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The psychological trauma causing isolation in Jeevan Jeevant's *Charaiveti*

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Abstract

The novel Charaiveti of Jeevan Jeevant is a Nepali flavoured writing which has the novelist's suffering after his father's refusal of keeping altar in own house amidst his two daughters' death; the forceful conversion of author's father into Christianity in the sense that he wants to regret of his past misdeed to his altar but the neighbours blame him continuously to have already left the Sanatan-Hindu religion; the consequent and unwilling migration from mountainous parental home to the Madhesh after the family clash; the police torture for adopting Christianity, and so on. This article broadly seeks the objectives that whether there are series of miseries and tortures after the works of religious conversion and migration from one place to another in the life of a person. To obtain the objectives, the writer of this article uses the qualitative method in which the Lacanian theory of trauma of the Real operates the matter. The researcher consults various texts including the novel, theoretical texts and some commentaries on the novel to reach the facts of the mental frame of the novelist's father of an islandish existence even in the society as central character. This study results a positive understanding of the life of any type of minority either religion or caste and region at new place. Such positive learning of life of a migrant and forceful religiously converted oneself will become a good moral lesson for the society to respect the individual's notions for social harmony and even to conservation of own religion and culture.

Keywords: Bible-man, isolation, migration, poverty, police torture, trauma and untouchability.

Introduction

The novel, *Charaiveti*, opens with the author's childhood and the family descriptions. The whole events take place in Nepal and the novelist, Jeevan Jeevant, himself narrates the story on behalf of his father what he has witnessed. The novel gives the account of mountainous life practice as well as the life of the Madhesh in Nepal. What the common things in the both regions are financially poverty; culturally some unscientific practices even to cure diseases in the lack of knowledge and family members dying so; concept of wizard; family feuds on the personal issues, and the consequent results that the person even changes the

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living place for mental peace. After all these, there is hard to find the mental stability in the life of doing such person because of issues of settlement at new place after migration, in the new religion and due to frequent police cross to the newly religiously converted people in the suspicion of spoiling the social harmony. Published in the early of 2024 a. d., this novel is very much relevant in the Nepalese context in the eastern part of the country. It is crystal clear that the novelist, Jeevant, himself is the narrator as a child of his father and his family's description.

The researcher here applies the theory of trauma and further its one form trauma of the Real. This theory postulated by the twentieth century's French psychoanalyst pioneer Jacques Lacan (1901 – 1981) helps the reader to ascertain why the novelist's father is always scared; feeling isolated after migration from Miklajung (the Mahabharat range mountain) to Ratuwa river (the Eastern part of the Madhesh in Nepal) and the unwilling religious conversion, and for the peaceful life for the future of the children. The Real's meaning of daily based experience and unexpected existence of thing, which are constantly making home in the mind of the novelist's father, adheres here with this theory of Lacan. In the light of such, this writer tries to objectify primarily i) what are some possible causes of miseries and tortures after the works of religious conversion and migration from one place to another in the life of a person in the context of Nepal, and secondarily i) how can the society be a socially harmonious for all types of citizens in current republican condition of Nepal under the constitution of 2015.

The theory of psychological trauma

This *Charaiveti* novel of Jeevant is almost full of psychology. Especially the novelist's father feels victim with his whole family when there is family matter of religion, worshipping the altar of the family (*gosain*), and by the constant fear of villagers who will inform the police about his family for the involved activities in Christianity remaining in Sanatan Hindu just based on suspicion but without poof. To explain the novel well, the author feels to explain some psychological theoretical terms here. According to one definition of 'trauma' (Sally, 2005, p. 1634), it is a mental state created by a certain unexpected severe shock, particularly when there is that shock's obsession for a long time.

A nontraditional French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan defines the terms 'the Real', 'trauma of the Real' and such other related words. It is notable that when one talks about the Real, there comes the relative term existence. Lacan understands that the Real is the non-understandable. He writes that the Real is such existence which is unpredictable with no any filters and buffers to give any meaning so, it does not fall in the meaning making system (Tyson, 2006; p. 32). This Real is something like a daily based experience when one reaches the mental state of having no meaning of life in the case he or she suspects the religion or governing social rules create only hoax or mistakes. He further writes that the Real is something like one can know about it nothing except its frequent feeling that it's there, which is nothing but an experience of trauma of the Real. The novelist's father in *Charaiveti* seems to be a patient of both: trauma and trauma of the Real.

The fear and feeling of isolation in *Charaiveti*: a traumatic effect

In the 'Accidental' section, the novelist gives the detail of their family migration from high peak mountain of Miklajung in the Mahabharat range to the Madhesh via Ratuwa river and settles near Chisang river. Here, the novelist Jeevan Jeevant writes in *Charaiveti* that he is afraid of tiger and tractor like vehicles for the former will claim the life in the forest of Madhesh and the later (tractor) is the first time seen vehicle which produces sound and is like roaring (15).

In 'Intention of fate- I' section, there is child psychology of the author and some background of circumstances why they have to migrate. The novelist cannot visit the altar (*gosain*) which is of nothing but stone. He inks that his younger sister, who is friend also of the author, dies of severe fever (21). The conservativeness, the unscientific thought of ghost and the wizard will chase the ghost or will make the *gosain* happy like practices have deeply rooted in the entire mountainous family in Miklajung including the novelist's family too. Likewise, in 'Intention of fate- II' section also, the tragic death of the novelist's elder sister also happens leaving Jeevant completely alone by heart (29).

One can see the mental storm of the author's father after death of his two daughters in the section 'God = Stone'. There is final ritual of thirteen days in the Sanatan Hindu of the novelist's elder sister after her death. While the joint-family members seek the way of calming down the *gosain*, the novelist's father is full of anger, hatredness and unhappy to the altar of the family and not only he speaks against *gosain* but also throws out (stone of *gosain*) from his house (34). The novelist's youngest uncle brings back and establishes *gosain* in his own house but he starts hating as well as calling rough words to his own elder brother (the novelist's father) suspecting him to have converted into Christianity internally. There is the feeling of hunted house and his father (novelist's father) fires the gun to chase the ghost at night.

The above mentioned deaths, confrontation on existence of *gosain* (throwing out and re-establishing), blaming novelist's father as Bible-man and so on cause the novelist's family to shift the residence from Miklajung. Jeevant's father migrates with his wife, son (the novelist Jeevan Jeevant in childhood), and one daughter younger than the novelist to the Madhesh. He has come to the forest where his relative brother where the child, Jeevant (novelist), has friends branches of trees and monkeys and those monkeys would eat the foods from hut in loneliness (46). There is completely isolation of this family in the forest where they are making new settlement in this 'Tarai poison' section.

In the section 'Dashain and marigold's leaf', the already migrated person to the Madhesh and who threw the Hindu's *gosain* from his house in the mountain, the novelist's father, goes to parental home, Miklajung, for Nepal's most popular Hindu festival, Dashain. He goes to take the *tika* (the sacred spot material on the forehead) of Dashain festival. There is no trace of his arrival even in the late night (51). The situation in the parental house is opposite. His father gets no *tika* material. There is humiliation by his family members only because of his misdeed of throwing *gosain* from his house. (55). In fact, Mahila Vishwakarma, Kami

Mahila and Thule Rai carry the writer's father to the house in unconscious condition. It is because he has fallen in the mud. This event has become the repeating verbology for Thule Rai that 'by the blessings of Christ, I have been curing all and have brought this person here' who really knows nothing about Bible but shows himself the only messenger of Christ throughout the novel (59).

The writer Jeevant lights why his father becomes a Christian, however, he is never before and even he does not force his family members including the writer to adopt Christianity. It is another matter that Jeevant's sister marries a Christian herself (68). The novelist further portrays the family picture in this same page that his mother chides his father pointing out his mistakes that why to become a Christian after throwing the altar, that if one claims himself an atheist. She claims unknowingly that her husband's such throwing altar act made the God angry to claim the lives of her two daughters. Actually, these are the mental stuffs in this 'Rest' section the novelist (Jeevat) is thinking continuously on some unsolved questions and becomes a Christian like: is the God to govern to punish the family members for the fault the parents ? where does the problem lie: in the matter or belief? if in the abstract belief then, how it controls the solid life of human ? why do my father pray the God to become a Christian now and even my sister marries a Christian Pastor but I am not allowed to be a Christian? And so on. The novelist clarifies that these questions give the birth of the name of the novel as *Charaiveti*.

In fact, the real history of Jeevant's father how he becomes a Christian, how he experiences the Bible matters in the area and at other place, and the police torture in those days when Nepal was a non-secular country and so on are the diary parts of the novel in the total twenty-seven parts. It is a brief history of locality, family pictures, police objection to participating in Church when before Nepal's secular condition, the brief description of the Christ's miracles and creation of the earth and the life of the Bible, the life of a migrant from mountainous range to the Madhesh for prosperous and easy life and so on. The diary begins from the introduction of 'Six-numbered Budhbare' – the area of Dhankuta, Ilam, Paanchthar and Morang where the Chisang River flows from South of Miklajung Mountain and meets the Ganga River via the Madhesh (Morang) (71). This diary ends with the comparatively large section of about nineteen pages with key notes of the novelist's learning that he has equal faith in all religions which completely advocate the prosperity of life of all the people and is scientific. The religion and science are opposite for many persons. However, Jeevant thinks that it can be humanitarian and scientific so, Thule Rai goes with his Bible putting in woolen bag (235; 236).

It is drawing attention in the novel that the epicentre of the novel is when the novelist's father makes neighbour a person with 'Ghimire' title thinking as Hindu Brahmin. It becomes such event that his father blindly trusts in 'Ghimire' neighbour for he describes Bible better than Thule Rai and Mahila Vishwakarma and he has no option to utilize his some three bighas land which is above the then Nepali law to use a single family above four bighas where the novelist's uncle does not want to settle with his own elder brother. This is why 'Ghimire' becomes successful to become his neighbour and the owner of that three bighas

land without labour any labour (84). Actually, this 'Ghimire' is a Christian who preaches the Bible matter very well and, now, his house is slowly a Church place where the regular pray occurs. This so called Ghimire is no one but a relative man of Mahila Vishwakarma from the angle of his wife, an untouchable caste for caste system. As he is so called an untouchable 'Kami' in the mountain, he migrates firstly in Darjeeling of Bharat then comes in Nepal with new title as 'Ghimire' for Christian publicity in disguised form in Nepal for his personal safety (122).

On *Charaiveti*, Mahendra Wagley writes that the main causes of migration are lackness of resources and financial weakness. Wagley even claims that the Hindu's social untouchability is rare in Christianity. It is the reason a character called accepts that he feels the relief from caste practice in the Church (Wagley, 2025). This is from the section 'Diary 14'. It is completely tallying to the untochability claim. Som Mijar claims that the Bishts made us remove *chappals* just on their entrance gate of the house but ours made shoes they carry to the inner rooms (133; 136; 137).

Whatever the bad situation the novelist's father bore in the life but the novelist, Jeevant, keeps the right track of humanity. He has the sense of value of own culture, religion and the society. The novelist himself answers in a question of Nishan Nishkarsha that religion conversion is not to change the blood. It is not the change of one's culture. He confidently asks the back questions to Nishkarsha that is there completion by leaving forefather's culture, and why is the same literature aloof which is hyper active in the name of so called identity attacking on certain castes but when there is religious attack on the Sanatan Hindu and such other ? (Nishkarsha, 2024).

Discussion

The aforementioned revelation of the 'Ghimire' Christian to the author's father and consequently being called as 'Bible-man' by the villagers and frequently being interrogated by the majority of the non-Christian villagers as well as the police add the traumatic effect of loneliness in the heart of the novelist's father deeply day-by-day. He himself is the sole cause of publicity of Christianity in that time by providing land, food and mass at new place in the Madhesh where he has migrated. He cannot deny it to the police. This is the reason he has even to stay whole one Dashain in the police custody with Samlinge *Dai* and Aaite Tamang who all three men played the Hindu's Deunsi (cultural dance) in the Christian flavour because they have converted unknowingly themselves into Christianity by the influence of 'Ghimire' and then by other Christian followers.

These events show that to convert a region and religion is not matter of the mind only rather the full support of the soul/heart is a must. As mentioned in the 'The fear and feeling of isolation in *Charaiveti*: a traumatic effect' section and also just in the above paragraph of this research article, there is a duality in the mind and behaviour of the new Christians. Where the novelist's father goes again back for the Hindu's *Dshain tika* after being termed as 'Bible-man', that is, a Christian, there the Samlinge *Dai*, Aaite Tamang and his father want to invent a new social practice of singing new Deunsi which is purely of the Hindu but in

the Christian flavour. Such change is positive but the society cannot accept so easily because the people think it as cultural and religious attacks at the same time. So where there is a matter of freedom and will of cultural celebration of one type of people, there is the issue of cultural protection in the other type of people in the same society which is religion issue based.

It is worth to pay attention that why and in what circumstances the novelist's father throws *gosain* (altar) from his house in the novel, how is he like an island in the heart from his own brothers and villagers in the mountain and how he has to migrate to the Madhesh in the search of good people and peaceful of mind but the unfaithfulness gets repeated even by 'Ghimire', even police torture gets repeated and so on causing a deep insecurity. This approach of this multi-dimensional novel is worthy for the people of Nepal where there is federal democratic republican constitution, 2015 and the country is currently a secular one. The novel teaches the lesson for social engineers, the governments and the members to assimilate the changes whether one comes as a migrant or a new religion but preserving own religion and culture also strongly.

In a nutshell

The entire events in the novel the novelist's father bears and Lacanian theory of trauma of the Real match perfectly. There are backwardness in Nepal due to lack of education in the mountainous as well as in the Madhesh part also so, people seek rapid relief from black magician from their respective accepted religions or even changes the religion rather than consulting the medical doctor. It is also noticeable that due to certain fear a person changes the religion or migrates for safety and peaceful life but it is always not sure that the person will get what he or she desires. In such condition, the person feels difficult to psychologically to settle the mind and body in the new context. There is a constant feeling of fear of something but there is nothing because of so many changes in the country politically and constitutionally. This is what Jacques Lacan calls the trauma of the Real. This is like a chasing ghost mentally which may be positive or negative. While the positive obsession (the imaginary Real) gives life's aspiration, there the negative obsession causes the ruining of life what Jeevan's father bears in the novel. In such condition, the theory of Real comes to be a matter of significance in this novel and in our life also where the citizens can make a social harmony for the better progress of the country. Of course, there is responsibility of the social members also to welcome the new migrant by assimilating his/her acceptable manners and culture.

Remedies

In the federal democratic republican Nepal under the current constitution of 2015 a. d., it is advisable some points to the individual and the government agencies for the social harmony and the overall betterment of Nepal:

- i) the government should ensure the rights of every individual in the practice and which already has/have been guaranteed in the current constitution of Nepal like religiosity, migration, cultural celebration, and so on;

- ii) there should be the humanitarian course of study more focused in the higher studies where the digital science and technology is massively becoming the cause of human's mechanical life rather than the humanitarian one. Such course should provide the job opportunity so that the human being will prefer to take this humanitarian based course and, hence, there will be a drastic change positively again developing in the human species;
- iii) it is socially assimilating matter the government agencies and the social members develop a sense of security to the new member/family who has settled there by geographical and religious migration, however, the new thing should not deviate forcefully or in a disguised manner the other members in the society to any conversion;
- iv) the literature should unite the society rather than divide. The author on division theme should get encouraged by the media houses and the government agencies to create such piece of literature which assimilates the cultural positive assimilation of all the diversities;
- v) the society should provide the chance of rethinking and returning to the home rather than continuous hating for those who changed the religion in the past by any reasons but now is eager to adopt own the forefather's practices of culture, and
- vi) the intensive care of the government to the socially traumatic person/family should be of high priority for security.

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