



Caste and Construction of a Tharu Subjectivity in Resham Chaudhary's Selected Novels

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Abstract

This paper studies the role of caste, community, and culture in the formation of Tharu subjectivity in Resham Chaudhary's novels *Chirphar (Breakdown)*, *Bandhuwa Kamaiya*, and *Hidden Stories from Prison*. Tharu subjectivity in Chaudhary's novels has been represented as the culturally distinguished, however, socio-politically oppressed body. Chaudhary's narratives mention his experiences of the time when Kamaiya system was in practice. Chaudhary discusses Kamaiya Tharus as the most acute representation of social status of Tharu community. The text primarily makes commentary on the shaping of Tharu subjectivity in his community. The author critically delves into the historical growth of the community, dividing it into Landlord Tharu and Kamaiya Tharu. Furthermore, the author becomes critical of his own community in terms of upbringing and social interaction. He expresses his dissatisfaction with the community's politically depraved conscience. He makes harsh and pitiful comments on the Tharu community's uncaring and self-observed behavior among themselves. The author begins his text by remembering his life-changing experience in America, where he was first advised to return to his own village home and start a movement for promoting the ethnic agency of his community. Chaudhary's autobiographical novels also assort memories of different periods of his exiled life in India. Hence, the paper assesses that the author has been the victim of his own community's naïve and unwitting socio-political structure and the depraved Tharu subjectivity is formed by the depraved socio-political conscience of its community.

Keywords: Tharu Subjectivity, Identity, Indigeneity and Resistance, Kamaiyas

Introduction

Resham Chaudhary's autobiographical texts "Hidden Stories from Prison," "Chirphar," "Paribandh," and "Bandhuwa Kamaiya" embody a Tharu subjectivity developed from historical lineage, class, and caste enclosure. The

texts were developed especially after the Tikapur incident of Bhadra 07, 2072 B.S. The Tikapur incident in Nepal's history appears to be one of the darkest periods that resulted from Tharu political agency movements. It was the first of its kind in the ethnic political rights movement, where eight people lost their lives. The death of zonal superintendent of police Laxman Nyaupane brought the incident to a close. At present, the incident has not only polarized politics based on castes, but it has also heated up the Tharu identity issue and the state's affirmative action even more.

Resham Chaudhary, the author, and the state's prime suspect's role in politics has become even more stable as the days following the incident, Bhadra 8 and 9, took the ethnic violence and segregated Tharu and non-Tharu, particularly the pahadi community. Caste politics and Tharu subjectivity were severely harmed by the rise of vandalism and destruction of not only Resham's radio station, building, and intimate material properties, but also by victimizing, ragging, unjustly enquiring, arresting without warrant, torturing, and physically molesting local Tharu community members. The aftermaths of this incident completely wiped out the state's dignified perception among the locals of Tikapur. The Tharu identity of western Nepal has frequently been associated with Tikapur. On the one hand, it became intolerable for the conservative group of the pahadi community to see the Tharu community as members of their neighborhood, despite the fact that the Tharu community had no discriminatory and hate-mongered sentiments towards the pahadi community even after the incident. As a result, the oppressive and discriminatory attitude of a specific faction of the pahadi community not only polarized the harmonious state, but it also made the Tharu group realize the presence or absence of their agency in the socio-political functioning of society.

Resham's exiled life produced all the known and unknown details about his exile life, struggle, political movement building, and uprising. In the postmodern phase of literature, as it is evident that truth shall never be known and truth is impeccable, constructive, and disruptive, the narratives engendered by Resham not only revolve around that particular incident, but also chronicle his growing up, the shaping of Tharu subjectivity, and his need for resistance towards caste egalitarianism. Exile shaped and developed the consciousness of the author, who more deeply realized the absence of any dialogic communication between the state and himself. Had there been dialogic communication and political recognition and seriousness for the community, as the author claims, he would have accepted the state's punishment long ago. However, due to the state's indifference, subjugated agency of the community, and lack of intellectual resistance, the author seems to suffer from injustice and dominant stereotyped caste segregation politics. Critically analyzing his narratives of exile, resistance, and political justification, the author appears as the target, victim, and politically alienated and unrecognized leader of the Tharu ethnicity.

In contrast to sociological interpretations of ethnicity and subsequent identity as a small part of a larger society, Resham's chronicles on Tharu

subjectivity discuss, explain, and make interpretations from the standpoints of humanity, emotions, kinship relationships, and economic derogation. The author has a thorough and very intimate relationship with the Kamaiya and Kamlahari systems because he himself comes from a social status and time period when Kamaiya practice germinated as an embryo inside the spheres of landlords Tharu and gradually expanded up to the pahadi community. Analyzing the historical recollections, it becomes apparent that the heinous practice actually originated from within the community. Furthermore, the author discusses the illiteracy, gullibility, and earnestness of the community as reasons for the fall of its social status. The emigration from the inner valley of Dang and Deukhuri (Buhra in community language) to avoid the pahadi community's interference in their monolithic community and peaceful community affairs has been presented as the inception of the transformation of their culture and identity. The community's settlement in the plains of malaria-infested Tarai and its disinterest in privately possessing the legally unmanaged land functioned as the primary reason for the community's class downfall. It not only altered their cultural performance; it also formed their consciousness in such a way that they could no longer define their history, agency, and cultural performance without referring to Kamaiya and Kamlahari practice.

Literature Review

Identity politics comprises two ways of resisting. Greta Fowler Snyder discusses the monovalent and multivalent recognition approaches to identity politics. According to Fowler, "the definitive feature of the politics of recognition is the demand that a devalued collective identity be accepted, affirmed, protected, and given status; in short, recognized" (249). Resham Chaudhary's narratives of memory, the Tharu inclusiveness movement, and exiled life accounts demand a respectable share in government policies, employment systems, and dignified existence in federal democratic Nepal. Resham's recognition and identity politics movement seeks change in institutional, cultural, and bureaucratic inclusion. "Recognition movements aim to revalue historically denigrated collective identities through legal, institutional, and cultural political strategies" (249). Tharu subjectivity throughout the political arena of Nepal remained constrained by suppressive policies. Whether it was the group's Kamaiya and Kamlahari clusters or the entire community, the community remained politically marginalized. Resham's narratives recount all those memories and the struggle of the community to possess space in national identity politics.

The present state of identity politics in Nepal requires a multivalent approach to recognition. Reading Resham's accounts, we find a voice raised in support of Nepal's harmonious and multiethnic inclusion in mainstream national politics. Resham's narratives, though, originate from caste-versus-caste discourse. Chaudhary's account, in particular, accounts for the Tharu community's upliftment and dignified status; he exemplifies all of Nepal's benign communities, castes, and classes that require proper political intervention and address to improve their socioeconomic condition. Fowler

propagates a multivalent movement of identity where rights, sovereignty, representation, protection, and supportive policies of government would enhance the poverty and political exclusion of every underprivileged community (250). Resham's voicing for other marginalized groups—all those lower-class, underprivileged groups—exactly fits into this model. So he prefers an alternative form of recognition politics that addresses the issues of every downtrodden class and group. Thus, the discursive approach to identity recognition should be prioritized in the class consciousness movement.

Resham's narratives account for a political subject arising out of the need to speak for Tharu identity and defy agonistic Tharu subjectivity. Trevor Garrison Smith argues for the birth of such a political leader out of the necessity for progressive change and overcoming oppression. "When one realizes there is something wrong in the world, it motivates one to act, which requires that one first step out of one's assigned place and role within society" (Smith 43). Resham's political activism arises from his feelings for his community. His stories focus on the plight of the Kamaiya, Kamalahari, and Tharu communities, who, despite having the fourth largest population, are barred from higher-level government positions. The underdeveloped class consciousness and lack of agency to resist the suppressive order His regressive attitude towards the absence of political consciousness among his community members makes him feel like a politically resistant subject.

Culture functions as one of the powerful tools of identity. The Tharu community in Nepal asserts its identity through the performative power of their culture. Joan Scott justifies that "culture has become a powerful form of political currency, a morally and legally compelling aspect of personal and collective being that can be deployed as the basis of a political claim" (517). Resham reflects on the Tharu community's distinct culture, including folk performance, food, dress, and language, as the solid base for its identity claim. Thus, he signifies the importance of cultural consciousness for the larger collective identity of his own community. Arjun Appadurai also mentions it as the conscious mobilization of cultural differences in the service of agency development (qtd. in Leve 517). Resham memorizes the unique folklore of the community, like Sakhiya, Jhumra, Dhamar, Sajana, and Mangar. He recalls being an active participant in these performances:

My village always misses me at Dashain, when I sing *Barkimar* with the senior brothers. How entertaining it is to play Madal at Dashain Dancing and jumping in the group of a dozen beautiful girls with the "Taun Ghedaun Ghel" music of madal being played by the madal players signals the arrival of our great festival Dashain at our lawns. Thus, identity reaffirmation through culture develops the acting body of the subjugated subject. (Chirphar 136)

Identity has always been relational. One group's identity is defined by its similarities and differences with another. Sana Nakata writes about identities and their relational attributes, "Identity is intersubjectively produced and takes shape especially in relation to our significant other" (341). Tharu identity in Nepal co-links with the hilly region's privileged community, which became

responsible for ousting the community and disqualifying them as competitive human resources. Moreover, Tharu subjectivity also closely interlinks its identity based on the discourses promulgated by the nation-state. After the rise of federal democracy, states like Madhesh and Karnali resembled the concept of a nation-state. However, the Tharu community's political aggressiveness took a regressive turn, being accused of casteist agitation, which segregated the Tharus and Pahadi communities' harmonious settlement. In "The Politics of Identity," Bronwyn Carlson expresses that "Aboriginal identity" is a product of our position within and our relationship to the nation-state (qtd. in Nakata 345). The Tharu community's struggle with the nation has always been antagonistic, as the nation considers the demand for political rights and justice as the uprising of conservative ideals. The populated demonstration before the Tikapur incident was one of the authentic performances of those subjugated sentiments. However, after the Tikapur incident, the relational ties between the Tharu community and the nation became more hostile, and no big political parties were ready to solve the dissatisfaction, dispute, and demand for constitutional rights through peaceful bilateral talk. This clarifies the Tharu subjectivity's political situation in Nepal's sociopolitical sphere. Tharu subjectivity at present has often been negated by relating it to the Tikapur incident. However, with Resham's election victory, his party, the "Nagarik Unmukti Party," is getting recognition as the national party and has started to recapitulate, reestablish, and redefine the "Tharu identity" in an active way.

Tharu subjectivity has always been the embodiment of social phenomena. Specific embodiment, according to Bourdieu and Foucault, is the result of class habitus and discursive micro-physics of power (Gorringe and Rafanell 100-105). Bourdieu and Foucault discuss the bodily constructiveness of particular subjectivity's identity. Bourdieu argues: "Physical features like postures, accents, ways of walking, even bodily shapes, preferred foods, sports activities, and so on, can be seen as the result of specific social conditioning" (qtd. in Gorringe and Rafanell 100). Cultural performances embody Tharu identity when discussing Tharu subjectivity in light of Bourdieu's reference. Similarly, Tharu subjectivity also gets shaped by the environment and ecological conditions around them, which also shape their culture and performance. Similarly, taking Foucault's reference, we find domination as the ongoing power discourse. According to Foucault's concept of discursive bodies, Tharu subjectivity is discussed and defined in terms of Kamaiya practice, social behavior, race, and history. The community is defined on the basis of its socially subjugated and politically marginalized caste.

Tribal identity or marginalized group identity is based on political definition, particularly after the postcolonial era. Vibha Arora, in her discussion of identity and indigeneity, connects indigeneity with self-empowered subjectivity rather than simply being marginalized or belonging to a group or caste that needs external political affirmation. As she argues, "tribal identity does not necessarily signify marginality, subalternity, and oppression; it reflects the political empowerment of a group" (196). Arora primarily discusses the issue of looking at all the non-Brahmins and Kshatriya castes

with a single perception. As a result, she basically claims that indigeneity refers to self-governed and culturally rich subjectivity. Eliminating caste backwardness necessitates class switching. Class alternation in modern times allows communities to transcend their economic helplessness. The class improvement becomes inclusive as it helps not only the oppressed, marginalized caste but also the economically poor class, even if they have belongings from a privileged caste group. Prabhat Patnaik argues: "What is required for the elimination of caste is the creation of a new "belonging" that transcends caste as a category altogether, a new belonging where both the oppressed castes and even members of other castes can find common ground, a higher community of belonging" (75). Thus, Patnaik argues for the need for supra-caste solidarity. Though certain behaviors like inter-caste marriage and political assertiveness provide some aid to end the distinction, the exact addressing of the financially weaker group would create more harmony and justified affirmation.

Resham, in his exile and activist memoir, argues for the economic improvement of Kamaiya and Kamalahari from the Tharu community. The economy, as is obvious in modern times, has become a critical factor in determining an individual's academic, socioeconomic, and personal development. Because Tharu subjectivity is inextricably linked to the majority of its historical development from Kamaiya practice and the displacement of aboriginality, economic access and income-generating employment opportunities must be the primary strategies for addressing identity crisis issues. As long as the financial circumstances of the community do not improve, their identity politics become an unachievable goal. Furthermore, the delimitation of caste-based hierarchies necessitates a break in dominant caste stereotypes that take the lower caste group for granted in their traditional occupation. Thus, in order to change the economic situation of the Tharu community and instill political consciousness, better education and their acceptance into the modern employment system would be necessary to bring about real change. Resham describes his observations of the Tharu community in Nepal as being less educated, politically unaware, inactive, and easily submissive than the Indian Tharu group, which has government jobs in almost every graduate family. He finds the more socially active organizations and clubs working toward preserving and vocalizing their identity and agency in the mainstream political discourse.

In the Tharu belt of Tarai, there has always been a discourse of Tharus versus non-Tharus in socio-political inclusion. The discourse of inclusion and exclusion based on regional preferences arises from every caste of society, where equal and proportionate representation has never been noticed due to nepotism and kinship. In a similar vein, Kanhaiya L. Sharma distinguishes the Indian discourse on caste along purity and impurity poles, critically analyzing the birth of caste as the new form of maligned politics. He identifies casteist ideology as sectarian electoral politics rather than a socially institutionalized system of local governance. He even explains how even the politicians of certain castes have become oligarchs rather than leaders. "Caste-

based political nominations would not provide "accomplished politicians" who could euphemize debates and discourses on issues of development, democracy, secularism, social justice, and human rights... today's political leader is more of a "banker" than a social worker" (254). Thus, the relationship between state and caste in Nepali society directly connects kinship and individual political notoriety, even if the political base of any leader originates from caste-based politics.

Caste has always been the midpoint of the dichotomy of violence and humanity. On that note, minorities, particularly the Tharus of Nepal, have always been politically stigmatized subjects, as they have no visible representation in local governance despite their majority in the Tarai belt. Anupama Rao, in her discussion about the vulnerable subjectivity of Dalits and Scheduled Castes and Tribes (SC, ST) in modern India, uses the reference of caste as a socio-political affirmation to strengthen the Hindu religion. In modern times, in societies like India and Nepal, the state has become more favorable to those leaders who come from a privileged class. With the power of being privileged, the state that they run helps them to control the caste-based resistance through the technologization of violence, the bureaucratization of state form, and the politicization of life (Rao 626). Thus, if we discuss Tharu subjectivity, we find that the stigmatization of the Tharu community often negates the community as uncivilized, politically incompetent, and unworthy of inclusion in the mainstream bureaucratic and political system. Resham narrates and recounts his personal experiences through the rise of identity consciousness, identifying his community as the stigmatized subject of the state's modern legislative affair.

The primary narrative of Resham's memoir as it developed from within the prison has been caste-based identity politics and the movement for the recognition of dignified Tharu identity. Indian scholars' discourses on caste-based politics have frequently blamed British rulers for widening the divide between pure and impure castes. However, the narratives of Dalit literature and aesthetics often relate caste atrocity and prejudiced social conditions with the rigid notion of caste supremacy. Tharu subjectivity's embodiment seeks the justice of state-oriented exclusion, and pahadi privileges castes' perception of them as the mere muscular, competent, cognitive faculty-less embodiment. However, literature reviews on the Indian subcontinent's caste system clearly promote the unilateral acquisition of socioeconomic power by the already privileged caste and class. They represent tribal subjectivity as being unable to break the bond of compulsion and vigorously resist the parochial structure. As a result, Tharu subjectivity emerges as the immobilized embodiment in that notoriously privileged political system.

Methodology

The interpretive methods of caste identity-based reviews, as well as dialogical and antialogical political action, as discussed by Paulo Freire in his book *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, are used in this study. The study appropriates caste-based theories and identity movements and analyzes the pre- and post-Tikapur incident to discuss how Resham's exile and prison

narratives justify the unjust deeds conducted upon him after the Tikapur incident. By conducting a spherical tour around the news story, post-incident narratives, and interviewing primary accused Resham Chaudhary, who is imprisoned at Dillibazar Prison, the study attempts to clarify the obscure post-incident victim theories. Examining the information available to the public in the out-sphere, the study conducts a critical literary analysis of narratives accounted for by others (involved indirectly) and Resham's self-involved subjectivity. The critical analysis of narratives and memoirs, as well as political discourse, in Resham's political justice discourse includes witness testimony and state suppression.

The Pedagogy of the Oppressed puts its complete weight on justifying the dialogical communication of a great leader. With reference to Guevara, Freire writes that communion with the public, for whom a great leader is supposed to work, is a serene force of genuine value (170). He emphasizes a visionary leader's capacity and passion to make his people active and aware about his action and, in return, make his supporters equally responsive and active to be united for the cause of class consciousness. Freire writes, "The leaders must believe in the potentialities of the people, whom they cannot treat as mere objects of their own action; they must believe that the people are capable of participating in the pursuit of liberation" (169). His concept justifies not only a one-way approach to transforming society, but also portrays a politically in-cognitive society as both passive and overtly active. This study incorporates Freire's concept of oppressed subjects' self-involvement, as well as exposing oneself to needs and the justice of one's sociopolitical identity.

Furthermore, Freire also justifies making his concept mutually considered when he clarifies that exposing and analyzing reality does not mean sloganizing it and making it redundant, rather it means analyzing the authentic problem of reality critically. His primary concept of dialogic action to dignify the oppressed involves making the lower class conscious of their class. Moreover, he also rejects the activities that just manipulate, impose, domesticate, and make the oppressed class the victim of herd mentality, who will time and again become the herd of a different owner without noticing their submissiveness. Thus, this study interprets to what extent Resham's political discourse is able to follow Freire's concept of dialogic action of a visionary leader by analyzing his exile and prison narratives.

Discussion

Resham Chaudhary's exile and prison narratives in his autobiographical narratives "Hidden Stories from Prison (HSFP)," "Chirphar," "Paribandh," and "Bandhduwa Kamaiya" speak for his dis-involvement in the deaths of eighteen people in the Tikapur incident, the class consciousness of the Tharu community, the formation of Tharu subjectivity, and his development as a political figure. Resham's recall of his bildungsroman memories, professional life adventure, family inclination, and inspiration towards politics present the factors that move him into politics. As he comes from a well-to-do family within the "Tharu" community, he remembers the

practices of Kamaiya and Kamalahari practiced at his own family. His narratives provide the authentic practice of the Kamaiya system within and outside the community sphere. His political subjectivity and vehement advocacy for Tharu subjectivity have recently elevated him from the accused to a normative principle working to build socio-political agency in the community.

Resham marks his initiation into identity politics by remembering his diasporic life in America. During his stay in Pennsylvania, he recalls the Red Indian woman Judith, who inspires him to return to his own village, study, and preserve the culture. In every conversation, she used to say, "Resham, return home to your own country and preserve your own culture and civilization." Tomorrow, professors from these big universities will go study and research the culture of your community. "Today you came here to study modernity; tomorrow they will visit your village for cultural study" (HSFP VIII). Resham develops and appeals to all community youths who are interested in learning about other cultures. Even if the scholars from tribal groups must discuss global discourse, their primary aim should be to disseminate their local culture into the global sphere. This consciousness is essential for the politically underclass. Moreover, such political consciousness in Resham's narrative emerges from his sense of caste underprivilege. Freire, in his claim for developing self-affirmation as historical subjectivity, argues: "The awakening of critical consciousness leads the way to the expression of social discontents precisely because these discontents are real components of an oppressive situation" (36). Resham's dissatisfaction with his community's social-political subjective status engrossed his identity movement and thus shaped his writings as a differentiated caste in Nepal. His return to Nepal not only marks his cultural affiliation but also establishes himself as a prolific revolutionary in the field of identity politics. Resham's experience of Tharu Kamaiya and the Kamlahari system differs and presents the core reason behind the rise of the Kamaiya Freedom Movement. Resham, defending the practice of kamaiyas by the landlords of the Tharu family like his, blames the unjust practice on the privileged class. "Of course, the Kamaiya system was a form of slavery. Since they had to work together with the head of the family and eat whatever they ate, the oppression was not extreme. The rebellion took place because the Tharu Kamaiyas in the houses of people from other castes were "not treated well and not fed properly" (HSFP 15). According to him, though it was never a humane custom, he himself was, from his student life on, vocal for abolishing it, regarding the dire condition of kamaiyas materializing from "out of community" practice. He even blames those privileged non-Tharus castes for Tharu subjectivity's total oppression, transforming it into the embodiment of submissiveness, helplessness, and full citizenship in the nation-state.

Resham, as a defender of freedom for his community, repeatedly mentions his destiny to fight for his community's state-sponsored injustices. Being the owner of three radio stations, a resort, and a guesthouse, he did not become nostalgic for those private lives; however, after the incident, he found himself an enlightened man who knew his primary aim in life. As the narrative

tells it, he sometimes wished to draw back from such struggle and make a compact with influencing politicians for his personal freedom, but that would be deception to his own soul, community, and God's chosen path for him. In a letter to his wife, he writes: "I also think about forging agreements and stopping this race, but it will be an injustice to the thousands of people waiting for their identities." It is not suitable for the warrior who has won their hearts. "Your continuous support and courage will lead me to victory; it is my firm hope that I will be able to fulfill my people's demand for identity" (HSFP 63). Resham's private liberty and freedom turned into the freedom of the community's political liberty. His private self-transformed into a self for the greater good.

Freire discusses an individual's fear of losing subjective freedom by really making them a non-resistant subject. Bringing Hegel's concept of a rebel's true liberty into play, he makes the point that an individual can only be a great leader if he is ready to seek meaning in greater freedom: "It is solely by risking life that freedom is obtained;... the individual who has not staked his or her life may, no doubt, be recognized as a person; but he or she has not attained the truth of this recognition as an independent self-consciousness" (36). Hegel's primarily shows how an individual's average concept of freedom keeps them in the limbo of the status quo. Resham's constant advocacy for his exile and imprisonment as a martyr's revolution for the identity of the oppressed community Over time, his narratives and internal locution of himself, as well as his frequent fighting for the rights of thousands of indigenous people, have forced him to bear the forced imprisonment.

Denunciation of state oppression in Resham's narratives arises from the complete and unilateral imposition of law, media, and political discourse created and spread by the privileged caste, class, and political party of Nepal. Freire attributes the emergence of such discourse to the threat that specific classes and castes perceive to their own status. "A different type of false perception occurs when a change in objective reality would threaten the individual or class interests of the perceiver" (52). For this, he argues that the means of praxis are the only medium. By means of praxis, the oppressed would need to engage in critical reflection and action to transform the world they inhabit. Resham, in his novel "Paribandh," discusses the absence of such reflection among those already established indigenous leaders who have failed to resist the discriminatory draft of the constitution.

The state was unconcerned about the old leaders of small and indigenous groups because the major politicians of big parties were already familiar with their bargaining power with them and well known for bringing the leaders of these regional parties into agreement on their benefits. The old leaders who advocate for identity politics are notorious for settling scores on contracts that benefit their personal growth; this could be some state-ministry or hidden agendas. (Paribandh 277, My Translation).

However, the state or major politicians wielding the whip were afraid of newly emerging leaders from regional parties. Resham's narratives criticize the

regional party leaders for enjoying the privilege of caste politics. Instead of actually working for the welfare and political rights of their community, such regional politicians up to present have just misused their caste and community votes in their favor. He even criticizes the main political party leaders for using the propaganda of "economic blockade" to discourage the ethnic identity movement from rising. However, this inflamed nationalistic sentiments, and once again, those political leaders who are directly responsible for Nepal's current denigrated state won the election.

Similarly, Resham also narrates the Kamaiya practice at his home in the past, attaching it to an important part of the Tharu community's class conscience and culture. The treatment was humane in a well-to-do Tharu family, such as Resham's Kamaiya practice. He even defends the practice, claiming that his grandparents kept kamaiyas because those people were landless and should not be exploited: "We had the tradition of respecting Kamaiya and calling them not by their name but by the relationship." "Not only was it our tradition, but all Tharu families who had kept kamaiyas would respond in the same way" (HSFP 20). Furthermore, kamaiya practice was presented as an integral part of upper-class Tharus, who were their good masters. The recruitment, exchange, and discontinuation of such practices by kamaiyas is heavily referenced and associated with the Tharu festival Maghi. KhojniBojhni was similar to the culture in the community, where a kamaiya would ask for his dues to be cleared for the past year. "After celebrating the Maghi festival, Baraba asked my father about his dues in Khojni Bojhni." KhojniBojhni is a Tharu word that means the traditional act of asking Kamaiya for their approval. "In Tharu community, people plan to do good or bad things on the day of Magh" (HSFP 18). Resham's narration of the historical practice of Kamaiya within the community reflects the class difference and internal struggle of Kamaiyas. Tharu was educated by Resham, the landlord, but was never seen to internalize the dominant class ideology. His Tharu background might have given him some privilege within his own community, but in a nutshell, in the caste periphery, he experienced the singular expression of a political identity crisis.

Resham talks about the self-propelled will and conscience of oppressed community members who actually chose and supported him to be their only visionary leader. His rapport-building method relies on dialogic communication, which is what actually made him successful in developing their political conscience. The good communication channeled between his cadres and himself presented the community members as the true resistive members, advocating for their political dignity. Resham recalls a similar incident: "I had several friends come to meet me." I convinced myself to engage in discussion with them. The Tharu people had taken my candidacy as a symbol of the struggle for their existence. They made their strategies work for my victory. "The people fully engaged in the election campaign without expecting food, guidance, or monetary support from me" (HSFP 43). As Freire argues, only such a rebel is able to bring positive change for the oppressed. This becomes one of the great skills of a visionary revolutionary leader: "The

correct method for a revolutionary leadership to employ in the task of liberation is, therefore, not "libertarian propaganda." Nor can the leadership merely "implant" in the oppressed a belief in freedom, thus thinking to win their trust. "The correct method lies in dialogue" (67). Resham's popularity in his victory and his party emerging as the first party in local level elections truly demonstrates the enormous public support that he has received for being able to communicate through them, whether through his speech, writings, videos, or close-public approach.

Resham challenges the anti-political identity tag imposed on him by mainstream politicians and privileged-class conservative groups. His primary concern is also to disprove all of the baseless accusations and false propaganda that portray the Tharu community as a criminal tribe:

We had a hope of getting justice when the federal democracy was introduced. If justice gets delivered by a majority-based rule system, then why were we, being one of the largest ethnicities, not given political rights? Now, if we fight for our rights, we are accused of being "Indians." Tharus and his wife do not own a home in the hills, nor do they own any property in Kathmandu. In a true sense, the Tharus are the true people of their earth. We do not have a history of being vagabonds. (Chirphar 19, My Translation)

Resham narrates the suppressive and discriminatory outcomes of political struggle, comparing the same with Madhesis and Karnali's people, who were delivered their desired states. In the case of Tharu identity, however, Resham's analysis of Tharu identity politics, in particular, is forceful. There must be a lack of intellectuals and good speakers in the community for Resham to emerge as a political figure. His entry into politics could also be interpreted as a covert desire to gain political power. As he narrates, he denied the proposal to be the coordinator of Tikapur for the Tharuhat Movement; rather, he demanded the role of central coordinator of the whole Tarai for the Tharuhat Movement (Chirphar 20). However, he always denies being the primary perpetrator of the incident. According to him, the anti-political slogans against him are just defamatory accusations to suppress the Tharu identity movement.

Smith considers political subjectivity to be the result of anti-political propaganda. He defines political subjectivity as the body resisting the established system. "To become a political subject, or to reveal oneself as someone with political substance, one must leave behind the particularities of identity that are used by the anti-political order to categorize, place, count, and ultimately dismiss one as a political subject" (Smith 46). Resham's struggle calls into question the Tharu stereotype of being politically silent and inarticulate. He expresses his disappointment that the dominant class regards Tharus as worthless. This is also expressed in his song, *Jago Jago Tharu Gochali* (Awake all Tharu Friends):

All Tharu friends, wake up!

We are all Nepali

What an absurd, we cannot be Nepali being Nepali

Having grated citizenship are not considered citizens

We can be cadres of your politics
But cannot rise ourselves as the leader
Some got *Akhand*, some Karnali
Some got hills, some got Madhesh
Everyone got their share of rights, when is our turn?
Awake all Tharu friends (Bandhuwa Kamaiya (235))

Resham builds his story by recalling his interactions with everyone who helped and listened to him in some way. The above lyrics, composed during his exile, were also supported by his friends, especially those at Bhandarbharari in India, where he stayed during his exile. The "shoot" moment provides him an opportunity to meet one of the central characters of his narrative: Gauri. Gauri, a young, pretty, and vocal woman, helps him with all his activities in a foreign country. The author gets mesmerized by her migration history from Nepal. He finds her traumatic past responsible for making her physically and mentally strong.

Her house, in Nepal, was near the Barka Banwa, which the Maoist combatants used for training and shelter. As the forest bordered the Dudhwa National Park, the Maoists used this route to take wounded fighters to Lucknow, Lakhimpur, and Delhi in India. The combatants often asked her to prepare food. Once Gauri had a row with a commander on the issue, the commander threatened her family. As a result, they migrated to the neighboring Indian village of Belaparasuwa. I came to know that Gauri had tried to take revenge on them from India, too. Fearing her, the Maoist cadres were afraid to go there. She still has an aggressive attitude toward the Maoist cadres. She grinds her teeth in anger when she hears about them (HSFP 46). Resham, throughout his different books, discussed her contribution during his exile.

During his exile, Gauri played a pivotal role in securing his victory in an election. However, Resham acknowledges good-hearted people from both communities: Hilly and Tharu people. His secular approach can be observed throughout the narratives. A similar incident occurs when he and his brother Jalu question him about why he never speaks out against the hill people politicians who have caused him to rot in exile. In return, the author replies, "My brother, our demands are with the state." If you fight with the people in your society, it will be a communal feud. We are not loners or wicked people to make such mistakes. "If I too follow their suit, what difference will there be between those people and me?" (HSFP 64). Resham supports the middle path between aggression and reconciliation, which will serve the purpose of identity politics. As the narrative develops, he knows very well that the majority of people in the hilly region will always be ready to collide physically as their number in comparison with Tharus's of just two districts dominates. Thus, to institutionalize the political rights of his community, he wants a humane and legal way. So, he becomes successful in presenting himself as the rightful and justified advocate for liberty.

To make the whole society a free society, individual liberty should be promised. A political activist working for the freedom of his society must first

try to free the self-depreciative sentiments of his society. As Freire argues, "The struggle for a free society is not a struggle for a free society unless through it an ever greater degree of individual freedom is created" (137). Resham's narratives frequently emphasize his goal of creating a socio-political consciousness in his society. "My movement is to ensure the rights of indigenous, ethnic, oppressed Dalits, Madheshi, Muslims, Tharus, etc. "They are stuck in the world of slavery" (69). Resham's identity politics and resistance against privileged groups sound very secular, as he wishes to bring all the oppressed groups into functional political status. It is evident that non-Brhamins and Chhetris rarely get political influence and support in most of their legal procedures. Therefore, an inclusive approach to identity politics should be legally and practically institutionalized.

Education and good upbringing play a key role in shaping the life of any character who comes from an underprivileged class, be it Om Prakash Valmiki, a renowned Dalit writer from India, Ambedkar, or Shanta Chaudhary from Nepal. Education functions as the only tool to change one's ignorance and repressed status. Thus, when Resham recalls his childhood memories, he always remembers how his grandfather played a crucial role in forming his subjectivity. "One day, while making a package of food items, my grandpa said, "I am going to Rajapur to buy some stuff for Resham." I will get him a school bag, a small blackboard, and a box of chalk. He is my eldest grandson. "I wish to educate him and see him climbing up the ladders of success" (HSFP 77). This also explores the chances of being educated in the Tharu family based on the primary house owner's favor. Thus, in the meantime, it also reflects education as one of the few privileges that few Tharu children get based on the preference of the head of the family.

Resham also explains more about the common routine of a Tharu house owner. The males in the Tharu family are addicted to wines and drinks as part of their daily routine. Whereas females prepare dishes from early dawn to late dusk, males who handle the majority of the field work consume the wines on a regular basis, serving as both a source of energy and a source of relief from field work exhaustion. While recalling the habit of his grandfather, he writes, "My grandpa had a habit of drinking alcohol all the time." Nobody could stop him. He used to start drinking as early as 4 a.m. and continue until bedtime. Tharus has a tradition of going to the field at around five or six in the morning. "Bhansariya, the people assigned to cook food should start with the crowing of a rooster at the break of dawn" (HSFP 80). Resham reflects the Tharu ethnography in the personalized documentation narration, where he explains the formation of Tharu subjectivity. He recounts the intrinsic life of his family to explicate the primary way of life that Tharu subjectivity relies on.

The peasantry, Kamaiyahood, the economy, and the favor of the house owner shape the Tharu community's overall experience of Tharu subjectivity formation and the fixity of class consciousness. Resham's political movement for identity for his community not only gets constrained within his own voice in justifying his involvement in the Tikapur incident. Although he was the coordinator of the movement, he denies any kind of decree, speech, or

act committed by him that would have infuriated, aroused, or agitated the demonstrators to use violence. Thus, his narrative recalls the important memories and people in his life that helped add to his experience and sharpen his behavioral expertise. Describing the historical development of his childhood with the Kamaiya family, he primarily justifies the causes that validate the demand for rights by Kamaiyas and Kamalari.

Conclusion

Resham's exile books present his affirmative statement, testimony on exile and class consciousness, and human attitude before and after a person's socioeconomic status. Even if most of his narratives present the chronological details of the pre- and post-Tikapur incident, his books also embed a significant part of Tharu subjectivity: the experience of being and witnessing the practice. The narratives heavily emphasize the account of suffering endured during exile, state indifference and hostility, and political indifference to dealing with the aftermath events. During the exile period, Resham remembers his childhood memories with his Kamaiya kids and family. He provides details on the upper-class family sponsorship for kamaiyas. The most significant part he deals with is how a good-natured man whose family once had kamaiyas later finds a Tharu subjectivity's political empowerment no less equal to kamaiyas. It even creates irony for the author, who speaks for the identity of Tharus and all politically marginalized classes. His family, who used to have kamaiyas for field and household chores, has even seen him as a kamaiya-type embodiment against political repression. He also relates more and even considers his kamaiya boy, "Vauna," an adult as he met him in jail after years. Such unexpected overturns of events in his life make him deeply contemplate a universal human fate that could bend in any direction.

Resham's testimony invalidates all political treatments and the state's interpretation of his trial. He brings the empathetically woven narratives of his kamaiya friend, grandfather, Gauri, his second mother, "Aiya," from India, his wife and son, brother Jalu, and other different personalities with whom he had some moments during his exile. He recounts his exiled journey around the borderlands of Nepal and India. On his to and fro, he explicitly explains the inter-cultural society that communicates based on trade, kith and kin, and local tourism. As he claims his return to his village for the sake of community development and building local political agency among his community, his life gets entangled with a leader's adventure of suffering for the betterment of his society.

Thus, Resham's statements and affirmative voice serve as an anatomy of Tharu community repression, subjectivity formation, and regressive class consciousness. His accounts also conclude with a note requesting political justice for the injustice and the wrongfully accused victim. His political victimhood arises from Tharu subjectivity's inability and remoteness from impactful politics. Analyzing the narratives of analysis on ethnography and community behavior critically, we discover that the intellectual political resistance of the community is one of its weakest points. The study finds the community's weak inter-subjective communication and emotional nurturing as

one of the regressive factors in their inability to develop political agency. Moreover, the study also accumulates illiteracy, unemployment, and a lack of aggressive political approach, which are responsible for the community's unsuccessful political dialogue with the state.

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