Pedagogy and Home: Reading Nepali Modernity through Plays

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Abstract

This article reads *Mukunda Indira* (1939), *Bahulakajiko Sapana* (1947) and *Kohi Kina Barbad Hos* (1958), written for schools, and performed and watched by students and teachers as social and literary documents that record the concerns academics had had for pedagogy in need during the period. Mukunda, a graduate from a university in Calcutta of the colonial time, goes through reorientation at the end of the first play. Bire, a subaltern protagonist in the second play, though performs excellently well academically, dies because of poverty at the end. Kamala, the teacher and Sundar, the Principal become successful in bringing transformation in Dhruva, a spoilt student in the third play. Interpreted through John Dewey's critical views on pedagogy, these plays can be taken as the important materials to map out the pedagogical shift that modern education in Nepal did take place. It concludes that while sharing stories about a graduate lost in Calcutta, a talent Dalit boy who dies at the end, and teacher and student trying to learn from each other, these plays dramatize the academic issue—the pedagogy that Nepalis needed to address at home to become modern.

Keywords: School Pedagogy, Modern Education, Drama, National Education

Introduction

As a theatre critic and someone who has followed the history of Nepali theatre for the last two and half a decade, I am driven to define the given plays written by first generation Nepali playwrights as social documents of the period. My reading of these plays of the period reveals to me that they can be helpful materials to follow the pedagogical tensions that the stakeholders had lived with since the playwrights were also teachers and academics by their profession. For this, I discuss *Mukunda Indira* (1939) by Balakrishna Sama (1903-1981), *Bahulakajiko Sapana (*1947) and *Kohi Kina Barbad Hos* (1957) by Vijay Malla (1925-1999) as markers of shift that took place in the domain of school pedagogy during 1940-1950s. Though literary texts written to be staged for the public, these plays can also help one to explain the changes and transformation that education in Nepal was going through on the other hand, the mainstream drama criticism in Nepal has concentrated on elucidating the generic nature of plays. Much space has been given to interpret the plays through commonly known literary criticism and literary theories such as feminist, psychoanalytic, and existentialist among other perspectives. I argue that that by treating these plays as documents to reflect upon the pedagogical agenda of the period, one can understand the spirit of Nepali academics trying to bring reformation in the education sectors. Performed by the students to the students, these plays embody the changes taking place in the very domain of pedagogy of the period.

The first play marks the tension between the world views held by the Sanskrit-education trained scholars on the one hand and the English education trained ones on the other, a real social experience that teachers and educators went through 1930s and early 1940s. The other plays by Malla carry the new spirit that supported the ideology of education for all, and supported and popularized the English medium pedagogy, the social phenomena of post 1950s social and political context. I have selected these three plays to highlight the historical fact that discussion about pedagogy got into prominence at times when the Rana autocratic regime started facing

its inevitable end. The issue concerning pedagogy becomes more dominant in the plays by Malla. This also indicates the opening of new frontiers in Nepal.

Bringing Home Pedagogy

Highlighting the objective of education, John Dewey, the leading twentieth century American philosopher on education argues: “it is also a social necessity because the home is the form of social life in which the child has been nurtured and in connection with which he has had his moral training" the purpose of the school is "to deepen and extend his sense of the values bound up in his home life” (8). Home occupies an important space in these plays being discussed. Moreover, these plays were written at times when the need to define home, for that matter, family, women, and education for youths was being felt by the public in general. Written by the playwrights coming from Hindu patriarchal and elite and middle-class economic backgrounds, these plays consist of characters who either suffer or get recovery because of the kind of home they belong to. Partha Chaterjee, the leading postcolonial historian regards the evolution of new notions of the “family” and the “women” among the educated middle class Bengalis as significant nationalist spirit during the rise of nationalism in India: “As it happened, the domain of the family and the position of women underwent considerable change in the world of nationalist middle class” and such changed did pave the way for “a new patriarchy” that was “different from the “traditional” order” as well as “Western” family (9). Though Nepal was not colonized as India that Chatterjee’s focus is, yet the first generation of modern Nepali writers from Rudra Raj Pande, Balkrishna, Bhimnidhi Tiwari and Gopal Prasad Rimal among others focused their attention in 1930s on males exposed to the western thoughts and lifestyles and the women characters who stayed home and provided continuity to the tradition. Since these writers were involved in teaching and designing pedagogy, their literary works carry the debates taking place on the right kind of pedagogy that the Nepali youths needed to be oriented.

Balkrishna Sama was a teacher by profession and did carry out a responsibility of designing pedagogy that would enable the students to interpret modern arts, literature, and society in a modern context. Sardar Bhimbahadur Pandey, a Nepali social historian narrates that by writing modern Nepali plays, intervening with canons of writing grammatically correct text, Sama as a man of the center of education and literary production of the then Kathmandu instilled historically significant confidence among his students at the Durbar High School (147). Sama belonged to the elite Rana ruling families and was bestowed with the responsibility of monitoring publication. He was one of the most influential teachers at Tri Chandra College and Durbar High School, the epicenter of academic activities in Nepal during the 1930s and 1940s. Academically, Malla belonged to the era when the educational policy makers for the first time got involved in what kind of education should be given. Educating youths was taken as the first and foremost need of the time, whereas Sama belonged to the era when the voice for alternate pedagogy other than the one offered by the British in India was gradually drawing the attention of Nepali intelligentsia. *The Report of National Education Commission 1992* recalls the 1947 educational planning, put forward by the last Rana rulers as "the first, faltering step in the direction of educational planning" (1). The last Rana rulers had no option other than embracing politically and socially liberal policies. Opening schools for the children of common Nepalis was their last effort to define themselves as the bringers of liberal changes Nepalis were waiting for. But without any changes in political, military and economic structures, the opening of a few schools simply was not enough to lift Nepalis from 'subjects' to citizens. *The Report* further states, "However, it was only after the introduction of democracy in 1951 that planned efforts were seriously taken in hand to promote the cause of education. An Education Committee was appointed in 1952, and acting on its timely recommendations, a National Education Planning Commission was formed in 1954" (4). The fact that the Rana government wanted to bring changes in the education system of the nation also makes one recall the debate that the policy makers, the stakeholders had had on the modality of pedagogy. Since

Indians had already achieved their independence, and were busy designing their pedagogy, it was natural that the ruling elites of Nepal too imbibed the spirit of the era. Should they keep on teaching youths the way they had been on traditional schooling pedagogy, or should they allow the introduction of the western form of imparting education system that had already been introduced in British India? This was the first major debate that the Nepali elites had had in the late 1940s on education (Bhatta 1).

With the introduction of democracy in Nepal, the people naturally became vocal about their need for modern education. Art and education policy makers established institutions such as schools, pedagogy, art centers, colleges, universities, Royal Nepal Academy, and Rastriya Naachghar and other academic centers. Importantly, such changes taking place in the domain of arts and education did pave the way for the rise of a class of educated modern Nepalis. Pointing to the characteristics of this class, Bhuwan Lal Joshi and Leo E. Rose write that they had "had a very different orientation from that of the older staff members" and they defined education "from a national perspective". On the one hand, they needed to familiarize youths with the world outside and also develop nationalistic fervor in their mind set: "Education was not only an instrument of social change, they were told, but also a powerful means for developing the sense of national identification. The use of Nepali, the national language in the classroom was of fundamental importance in the achievement of this latter goal" (201). Almost a sea change seemed to have taken place within a couple of years after Padma Shamsher decided to let the public run schools on their own risk and resources in 1947. From a hermetically sealed society, Nepali intelligentsia realized a herculean task of carrying the nation out of the dark era and almost impossible task of taking it along with the people who had had centuries of open education system in the world.

On top of that, the British were leaving India soon, and the popularity of the model of education that Gandhi had put forward was casting its wave across Nepali society as well. The Rana rulers and their henchmen also staggered to define their space by rejecting the policies

promoted by the British in colonial India. Calcutta, the first metropolis under the British Empire, had already been a haven for the anti-Rana campaigners. Any cause that discouraged Nepali youths from going to Calcutta pleased the Rana rulers at home. Calcutta and the British pedagogy were taken as unsuitable social factors for Nepali youths. Such an approach of the Rana rulers and the elite class directly supported the government policies of discouraging Nepali youths from involving themselves in liberal political agendas being launched in India in the 1930s and here at home.

Balkrishna Sama's *Mukunda Indira* carries the pedagogical spirit of the time, i.e. 1930s and 1940s. The protagonist, Mukunda, educated and influenced by the British lifestyles, favors the Darwinian ways of looking at life, race and civilization. He favors freedom of choice over the cultural bond to the family and culture: "We don't have home, monkeys are our forefathers, I don't know who Indira and she too shouldn't bother about me" (26-27), is one of the famous lines he utters in the play. And such belief of Mukunda is taken as the possible disaster that could happen to Nepali youths and their society if the youths were trained in pedagogy introduced and promoted by the British colonists. The play was staged at the Darbar High School and the Nepali government under the Premiership of Chandra Shamsher had already approached Patna University to allow Nepali students to sit for the Matriculation exams by 1920. Nepali students studying in Calcutta, for that matter in Indian cities under the British Empire, brought ideas which contradicted the core values of the governance the Rana regime was guided by. Mukunda, a Nepali student taught in a 'faulty' pedagogy in Calcutta, embraces civilizational and cultural values incompatible with the ones at home. Contrary to what Mukunda says about personal freedom and his vision of life and society, Bhavadeva puts forward the vision of life and the responsibility that one has for family and nation as celebrated in the Indo-scholastic traditions. Bhavadeva, a senior Nepali, trained in the traditional pedagogy, is given a responsibility, in some sense, himself willingly takes the responsibility of bringing Mukunda home. By looking at the social and moral values he supports, one can feel the rise of patriotic intelligentsia who had a role of teaching cultural lessons to the

foreign-educated youths. Lokranjan Parajuli points out a similar ideological standpoint that the Nepali educators had taken in the late 1940s: "One recurrent argument against the existing (modern/English) education system that appears in the various issues of Nepal Siksha over the years", according to him "is that the system was introduced in India by the British to produce low level office workers to sustain their regime. As this faulty education system was copied in toto in Nepal, it was only natural that the Nepalis too got the vices: it promoted selfishness, and it drove the educated lot away from physical labor (51). With 'wrong' and 'immoral' values about life, family, and woman, the protagonist is almost bound to suffer since there are no good parents and guardians around. At the end of the play, Mukunda comes out of the hangover and enters safely into a cultural and spiritual haven as if he was rescued from a foreign invasion.

'Selfishness' is the exact quality that Sama imbues Mukunda within the play. Contrary to him, he projects Bhavadeva as a self-controlled Brahmin scholar, who embodies gentle and socially and morally trained patriotic Nepali manners. On the other hand, Mukunda is an unruly and misguided educated boy. Sama's dramaturgy and his subtle way of critiquing British education speaks volumes about the worries Sama's generation had lived with. Though Sama was not always favored by the court as his plays too had to go through a round of censorship before they were allowed to be printed and staged, Sama seems to favor the education policy of teaching Nepali youths in a pedagogy that suited best to their social needs.

Education is often defined as one of the powerful means of bringing shifts in perception and interpretation of the 'order of things' in a society. John Dewey, one of the leading twentieth-century American philosophers on education and pedagogy explains that individuals with such limited exposure sees and feels "one thing rather than another" and is moved to "have certain plans so that he may act successfully with others; it strengthens some beliefs and weakens others as condition of winning the approval of others" (15). Mukunda in the play can be said to have been

caught into a state of perception that has trapped him. There exists a conflict between him and Bhavadeva in terms of looking into social values. Written in the decade when Mahatma Gandhi and his friends and followers were actively involved in questioning the educational pedagogy practiced by the British regime in India, the play carries the spirit of the era. Gandhi's influence had already been felt in the community of educated Nepalis by the 1930s as Tulsi Mehar, known as Gandhi of Nepal, had already returned to Nepal after spending ten years with Gandhi. Though I have not come across any documents which show Sama's connection with Mehar, his play under consideration shares a similar approach to the British education system. Gandhi in one of his essays speaks for the need of including native issues into pedagogy. Criticizing the British Empire-promoted pedagogy, Gandhi argues, "Primary education is a farce designed without regard to the wants of the India of the villages and for that matter even of the cities". Instead of it, he propounds the pedagogy that "develops both the body and the mind, and keeps the child rooted to the soil with a glorious vision of the future in the realization of which he or she begins to take his or her share from the very commencement of his or her school career" (416). Mukunda in the play is unfit for the society he belongs to, and he is much needed for. With exposure to the British education system and world view, he is disconnected from his family and society. He has lost faith in spiritual values, moral responsibility, and integrity. He does not believe that his wife Indira is still chaste and is waiting for him at home.

Mukunda's journey home is successful from the perspective of Bhavadeva and the parents. He frees himself from misconceptions about his wife's moral integrity. Since he is a graduate and a Calcutta returnee, he is expected to make the best of what he has learnt in the native context. Pointing on the need for connecting educationally acquired knowledge to society, Dewey concludes: "An educational aim must be founded upon the intrinsic activities and needs (including original instincts and acquired habits) of the given individual to be educated" (113). Mukunda's journey is a trial of his educational learning. There is a hope that Mukunda will

contribute to the family and society in the days to come. He vows to run the family as well as the nation in a peaceful manner at the end of the play.

Pedagogy and Homelessness

Years which followed the first production of *Mukunda Indira* saw the issue and urgency of imparting education to the youths according to the demand of their society. Though much had not changed in the society, education was accepted as one of the most helpful mediums to achieve progress in society. The Rana rulers also realized it by the late 1940s and set out to bring a reformation in school education. School as public space provided a forum for imparting new ideas in the society. The rising intelligentsia who favored liberal ideas used the space "to expand political party bases, and especially "modern" schools were sought and opened to challenge the exclusivity of the ruling elites' access into the corpus of knowledge that they thought existed in the English language" (37), comments Parajuli. And such spirit of the time can also best be realized through discussion of Vijay Malla's *Bahulakajiko Sapana*, staged in 1947. The play deals with the educational policies that the Ranas reformed through allowing more public schools to operate mainly in the capital Valley. Unlike Bhavadeva, who is in a mission to bring a 'wayward' elite Newar boy 'home', i.e. culturally prescribed ways of life, patriotically inspired mindset in the play discussed above, Bahulakaji of the second play is a self-guided protagonist, who holds a social mission of sending subaltern children to the school. As a socially responsible man, Bahulakaji knows he is trying to do an impossible job because sending kids to schools alone was not going to bring changes in the society. Much was needed to bring changes at political and economic level in the society, Bahulakaji is sure of. Historically speaking, along with the education Nepalis needed most was a politically liberated society. For this, they needed the Rana autocracy to go down. Sending boys of all castes and creeds to local schools was a thing of joy, but the society did not have anything to offer to such subaltern graduates. Bire, a subaltern, does excellently well in his studies and surprises all the teachers and students. With an excellent academic result

and certificate in his bed, he falls ill at the end of the play. His father Bhakte is so poor, a coolie by profession that he cannot afford doctors and modern medicine. The knowledge that Bire gains does not bring any confidence in him. What he experiences and the state of suffering he goes through daily can best be understood by explaining the emphasis Dewey made on the 'integrated' approach of teaching. Explaining such philosophy of Dewey, Mary Aurora da Costa reaches to the conclusion that "the maximum value of teaching is individuality, in the radical sense of the term, involving the manifestation of desires and knowledge of the teacher and the student and the search for attuning them to the goal of changing social reality" (12). Bire, as a Dalit boy, does not find anything that lifts his spirit high. He scores well in the exam and performs best. But no change is seen at home; his father remains poor. He falls sick and is destined to die with the highest score marks next to his deathbed. The education that he is exposed to can best be understood from the term 'necrophiliac' put by Paulo Freire: "Oppression—overwhelming control—is necrophilia; it is nourished by love of death, not life. The banking concept of education, which serves the interests of oppression, is also necrophiliac" (77). Bire's emancipation is not possible without an overhaul of the system. He is bound to remain poor and a Dalit. There is something wrong in the society, not in his mind. The society with its conservative and superstitious brought up celebrates the educational achievement of a Dalit boy but is not ready to go through liberal and democratic changes within- is the message the play seems to be sharing with its readers. Pointing out this crisis that policymakers in Nepal need to address, the researchers reach to a conclusion that pedagogues and teachers in Nepal's caste-hierarchy dominant social and cultural contexts have some 'extra' job to perform: "In Nepal, as in other major regions of South Asia, large caste and ethnic differentials in entrance to, and attention from primary education must be grappled with by policymakers, educational planners, and researchers" (Stash and Hannum 50). Indirectly, Malla seems to be sharing the same message with his audience. Importantly, the audiences and the actors who

participated in this 'sharing practice' of message were students and teachers and were part of the pedagogy.

The access given to education to Bire seems like a token of opportunity provided to him to read the textbooks prescribed. Since Nepalis in the upper echelon are becoming good or better, the hitherto untouchable or outcaste Nepalis too are getting good days - seems to be the point that Malla critiques in the play. Exposing the nature of emancipation, Frier states "Freedom is acquired by conquest, not by gift. It must be pursued constantly and responsibly. Freedom is not an ideal located outside of man; nor is it an idea which becomes myth. It is rather the indispensable condition for the quest for human completion" (47). Bire cannot question anything in the play. Education provides him a new identity, but back to the society, he is recognized with the older identity, i.e. Dalit, untouchable, the 'wretched of the earth'. His father's income has not increased over the years. Like heavy rocks, social practices and caste-based attitudes remain equally burdensome. Historically speaking, the schools had gradually started to enroll boys from the Dalit communities from the late 1940s in Kathmandu. But at such schools, boys from Dalit families faced humiliation. Bidya Nath Koirala, a senior Nepali pedagogue and expert points out social situatedness of the Nepali Dalits boys appear in the classroom for the first time in the history of their nation: "…unlike *Dalits* from other ethnic/language groups, they have neither a language of their own nor a religious and cultural background distinctive from that of the dominant Hindus. That is, despite being fully incorporated or "assimilated" into Nepali Hindu society these *Dalits* are, like other *Dalits,* generally strongly disadvantaged and poor relative to other Nepali" (3). Bire in the play speaks the same language as his classmates speak. He follows more or less the same religious practices, but not having a separate religion and language along with an economically secured identity become one of the causes of his death. Pointing out the detrimental role that poverty, for that matter, unequal distribution of resources among Nepalis, has played into the development as well as educational sectors in Nepal, researchers have argue "the poverty and competing claims of daily life on the attention of children

and their families may mean that school inputs have relatively little effect on learning" (Khania and Williams 207), and "efforts to tackle the inequalities in the nation must start with a plan for improving the quality of public schools" (Saurav Bhatta 118). Malla with the character Bire is sharing the revolutionary message. Ironically, Bahulakaji, the man behind the scenes, who motivates the people like Bire to go to school is a little 'crazy' in his mind. An inspiring educated youth of the period, Bahulakaji can be taken as the literary trope Malla employs to carve out a safe symbol to communicate with his audience. The protagonist appears and consoles Bhakte at the end of the play. He blames Bhakte for not becoming a little cruel. For not daring to break into some rich people's house. He could have stolen the money and used it for the medicinal purpose of his son. "Stealing money would have been a far better act than watching a son dying helplessly" (Scene V 53). Bahulakaji sounds ideological. Malla, by providing such an ideology from the mouth of a character who is a little crazy, is indirectly also saving himself from the risk of censorship and bureaucratic trouble as well.

A similar situation dominates in *Jiundo Las* (1955), another play of Malla. Urmila and Pratima, two educated girls, live through a torturing conflict. Exposed to liberal ideas, Urmila waits for her husband who had been away for years to come home. Caught into a schizophrenic state of mind, one moment she thinks that her husband is dead and is not going to come back, and next moment she thinks he may arrive any moment now. Her knowledge and education do not help her gain control of her own life. Death is the only way out for her. Similarly, Pratima, a widow, comparatively free, finds it suffocating to live in the patriarchal system. With liberal ideas in her head, a gift of modern education, Pratima feels suffocating. Helpless, she now starts to pose questions against the issues, mainly patriarchal values. Indirectly, the play makes the readers feel about the gap between what the girls are taught at school and college and what the society is at its core under the Hindu patriarchal system (Rijal 16).

Mukunda Indira evokes the era when no public colleges and schools except Tri Chandra Campus was available for the general public in Nepal. *Bahulakajiko Sapana*, written just eight years later, gives a sense that schools were being opened, and it provided a new responsibility to the liberal thinkers. Bahulakaji, the leading character in the play, is not a court influential. He is a man rising from the public, and thinks of bringing changes in the society. He wants to speak for the subalterns. He knows that there is a large number of people at the bottom of the society, and they need to be given an exposure to education. Such consciousness does not make Bahulakaji a leader but an outcast, someone not accepted by the elites. The elites tried their best to woo the course and believed that by serving the state heads and through influencing the court, as Joshi and Rose call it in the passage quoted above, they would be in a position to help the people and themselves. Bahulakaji is different. Importantly, *Mukunda Indira* was written and directed by Bal Krishna Sama for the Durbar High School. Most of the artists who appeared in the performance were students of the same school. Sama was a teacher there. Vijay Malla wrote it for the anniversary of Shanti Bidhya Mandir, one of the schools opened during the last years of the Rana regime in 1947.

Pedagogy of Saving Home

With the introduction of democracy in Nepal, a new role was given to the policy makers, who were no longer the "court influencers". For example, the educated policy makers of the period had realized the importance the polity needed to give to the job of imparting modern education to the people for a safe and long-term progress in the society. Policymakers for the first, as Jeremy Rappleye highlights, regarded education, as "central to the creation of a new, modern Nepal" and set out to design a "new cultural script" that tried to stabilize "democracy" and promote "scientific knowledge" as part of carving out a "new national identity" and this was done at times when Nepal was trying wake up "from its reclusive slumber to take its place in the modern world" (71). For this, Nepal reached out for help to the developed world. Politically liberated

Nepali society accepted modern education as one of the most secure mediums to make progress. Despite the unclear educational policies of the government, the nation made significant progress in the domain of education (Parajuli 13). He provides the picture through the following data that the number of educational institutions as well as the number of students/teachers grew significantly in many parts of the country. The rate of literacy increased from less than 2 percent in 1951 to around 9 percent by 1961 (HMG 2018 v.s.12). The increase in the rate of literacy is significant as the new education was secular and focused on the promotion of egalitarian values. This shift was very significant in a caste-discrimination like Nepal. Pramod Bhatta marks the year 1951 as the dividing line between the past and the present of modern education in Nepal: "In 1951, there were 8,505 students in primary education and 1,680 students in secondary school" (3). Bhatta compares this data with the one of 2008 to highlight the significant progress Nepal has achieved in the domain.

Modernity in this part of the world cannot be separated from the agenda that the British colonizers had lived by. India being colonized did pave the way for the capitalism and politics that defined people's identity, their culture, and nation. Gyan Prakash, an Indian scholar of Subaltern Studies, exposes the way modernizing India was defined during the colonial time. He argues that India was taken as a society that needed to be lifted and taught to be a proper and modern nation: "To be a nation was to be endowed with science, which had become the touchstone of rationality" (7). Though Nepal was not colonized, the rulers had tried their best to exclude Nepal from the world amid change and transformation. It was only after the Ranas were gone did the Nepalis openly exhibit their desire to get their children exposed to western education, sciences, and technology. Nepalis in the post 1950 political and social context looked for the amenities that the Western science and technology had already offered to Indians during their colonial times. With the departure of the Ranas from power and the British from India, Nepalis were left to start from a zero ground as it were. Such a left-out state is what one finds dominating in *Kohi Kina Barbad Hos*, another play written by Malla.

As a boy born in a family that ran a publication business and had already become a hub of literary activities, Malla's association with writers, artists, and academics seemed to have remained throughout his life. Most of the plays were written upon the request of one or the other academic institution. Upon the request of Hemchandra, the headmaster of Siddhartha Vanasthali School, made three years earlier, Malla wrote a one-act play in 2015 v.s.. He confessed that he had been to the school and stayed there for a couple of hours and wrote the play. Since the school did not have any female artists ready to play the role, Malla kept the script with him for a month till the Director of Normal School, now College of Education, Shyamrajdhwaj Joshi requested him to write a play for the annual function of the college. Malla expanded the one act play into a full-fledged one, i.e., a play in three acts (2078 v.s. Preface). The two schools which Malla mentions in his "Preface" deserve a certain introduction. Normal School had come into existence in the early 1950s, and Siddhartha Vanasthali Vidhyashram in 1951. Normal School, now known as Mahendra Ratna Campus, was a pioneer teacher education campus. As a College of Education that came to function in 1956, it trained teachers and developed academic programs needed for the nation. It was first begun as the Normal School in 2008 v.s. (1951 AD). Vanasthali Vidhyasharm was the first-generation English medium school in Nepal, a metaphor of changes. Similarly, College of Education/Normal School was one of the major centers of knowledge production in Nepal in its early modern days. Run with the support of the US government, it carried the spirit of geopolitics as well. "The Normal School program aims to provide a minimum of training to Primary School Teachers to meet the great demand of education in the country" (15), the report of the evaluation of College Education states. Malla's association with historically important schools and the people in charge and the issue related to pedagogy that he dramatizes in the plays make one realize the feature of modern Nepali plays and theater of the period.

Kohi Kina Barbad Hos is directly about a pedagogy in which two teachers, the Principal and the lady teacher, bring positive transformation in

Dhruva, one of the students who is on the verge of spoiling his life. His journey from a lonely and nasty kid of the class into a happy and creative boy asserts a view that teachers as pedagogues can play a significant role in the life of their students. Kamala and Ramesh, the Principal, use modern or innovative methods. They invent pedagogy. The child is no longer a problem but an opportunity for teachers and the principal to learn and expand their expertise. Malla sidelines the relationship between Dhruva's parents and also the interpersonal relationship between Kamala and Dhruva's divorcee-father at the cost of concentrating on the progress that Dhruva makes in his studies and achievement that Kamala and Ramesh, the teacher and the principal make in the pedagogy they employ. This play celebrates the success that the characters make. It is very important that it was written on the request of the personnel in charge of a non-government school and was later performed by the students at the same school. It projects the significance of pedagogy that teachers invent to address the needs of individual students. It marks the confidence schools and intellectuals were gaining in Nepali society at the changed political and social context.

Malla's plays give a picture that Nepal was waiting for the changes, for justice and progress. But since they were not being materialized, there was a sense of restlessness among the intelligentsia. Several things must have occurred in between the years 2004 v. s *Bahulakajiko Sapana* and *Kohi Kina Barbad Hos* written in 2013 v. s. The first one is hopeless about the changes that schools can bring to the life and family of poor children, whereas the second one asserts the changes that teachers can bring in the life and family of students. Together these plays reflect the progress Nepal was making in the sector of education. With progress in education, youths are seen as making the most of it. Left free to carry out the plan and vision on their own, the new generation as represented by Kamala and Ramesh from the play becomes successful in achieving their goal.

Kamala and Sundar carry the spirit of a private run boarding school. As teachers, they are free and creative enough to invent pedagogy to meet

the needs of the student. They improvise their role, like artists embodying their respective roles, they invent one. Their intervention is strategies and "through transforming action", the characters "create a new situation, one which makes possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity" (Frerie 47). With such power to 'create a new situation', they also define themselves as pedagogues. Together the teachers 'stimulate' the child. As the Principal, Ramesh and as a professional teacher Kamala take the job of teaching Dhruva as "paramount moral duty", a term Dewey uses to define the seriousness teachers need to have. Together, the teacher and the principal assert a fact that "through education society can formulate its own purposes, can organize its own means and resources, and thus shape itself with definiteness and economy in the direction in which it wishes to move" (Dewey n.p.). Written at times when institutions were being set up in order to institutionalize democracy in Nepal, the play represents the confidence that the professional ethics the individuals were coming up with. Highlighting the spirit of the era, the report by College Education states, "In order to expand schooling in a planned way, the government appointed a Nepal National Education Commission in 1954 that prepared national education policies and programs, formulated a grants-in-aid policy, developed a scheme to prepare teachers to work in rural areas, provided guidelines to develop textbooks in the country, and recommended at least one high school in each of 108 electoral constituencies" (80). Such was the target of the nation, and the play evokes the confidence the private run schools and teachers were gaining in a short period. Though much can't be said about the facilities and other opportunities the private-run schools might have offered to their teachers, the play points out the space that teachers do have in a society like Nepal. Given the caste-hierarchy dominant social and cultural fabrics in Nepal, teachers hold an important position to rescue many students from humiliation. Pointing out this need, researchers argue that teachers in Nepali schools "need to be engaged and committed to the reform from the outset and, like any interest group, must see the benefits of the change in terms of their situation". They further critique that "The initiative in Nepal appears to be developed to crush the

independence and autonomy of teachers and research from other contexts suggest that such tactics will almost certainly fail to bring about significant improvements in learning in classrooms" (Carney, Bist and Agergaard 239; Gautam and GC 81-83). The researchers make the point by analyzing the over seventy years long history of education in Nepal. However, for Malla's generation the coming of the new education policy and the rise of private boarding schools did provide a new spirit and role for the teachers as well as the public.

Pedagogy for Home in Trouble

In both plays *Mukunda Indira* and *Kohi Kina Barbad Hos,* the protagonists are brought home. At home both feel connected. Mukunda and Dhruva come with a new self and are sure to perform better in the days to come. Dewey's emphasis on 'home' is also a call for pedagogues with local sensibility, teachers and pedagogues' temporal and spatial locations. Sama and Malla's temporal and spatial locations were historically distinct. Opening of a new school was taken as a major social event. Staging a play in Nepali was a shift in the medium of expression. Turning the focus of dramaturgy to the burning issues of the time was a radical act. In both the plays, the protagonist is brought 'home'. Since they come from affluent families, they have 'home' to support them. Whereas in *Bahula Kajiko Sapana,* Bire does not have a home. As a subaltern, he is not in the textbook, he is not in the classroom, and in the 'room' that his father has lived on rent, he is bound to die. The death can also be taken as the metaphoric death of pedagogy. In *Jiundo Las,* Urmila and Pramila don't stay at their husband's home. Even at their parental home, they feel living through surveillance and eerie gazes. 'Home' does not give them security. Located in a conservative society, their home nurtures a schizophrenic ambience. Youths who try their best to bring changes in the society give up and prefer to go somewhere else. The play projects the image of Nepali society where transformation is impossible through pursuing higher studies alone. What these sisters and other youths experience at home and in their

society is something that the pedagogy needs to address the existing order of things.

Conclusion

As 'shared texts' these plays were written and directed by teachers and people who were involved in the writing and publication sphere. Staged and watched by teachers and students, they carry the spirit of the time. Along with stories of domestic and institutional order, these plays provide the standpoint that the educated class had taken on issues related to pedagogy. By reading the plays with special attention to the shifts taking place in pedagogy, one comes to know that exposure to the world outside, to the modern world has made Nepali writers and artists to move within. Exposure to the world as these plays reveal was to realize the important preparation Nepalis needed to make to step into a new world. Interestingly, while sharing simple and interesting stories about wife and husband, sisters, teacher and students, these plays indirectly also share the serious academic issue such as pedagogy that Nepal as a modern nation needed to address at home. As literary materials, they also become helpful materials to map out the history of school education in Nepal. They enable one to know the stories that individuals carried with them, along with the issue that Nepal as a nation state was trying to address at pedagogy. By treating home as the returning point as well as the location of tension and reflection, these plays definitely point out the need of designing pedagogy according to the issues that the home in Nepali society is full of.

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