.५, पृ.३)

किशोरावस्थापछि आउने युवावस्था हो । प्रायः यस अवस्थामा मानिसको आत्मा दूषित हुन्छ । आत्मा दूषित भएका बेलामा मानिसका मनमा विभिन्न पापहरू उत्पन्न हुन्छन् । यस अवस्थामा मानिसको प्रवृत्ति चञ्चल, व्याकुल र निद्राग्रस्त हुने हुँदा यस अवस्थामा उत्पन्न भएका पापहरूबाट बच्नका लागि भगवान् गुहार्नु उचित हुन्छ ।

### (ख) मध्य भाग

कविकाअनुसार युवावस्थामा मानिसको मन कामवासनातिर तानिएको हुन्छ । यस अवस्थामा मानिस धन, रूप र अहम्को मदले युवतीहरूसँगै लड्छिन् थाल्छ । यस अवस्थामा मानिस कामविषयप्रति बढी लोभिने हुनाले उसको मन दूषित हुन पुग्छ । कविकाअनुसार यौवनको मदले गर्दा मानिस आफूलाई जन्म दिने आमालाई पनि नराम्रो व्यवहार गर्छ । यस अवस्थामा मानिसहरू पत्नीको दास बन्छन् । यो नै उसको बुद्धि नाश गर्ने साधन हुन्छ । त्यसैले यस अवस्थामा उत्पन्न हुने पापहरूको नाशका निमित्त गोविन्द नै सक्षम छन् भन्ने कविको धारणा रहेको देखिन्छ ।

जस्तै:-

युवत्वमाद्यन्मनसः प्रसूद्विषः सहासजायाजनदासताजुषः ।

विदग्धतादग्धविशुद्धपद्धतेः क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम् ॥

(श्लो. ४, पृ. ३)

यस अवस्थाका मानिसका अरू पनि थुप्रै मनोविकृतिहरूको चर्चा प्रपञ्चचर्चामा गरिएको छ । कविका अनुसार युवावस्थाको मानिस आफ्नो जप, पाठपूजा आदि कर्महरू विधि नपुऱ्याई चाँडै सकेर नचाहिँदो गफमा लाग्ने गर्छ । शास्त्रले अभक्ष्य मानेका पदार्थहरू किन्नका निमित्त द्विजजातिका मानिसहरू पनि बजारमा लाम लागेर बस्ने प्रवृत्तिको वर्णन काव्यमा छ । यसप्रकारका प्रवृत्तिबाट हुने पापहरूको प्रायश्चित्तका लागि उनले भगवान्लाई यसरी पुकारेका छन् ।

जस्तै:-

परस्य कर्माणि परस्य कर्मणोः शनैः सतोषं जपतोऽपि दुःखिनः ।  
हतोपलब्धेर्भजतो भुजिष्यतां क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम् ।  
(श्लो. ४२, पृ. ३५)

प्रस्तुत कृतिमा कविले विशेष गरी पुरोहित पेसाबाट हुने पापहरूको वर्णन गरेका छन् । उनका अनुसार तत्कालीन समाजमा खराब मानिसहरूले गरेका पापहरूलाई पखाल्ने भन्दै पुरोहितहरू जथाभावी तरिकाले स्वस्तिशान्ति गर्दै हिँड्थे । तिनीहरूका ती प्रवृत्तिबाट समाजमा पौरोहित्य पेसा निन्दित हुने भएकाले त्यस्ता प्रवृत्तिरूलाई निरुत्साहित गर्नका लागि उनले आफूमाफत गोविन्दसँग क्षमा मागेका छन् ।

जस्तै:-

सलोहपात्रानुपहस्य सम्मतः प्रतिग्रहान् राहुजपार्थदक्षिणाम् ।  
स्वबाहुगां द्यूतदिनाय रक्षतः क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम् ॥  
निपीडितस्यापि यथेच्छमृच्छतः स्थितिं ग्रहाणां गणकाँश्च पृच्छतः ।  
प्रतिग्रहं चार्जयतः प्रति ग्रहं क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम् ।  
(श्लो. २७-२८, पृ. १६-१७)

प्रपन्नलोकाभयदानदीक्षितं पुरस्थितं त्वामनिरीक्ष्य चक्षुषा ।  
विपत्तिलुप्तप्रतिपत्तिशोचतः क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम् ॥  
(श्लो. ६१, पृ. ५९)

यसप्रकार कविले प्रस्तुत काव्यमा मानवमनका पाशविक प्रवृत्तिको स्पष्ट व्याख्या गरेका छन् । उनका अनुसार मानिसको मन जसरी पनि भोगविलासमा मस्त रहन चाहन्छ । मनको अन्तःप्रवृत्तिको वास्ता नगरी हिँड्दा पनि मानिस असन्तुलित हुन्छ

। साथै मनको दमन हुँदा विकृतिहरू उत्पन्न हुन पनि बेर लाग्दैन । यस स्थितिमा मान्छेले सदाचारको बाटो अँगाल्न आवश्यक छ भन्ने कविको धारणा रहेको देखिन्छ । यसमा कविले तात्कालीन ब्राह्मणवर्गको अहङ्कार, नित्यकर्म त्याग, गोसेवा त्याग आदि अनेकौं दोषहरूको विश्लेषण गरेको देखिन्छ ।

जस्तै :-

अपोहविद्यस्य तपो न जानतो निजं सदातारमधो निनीषतः ।

प्रतिप्रभु प्रार्थयतः प्रतिग्रहं क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम् ॥

(श्लो. २३, पृ. १२)

जपादिना वार्धुषिकत्वमृच्छतोऽनपाकृर्णत्रितयस्य कर्हिचित् ।

विनष्टमूलस्य सकष्टसंस्थितेः क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम् ॥

(श्लो. ३७, पृ. २८)

प्रयत्नसम्पन्नपरान्नभक्षणप्रणद्धकुक्षेर्हतसान्ध्यकर्मणः ।

चिरस्य सालस्यतया सतः क्वचित् क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम् ।

(श्लो. ४०, पृ. ३०)

समत्स्यबल्लूरवसासु मध्यतः सकुक्कुटाण्डास्वपि भक्ष्यराजिषु ।

स्वयं यथेच्छं विपणेः प्रतीच्छतः क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम् ॥

(श्लो. ४९, पृ. ४२)

### (ग) अन्त्य भाग

यस भागमा मान्छेका वृद्धावस्थाको बारेमा चर्चा गरिएको छ । मान्छे बूढो भएपछि पनि पापकर्ममा संलग्न हुन्छ । शारीरिक अवस्थाले गर्दा ऊ बूढो हुन्छ । उमेर र अनुभवले गर्दा यस अवस्थामा गम्भीर प्रकृतिको पाप नगरे पनि मानिसबाट मानसिक पापहरू भन्ने प्रशस्तै हुन्छन् । कविले यस कृतिमा त्यस्ता पाप उल्लेख गरेका छैनन् । नगर्नुको कारण उनी आफैँ पनि यो काव्यरचना गरेको समयमा वृद्धावस्थामा पुगेको कुरा मुख्य कारण हुन सक्छ । यसरी काव्यको कथानकलाई माथि उल्लेख गरिएका आदि, मध्य र अन्त्य भागमा संयोजित गरिएको पाइन्छ ।



कथानक घटनाप्रधान नभई प्रवृत्तिहरूको वर्णनमा केन्द्रित छ। त्यसैले यस काव्यको आख्यान कविको अनुभव र अध्ययनमा आधारित देखिन्छ।

## ९. पात्रविधान

अनुभूति र आख्यानमय काव्यतत्वलाई निजी व्यक्तित्वको प्रकाशको आलोकमा सशक्त र जीवन्त एवं संवेद्य र मार्मिक तुल्याउनमा पात्रविधानको महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका रहेको हुन्छ। कथावस्तुलाई गतिशीलता प्रदान गर्ने काम पात्रले गर्छ। पात्रहरू प्रमुख, सहायक र गौण गरी तीन किसिमका हुन्छन्। पात्रहरू अनुकूल प्रतिकूल, गतिशील, गतिहीन, व्यक्तिगत, वर्गगत, प्रत्यक्ष, अप्रत्यक्ष, सजीव, निर्जीव र वस्तुयुक्त हुन्छन्। अनुभूतिको आख्यानीकरणको सुन्दर संयोजनमा उत्कृष्ट काव्यको सौन्दर्य सिर्जित हुन्छ। त्यसमा पात्रले कलात्मक र काव्यात्मक भूमिका निर्वाह गर्दछ। त्यसैले उत्कृष्ट कलात्मक रसमय परिपाकका निमित्त काव्यमा पात्रको उपस्थिति अपरिहार्य हुन्छ।

गौतमको प्रपञ्चचर्चा काव्य धार्मिक काव्यको रूपमा परिचित छ। धार्मिक काव्य भए पनि यसमा उनले समाजका दुराचारी व्यक्तिहरूका प्रवृत्तिलाई पचात्मक शैलीमा प्रस्तुत गरेका छन्। यसमा मूलतः कवि स्वयं नै प्रमुख पात्रका रूपमा मुखरित भएका छन्।

### (क) मुख्य पात्र

यस काव्यका मुख्य पात्रका रूपमा लेखकले आफूलाई नै प्रस्तुत गरेका छन्। यहाँ कविले तात्कालीन समाजमा भएका विकृतिको जड अन्य कुनै व्यक्ति नभएर आफू नै हुँ भनेका छन्। जूवा खेल्ने, धेरै धन पाए जस्तो सुकै खराब दान पनि लिन पछि नपर्ने जस्ता प्रवृत्ति आफूमा नै रहेको छ भन्दै यी कुरालाई उनले वाच्यार्थमार्फत् व्यक्त गरेका छन्। धन, बैँस र शक्तिका आडमा समाजलाई विकृत पारेकोमा त्यसका प्रायश्चित्तका लागि उनले भगवान् गोविन्दसँग बारम्बार क्षमा मागेका छन्। यस काव्यमा प्रत्यक्ष रूपमा देखिने सजीव एवं मानवीय मुख्य पात्रका रूपमा उनको भूमिका बौद्धिक र आध्यात्मिक स्वरूपको देखिन्छ।

**(ख) सहायक पात्र**

शक्तिमा रहेका राणाहरू र तिनको चाकरीमा रमाउने व्यक्तिहरू यस काव्यका सहायक पात्र हुन् । यस काव्यका सहायक पात्रहरू असत् चरित्रको भूमिकामा देखिन्छन् । कविले उनीहरूले गरेका नराम्रा कर्मलाई सोभै प्रस्तुत नगरी आफैँ समाजको प्रतिनिधि बनेर लक्ष्यार्थमार्फत् वर्णन गरेका छन् । राणाशासनका केही मानिसले गरेका नराम्रा कार्यले नेपाली समाज दिनानुदिन अधोगतितर्फ धकेलिएको कुरालाई कविले बढी महत्व दिएर प्रस्तुत गरेको देखिन्छ । प्रत्यक्ष रूपमा नदेखिने यी सहायक पात्रहरू मानवीय छन् ।

**(ग) गौण पात्र**

शक्तिमा आडमा आफूले जे गरे पनि हुन्छ भन्ने मान्यता राख्ने शासकहरूले गरेका खराब कर्मलाई लोभका वशमा परी स्वस्तिशान्ति गराउँदै हिँड्ने गुरुपुरोहितहरू प्रपञ्चचर्चाका गौण पात्र हुन् । ब्राह्मणका ६ वटा कर्म मुख्य हुन्छन् । पढ्नु, पढाउनु, यज्ञ गर्नु, गराउनु, दान दिनु र लिनु ती कर्महरू हुन् । त्यति बेलाका ब्राह्मणहरूले शवदाह गर्ने, ग्रहको दान लिने, धर्मबाट पतित व्यक्तिलाई चोख्याउनका निमित्त विनाविधि यज्ञ गर्ने जस्ता कार्य गर्दा ब्राह्मणधर्म नै दिनानुदिन च्युत हुँदै गएको बुझाई कविको छ । त्यसैले उनले यस्ता प्रवृत्तिप्रति प्रस्तुत काव्यमा चिन्ता प्रकट गरेका छन् । यस काव्यको पात्रविधान मूलतः मान्छेका प्रवृत्तिको उद्घाटनका लागि सहयोगी बनेको छ ।

**१०. परिवेश विधान**

काव्यमा चरित्रचित्रणलाई सहज तथा जीवन्त बनाउन र कथावस्तुलाई मूर्त रूप दिन परिवेशको महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका रहेको हुन्छ । अर्को शब्दमा भन्दा जुनसुकै घटनाहरू कुनै न कुनै स्थान, समय र वातावरणमा घटित हुन्छन् र पात्रहरू कुनै न कुनै परिवेशको धरातलमा आश्रित हुन्छन् ।

**प्रपञ्चचर्चा** काव्यको रचना भएको समयमा नेपाल जहानियाँ राणाशासनको नियन्त्रणमा थियो । त्यसकारण राणाशासनको समय नै प्रस्तुत काव्यको कालिक परिवेश हो । स्थानिक परिवेशमा काठमाडौँ उपत्यकालाई लिइएको देखिन्छ । राणाहरूका अत्याचार र दमनले नेपाली जनताहरू उनीहरूका विरुद्ध बोल्न र लेख्न डराउँथे । जहानियाँ राणाकालीन राजनैतिक परिवेशले गर्दा नेपाली जनता आतङ्कित र भयभीत थिए । (गौतम, दोस्रो संस्करण, २०६८:ज) । शक्तिमा रहेका राणाहरूको चाकरी गर्ने र कसरी आफ्नो स्वार्थका लागि तिनीहरूको विश्वास जित्ने भन्ने पक्षमा समाजका केही मानिसहरू अभ्यस्त भइसकेका थिए ( गौतम, पूर्ववत्) । यसै परिप्रेक्ष्यमा दरबारिया गुरुपुरोहितहरूले पनि चाकरी स्वरूप शक्तिशाली राणाहरूले गरेका कुकृत्यलाई शास्त्रीय विधि र ब्राह्मण धर्मको विपरीत स्वस्तिशान्ति गरी चोख्याइदिने गर्थे । यस कुरालाई नै यस काव्यमा विशेष महत्वका साथ ध्वनित गरिएको छ (गौतम, पूर्ववत्) । यस्ता मानिसका आचरणले नेपालको सामाजिक, धार्मिक तथा आर्थिक क्षेत्रमा देखिएका विकृति नै यस काव्यको मुख्य परिवेश रहेको देखिन्छ ।

## ११. भावविधान

भाव काव्यको आन्तरिक र अनिवार्य तत्व हो । **प्रपञ्चचर्चा** काव्यले शमभावलाई मुख्य भावका रूपमा अङ्गीकार गरेको देखिन्छ । त्यसका अतिरिक्त उत्साह, भय आदि भावहरू पनि यस काव्यमा आएका छन् । यस्ता भावहरूले पनि शमभावलाई नै मद्द्त् पुऱ्याएका छन् । शमभावका पोषक तत्वका रूपमा शङ्का, उत्सुकता, उन्माद, चञ्चलता, स्मृति, वितर्क, चिन्ता आदि सञ्चारी भावहरू पनि काव्यका ठाउँठाउँमा प्रकट भएका छन् । शक्तिमा रहेका शासक र तिनीहरूको चाकरी गरेर आफ्नो अभीष्ट पूरा गर्ने राणाशासनकालीन मानिसका स्वार्थी प्रवृत्तिको उद्घाटन गर्दै शमभावलाई उत्कर्षमा पुऱ्याउने प्रयत्न यसमा गरिएको छ । यसका अतिरिक्त ब्राह्मणधर्मको ख्याल नगरी दक्षिणाको लोभले दुराचारी मानिसका घरघरमा गई स्वस्तिशान्तिका नाममा तिनीहरूले गरेका पापलाई चोख्याउने काम गर्ने पुरोहितप्रति व्यङ्ग्य गरिएको छ । तलका उद्धरणले काव्यको मुख्य भावपक्षलाई सम्बोधन गरेका छन् ।

जस्तै:-

परस्य कर्माणि परस्य कर्णयोः शनैः सतोषं जपतोऽपि दुःखिनः ।  
 हतोपलब्धेर्भजतो भुजिष्यतां क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम् ॥  
 जपार्थिनस्तत्क्षणजातया शयात् प्रमीलया पातयतोऽक्षमालिकाम् ।  
 दिवानिशं द्यूतदिनेषु जाग्रतः क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम् ॥  
 (श्लो. ४२-४३, पृ. ३५-३६)

सारांशमा शमभाव नै प्रस्तुत काव्यको केन्द्रीय भाव रहेको देखिन्छ ।

## १२. केन्द्रीय कथ्य

**प्रपञ्चचर्चा** काव्यमा गौतमले तत्कालीन समाजका मानिसका खराब आचरणका कारणले उत्पन्न विसङ्गतिलाई पद्यका माध्यमले वर्णन गरेका छन् । उनले शासकहरूले शक्तिका आडमा गरेका कुकृत्यले तत्कालीन समाज दिनानुदिन विकृत र कलुषित बन्दै गएको कुरालाई काव्यमा महत्व दिएर चर्चा गरेको देखिन्छ । कविकाअनुसार त्यस समयमा बन्धुहत्या र हाडनाताकरणी सम्बन्धी पापहरू पनि दिनानुदिन बढ्दै गएका थिए । शक्तिमा हुने व्यक्तिहरूले गरेका यस्ता प्रकृतिका पापहरूलाई ठूला पण्डितहरूले पनि विभिन्न प्रभावमा परी प्रायश्चित्त गराई चोख्याउने गर्थे ।

कविका विचारमा मानिसबाट बाल्यावस्था, युवावस्था र वृद्धावस्थामा तीन प्रकारका पाप हुन जान्छन् र त्यसरी हुन जाने पाप आफूबाटै भएका हुन्छन् । यसले समाज र व्यक्तिलाई असर पार्छ । समाजमा देखिएका विकृतिको अन्त्य भएमात्र समाज विकसित भई अगाडि बढ्छ, भन्ने कुरा नै यस काव्यको मुख्य कथ्य हो । तलको अभिव्यक्तिले यस कुरालाई स्पष्ट पार्छ ।

जस्तै:-

नतं विधाय त्रिवितस्ति मस्तकं करिष्यतः स्वस्ति पुरः कृताञ्जलेः ।

उपेक्ष्यमाणस्य सतोऽनुधावतः क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम् ॥  
 अजानतः प्रत्यभिवादनं सतोऽभिवादनं विप्रतया जिघृक्षतः ।  
 तिरोभवत् सत्वतया निरोजसः क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम् ॥  
 (श्लो. २०-२१, पृ. ११-१२)

### १३. कथनपद्धति

**प्रपञ्चचर्चा** काव्यमा कविप्रौढोक्ति पद्धतिद्वारा कविले आफ्नो विचार व्यक्त गरेका छन् । यस काव्यमा संवादको व्यवस्था छैन । संवाद नभएकाले नाटकीय तत्व पनि भेटिँदैन । कविप्रौढोक्ति कथनपद्धतिबाट राणाकालीन समाजले निम्त्याएका नराम्रा कुराको बारेमा चर्चा गरिएको छ । समाज विकृत बन्नुमा राणाहरू र तिनको चाप्लुसी गर्ने चाकरीबाजहरूलाई कविले मुख्य दोषी मानेका छन् । कविका अनुसार शक्तिका आडमा कुकृत्य गरी हिँड्ने शासक र तिनका मतियारहरू समाजलाई कुरूप बनाउने मुख्य पक्ष हुन् । यस कुरालाई उनले यसरी सङ्केत गरेका छन् । जस्तै:-

अनादृतप्रत्यभिवादनान् जनान् धनाशया दूरगतान् नमस्यतः ।  
 निजंश्च पूज्यानपि हा ! जिहासतः क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम्॥  
 अपोढविद्यस्य तपो न जानतो निजं सदातारमधो निनीषतः ।  
 प्रतिप्रभु प्रार्थयतः प्रतिग्रहं क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम् ॥  
 (श्लो. २२-२३, पृ. १२-१३)

प्रस्तुतिमा एकोहोरो वर्णनात्मक शैली अपनाइएको भए पनि तार्किकता र नैतिक सन्देशका कारण अभिव्यक्ति आकर्षक एवम् प्रभावकारी नै बनेको छ । यसका साथै कवि स्वयंले अनुभूतिप्रवाहको संयोजनमार्फत् यस काव्यलाई सम्प्रेषणीय बनाएको पाइन्छ ।

### १४. छन्दविधान

छन्द काव्यको विधागत मौलिकताको मुख्य आधार हो भने काव्यमा छन्दको प्रयोगबाट श्रुतिमाधुर्य प्राप्त हुन्छ । साहित्यका अन्य विधाबाट काव्यलाई फरक पार्ने काम छन्दले नै गर्छ (ज्ञवाली, २०७० : ९) । यो काव्यको साथै त्यसको एक उपविधाका रूपमा रहने काव्यको मुख्य तत्व पनि हो । काव्यमा सौन्दर्यपूर्ण भाषाका वर्णगत र पङ्क्तिगत एवं अनुच्छेदगत बनोटबाटै लय उत्पन्न हुने र समृद्ध हुने गर्छ । काव्यको सौन्दर्यपूर्ण भाषामा पनि वर्णसमूहको प्रयोगका स्तरदेखि नै छन्दको न्यूनतम एकाइ थालिन्छ । त्यसपछिका शब्द/पद, पदावलीका बीचबीचका उपविराम र विराम हुँदै वाक्यपङ्क्ति वा पाउका स्तरमा पुगी त्यसले साङ्गीतिक लहरहरूका रूपमा श्रुतिमाधुर्य सिर्जना गर्छ । गायत्री, उष्णिक, अनुष्टुप, वृकती, पङ्क्ति, त्रिष्टुप, जगती इत्यादि छन्दहरूबाट नै इन्द्रवज्रा, शालिनी, वंशस्थ इत्यादि लौकिक वृत्तहरूको उत्पत्ति भएको कुरा विज्ञहरू बताउँदछन् । लौकिक वृत्तहरूलाई नै छन्द भनिने गरेको छ तापनि त्यसो भन्नु अनुपयुक्त हुने कुरा छन्दःशास्त्रका विज्ञहरूले बताएको देखिन्छ (आचार्य, २०२८, पृ: ख) ।

**प्रपञ्चचर्चा** काव्यको छन्दविधान संस्कृत शास्त्रीय वार्षिक वंशस्थ छन्दमा गरिएको छ । तलको उदाहरणले यसमा प्रयुक्त छन्दःप्रयोगको स्वरूप बुझ्न सकिन्छ ।

जस्तै:-

अनादृतप्रत्यभिवादनान् जनान् धनाशया दूरगतान् नमस्यतः ।

निजाँश्च पूज्यानपि हा ! जिहासतः क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम्॥

(श्लो. २२, पृ. १२)

छन्दलाई प्रभावकारी र श्रुतिमधुर बनाउन कविले आद्यानुप्रास, मध्यानुप्रास र अन्त्यानुप्रासको समुचित विन्यास गरेको पाइन्छ । यसले गर्दा काव्यले लयको माधुर्य प्राप्त गरेको छ । लय तथा अर्थको औचित्यमूलक समीकरण हुनुले पनि यस काव्यको छन्दोविधान विशिष्ट बनेको छ । छन्दोविधानका दृष्टिले **प्रपञ्चचर्चा** सफल बनेको छ ।

## १५. अलङ्कारविधान

शब्द र अर्थमा रहेको वैचित्र्यले काव्य सुशोभित भई श्रोता र बोद्धाहरूको हृदयमा भित्री आनन्द र उल्लासस्वरूप चमत्कार पैदा गर्ने वैचित्र्यको साधन अलङ्कार हो। अलङ्कारलाई परिभाषित गर्ने क्रममा आचार्यहरूले यसलाई दुई किसिमले परिभाषित गरेका छन् :

१. अलङ्करोतीति अलङ्कारः (जसले शोभित गर्छ त्यो अलङ्कार हो)।
  २. अलङ्क्रियते अनेन इति अलङ्कारः (जसद्वारा शोभित हुन्छ त्यो अलङ्कार हो)।
- पहिलो परिभाषाले अलङ्कारलाई काव्यको अनिवार्य र प्रमुख तत्वका रूपमा परिभाषित गरेको छ भने दोस्रो परिभाषाले अलङ्कारलाई काव्यको शोभाकारक तत्वका रूपमा परिभाषित गरेको छ। काव्यको सौन्दर्यको सृष्टि अलङ्कारले गर्दछ भन्ने धारणा अलङ्कारवादीहरूको छ भने रस तथा ध्वनिवादीहरूको धारणा अलङ्कार काव्यको सौन्दर्यवर्द्धक तत्व हो भन्ने रहेको छ।

अलङ्कार सम्प्रदायका संस्थापक आचार्य भामहले अलङ्कारको परिभाषा दिँदै भनेका छन्—**वक्राभिधेयशब्दोक्तिरिष्टा वाचालङ्कृति** : (काव्यालङ्कार, श्लो.१,पृ. ३६)। शब्द र अर्थको वक्रता वा वैचित्र्यलाई अलङ्कार भनिन्छ। उनले अलङ्कारका लागि वक्र भनाइ आवश्यक हुने र त्यसप्रकारको भनाइ नभएमा काव्य सामान्य भनाइभन्दा माथि जान नसक्ने कुरा बताउँदै अलङ्कारको निर्माणका लागि वक्रोक्तिमा जोड दिएका छन्। उनले अलङ्कार काव्यको आत्मा हो भनी सोभै नभने पनि व्याख्यामा अलङ्कारलाई काव्यको अङ्गीतत्वका रूपमा लिएर काव्यात्मकै रूपमा प्रतिष्ठापित गर्ने प्रयत्न गरेका छन्।

रुद्रटले **अभिधानप्रकारविशेषा एव चालङ्काराः** (रुद्रटालङ्कार) भनी विशेष प्रकारको कथनलाई अलङ्कार मानेका छन् भने दण्डीले **काव्यशोभाकरान्धर्मानलङ्कारान्प्रचक्षते** (काव्यादर्श, २, १) भनी अलङ्कारलाई काव्यको शोभाकारक (सौन्दर्यसर्जक) धर्म (तत्व) का रूपमा लिएका छन्। यस भनाइभित्र अलङ्कारमा रस, भाव, सन्धि, वृत्ति आदि सबै सौन्दर्यसर्जक तत्वहरूलाई समावेश गरिएकाले उनको परिभाषा केही उदार देखिन्छ। दण्डीले जस्तै उद्भटले पनि अलङ्कारलाई सौन्दर्यको पर्याय मानेका छन् (केशवप्रसाद, २०५५, पृ. ९६)। अलङ्कारलाई काव्यको महत्वपूर्ण तत्व (आत्मतत्व) का रूपमा

लिने अर्का आचार्य जयदेव हुन् । उनले अलङ्कारको महत्वलाई प्रतिष्ठापित गर्दै यसको परिभाषा दिने क्रममा तापविनाको आगोको कल्पना गर्न नसकिएभैं अलङ्कारविनाको काव्यको कल्पना गर्न सकिदैन (चन्द्रलोक, श्लो. १, पृ. ८) भन्ने विचार प्रस्तुत गरेका छन् ।

अलङ्कारवाद इतर सम्प्रदायका आचार्यहरूले अलङ्कारका बारेमा आफ्ना परिभाषा प्रस्तुत गरी अलङ्कारवादीहरूकाभन्दा केही पृथक् धारणा प्रस्तुत गरेको पाइन्छ । रसलाई काव्यको आत्मा मान्ने अग्निपुराणमा अलङ्कार काव्यको शोभाकारक धर्म भएकाले अलङ्कारले शब्द, अर्थ र शब्दार्थोभयलाई अलङ्कृत पार्दछ भनिएको छ । अर्का आचार्य रीतिवादी वामनले रीतिलाई काव्यको आत्मा मान्दै अलङ्कृत शब्दले यमक, उपमा आदिलाई बुझाउँछ भन्ने जनाएका छन् (उपाध्याय, २०५५, पृ. ९७) । यसपछिका ध्वनिवादी आचार्य आनन्दवर्द्धनले पनि अलङ्कारलाई चिनाउने क्रममा भनेका छन्—

**अलङ्कारो हि बाह्यालङ्कारसाम्यादङ्गिनश्चारुत्वहेतुरुच्यते** (ध्वन्यालोक, दोस्रो उद्योत, कारिका ४०) अलङ्कार लौकिक आभूषणभैं अङ्गी (रस) को सौन्दर्यसाधन हो । उनका विचारमा अलङ्कार काव्यको साध्य नभएर बाह्य शोभावर्द्धक तत्वमात्र हो । यस्तै अर्का आचार्य मम्मटले आनन्दवर्द्धनकै विचारसँग सहमति जनाउँदै शब्द र अर्थद्वारा रसको सौन्दर्य बढाउने अनुप्रास, उपमा आदि अलङ्कार हुन् र ती हार आदिजस्तै आभूषण हुन् (काव्यप्रकाश, ८/६७) भनेका छन् । उनीपछिका आचार्य विश्वनाथले अलङ्कारलाई शब्द र अर्थका अस्थिर धर्म भैकन पनि शब्द र अर्थको सौन्दर्य बढाउँदै रस र ध्वनिलाई पुष्टि गर्ने तत्व नै अलङ्कार हुन् (साहित्यदर्पण, १० । १) भनेका छन् । पूर्वीय साहित्यका अन्तिम प्रसिद्ध आचार्य तथा रसवादी आचार्य जगन्नाथले अलङ्कारको सम्बन्धमा **अथास्य प्रागभिहितलक्षणस्य काव्यात्मानो व्यङ्ग्यस्य रमणीयताप्रयोजका अलङ्काराः निरूप्यन्ते** (रसगङ्गाधर, २, १९४) अलङ्कारहरू भनेका काव्यात्मा रसको सौन्दर्यलाई उजागर गर्ने रमणीयता प्रदान गर्न सहयोगी तत्वहरू हुन् भनेको पाइन्छ ।

यसरी हेर्दा अलङ्कारको परिभाषाका क्रममा स्पष्ट दुई धारका आचार्यहरू देखा पर्दछन् । एकथरी आचार्यहरू काव्यको धर्मका रूपमा अलङ्कारलाई लिँदा अलङ्कार काव्यको सौन्दर्यकारक तत्व हो भन्छन् भने अर्काथरी आचार्यहरूले काव्यलाई शोभा बढाउने तत्व हो भन्छन् । यी दुईबीचको तटस्थ विन्दुमा रहेर अलङ्कारको परिभाषा निम्नानुसार गर्न सकिन्छ—



मूल रूपमा अलङ्कार शब्दार्थ प्रयोगको त्यो असाधारणता हो जो एकातिरबाट वाणीको इष्ट अलङ्कृति (सजावट) हो भने अर्कोतिर सामान्य कथनभन्दा माथि उठेर अतिशयतामा आधारित अभिव्यक्ति हो ।

अलङ्कारशब्द र अर्थमा दुवैमा हुन्छ । शब्दमा आश्रित अलङ्कार शब्दालङ्कार हो भने अर्थमा आश्रित अलङ्कार अर्थालङ्कार हो । शब्द र अर्थ दुवैमा संयुक्त रूपमा आश्रित अलङ्कारलाई उभयालङ्कार भनिन्छ । यसै सैद्धान्तिक आधारलाई आत्मसात् गर्दै कुलचन्द्र गौतमले पनि प्रस्तुत काव्यमा शब्दालङ्कार र अर्थालङ्कारको प्रयोग गरेका छन् ।

### (क) शब्दालङ्कार

#### वृत्यनुप्रास

एउटा व्यञ्जनवर्णको अनेकपल्ट आवृत्ति भएमा वृत्यनुप्रास शब्दालङ्कार हुन्छ । तलको श्लोक यसको उदाहरण हो ।

परस्य कर्माणि परस्य कर्णयोः शनैः सतोषं जपतोऽपि दुःखिनः ।

हतोपलब्धेर्भजतो भुजिष्यतां क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम् ॥  
(श्लो. ४२, पृ. ३५)

#### अन्त्यानुप्रास

श्लोकका विश्रामस्थानमा वर्णको आवृत्ति देखिएका अन्त्यानुप्रास शब्दालङ्कार हुन्छ । यस काव्यमा अनेक श्लोकमा यो अनुप्रास पाइन्छ ।

जस्तै :

घृणासमाकुञ्चितघोणमुच्चकैर्विपत्तिताम्यत्तनु पञ्चकम् ।

सदम्भमम्भः पिवतः ससोरकं क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम् ॥

(श्लो. ५१, पृ. ४)

प्रस्तुत श्लोकको पहिलो र दोस्रो पङ्क्तिका अन्त्यमा **म** व्यञ्जनवर्णको आवृत्ति भएको देखिएकाले **अन्त्यानुप्रास** शब्दालङ्कारको प्रयोग भएको देखिन्छ । यस काव्यमा शब्दालङ्कार अन्तर्गत विभिन्न अनुप्रासका भेदहरू पाइन्छन् ।

### (ख) अर्थालङ्कार

**प्रपञ्चचर्चा** काव्यमा गौतम अर्थालङ्कारको प्रयोगमा पनि सफल देखिन्छन् । प्रस्तुत काव्यमा उपमा, रूपक र उत्प्रेक्षा अर्थालङ्कारको प्रयोग भएको पाइन्छ ।

जस्तै:—

उपमा

निमन्त्रणातिक्रमणेन गौरवं निजं प्रतिष्ठापयतः पशोरिव ।

मदादधिब्राह्मणगोष्ठि गर्जतः क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम् ॥

(श्लो.३२, पृ.२९)

प्रस्तुत श्लोकमा आफ्नो प्रतिष्ठालाई स्पष्ट पार्न पशुसँग सादृश्यविधान गरेकाले उपमा अलङ्कार प्रयोग भएको छ ।

रूपक

युवत्वमाद्यान्मनसः प्रसूद्विषः सहासजायाजनदासताजुषः ।

विदग्धतादग्धविशुद्धपद्धतेः क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम् ॥

(श्लो.७, पृ.४)

प्रस्तुत पद्यमा आँखालाई कपिलमुनिको आँखासँग सादृश्य गर्न तुलना नगरी सोभै प्रस्तुत गरिएकाले रूपक अलङ्कार भएको छ ।

उत्प्रेक्षा

निपीतदुग्धा अपि गाश्चिरं भृता जरापरीता इति दुर्भरा इति ।

हिता इहामुत्र चहा ! जिहासतः क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम् ॥  
(श्लो.५०, पृ. ४६)

यस काव्यका अरू श्लोकहरूमा पनि उत्प्रेक्षा अलङ्कारको प्रयोग भएको पाइन्छ।  
माथिको श्लोक एक उदाहरण मात्र हो ।

### १७. भाषा

काव्यमा कथ्यलाई प्रभावकारी रूपमा प्रस्तुत गर्न भाषा र शैलीको महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका रहेको हुन्छ । भाषा अभिव्यक्तिको साधन हो भने शैली अभिव्यक्तिको तरिका हो । प्रपञ्चचर्चा धार्मिक काव्य हो । गौतमले यस काव्यको कथन गर्दा विषयवस्तु अनुरूपको भाषा प्रयोग गरेको देखिन्छ ।। कवि नेपाली मातृभाषी हुन् तर प्रस्तुत काव्यको रचना संस्कृतमा गरेका छन् । संस्कृत भषामा पनि उनको पकड उच्च रहेको देखिन्छ । उनले विषयवस्तुलाई प्रस्तुत गर्दा साहित्यशास्त्रका नियमहरूका पूर्णतः पालना गरेका छन् । हिज्जेसम्बन्धी नियमहरू खज्मजिएका छैनन् । तलका श्लोकहरूबाट यस कुराको पुष्टि हुन्छ—

प्रवृत्तमात्रस्य धिया ऽनवस्थया यथाकथंचित् परपाठकर्मणि ।

द्विजत्वदं पाठमजानतो निजं क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम् ॥

सतः पथि स्यन्दनमध्यवर्तिनां प्रतीक्ष्य दृग्वारिजकोणवीक्षणम् ।

प्रतीक्ष्यतामात्मन एव वाञ्छतः क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम् ॥

(श्लो.१७-१८, पृ. ८)

प्रपञ्चचर्चा काव्यको संस्कृत भाषा शास्त्रीय र सम्प्रेषणीय स्वरूपको देखिन्छ ।

## १८. शैली

कविले यस काव्यका श्लोकहरूलाई रचना गर्दा संस्कृत काव्यमा प्रचलित रीति/शैलीलाई उपयोग गरेको देखिन्छ । तलका उद्धरणहरूले विभिन्न शैलीको प्रतिनिधित्व गरेका छन् :-

### (क) गौडी रीति/शैली

दुरन्तदौर्गत्यनितान्तपीडित स्वकीयकान्तानयनान्तवीक्षितैः ।  
 प्रतिक्षणक्षुब्धमतेरनिर्वृतेः क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम् ॥  
 निरस्तहालाहलगर्वदुर्वदत् कुटुम्बकोलाहलविह्लात्मनः  
 प्रभूतवित्तार्जनदत्तचेतसः क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम् ॥  
 (श्लो. ११-१२, पृ. ६)

### (ख) पाञ्चाली शैली

वृथात्वमापादयतः सुदुर्लभं स्वकीयमायुः परकीयचर्चया ।  
 न दोषकोषं निजमेव जानतः क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम् ॥  
 स्वयं निकृष्टस्य समाजसौष्ठवं समीहमानस्य सतो गुणद्विषः ।  
 (श्लो. ३३-३४, पृ. २३)

### (ग) वैदर्भी शैली

सदागते स्वस्य पुपूषतो वपुः परस्य पिण्डैरपि दक्षिणाशया ।  
 कृतस्थिते : प्रेतसमस्य सीदतः क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम् ॥  
 (श्लो. ४७, पृ. ४०)

निपीतदुग्धा अपि गाश्चिरं भृता जरापरीता इति दुर्भरा इति ।

हिता इहामुत्र च हा ! जिहासतः क्षमस्व गोविन्द ! मम व्यतिक्रमम् ॥

(श्लो. ५०, पृ. ४६)

यसप्रकार कवि गौतमले संस्कृतका महाकविहरूले आफ्ना काव्यमा प्रयोग गरेका बहुप्रचलित रीति/शैलीलाई नै उपयोग गर्दै **प्रपञ्चचर्चा** काव्यका श्लोकहरू रचेको देखिन्छ । शैलीप्रयोगका दृष्टिले उनको यो काव्य राम्रो बन्न पुगेको छ ।

### १९. शीर्षकविधान

**प्रपञ्चचर्चा** शीर्षक काव्यमा वर्णित मुख्य विषयका आधारमा राखिएको छ । यस काव्यको मुख्य विषय राणाकालीन समाजका विकृत प्रवृत्ति हुन् । यस विषयले नै काव्यमा विस्तार र गतिशील हुने अवसर पाएको देखिन्छ । नेपाली बृहत् शब्दकोशानुसार **प्रपञ्च** शब्दको अर्थ सांसारिक माया वा मोह हो । त्यस्तै **चर्चा** शब्दको अर्थ विचार वा विमर्श हो । काव्यको प्रारम्भदेखि अन्त्यसम्म यसै विषयवस्तुलाई प्रस्तुत गरिएको र समाजका असत् कार्य गर्ने व्यक्ति अरू कोही नभएर त्यो व्यक्ति आफैँ हुँ भन्दै क्षमाको लागि वाच्यार्थद्वारा कविले भगवान् गोविन्दसँग क्षमा मागेको देखिन्छ । विषयको केन्द्रीयतामा विकसित भएको र विषयको पुष्टि पनि गरिएकाले यस काव्यको नामकरण **प्रपञ्चचर्चा** गर्नु सान्दर्भिक देखिन्छ ।

### २०. निष्कर्ष

संस्कृत नै नपढेका पुरोहितहरूले कर्मकाण्ड गर्दा सनातनदेखि चल्दै आएको यज्ञयज्ञादिको विधिमा विकृति उत्पन्न भएकोप्रति गौतमले **प्रपञ्चचर्चा**मा चिन्ता व्यक्त गरेका छन् । सामान्य जनतालाई उचित शिक्षा दिने कार्य पहिलेदेखि भएन (शर्मा, दो.सं. २०२२ : ४७) । तर, राजा र राणाहरूले भने शिक्षकहरूलाई राखेर आफ्ना सन्ततिहरूलाई पढाउने व्यवस्था गर्दै आए । सर्वसाधारण मानिसहरूका छोराछोरीहरूलाई त्यस प्रकारको शिक्षा प्राप्त गर्ने व्यवस्था भएन । यसै कारणले रूढिवादी परम्पराले नेपालमा पहिलेदेखि नै जरो गाडेको हुनाले नेपाली समाजमा

विभिन्न विकृति मौलाएको र त्यसले समाजलाई दुर्गन्धित पारेको कुरा व्यक्त गर्नु प्रपञ्चचर्चा काव्यको मुख्य उद्देश्य हो । शिक्षाको कमी र मानसिक परिवर्तनको अभावले गर्दा उत्पन्न भएका यसप्रकारका प्रवृत्तिहरूको अन्त्य गरी स्वच्छ समाजको निर्माण गर्नुपर्छ भन्ने कुरा प्रपञ्चचर्चा काव्यमा पाइन्छ । यसमा कविले विभिन्न कथ्यको पुष्टि गर्नका लागि उचित सादृश्यविधान गरेका छन् भने काव्यलाई श्रुतिमधुर बनाउन अनुप्रासको राम्रो उपयोग गरेको देखिन्छ । समाजमा देखिएका विभिन्न विकृतिका कारकतत्व अरू कुनै नभएर आफू नै भएको भनी कविले वाच्यार्थमार्फत सामाजिक विकृतिको उद्घाटन गरेका छन् । राणाशासक र उनीहरूको चाकरी गरी विनापरिश्रम धनार्जन गरी त्यो धनलाई सुमार्गमा नलगाई कुमार्गमा प्रयोग गर्ने तत्कालीन समाजका ठालुवादी प्रवृत्तिप्रति व्यङ्ग्य गर्नु यस कृतिको लक्ष्यार्थ रहेको देखिन्छ ।

## २१. सारांश

अन्त्यमा पं.गौतमको प्रपञ्चचर्चा काव्यको अध्ययनबाट तत्कालीन समाजका व्यक्तिहरूमा मानसिक परिवर्तनको अभावले गर्दा मानिसमा उत्पन्न भएका नराम्रा प्रवृत्तिहरूको अन्त्यभई स्वच्छ समाजको निर्माण नहुनु प्रमुख कारक तत्व हो भन्ने रहेको छ । त्यसका अतिरिक्त राणाशासक र उनीहरूका चाकरी गरी विनापरिश्रम प्राप्त धनलाई सुमार्गमा नलगाई कुमार्गमा प्रयोग गर्ने तत्कालीन समाजका स्वार्थी र दम्भी मानिसहरूका प्रवृत्तिलाई पनि काव्यमार्फत् व्यङ्ग्य गर्नु गौतमको रचनाधर्मिता रहेको कुरालाई यहाँ प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । गौतमले समाजमा देखिएका विभिन्न विकृतिका कारकतत्व अरू कुनै नभएर आफू नै भएको भनी वाच्यार्थ मार्फत् सामाजिक विकृतिको उद्घाटन गर्नुका साथै विभिन्न कथ्यको पुष्टिका लागि काव्यमा उचित सादृश्यविधान पनि गरेका छन् । गौतमका संस्कृतका र नेपालीभाषामा साना आकारका अन्य काव्यहरू पनि प्रशस्तै प्रकाशित छन् । उनका ती काव्यहरू प्रायः वर्णमात्रिक छन्दमा रचिएका छन् । गौतमले ती काव्यमा कलापक्षलाई भन्दा भावपक्षलाई बढी महत्व दिएको पाइन्छ । उनका यी काव्यमा भावको गाम्भीर्य, बौद्धिकता, तार्किकता, छन्दोबद्धता तथा कसिलो र परिष्कृत प्रस्तुति पाइन्छ । काव्यलाई श्रुतिमधुर बनाउनका निमित्त उनले विभिन्न अनुप्रासको राम्रो उपयोग गरेका छन् । प्रस्तुत लेखमा गौतमद्वारा रचित प्रपञ्चचर्चा काव्यमा देखिने यस्ता र अन्य विशेषता तथा तिनका प्राप्तिहरूको विश्लेषण तथा मूल्याङ्कन गरिएको छ ।

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## लेखनाथ पौड्यालको आध्यात्मिक पर्यावरणवाद

डा. गोविन्दशरण उपाध्याय

सार:

प्रस्तुत लेख नेपाली साहित्यमा कविशिरोमणि पदवीले सम्मानित कवि लेखनाथ पौड्यालका कृतिको दार्शनिक समीक्षामा आधारित छ । लेखमा कविशिरोमणि पौड्यालका रचनालाई आध्यात्मिक पर्यावरणवादी दृष्टिकोणबाट हेरिएको छ । वेद उपनिषद तथा शास्त्रहरुप्रति आस्था राख्ने कवि पौड्यालले उपर्युक्त आस्थाका आधारमा पर्यावरणवादी विश्वदृष्टिकोणलाई आफ्ना रचनामा कसरी अवलम्बन गरेका छन् भन्ने तथ्यलाई यो लेखले उजागर गर्छ ।

**कुञ्जी शब्दहरु** – आध्यात्मिक पर्यावरणवाद, कविशिरोमणि, पर्यावरण, मानवतावाद, लेखनाथ पौड्याल ।

### १. विषय परिचय

लेखनाथ पौड्याल (विक्रम सं.१९४१-२०२२) नेपाली साहित्यका छन्दोबद्ध कवि तथा नेपाली साहित्यको परिष्कारवादी धाराका थालनीकर्ता थिए । उनलाई आधुनिक युगको जन्मदाता, आध्यात्मिक पुनर्जागरण ल्याउने तथा आध्यात्मिक मानवतावादी कविका रूपमा नेपालमा र बाहिर चिनिन्छ । विक्रम सम्वत् २००८ सालमा पौड्याललाई कविशिरोमणिको उपाधि दिइएको थियो । उनको जन्मस्थल लेखनाथ नगरपालिकाको अघौँ अर्चले हो । त्यसैले उहाँको सम्मानमा लेखनाथ नगरपालिका पनि स्थापित भएको थियो तर अहिले लेखनाथ नगरपालिका पोखरा महानगरपालिकामा गाभिएको छ ।

उनको औपचारिक शिक्षा नेपाल र बनारस दुई ठाउँमा भएको थियो । उनले बनारसमै रहँदा विभिन्न लेख-रचनाहरू स्थानीय पत्रपत्रिकामा प्रकाशित गराएका थिए भने नेपालमा फर्केपछि काठमाडौँमा बसेर आफ्नो रचनात्मक



क्रियाकलापलाई निरन्तरता दिएका थिए। उनले कविशिरोमणिको (वि. सं. २००८) उपाधि राजा त्रिभुवनबाट प्राप्त गरेका थिए। महाकवि लक्ष्मीप्रसाद देवकोटा र नाटककार बालकृष्ण सम उनका मित्र तथा सहयोगी थिए।

लेखकका अनेकौं अनुवाद, मौलिक रचना तथा सहलेखनहरू मध्ये ऋतु विचार (१९७३), बुद्धिविनोद (१९७३), सत्यकलि संवाद (१९७६), सत्यस्मृति (२००९), तरुण तपसी (२०१०) आदि ग्रन्थहरूले उनको आध्यात्मिक दार्शनिक चेतनालाई पर्यावरणसँग जोडेको छ। ऋतुविचार र तरुण-तपसीमा उनको आध्यात्मिक-पर्यावरणवाद उत्कर्षमा पुगेको छ। यी दुई कृतिहरूमा उनको आध्यात्मिक चिन्तन पर्यावरणसँग एकाकार भएको छ। नेपालको प्राकृतिक सौन्दर्यले कविलाई पर्यावरणवादी बनाएको कुरा लुकाउन मिल्दैन।

## २. विषय प्रवेश

वेदहरूले ब्रह्मतत्त्व र पर्यावरणलाई पर्यायवाचीको रूपमा साक्षात्कार गरेका छन्। चारै वेदहरूको आरम्भमा ऋषिहरूले पर्यावरणको स्तुति गरेका छन्। सन्ध्या वन्दनका वखतमा प्राणायाम गरिन्छ, त्यसमा पनि पर्यावरणकै स्तुतिगान गरिएको छ। त्यतिमात्र नभएर विहान विस्ताराबाट उठेर पृथ्वीमा पाइला टेक्नुभन्दा पहिले पृथ्वीको आराधना गरिन्छ, पर्यावरणसँग क्षमा प्रार्थना गरिन्छ। वैदिक ऋषिहरूले शान्तिपाठका माध्यमबाट पर्यावरणको शान्तिको कामना गर्छन्। साच्चिकै भन्नुपर्दा वेदहरूले जति पर्यावरणको प्रसंसा गरेकाछन् त्यति अन्य वैदिक ग्रन्थमा भेट्न सकिन्न। वेदका यी पर्यावरणीय मन्त्रहरूको छुट्टै संग्रह गर्न सकिन्छ। उदाहरणका लागि अथर्ववेदको पृथ्वीसूक्तलाई लिन सकिन्छ।

लेखनाथ पौडेल वैदिक दर्शनका विनम्री अनुयायी हुन्। उनका साहित्यहरूले भक्ति, ज्ञान तथा कर्मलाई मानवीय जीवनका लागि उत्तिकै उपयोगी भनेर प्रशंसा गरेको भए तापनि उनको बुद्धि आचार्य शंकरको अद्वैतवाद तथा उपनिषदहरूको ब्रह्मवादबाट निकै प्रभावित देखिन्छ भने महर्षि पतञ्जलिको योग र भगवान कपिलको सांख्यदर्शनको पनि तिनमा प्रसस्त प्रभाव छ।

कवि लेखनाथ पौडेल सनातन धर्म, संस्कृति तथा आचरणका जीवन्त प्रयोगकर्ता हुन्। वेद, उपनिषद तथा शास्त्रहरूप्रति उनको अपूर्व आस्था र विश्वास छ।

उनी चारपुरुषार्थ तथा धर्मका दशवटा लक्षणले सुसज्जित होस् भन्ने चाहना राख्छन्। लेखनाथ नेपालका रैथाने पण्डितका सन्तान थिए । वाराणसीबाट उनले उत्तरमध्यमासम्मको औपचारिक शिक्षा लिएर नेपाल फर्केका थिए । तर उनको प्रतिभा उनले औपचारिक रूपमा प्राप्त गरेको शिक्षा भन्दा धेरै अगाडी देखिन्छ । आज दुईदर्जन भन्दा बढी विद्वानहरूले लेखनाथको साहित्यमा स्नातकोत्तर र विद्यावारिधि गरिसकेका छन् । प्राडा बासुदेव त्रिपाठी लेखनाथमा विद्यावारिधि गर्ने पहिलो विद्वान हुन् ।

स्वाभाविक रूपले बनारसको शिवमय संस्कृतिले उनी प्रभावित भएकै हुन् भने नेपालको शाक्त पद्यतिले पनि उनको चिन्तनमा प्रभाव पारेकै भेटिन्छ । लेख्दा पढ्ने कामलाई अपराध ठानिने नेपालको त्यस काल खण्डमा उनले जे-जस्तो लेख्न सके, त्यो अद्भूत नै थियो । उनले जुन विषयमा कलम चलाएको भए पनि प्राकृतिक-पर्यावरण उनले कहिले पनि विसर्गका छैनन् । तरुण-तपसी उनका दार्शनिक सोचको मौलो नै हो । आध्यात्मिक पर्यावरणवादी चिन्तनको विशिष्टिकरण हो । निश्चय नै लेखनाथ पौड्याल दार्शनिकको साटो कवि नै हुन् । तर अनुसन्धाताहरूले दार्शनिक कविका रूपमा उनको व्यक्तित्वको व्याख्या गर्छन् । समालोचकहरूले ठीक चिनेका हुन् । उनी वैदिक चिन्तनले ओतप्रोत दार्शनिक हुन् । तर उनको चिन्तनधाराको विश्लेषण गर्ने हो भने पर्यावरणीय चेतनाले आध्यात्मिक चेतना दवेको छ । उनको लागि चेत पहिला र ब्रह्म, जीवआदि तत्त्वहरू पछि छन् । उनी केवल परम्परागत दार्शनिक चिन्तन लिएर हिंड्ने व्यक्ति होइनन् । उनले आध्यात्मिक चिन्तनमा नया सिद्धान्त सृजित गरेका छन् । ध्यानस्थ ऋषिले ब्रह्मसंग एकत्वको अनुभूति गर्नुको सट्टा पर्यावरणका रूपमा ईश्वर साक्षात्कार गर्ने लेखनाथ संसारका पहिला सिद्धान्तकार होलान् । उनले आफ्नो यो पर्यावरणको चेतनालाई तरु अर्थात् रुख तपस्वी बनाएर प्रकट गरेका छन् । यिनले ध्यानस्थ ऋषि बनेर पर्यावरणीय महत्वको साक्षात्कार गरेका छन् । तरुणतपसीको बटुवा ऋषि हो जसले पर्यावरणमा विश्वअनुभूत गरेको छ ।

लेखनाथ पौडेलको लेखनशैली नै उनी आध्यात्मिक पर्यावरणवादी भएको जीवन्त प्रमाण हुन् । उनका प्राथमिक लेखनहरू वर्षा-विचार र ऋतुविचार दुवै पर्यावरण मै केन्द्रीत छन् । दुवै लेखनहरूमा वैदिक वैदिक दार्शनिक चिन्तन र नैतिक चेतनाको प्रभाव राइछाई छ । उनले आफूभित्र रहेको वैदिकचिन्तनको उपयोग पर्यावरणीय-महत्व प्रस्तुत प्रयोग गरेका छन् । असलमा, ऋतुविचार होस् वा वर्षा-विचार दुवै कृतिहरूले वैदिक नैतिकताको समाजको सपना देखेका छन् ।

### ३. चिन्तनको समालोचना

लेखनाथ दर्शनको स्रोत उनको आध्यात्मिक चेतना नै हो । लेखनाथ वैदिक संस्कृतिका विनम्र अनुयायी वा धर्मभिरू दार्शनिक हुन् । बूढो दार्शनिकको नौलो हेराइ शब्दले पनि परम्परागत चिन्तनमा नवीनतम दार्शनिक चेतनाकै तथ्य उदगार गरेको छ भने भने केही समालोचकहरूले पूर्वीय दर्शनको वैचारिक शक्तिसारका रूपमा पहिचान गरे तापनि 'मानवजीवनको समसामयिक सन्दर्भ' भनेर नवीन 'आध्यात्मिक पर्यावरण' सिद्धान्ततिर नै इङ्गित गरेको हुनुपर्छ ।

लेखनाथका समीक्षक प्राडा केशवप्रसाद उपाध्याय 'मानवतावादी जीवनमूल्य' को प्रस्तोताका रूपमा लेखनाथको व्याख्या गरेका छन् । उपाध्यायले आधुनिक समयमा लेखनाथले औल्याएको 'मानवतावादी जीवन मूल्य' के हो ? भन्ने नखुलाएको भए पनि यो मूल्य 'पर्यावरण' नै हो भन्ने तथ्य स्पष्ट बुझिन्छ । मेरो विचारमा, हरेक जीवनधारीका लागि सर्वाधिक महत्वपूर्ण सम्पत्ति 'पर्यावरण'को जीवन्त अभिव्यक्ति नै तरुणतपसी हो ।

### ४. मानववाद र मानवतावाद

आधुनिक विश्वमा मानवतावादको सबैभन्दा बढी कुरा गरिन्छ । तर यस्तो मानवतावाद वास्तवमा मानवतावाद नभएर 'मानववाद'मा सीमित छ । लोभ र व्यक्तिगत स्वार्थका कारण मान्छे अन्धो भएको छ । व्यक्ति केन्द्रीत स्वार्थले प्रकृतिउसको अन्त्याय बढिरहेको छ । मानवतावादको कुरा गरे पनि व्यवहारमा 'मानववाद'मा केन्द्रीत छ । लेखनाथले 'आध्यात्मिक मानवतावाद'को स्थापना गरेका छन् । उनको चिन्तन स्पष्ट छ -

प्रकृति सबैकी साभा हुन् । प्रकृतिमा विभेद छैन । वातावरण सबैको साभा हो । यसको सुरक्षा गर्नु सबैको साभा दायित्व हो । आफ्नो व्यक्तिगत स्वार्थका लागि पर्यावरणको प्रयोग गर्नु दानवता हो । पृथ्वीका हरेक जीव पर्यावरणका साभा अशियार हुन् । एउटा तुच्छ चरो र मान्छेको जीवन यसै पर्यावरणमा आश्रित छ ।

## ५. धार्मिक आध्यात्मवाद र धर्मनिरपेक्ष आध्यात्मवाद

आजभोली एउटा बहस चलिरहेको छ - आध्यात्मिक हुन्, धार्मिकता होइन, नास्तिकहरू पनि आध्यात्मिकहुन् छन यो बहस एकदेववाद र एक पुस्तकवादी अन्धविश्वासबाट उम्कने प्रयत्न हो । वैदिक संस्कृतिमा आध्यात्मिकता र धार्मिकतामा कति पनि फरक छैन । धर्मका दशबाट लक्षणहरू हिन्दूहरूका व्यक्तिगत आचरण होइनन् । यहाँ आध्यात्मिक बन्नका लागि ईश्वर वा कितावमा विश्वास गर्ने बाध्यता छैन । लेखनाथ पौड्यालको 'आध्यात्मिक पर्यावरणवाद' उनको धार्मिकता तथा आध्यात्मिकताको मिश्रित धारणा हो । यस अर्थमा उनी पुनर्जागरणवादी हुन् ।

पश्चिमाहरूले 'पर्यावरणवाद'लाई भौतिकवादी चिन्तनको परिधिमा मात्र बुझ्ने गरेका छन् । यस्तो हुनुमा बाइबलीय पेलाई जिम्मेदार छ । वैदिक, बौद्ध, जैन, किराती, बोन आदि नेपालका रैथाने धार्मिक अनुयायीहरूका लागि 'पर्यावरण' महत्वपूर्ण आध्यात्मिक तत्व हो । खासगरी वैदिकहरूले त हरेक विहान आँखा खोल्ने वित्तिकै पर्यावरणलाई नै धन्यवाद दिन्छन् प्रार्थना गर्छन् । दिनको आरम्भ नै पर्यावरणको प्रार्थना, शान्तिपाठ तथा ध्यानसंग हुन्छ । लेखनाथ यसभन्दा फरक छैनन् ।

लेखनाथको दार्शनिक पर्यावरणवादको आधार अद्वैतवाद हो । ब्रह्म नै विश्वको आदिकारण हो । जीव ब्रह्मको अंश तथा स्वयं ब्रह्मकै अभिव्यक्ति हो । विश्वको हरेक वस्तुले ब्रह्मको प्रतिनिधित्व गर्छ । रूख, पहाड, वादल, पशु-पंक्षी आदि समस्त विश्वका वस्तुहरू ब्रह्मकै अभिव्यक्ति हुन् । यदि अन्तर्मनले ती वस्तुहरूको आत्मनिरीक्षण गर्ने हो भने आफू र त्यसमा विभेद हुँदैन । ऋतुविचार, बुद्धिविनोद, तरुण-तपसीमा यत्रतत्र प्रकृति र आध्यात्मिकताबीच समन्वय स्थापित गर्न प्रसस्त उपमा तथा उदाहरणहरू छन् । तरुणतपसीको अन्त्यमा बटुवाले वृक्षका रूपमा विश्वरूपको अनुभूति गरेको यसको उदाहरण हो ।

## ६. तृष्णा, पैसा र लोभले प्रकृतिबाट अलग पार्छ

लोभ र तृष्णाले मान्छे अन्धो हुन्छ जसले गर्दा प्रकृति र आफूबीच रहेको अनन्तसम्बन्ध बिर्सन्छ । यस्तो विस्मृतिले मान्छे दानव बन्छ र प्रकृतिउपर

अत्याचार गर्न थाल्छ । उसले आफ्नो लोभलाई जीवित राख्न अनेकौं अस्त्रशस्त्रहरूको आविष्कार गर्छ । आफूसरह प्रकृतिमा आश्रित र वातावरण निर्माण गर्ने प्राकृतिक वस्तुहरूमा हस्तक्षेप गरेर आफ्नै अस्तित्व समेत धरापमा परिरहेको छ ।

लेखनाथको साहित्यले भन्छ - यदि अस्तित्वका विषयमा सोच्ने हो भने रुखभै संसारका हरेक वस्तुको अस्तित्व एकाकी प्राप्त भएको हो । पर्यावरण अनादि तत्व भएकोले स्वयं आफ्नो उत्पत्तिका विषयमा यो बोल्न सक्दैन । प्रकृतिमा अप्रत्यासित रूपमा घट्ने राम्रा र नराम्रा घटनाहरूको साक्षी हुनैपर्छ । पर्यावरणको काम अरूको कल्याण गर्नु भएकोले एउटा तपस्यारत ऋषिभै समस्त विपदहरू सहन गरेकै हुन्छ ।

प्रकृतिका छ वटा ऋतुहरूका प्रभावहरू मान्छे र पर्यावरण दुवैले समान रूपले सामना गर्नुपर्छ । रुखले सबै प्रकारका प्राकृतिक परिवर्तनहरूलाई सहज रूपमा अङ्गिकार गर्छ । वसन्त, ग्रीष्म, वर्षा, शरद, हेमन्त, शिशिर - यी छ वटा ऋतुहरू पर्यावरणका गहना हुन् । कठिन ऋतुहरूका माध्यमबाट रुखरूपी ऋषिले कल्याणकारी शक्ति आर्जन गर्छन् भने सरल ऋतुहरूमा त्यो शक्ति परोपकारमा प्रयोग हुन्छ । यसरी एउटा मुनि र पर्यावरणकाबीच एकात्मकता हुन्छ । रुख पर्यावरण र पर्यावरणको रक्षक दुवै हुन्छ । मान्छेले पनि आध्यात्मिक दृष्टिले आत्मज्ञानका माध्यमबाट यो सम्बन्ध बुझ्न सक्छ । यो बुझ्नका लागि उसले लोभ तथा तृष्णा छोडेर एउटा रुखको आत्मकथा बुझे पुग्छ ।

प्रकृतिमा रहेका हरेक वस्तुसँग जीवन गाँसिएको छ । हिंसा पनि प्रकृतिको एउटा अंग हो तर मान्छेले जानाजान आफ्नो स्वार्थपूर्तिका लागि हिंसा गर्छ । वातावरणमा नकारात्मक असर पार्ने मान्छेका हरेक क्रियाकलाप हिंसा नै हुन् । यो तत्स्थ तटस्थ योगीका रूपमा आफ्नै मनको मनन नगरी बुझ्न सकिन्न । स्वार्थले प्रेरित मान्छेका हरेक क्रियाकलापले प्राकृतिक विश्वमा विपत्ति निम्त्याउँछ । सबैसंग प्रेम गर्नुपर्ने मान्छे, स्वाधी हुँदा अरूको मानव-इतरका प्राणीहरूले समेत व्यर्थमा दुख भोग्नुपर्छ । जसरी सूर्यको प्रकाशले विभेद गर्दैन त्यसरी नै पर्यावरणले कसैसंग विभेद गर्दैन । पर्यावरणको लाभ सबैका लागि हुन्छ । समता नै प्रकृति अर्थात् पर्यावरणको पहिलो मन्त्र हो । मान्छे यति स्वार्थी छ कि 'जगत्प्राणीदेवी प्रकृति जननीमा विषमता' देख्न थाल्छ । उसले आफ्नो स्वार्थका कारण निम्तिएको विषमता बुझ्न चाहदैन ।

लेखनाथ पौड्यालले एउटा प्राकृतिक तपसीको रूपमा धनि-गरिव, कृषक-(ब्यापारी सबैले अंशियारको हैसियतले पर्यावरणबाट लाभान्वित भैरहेको अनुभूति गर्न चाहन्छन्। जुन दिन पर्यावरणमा वास्तविक समस्या उत्पन्न हुनेछ, त्यसदिन मान्छे त के कुनै पनि प्राणीका लागि यो धर्ती उपयोगी रहने छैन। मान्छे यो संसारको सबैभन्दा ज्ञानी, चतुर सीपालु, उद्योगी र गुरू हो। उसले संसारको प्राकृतिक चक्रलाई सम्मान दिए साँच्चिकै यो पृथ्वी 'अमर-नगरी' बन्न सक्छ। यो धर्ती सबैको साझा हुन्छ। यो धरतीमा सबैको साझा अधिकार छ। एस्तो समानानुभूति केवल आध्यात्मिक चेतनाबाट प्राप्त हुन्छ।

मान्छेको संचय गर्ने र लाभान्वीत हुन् बानीले प्राकृतिक विश्वलाई सबैभन्दा नोक्सान गरेको छ। संचय गर्ने मान्छेको बानी प्राकृतिक नियम विरुद्ध छ। यसले मान्छे-मान्छेबीच अस्वस्थ प्रतियोगिता हुन्छ। भगडा निम्त्याउँछ। प्राकृतिक साधनहरूउपर बलजफ्ती अधिकार जमाउने भावना बलियो हुन्छ।

भारतीय स्वतन्त्रता आन्दोलन, राणाहरूको एकतन्त्रीय शासन, प्रथम विश्वयुद्ध र द्वितीय विश्वयुद्धले दिएको मानव विनाशको घाउ तुरूण-तपसीमा दुखेको छ। अध्यात्मको गहिराइमा दार्शनिकले यो दुख साक्षात्कार गरेका छन्। अस्तित्ववादी चेतना पनि यहा प्रस्फुटित छ तर वैदिक दर्शनको 'सर्वजन हिताय'को पृष्ठभूमिमा त्यो बलियो छैन। उनको बुझाइमा जवसम्म मान्छे आध्यात्मिक दृष्टिकोणले सुसज्जित हुँदैन तबसम्म लोभ तथा तृष्णाको गर्तबाट निस्कन सक्दैन। निर्लोभीपन नै अमृत हो, जसले सबैको लागि साझा विश्वको प्रत्याभूति दिन्छ।

व्यक्तिगत सुख खोज्ने प्रवृत्ति र पूँजीसंग्रह गर्न पैसाको आविष्कारले मान्छेलाई हदैसम्मको लोभी तथा लालची बनाएको छ। पैसाको आविष्कारले क्षमा, मैत्री, करुणा, प्रणय, शान्ति तथा शुचिता जस्ता सकारात्मक मानवीय गुणहरू ध्वस्त भएका छन्। यसले मान्छेमा आध्यात्मिक चेतनाको कमि आएर जडवादीपन हावी भएको छ। आध्यात्मिक चेतना धमिलिएको छ। आफूले रहेको राम्रो र नराम्रो छुट्याउन सक्ने सुन्दर 'विवेक'लाई समेत लत्याएको छ। पैसाका धेरै गुण होलान् तर यसको सबैभन्दा ठूलो दुर्गुण भनेको समाजमा 'विषमता' उत्पन्न गरेर द्वन्द्व बढाउनु हो। यही पैसा जोड्न मान्छेले आफ्नो प्राकृतिक विश्वको पनि उपेक्षा गरेको छ। आफ्नै पर्यावरणमा अत्याचार गरिरहेको छ।

लेखनाथ पौड्यालले तरुण(तपसिका रूपमा साक्षत्कार गरेको 'विकासको सूत्र' अरूको भन्दा फरक छ। विकासको सबैभन्दा ठूलो शत्रु भौतिकवादी सोच र

धार्मिकतासंग गासिएका अन्धविश्वास हुन् । व्यक्तिगत सुखलाई सबीतम सुखमान्ने भौतिकवादी चिन्तनमा आधारित जीवन-प्रणाली र सोचविचार नै नगरी पूजाआजा, जादु टुनामुनाकापछि लाने धार्मिक कायरता नै विकासका सबैभन्दा विरोधी तत्व हुन् । प्रकृतिका हरेक पूजा(आजाका विषय भन्दा पनि आत्मिक-सम्मानर समानानुभुतिका विषय हुनुपर्छ । लेखनाथले तरुण-तपसीको चौध, पन्ध्र र तथा सोह्र अध्यायमा अन्धविश्वास र त्यसबाट सृजित भ्रमको कवितात्मक शैलीमा वर्णन गरेका छन् । यी कविताहरूले अन्ध-विश्वास, भ्रम र आध्यात्मिकताबीचको पार्थक्य बोध गर्छन् । लोभ, लालच, तृष्णाले मान्छेलाई कतिसम्म अन्धो बनाउँछ भन्ने तथ्य प्रकट गरेका छन् ।

यसरी, लेखनाथ पौड्यालको दार्शनिक चेतना आध्यात्मको गहिराइबाट प्रकट हुन्छ र रुखका रूपमा आत्मालाई विस्तारित गरेर पर्यावरणका रूपमा प्रकट हुन्छ । यसले प्राचीन वैदिक दार्शनिक दृष्टिकोणलाई आधुनिक पर्यावरणवादी चेतनाका रूपमा व्याख्या गरेको छ । यसको स्रोत अद्वैतवादमा छ । यसको आत्मा वैदिक मूल्य तथा मान्यतामा रुलमुलिएको छ । लेखनाथले विश्वका लागि ‘आध्यात्मिक पर्यावरणवाद’को वैदिक मोडेल प्रस्तुत गरेका छन् । पर्यावरणको दार्शनिक पक्षमा लेखनाथको चिन्तन अद्वितीय छ । आध्यात्मिकतासंग जोडेर पर्यावरणसंग एकात्मकता स्थापित गर्नु र त्यसो गर्न मानिसलाई प्रेरणा दिनु यस दार्शनिक चिन्तनको मौलिकता हो ।

प्रसिद्ध नोबेल पुरस्कार विजेता बेन्गारी मेथाईले २००४ मा भनेका थिए, ‘तपाईंको अन्तरात्माको पर्यावरणलाई पवित्र वस्तुको रूपमा स्वीकार नगर्ला तर हाम्रो जीवन पानी, हावा, आकाश, ऋतुहरूमा टिकेको छ । त्यसैले हाम्रो अस्तित्व सुनिश्चित भएको छ । यस आधारमा हामीले प्रकृतिलाई सम्मान गर्नुपर्छ । जव कुनै वस्तु सम्मानित हुन्छ ती स्वयं आदरणीय हुन्छन् । विनाश गर्नु आफैलाई हत्या गर्नु सरह हुन्छ ।’ यही कुरा लेखनाथ पौड्यालले वि. स. २०१३ मा उद्घोष गरिसकेका थिए ।

अन्त्यमा, लेखनाथ पौड्यालको जन्म सौभाग्यले नेपालमा भए तर उनी हामी सबैका साझा सम्पत्ति हुन् । हाम्रो भारत वर्षमा जन्मिए । आफ्नै सेरोफेरोमा उभिएर वैदिक चिन्तनको नवीन व्याख्या गर्दै ‘आध्यात्मिक पर्यावरणवाद’को उदात्त सिद्धान्त जन्माए । लेखनाथीय पर्यावरण दर्शनले कमसेकम पाँचवटा दार्शनिक तथ्यतिर मानवीय चेतनालाई आकर्षित गरेको छः

(१) पर्यावरण आध्यात्मिक सत्ता हो र यसको सुरक्षामा हरेक व्यक्तिको आत्मिकतहले लाग्नुपर्छ ।

(२) पर्यावरणको वास्तविक अस्तित्व छ । पृथ्वीका हरेक प्राणी र वनस्पति जगतको अस्तित्व पर्यावरणमा निर्भर छ ।

(३) पर्यावरण सबैको साझा हो । पृथ्वीका हरेक प्राणीको साझा हो । मान्छे होस् वा अन्य प्राणी अथवा वनस्पति नै पर्यावरणीय अंगका रूपमा यसमा साझा तथा मौलिक अधिकार प्राप्त छ । तथापी पर्यावरणको सुरक्षा गर्ने जिम्मा मान्छेलाई बढी छ ।

(४) यस्तो साझापनको साभेदारीका लागि आध्यात्मिक चेतना हुनुपर्छ । हरेक प्राणी, वनस्पति तथा विश्वका वस्तुहरूमा आत्मतत्त्वको उपस्थिति रहेको बैदिक मान्यता आत्मसात गर्नु नै आध्यात्मिक चेतना हो ।

(५) यस्तो साझापन मानवता हो जुन दया, माया, प्रेम, क्षमाआदिका माध्यमबाट प्राप्त हुन्छ ।

अन्त्यमा, प्राकृतिक वस्तुहरूको अधिकार केवल मान्छेमा हुन्छ भन्ने सोचमा परिवर्तन हुनुपर्छ । साझाको अर्थ 'प्राणीमात्र'को साझा भनेर बुझ्नुपर्छ । यसरी लेखनाथीय चेतनाको विनम्रतापूर्वक अनुसरण गर्ने हो भने अहिलेको प्रतिस्पर्धी विश्वले एउटा साझा-विश्वको निर्माण गर्न सक्नेछ । लोभ, तृष्णाका कारण प्राकृतिक साधनहरूको लुछाचुँडी गर्दा पर्यावरणमा पुगिरहेको क्षति क्रमशः न्यून गर्न सकिन्छ । कसैले पनि आत्मभूत प्रकृतिलाई हानी पुर्याउने कल्पना समेत गर्ने छैन ।



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