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Narratives of Hegemony: A Critical Analysis of Dissidence in Sah's "Jayath" and Theeng's "Yambunera"

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Abstract

Nepal incorporates a long history of exploitation, mistreatment and marginalization of indigenous communities, including the Tamangs and the Madhesis. Throughout its history, the Hindu-based state has held power and taken control over the ethnic communities via the mainstream culture, language and the idea of homogenous national identity, which consistently rejects multiple indigenous cultural identities and voices. In this regard, the paper critically analyzes narratives of hegemony, namely, structural domination as well as the resistance of marginal community portrayed in Nepali stories "Jayath" ("A Wooden Pole") and "Yambunera" ("The Outskirts of Kathmandu") written by Shyam Sah and Bina Theeng respectively. Both stories deal with the issues of cultural hegemony and the dissenting voice of the marginalized characters that challenge the structural power. The paper also argues that despite being continuously suppressed, the marginalized community musters strength to raise their voice against the power blocs. To analyze the systematic outcast of peripheral community and their resistance, I have employed Michel Foucault's concept of institutional power and Susan Seymour's idea of resistance as theoretical backing.

Keywords: Hegemony, indigenous community, structural power, Tamang, Madhesi, dissidence

Introduction

The quotidian experiences of marginalized individuals play a vital role for the articulation of their collective sufferings since they endure the same structural domination. Mostly, the authority subjugates and silences the peripheral communities, using power through the mainstream culture, language, social values and myriads of social sentiments and novel discourse of development. In fact, the indigenous communities have little or no knowledge of being under the influence of mainstream cultural values and new developmental concepts. They can never penetrate the vested interest of the latest discourses created and spread by the power holders when they gradually get overpowered. Michel Foucault inculcates such authenticating power as

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“biopower” (140), which works at every level of social bodies. Similar has happened in the case of indigenous communities of Nepal: Initially, Janga Bahadur Rana’s *Muluki Ain* (“The Law of the Nation”) (1854) and later King Mahendra’s concept of homogenous national identity have denied indigenous existence and identity and forcefully assimilated them within the single Nepali identity. As a result, the democratic movement of 2005/06 intensified suppressed sentiments of the marginalized communities, which overflowed on the streets as collective voices of resistance that claimed their socio-cultural identity. Thereafter, cultural identity has remained at the center of contemporary Nepali literature and several other forms of creative works. I have taken the stories of Shyam Sah’s titled “Jayath” (“A Wooden Pole”) and Bina Theeng’s “Yambunera” (“The Outskirts of Kathmandu”) to critically analyze the narratives of hegemony and the resisting voice of the marginal characters.

The indigenous communities encompass a long history of exploitation around the globe including South Asia in which encroachment of their land, obliteration of their identity and enforcement of the main-stream values over their unique socio-cultural values are more distinct. The power centers become close to the ethnic people with their mesmerizing discourses of development and persuade them as they promise for happy, prosperous and civilized society. However, most of the mega projects not only displace the whole community from their ancestors' land, but also they snatch away their existence, identity and socio-spatial attachment with the places. Nepal, India and many other Asian countries have witnessed such cases where the indigenous communities and their lifestyle are completely crushed. Mary Des Chene, Arundhati Roy, Dhiraj Kumar and several other social critics have been consistently raising their voice against the hazardous developmental model and the predicaments of indigenous communities. Against this backdrop, this paper critically examines and analyzes the hegemonic structural power that strategically dominate the indigenous communities and their cultural values.

This paper explores the systematic sidelining and domination of indigenous communities and their culture by the structural power center. Furthermore, it sheds light on the narration of dissidence of the underprivileged characters, which is comprehensibly exhibited by both stories that I have chosen for textual analysis. “Jayath” is a short story based on the Madhesi society and culture, which is taken from Sah’s latest anthology *Pather (The Brick Maker)*. It depicts the destruction of community space, a pond as well as Madhesi’s culture related to the ‘jayath’ ritual. The author explains that the “jayath” is a wooden pole, which is erected in the middle of a pond along with some cultural rituals (7). The story lucidly visualizes encroachment of local culture by the authority, which leaves the whole community completely helpless. However, Bhola, the protagonist attempts to voice against the demolition of the pond, which was built by his grandfather that reifies his dissidence. Similarly, Theeng’s “Yambunera” compiled in her latest story collection *Yambunera* presents the predicament that befalls on a Tamang woman, Som Maya and other members of her community when the authority bans the production of *raksi* (“local house wine”). Banning of the local wine made by Tamang women not only unfolds the malicious act of power holders against the indigenous community, but it also highlights the banishment of their knowledge and cultural values connected with that in the name of creating a civilized society. Amid such unfavorable power game, Som Maya continues her endeavor and firmly stands on her determination of brewing house wine. Despite her underprivileged condition, she voices against the power bloc that validates her dissidence.

Narratives of Hegemony

Certain socio-cultural supremacy prevails in each society with multifarious intensity and attitude. Normally, the hegemonic socio-cultural value prioritizes homogeneity that obstructs spontaneous flow of multiple voices and identities. Needless to say, several social institutions swell with their concentrated power that turn into dominating power towards specific class, caste and community. Foucault claims that many social institutions act as factors of segregation and social hierarchization, which guarantee relations of domination on and effect of hegemony (141). Social bodies are formed in such a manner that they easily control, dominate and impose their suppressive values on the marginal groups. Consequently, there arises an unfathomable gap between the dominant and the dominated people where a socio-cultural hierarchy gets more visible. On top of that, each state strategically induces and initiates certain regulations that guarantee the authority of power holders. In fact, when the nation itself gets clawed by the vested interest of a particular caste and community, many other groups are naturally pushed towards the margin.

In the context of Nepal, Janga Bahadur Rana's *Muluki Ain* and the massive sanskritization process created and maintained hegemonic Brahmanic values that not only stratified castes, but also they emphasized on the homogenous Nepali identity. About the sanskritization process, Prayag Raj Sharma explains it as a process by which a "low" Hindu caste or tribal or other groups changes its customs, rituals and ideologies and a way of life in the direction of a high and frequently "twice-born" caste (127). The important thing is that there lies no interest of the specific caste or indigenous community to adopt the ruler's strange culture and language; it is the state that compels them to do so. In the same manner, the sanskritization process unfolds the truth that Rana's *Muluki Ain* has played the major role for the authentication of caste hierarchy in Nepal. It aimed at creating "homogenously constituted society" claims András Höfer (2). Despite Nepal being a country of various castes and indigenous communities, embracing their own socio-cultural values, the Ranas and King Mahendra imposed the homogenous Nepali identity on the indigenous communities. As a result, the sanskritization process accelerated and enforced each mother tongue having indigenous communities to speak the Nepali language. Such strategic sanskritization process compelled the indigenous communities to accept the single Nepali identity and adopt the national language, dress and culture. Leo E. Rose shares the similar idea of sanskritization with Sharma as he argues, "...mangoloid origin is no longer synonymous with non-Hindu- usually Buddhist- culture. The Magar for instance and to a lesser extent the Gurungs, Rais and Limbus have been sanskritized to a considerable extent" (8). As a matter of fact, not only the castes, Rose has pointed out that they were not only influenced by the state strategy, but also the Tamang and many other indigenous communities were highly affected by the process. One of the examples of sanskritization process could be realized in the case of Chewang Lama whose name had been changed and became Chakka Bahadur Lama. He shares his painful experience of being Chakka Bahadur from Chewang:

I was one of the students of Mahendra Jagriti Pathshala at Terpa village in Humla. My father was a Lama priest from my community. He had named me Chewang which was changed by my school teacher and made me Chakka Bahadur Lama. Similarly, we got in touch with our Khas neighbors from south that also supported for the renaming of our village. My village Tetpa became Terpa... (227)

It exposes the heart-wrenching case of Chewang who was affected by the wave of sanskritization process, which left everlasting impact on the culture, language and

ritualistic values of ethnic communities. Gradually, they became a part of Hinduisation process and homogenous national identity. Eventually, King Mahendra's aspiration for "single national identity" was materialized. Since then, just contrary to the jovial spirit of national unity, rich cultural heritage and social values of marginal communities have headed towards the path of continuous erasure.

In the past, the Hindu rulers' discriminatory measures had divided the Nepalis into Hindu-tribal and pahadi-madhesi dichotomies – it still continues. For a long time, ethnic groups had profoundly suffered the strategic suppression whereas the Madhesis were even denied easy entrance into the Kathmandu valley. They had to receive *rahadani* (i.e. "passport") in Thankot to enter the capital during Shivaratri or for some legal purposes. Ramawatar Yadav remembers his father's experience of being a Madhesi and receiving *rahadani* in Thankot while entering into the Kathmandu valley (66). Sardar Bhim Bahadur Pade's description matches with Yadav's narration when he explains, "...people from Terai used to get entrance into Nepal once a year that was also only for a week during Shivaratri" (47). Yadav and Pade's reminiscences explicitly present the suppressed position of the Madhesi community, who even did not have an easy access of mobility in their own country. Yadav himself had encountered hard time to get his citizenship card. He shares his painful experiences of being a Madhesi in this way:

My official identity as Nepali and my induction into Nepali-hood came the rather hard way. The badhakima, Mr. Badri Bikram Thapa, would simply not grant me the Nepali citizenship—no matter what—although a number of refugees from Burma with high cheekbones and flat noses were offered citizenship certificates almost instantly. I had to wait to receive my citizenship certificate until a university degree holder, Mr. Tej Bahadur Prasai was appointed as *anacaladhisa* (Commissioner) at Jaleshwar. (66)

Yadav's unpleasant experience related to his citizenship card exposes the hegemonic state attitude towards the Madhesi community. His miserable situation could be realized even closely through Jhalak Subedi's portrayal of the state rigidity. As he posits, "There was some condition that arouse difficulty for the Madhesi to get citizenship during the Panchayat system. It was mandatory to speak the Khas Nepali language to get the citizenship" (98). Such distinctly biased state strategy towards the Madhesi community clarifies the fact that they were mistreated, discriminated and exploited in the past. The above-mentioned cases of Chakka Bahadur Lama and Ramawatar Yadav confirms the hegemony of pahadi-Hindu rulers over the ethnic and Madhesi communities.

The indigenous communities, including the Tamangs and the Madhesis are subjugated through the acculturation, sanskritization and hinduisation processes. The concept of a single nationality and a single language has been spread as a means to take hold over every caste and community. The state-enforced regulations have not only intimidated the large group of ethnic people, but also it forced them to twist their indigenous tongue as per the Khas Nepali language's rhythm, which has always been the most difficult task for them. They are forced to speak and communicate through the ruler's language and get outrageously insulted due to their different Nepali tone. Both the Tamangs and Madhesis have been under the continuous shaming because of their appearance, language tone, color and particular cultural characteristics. Amidst such coercive social scenarios, they find themselves "emotionally detached" from the Nepali context (91) as claimed by Yogendra Prasad Yadav. Numerous ethnic groups are still in the margin, who are blatantly smashed by the hegemonic socio-cultural values of the rulers. In this regard, the Tamangs and Madhesis are in the continuous conflict with the so-called mainstream cultural imposition.

Since the paper critically examines the hegemonic structural power and the dissidence of marginalized people, their lived experiences and unremitting struggle have become vital resources to analyze the situation. Stefan Collini emphasizes that the “experiences” of marginal characters can be taken as “methodological touchstones” (23) whereas Michael Pickering shares the similar idea when he highlights “experiences” and the “subjective dimensions” (18) are the important factors for cultural studies. Likewise, Steph Lawler prioritizes the people’s stories and opines: “I consider stories here as both resources that are drawn on and as social and cultural productions used by people in their everyday lives to make sense of those lives” (33). When the concepts of several cultural thinkers are considered, I have acknowledged the power of each marginal character’s narration that helps to unveil the atrocity of dominating socio-cultural structure. In this respect, I have focused on the analysis of Sah’s and Theeng’s characters that embody and exhibit resisting spirit despite being marginalized. I have also envisioned Susan Seymour’s idea of resistance: she takes it as intentional and conscious acts of defiance of opposition by a subordinate individual against a superior individual or sets of individuals (305), which aptly matches with Bhola and Som Maya’s actions.

Sah's “Jayath”: The Narration of Dissidence

Shyam Sah’s story “Jayath” portrays the narration of hegemony and Madhesi cultural decline since the municipality decides to demolish the public pond built by Ajodhi Jimdar to replace with a new administrative building. The municipal authority’s decision points towards two things: firstly, it exhibits the domination of power bloc; secondly, it unfolds the insensitivity and indifferent attitude of power center towards the Madhesi’s spatio-cultural values connected to the pond and “jayath” culture. Jayath, a tall wooden pole, carries some cultural and ritualistic values of the Madhesi community. However, the municipality proceeds for the destruction of the pond and gets ready to pull it down. The action comprehends the intrusion of hegemonic structural power over the Madhesi and their cultural values. Nevertheless, each marginal individual inculcates intrinsic consciousness that naturally drives them towards the path of dissidence at the time of need. Bhola, a helpless character, raises his voice against the municipal authority and jumps with joy when the excavator stuck in the swampy pond. “Jayath” discloses the fact that the Madhesi community’s socio-cultural values have been strategically obliterated by the state authority: demolition of the pond itself speaks the domination of power center.

Most of the developmental projects have failed to acknowledge the ethnic communities’ harmonious and friendly relation with nature, which they maintain through some tangible and intangible heritages. Their deep connection with the land and environment get disturbed when the state intervenes without a proper understanding of the local people’s socio-spatial attachment. Sah’s story indicates the similar situation since the municipality decides to build administrative building, destroying the public pond. Building a permanent municipality building closer to the village could have its own benefits for the villagers; however, the decision of destroying the pond looks unreasonable. Many such insensitive cases of state imposition have taken place around South Asia. Dhiraj Kumar points out the fatal developmental activities in Jharkhanda that have the social and ecological cost for the indigenous community (147). Kumar’s indication matches the issue of Bhola and his villagers as the destruction of their pond is sure to bring some socio-cultural and ecological problems to the locality. Kumar’s concept of decoding the idea of development could be helpful in such contexts. As he argues, “It is necessary to understand and de-codify the meaning of development when the cries of development echo all around in the forms of displacement, ethno genocide,

marginalization and dispossession” (148). As a matter of fact, development holds far deeper meaning than just the erection of modern infrastructures and skyscrapers. It needs to comply with the sentiment, culture and socio-spatial significance of the particular community before bulldozing the areas. “Jayath” has presented the similar issue when the authoritative body fails to realize the importance of the pond and “jayath” culture of the Madhesi community and issues an order to demolish the pond.

Besides its ritual importance, “jayath” comprises solidarity, communal emotions and spatial consciousness of the Madhesi community. The whole villager worked together for the construction of the pond and ritualistic erection of “jayath.” The wooden pole stands as a cultural totem, which has a mythical and ritualistic value for the community. The pond, which is being destroyed was built by Bhola Mahato’s grandfather during his land-lordship. He had coordinated and managed the project so perfectly that there was the enthusiastic participation of the whole village. He remembers the excitement-laden time during the pond building:

Ajodhi Mahato had initiated to dig the pond. It was almost an acre land. More than five hundred workers had dug the pond. There was feast every day during the time. ... There was like a fare on the day of “jayath” erection. ... While straightening “jayath,” it was tightened by rope from all four sides and erected at the middle of the pond. The priest worshipped. Bhagat (shaman) enchanted his ritualistic mantras for three hours when the “jayath” was gradually spiraled down and fixed. (11)

Bhola’s recollection of the jovial involvement of the villagers verifies the fact that collective task, harmony and solidarity remain at the center of Madhesi’s life. Furthermore, it highlights the certain aspects of Madhesi society where the *jamindar* (“the landlord”) is no more a suppressor, but a generous path-guider who is responsible for public welfare. Ajodhi Mahato possesses the same magnanimous personality rather than a dominating land-lordly image. He was in special bonding with the community that everybody happily contributed their physical labor for the pond building. However, the municipal authority takes a decision of destroying the emotion-attached cultural heritage of the locality that substantiates the suppressive nature of power bloc towards the Madhesi community and culture.

Bhola becomes helpless as he is surrounded by the dominating administrative forces. Every morning he goes around the pond and witnesses the ongoing destruction. The narrator shares his sentiment and explains the scenario, “Next day Bhola came to the pond very early. He stood below the same Pakhair tree. He continuously stared at the pond. ... Everybody had known that the pond will be buried. The pond, only remaining legacy of Ajodhi landlord will be demolished” (8). His vulnerability and helplessness become overt that everyone could feel pain in his eyes. As an individual, he feels so powerless to defy the authority that he becomes a mere bystander amid the power game. Nonetheless, he gets overwhelmed by the beautiful memories of family lineage and profound emotions attached with the pond though. Without a doubt, the local authority’s decision of burying the pond to build an administrative building has traumatic effect on him. He could do nothing much than visiting the pond every morning and gazing at it. His grandfather had built the pond for the continuation of cultural values, for the beautification of the village, and most probably for the validation of his social status. However, the state authority has become indifferent towards their socio-cultural sentiments. It exposes austere and dominating attitudes of *pahadi* (“hill-dweller”) authority where the Madhesi’s socio-spatial and cultural values have been ignored.

Sah presents a stressful situation of the contractor, who ultimately accepts to perform the “jayath” ritual when the excavator stuck in the pond. He surrenders as the

continuous efforts of pulling down the “jayath” goes in vain. The situation becomes worst due to the continuous rain and the swampy land; the excavator gets stuck in the marsh and every idea of getting it out fails. In this context, the villagers remind the contractor about the importance of “jayath” rituals. Even though he is reluctant to the ritualistic expense, he is compelled to accept it. Moreover, human beings naturally take refuge to uncanny power and conviction when they find themselves in a complicated situation as such. Jayath’s ritual is very spectacular and performative, which is carried along with shamanic chanting. Myth and rituals incorporate superstitious beliefs, which unknowingly leave some marks in people’s psyche. Bhola believes that a dire situation has occurred because of his grandfather’s denial of animal sacrifice on the day of the jayath erection (11). He feels good when he sees the contractor agrees for the ritual and shamanic performances (16). Sah visualizes such superstitious scenario to highlight the Madhesi’s culture that counters the capitalistic force that is represented by the contractor. He at the same time shows dissenting self of Bhola when he voices against the dominating authoritative power.

Bhola raises his voice against the authority when he sees the only remaining legacy of his family that collapses in front of his eyes. Initially, he feels so vulnerable to observe the destruction of the pond, but he could do nothing to save it. In fact, he was so hurt and felt as if a knife has penetrated his heart when he hears that the municipality has chosen the pond as a piece of land to build their administrative building (9). However, each marginal character embodies agony and rebelliousness that comes out in a form of dissenting voice. Even though Bhola is unable to obstruct the ongoing demolition, he expresses his anger against the authority. His resistance complies with Seymour’s opinion on resistance as she argues, “Such acts are counter-hegemonic but may not succeed in effecting change. They can range from relatively small, covert acts...” (305). Bhola’s joyful jump when he hears that the excavator is jammed in the swamp itself that can be an example of his dissidence. No sooner he gets the news about the excavator, he swallows a glass of local wine, rushes towards the pond and shouts, “...destroy the pond, build the building. ... its your father’s rule!” (14). Bhola’s voice comprises a powerful expression of the suppressed community. Everyone gets shocked to listen to Bhola’s aggressive voice. The authority is threatened by his unexpected behavior that they instantly arrest him. It indicates the timidity and irrationality of power blocs who are easily intimidated by the dissenting voices.

Sah’s “Jayath” tells a tale of the Madhesi community where their local culture and social values have been brutally crushed by the authority. The municipality’s decision of demolishing the public pond and uprooting “jayath” present dominating and exploitative attitude of power center towards the Madhesi community and their culture. Nonetheless, Bhola raises his voice against the oppressors, which substantiates the fact that each marginalized person carries an intrinsic strength, consciousness and dissenting characteristic.

Theeng's “Yambunera”: A Voice from the Margin

Bina Theeng’s “Yambunera” visualizes the plight of an indigenous Tamang woman Som Maya, who is affected by the authority’s decision of banning the *raksi* (“local house wine”) since it is the only source of income to run her family. The power bloc strategically rejects Som Maya’s indigenous knowledge related to brewing house wine and consistently intimidate her for producing and selling it. The house wine comprises a cultural importance in many ethnic communities, including the Tamangs. They need wine in each ritual, worship and social gatherings. However, the authority declines to acknowledge an indigenous cultural value when they allow the imported wine

and ban the local products. Furthermore, the rulers spread power, using several institutions that include police to take hold over ethnic communities to implement their order. Time and again police interrupt, snatch and throw away their ready to sell wine and distillery equipment. Such actions not only disclose the despotic attitude of power, but also they narrate the structural victimization of the marginal Tamang community. Nevertheless, each underprivileged character carries resisting flame that only needs a stroke to spread as wildfire. Som Maya has accumulated dissenting characteristics within – despite being threatened by the authority, she brews wine and walks carrying it the same path she has been treading since long.

Janga Bahadur Rana's *Muluki Ain* validated the caste hierarchy that massively discriminated people in terms of their caste and ethnicity. The Tamang community has endured the extreme biasness implanted by the Rana's law. Höfer points out towards the rejection of Tamangs that they are not even mentioned by name in the MA, not even by then the usual designations "Murmi or Lama" (125). It proves that the Tamang was not even recognized as a caste by the state authority, rather addressed as "enslavable alcohol-drinker" (as qtd. in Baburam Acharya, 125). The Tamangs being categorized as *masinyamathwali* ("enslavable alcohol-drinker") confirms the hegemony of the rulers who could use, enslave and take control over them as per their need and interest. Consequently, the Tamang community has lagged far behind in education, economic prosperity and resource reach. Som Maya's illiteracy, economic deprivation and dire social position somehow connected with the structural domination of the power holder upon the community. On top of that, she bears multiple layers of discriminations, namely, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, etc., which are some of the indicators that verify her marginalization.

Besides, the Rana's historical blunders such as the recent so-called progressive developmental concepts have played an important role for the denial of indigenous space, culture, knowledge and social system. In this regard, India's mega project Sardar Sarovar Dam of Narmada valley is quite contextual to recall, which has affected millions of tribal people. As Arundhati Roy claims, "Thirty-three million people. Displaced by big dams alone in the last fifty years. ... A huge percentage of the displaced are tribal people (57.6 percent in the case of the Sardar Sarovar Dam)" (para. 25). Roy's data exposes the grim consequences connected to the latest developmental model, which was imposed on the tribal territory without a proper understanding of the community and their socio-spatial rootedness. These days, developmental discourse disseminates an abstract idea of creating prosperous and civilized society. In the name of civilizing society, the power holders unhesitatingly point out towards the indigenous people's way of life as uncivilized and obstacle for the progress of modern society. Consequently, the authority without further delay bans the local products and indigenous knowledge. Mary Des Chene writes a letter to the then Nepal's Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai, countering his developmental vision, which she views as incompatible for the ethnic communities. As she argues, "–Nepal's farming systems and indigenous and *janajati* social system have been under siege for a long time. ... yet there is no state support (and was none during your time in office either) ... On the contrary, your program will make it doubly difficult for those systems and agro-ecological communities base on them to survive, never mind thrive" (para. 34). Des Chene's idea indirectly prioritizes the indigenous social system and their agro-ecological practices, which are underestimated by the modern developmental discourses. Denial of ethnic knowledge in a long run not only hampers the concerned community, but also it brings irrevocable loss to the whole social system of the state. Banning of local wine brewed by ethnic women could be no issue to fuss about today, but it definitely erases one of the unique knowledges of

indigenous communities. Som Maya struggles to carry on her work, which could be taken as a courageous step of illiterate Tamang woman, who fights on her own manner against the dominating structural power to preserve her cultural knowledge.

The state authority becomes more coercive towards Som Mayas as it imposes unfavorable rules of banning house wine that obstructs their economic source. Her condition has become more pitiable since she is an unmarried woman in her mid-thirties, who has solely shouldered the responsibility of her aged parents. She collects firewood from the Shivapuri jungle to make wine; the money she gets from the wine is the only economic source to feed her family. However, the authority blocks her path in each step she strides for her livelihood. Firstly, they ban her (villagers) entering into the forest from where she has been collecting firewood since her childhood; secondly, they prohibit her brewing and selling local wine. She is threatened by the army when she enters the Shivapuri forest for wood: ““Hey! Woman, climb down!” ...a man with fully patched dress has straightened rifle towards her”” (52). The army orders Som Maya to climb down the tree as he finds her ready to chop the branches. The dominating army personnel represents the powerful “institution” that uses regulatory power to tame and frame the public within its structure in Foucault’s opinion. The authority has banned the indigenous community’s easy access to natural resources, which has incarcerated them in their own land. Such misuse of power not only exposes the exploitation of ethnic community, but it also verifies disrespect and denial of their existence and socio-cultural values. Amid such exasperating situations, Som Maya expresses her pain: “If there is no firewood, how do I make wine. If I cannot produce and sell wine, how can I see money!” (53). It unfolds her complicated situation where only a means of her earning has been blocked. Moreover, the continuous interference of the authority has left her helpless and frustrated.

The state authority exhibits its indifferent attitude towards indigenous knowledge and cultural values, banning the local house wine. The most unreasonable thing is that the government allows the multinational liquor companies to sell their expensive alcohol in the market whereas the local product is strategically rejected. Som Maya becomes a victim of government’s policy since several authoritative bodies from the Shivapuri forest administration to local police keep daunting and blocking her way. When she walks down to the town carrying wine, a young policeman stops and interrogates her: “How could you carry *raksi* (the local house wine) openly? Do you think you could sell it?” (56). It is just an unreasonable interrogation of the authority where ethnic voice is easily reprimanded. Nonetheless, Som Maya exposes her fearless self and questions him back: “Why not? The whole market sells seal-packed wine. Why cannot we sell ours?” (56). Politician Usha Kala Rai has overtly raised the issue of “ban versus brand” in the context of banning of local wine. In her interview on AP1 television, she has questioned: “We throw our own product using our own police force and get overjoyed for the deed. Can the government ban the imported alcoholic drink that is excessively available in the market?” (6:14-7:14m.). The question she has raised is absolutely sensitive like of Som Maya’s. But in the case of Som Maya it is the matter of courage to question back to the authority since she belongs to the marginalized group from where such thing is unimaginable to happen. Her questions verify her resisting personality and at the same time it challenges Spivak’s declaration that “The subaltern cannot speak” (104). In fact, each marginalized character treasures rebelliousness that can outburst unexpectedly. In spite of miserable socio-economic position, Theeng’s Som Maya reveals her dissenting nature that matches with Bhola’s courage. Both Bhola and Som Maya stand at the lowest rank of social stratification nonetheless they exhibit resilience, determination and rebellious characteristics.

Som Maya possesses staunch determination and dauntlessness that she never surrenders in front of the authority. She has already faced numerous police interrogations on her way towards the town. Actually, a tension between the authority and the Tamang community arises when the police raids each Tamang's house of that locality including Som Maya's the early morning that day. The narrator presents the details of police operation in the village: "Police invaded Patali Tamang's house nearby *chautara* ("sitting place for the public"). Patali Tamang has just placed distillery pot on the oven. Pouring water, police doused the fire. They broke *petasi* (small earthen pot where alcohol drips). Threw away *chyang* ("the fermented rice to make wine") from *foshi* ("a big pot to brew wine")" (58). The police use excessive power to take control over innocent indigenous women. The whole community could do nothing more than surrendering in front of the power and witnessing their own damage. After a forceful takeover of the Patali's place, they enter Som Maya's house and capture her distillery equipment. When she tries to stop them, they use force: "More police women came. Some held Som Maya's hand. One of them caught her hair lock and shuddered. Another kicked at her thigh. Som Maya fought with everyone as long as her strength allowed her" (59). The police authority controls Som Maya and attempt to suppress her voice using their power. However, she fights back and shows her resisting personality. Her dissidence gets more visible when she sells her mother's gold earring and buys a few sacks of grain and all the necessary equipment to make wine even after the latest police raid. The final scene of the story narrates intensely emotional and rebellious act of Som Maya: "Som Maya went to Dhanjit Shrestha's shop. She paid the due amount of five sacks wheat. She paid for additional five sacks wheat in advance. She also bought distillery equipment. ... Carrying everything in a basket, Som Maya climbed up towards village leaving the town behind her" (61). She is not intimidated by the power: instead she garners necessary valiance and rigidity that challenges power center. Som Maya turns her back to the town (capital) that has always prejudiced her community. She is a strong headed woman, who is never deterred by the state authority. Moreover, she is more determined to use her indigenous cultural knowledge to earn her living. The whole incident confirms the fact that she possesses lots of inner strength and rebellious consciousness despite her marginalized condition.

Both Bhola and Som Maya share the similar situation when they become victims of structural subjugation. The authority destroys culturally important public pond and "jayath" of Madhesis whereas the same power banishes the Tamang community's indigenous knowledge and bans their house wine. Nonetheless, the marginalized characters raise their resisting voice against the authority and challenge the hegemonic structural power.

Conclusion

The paper has critically analyzed the narratives of hegemony portrayed in the stories: "Jayath" by Sah and "Yambunera" by Theeng. Since several castes, community and regional groups, including the Madhesis and the Tamangs have suffered strategic hegemonization, the paper has primarily delved on the issue of structural domination; it has analyzed the dissenting characteristics of marginalized Bhola and Som Maya.

The Madhesi community's socio-spatial and cultural value related to public pond and "jayath" have brutally crushed by the municipality when the authority decides to demolish the pond to build their administrative building. Similarly, the power blocs have imposed their power and inflicted harm on the indigenous Tamang community when they provide an easy gateway to the multinational companies to sell their alcoholic products. Specifically, the house wine remains at the center of Tamang culture; on top of

that, it is also an important economic source of income for indigenous women. Banning local wine not only unveils the ruler's domination towards the community, but also exposes disrespect towards ethnic knowledge and cultural values. Mainly, in the South Asian region, the ethnic communities' socio-cultural and spatial connectedness have been uprooted by the state authority either through mega developmental projects or by an imposition of the mainstream socio-cultural values. In this regard, Nepal has remained no exception when the power center has continuously dominated the Tamang and Madhesi communities. Despite suffering from unremitting prejudice, discrimination and structural exploitation, the marginalized communities astride the path of dissidence. Extremely underprivileged characters like Bhola and Som Maya have raised their voice against the supremacy of power holders.

Bhola and Som Maya regularly encounter an indifferent and hegemonic attitude of the state. They have become outsiders in their own country and being pushed at the margin. As every society authenticates supremacy of power bloc when the voice of marginalized communities gets strategically muted. In this paper, I have critically examined the experiences and circumstances of Bhola and Som Maya, which explicitly articulate their history of domination. Therefore, it is high time to rethink and reanalyze the history and raise a dissenting voice against the hegemonic power centers.

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