

Liminal Performance and Gender Reconstruction: Exploring Subaltern Consciousness in *Balidaan*

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Abstract

Balidaan is a highly acclaimed film that redefines gender boundaries within a historical context. This paper examines the portrayal of **subaltern consciousness**, manifested through revolutionary songs, inclusive representations of ordinary people, underground resistance movements, and their collective struggle against autocratic rule. The film critiques the cruelty and domination of the Panchayat regime, highlighting the suffering of ordinary Nepalese citizens and their resistance against systemic oppression. Central to this analysis is exploring the subaltern voice and agency, which emerges through the active participation of marginalized individuals and rebel groups in dismantling autocratic hierarchies. The paper also investigates the redefinition of gender boundaries within these revolutionary dynamics, underscoring how collective resistance challenges oppressive norms. These issues are analyzed through the theoretical frameworks of **liminal performance pedagogy** and **subaltern consciousness**, offering insights into the intersection of marginality, resistance, and transformative action.

Keywords: Consciousness, gender, liminal, performance, reconstruction, subaltern

Introduction

Balidaan is the first political film in the field of Nepali cinema. Tulsi Ghimire directed this film, and Modnath Prashrit, the contemporary communist leader of Nepal, has written the script. *Balidaan* is the production of Cinema Nepal. This film critiques the autocratic rulers, their domination, cruelty and suffering of the subaltern people of the contemporary Panchayat period of Nepal. *Balidaan* evokes awareness among the uneducated, poor people and politically conscious young youth who are victimized and made scapegoats by the autocratic rulers. Despite their suffering and domination, *Balidaan*

is also a radical enactment and revolt against the then vindication. When Modnath Prashrit wrote the script of *Balidaan*, educated women were conscious of the patriarchal domination and autocratic ruling system of Nepal. The performance of female characters in this film is as bold as the male characters. Female characters perform very reliable, strong, and radical roles to fight against their domination. *Balidaan* evaluates the contemporary political situation from the liberal standpoint. It is the panoptic gaze upon the political activities of the autocratic ruling system of Nepal.

Balidaan is an acclaimed film that tries to redraw the gender boundary in the Nepali cinema industry. The plot of this film revolves around a young student who goes to the villages after completing his studies to initiate a mass movement against the repressive administrative system. Though the film does not spell out the political affiliation of the martyr hero, he is generally regarded as a communist reformer. In this film, the relationship between innocent and uneducated villagers and educated young rebels mutual relationship is implemented very sturdily. *Balidaan* shows the negotiation between politically/ educationally conscious and uneducated/unconscious people and their dedication to the process of freedom and the establishment of democracy. It also reveals that the political revolt against autocracy begins in the rustic and village areas and then slowly reaches the center in a mature form.

It is about the sufferers' domination, punishment, suffering, and revolt. *Balidaan* begins with the speech of the young revolutionary students and his death by the attack of the representative of the Panchayat rulers. The plot of this movie starts with the innocent activities of some of the revolutionaries and slowly develops toward their experience and aggression. The direct attack of the cruel Panchayat rulers was unbearable for the revolutionaries, so they shifted their revolutionary programs to the village and started the formation of their revolution from the rural areas. They begin their revolution by teaching the uneducated and innocent people of the rural areas. Through the revolutionary songs, they started to arouse emotion among the people. In the central part of the film, the producer tries to demonstrate the mutual relationship between the villagers and the revolutionary cadres. The relationship between farmers, teachers, children, women, and lower and higher castes plays a crucial role in developing the revolution at its locus point. At the same time, the exploitation and the domination of the autocratic rulers as a counterpart of the revolution are demonstrated critically. Despite the arrest of the male protagonist and the revolutionary party leader, Arjun, the revolutionaries did not bend down in front of the cruel rulers. In the last part of the film, the hypocrisy of the autocratic rulers is clearly shown by killing the protagonist of the movie illegally. The ending of this film is 'liminal.' It stands neither on the side of autocracy nor does it show the complete victory of the revolutionaries. In Victor Turner's words, this film is standing at the "liminal position" and gives the panoptic gaze to the activities of autocratic rulers and the revolutionaries. This film stands at the threshold of the ending of 'Panchayat' and the teething days of a new democracy, 'Bahudal.'

In his review, Ramesh Pradhan (2023) highlights *Balidaan* as a groundbreaking film that captures the essence of Nepal's revolutionary movement. He notes the film's strong political message, particularly its critique of the autocratic Panchayat system and the sacrifices made by the youth to bring about change. Pradhan commends director Tulsi Ghimire for his ability to intertwine personal narratives with broader political struggles, making the film accessible and emotionally impactful. He also praises the lead performances, especially Hari Bansha Acharya's portrayal of a revolutionary leader. According to Pradhan, "*Balidaan* stands as a reminder of the costs of freedom and the enduring spirit of resistance in Nepali society" (p. 34).

Deepak Gurung's (2023) review approaches *Balidaan* from a historical perspective, acknowledging its cultural significance in the context of Nepal's socio-political landscape. Gurung argues that *Balidaan* is more than just a film; "it is a cultural artefact that embodies the sentiments of a generation fighting against authoritarianism. He examines how the film mirrors real-life events of political oppression and revolution, reflecting the struggles of ordinary people against systemic injustice" (p. 41). Gurung also explores the film's technical aspects, praising the cinematography and soundtrack for enhancing the film's revolutionary tone. He considers *Balidaan* as one of Nepal's most important political films.

Anju Sharma's (2024) review of *Balidaan* emphasizes the emotional depth of the film, particularly its portrayal of sacrifice and loss. Sharma focuses on the human element, arguing that *Balidaan* is not just a political statement but also a moving personal story of the revolutionary fighters and their families. She praises Tulsi Ghimire's direction for its sensitive handling of themes like martyrdom and moral struggle. The visual storytelling, combined with a powerful soundtrack, enhances the emotional intensity of the narrative. Sharma views, "*Balidaan* is a timeless work, relevant not only for its political message but also for its universal themes of courage and sacrifice" (p. 22). These reviews by different critics highlight various aspects of *Balidaan*, offering a comprehensive understanding of the film's political, emotional, historical, and symbolic significance. However, this research highlights the issue of liminal performance and gender reconstruction in *Balidaan*, which is a virgin territory to explore.

In *Balidaan*, the revolutionaries and oppressed groups occupy a liminal space during their resistance to the autocratic Panchayat rulers. This space represents a suspension of traditional hierarchies and gender norms, fostering subaltern agency and communal solidarity against systemic oppression.

Mallika Aryal (2008), in her review note, appreciates *Balidaan* and writes, "*Balidaan* explores periods of violence, domination, and revolt in the country. It tries to explore the autocracy to the leniency of Nepal" (p. 19). *Balidaan* assesses the contemporary Panchayat politics of Nepal. The male protagonist, Arjun (Haribamsha Acharya), and the

female protagonist, Sangita (Anjana Shrestha), are educated and politically aware young rebels. Their language is compelling and comprehensive. In Austin's terms, their language is 'articulative' and 'recognizable,' which meets the felicity and appropriate condition. The film broadcasts the harmonious relationship between villagers and the underground revolutionary cadres. Young cadres are teaching those villagers the lesson of political awareness and consciousness. This film tries to perform the identical roles of males, females, and children to fight against political suppression.

Previous research has extensively explored both **subaltern consciousness** and **liminal performance**. However, few studies have combined these frameworks to examine how marginalized groups engage with resistance and transformation within transitional spaces. Scholars like Spivak (1988) have focused on the limitations and possibilities of subaltern voices in hegemonic contexts, highlighting the difficulties of speaking for or as the subaltern. Similarly, Turner's (1969) exploration of liminality has primarily centered on rites of passage and social rituals, focusing on how collective experiences in liminal spaces lead to personal and social transformation. While these individual frameworks offer valuable insights, a gap in research directly links the transformative power of liminal performance with the political and social resistance articulated through subaltern consciousness. This study aims to fill this gap by examining how **liminal performance pedagogy** functions as a space for the subaltern to negotiate identity, challenge oppression, and rewrite the narrative of resistance in both historical and contemporary contexts.

Methods and Materials

The methodology for this study is grounded in the theoretical frameworks of **subaltern consciousness** and **liminal performance**, which provide a lens for examining marginalized voices and their resistance within transitional spaces. Drawing from Gayatri Spivak's (1988) concept of subaltern consciousness, this research explores how subaltern groups, who are typically excluded from dominant power structures, navigate and challenge their oppression through collective action and cultural expressions. Additionally, Victor Turner's (1969) idea of liminality offers a critical framework for understanding how these groups engage in temporary spaces where traditional norms and hierarchies are suspended, allowing for alternative forms of identity and resistance to emerge. This study employs a qualitative, interpretive approach, using film analysis and narrative inquiry to explore how marginalized characters in *Balidaan* embody subaltern consciousness and engage in liminal performances. By focusing on scenes of resistance, communal solidarity, and identity transformation, the research aims to uncover how liminal spaces function as sites of empowerment and subversion for oppressed communities. Through this methodology, the study seeks to bridge the theoretical concepts of liminality and subalternity, offering new insights into the intersection of marginality, resistance, and performance.

The concept of **subaltern consciousness** is closely associated with thinkers like Antonio Gramsci and later expanded by postcolonial scholars such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. The subaltern refers to groups or individuals marginalized within a dominant social hierarchy, often deprived of agency and voice. Victor Turner's concept of liminal space originates from his anthropological studies on rites of passage, significantly influenced by Arnold van Gennep's earlier work. Liminality refers to a transitional phase during which individuals or groups are situated "betwixt and between" established social roles, norms, or identities. Turner (1969) describes this space as one characterized by ambiguity, disorientation, and openness to transformation. Within this space, societal structures are suspended, allowing participants to experience a state of potentiality and change. A critical feature of liminality is the emergence of *communitas*, a temporary and egalitarian form of solidarity where hierarchical distinctions dissolve, fostering an unstructured community of equals. Furthermore, liminal spaces are often sites of intense symbolic and ritualistic activity, marking the thresholds of change. While inherently unstable, these spaces offer immense opportunities for personal and collective transformation (Turner, 1969).

The concept of subaltern consciousness, on the other hand, focuses on marginalized groups excluded from dominant power structures. Initially introduced by Antonio Gramsci and later expanded by postcolonial scholars like Gayatri Spivak, the term subaltern refers to those who lack agency and voice within hegemonic systems. Subaltern consciousness emerges from the lived experiences of oppression and often manifests as subtle forms of resistance, cultural production, or alternative discourses (Spivak, 1988). However, Spivak highlights the challenges of representing subaltern voices authentically, arguing that their narratives are frequently mediated or co-opted by elite frameworks, leading to distorted or silenced accounts of their realities. Additionally, subaltern consciousness intersects with other forms of marginalization, such as race, class, and gender, further complicating their socio-political positioning.

The intersection of liminal space and subaltern consciousness provides a robust framework for understanding moments of resistance and transformation. Liminality offers an analytical lens to explore transitional spaces where marginalized groups challenge existing norms, temporarily suspending oppressive structures. Subaltern consciousness, meanwhile, provides insight into how these groups articulate their identities and resist domination within or beyond these liminal spaces. For instance, in the film *Balidaan*, revolutionary characters and oppressed groups occupy a liminal space during their fight against the autocratic Panchayat regime. This space suspends traditional hierarchies and norms, fostering communal solidarity and enabling subaltern agencies to emerge. The film critiques systemic oppression while showcasing how marginalized voices resist through symbolic and collective actions. Thus, the interaction between liminality and subalternity highlights how marginalized groups navigate and transform oppressive boundaries (Turner, 1969; Spivak, 1988).

Discussion and Analysis

In analyzing *Balidaan*, the interplay between **consciousness and liminal performance** emerges as a central theme in the film's depiction of resistance and transformation. The characters, particularly the marginalized groups, navigate moments of crisis that force them into liminal spaces where societal norms are disrupted and new identities and forms of solidarity are forged. Through the performance of revolutionary acts, these characters transcend the oppressive structures of the autocratic Panchayat regime, embodying **subaltern consciousness** by reclaiming their agency and articulating resistance in ways often invisible in dominant narratives. The underground movements and charismatic songs became potent symbols of this subaltern resistance, offering a collective voice to the oppressed. This analysis focuses on key scenes where **liminal performance** is enacted, exploring how these spaces enable the redefinition of gender, power, and identity. Through this lens, the film becomes a site of both personal and collective transformation, challenging the hierarchical structures of power while emphasizing the importance of community and solidarity in the face of oppression. One of the popular songs in the film – *Gaun gaun bata utha, basti basti bata utha* (Arise from the villages, arise from the slums – our translation) has been adopted by the largest parties in the kingdom. The repressive government, the autocracy in *Balidaan*, demonstrated the Panchayat system of government when the king had absolute power. The film displays everything by taking the 'liminal' stand and trying to critique the contemporary political situation. From the beginning to the end, the cruelty and operation of Panchayat officers are demonstrated as a focal point. The inhuman activity, rape of an innocent girl, and her death punishment are implemented in a crucial manner. If local people become conscious of their domination, they can win everything. The same thing is shown in *Balidaan*. When all people join hands, the revolution becomes a success.

The use of language meets the appropriate condition in *Balidaan*. J. L. Austin (208) points out the performativity of language. Language works and performs. It should be articulative, comprehensive, and recognizable. "Language should meet felicity condition for performative act. Illocutionary act should meet perlocutionary" (p. 431). Appropriate conditions of language meet the echo of the senses while performing. The charismatic language evokes a sense of revolt and sacrificial sense to the ordinary audience. The song's wording is magical, creating an echo to the senses. All the uneducated villagers are the learners of the underground cadres. The best means to teach the villagers is through revolutionary songs. The songs are sensuous as well as productive. The revolutionary song they sing is as follows:

Gaun gaun bata utha
Basti basti bata utha
Yo desh ko muhar ferna lai utha

Haat ma kalam hune haru
Kalam liera utha
Baja bajauna janne haru
Baja liera utha. (Ghimire 1986, 00:57:10)
 Rise from village to village
 Rise from settlement to settlement
 Rise to change the face of this country
 Those who hold pens in their hands,
 Take up the pen and rise
 Those who know how to play instruments,
 Take up the instrument and rise. (Our Translation)

This song provokes emotion and a sense of revolt. All the village people should rise and unite to fight against cruelty and supremacy. If you have a sword, then come with a sword; if you play a musical instrument, then come with music; if you have a pen, then come with it, but you all should participate in this revolution. If we come together, we will certainly get victory over cruelty and autocracy. So, all the people of the village should come together to change the governance, to see the changed country, and to see the new face of the country. It urges individuals from villages and settlements nationwide to rise and bring about change. It emphasizes the power of collective effort, symbolized by the metaphor of the pen and musical instruments, representing knowledge and creativity. The song invokes a sense of duty and responsibility, particularly among the educated and talented, to contribute to transforming the nation's future. By appealing to people's intellectual or artistic skills, the song highlights the diverse ways individuals can participate in the broader movement for national progress. Ultimately, it carries a patriotic and motivational tone, encouraging unity and active involvement in shaping the country's destiny.

In a scene where villagers perform a satirical play to mock the Panchayat rulers, this act becomes a liminal performance, blending art and resistance, and temporarily inverts the power dynamics by exposing the rulers' hypocrisy. Similarly, after Bhakti Thapa's death, the villagers hold a traditional mourning ceremony that turns into a rallying cry for revolution. The ritual transforms from a space of grief into empowerment, embodying a liminal space between despair and action.

Through the medium of revolutionary songs, revolutionary young actors of *Balidaan* are inducing about their rights. Their songs are melodious, and the wording is compelling, which can touch the echo to the sense. The melodious epigraphic announcement of the anonymous narrator indicates that this film is dedicated to those martyrs who sacrifice their lives in the name of democracy and freedom. It is dedicated to active, energetic, and wise young cadres who want to sacrifice their lives to establish democracy and freedom in the country. The epigraph of the film is announced in this way:

Raktakrantiko jwalamuukhi ma,
 Aja utheko yo balidaan
raktakranti ma jeevan chadahune
yuwa shaktiko yo balidaan. (Ghimre 1986, 00:04:03)
 In the volcanic eruption of the bloody revolution,
 This sacrifice has risen today
 This sacrifice of the youth power
 Who gave their lives in the bloody revolution. (Our Translation)

Here, the anonymous narrator narrates these lines as a form of song. These lines evoke that the *Balidaan* is the production and performance of a bloodshed revolution and is dedicated to those who sacrifice their life and who want to sacrifice their life to fight against cruelty and autocracy. It indicates that *Balidaan* is a performance of actual Panchayat governance and its domination. In one sense, this film is a historical record in cinema. This song reflects the theme of sacrifice in the context of a revolutionary struggle. It paints a vivid image of a violent, transformative moment, symbolized by the "volcanic eruption of the bloody revolution." This metaphor emphasizes the intensity and ferocity of the fight for change. The song glorifies the youth who have laid down their lives for this cause, portraying their sacrifice as a powerful and noble act. Their blood spilt for the revolution is not seen as wasted but as fuel for the movement's success. The song mourns their loss while celebrating their bravery and commitment to a greater cause, encapsulating the idea that significant change often requires extreme sacrifice. The tone is sombre and inspirational, highlighting the profound cost of freedom and the enduring legacy of those fighting for it.

Moreover, the underground revolution forming the political agenda and arrestment by the police is focused crucially. Rajesh Ojha appreciates this movie and argues, "*Balidaan* is only one historical movie in the history of Nepali cinema which evokes the political domination and slum conscious" (cinemasansar.com). The cruel punishment and hypocrisy of Panchayat officers are focused minutely through the camera eye. *Balidaan* also shares Victor Turner's concept of intercultural production and Schechner's behavioural, multidimensional, and circulation of power. In *Balidaan*, actors are from different ethnographies like city-village, educated-uneducated, power-rich, upper-lower caste, male-female, children, and old. The negotiations between all these groups develop hilariously.

Joseph Roach (2002) argues about the genealogy of performance studies. Roach asserts that "the presence can be seen as a point of struggle between conflicting versions of the past and opposed versions of the future" (p. 44). Roach tries to inform that in performance, the past is shown as a struggle, the future is a revolt, and the characters perform the reality of the society they represent. Autocracy and the past are the struggles for the sufferers, and that suffering leads these characters toward revolutions and opposition of those rulers. Dwight Conquer (2002) focuses on "enlightenment and subjugated knowledge" (p. 15).

Spiritual knowledge is not officially acceptable to him. Officially recognizable knowledge is governing us. The spiritual knowledge is subjugated knowledge. It is the knowledge of the subaltern. Performance studies throw rays on oral knowledge rather than print knowledge. *Balidaan* focuses on oral knowledge and rustic lifestyle, which is dominated by official knowledge of 'Panchayat' rulers.

In the film, when the protagonist, Bhakti Thapa (Hari Bansha Acharya), is captured and tortured by the regime's forces, his resilience and refusal to betray his comrades symbolize the courage of subaltern voices that refuse to be silenced, even in the face of physical oppression.

Similarly, Victor Turner (2008), in their essay "Liminality and Communitas," gives the idea of 'in-between' and 'service of the community.' Our community is culturally, politically, and socially defining communities with strict rules and regulations. If any person starts to dominate these rules and regulations, then the sense of communitas stops functioning. In *Balidaan*, one can find different communities and communitas among them. The job of performance is to create reality. Likewise, politicians do the same. Clifford and Geertz opine that the performance genre should be blurred. The modern form replaces the classical notion of performance. He opines that "the world is single, but it is not the same for all people, such as subalterns, races, and low castes. So, there is no point behind the theatre" (p. 84). All the voices come inclusively through performance only. Every social role is affected by politics, and those roles keep changing.

The performance of the autocracy is the essential thing in *Balidaan*. Behind the autocracy, there are many things to talk about, for example, the lifestyle of village people, their thinking, the costumes and rituals, helpfulness, reliable nature, etc. The performance of the ex-Indian army 'cupaansaap' (Madan Krishna Shrestha) is very energetic and praiseworthy. His words are very belligerent as well as genuine. He is an experienced person. He has fought many wars, so he is highly trained as well. He teaches armed rules and gives training to the young political cadres. The innocent young cadres become experienced through the instruction of the captain. The heart-touching expression of Arjun to convince the captain is commendable and the best shot of this film. At the same time, the captain's futuristic expression for the corrupt politicians is the focal point of this film. He expresses a desire toward politicians and evokes "[...] *Lekin bholi satta ma pugne bitikkai bidesi kapada jhalkine chhan, Compound ma mehenga mehenga gadiharu talkine chhan [.]Kursi ko lagi nango naach dekhaune chhau, saatpusta pugne sampati jodna lagne chhau [....]*" (Ghimire 1986, 00:1:18:12).

[...] But as soon as they reach power tomorrow, they will flaunt foreign clothes, Expensive cars will be parked in the compound [...]. They will perform a naked dance for the chair,

And start accumulating wealth enough for seven generations [...]" (Our Translation).

In the above dialogue, the ex-captain expresses his hatred for corrupt Nepali politicians and his self-centered nature. In the beginning, political leaders promised to conduct public service and democratic rule, but when they took their seats, they forgot all those promises. Captain's view towards politicians turns out to be relevant in the present scenario. This dialogue is a sharp critique of the corrupting influence of power, particularly in the political realm. It highlights the disillusionment that often follows the ascent to power, where leaders, once idealistic, quickly succumb to greed and materialism. The mention of "flaunting foreign clothes" and "expensive cars" in the compound serves as a metaphor for the abandonment of nationalist values and the embrace of personal luxury at the expense of the people. The "naked dance for the chair" symbolizes the degradation of moral integrity, as individuals are willing to go to any lengths, even shamelessly, to secure political power. Moreover, the reference to accumulating wealth "enough for seven generations" underscores the selfishness and long-term exploitation that follows. The dialogue paints a bleak picture of how those who once fought for justice or change become part of the same system they opposed, prioritizing personal gain over societal welfare. It serves as a cynical but realistic commentary on the political cycle of power and corruption.

Balidaan adopts the uneducated, poor, marginal people and their suffering from the hand of panchayat bureaucracy and autocracy. The interior cannot hear their voice. To make their voice audible and strong, educationally conscious youths, experienced and trained ex-army, left-wing leaders, and aware police officers of autocratic rule are performing inevitable roles. In this sense, the liminal position of this movie is also evidently perceptible. It adopts the affirmative side of the Panchayat ruling system and condemns the negative aspects of the very system. In addition, Gayatri Spivak (1988), in her essay "Can subaltern speak?" posits that "subalterns cannot speak themselves" (p. 97). They need a strong medium to speak. If they speak, their voice cannot be listened to by the center. If conscious and strong people raise their voices, the subaltern problem can be solved. *Balidaan* shares a similar view of Spivak in the case of the subaltern voice.

The subaltern people of the village are conscious of the assistance of political cadres. Subalterns cannot speak for themselves. If they speak, their voice cannot be heard by the mainstream. They need the medium to speak. In *Balidaan*, uneducated and innocent subaltern people cannot speak for themselves. If they speak, their voice is ignored by the autocratic rulers. They got consciousness through the educated, conscious political cadres, and they acted as a medium to speak for those subalterns. In one of the scenes in the film, the ordinary people of the village evoke their voices and say, "*Hami garib chhaun, tara hamro aatma bechne chhainau*" We are poor, but we will not sell our souls (our translation). However, there is no gap between males, females, children, old and youth. All the actors perform responsible roles and have equal roles to fight against the operation. Children are

the primary mediators and learners as well. Young and older people and children are against the Panchayat autocracy.

Balidaan redraws the gender boundary which was prevailing at the contemporary time. At that time, Nepalese society was strict in terms of gender roles. Males had to be strong, laborious, responsible for their wives and children, and earn money to look after the family. Meanwhile, the females had to be submissive, logical, and confined to the house's four walls. In *Balidaan*, all those traditional gender roles are not strictly followed. Females are participating in the revolution, and their role is equal with male companies. Even children are also playing a responsible role in fighting against Panchayat politics. In the film, women characters express their suppressed voices and state, "*Hami nari haun, tara kamjor hoinaun. Yo yuddhama hami pani ladnechhaun*" We are women but not weak. We will fight in this war too (our translation). Judith Butler (2003) opines on the empowerment of females and advocates that gender is a socio-cultural construct and females should subvert gender-given roles. Gender roles confined females to a narrow boundary, so the females should redraw such boundaries. In *Balidaan*, gender boundaries are blurred by the females and Child's world. The mutual relationship between children, male, female, old, and youth is strongly performed in *Blaidaan*. Unlike traditional gender boundaries, this film crosses traditional thinking through their consciousness.

In this light, the film serves as a narrative of political revolution and a performance of societal transformation. It aligns with Freire's (1970) notion of praxis, wherein oppressed groups, through critical awareness, engage in transformative action to challenge and change oppressive systems (p. 56). The revolutionary struggle depicted in *Balidaan* is, therefore, both a reflection of historical realities and a pedagogical tool for contemporary audiences, encouraging them to engage in critical thought and active resistance against present-day injustices.

Balidaan thus stands as a crucial cinematic text that highlights the transformative power of revolution, not only in political terms but also in the way it reshapes societal norms and individual identities. It provides an example of how film can serve as a medium for critiquing power structures and articulating the voices of the marginalized, aligning with Freire's (1970) vision of education as a practice of liberation. In this way, *Balidaan* becomes more than a story of political change; it becomes a testament to the enduring human capacity for resistance, renewal, and the reimagining of a just society.

Conclusion

To sum up, *Balidaan* is evidence of the domination and revolt of the contemporary Panchyat governance. It is one of the political movies in the history of Nepali cinema that reveals the autocracy and its resistance to the contemporary political struggle. It is about the

bodily and linguistic performance of the characters whose 'liminal' stands, and negotiation is inevitable in fighting against autocracy. Communication among males, females, youth, children and familiar people is well combined, and the gender boundary is redrawn to show the emerging freedom, consciousness, equal rights and opportunities in the democratic system.

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