

“LITERACY SUCKS”! LIVED EXPERIENCE OF THARU WOMEN

Suresh Gautam

**In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the course of M. Phil. in Education
(Development Studies)**

**Submitted to
School of Education
Kathmandu University**

**Balkumari, Lalitpur
September, 2011**

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is for the fulfillment of the requirements for Master of Philosophy in Education (Development Studies) of Kathmandu University.

Title: - “LITERACY SUCKS!” LIVED EXPERIENCES OF THARU WOMEN

Abstract approved: - Bal Chandra Luitel, PHD

My interest in adult literacy has been growing with the agendas of Dakar conferences and United Nation Literacy Decade (UNLD). United Nation educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has been celebrating the literacy decade during these days understanding that there is no single or universal method or approach to literacy. Under such circumstances, Tharu women in social hierarchies felt harsh discrimination in the village and thus viewed literacy as mere imposition. Tharu women are disinterested to participating in literacy that follows a single instructivist approach. My observations on social hierarchies and multiple forms of oppression are barrier to create an inclusive approach of literacy. Layers of oppressions also influence the pedagogical practices in literacy classroom. It further makes them subordinated whereas they are trying to get their identity through the literacy. As a result they resist literacy programmes to challenge social hierarchies and oppressions.

I generated initial research questions on the basis of these problems which hinders Tharu women to participate in literacy programmes. I research questions set on my childhood experiences and the first field observation during the national literacy programmes, viewing the current literacy programmes and practice among Tharu women. I created four research questions based on the social hierarchies and oppression, literacy pedagogical approaches, identities of Tharu women in literacy and their resistances in the society via literacy or vice versa.

Then, I addressed social oppression and ways of learning among Tharu women with metaphors of hierarchy, anarchy and holarchy in Chapter III. Likewise, I hooked up inventing metaphors of literacy pedagogical approaches as pain giver, pain killer and pain healer addressing my second research questions. Similarly, I observed potency of identities of Tharu women in literacy and coined three metaphors of identity as blaming, (re) naming and no/naming. In the same way, I emphasized on the forms of resistance that were viable among the Tharu women. I found that Tharu women were resisting in silence, voice and solitude and thus formed three metaphors to depict their ways of resistance.

I used a multi-paradigmatic research design space. I applied mainly the paradigms of interpretivism, criticalism and postmodernism under multi-paradigmatic research space. The critical paradigm offered me a critical outlook needed to identify the research problem, to reflect upon my experiences as a university graduated -male- Brahman, and to make my lifetime's agencies transparent to readers, whereas the paradigm of postmodernism enabled me to construct multiple genres for cultivating different aspects of my experiences of culturally de/contextualised literacy programmes. The paradigm of interpretivism enabled me to employ emergence as the hallmark of my inquiry. Within this multi-paradigmatic design space, I chose performance ethnography, auto/ethnography and critical ethnography as my methodological referents.

COPYRIGHT

Copyright by Suresh Gautam

2011

All right reserved

DEDICATION

For them

Who are searching their

Voice/Identity/ Existence

in

Alphabets/ words/numbers

within their own world.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation has not been submitted for the candidature for any other degree.

Suresh Gautam

APPROVED

Dissertation of Master of Philosophy in Education (Development Studies) has been submitted by Suresh Gautam and Presented on the research committee on September 2, 2011

September 2, 2011

Bal Chandra Luitel, PHD
Dissertation Supervisor
School of Education Kathmandu University

September 2, 2011

Prof. Peter Taylor, PHD
Curtin University of Technology
Australia

September 2, 2011

Prof. Mahesh Nath Parajuli, PHD
School of Education, Kathmandu University

September 2, 2011

Prof. Shreeram Lamichhane, PHD
School of Education, Kathmandu University

September 2, 2011

Prof. Tanka Nath Sharma, PHD
School of Education, Kathmandu University

September 2, 2011

Prof. Mana Prasad Wagle, PHD
Dean, School of Education, Kathmandu University

I understand that my dissertation will become a part of permanent collection of Kathmandu University Library. My signature below authorizes to release of my dissertation any reader for any academic purpose.

September 2, 2011

Suresh Gautam, Degree Candidate

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research is for the fulfillment of the requirements for my Master of Philosophy in Education of Kathmandu University.

I am most fortunate to have had Dr. Bal Chandra Luitel, as an advisor and mentor throughout the research journey. The work has benefitted a lot from his constructive guidance and exciting discussions. I especially appreciated his critical ideas and prompt responses to my queries. Under his tutelage, I was fully able to explore my own interests in educational research and practices.

I do not claim that inventiveness of all ideas in this research of mine. I also incorporated innovative ideas of my professors *gurus*. My honor sets out to all my *gurus* in Kathmandu University: Mana Prasad Wagle, Shreeram Lamichhane, Tanka Nath Sharma and Mahesh Nath Parajuli who helped me to furnish this research from different angles and perspectives. I am grateful to Prof. Bidya Nath Koirala for his blissful suggestions.

I always remember my friends Kashi Raj Pandey, Samjhana Singh Rathaur, Radheshyam Thakur, Bishnu Prasad Aryal and Navaraj Koirala for reading and correcting the manuscript.

I wish to thank all my friends of M. Phil. 2009 for their mutual cooperation.

September 2, 2011

Suresh Gautam

ACRONYMS

EFA	Education for All
INGO	International Government Office
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NLS	New Literacy Studies
NFE	Non Formal Education
NFEC	Non Formal Education Center
NGO	Non Government Office
PHD	Doctor of Philosophy
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
UNESCO	United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNLD	United Nation Literacy Decade
ZDP	Zone of Proximal Development

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	i
Copyright	iii
Dedication	iv
Declaration	v
Approved.....	vi
Acknowledgement	vii
Acronyms.....	viii
Table of Contents	ix
CHAPTER I.....	1
LOCATING MYSELF	1
Chapter Overview	1
Relational Being: Me and My Participants.....	1
My Childhood Experiences: Unsettling the Boundaries	7
My Positioning: As Researcher/ Participant.....	8
Constructing the Problem Statement	9
Emergent Threads of My Inquiry	11
Thread 1: Hierarchies	11
Thread 2: Pedagogy	12
Thread 3: Identity	12
Thread 4: Resistance.....	12
Research Questions.....	12
Significance of the Research.....	13
Policy significance.....	13

Pedagogical significance	14
Research significance	14
Personal-professional significance	14
Chapter Conclusion.....	14
CHAPTER II.....	16
MY RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS	16
Chapter Overview	16
Ontological Assumptions.....	16
Epistemological Assumption	17
Axiological Assumptions.....	18
Multi Paradigmatic Research Space	18
Intrepretivism.....	19
Criticalism	20
Post/modernism	21
Personal Encounter: Methodological Heuristics.....	22
Performance Ethnography	22
Critical Ethnography.....	23
Auto/ethnography	24
Quality Standards.....	24
Critical Reflexivity	25
Praxis	26
Pedagogical Thoughtfulness.....	27
Ways of Thinking and Articulating: Multiple Research Logics and Genres.....	27
Dialogical Logics and Dialogues.....	27
Dialectical Logics and Slash (/).....	28

Metaphorical Logics and Metaphors	29
Poetic Logics and Poems	29
Narrative Logics and Narratives	30
Ethical Consideration	30
Chapter Conclusion.....	32
CHAPTER III	33
SOCIAL HIERARCHIES, OPPRESSIONS AND LITERACY	33
Overview of the Chapter	33
Social Hierarchies and Literacy Programmes.....	34
In the Mandap: Courtyards of Tharu	36
Caste Hierarchies and Literacy Programmes.....	41
Caste/Class Consciousness in Literacy.....	42
Gendered Tharu Women in Literacy	48
Subalternity and Literacy.....	50
Social ‘Anarchy’ and Literacy Programmes.....	52
Being in the Mandap: Two Stories from the Field	53
Being in the Samsara: <i>Bhutwa</i> and Cultural Literacy	57
Holarchy: My Visions of Literacy Programmes	61
Unified Visions of <i>Bhutwa</i> and Nokia: Glocalization	62
Third Space in Literacy	64
Chapter Conclusion.....	65
CHAPTER IV	67
TRANSMISSIONIST LITERACY PEDAGOGY: PAIN GIVER.....	67
Chapter Overview	67
Transmissionist Literacy Pedagogy: Pain Giver.....	68

Sahili Tharuni Speaks, “I Know Nothing”; So Do I?	68
Homework in Literacy Classes	73
Potential Pain Killer in Literacy Classes	77
<i>Sohani Says: “Preserve the Forest.”</i>	78
Prologue: Generating Themes	79
<i>Naya Goreto</i> in Constructionist Falvour	80
Contextualized <i>Naya Goreto</i>	82
Transformative Pedagogy: Pain Healer	84
In the Mandap: Performance of Literates	84
Literacy and Liberty in a Transformative Literacy Class	87
Chapter Conclusion	90
CHAPTER V	91
LITERACY AND IDENTITY: BLAMING, (RE) NAMING AND NO/NAMING	91
Chapter Overview	91
Identity as Blaming	93
Being in the Mandap: “Am I Saiya?”	93
Being in the Samsara: Name, Identity and Literacy	96
Prologue: Situating Myself	97
Blamed Parents of Tharu Girls	98
Blamed Local Elites	98
Blamed Tharu Women	100
Identity as Blaming: An Essentialist View	100
Identity as (Re)naming and Literacy	105
Being in Mandap: We Are Bound to Learn Nepali	105
In the Samsara: Shifting essentialism and Literacy	107

Prologue: Allowing Variations.....	108
Language Variation and Literacy	108
(Re) naming: A Shifting Essentialism.....	111
Identity as No/ naming and Literacy.....	113
Being in the Mandap: My Interior Monologues.....	113
Being in the Samsara: My Envisioning	114
Prologue: Stretching my Words	114
No/naming: Inclusive Identity and Literacy	115
Chapter Conclusion.....	116
CHAPTER VI.....	118
RESISTANCE IN LITERACY: SILENCE, VOICE AND SOLITUDE	118
Overview of the Chapter.....	118
Unheard Voices of Tharu Women	119
Being in the Mandap: “Portrait Speaks Up”.....	119
Being in the Samsara: Silenced Resistance of Tharu Women.....	121
Resistance and Learning	122
Voice: Metaphor of Visible Resistance	125
Being in Mandap: “Literacy Sucks”!.....	125
Being in the Samsara: Three Layers of Voice	127
Visible Resistance against Feudalism.....	128
Visible Resistance against Gendered Social Hierarchies	129
Resistance in Literacy Class	130
Literacy for Solitude: My Envisioning	133
Literacy and Emancipation.....	136
Literacy for Solitude.....	137

Chapter Conclusion.....	138
CHAPTER VII.....	139
EMERGENCE, FLUCTUATION AND CONSOLODATION	139
Chapter Overview	139
Emergences in/of My Research	139
Post/colonialism as a Key Theoretical Referent	141
Fluctuation: Problem Statement.....	142
Fluctuations: During the Write-Ups.....	143
Methodological Heuristics and Fluctuation.....	144
Consolidation: Gradual Landing.....	145
Birth of Research Questions: Consolidation Starts	145
Future Directions	151
Literacy in Humanistic Approach.....	151
Transformative Literacy and Research.....	152
References.....	153

CHAPTER I LOCATING MYSELF

“The tradition of bounded being carries far beyond the daily experience of self and others. It is also realized in our ways of life and the structures of our institutions—schools, businesses, and democracy itself” (Gergen, 2009, p. 20).

Chapter Overview

I articulate my research agendas in this chapter clarifying my situation as a researcher and a participant. Similarly, I bring some anecdotes to visualize the literacy scenario and learning practices of Tharu¹ women in research area by unpacking their socio cultural positioning. I have chosen six Tharu women as my research participants focusing on my research interests, i.e. adult literacy and Tharu women. While doing so, I describe my participants in relation to their day to day activities and literacy programmes based on my ir/rational² field observation and childhood experiences. Creating such a study background I problematize the main issues of my research (adult education, literacy of minorities) among Tharu women and articulate why this problem is worth of my inquiry. Similarly, I further raise research questions to address the problem statement of the study. Likewise, I discuss the significance of the study and some key threads of my inquiry.

Relational Being: Me and My Participants

My childhood began when I was four years old among the Tharu children. My childhood friends belonged to Tharu community. We enjoyed playing in the narrow dusty streets in the Tharu village. The street was mostly covered up with the animal (pig and cow) dung because they tied animals on the narrow street. I was often scolded by my parents when I played with them. I was called Tharu because I played in dirty place with dirty clothes. My

¹ “Tharu consider themselves an indigenous population of Nepal but they did not originate from the current Hindu Kingdom” (Maslak, 2003, p.19). “They like to call them Chaudhary a title, given to the land revenue collectors of Terai during the Rana rule”(Singh, 2007, p. 14).

² Ir/rational observations are being emerged from the field. At that time I was not a researcher but as a habitant of the same village might help me to visualize the problem in a keen way.

home is located next to the Tharu village. This helps me to enter into the village as a researcher and to establish a rich communication among the Tharu women.

As I was growing up observing, seeing and almost believing that Tharu women were born to work here and there. I had a notion that we Brahmin people were best amongst Tharu men and women. The Brahmins were everywhere in my 1980s childhood: schools, temples, banks, market. I almost believed that the only Tharu women destined to work as *Kamlaries*³. I never heard that it was injustice to be *Kamlaries* and caging themselves in landlord's house. I cannot remember much about this period. Things are vague to me at present. However, these reminiscences of my childhood days offer me a secret to explore the lived realities of Tharu women.

Every day the door of my home got opened by these Tharu women. They cleaned the door and swept the floor of our home. Then they cleaned the utensils that we used last evening. After accomplishing all these household chores, they went to the field or forest to collect firewood and fodder. Then after, they took lunch after my family members had left the kitchen. They were not allowed to enter the kitchen before we had eaten. During those days, I never heard one word about how Tharu people were among the first to cultivate in the plain land of Dang valley. I never realized that they were ruler of the valley. I left the village with my parents at that time and went to Surkhet⁴ because my father's job was transferred.

When I completed SLC (School Leaving Certificate) and returned to Dang to continue higher education but I started to stay in headquarter with uncle. At that time two *Kamlaries* were appointed to assist my grandparents at our home. One of them was similar to my age. She was too small to control buffaloes and to carry the bunch of fodder for them. I sometime think that why wasn't she sent to school. I mostly visited my grandparent's house on Friday when I got holiday in my college. At that time I started to feel injustice with the situation of

³ Female bounded labourers of Tharu community serve landlords.

⁴ One of the districts of Mid-Western Development Region of Nepal

these two *Kamlaries* but I could not say anything to anyone because it was a status of having *Kamlaries* at home. With ups and down the *Kamlari* system has been abolished by the government in 2007, but it keeps on going in different forms in a society.

Now a day there are no *Kamlaries* at my home. My mother works as *Kamlari*. My father, I and my brother hardly help my mother in the kitchen and in the field. Grandparents were getting older cannot work anything.

As a cultural insider I established rich communicative relationship with Tharu women. I felt difficulties first few days because they were hesitant to raise issues of the exploitation and oppression they felt from the landlords like my family and relatives. Later on, I was able to convince them about my role as a researcher. I do not have any difficulties to understand Tharu language because I was brought up in the Tharu community. I often start to communicate in Tharu language when I met Tharu them. They also understand Nepali (my mother tongue) clearly. Mostly senior generations of Tharu women liked to communicate in Tharu language whereas new generation Tharu people mostly speak Nepali language with us. There is no problem of communicating with each other. When I was in the research period, I sometimes speak Tharu as well as Nepali language. We shared a common zone of language where we understand to each other.

Let me introduce my research participants while contextualizing my research agendas. I bring ir/rational observations to set the background in the research, hoping that it sets the un/certain boundary of my research which might make me the relational being in the research area. I draw an idea of relational being from Gergen (2009) “the vision, relational being seeks to recognize a world that is not within persons but within their relationship, that ultimately erases the traditional boundaries of separation.” (p. 5). Here, I would like to unpack me as relational being with my participants whom I knew since my childhood. We shared some sorts of socio cultural space living together in the same village. In this case, I

prefer to be like a cultural insider, whereas, my class, caste and gendered hierarchies prefer me to be cultural outsider. In a space between cultural insider and outsider I introduce my research participants briefly. Am I not irrational researcher here?

I would like to start with an anecdote of Phuluwa Chaudhary. Perhaps, the name Phuluwa is strange for you, isn't it? It might be strange because her name is unlike y/ours like Suresh, Naresh, Mahesh, Ram Chandra, Bal Chandra, Rupa, Muna and so on. The dialect of the name Phuluwa is different to the dialect of 'our' names. Anyway, literally Phoola refers to the flower in Tharu language and Phuluwa is then personified. I wish readers wouldn't be perplexed. Phuluwa was one of the participants of my research. I chose her as my research participant because she was from Tharu community and still wants to learn letters, alphabets and numbers to fulfill her desire to read and write but hardly attended the literacy class.

I met Phuluwa, the mother of three, a wife, and an ex *Kamlari*, first time in the narrow gully of poverty stricken Tharu village while she was returning home from the forest carrying a basket in her head. The woman, in her early forties, had never touched books, exercise books or pencils in her life. I came to know an interesting thing about her that she wishes to spend few hours for learning to read and write with her sons now a day. Her sons are studying in college. I found that she was inquisitive to learn because she liked to spend few hours in a week with her sons, observing their ways of learning.

I met Shona Chaudhari, another research participant in the field. She was one of the members in literacy class. She said that she had joined literacy class in the village for three times. I had a conversation with her;

Me: What's up? Barki⁵ !

Shona: it's ok, Babu⁶

Me: Where are you heading to?

⁵ A word, which is used to call female who are elderly son in law, depicts respect. Calling her by her name Shona might be disregarding to her because I am younger than her.

⁶ The term is used to show respects for juniors.

Shona: I have a class, now.

Me: Class? What for?

Shona: It's literacy class.

Me: Do you have interest in learning to read and write?

Shona: It's the situation that inspired me.

Me: What situation?

Shona: My husband went to abroad and he usually sends money. It is difficult to deposit and withdraw from the bank. Sometimes, I ask help from the people. But I would like to do all these things on my own. So I thought to join literacy class to do these sorts of things myself.

Me: Do you have hopes that you can do all those things after being literate?

Shona: I participated in literacy classes for three times but still don't know how to read and write perfect. And my teacher says that I have to do a lot for it.

Me: How long did you participate in the class?

Shona: This is my third attempt. In first attempt for 10 days, in second attempt about 15 but this time it's been a month and I have thought of continuing it till I will be able to read and write.

Me: Why didn't you complete it in previous attempts?

Shona: Due to household problems.

"What do you teach in literacy?" a question by 25 years old Sohani made me astounds and liked to choose her as a participant in the research. I was shocked by her question because she thought me as a teacher of literacy programmes for Tharu women. This inspired me to explore their perception of literacy programmes. My answer, "I don't teach but I try to learn how you learn alphabets; letters and numbers in literacy classes" may not be sufficient for her. "It sounds good, but I am from an unknown remote village where your

alphabets, letters and numbers (literacy) don't reach. They fly away before they rest in our heart." She said in a poetic expression.

Susmita Chaudhary who is always called by her stereotypical name Saiya, another participant of my research, brought hurricane in my mind when I heard her project to revenge with higher caste landlords and elites after being literate. I became much more inquisitive after meeting her because of her passion to take revenge with the elites in the society was something beyond my imagination. I assumed that her radical view of being *Susmita* was another aspect of getting identity through the literacy programmes and practice.

Likewise, I was influenced by the traditional knowledge of Kauli Chaudhary, a widow of mid fifties and felt myself as illiterate in front of her. My all understanding of literacy got perplexed in a single conversation with her. She is one of the older participants of my research. She cannot read and write and could be called an illiterate. However, I was spellbound listening melodious songs of Kauli Chaudhary and spent a lot of hours listening to her recitation of lines from the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. It seems like a mere blame for her as 'an illiterate'. I assume that she is blamed for being Tharu, being a woman, being a widow, being unable to read and write and thus were called illiterate.

I chose more two participants for this study: Sawali Chaudhary and Shova Chaudhary. They joined adult literacy classes in different phases of the national and local programmes. They believed that literacy was important for them but they did not know why and how literacy was useful for them.

I explored some of the agendas of literacy programmes and practices from my ir/rational field observation to draw the sketch to move ahead. At this stage I am going to use the part of the anecdote to generate the statement of problem. While doing so, I cannot ignore my childhood experiences that inspire me to conduct this research.

My Childhood Experiences: Unsettling the Boundaries

Being relational, let me bring my childhood experiences to illustrate layers of oppressions in a village which provide me insight to set the boundaries of the research agendas.

I would like to start with the background of my family. I was born to a Brahmin family as their first child in joint family in Dang district of Nepal. I came to know from my grandfather that Brahmins were wise-upper-class people. They believed to be learned and educated, so I was sent to school when I was four to educate. There were two *Kamlaries* who worked at my house during those days. They could not go to school. I was inquisitive to know why they did not go to school and worked at my home. Although I was very small, my innocent wisdom could still feel and see the forms of oppression at that time. And I was never satisfied with the response of my parents those they uttered to satisfy my curiosity whether those people were being suffered. I still remember some events which touched me a lot. I often used to play with Tharu male kids although my parents and grandparents didn't like it. I was hardly allowed to go to field with them after returning from school. As we were together in primary school we went and returned together daily. The school was located nearly two kilometers away from our village. One day, our teacher scolded one of my Tharu friends, and he left school without completing Grade III. We swam and played while we were returning from the school. As a result, I was punished by my parents and grandparents several times. My desires to play with them vanished after we had migrated to Surkhet.

I had not understood these sorts of activities at my home and at school as prejudices and injustices. These sorts of reminiscences from my childhood days led me to advocate the learning practices of Tharu women, critiquing the current literacy programmes and envisioning literacy for Tharu women. As an M. Phil student, I started to think that issues of literacy for Tharu women are associated with the social injustices and prejudices which I

gained from my childhood reminiscences, hidden somewhere in my mind insist me to explore the social oppressions and their educational access of Tharu women. So, I do not ignore the part of my childhood experiences.

My Positioning: As Researcher/ Participant

So far I discussed cases of Tharu women above namely Shona, Saiya and Kauli and the forms of oppression, Tharu women have undergone through. Here, I aim to clarify my positioning as a researcher and as a research participant being relational in the village where my research participants reside and I spent my childhood days. On one hand as a researcher, I wish to generate knowledge on Tharu women and their literacy practices through my academic experiences like formal school education, classroom knowledge, books, formal timing, discipline and their everyday practices. This position might guide me to link my schooled knowledge into the research context. I hope that it may also help me in generating, analyzing and interpreting data. On the other hand, as a research participant, I can contribute to this research by bringing my firsthand experiences of literacy and Tharu women. The experiences that I acquired during my childhood and adulthood about the research participants might help me to generate in-depth understanding and knowledge as data for this research. My perceptions, understanding and field experience of literacy practices through seeing, observing, enquiring, reacting their social programmes and practices, the family practices and kinship relation, the speech acts and the speech events, social gathering, could help me to identify and explore the literacy issues and social sufferings and their impact in their daily life. In course of putting my personal experiences, I bring their ways of learning, which we (research participants and me) have questioned, supported, enquired and regenerated as well as my own ideas with the help of relevant theories and literature. In this way, I think to play a dialectical role to accomplish this research successfully.

My stand point as one of the research participants in this research was to explore the lived experiences dealing with the agendas of literacy showing the relationship of oppressed and oppressor between Tharu women (receivers of literacy) and literacy practitioners (providers of literacy). I mainly concerned on the systematic differences and power relationship among the literacy providers and receivers. Nonetheless I did not claim that it might be a new historiography of the subalterns to write their history in the literacy programmes and practice. I was sure that it advocated the needs and adjustments of the contemporary national and local literacy programmes and practices coping with the social and cultural norms of the subalterns like Tharu women.

Constructing the Problem Statement

As discussed in the research context above, they are suffering from the injustices and oppressions in the society. Under such circumstances, the state has announced literacy campaign for their socioeconomic empowerment from social oppressions (The Rising Nepal, 14th February, 2010). However, each Tharu family in my research area is still subjugated by their landowners. Generation after generation they have remained as bounded labourers and bore various forms of social oppression. The space they share in the society is very limited that they hardly move towards the gate ways to the school. The layers of hierarchy excluded them to be literate. Even the literacy status of Nepal reflects traditional caste and ethnic hierarchies (Acharya & Koirala, 2006, p. 1; Acharya, 2004). Despite having the significant contribution of the literacy practices realized by the government, development partners in international, national, and local level to uplift the socio economic standard of the people, the receivers of the literacy do not enhance the success (Tuladhar, 2001). I argue that receivers of literacy like Tharu women are often supposed to be underprivileged and marginalized who are oppressed in the hierarchies of society.

Under such circumstances the transmissionist literacy pedagogy is highly dominated. Robinson-Pant (2000a) said “the adult literacy programmes cannot be seen in isolation from the school education system in the areas I describe” (p.105). Social hierarchies help to maintain the transmissionist pedagogy in literacy class and as a result Tharu women are not interested in literacy programmes.

I find literacy which “rather attempts to establish the values of the mainstream or power holding people as the values of "others" as well” (Acharya, 2004, p. 8). So Tharu people got their identity as peasants and brave people (Singh, 2007, p. 15). This caused them to practice the peasantry knowledge generations down the ages which encouraged them only to be subjugated to their landowners and occupy the place of the oppressed in the society. On the other hand as per the global practices of human rights and the treaty that Nepal has signed to meet MDG (Millennium Development Goals), EFA (Education for All) goals. The government of Nepal is bound to make laws and policy to improve the situation literacy. During this time Tharu were made free from bounded labourers in the year of 2007 (Giri, 2010). However, lack of property and basic infrastructures to fulfill their daily needs, they were bound to move to the same plight again. The government along with educators and development practitioners decided to eliminate their plight through literacy. A number of NGO (Non Government Office) and INGO (International Non Government Office) were invited to work on the literacy program for Tharu. Whereas, as obstacles of literacy, despite about 70 years of long history of literacy Tharu could not equip themselves with the basic knowledge and skills which could help them in addressing their daily life issues.

As a result Tharu women like Phuluwa kept on marching to the literacy class months after months but did not seem to feel empowered. They remained unvoiced against the social oppression despite attending literacy class for several months. In the same way Sainya was struggling for her identity to feel like a part of society.

Why does the literacy become an enigma for the marginalized population like Tharu women in Nepal? Why does literacy become the talk of the town for the development partners? Do literacy programmes and practices help to cope with day to day activities of minorities like Tharu women? Are there any ways to represent the voices of marginalized group of people in literacy practices? Has seventy years long history of literacy programmes improving socio cultural transformation of the women in Tharu village been counted? How have literacy programmes and practices been operated in the ground realities? These all questions encourage me to search the literacy practices and programmes among subalterns like Tharu women.

Emergent Threads of My Inquiry

I translated the statement of problems into four threads of my inquiry. My threads of inquiry stand on the hierarchical structures of society. Then after, I linked hierarchical social forms and layers of oppression with the literacy pedagogy. When these two dimensions of literacy get blurred, I raise few agendas of identity of Tharu women and their resistance for/against existing literacy programmes and practices.

Thread 1: Hierarchies

I would like to create a space for Tharu women in this research, finding their position as oppressed social group. Through such type of experiences of my childhood days, I feel that they have been oppressed in multiple layers of social hierarchy. Assuming such a situation, I attempted to link the usefulness of the literacy programmes for Tharu women who have been suffered from the layers of oppression in my village. In this regard, I aimed to explore the hierarchies of society which prevents them to be literate and to envision the literacy which may create social justice for Tharu women.

Thread 2: Pedagogy

Literacy pedagogy, I assumed the means of NFE (Non Formal Education), as unstructured and flexible in curriculum and teaching learning methods. However, I found that it followed the mode of formal schooling in the field. When I observed the literacy class I found that it was based on the formal mode of teaching and learning practices as school. Further, I envisioned the transformative literacy pedagogy for Tharu women.

Thread 3: Identity

Believing name as the fundamental basis of identity, I would like to explore the identities of Tharu women in literacy programmes and practice. Literally, I believe that literacy may help them sensitizing for their identity with socioeconomic empowerment, I was interested to observe how literacy programmes help them to be recognized in the community. I felt that identities of Tharu women might be erased by existing literacy practices. Their doomed identities in layers of oppressions and transmissionist pedagogical practices restrict them to participate in literacy programmes. I envisioned the self recognition and pride of Tharu women in society through inclusive literacy.

Thread 4: Resistance

My forth thread of the research emerged from the context of social hierarchy, transmissionist pedagogy and blaming identity. I analyzed how Tharu women resisted the literacy programmes. Tharu women raise their voice against literacy that may be influenced by the social hierarchies, transmissionist pedagogy and blaming identity. I further envisioned the state of solitude through the literacy.

Research Questions

Standing on the main research problems and the thread of my inquiry, the literacy programmes for rural women, indigenous people, and social and linguistic minorities has

been isolated without synthesizing the social and cultural practices. To address the purpose of the research the following research questions were being addressed in the research.

- In what ways are the existing hierarchical social structures translated in literacy programmes? How can an inclusive literacy be envisioned so as to address the problem of hierarchy manifested in literacy practices?
- How is transmissionist pedagogy mimicked in literacy class? In what ways can a transformative pedagogy for literacy be envisaged?
- In what ways has naming as a form of identity been related to literacy? How can an empowering literacy be envisioned for an inclusionary space for their identity?
- How have Tharu women been resisting the literacy program? How can these resistances be morphed into the design of an engaging literacy program?

Significance of the Research

Believing literacy as a way to be emancipated for minorities like Tharu women, I aim to describe the existing problems of literacy programmes and practices analyzing the literacy situation in the research field. I envision the future literacy scenario for the inclusive society. This may be useful for the literacy programmes designers. I hope that the research could contribute for the policy formation apt to the marginalized group of people like Tharu women. More importantly, it is significant for me reflecting my understanding on literacy and making contextual frame for literacy in my village.

Policy significance

I envisage that the research work may contribute for revising the current policy of NFE in Nepal. Literacy as one of the major NFE programmes of Nepal has been passing through various challenges and problems. I hope that this research may offer a set of insights

into the problems of literacy and NFE faced by the marginalized group of people like Tharu women.

Pedagogical significance

Believing that literacy pedagogy has been highly guided by the transmissionist pedagogical approaches, I envision the transformative pedagogical approaches in literacy programmes. I come up with a transformative vision of literacy for subaltern, Tharu women, for their liberation through the literacy programmes. As I wish to illustrate the inclusive pedagogical space, I construct inclusive pedagogical visions via the metaphors of pain healer.

Research significance

My discussion of a transformative vision of the literacy policy and pedagogical significance further raise research agendas for the literacy programmes and practice not only for marginalized group of people but also for the elites. Challenging the stereotypical understanding of literacy in 3Rs concept, it may help to contextualize literacy in social complexities.

Personal-professional significance

Indeed, I think the research is useful for conducting literacy researches, adapting new literacy pedagogies and policies. Moreover, it may be significant for my future professional practices as well because this research may develop some useful means for empowering me in my present and future professional practices. Use of various logics (dialectical, metaphorical and poetic) as means for envisioning may illuminate me acting in complexities.

Chapter Conclusion

I introduce my participants and their belief systems of literacy. Then, I generate the statement of the problem from their perception describing that literacy program is de/motivating for them. I explore why literacy programmes have been isolated from social and cultural context. From my childhood experiences, I came to know that class and gender

hierarchies are the major obstacles for Tharu women to participate in the literacy programmes. I generate four research questions on the basis of problem statement.

CHAPTER II MY RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Chapter Overview

I portrayed my research agendas exploring four research questions from the key research problem based on the oppressive social structures for Tharu women. This chapter shows my research design into multiple facets of research problems for my inquiry. I address my ontological and epistemological assumptions which create a multi-paradigmatic research design. Then I shade light on research methodologies, quality standards and ethical consideration respectively for my inquiry.

Ontological Assumptions

The aim of my research is to explore the voice and space of Tharu women in literacy programmes and practices. The development of literacy in Nepal aims to uplift the socio economic standards of marginalized group of people like Tharu women (NFEC, 2007) but existing structures of society suppress the agency of minorities even in literacy programmes and practice. On the basis of my initial observation, I aimed to move around observing the relationship of power structures in literacy programmes and practices. For me, national and local literacy programmes and practices have been partly confronting within the social setting. Similarly, the conflict between the providers and receivers of literacy programmes and practice has been maintained in its history. Their access of power and opportunity are limited because of prevailing prejudices (such as illiterate, dirt, workers) in the society. The relationship between oppressor and oppressed creates the social realities. For me literacy for social justice is inevitable to empower those subalterns like Tharu women who cannot cope with the current national/local literacy programmes and practices. My ontological assumptions are the output due to the processing of social reality. These are the essence of the social phenomena being investigated (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2002). Furthermore,

my ontological assumption concerns on the nature of the world and human being in social contexts of Tharu women, me and my understandings of literacy. This assumption enhances that the creation of the knowledge occurs only because of dealing with the multiple realities of Tharu women.

Epistemological Assumption

Following the notion of the basic contention of the constructionist argument that reality is socially constructed by and between the persons who experience the world (Gergen, 2009). I justify my role as a researcher as well as participant of this research. In so doing, I wish to advocate the justice of literacy classes for those Tharu women addressing the inequalities and injustice. I believe to recognize the lived experiences of Tharu women that construct the viability of truth. For me truth is shaped by social, cultural, economical, and political power and privilege that are potential strength of exploring the complexities of the social realities in the culturally complex setting for social change. In this context, I begin to construct my own meaning making structures, my own interpretive strategies, my own criteria for producing and consuming knowledge (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 29). In this process, I questioned the traditional notion of literacy practices to envision the alternative form of literacy suitable to Tharu women. I envisaged dialogues between participants and the researcher create the knowledge in addition to a description of social reality which is mostly distorted by the interpretation of powerful agency. My epistemological assumption in a line of Kincheloe (2008) “a critical complex epistemology helps us ask new questions, to develop new cognitive abilities, to see through the walls of colonialism and the ways the empire has shaped our interpretations of our own” (p. 250). Similarly, I assumed to give space of Tharu women’s agency and bring the voice of oppressed and excluded group of people to analyze and interpret and the social hierarchies and layers of oppression for their socio cultural transformation along with literacy programmes and practice in this research. Truth for me is

generated by interplay with the various layers of power practiced in the society, analyzing the relation of subalterns like Tharu women (receivers of literacy) and elites (providers of literacy). I believe that dialogical and dialectical engagement with Tharu women produces knowledge incorporating their experiences and consciousness in subjective ways.

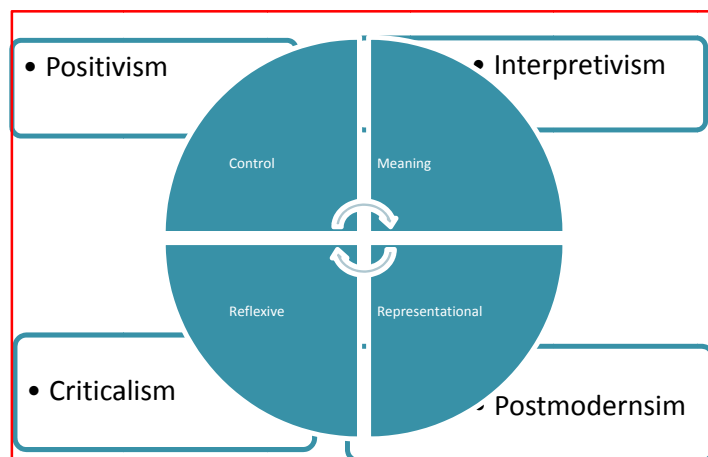
Axiological Assumptions

The values based on the equity, justice and emancipation of Tharu women generated the meaning of the literacy programmes and practices in this study. I was interested to discover the ‘new dimensions of their genius and insight’ (Knicheloe, 2008) in literacy programmes and practices. I started this research with assumption that Tharu women have been alphabetized in the literacy rather than developing self esteem and freedom. This assumption was further strengthened by the social prejudices, hierarchies, oppression and exclusion. My position as a university graduate person seemed paradoxical in the mass of non literate Tharu women. The paradox of being literate further added value in this research by challenging the traditional concept of 3R literacy (reading, writing and numeracy). Another value of this research envisioned the transformative ways of learning practices of Tharu women which was missing at current literacy practices.

Multi Paradigmatic Research Space

I imagined traveling a metaphorical journey of the critical social research shifting my methodological interest within

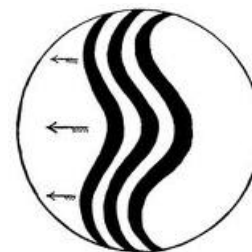
interpretative, critical, post-modern research paradigms. It is im/possible for me to remain merely within the critical paradigm and its methodologies while discussing challenges and



prospective of the literacy programmes and practices. I made a garland of paradigm with the flowers of positivism, interpretativism, critical and post modern on the thread of auto/ethnography. My interest as a critical interpretive researcher may have to experiment in the field, and in the writing which may challenge the existing authenticity of paradigms. I adopted the heuristics of multi-paradigmatic critical research to show the shift in methodologies in the paradigms of research and the guiding elements of critical social theory. This research partly belonged to the cultural study, as I raised the cultural practices of Tharu women and their reflection in the learning practices in literacy. In the same line I would like to cite here Taylor, Settelaar and Luitel, “culture studies researchers are currently working within multi-paradigmatic research design spaces, drawing on interpretive, critical and postmodern paradigms to create powerful hybrid research methods such as *critical auto/ethnographic inquiry*” (in Press).

Interpretivism

I came to know that “interpretations of the social world as culturally derived and historically situated” (Blaxter, Hughes, and Tight, 2008, p. 60) challenged the linear approaches of positivism. I used the term interpretivism to generate the meaning and actions of Tharu women to their subjective reference. In the same way my inquiry followed the emergent mode of inquiry in which sections, chapters, topics and research questions emerged and crystallised as the inquiry progressed (Taylor, 2008). I developed some sections of research arising from emergent themes in the research field. Under this paradigm I think in terms of emergent logics arising from the context of study. I created the intersubjective space to generate the meaning of the literacy practices of Tharu women. In this process I partly prioritize my perspective to subscribe the emergent thread of inquiry. In this continuum, I used my perspective and their perspective simultaneously. I hope to have used



the logics of empathy, negotiation and intertextuality to generate the meaning of literacy. The logic of empathy helped me understand the Tharu women from the vantage point of lived reality whereas the logic of negotiation enables us to be cognizant of democratic ways of meaning-making. Possibly, my logic of intertextuality was helpful for me to develop the layered meanings of social life of Tharu women by generating diverse yet interconnected meanings of phenomenon under study. For me, intertextuality was about acknowledging the very nature of relationship between meanings and social reality under investigation.

My point of view was that “unlike the natural sciences, the researcher is not observing the phenomena from outside the system but is inextricably bound into the human situation which he/she studying” (Willman, 2006, p.20). This is not purely observation for me I would rather prefer to use the term intersubjectivity that helped me to view the life of Tharu women that was guided by multiple perceptions, attitudes, consciousnesses and experiences. As an intersubjective essence I shared the linguistic features that took place to interact with Tharu women. I understood Tharu women and their ways of knowing from an intersubjective approach of engaging.

Criticalism

Criticalism in this research helped me to identify the research problems in the hierarchical society. In the same way it offered me a space to be dialectical and dialogical reflecting my experiences as a Brahmin-university-graduated male. My understandings of literacy programmes were challenged by critical perspectives. In this line, I offered criticalism as Kincheloe (2008) focused on critical self-reflection which offers me an understanding of the significance of socio-cultural and socio-historical process of the construction of a dynamic self. Likewise the nature of literacy pedagogy in which the self engages can be useful for changing the structure of reality. I employed primarily my experiences as a university student and a Brahmin-male portraying the hierarchies and layers

of oppressions in the village. For example, I critically reflected upon my roles as a university student who masked his own dissatisfaction about the traditional literacy practices in hierarchical society.

Post/modernism

I employed post/modernism as a key referent for creative methods of knowing through multiple forms of epistemic metaphors, expressions, and logics. Believing that the paradigm of postmodernism promotes epistemic pluralism, I cultivated the world of Tharu women in which each type of 'knowledge' has the same epistemic status with every other type of knowledge, thereby showing differences between individuals, contexts and events. One of the benefits of promoting 'difference' is to challenge the one-size-fits-literacy under the positivism. I was able to use irony and paradoxes through this paradigm in the research. In the same way, it enabled me to construct multiple genres/logics for cultivating different aspects of my experiences of university graduate and a Brahmin-male among the so called illiterate Tharu women. When the agendas of representation were crucial at that time (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 1124), I concerned as Luitel (2009) said that within this paradigm I used the propositional-analytical logic without giving due emphasis on alternative-inclusive logics such as non/dual, dialectical, poetic, narrative and metaphorical logics, which potentially account for a complex nature of knowing, being and valuing. I developed alternative logics in Chapters III, IV, V and VI with critical as well as postmodernist assumptions of making research inclusiveness. For me, alternatives logics had strengths of using narratives, poetics and painting to portray the complexities of social realities. While doing so, I used the playful, ironic and metaphorical language in this research.

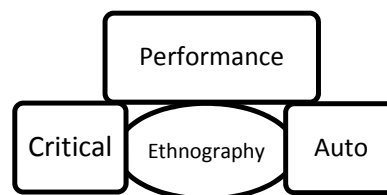
Personal Encounter: Methodological Heuristics

I chose the heuristic research methodology under the multi-paradigmatic research, moving here and there in performance ethnography, critical ethnography and auto/ethnography. I offered the heuristics as (Moustakas, 1990) said, “in heuristic research the investigator had a direct, personal encounter with the phenomenon being investigated. There must have been actual autobiographical connection” (p. 14). My research based on the autobiographical connection and my personal encounter with Tharu women attributed meanings to understand the social hierarchies and layers of oppression. I visited the research field four times spending almost two months while exploring the lived experiences of Tharu women in literacy. Moreover, my childhood experiences as a member of the same village sets the background of the study as heuristics research methodologies.

Performance Ethnography

I unpacked the performance of Tharu women, performed and explained in the complex social structures. I hope that their voices, short stories, photography enabled to provide a performative flavor of events in this research. Performance ethnography, for Denzin (2003) is linked with the praxis in capacity to transpose researchers. As a critical researcher (to some extent) I advocated the inclusive literacy of Tharu women under socio cultural hierarchies and silence resistance of Tharu

women. Performance enabled me to depict silences of performers into new critical political spaces of cultural awareness and resistances (Madison, 1998). Sometimes, I picked up poetry of Tharu women as the performance as



Richardson (2002) said. I chose performance ethnography as an emerging arts based methods of qualitative inquiry (Alexander, 2005; Finely, 2005; Kemmis & Mc Taggart, 2005), as a theatre of the performance for minorities and subalterns regarding class, gender,

peasantry and caste. I employed it to show the existing layers of oppressions (Oberg, 2008). When I interpreted the life experiences of the Tharu women I depended on the data to the performers. In this case, I was interplaying with the video tapes and transcript of the Tharu women and their attitudes, point of views and intentions and meanings which they would choose to be represented. Being aware of the ethics of the performance as avoiding the challenges to make the research, I used participatory and emancipatory forms of artistic (re) presentation (Denzin, 2003, p.53).

Critical Ethnography

As a critical social researcher I studied Tharu women and their participation in literacy programmes and practice aiming to advocate the change in their literacy situation. Understanding social consequences and foresee the alternatives approaches of literacy programmes and practice I employed critical methodology to evoke to envisage improved literacy. Despite juxtaposing the literature of critical methodology, my interest as well as experience as university student might be dominating the prospects and challenges of critical researcher, though we could not hide the influences of the heuristics of critical research.

The work of critical ethnography requires a problematic that is in-tended to reveal social practices as produced and regulated forms of action and meaning (Connell, 1983 as cited in Simon & Dipbo, 1986). So, critical ethnography became performance of the critical theory that linked the research methods with politics of justice to explore the lived reality of the oppressed group of people like Tharu women. The focus on the lives of the marginalized group of population balanced both conflicting forces equally. In this line, I agreed to Robertson (2005) said that conventional ethnography is unable to provide a method to address conflict associated with structured society. The conventional ethnography tends to uphold the status quo whereas critical ethnography tends to reinforce change in society depending on the critical theory. Critical methods and theory get blended in ethnography in

critical ethnography exploring the social “relations of dominations and alienation”

(Robertson, 2005).

Auto/ethnography

This research to some extent is a self study of why I, a Brahmin educated male who engaged to the literacy of Tharu women who have been victimizing from the social injustices and oppressions. I chose several modes inquiry and frameworks, primarily, of which is auto/ethnography. I hope that auto/ethnography allowed me to explore my lived experiences and perception to better understand the nature of literacy among Tharu women. It was important for me to explore how my internalized prejudices and experience counted to observe the literacy practices of Tharu women. It was my desire to undertake literacy acts to transform the literacy spaces and acts of liberations beginning with self. It seemed keeping myself in the periphery of the research but it was dual in a sense that it moved back and ahead with Self/Other emphasizing dialectical logics. I was a bit skeptic in that part “the skepticism towards representation of ‘the Tharu women’ and misgiving regarding generalizing theoretical programmes and practice” (Anderson, 2006, p. 377). I employed multiple logics as Denzin (2006) clarifies the ways of expressing analytical auto/ethnography with the multiple logics of narratives and poetics. Auto/ethnography was helpful for me since my research questions intended to look for my own experiences with the concern of cultural context, I followed the auto/ethnographic method of inquiry as it was a form of qualitative research where the researcher explores his or her own experience as a focus of investigation. In so doing I am closer to Spray (2001) believing that autoethnography as a self-narrative that critiques the situatedness of self with others in social contexts (p. 6).

Quality Standards

Unlike a positivist I claimed the legitimacy of my research by the quality standards within the multiple critical paradigmatic design space. I never dream to be evaluated my

research with validity and reliability as quality standards. This research is partly interdisciplinary as Greckhamer, Ljungberg, Cilesiz and Hayes (2008) say that the nature of interdisciplinary research even in the post modern phase is trying to claim the truth as a credible and trustworthy as in positivistic nature. The nature of the interdisciplinary research seeks the legitimating knowledge. It might be influenced from the post modern claim of Greckhamer, Ljunbberg, Cilesiz and Hayes (2008) that “the offered reflection may lead to a new praxis of qualitative inquiry that may emancipate the field from the status quo, which is still the hegemony of prevailing institutional structures of disciplinary knowledge production and legitimation”(p. 310).

As a critical social researcher I hope to have maintained the quality standard of the research. How often I reflected myself critically in the research? Can I lead the non/essence of the dialogical logics? And alternative envisioning regarding the social injustice would be justifiable from the critical paradigm. But I moved back and forth raising methodological issues may dismantle the notion of credibility and reliability of the research. I maintained the critical reflexivity and pedagogical thoughtfulness within the multi- paradigmatic critical space.

I found these types of methods and methodologies within the critical paradigm but the space of ‘methodolatry’ (Pereira & Taylor, 2005) in critical social research emerges from the legitimacy to challenge the status quo for emancipation of the researchers and participants. I think that this research might belong to the fifth movement of Denzin and Lincoln (1994) classification in terms of experimental writing and participatory research.

Critical Reflexivity

I constructed stories of a researcher time and again in the research being as a research participant. I criticized myself as an elitist (Brahmin-male, university student who failed to understand learning practices of Tharu women). Was it merely etic and emic perspectives of the research or self reflexivity? Self reflexivity was another tool which I used to make my research critical. I don't know it became critical or not. I argued that quality standards of the critical research and the way it legitimates the quality standards. In this regard, I questioned theory, methods and methodology maintaining the critical bricolage. Kincheloe and McLaren (1994) asserted that "the notion of self-reflection is central to the understanding of the nature of critically grounded qualitative research" (p. 147). I would like to clarify further quoting "at a time when the programmes and practices of emancipation, inclusiveness, social justice, plurality, multiplicity, diversity, complexity and chaos are entering academic circles" (Berry, 2006, p88). It might trace that scope of critical research and the attitude of critical researchers in fusion with certain heuristics of research rather than holding a certain paradigm. I followed Batt (2010) regarding the use of reflexivity in this research as "the need for researchers to constantly locate themselves within their work and to remain in dialogue with practice, participants and methodologies" (p. 160). Inspired by Burdick and Sandlin (2010) "reflexivity, often in the form of divulging or examining one's own "positionality" or "subjectivity" and reflecting on how this has shaped or affected research design, data collection, and data analysis"(p.353). I reflected my positionality and subjectivity as elite who in/directly oppressed Tharu women and advocated the need of literacy for them.



Praxis

Whether it was praxis or phronesis but I would like to say I concerned with a praxis oriented researcher. I followed the line of praxis to question the epistemic of "the knower and the known, the researcher and the researched, the scientific expert and the practitioner"

(Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994, p. 150). Praxis helped to challenge the traditional 3 R literacy and envision literacy for subaltern like Tharu women. The research might advocate the social justice in the practice of literacy among the subalterns who cannot speak to change. Praxis partly brought changes in the class, caste, gender hierarchies and layers of oppressions in the society and I imagined the space of subalterns like Tharu women in the literacy programmes and practice. My envisioning as a praxis oriented researcher directed to critique the existing literacy programmes and practice in order to create alternative programmes and practice criteria that develop literacy for subalterns.

Pedagogical Thoughtfulness

Another quality standard of the research was pedagogical thoughtfulness which “arises from phenomenological-hermeneutical traditions and addresses the extent to which present and future readers of my text are evoked to question, reflect and examine their own pedagogical practices” (Van Manan, 1991 as cited in Luitel, 2009, p. 54). I hope that this quality standard bring evocative, perspectival and dialogic texts. How often this research engaged my readers including the perspectives and reflections of readers on the issues of literacy and subaltern like Tharu women?

Ways of Thinking and Articulating: Multiple Research Logics and Genres

I was influenced by five research logics in the multi-paradigmatic critical research space. These three research logics represent the mode of thinking modality through the various ways of knowing. I used Luitel (2009) while employing multiple logics in my research: dialogical logics, dialectical logics, metaphorical logics, poetic logics and narrative logics.

Dialogical Logics and Dialogues

It can be devised the power of dialogues in the multi-paradigmatic critical space to show the complex interactions in the real world setting. I adopted dialogical logics to focus

on the subaltern agency of Tharu women, showing literacy programmes and practices that silenced the subaltern agency. Emphasis on the subjectivity of the subalterns in the literacy programmes and practice included some of the aspects of the critical ethnographic elements to deal with their issues in literacy programmes. Use of dialogues helped me to explore the subaltern consciousness throughout the study. Studying subalterns like Tharu women sought the historical background of Tharu women while re/defining their history. Dialogical logics partly helped to explore historical situatedness of Tharu women. I constructed some testimonies in Chapter IV believing that “a testimonio is a types of oral history, or life story, it is an explicitly types of oral, narrative that describes and resists oppression” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 653). Construction of narratives and testimonies were dialogical in my research.

Dialectical Logics and Slash (/)

I envisaged that the tensions between literates and illiterates, Brahmin and Tharu, peasants and landlords, men and woman, subaltern and elites were supposed to be mitigated by developing dialectical logics. I therefore planned to minimize the contradictions and issues of literacy raised in between tensions of dualism of subalterns and elites through dialectical logics. Dialectical logics might support the reasons behind choosing multi-paradigmatic critical research. It helped me facilitating the inclusive visions to address the problems and issues embedded in the research questions and process (Luitel, 2009). I have an assumption that dialectical logics depict the relationship between opposing realities such as dualism/non dualism certain/ uncertain, self/other, east/west (Taylor, Settemeier, & Luitel, In Press) in the literacy programmes and practice. I used slash (/) to show the dialectical logics like il/literate, un/certain. This referred to they were partly literate and certain and partly illiterate and uncertain.

Metaphorical Logics and Metaphors

I used metaphors to express the unexpressive mode of language. For example

Trapped Dreams

While
Travelling in
curved road of
Tharu village
I met dreams,
lived for ages,
tortured by dirty
faces and
trapped in its land.

Chapter metaphors of Mandap and Sansara were employed to describe the nature of data and their interpretation. Metaphor of Mandap as data text provided me a space to create the worldview of Tharu women. Metaphor of Sansara helped me to interpret and analyze the data. Under the Mandap metaphor, I presented the performances of the participants, including the nature of data under

the space of intertextuality and emergences in the field. Similarly, I employed metaphors of

‘hierarchies’ (Chapter III), ‘pain giver’ (Chapter IV), ‘blaming’ (Chapter V) and ‘silence’

(Chapter VI) describing the problems of existing literacy

programmes and practices. In the same way, metaphors of

‘anarchy’ (Chapter III), ‘pain killer’ (Chapter IV),

re/naming (Chapter V) and ‘voice’ (Chapter VI) describing my

reflexivity. Lastly, I used metaphor of ‘holarchy’ (Chapter III),

‘pain killer’ (Chapter IV), ‘no/naming’ (Chapter V) and ‘solitude’ (Chapter VI) to envision

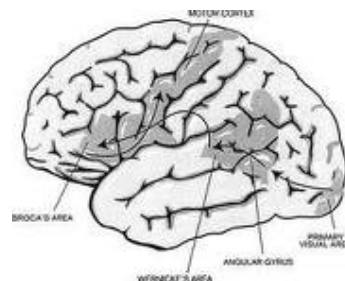
the literacy practice for Tharu women. In the line of Luitel (2009), I used metaphorical logics

which appear in the form parables, analogies, images and imageries to capture multiple

meanings, perceptions and conceptions. I moved here and there; in Mandap and Sansara via

metaphorical logic which was not restrained by the literal meaning enshrined in the concepts,

instead they helped pursue my understanding beyond bounded literalism.



Poetic Logics and Poems

I planned to furnish my poetic imagination right from the beginning of each chapter.

Poetic logics, I applied to bring the expressive logics of the performers and self expressing

the non linear realities of the subalterns in the literacy programmes and practice. Here, I

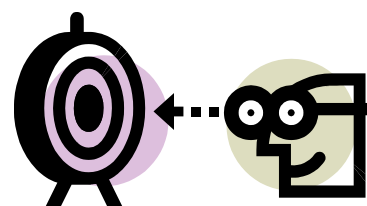
appreciate Richardson (2000) for writing as inquiry to design experimental writing in the postmodern research in creating evocative presentations of my perspectives of the agendas of literacy programmes and practice.

Narrative Logics and Narratives

I used narrative logics as a main source of showing multi faceted nature of reality. The whole epistemic view of the subalterns existed in the oral tradition which I used performative texts in narrative as well as auto/ethnographic form depicting realities of Tharu women and their literacy participation in order to convey experiences. It was useful for me to de/centre myself in writing. I employed narrative to bring subaltern agency whereas auto/ethnographic mode of writing focused my subjectivity. So that this process helped to be more dialectic to reduce the emerging tensions with self and other.

Ethical Consideration

If I were a positivist I would believe that “ethical issues for a social scientist begin with the selection of the problem itself and continue throughout the data collection process; the questionnaire, nature of the treatment” (Majumdar, 2005, p.105). If I were a merely post positivist I would think that the ethical norms of research right from the beginning while choosing the objectives of the research. But my research under the multi-paradigmatic space needs to be concentrate on the complexities of social issues as Baker (1988) writes that ethical consideration is right based approaches use of high technical standard with full disclosure with giving importance of trust. I had a respect the right of all research participants and keep all the data confidential without giving any personal information of the participants as interpretivists. I did not violate the norms of the researchers who considered the ethics in research to maintain its value. In the line of Madison (2005) who proposed the ethics for the critical ethnographers is to maintain the alternatives to carry forth



change the society (p. 91). I, in this study, as a researcher, and a politician advocated the need of literacy and its type for the subalterns like Tharu women in research area. My adopted methodological heuristics not as proposed by merely autobiographical social and perhaps universal (Moustakas, 1990, p.15) but my each queries were linked with cultural and social phenomena of Tharu women within interpretive, critical and postmodernism dimensions of research.

I believed that the relationship between the research participants was vital in my research. As a result, the ethical issues were much challenging to emphasis in the research. I was much aware of the Elmes (1995) basic ethical considerations that apply to the treatment of participants. More so, following Elmes (1995) I maintained the following three major ethical concerns:

a) Informed consent: I moved ahead with the consent of the participants in the research area. Similarly, role of my supervisor of getting consent on the themes and ideas are valuable to lead the research ahead. It was important because I wanted that no participants would be hurt and humiliated by any sort of activities and intentions.

b) No deception: I showed whatever I found from the field interacting with Tharu women to my family members because the hierarchies between my family and Tharu women exists because of social and cultural boundaries. First, whatever I got from Tharu women I shared to parents and whatever I got from the family shared with the participants.

c) Confidentiality: I hope to have maintained the confidentiality regarding any information about the participants. I hope that this confidentiality led towards the ethics of care and compassion.

Moreover, I established non-coercive/non-manipulative/non-self-serving informal relationships with Tharu women that enabled them to disclose sensitive thoughts and feelings leading to powerful and complex cultural insights. I was born and brought up in the same

village (see Chapter I), my childhood friends helped me to establish a rich communication relationship with these Tharu women. I can speak their local language and they can also understand Nepali language. Our language ability helped us to communicate with each other. Mostly, I initiated to talk in Tharu language and they replied in Tharu. In some cases, I talked to them in Nepali and they talked in Tharu language. But in some cases younger generation of Tharu women talked in Nepali language.

Chapter Conclusion

My research partly follows the integralism (Taylor, Sattelmier, & Luitel, In Press). More over it based on the heuristics of methodology. I used positivism to control my writing and data generation. The use of interpretivism explored the lived experiences of Tharu women, capturing the essence of the emergences in the writing as well as in the field activities. Criticality helped me to develop the critical reflexivity and praxis. Likewise using postmodern paradigm I made this research representational. Based on the auto/ethnography, performance ethnography and critical ethnography, I explored the complexities of lives and understanding of the oppressive Tharu women. I found the layers of oppressions which hinder the literacy programmes and practice (Chapter III).

CHAPTER III

SOCIAL HIERARCHIES, OPPRESSIONS AND LITERACY

Overview of the Chapter

In this chapter, I attempted to explore the difficulties of Tharu women participating in literacy program via portraits of the caste, class and gender hierarchies in Tharu village.

These social hierarchies created layers of oppression that were reflected in literacy programmes as response to my first set of research questions “In what ways are the existing hierarchical social structures translated in literacy programmes? How can an inclusive literacy be envisioned so as to address the problem of hierarchy manifested in literacy practices?” In this Chapter, I used three metaphors to link multiple layers of oppressions that exist in society (hierarchy), with few autonomous currents of Tharu women (anarchy), and my envisioning of literacy on such contexts (holarchy), thereby addressing my first research question.

Firstly, I was much influenced by the Subaltern Studies Group (SSG) focusing on three forms (i.e., class, caste and gender) of hierarchy which exist in the Tharu community. I designed the first sub-section of this chapter amid hierarchical structures of society which influenced participation of Tharu women in literacy programmes. Secondly, I observed the day-to-day activities of Tharu women as autonomous currents under the metaphor of ‘anarchy’ substantiating their ‘different’ ways of learning. I attempted to link their traditional and modern ways of living that influenced literacy programmes. Here, agreeing with Day (2005) while choosing a metaphor of anarchy as “interventions on the field of constituted power on behalf of marginalized individuals and groups” (p. 31). Lastly, another metaphor ‘holarchy’ was employed to envision a utopia to resolve the social hierarchies through literacy (to some extent). I was persuaded, perhaps by the Bloom’s (2004) ideas of integral

visioning while using this metaphor of holarchy focusing on holons of society and literacy programmes.

Social Hierarchies and Literacy Programmes

It is May 1, 2010. Today is my birthday. However, I do not like to celebrate birthdays with party, cakes and candles. And therefore, I am not much excited for birthday parties. Perhaps, celebration of birthday is not the part of my cultural ceremony. Today, special thing for me as a birth day gift is my first field visit as a researcher. I have worn a researcher's hat and much excited to see the social hierarchies in my village. However, I gained few experiences of social hierarchies and forms of oppressions that were happening in my village from my childhood days.

In the morning of my birthday, after a cup of tea, I love to wonder around the gully, outside my home. Now, I am standing restlessly for few minutes, waiting for someone who I think can provide some information about literacy classes and participation of Tharu women there. At the moment, I see a group of Tharu women heading towards the western side of the village. They are chasing cattle in the land, the uncultivated plot. It's the summer season and they let their cattle free in the barren field. Then, I like to approach nearer to the stream which is located in the eastern part of the village. At this time my interest is not to find what Tharu women are doing there. It is my morning walk and with no purpose beyond, I find some Tharu women doing dishes and utensils there. Some of them are fetching water from the stream. I see few women are working there by the stream. At that moment, I thought I wish I had met

Un/ Expression
*I weep with empty
vessels
with dirty utensils
in the kitchen
in the cow shed
in the bank of the Rapti
river
in the forest
I weep with torrents of
tears
Why don't you ask
about me?
You were to narrate my
story
The story of suffering
melancholy
and
grief
you were to
recite my poems
The poetry of hatred
pathos
and
ethos*

some Tharu women too. Then, I plan to move towards forest. I am going further wishing to meet other Tharu women in the forest. I see few of them are collecting fuel wood. I cannot go anywhere because I see Tharu women everywhere, in the field, in the stream and in the forest, some working and some just dawdling away. I rinse my face with sprinkling water from the stream and try to be fresh myself but I can't be fresh because I am haunted by the questions "Why are only Tharu women working everywhere?"

I returned back to home from the stream and had my lunch. Staying at home I recollected my reminiscences. Two Tharu women usually used to come at my home every early morning to perform the household chores. They engaged themselves in all sorts of works as they were ordered. I did not feel these sorts of daily activities of Tharu were new and strange. I was not aware of a sense of justice and humanity at that time nonetheless, I felt some sort of un/comfortable observing the nature of work they did at my home. I was observing such types of day-to-day activities of Tharu women without relating to justice for their education and literacy since my childhood days. I would believe all those things as a 'common sense' like what they were and the worked they had to perform from early mornings to late nights.

My morning walk became purposive because my childhood experiences were embodied with the oppressive situation of Tharu women in hierarchical society. While highlighting the research agendas in literacy, I focused on the layers of oppression that Tharu women have been experiencing as obstacles of being literate. I observed caste, class and gender based hierarchies which influence the literacy practices of Tharu women. I argue here that social hierarchies in/directly influence their participation in the literacy programmes. On the basis of my fieldwork, I also brought few anecdotes to demonstrate these social

hierarchies as major obstacles to adapt the ethos of national literacy programmes in their day-to-day life.

In the Mandap: Courtyards of Tharu

I formed the controlling narrative on the basis of research questions bringing the cases of Tharu women. In this narrative, I found the literacy practices under caste/class and gender hierarchies as Stash and Hannum (2001) argued “using the case of Nepal, we focus on two fundamentally ascriptive status hierarchies of critical importance in South Asia ; gender and caste” (p.354). I therefore prioritize caste and gender issues while raising the agendas of hierarchies and oppression in literacy practices of Tharu women.

Scene I: Courtyard of Tharu

It is a hot May Day of the year 2010. I prepare myself to go to the field in the morning. As I have just reached in the narrow gully of the Tharu village, I meet Phuluwa. She is cleaning the cow dung in her yard which is used for tying cows, goats and pigs in the summer. Approaching nearer to her, I greet her

“Namaste Sahili”.

“Namaste Babu”, She replies with a smile but she does not look at me.

She tells me to have a seat on the wooden logs besides the pigs but I like to observe around her home. I observe the beautiful kitchen garden near to the courtyard. It is green, vegetables like lady finger, guards and pumpkin look like as if they get up from the deep sleep. It's a dream to plant vegetables in summer in the village. There is not irrigation system and they are not habituated to plant the off seasonal vegetables before. I guess that they might learn all these things from the literacy. I cannot remain silent and said her

“Oh! See the green vegetables in lush”

“Yes, I make it myself because earlier we used to eat chapattis with chillies and onions. But now I and my family eat green fresh vegetables. This solves the problem to buy green vegetables from the market.”

“How do you learn to make a kitchen garden? Do you learn in literacy class?” I ask further?”

“I do not learn from literacy class because I never joined it”, She replies.

“Don’t you think that you can learn reading, writing and some ways to increase your income in literacy?” I ask further

She continues, “My parents never sent me school. I was a Kamlari for more than 7 years in landlord’s house. Early in the morning, I used to go there and would do all the households works except cooking food. I had shunned a formal education system because I had never been to schools. I had to work in my house and landlord’s house. I didn’t have anything to go to schools. I was a daughter of Tharu. My parents sent me to landlord’s house as a Kamlari and worked 7 years there. I completed all the works such as wash clothes, clean utensils, collect fodders for cattle, collect firewood and other household chores. However, I never cooked food at their homes”.

Though I know Tharu women are not allowed to cook in a Brahmin’s family, I ask her with a purpose of knowing her perspective. It is important for me why does she focus for cooking food. Then I ask her with a purpose of knowing her perspectives, “When you were working as Kamlari why didn’t you cook food there?”

She twists her face and says, “They do not eat food cooked by Kamlari. After gasping long breath she continues, “Actually, I don’t feel respected, proud in front of them. I feel inferior too.”

I find her gloomy expression as being oppressed in the village in that conversation and moved towards home.

While I am returning from the Tharu village, I plan to impose the same sort of questions to my mother. I plan to act as an activist. As I reach at my home I have started to talk to my mother and ask her.

“Mother, why do you not eat food prepared by a Tharu woman?” though I know that that we, Bahun⁷ particularly do not eat food prepared by Tharu women at home.

My mother smiles and continues, “It is our tradition, and we inherit this tradition from our ancestors”.

I am in a mood of opposing the belief system of my mother and say, “I do eat the food cooked by anyone. Am I not the descendant of Bahun, my grandfather and grandmother?”

She closes her eyes and says “You might have known the reason well.”

But I pretend as if I could not know anything about my own caste.

“It is our tradition to cook food ourselves.” She asserts further “We should not have eaten food cooked by the lower caste people”.



“Who are the lower caste people, mother?” I ask her. “Does it mean for you that being born in Brahmin is higher caste? Does it mean that we are superior to Tharu? Are you educated and learned? How has ever learned caste Brahmin given us authority to exclude Tharu? Is it a good practice?”

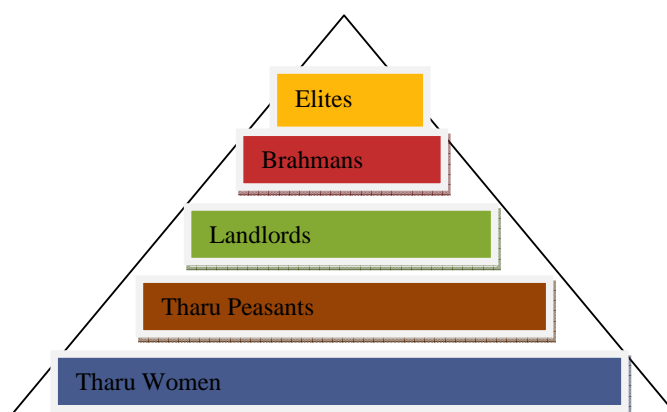
She is perplexed with my questions. She does not speak anything. She possibly thinks that I am challenging our tradition. I further continue.

⁷ Brahmins are the higher class people in the Nepalese caste system, they were supposed to be the learned but Tharu call them Bahun for convenient.

“Could you tell me how much am I a Bahun? I have felt how radically we Bahun are strict in the caste system. Still we claim to be educated and literate in society. What makes us to be literate? Is it because of our cast, Brahamin? Almost all work inside and outside my house are done by Tharu women but they are not allowed to cook food. Mother, is it fair to treat them as you are doing?”

“I don’t know whether it is fair or not but I know our tradition.” She seems to be harsh advocating our caste system.

These harsh social settings have been hovering in my mind. At this stage, I am overwhelmed by the injustices and layers of oppressions prevailed in Tharu village. How could they attain the literacy classes under such social and economical pressures? How do they cope with the situation of being literate? Can imposed literacy bring the changes to fight against the social hierarchies, oppressions and exclusions among Tharu women?



Prologue: Extending Stories

Whilst returning home from the field, I came up with an understanding that social hierarchies might be the barriers to be literate to Tharu women. They could not see any linkage of literacy to their real life needs. This directed me to think that how caste, and class discrimination was pertinent to exclude Tharu women in society. However, “inequality in education has its roots in social history, which records the stereotyping of expected adult roles for men and women and the translation of these into curricula” (Byrne, 1978, p.30). Being away from their lives, there was no fine cause to motivate them for current literacy

practices. In this context, I analyzed impacts of discrimination and oppression in the literacy programmes. Hierarchies prevent to create social injustice in the literacy programmes which did not dismantle the caste discrimination. It affected literacy participation of Tharu women.

Similarly, I explored the social class of Tharu women. “They are engaged in the agricultural activities and domestic chores such as collecting firewood, fetching water, cleaning and caring children” (Singh, 2007, p.15). I found that they rarely managed time to be enrolled in the current literacy programmes. I observed Tharu women working as Kamlari at the house of landlords though “in July 2007, the Nepal government announced that it will ‘rehabilitate’ all *Kamaiya* families by early 2008” (Giri, 2010, p.160). All promises of government were worn out along with the hopes of *Kamaiyas* to make them educated and literate. I, even today, can see, some Tharu women working as Kamlari in the landlords’ houses. I felt the need of literacy programmes for Tharu women not to increase the reading skills as indicated Agee (2003) “reading skills are very low among much of the population of developing countries” (p. 344), but to liberate them from the social oppressions and injustices. However, during initial phase of this research I also understood literacy is to be able for reading and writing as Agee (2005) summaries that literacy programmes are the bridge to link between readings and getting pleasures associating with social concern with allowing individuals to participate in democratic civil society.

My understanding of literacy shifted from the value of reading and writing to “recognize the importance of capacitating non formal education participants in terms of developing their strength and talents along with organized movements for emancipation and growth” (Lamichhane, 1992, p.197). Therefore I started believing literacy is a part of the life as a skill. Conceptualized literacy as developing reading, writing, and numeracy skill became a popular education as Freire linked the issues of adult literacy with the raising of political and social consciousness best known as popular education (Graceffo, 2001, p. 113).

However, literacy programmes were guided by the traditional literacy approach (3 R) as a result Tharu women were not interested in literacy.

Lastly, I explored the participation of subaltern Tharu women in literacy programmes was low. Those women seemed excluded from the literacy programmes because they could not manage time to participate in literacy programmes, their own cause. Second, literacy programmes were unlikely to engage subaltern Tharu women because it failed to show the concrete link to their lives. Here, I would like to ask a question who needs to be literate?" Do Tharu people need to be literate? Or is literacy a business for those practitioners who have been maintaining hierarchies to be superior being? Why has literacy been always imposed to marginalized group of people and which works better: imposition or motivation? These are few questions that I have addressed in the analysis level.

Caste Hierarchies and Literacy Programmes

Historically, Tharu women are suffered from the elite feudalism and thus they don't feel like going for literacy and education. Reflecting upon the anecdote *Courtyard of Tharu* in the data text, I followed caste hierarchy in the village because there were resemblances of elite caste to oppress subaltern like Tharu women. I was critical to myself as elite whose group prevents Tharu women to be literate. Imposing the burden of work, compelling to be *Kamaiya* and *Kamlaries* and continuing the bounded labour system were some examples of being elite. "To generalize the complex issue of bondedness... a part of the produce rather than wage barely allows the *Kamaiya* to make a living from a mono-cropped land forcing them to borrow money from landlords in times of crop failure or family hardships" (Giri, 2009, p. 600). Feudalist caste hierarchies were linked with the *Kamaiya* system as a class consciousness rather than caste. Such types of exclusionary practices were found at my house. I did not know how I critiqued myself under such exclusionary practices. I was born in the Brahmin family and supported some exclusionary practices but I was called literate. I

have been always aware about my position in the village as the Brahmin elite. I raised the need of literacy for Tharu women showing which can address their day to day problems in their lives.

Coming to this stage, I realized that my elitism would never teach to respect the work, culture and nature of 'Other' people like Tharu women. I was instructed to believe that Tharu women were illiterate and ignorant from my childhood experiences. Are my experiences similar to common people? I knew that Tharu women were *Kamlaries* and were born to serve Brahmins from my childhood experiences. I learnt all those things from my senior family member right from my childhood days and since I then knew the social hierarchies. Maybe, these reflections were guided by my cultural experiences of privileged status. I think that we higher caste people tried to maintain a distinctive social stratum pretending to be higher in terms of knowledge and skills. Consequently, we (higher caste people, even Tharu males) might be superior to Tharu women. While I was writing this section I feel that the caste hierarchy between Brahmins and Tharu might create social, economical and cultural inferiority to those Tharu women. Perhaps, it can be the primary cause to miss the opportunities to be educated and literate among Tharu women.

When the literacy of Tharu women got affected by the social, economical and cultural hierarchies, they wanted to be literate but they could not join the class regularly. I came to know that literacy was taken to develop basic skills of reading and writing. They could no longer participate in literacy programmes because reading and writing could not be as important as their works.

Caste/Class Consciousness in Literacy

Let me remind a story of a Tharu woman to relate their consciousness about caste/class and literacy. She had worked in my home as a Kamlari for three years some ten years ago. Consciousness for me is social construction as Kincheloe (2008) says,

“consciousness is not a miraculous force that concurrently helps to shape the universe in which we live” (p. 217). Consciousness might be socially constructed. In this line, I argue that enslaved caste/class consciousness of Tharu women barred them to join the literacy programmes. In this regard, perhaps, the ‘feudalistic mindset’ enriched the caste/class discrimination which was integrated with the ethnic beliefs, superstitions, rites and rituals. I guess that it was often practiced as a taboo. I heard stories of Tharu people sacrificing themselves as domestic servants, *Kamaiya*, *Kamalari* and *Halis* because of landlordism. To cite Giri (2009) “the *Kamaiya* system however is commonly known as an agriculturally based bonded labour system in which a *Kamaiya* makes a verbal contract with a landlord or a moneylender to work for a year” (p. 600). Eventually caste system has been interpreted from point of view of Vedic tradition which may not prefer to caste based discrimination as it was in the field. Then after, I contemplated on the root cause of caste system. Though I am not a Vedic scholar, I like to go to the Vedic tradition to explore the caste system and forms of discriminations. Maybe, I am influenced by the saying “*Brahmo mukhammaasit, bahur janya kreta udarata tamsmai sudro ajayata*”⁸. This also showed that all castes were integrated to form the whole body. Vedic philosophy possibly did not have such practices of caste discrimination. It seems to me that the body was classified as being four distinct features and occupation described the four main groups of caste Brahman, Chhetri, Baisya and Sudra. The orientation of the caste system seems to be derived from the Vedic philosophies but later one of the elite interpretations in *Manu Smirti*⁹ created the hierarchies of cast in the society allocating the functions of people on the basis of their caste.

⁸ The Brahmin was his mouth, his two arms were made the Rajanya [Kshatriya, king and warrior], his two thighs [loins] the Vaishya, on his feet the Sudra [servile class] was situated.

⁹ Smirtis mean that has to be remembered. Unlike the Vedas which are considered of divine origin, the the Smirtis are of human composition.

Similarly “literacy in Nepal followed the Hindu Varnashramic caste line. Even the indigenous people followed hierarchical values in imparting literacy education. This implies that the Nepali culture and the political system did not make an effort to introduce mass education” (Acharya, 2004, p.1). For me literacy programmes have maintained the feudalistic mindset in a couple of ways for me. The literacy programmes were designed in such ways that Tharu women may not learn anything else in the literacy classroom. First the way of instruction in the literacy classroom of Tharu women was Nepali (the language of the feudal lords). For me, it further transmits the interest of feudalism showing that Tharu women are unable to read and write in feudal languages. Does it not mean that current literacy programmes further maintain the gap between the landlords and labourers?

Second, the data text “*The scenes from the field*” provided instances of exclusions to Tharu women. Feudal caste system further excluded a group of people like Tharu women, prescribing their roles confined within a family. My consciousness started to suspect a subaltern point of view that Vedic tradition and its deep rooted division of the caste hierarchies was responsible for caste discrimination and the inequalities. I agreed that Tharu women were victimized by our caste Brahmin. How could I believe that we (Brahmins) were learned (and literate) people who gave preferences to injustices based on the caste discrimination? We have been exploiting and oppressing Tharu women in different forms injustices (re) interpreting the caste system.

Under these two cases of consciousness, I would like to ask here: who needs to be literate? Those who have been reproducing social injustices in the hierarchical society: elite Brahmins? Or the subaltern Tharu women who were supposed to be uncivilized and illiterate? How can elites manipulate their power to oppress Tharu women? Why do they think that Tharu are illiterate and ignorant? Elite Brahmins like me (development partners, policy makers, and facilitator) need to be literate to dismantle the hierarchies of caste and

class and to create inclusive society. I feel that a great irony has been hidden beyond the purpose of making literate group of people like Tharu women.

I envisaged from the Vedic philosophies perspective as to create harmony among multi ethnic, multi lingual and multi culture Nepalese society. I argue here caste system was not as Dirk (2001) explained “an invention of the British” (Brun, 2010, p. 2). I came to know that interpretation of caste system which has been distorted from the Vedic tradition by Manu Smirti and Varnasharama¹⁰ system. However, the practices of caste system have been manipulated by landlordism rather than Hinduism in terms of the nature of the work as people do in the society. As observing at the participation of Tharu women in literacy class I claimed that literacy class might be guided by the caste and class consciousness.

Existing caste system might hinder the learning practices of Tharu women. I would like to cite Chatterjee (1997) who says that “Gandhi used to argue that empirical reality of caste discrimination and even its sanction in the religious text had ‘nothing to do with religion’” (p.174). I found same sense in this issue because both elite Brahmin and subaltern Tharu women follow the Hindu religion. Moreover, caste/ class hierarchies are maintained as a feature of the superstructure of society, its existence and efficacy are to be understood as ideological products of the specific precapitalist social formation (Chatterjee, 1997, p. 173). In my village, landlordism could be a symptom of precapitalist formation and feudal Hindu religion is an ideology all Brahmins creates a gap of caste/class hierarchies. In the situation how can an oppressed Tharu women learn words and alphabets in the classroom managing their time?

Let me take a detour to describe the caste system from a postcolonial perspective. I do not have regretted on being born in Brahmin family. It might be my pride to be a Brahmin because they were the followers of great civilization of Vedas (to what extent?), whereas I

¹⁰ Vernashrama Dhrma classified caste group into four groups as Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra.

critique on the exclusionary practices among the Brahmins which prevent Tharu women to participate in the literacy class. But I should respect Other and their caste. Perhaps I am closer to Chatterjee (1997) saying that caste might be the cause of impurity of social justice “It is the biological reproduction of human species through the procreation within endogamous caste groups that ensures the permanence of ascribed marks of caste purity or pollution” (p. 194). Can I say Tharu women therefore were deprived from formal and non formal education because of feudal Hinduism?

Scene 2: “I Work 15 Hours in a Day”

People call me Saiya Chaudhary though my official name is Susmita Chaudhary. I am going to narrate my own role and responsibilities in and outside of my house. “Work, work and work until you die.” I always say when I am fed up with work. Sometimes, I am jealous to see the life of my masters¹¹ who involve in comparatively easier activities in their own house. I have rarely seen them working in the field and in the forest. Even it is difficult for me to take care of my children and they fall sick most of the times.

Early in the morning, I get up and prepare food for the whole family. I start it even without washing my face. It is my job, job of a woman to prepare food for the family. It was easier when I was in my extended family because mother in law had divided the work to all family members and she used to take care of my children. Now we start to live separately from the rest of family, and it is very difficult to complete all the jobs in my house. My sons and daughters are too small to help me.

I go to a stream to fetch water after I have cooked food. It is a bit far in summer and takes nearly half an hour. It is my own work. Then we take Basi (Stale food used as breakfast) and move to either field or forest. I have to complete the domestic chores of the landlord’s house before I move to field or forest. I usually clean utensils, kitchen, cowshed

¹¹ Female Brahman women.

and courtyard there. Then I feed my children and have Kalwa (lunch) which I prepare early in the morning. Again, I repeat the same job; go to the landlord's house, field, forest and stream and when sun sets I will be in kitchen with my children.

My husband mostly arrives in the evening. He sometimes drinks alcohol and scolds me. I have been beaten severely many times from my husband. Sometimes, landlord protects me from his beating. I am tortured by my husband along with the burden of work. I curse myself because I got married when I was 14.

Now I realize that it was too early to get married.

My father never sent me school and I never think for me to be educated. My parents are peasants and I learn peasantry since my childhood. I attempted to be literate and joined literacy class but it was vain because I hardly feel comfortable with books, exercise books and pencils. My hands are habituated to hold axes and knives rather than books and pencils.

This time literacy class starts before the rainy season. I plan to fulfill my wish to sign in the register of the village. I am interested to read

and write so that I can encourage my children to study. Though it is hard to get rid of work but I have been managing time to go in literacy class. At least I can take rest there.

Daily Schedule of Tharu Women

- 3-4 AM get up (accordance to the pressures of the work)
- 4- 5 AM Sweep the floor
Prepare meal
(breakfast and lunch) Go to fetch water, wash hands and mouth, Clean the shed
- 5- 6 AM have breakfast clean utensils
- 7- 11AM work in the field. Or go to the landlords' house to work. (different other house hold activities)
- 11 AM- 12 PM have Kalwa (lunch)
- 1- 5 PM again to the field
- 5 -6PM make fodder for cattle.
- 6-8 PM dinner prepare.
- 8-10 PM have dinner and slept.

Prologue: Extending the Scene

This part is not always a reductionist analysis rather this is more interpretive. Here, I interpret gendered role of Tharu women with the help of the case of Susmita Chaudhary.

Believing that gender realities are constructed by a group of people in a Tharu village makes

me interepretivist, instead of reducing the case of Susmita and her role as gendered woman. Just for a moment, let me imagine a hot day during the month of June, sweat trickling down my back and I am suffocating; let me also not forget the situation of Susmita who is working in the field from morning to evening in the scorching sun. A dog was sitting in the middle of the field near her restlessly. “It was not hot enough yet” Susmita murmured. I would like to start gendered role of Susmita with the un/wearingly hot day in June. She has been working in the wearing hot in the month of June. That demonstrated the burden of work, roles and responsibilities of Tharu women through the *testimonio* constructed on the basis of my experience as a cultural insider-outsider. My observation in the field found another layer of hierarchy which could be the result of gendered role of Tharu women. I was stunned with Susmita Chaudhary’s lamentation (celebration?) of working more than fifteen hours a day, with her drunkard husband and her tolerance against the violence of her husband. I argue that there might be other social, economical and cultural factors to determine the multiple layered-classes of Tharu women. From this *testimonio* I attempt to investigate the reasons of being gendered and il/literate among Tharu women. I argue that the gendered role of the Tharu women is one of the barriers of participating in literacy programmes. Does it mean that they showed their presence in literacy class for maintaining the norms of national literacy programmes?

Gendered Tharu Women in Literacy

Let me start this section from the questions: What justice could literacy give to gendered Tharu woman? My notion of gendered Tharu women is based on social oppressions in terms of caste/class and gender discrimination. Referring to the data text, I have described the multiple layers of oppressions faced by Tharu women which were pertinent to exclude them from literacy class. They were housewives at their houses; they had to accomplish all most all the household activities; they were suffering from the household chores. At the same

time I found that they are physical labourers. As they completed their household activities they immediately joined the physical works in the field or in the forest. They even compelled to work at the houses of landlords without payments or very less payments. “Tharu women suffer gender discrimination in addition to the discrimination faced by the Tharu men. They are generally less educated, have to work longer hours, have no right to property and have little say in decision making” (Cheria, Kandangwa & Upadhyaya, 2005, p. 42). Thus, the class of Tharu women was gendered. These all classes might be in inferior rank, as Gramsci believed. In this case, I envisage that they were discriminated even in literacy programmes as being inferior social class. I use the term subaltern describing Tharu women in a situation as Lila Gandhi (1998) says “by ‘subaltern’ Spivak meant the oppressed subject, the members of Antonio Gramsci’s Subaltern Classes or more generally those of inferior rank and her question followed on the work began in the early 1980s by a collection of individuals now known as Subaltern Studies group” (p. 1)

I found some peculiar characteristics of gendered Tharu women. Mainly I was conscious about their preferences to son and early marriages which were vital for gendered discrimination in Tharu community. As Acharya (2004) pointed from the gender perspective traditional approach of literacy education further polarizes men and women within a complex social structure e.g. in a Hindu social structure women are confined to the household chores and men are involved in the outer world” (p.7). I found the same plight of Tharu women participating in literacy. Yet, literacy programmes have not brought any significant changes in the lives of Tharu women.

How do I hope to bring changes to Tharu women through national literacy programmes under such circumstances? I found that inequalities are taken for granted in Tharu women’s lives and asymmetrical power relationship which affects the learning practices of women in literacy programmes. My experiences as a cultural insider/outsider

accept that Tharu women could learn differently than the Tharu men. When will it be recognized that Tharu women need their types of literacy by the NFEC and development practitioners? Perhaps, the national literacy programmes fail to address the issues of Tharu women. However, the question how gender equality can be achieved in a given structure is pertinent. Is mother tongue based literacy sufficient to bring the voices of subalterns? Gendered Tharu women and their role have been guided by the hierarchical social structures and “it is also an axis along which power, hierarchy and inequality, among others, are distributed, explained and rationalized” (Acharya, 2004, p. 7).

From the perspective of women empowerment, I found the problem of literacy as Horseman (1996) says “the literacy programmes which are offered to women therefore need to recognize the inequalities taken for granted in women's lives. If they do not help women to look critically at their own lives, literacy programmes will only fit women more firmly into their traditional roles” (p.15). For me the positionality of Tharu women is as Suna Karo (2010) reviewing the book of Gyanendra Pnadey *Subaltern citizen and their histories: Investigations from India and the USA* said “the multipositionality of the gendered subaltern is elucidated here as a compound temporal bind, within which women are endlessly cajoled into temporal displacement, as child, wife, and mother, and that belongs to others and effects the erasure of their agency” (p. 3).

Subalternity and Literacy

Tharu women made a history of working class, so I did as elite. Their history has not been yet written. How could they write their own history with 3R literacy? What type of literacy is needed for them to write their own history? The literacy programmes which merely severed an interest of so called elite through the words, alphabets and number might not be helpful to write history(s) of subaltern Tharu women. I argue here that if literacy practices of Tharu women included with stories of their oppression and exclusion then they could write

their history to liberate from the social inequalities and injustice they could imagine their future. “Subaltern histories emphasized the need to understand the experiences and lives of the dominated – peasants and workers, tribals and lower castes, women and dalits – people who leave few written records, whose voices are difficult to hear, whose actions appear inconsequential (Kumar, 2008, p.6.)”

I found the most pressing issues of education among Tharu women. They were deprived from the formal education system and they did not even show interest in literacy and NFE. Peasantry created a class of gendered Tharu women. I saw a layered position of Tharu women as Tharu, peasant and women. I was haunted looking at the purpose of literacy. Does it really meet the policy of literacy as “inclusive education policy will be adopted to ensure access, quality and co-existence” (NFEC, 2007, p.12). The purpose of national literacy programmes had nothing to do with transformation of the subaltern Tharu women. It appeared for me merely to increase the percentages of literate people. I am partly skeptic for the national literacy programmes of NFEC which seems to get support campaigns to change structures, donate time, expertise and resources rather than analyzing own position/context and participate in changing structures, assumptions, identities, attitudes and power relations in their contexts (Andreotti, 2006, p. 69).



For me voices of the Tharu women are one of the important issues for literacy acquisition that “defines linguistic inequality along with other forms of social, political and cultural inequalities existing in the society” (Blooaert, 2005, p.5). Tharu people are mostly peasant and the followers of the animistic beliefs and practices handed down for ages (Singh, 2007, p.14). Tharu women are thus suppressed by male Tharu and other caste, class in the society. So subalterns referring to the Tharu women in the research as “Spivak used

subalterns to refer marginalized individuals rendered voiceless by sexism, classism, and an interconnected web of global and local power configuration” (Asgharzadel, 2008, pp. 340-341). Perhaps literacy programmes have been imposed by NFEC not incorporating “a subaltern-centric approach to social and educational struggles would direct one to explore various sites of power, privilege, exclusion, and oppression more effectively” (Asgharzadel, 2008, p.338).

Till this point, it is my conclusion that my dominant elite literate position, and thus reinforces Tharu women’s position as a subaltern. Since their behavior had ever seen as transcending their social class, they are forcibly subordinated through violence against their position and body. The dominant classification of Tharu women in different categories creates the layers of oppression within their family and society. A Tharu woman may be a wife, a daughter, a Kamlari, a mother, as Spivak concept of the “resident alien” (Spivak, 2002, p.47) as she discussed the practice of Sati in her controversial essay “Can Subaltern Speak?” In such circumstances I found that their day to day activities have not been incorporated in the national literacy programmes as they are oppressed in terms of class, caste and gender. I am articulating the space of their day-to-day activities in literacy programmes under the metaphor of anarchy.

Social ‘Anarchy’ and Literacy Programmes

It is a cold morning, 14 September, 2010. I am sitting near the fire at my home and having a cup of black tea. A Tharu woman comes to my house and asks me how to call her husband in Dubai via her cell phone. I ask her how you have handled it before. She says that her daughter assists her previously. I observe that few research participants are holding cell phones in their hands. How can I say that these Tharu women are illiterate who are much friendlier to growing technology. I think to design another metaphor of ‘anarchy’ focusing on the new coming social/technological trends among the lives of Tharu women. I use the

metaphor of anarchy describing the situation of Tharu women who are learning outside of literacy classroom without formal facilitator and a *Naya Goreto*¹². I like to show the different situations of being literate through the metaphor of anarchy. At the same time I am exploring their traditional ways of being literate through the metaphor of *Bhutwa*¹³. How could they learn from their cultural experiences and the recent technology like Nokia? Symbolically, it can be seen that Nokia makes Tharu women economically superior. But the situation has been changed; Tharu women can afford Nokia, breaks the economical hierarchical norms of the society. I use the metaphor of anarchy to critique the national literacy programmes with ‘my’ self-reflection.

Being in the Mandap: Two Stories from the Field

I have articulated two stories under the metaphor of anarchy as data texts, relating to the day-to-day activities of Tharu women and their perception of being literate. These narratives may help me to reflect literacy as an autonomous practice rather than traditional 3R literacy. My central focus using the metaphor of anarchy is to show the changes in the daily lives of Tharu women. At the same time, I show the cultural practices of Tharu women which have not been incorporated in national literacy programmes. Both examples of anarchy challenge and critique the traditional literacy. It may be my wishful hallucination using this metaphor to show the autonomous ways of learning ways of Tharu women. Let me be anarchist here exploring cultural and historical situatedness of Tharu women in literacy practice, bringing their changed atmosphere of lived realities in literacy programmes. I would like to cite Hieshleifer (1995) who argued that “anarchy is not chaos, at least potentially; anarchic relationship can constitute a stable system” (p. 26). Thus, I am also imagining a stable (and chaotic) system of literacy practices of Tharu women.

¹² Naya Goreto is a literacy text book.

¹³ Tharu people worship Bhutwa but Brahmins think a ghost spirit.

Story I: “Inspiration from Bhutwa”

It is the 23rd of June 2010. I feel quite comfortable while talking to my participants now days. They even use satire and irony while criticizing my position as elite which I mentioned in subtitled “Bahun, Elites and Literacy”. I also start to crack jokes and enjoy spending longer time with them as I am exploring the lived realities of Tharu women, their tradition and influence on literacy programmes.

It is a cool eve of hot June. While I am climbing a wooden ladder to have some snaps of artistic goods made by Tharu women I see an image like an empty Bhakari¹⁴. I am sure that it is not a Bhakari because its front part is open like a door.

Then I ask Barki¹⁵, “What is it?”

She says, “It’s our Bhutwa. We worship Bhutwa.”

It is interesting for me because I worship god and Bhutwa is devil for me and further ask her, “Well, how do you worship Bhutwa? Is it like my grandfather worship god?”

She laughs and continues, “The ways of worshiping are different. It is different because you Bahun worship god and we worship Bhutwa. Bahuns have many types of god but we worship only two Bhutwas.”

I am more inquisitive to get additional information about Bhutwa, a bad spirit and to link that bad spirit in the literacy programmes.

I further ask, “Don’t you worship god?”

“We worship god too. Krishna Astami¹⁶ is our one of the major festivals in which we prefer fasting and worship Krishna.”

¹⁴ Bhakari is a handmade small round room made up of bamboo sticks to keep food grain and it is usually tied with rope around it.

¹⁵ One of my participants

¹⁶ Birth day of lord Krishna

I remember the playboy like image of god Krishna. I have not completely realized the Krishna's consciousness yet. I've heard the myths of Krishna about 16000 Gopinis¹⁷ and want to get one as a gift from Krishna.

Suddenly I wake up when Barki says, "What you are thinking?"

"Nothing", I say

How do you feel worshiping Bhutwa?" I further question

She says, "Sometimes I feel that it is our tradition, so we follow it. Sometimes I feel underestimated when Bahuns undermine us as uncivilized and barbaric."

I experience the strong sense of Bhutwa at the moment.

Story II: I Miss Call from My Husband

It is another hot day of May. While I am wandering in the research field to search some metaphor of anarchy in literacy programmes, suddenly I am caught by a scene. I see that a Tharu woman is talking in cell phone. I observe her few minutes. As she finishes her conversation I go nearer to her and start to talk about her skills and knowledge of using cell phones.



"Where are you coming from?" I initiate my conversation.

"I am coming from market." She says.

"To whom are you talking in phone now?" I put my queries further.

She smiles and says, "With my husband. He is in Saudi Arabia. He went there 2 years ago".

"When will he arrive here?" I ask

¹⁷ Gopinis are the daughters, sisters and mothers from the cowherd family.

“He says that he will come in this Dashain¹⁸.” She says watching blue sky over her head.

I like to link our conversation to the Nokia 3510 and say, “Your cell is beautiful, when you bought it?”

“I did not buy it. It was brought by my husband when he had returned from Saudi last year.” She says with pride.

“Would you give me a missed call, please? Sometimes I may need your number?” I would like to see her skills of using cell phone.

She hesitantly says, “I use it only to receive call. I don’t know the ways to give call.” She further makes me clear, “My daughter handles the cell most of the time and I don’t know anything about it.”

“Do you want to learn the ways to handle it? I can help you for that.” I say

“Of course but I can’t. My daughter says that uneducated people like me never learn to handle it because we do not know English. I do not read and write Nepali how I would think to learn English during this time.” She puts her situation ahead.

Prologue

I was afraid of the *Bhutwa* in my childhood days. My parents scared me showing these *Bhutwa* under the Pipal trees in Tharu village. I never went nearer to those ghostly images of *Bhutwa*. I left my village when I was ten years old and nobody reminded me about *Bhutwa*. Nobody scared me of *Bhutwa*. Twenty years later I experienced *Bhutwa* differently. Now, I would not be scared of *Bhutwa*. During my fieldwork, I enjoyed going nearer to its place, observing closely and having some photographs. I was surprised when I knew that it was made up of mud in a shape of horse. I saw my personal gods carved in stone and mud in a shape of unique humanoids having multiple heads and hands. I knew from my cultural

¹⁸ Dashain is one of the major festivals of Hindu.

experience that we Brahmin worship cow, dog, and snake as a form of god. Horse is also an animal but it was not called *Bhutwa*, an evil spirit.

I could visualize the New Literacy Study (NLS) through the metaphors of *Bhutwa* and Nokia. “New Literacy Studies (NLS) which has contributed to understanding the diverse and complex ways of reading and writing take place across multiple contexts and has highlighted written language practices as plural and socially situated” (Kalman, 2009, p.166). However, the current literacy programmes hardly incorporated the line of NLS highlighting the written language practices in multiple contexts. In this context, I argue that homogeneous literacy programmes extending elite interests missed the autonomous ways of learning through *Bhutwa* and Nokia. The connection between cultural and universal dimensions of literacy was missing in current national literacy programmes.



Being in the Samsara: *Bhutwa* and Cultural Literacy

Let me extend the tale of *Bhutwa* from the Mandap. I portrayed *Bhutwa* under the metaphor of anarchy but I could not ignore another reality of Tharu women that they worshiped the Lord Krishna. I was astonished with the reality that they worship god and *Bhutwa* simultaneously. I am dazed of knowing *Bhutwa* and god are same for them at that time. For me, Lord Krishna was superior to *Bhutwa*, because of its divine image. One possibility is that Brahmins interpreted the stories of *Bhutwa* as an evil spirit to be a superior image for Tharu women. It might be one of the forms of undermining and oppressing them by ignoring their ever present balanced cultural practices. They have already recognized the complexities and anarchy in conceptualizing *Bhutwa* and Krishna.

I would like to say that those Tharu women have better sense of knowing great Hindu myths and religion than the elite higher class people are often called illiterate. The national literacy programmes disregard their ways of knowing for learning practices. How has the

whole feudalistic civilization been transforming for exercising power in the society, even in literacy programmes without recognizing *Bhutwa*? I wonder where our civilization is going on at a point. The current literacy programmes do not seem to blend the construct of Krishna and *Bhutwa*, the Tharu epistemic concerns literacy programmes.

Probably they have a consciousness of Parambrahma¹⁹ (Spirit or God) as everlasting, complete, without beginning or end. It is one, invisible Being. Perhaps, they do not see any differences between spirit ghost and god at this stage. While writing this chapter, partly I am guided by the frightening stories of ghost that I heard in my childhood days. I respect Barki's confidence of saying "we worship *Bhutwa*." I was glad that they were still following their tradition in the one hand having the greater knowledge of the Parambrahma than Brahmins but they were recognized as illiterate. Brahmins felt pride because they worshiped god and became superior. Brahmins might not have the Parambrahma consciousness as Tharu women have. Still they claimed that Tharu women were not civilized and educated. How has been literacy defined? Who recognize the ways of knowing and learning of these Tharu women?

Can I say that world view of Tharu women might be more open, expanded and sophisticated than the elite Brahmins? This led me to think that we Brahmins might be exploiting them in the name of religion but we cannot accept the construction of Parambarhma of Tharu women. The current literacy practices allow very less space including the perception of Tharu women like Parambarhma. Can literacy ever recognize the Tharu women's Parambramha's world view which is their day to day activities? I argue here that a kind of cultural literacy needed for learned Brahmins to understand Tharu women and their ways of learnings. Can I say that literacy programmes are hegemonized by the national culture rather than the culture of Tharu women. Koirala (2009) says that literacy

¹⁹ Supreme absolute truth

programmes in Nepal expanded the monolithic national cultural practices and thus classified into broken sketches of literacy based on the diverse opinion of the practitioners (p. 20).

Literacy in *Maghi*²⁰

I still remember the *Maghi* when a long discussion between Tharu people as *Kamaiya* and *Kamlaries* was going on for renewing the farming tradition. *Maghi* could be one of the festive seasons for Tharu women when they do not work and enjoy a lot. I have experienced the autonomous Tharu people during that festival. They worship *Bhutwa* and drink alcohol and feel superior. How about including a story of *Maghi* and *Bhutwa* in their literacy programmes? While writing this section, I think that they might regard the importance of words and numbers that are associated with their lifestyles. The recent literacy practices appeared to be isolated from their lived realities like *Maghi*. On the basis of the same situation I argue that literacy has not been aptly designed for people at the receiving end like Tharu women. Literacy programmes, which were rarely popular among Tharu women, were hardly reflected their cultural and social context.

Maghi could be theorized from the perspective of cultural literacy, “the phrase ‘cultural literacy’ was popularized by E. D. Hirsch, Jr. (1987b), in his best-selling book *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know*” (House, E. R., Emmer, C. & Lawarance, N. 1991, p. 58). I use Hirsch’s concept as a referent to distinguish the national and local cultures of the people while interpreting literacy from the gendered Tharu cultural perspective. The examples of *Bhutwa* and *Maghi* helped me to explore such cultural practices which are even hardly recognized by the Brahmins landlords but they have been continuing their tradition in the community. These autonomous trends of learning from *Bhutwa* and *Maghi* may not help them to get rid of the oppressions they suffered from.

Perhaps Street (1993) is closer to me to get the ideas of literacies to link the world of multi-

²⁰ *Maghi* is one of the major festivals of Tharu, celebrated as a New Year. It is the time to make a bondage to Tharu farmers and landlords. There was a system to keep *Kamlaries* and *Kamaiyas* on this occasion but *Kamlari* system has been formally abolished by government.

faceted worlds of knower and learner like Tharu women to assimilate the socio cultural aspects in the literacy programmes. So it would be a great challenge for the literacy designers who have been guided by the strong sense of feudalism, hierarchies in the society and elite orientation of education to include the story of *Bhutwa* in the Tharu literacy programmes.

Nokia 3510: Technological Literacy

During my field visit I gain valuable experience to recognize ways of knowing of Tharu women. I understand their world in multiple contexts in which literacy was seemed as technological project for me because it focused on making them familiar with the words and numbers. The objective of national literacy was to increase the number of literate Tharu



women without linking their day to day activities in national literacy programmes. I partly agree to Gee (1996), who identifies literacy as locally disputed form and believes that literacy comes to the social worlds to make possible in the future (p. 123). However, I found metaphor of Nokia as impactful as *Bhutwa* in the social world of Tharu women. Nokia for me is a symbol of modern technology and needs a justification of universal literacy on one side. On the other side Nokia as a technological literacy “permitted challenges to existing power structures by enabling those with the technology to exercise their new-found power. Later, increased personal mobility extended relationships once limited to the family and the tribe into broader communities” (Williams, 2009, p. 237). I assume that use of Nokia slightly challenged the hierarchies in the society. Referring to the data text ‘*I Miss a Call from My Husband*’ I don’t absolutely mean that including these two metaphors: metaphor of *Bhutwa* and Nokia 3510 in the literacy programmes may be completely useful requirements of being literate for Tharu women. If literacy practitioners made literacy relative to the participants it would meet the philosophy of UNESCO “learning to do” in the practice. It was hard for me

to label literacy under the philosophy of UNESCO's four pillars of education (learning to be, learning to do, learning to live and learning to know). I used these two metaphors to show how Tharu women are being interconnected with the local and global worldview, whereas literacy programmes have been departed from the local and global world view of Tharu women. Literacy based on the philosophy of learning to do can help them to solve the problems and make ready for work orientation. Using Nokia as a metaphor of anarchy, I showed the how technology helped to mitigate the layers of oppressions in the community. I feel the need of technological literacy for Tharu women to attract them in literacy programmes.

Holarchy: My Visions of Literacy Programmes

I have found the different ways of learning among Tharu women from their traditional practices, like worshipping *Bhutwa* and like using recent technology like Nokia under the metaphor of anarchy. I came to know that they could learn from their cultural experiences as well as the technical development which are manifested through the metaphors of Nokia and *Bhutwa*. Coming at this stage of research, I can comprehend what is going through the literacy programmes among Tharu women. How has something very interrelated to Tharu women have been missing in literacy class? I hardly found the presence of *Bhutwa* and Nokia in the classroom. I argue that literacy might have taken place as mono-logical the elitist framework of designing literacy classed. I envision a synthesis of *Bhutwa* and Nokia in the literacy practice to increase the participation of Tharu women in literacy programmes which might really empower them. Metaphorically such an envisioning as articulated 'holarchy' to describe the possible (W) holistic literacy practice that values learning as an act of integrating and relating sometime desperate 'bits' of knowledge. I believe that it might be possible through the approach of consentization, a critical consciousness of the participants of the literacy (Freire, 1974). The layers of critical consciousness would work as holons where the

fusion of Noika and *Bhutwa* may create ‘bits’ of knowledge. For me, it possibly is generated sharing the local and global cosmology of Tharu women which may make sensible 3R literacy for the most part social setting. I explored such social settings where people have been learning in mutual cultural respect and social regard. Holarchy is possible for me as a state of society including holons of hierarchies and anarchies creating a (w) holistic learning atmosphere. Bloom (2004) says that “Holarchies can be used to describe and analyze the nature of communities, such as professional, classroom, learning, inquiry, and school communities that attempt to function as apprenticeship communities” (p. 165).

I like to focus to an experiment of holarchy in the literacy practices describing how participants’ actions, talk, identity, knowledge, meaning, and senses change in the community over time. I imagine the state of holarchy synthesize the importance of words and world in a new space addressing the glocalized form of literacy. Let me explain this further.

Unified Visions of *Bhutwa* and Nokia: Glocalization

It is strange to me to worship *Bhutwa* because I learnt that *Bhutwa* are the evil spirit as being a son of Brahmin. Whereas, Tharu women have a sense of mutual respect to the gods whom I worship and the *Bhutwa* they worship. They link the story of *Bhutwa* with the great epics of Hindu: the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. But my supposition of claiming them il/literate has not been changed or

challenged while perceiving the meaning of literacy and development. In this context “glocalisation can be best described by the two-way border crossing metaphor that helps us challenge the hegemonic extremes of anything including both globalization and localization”



(Luitel, 2009, p. 334-335). Indeed, the exclusive view of globalization as reflected in Nokia does not help literacy practitioners realize the disempowering limitations of a hegemonic worldview. Social hierarchies (caste, class and gender) which I explained in the first section of this chapter described the obstacles of the enhancing their basic literacy skills. However, the hierarchies can be dismantled through the literacy if it has focused subjectivity, objectivity, global and local, transcendental and cultural, universal and contextual, and Western and non-Western exist side-by-side (Robertson, 1995), as a basis for challenging the uncritical importation of literacy programmes. I argue that social hierarchies and exclusionary practices could be mitigated while emphasizing (hi) stories of Tharu women in literacy practices. It further creates a sense of co-existence among the Brahmins and Tharu women because I feel that when the story of the Mahabharata and Ramayana get mixed with the story of *Bhutwa* of getting sense of literacy recognizing the different values between Brahmins and Tharu.

When do these literacy programmes recognize the wisdom and knowledge of Tharu women? I could not answer this question at present because my belief system has been shaped by in the philosophy of literacy as propounded by the NFEC and UNESCO. Fusion of Nokia and *Bhutwa* can create a third space literacy program which can incorporate the day-to-day activities of Tharu women and create a sort of engaging learning activities among Tharu women. The 3 R concept of literacy which is quite popular in Nepalese literacy program can be sustained when it is incorporated the cultural space of Tharu women along with their technological enhancement. In this stage an image of cultural transmission might be reflected as a facilitator rather than teacher (See Chapter IV), who can bring their lived realities in the literacy practices.

I imagine here the fusion of cultural and technological literacy which attributes the sense of freedom to Tharu women by promoting their cultural awareness, developing their

knowledge about the specific cultural beliefs, values and sensibilities that might affect the way to behave, think and learn. It may helpful for showing deep respect to their root and history. I focus on the Barki's tolerance which she might develop from the story of *Bhutwa* so cultural literacy helps to maintain the mutual tolerances and reduces the conflicts in the society. However, technological literacy is another part of the Tharu women which should be addressed in the current literacy practices of Tharu women. So that they can talk in cell while worshipping *Bhutwa*. "Throughout different periods of time, technology has both facilitated the development of democracy and has been an impediment to democracy, and this equally applies today" (Williams, 2009, p. 237). Technological literacy may help to rupture the hierarchies between Tharu women and local elites to bring them in the same social spectrum. It was important for me to envision a transformation of caste/class hierarchies through literacy programmes. This transformation might ensure Tharu women to live a life of dignity; enjoying equal access to educational facilities and equal opportunities in the job market is of paramount importance. I think this transformation might be impossible unless they start loving their cultural values which should be the part of their literacy practices.

Third Space in Literacy

As I raised the interactions and disjuncture between everyday activities of Tharu women and national literacy programmes under the metaphor of anarchy. While coming to this section I realize the need to create a third space of literacy to make an engaging literacy programmes for Tharu women. Third space for me is as Soja (1996) emphasized "two opposing categories to open new alternatives" (p.5). "In third space, then what seems to be oppositional categories can actually work to gather to generate new knowledge, new programmes and new forms of literacy?" At the same time I would like to cite Bhabha's (1994) concept of third space (p. 36) which generates a sense of in-stability of sign and symbols, a challenge to dominant conceptions of unity and fixity.

Coming to this point I feel the need of Third Space to design the literacy programmes remaining in the third space to challenge the traditional concept of literacy as Bhabha (1994) says while creating a third space. I bring Bhabha's concept of third space to depart the traditional concept of 3R literacy. Incorporation of *Bhutwa* and Nokia in literacy might create in/stability of literacy sign and symbols. I would like to show the definitional problem of literacy which could never mean that only letters and numbers mean people literate. The great sense of cultural respect of Tharu women should be valued with some preferences in a third space of literacy. I argue that national literacy programmes hardly cope with this situation of incorporating the cultural aspects of Tharu women as dominant concept of unity and fixity. Similarly, it shows that how do elites perceive the meaning of being literate promoted by only Nokia but not the local practices. Similarly, the dialectical relationship between the Mahabharata (oral wisdom) of Tharu women and the numbers of Nokia can be maintained in the third space of literacy practices as Soja (1996) project looking "beyond the binary categories" (p.1) of first and second spaces of the Mahabharata and the Nokia. In third space they share the mutual cultural zone where hierarchies and anarchies may not have rigid forms to be performed. Thus, third space may break the hierarchies of subalterns and elites in learning process; all might share their understating and learn in mutual relationship.

Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I have dealt with the problems of Tharu women participating in literacy. My observations of literacy programmes in Tharu village explored three types of obstacles. While doing so, I coined metaphors that represent social hierarchy, anarchy and holarchy and further reproduced in the literacy programmes. The metaphor of hierarchy portrayed the obstacles of Tharu women in a hierarchical society. Tharu women cannot feel comfortable to participate in literacy programmes which maintain the hierarchies in the society. Through the metaphor of anarchy I explored some possibilities which further

enhance Tharu women's participation in literacy. Based on the possibilities expressed under the metaphors of anarchy, I envision the literacy for all instead of Tharu women showing the cultural and technical assimilation with the subaltern Tharu women's agencies at the present literacy programmes.

CHAPTER IV TRANSMISSIONIST LITERACY PEDAGOGY: PAIN GIVER

Chapter Overview

Continuing from Chapter III where I portrayed hierarchical social structures and layers of oppressions as obstacles of Tharu women to participate in literacy programmes. In this regard, I analyzed the societal power structure that influenced the literacy programmes and practices. Claiming that legitimate exercise by dominant groups (elites) took place to subordinated groups (Subaltern Tharu women) in literacy programmes in society where hierarchies were prevalent. My ‘innocent wisdom’²¹, further observed that social hierarchies were translated into literacy pedagogy and thus became painful. In this context, I linked hierarchical structures of society with the transmissionist pedagogical approach of literacy. A set of research questions “how is transmissionist pedagogy mimicked in literacy classes? In what ways can a transformative pedagogy for literacy be envisaged?” emerged while articulating the pedagogical approaches of literacy. In my observation, hierarchical social structures linked to some sort of pain for Tharu women. While articulating painful experiences of Tharu women in literacy programmes I chose a component of literacy programmes, pedagogical approaches to concentrate on the teaching

BLACK CLOUDS

*Black clouds,
floating in the sky
above my head
are perhaps black letters
of
some black bibles*

*Black birds
(Hawks, crows and raven)
dancing in the sky
above my head
are perhaps black digits of
some black bibles*

*Clouds, birds, bibles
black, black, and black
like me*

*I see black clouds, birds
and bibles
Rest in the nest
Among the boughs of
Eucalyptus.*

*Right under the tree
confused Confucius
teaches his disciples
enormous Ekalavya
meditates on archery
sagacious Sanajay
narrates holy war of the
Mahabharata.*

²¹ My childhood wisdom which were not recognized by my family members

learning activities in literacy. Moreover, I further planned to unfold this chapter with three metaphors: ‘pain giver’, ‘pain killer’ and ‘pain healer’ partly relating with transmissionist, constructivist, and transformative pedagogy respectively. Moving around the metaphor of pain with pedagogical practices in the literacy programmes, I have envisaged transformative pedagogical practices in literacy classes as pain healer.

Transmissionist Literacy Pedagogy: Pain Giver

Existing literacy classes give some aspects of pain to Tharu women. Pain giver, a metaphor responding to transmissionist pedagogy is dominant in literacy classes. Getting rid of this type of pedagogical approaches I challenge the purpose of the literacy, strategies of literacy programmes and impacts of literacy classes through the pedagogical practices. Goodson (1998) says, “transmission is a one –way communication; it is to ‘pass on, hand on’ knowledge as characterizing any educational incident that sets the learning of knowledge previously planned or defined by the teacher as the basic objective” (p. 27). Believing so, I reflect on transmissionist pedagogical approaches which I perceive as the imitation of formal school practices rather than imitation of their cultural production. Thuladhar (1994) analyzed the output of the literacy classes broadly under the non formal education sector, thereby comparing the aptness of pedagogy and andragogy for the illiterates (pp. 29-31). Let me present snippets of pedagogical practices in literacy class via the following the data texts.

Sahili Tharuni Speaks, “I Know Nothing”; So Do I?

It is April 17, 2010 around 12 noon, I am almost boiling in the blistering hot of a mid afternoon. I walk in the narrow gully of village carrying a bag. I had kept a notebook and a pen in it. I am heading towards the field²² to observe the change that the literacy practices probably brought in my village among the Tharu women.

²² Research field

Now, Let me start by informing my purpose why I am here for data collection of my research, which is provisionally titled as “Subalterns, Elites and Literacy” for my M. Phil. dissertation but I have not been sure about the research title yet. I am sure that I explore the literacy practices of Tharu women. Perhaps I would change the title of the dissertation. Why shouldn't I?

I would like to share my experience as a transformative researcher. It is my first field visit for ethnographic (‘critical’ and ‘auto’) research. I have not completed any other research studies using such methodological heuristics thus far. I am almost perplexed when I am in the research field. Sometimes, there are few challenges to be a critical ethnographer for me at that time. How much can I maintain my quality standards in the field? My mind is muddled with quarries about the ways to deal with participants.

Where is my mind situated? My major two challenges are to maintain quality standard and to adhere to research ethics. I am partly uncertain about my research activities in the field. What type of field activities could guide me in initial stage to explore the lived realities of Tharu women and their literacy? What is certain in this world?

Performance pulls my attention for writing as inquiry. It is my first moment of challenging the positivist writing.

I have some core theoretical ideas about research stages, process and channels as methodological heuristics which I learnt in the university classes. Still, I am feeling difficulty to fit these methods in the field. Whereas my supervisor referring to Madison (2005) always says that he never counts the exactitude of methods rather he prefers meaningful uses of them. “I hoped the performance would provide such a class through the descriptions and narratives...” (p.538). I, therefore plan to capture the performance of my participants in the literacy classes at first. I decide to speak less and observe more in the first few days of data generation as following Carspecken (1996) who suggests that the first stage of the field

covers the mainly five stages- they are, “compiling thick description, keeping a field journal, doing a passive observation, selecting periods for intensive observation and rational for the passive observation”(p. 44). I follow Carspecken silently without any queries and confusion at the beginning of my research work. I try to write as much as I can.

That night I almost do not sleep, I write this field journal.

In my mind I have, “I know nothing”

It is another day of April, 2010. I feel that those passive as Carspecken (1996) stated in this observations of participants may not be sufficient to explore the lived reality of Tharu women. I need to engage with Tharu women with a view to grasp emergences in the field. So I make some broader criteria to talk about literacy classes with my research participants.

“Hello! Who is there?” I ask, standing outside the house where literacy classes have been running. I wait there for a while but I do not get any response from inside. I think it is not necessary to wait outside of the house and prepare myself to enter. I am standing outside the door of the classes. I am blushed and the forehead got even hotter than rest of my other body parts. I see from there that two women are sleeping on the floor mat in the room. I look at them from the door which is opened. There are two windows which are closed. I cough intentionally and they notice.

One of the women gets up suddenly. She stares me strangely. I smile. It is my usual response because I am unacquainted with them.

She says politely, “Would you like to sit here?”

I take a seat at the door on a bira²³. Then I introduce me as a student of the Kathmandu University and me as a researcher.

The youngest woman puts a query, “Research! What is this?”

²³ A local mat made up of stray, used for sitting for a single person, popular in Tharu culture

“A difficult question!,” I say to myself.

It is another challenge for me to convince them about my research. How do I make de/contextual meaning of research which they could understand? The situation is unlike the classroom of university. I feel that I am illiterate in front of them. Is my supervisor literate? Are my other teachers literate? How could they make these women understand about research, if they were here? I suspect that university has been producing the semi literate people like me. I have hardly learnt anything that helps translate classroom knowledge in community. But I attempt to satisfy research participants about what research is about. I translate the word research into Nepali at first but the hurdles are expanding greater I have to be decolonized myself from the “disciplinary boundaries, writing genres, and the ethics and politics of social scientific inquiry and presentation” (Richardson, 2000, p.2). I think that I may not make her certain about research that I am doing under the critical ethnographic frame as “intense self other interaction that usually marks fieldwork and mediates the production of the ethnographic narratives” (Foley &Valenzuela, 2005, p. 217).

Is it just my wishful thinking or hallucination to make them comfortable regarding my research? Now I start to build rapport with these two women. One of them is found to be the participants of the literacy classes but she isn't Tharu. It's a dilemma whether I can include voices of non Tharu woman. I quickly decide that I cannot choose her because I have chosen Tharu women as my research participants. At the moment, other two Tharu women, who know me, come there to participate (or attend) in the literacy classes. I think there would be three participants in that literacy classes on that day but only two participate in the literacy classes. The woman who was sleeping when I arrived there goes to fetch water just before the classes start. It is a great shock for me as I see two participants among thirty on that day. I observe quietly although I expect that all thirty participants will be there in the literacy

classes. However, the two participants and a facilitator have started teaching (and learning) activities.

This situation has created a bundle of questions in my mind, about the plan of NFE, goals of literacy, development classes surrounding literacy, philosophies and myths of literacy. I further decide to observe the performance of participants in the literacy classes in the following days. I find myself as the spectator of “Waiting for Godot”²⁴. (All of them take their seat and open books, exercise books and gaze me and the facilitator strangely. I do not know who Godot is. I even do not know if he exists. Sam and Hamm main characters of Waiting for Godot are transformed here as Apollo and Dionysius.)

Apollo²⁵: Home work garnubhayo? (Have you completed the homework?)

(Nepali Apollo uses English term ‘homework’?)

Dynosius²⁶1: (Hesitating), Ka jan ta kasike karna ho? (How do I do? I know nothing. She replies in Tharu language)

Dynosius2: No, I have not completed.

Apollo: It is impossible to learn without doing homework. Why don’t you do homework? Don’t your children do homework for their teachers? (Harshly)

Dynosius1:----- (smiles looking at me)

Dynosius2: Neither can I feed my children nor I complete other jobs around my house if I worry more on homework.

Prologue: Extending the Story

Let me extend data text assimilating reminiscences of my childhood school days when I hid whole day in the bush instead of going to school. I bunked few classes of social studies in Grade Seven. I was terrified by my *social studies teacher* with his unsocial

²⁴ Samuel Beckett’s absurdist play I intend to show the absurdities in the literacy classes. Literacy participants are hopeful to be learned numbers and alphabets but it seems as Godot.

²⁵ I use as a metaphor for Facilitator

²⁶ Refers to literacy participants

behaviors. He even beat us severely when we did not complete the homework. I was afraid of 'homework' since then I empathize that the same frightening terror might bring worry to the literacy participants, Tharu women. The facilitator might have been referred as ghostly image my social studies teacher alike in front of them when they could not complete the homework. Moreover, I find few similarities between my *social studies* teacher and the literacy facilitator. Both of them seemed as if they only knew teaching styles, pedagogy and curriculum where students passively received as I used to. As compared to the objectives of the programmes, I never saw my *social studies* teacher with any teaching learning materials in the classrooms who used to carry *Samajik Shikshya* (Text book of social studies) in his hand, literacy facilitator also mostly appears holding "*Naya Goreto*²⁷" in his/her hands in the classroom. Lastly, both of them were in classroom emphasizing homework of reading and writing. I have borrowed the two metaphorical characters of Greek Gods Apollo and Dionysus as Nietzsche used to show the balance of dichotomy in the Ancient Greek Tragedy. Here, the Apollonian stands for light, clarity, and form, whereas Dionysus, as the wine-god, represents drunkenness and ecstasy (www.plato.stanford.edu).

Homework in Literacy Classes

Here, I use Ms. Apollo as a metaphor describing clean, clear, and competitive teacher who has been teaching literacy to those Dionysian Tharu women. Let me seek your consideration for using the term 'teacher' for literacy facilitator. Under such circumstances, few Tharu women attend (participate?) the literacy classes. From my fieldwork experiences I argue that they might not have felt comfortable with the pedagogical approaches in the literacy classroom. I depicted how homework was dominant in the literacy classes. Why reading and writing homework exist in literacy class for Tharu women? To what extent reading and writing homework is essential for Tharu women? Why does homework represent

²⁷ Naya Goreto is the most commonly used literacy course which was developed in 1977, based in the pilot project in the West of Nepal (Pant, 2000, p. 54)

merely reading and writing task? What types of homework are useful to Tharu women in literacy classes?

Why homework appears dominant in the literacy classes educating Tharu women in literacy? When I asked one of the literacy participants about homework in front of the facilitator she said that doing homework was difficult for them because they could not read and write at home. She stressed the word ‘at home’ because there was a facilitator in front of them. Possibly, she was afraid of the facilitator to go against his/ her ideas of doing homework so s/he emphasized the word at home. But I hardly found that they were interested in learning activities in the classroom. I am sorry to use the term classroom as a defining structure of formal education to describe the literacy scenario.

Let me continue extending my data text “*Sahili Tharuni Speaks, “I Know Nothing”; So Do I*” by offering yet another space for *Sahili Tharuni*. She had a plan to start to start goat farming and organic farming previously. She was quite happy when she got a book, a pencil, and an exercise book in the literacy classes. In the first day, she also knew that was going to be taught. She was called to write in an exercise book but she could not write a letter; instead the exercise book itself tattered. Her colleagues started to laugh at her when the ‘teacher’ scolded. Since then she never attempted to go in literacy classes. I am not debating on the pedagogical paradigms (transmissionist, constructivist, and transformative) which differ in many areas. But, in this section, I would like to raise a question that is it the only and approach that would suit.

Why is homework so important in the literacy classes? While exploring the question I observed that literacy participants were instructed to sit with exercise books and *Naya Goreto*, solving numerical and alphabetical exercises. This exemplifies that traditional transmissionist approach was dominant in the literacy. The teacher based instructions like homeworks may not be useful for Tharu women. I discovered the more dominant voice of

the facilitator than the voice of participants in the literacy classes. The situation appeared to me that Ms. Apollo wanted to maintain a distance with the literacy participants being as ‘teacher’ with ‘students’. Does this relation help them to be learned? I found banking approach to describe teaching learning activities in literacy class as Freire (1970) described “the capability of banking education to minimize or annul the students’ creative power and to stimulate their credulity serves the interests of the oppressors, who care neither to have the world revealed nor to see it transformed” (p. 54). How do you (readers) feel when non Tharu facilitator speaks English with Tharu participants? What could be the greatest irony than this in literacy practices?

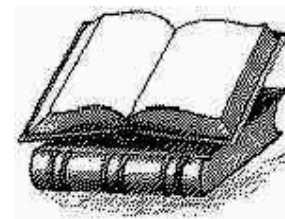
I used the dialogue between the participants and facilitator in the data text “*Sahili Tharuni Speaks, “I Know Nothing”; So Do I?”* represents facilitator as Apollo who always seeks rationality in a set form within the literacy classes whereas participants of the literacy classes symbolically could represent as Dionysius have some sort of wild ideas about literacy classes. Two dualistic forces between participants and facilitator in the literacy classes seemed to happen from every then and now. I could say that such dualism between participants and facilitator promotes exclusionary practices.

Ms. Apollo Loves the Bible²⁸, Naya Goreto

In my observations the literacy facilitator is in the centre of the literacy classes. She keeps on talking almost one hour looking at the Nepali Bible of literacy programmes, *Naya Goreto*. Tharu women patiently listen to her. I never see them raising any questions to Ms. Apollo. Ms. Apollo holds *Naya Goreto* in her hand during the teaching process. She always asks homework before she begins to teach in the classroom. I find them trying to do whatever facilitator says but they are not familiar with all those type of things.

²⁸ I meant to say that Naya Goreto is taken as means of salvation of subalterns like Tharu women through the metaphor of Bible.

Goodson (1998) says that transmission of knowledge from teacher to student through 'chalk and talk' is the dominant feature of transmission pedagogy which is dominant in the literacy classes.



I felt that instructivism was dominant in literacy classes rather than constructivism as proposed by John Dewey. Literacy has been taken as "...the linguistic perspective that views literacy as a technical process of acquiring reading and writing skills" (Stanley & Frank 2001, p.575), in the national programmes whereas need of literacy is different than its policy and programmes among the participants. These words and alphabets were detached with their lived reality, with their culture but hope of creating fusion in the global span enforced them to attend literacy classes.

Literacy Classroom: A Replica of Formal Education

When I started to write this section of research I was in a dilemma to depict the nature of the literacy classes. I admired Ms. Apollo's confidence that she knew the words but she was indifferent to the world of Tharu women. Perhaps, her confidence of being literate might be built by the ways she was trained and educated. Moreover, she followed formal transmissionist pedagogical approaches in the literacy classes. The philosophy of NFE in the literacy classes has been doomed with the pedagogical approaches of literacy in the research area. Today's NFE in many contexts means alternative forms of primary schooling to out-of-school children with less formal learning programmes for adults (Rogers, 1993, p.3).

However, I could not totally blame the facilitator. It might not be only fault of the facilitator. I argue that literacy pedagogical approaches have been based on the formal education system. I found that literacy classes have been adopting a rigid framework of transmissionism. For me here, classroom activities in the literacy classes reflect the classroom situation as in the private school where text books are taken for granted. I would like to give some examples of rigid frameworks i) I discovered that they followed the text

book *Naya Goreto* strictly, ii) they were compelled to do homework, iii) literacy classroom is dominated by the teacher, iv) I hardly perceive participation and interaction among the students. I find literacy pedagogy is painful under such circumstances it would be injustice if I criticized facilitator merely. Is it her fault to practice teaching and learning activities in literacy program as in the school? Why do I attack her? If I were the facilitator of the same literacy classes what would I do?

Thus I partly empathized with the situation of the facilitator whose mind seemed to have tied with the formal education system. I remember my school days how teaching learning activities were structured during my school days. More importantly, my experiences of pain giver showed the gap between the philosophy and practice of the literacy. It seemed to me that most of the literacy projects are in crisis because they followed the instructionism. In such case, literacy pedagogy is painful for participants like Tharu women.

Potential Pain Killer in Literacy Classes



Let me start this section with the metaphor of pain killer describing constructionism in the literacy classes. Not only I have experienced transmissionist pedagogy in the literacy classes but I have felt some of the glimpses of constructionist pedagogy which I labeled under the metaphor of pain killer. Perhaps it is the more significant than what I explored under the metaphor of pain giver because it is interlinked with what they believe with what they learnt in literacy classes. This form of teaching and learning activities are exemplified through student-centered instruction. Believing that literacy participants contain the knowledge not only the facilitator, I feel that learning is an ongoing process. I have observed these types of situation repeatedly in the literacy classes. One of many examples I have witnessed through the informal discussion among the participants and facilitator. The first

one I have depicted under the metaphor of pain giver equals to a technical matter that belongs in an educational school course on 'methods' second one is associated with the epistemological areas of learning (Papert & Harel, 1991, p. 1). The metaphor pain killer is tangled with Tharu women and their ways of learning in their own ways.

Sohani Says: "Preserve the Forest."

I would not normally find myself speaking up in favor of the literacy classes, learning activities and pedagogical approaches. Today I spend a very rare time with the literacy participants I am in the same classes where Ms Apollo has been instructing literacy participants. I observe something different today. It's not monotonous lecturer of Ms. Apollo. Tharu women are talking to each other in their language. I am listening to them rather than asking questions as an interviewer. While I am turning the pages of Naya Goreto, I find the voices of subaltern Tharu women. Anything I might feel is worth adding to exploring the link between Naya Goreto and the participants. Abruptly, one of the literacy participants shows her worries of deforestation.

Dionysius 1: Some people cut few trees near the stream in our forest yesterday. How hardly have we preserved it.

Dionysius 2: Who were they? They should be punished. I think they might be new migrants in the village.

Dionysius 1: If they were found they would be punished. But how do we find them, and who would punish them? It is a distant dream to punish them. I have not seen anyone to be punished but the forest is going to be finished.

Dionysius 3: No one is active leader in our village. All most all elite Brahmins have migrated. Who would go to the police station to complain? Police also would not hear us.

Dionysius 1: Police could not do anything. We should protect forest ourselves. Otherwise they would finish it.

Dionysius 3: What to talk about forest, our village is highly underdeveloped, isn't it?

We do not have facilities of drinking water, irrigation, electricity.

Dionysius 1: I know. Nearly 2 years ago it did not rain and our most of land remained barren. We could not have sufficient food grains to eat. People said that it was because of the deforestation.

Dionysius2: It is not the case of our forest only but some part of the forest might have been cut down in the earth.

Prologue: Generating Themes

I can hear that subaltern Tharu women are speaking today. I find the level of their consciousness of preserving forest is appealing. They are enthusiastically participating in discussion with each other in the absence of facilitator, pointing the facts from the literacy text book, *Naya Goreto*. On the basis of their conversations, I argue that *Naya Goreto* has a lot of possibilities to link with the world of Tharu women. I attempted to look at *Naya Goreto* with constructionist eyes while exploring their voices which are more suppressed. Some sort of fear in my mind stifled with their opinion of development and literacy. Their worries that they cannot do anything for the development of their village, make me to think the use of *Naya Goreto* in participatory approach help them to make literate and to grasp the national literacy policy. My experience of literacy practices inside of the classroom creates the span of constructionism which I capture when Tharu women became active learners and seek meaning of development and literacy. I am much concerned how Dionysus realized that deforestation is harmful for them. Where does she learn? Can we bring such learning practices in the literacy classroom? I am going to address these questions in the analysis of my metaphor 'pain killer'. Arriving at this stage I think that existing literacy programmes could have enough space to kill the pain of Tharu women.

I generated a couple of themes from the data text *Sohani Says: "Preserve the Forest."* First, I am much happier when I viewed the expressions of Tharu women who were speaking, blaming and sharing things. Isn't it an element of participatory literacy classes? They learnt with their conversations to each other. I would like to thank the NFEC which designs literacy for such people who really wants to learn through their experiences.

Second, I observed them that they did not have any pressures such as homework of reading and writing exercises. Perhaps, they enjoyed the classes very much without pressures (instructions of facilitators). I focused that the same *Naya Goreto* can be handled in a meaningful way to the literacy participants like Tharu women in my village assigning some sort of interesting work like starting from the oral tradition which was popular in Tharu tradition.

Naya Goreto in Constructionist Falvour

At this stage, I viewed the use of *Naya Goreto* in the literacy classes of subaltern Tharu women. I felt the need of such type of literacy materials like *Naya Goreto* that could be linked to their psychological or social activities of the literacy participants. Subaltern Tharu women resisted the traditional instructivist pedagogy which was mostly dominated in the literacy class. This could be one of the approaches to implement any strategies of NFEC to empower subalterns Tharu women. I wonder about the pedagogy applied in the literacy classes, the clear demarcation line between the participant's world-view and the pedagogy. I would like ask questions to myself how these women need to be literate. Are only the text books and exercise books sufficient for them? I talk more about their perception in the following section.

Let me bring the ideas of *Naya Goreto* from constructivist point of view. The topics in *Naya Goreto* as environment preservation and cleanliness, family life, income generation and agriculture, civic consciousness, women and development, culture and tradition, health

and nutrition (*Naya Goreto*, 2007) supposed to motivate Tharu women to engage in literacy class. These texts in the *Naya Goreto* bringing the some positive changes for subaltern Tharu women when it handled with the constructionist approach as Vygotsky stated that culture and language have important effect on learning, and learning occurs via social interactions (Tuncel, 2009, p. 85). The major theme of Vygotsky's theoretical framework is that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition.

The examples of constructivism could be drawn among the participants of literacy. I found them very inquisitive to learn something new and useful in her daily lives. However, their aspirations were not fulfilled. Shona, a participant wanted to develop skills of using cell phones after attending literacy classes. She could not operate cell phone to talk to their husband in United Arab Emirates. At the same time I suspected the philosophy of literacy which hardly emphasized on the curriculum as in formal education system, which is supposed not be applicable in that context as Street (1995) argues that literacy is not an autonomous set of skills but a variety of practices which are dependent on specific social and cultural realities. Here, I like to link the constructivism and literacy based on the idea that knowledge does not exist in an objective world, outside of the "knower." Instead, knowledge is constructed by people. I argue that literacy among Tharu women might have constructivist dimensions as Vygotsky focused on how meaning, connections, and comprehension are all influenced by social encounters (Tuncell, 2009)

Street (1995) focused on the social and cultural realities but I challenged his modality of literacy which ignore of the changing culture Tharu women like using cell phones. How can literacy make *Shona Chaudhary* familiar using cell phone after participating in literacy classes? Cell phone is a metaphor of changing lifestyles of Tharu women. Here, I would like to say that a door has been knocked by globalization. I raise a question in this context, how can their ways of learning be the part of literacy in the global village? I remembered Maddox

(2010) here who claims that literacy is a global form, global understanding and global structure and his question 'who cares the inequalities' is my concern. I argue that literacy has been shaped in the global frame rather than local. Legacy of formal educational pedagogy has been dominating the literacy practices. I hardly observe that they have been using *Naya Goreto* assimilating the worldviews of Tharu women.

Contextualized *Naya Goreto*

After travelling a journey of literacy classroom with *Naya Goreto*, I saw many possibilities to contextualize it among Tharu women. The lived realities of Tharu women were closely associated with the chapters of *Naya Goreto* like Micro-finance, environment preservation and health and hygiene which were useful to Tharu women. Four participants involved in the small micro credit activities led by the development organization. I am a bit happy because literacy has developed the entrepreneurship skills among Tharu women. They invested money in pig husbandry and goat farming in the community. Still, literacy programmes have been guided by the relief and basic need support approach aims to share information. Some international organizations run literacy with capacity building approach aiming to empower women and children (Acharya, & Kiorala, 2006, p. 32). I am not going to claim that such literacy should be banned but I again raise the agenda that it is not ultimate way to be emancipated from the gendered, classed and caste based hierarchies in the field for the fulfillment of their needs.

I would like to relate the data text "*Sohani Says*: "Preserve the Forest" showing their consciousness of their resources. Though possibly, they were not familiar with the issues and politics of global warming and climate change but they had a keen interest to preserve forest. All participants agreed that forest was needed to live. I wonder how they would have learned the global issues of climate change and global warming. I was much surprised believing that

they could learn and earn from mutual sharing. Mutual sharing through dialogues and participation might be the two major approaches for constructivist learning practices.

Coming to this stage, I felt that mutual sharing of Tharu women in literacy might be imparting the philosophy of NFE. Walking with Tharu women in the field, in the forest and in the river, I came across to know some ways of knowing (like from elderly people, from the group and pairs) which were pertinent for strengthening the mutual sharing of Tharu women. Literacy class room might produce a live learning atmosphere among Tharu women if it was connected to their world and mutual sharing. Current literacy practices may ignore how the long tradition of knowing has been transmitted among Tharu culture. I assumed that homogeneity as standard norms of the national literacy programmes which might have doomed the beauty of the literacy for subaltern Tharu women.

Likewise, Sangita Chaudhary said that she felt more comfortable while looking the situation of women underprivileged like her in the *Naya Goreto*. She felt that they could have done something in the book but practically we could not do anything. It showed me that the text books based on the particular social context may not be the solution to enhance the social transformation. These bookish references helped them to dream as the transformative self as a bubble of water which could not last for long time. Why do the words and numbers appear like ghost for these women? Is it because of dominant instructivist approach in literacy classes? I came to conclusion that literacy classes might have lacking social constructivism as Vygotsky believe that the first level is the level of actual development where the learner has already reached, and this is the level at which the learner is capable of solving problems independently. The second important way in which Vygotsky thought learners interact with each other is through what he calls the “Zone of Proximal Development” (ZPD) (Carlile & Jordan, 2005, p. 22). ZPD could be the mutual sharing zone in literacy classes.

Transformative Pedagogy: Pain Healer

Let me start this sub section with the metaphor of pain healer envisioning transformative approach of literacy. In this section, I am hopeful of visualizing the liberated subaltern Tharu women through such literacy practices. Metaphor of pain healer (in this Chapter) gets influenced by Jack Mezirow's ideas of transformative learning showing that "adults coherent body of experience- associations, concepts values feelings conditioned responses- frames of their reference that define their world" (Mezirow, 1997, p .5). I would like to bring the frames of reference of Tharu women showing the stage of their transformative learning under the metaphor of pain healer.

In the Mandap: Performance of Literates

Setting: A court located at distant village. The court is particular in many ways. There are few academicians who are going to propose their ideas of literacy for dwellers of that village. Unlike the educated judge, a subaltern woman is having a chair of the chief judge in this court hearing the pertinent educationists who are advocating the model of their literacy for the subalterns Tharu women. I sue against the reliable educationists who fail to design the subaltern friendly course in education. A judge gives order and hearing is going on

Conventional 1: (Stands on the bar and advocates ideas of literacy). I believe literacy simply means 3R. I emphasize more on women's literacy programmes which are predominately functional. At the same time I do agree with some alternative education from 3R. My lord my vision of literacy for Tharu women have been guided by the "first tradition follows oral literacy which has been reinforced by the religious preaching. The second tradition follows scribe's literacy (assisted literacy). The third tradition deals with written literacy" (Acharya & Koirala 2006, p. 6)

Critical 1: Objection your honor! I question the first advocator's ideas of literacy which is not sufficient for empowering Tharu women. It neither reflects their culture experiences nor liberates them from oppressions. There might be layers of hierarchies in their society regarding caste, culture and religion. So I have tried to explore the oppressions in the society and designed the critical pedagogy for their liberation.

Transformative 1: My Lord! Each of them is romanticizing learning practices of Tharu women in literacy. (Smiling) my lord you know transformative literacy might be helpful to get rid of such types of exclusions and dogmas of literacy practices. Homogeneity of literacy programmes cannot bring any changes in the lives of the Tharu women. It might deal with pluralist point of view of literacy.

Subaltern Judge: Can you make it clearer to me? What do you mean by 'pluralist' point of view?

Transformative 1: There are plural experiences of Tharu women which might be gained from their cultural experiences. I see their experiences are hardly incorporated in the current literacy practices. They have their own traditional skills and knowledge such as fishing, farming, foresting, and fostering the knowledge. Can you incorporate all those skills and knowledge in learning process? Can oral tradition of telling stories of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana be brought in literacy?

Tomorrow all the subalterns male and women are gathered in front of the court. All people are worried to listen to the voice of judge. All the scholars are wearing neat and clean clothes and advocating their own philosophies on the literacy programmes. The judge is hopeful to get the solution of the literacy classes so that all the subalterns can be transformed as literate in the village. I am standing at the corner to report the achievements in the decision of the court.

The huge, fierce discussion is going on. Everyone seems radical in their own view. They seem very profound and clever to implement their modal of literacy in the village to the subaltern Tharu women. The presence of the local elites also is alert with the achievements that are paying attention in the decision of the judge. Some gloomy faces of the indigenous elite shows that these subalterns would speak and they could not impose their types of the learning approach in the village. The situation is interesting. Some women seem very energetic hoping that they would challenge the contemporary elite learning practice.

One of the subalterns stood up and said that they heard yesterday a lot. "I know your infatuation in letters, numbers, and alphabets. I know your interpretation about the culture. I would like to thank for Freire who approached very nearer to us and said about the critical pedagogy. But have you ever thought about our farming system. Do you know about our Bhuttwa (Spirit). If not we could go home you cannot do anything for our literacy. We will design our own literacy. We don't care either you regard us or not.

Prologue: Beyond the Performance

I construct a drama including the gist of main trends of literacy practices in Nepal. I have attempted to reflect the dominant interests of officials of NFEC, development activists, and academicians in literacy programmes. Here, I propose the literacy as emancipatory movement that is aimed by the subaltern Tharu women borrowing the ideas of Jack Mezirow's approach of transformative learning. Influenced by the transformative research (Taylor, Settelmaire, & Luitel, In Press), I would like to emphasize on the transformative approach of learning in literacy classroom among Tharu women. This attempt aims to bring up the activists, political agents educationist, and officials to think for literacy for the subaltern Tharu including the range of experiences of their perspectives. My intention of showing the discussion in front of the subaltern judge may create a sense of recognizing belief systems of subaltern Tharu women in literacy programmes. I raise three main

traditions of literacy programmes in the data text. First one is conventional thought of literacy which merely focused in 3R. This bureaucratic approach influenced the officials of literacy programmes, dominating with instructionist pedagogy. It seems to be as pain giving pedagogy and practices of literacy. Second I bring the voices of reformists who want to bring certain changes in pedagogical practices of literacy through the voice of critical pedagogs. I argue that this reformist approach of literacy may not be sufficient for the subaltern Tharu women. Then lastly, I bring an image of transformative pedagogy in literacy classroom believing that it really liberates subaltern Tharu women. Mainly, my focus has created a space for those women who needs to literate. While believing so, I slightly depart from Freire's critical notion of consentization or problematizing approach with Koirala's (2003) autonomous project of literacy. I would like to continue here with the subaltern subjectivity, their world view and liberation from the layers of oppressions could contribute to design the literacy project for subaltern women. How can literacy pedagogies liberate Tharu women?

Literacy and Liberty in a Transformative Literacy Class

Metaphor of transformative pedagogy aims to liberate Tharu women from all forms of exclusions and oppressions in the literacy classes, even in the society. I envisage that critical consciousness of the Tharu women should have been developed by the literacy programmes as an "integrated with reality representing things as they exists empirically (Freire, 1974, p. 39). From the reformists' voice I look from the perspective of learning to do philosophy which merely solves the day to day technocrat problems unlike the Freire's concept of problematization. "Problematizing is the antithesis of the technocrat's problem solving stance" (Goulet, D. 2007, p. i). Such as to increase their income and hygienic practices in literacy classes may not liberate them. These strategies reflect merely the philosophy of learning to do rather than learning to be live. In such cases, I partly, agree that some sort of constructionism in the classroom might help them to participate in literacy classes.

Constructionist ideas are more popular among subaltern Tharu women because perhaps, they increase the temptation of raising income and maintaining their livelihood is associated with literacy programmes. Are these efforts sufficient for Tharu women?

I envision a state of Tharu women who can participate in the literacy classes breaking the boundaries of Apollo and Dionysius. I mean here that the hierarchical relationship between facilitator and participants could be broken. More than this I aim to challenge the universalistic and particularistic pedagogy of literacy as imposing them to be empowered. I envision that literacy classroom materials may be created from art and music of Tharu women because I have experienced that Tharu are rich in music and art. I see the artistic creation of Tharu women in the kitchen of their houses. They make the artistic pot from the mud which can be used for cooking food and keeping water. I like to compare the Tharu Art to China clay. They put water in such pots in the summer seasons believing that water will be pure and cool. Similarly, I see an art on the wall of their house. It might be the artistic tapestry if they were hanged in the houses of Europe and America. Who would recognize the beauty of Tharu arts? Music is another form of artistic expression among Tharu women. They sing songs to express their suffering, pain and ecstasy during dancing festivals, during planting in rainy seasons and during entering crops. Music is a part of their life. I find Tharu civilization rich in art, music, and oral literatures.

I frequently bring the metaphor of Apollo and Dionysus from Nietzschean versions to show the deconstruction of the current literacy programmes as conventional I argues in the data text. Similarly, the reference of Nietzsche would be (ir)relevant here because his claim of death of god is one of the milestones to deconstruct the grand narrative of Christianity, and reference of the writing genealogical history. But I see the *Bhutwa* was born in Tharu community to challenge the existence of god before Nietzsche claimed. However, this does not mean to say that Nietzsche is the only referent that I am going to use in my research.

Instead I envision here, Apollo and Dionysius both dichotomies can be combined to generate a appropriate form of literacy for Tharu women.

Following the *reformists* literacy programmes in Nepal is something like Carr (2008) says that “ the focus in these courses is more on the context than the content, more on the informal (hidden) than the formal curriculum, and more on critical analysis than the development of lesson plans and classroom management strategies” (p.81). I argue that national literacy programmes have been partly acting as reformist but mostly, it has bureaucratic norms and values of Nepal courses and formal curriculum have been formed rather than making it contextualization.

While creating an atmosphere of the transformative learning for Tharu women I wish that the book *Naya Goreto* merged with fishing net and organic farming. I visualize fishing nets on the wall of their house. My hallucinations of integrating skills of Tharu women and literacy classroom might be grown as wishful thinking. They have skills of making fishnets, baskets, mats, and many other goods. Can't we use the things that are available in their community?

Can we not use local resource person in the literacy classes? Can we not 'teach' them in the forest, in the field and in the cowshed? Why do we want to 'teach' them? Are not we imposing books and text books as imposing elitism among them? It would be humorous to say that literacy is one of the ways to create awareness for the marginalized group of people. “Empowerment of women in terms of literacy usually measured from the development in the livelihood, family and wider arenas” (Bown, 2009, International Literacy Day Lecture, www.UNESCO.org). Is it sufficient? When I see Tharu women were either working in the field or at their houses based on the ideas of Mezirow (1996) they learnt in their own way from the nature, from their hard work, from the older generation, from their own culture. I hardly see all those things get incorporated in the mainstream of literacy programmes.

Chapter Conclusion

To this point, I go to the answer of the research questions. (a) The current pedagogical practices of literacy somehow are de/motivating for those who wish to be literate. So I used a metaphor of pain giver describing the nature of transmissionist pedagogy. (b) Some technical as well as cultural changes have been equally affected the learning practices of Tharu women. They were inspired from the global as well as local context of learning practices. I portrayed such changing tradition of Tharu women under the metaphor of pain killer where literacy kills some sort of pain of subaltern Tharu women. (c) I find that literacy practices are detached from their social and cultural cosmology, if these traditional learning skills of Tharu women are emerged as literacy agenda it will liberate them. I described this scenario through the metaphor of pain healer.

This chapter has made able to take a stand that all the Tharu women in literacy classes are subalterns. Are those participant puppets in the hand of middle- classed elites who initiated the literacy as the development tool rather than bringing the changes among the lives of marginalized group of people? I found the layers of oppressions in the community reflected in the literacy classes. As the subaltern studies group focuses literacy education is the generative force of the elites and gradually reproduced among the subalterns. Pedagogy, I hardly realized that it is subaltern friendly. I see the literacy participants are like the students of formal schools. It is hardly disseminate the lines between literacy as non formal education and classroom of the formal schools.

CHAPTER V

LITERACY AND IDENTITY: BLAMING, (RE) NAMING AND NO/NAMING

Chapter Overview

Social hierarchies and instructionist pedagogy dominating the literacy class might deny subalterns like Tharu women to be literate. Under such circumstances the issues of identities of Tharu women are pertinent to explore how they perceive the current literacy programmes and practices. Dominant social hierarchies and instructionist literacy class room may reproduce monolithic identities of Tharu women, teaching them what majorities in the village do. For me, issues of identities are dynamic and varied in their political, ethnic and social contexts of Tharu women. However, I have focused on the ‘namings’ of Tharu women as primary basis of their identities. Based on this premise, my third research question, “In what ways is naming, a form of identity related to literacy? How can an empowering literacy be envisioned for an inclusionary space for their identity? appeared here. Now, I continue extending the metaphors of identities of Tharu women which are closely associated with the layers of oppressions and formal schooling practices relating literacy programmes. In this stage I explore three metaphors: blaming, (re)naming and no/naming so as to uncover the identity agenda of Tharu women in literacy practices.

Who am I?

*Am I like
Trees are beheaded
in the forest?
water soaked in the river?
so is soil saturated
in the field?
as grass greased in the bush?*

*Searching a human heart
Find a human-fleshy-being
I am blamed as a hangman
Searching a soul in my heart
charged as a madman
sheltering inside a house
scolded as an outsider
behaving with intimacy
treated as a stranger
My God!
I am excommunicated
from the vicious circle
Yes,
I am a tree
beheaded in the forest*

*They call me a pig
I like to tear their holy scripture
the red books
and Bhagwat Geeta*

The first metaphor of blaming as identity partly shapes their identity by the fixed social structures and action according to class difference that “aspect of self is assigned by others such as society, college student peers, or family” (Jones & McEwen, 2000, p. 406). I take the case of those Tharu women who might have been concentrating on individual struggle against layers of oppressions to get identity in literacy class. In this process, I study the existing literacy tradition with the identity of Tharu women as blaming. I argue that current literacy programmes have done nothing more than given literacy a universal (i.e. homogeneous approach) approach and thus blaming identity as among Tharu women exists.

I have presented another metaphor of identity as (re)naming. I use the metaphor of ‘(re)naming’ based on Foucauldian concept of identity in which he argued “power was the driving force in shaping identity” (Mckinney & Norton, 2007, p. 192). I believe that this stage of identity could be the impact of the existing anarchies (see Chapter III) and pain killing literacy pedagogy (see Chapter IV). I have examined identity from the anti-essentialist point of view at this stage of the research. So far, the process of (re)naming in literacy class might be a process of getting identity which is not “as static and unidimensional but following poststructuralist theorists, as dynamic, multiple and a site of struggle” (Mckinney & Norton, 2007, p. 192). The third metaphor that I have used is identity as no/(re)naming referring to the identity of Tharu women in association with social inclusion and justice influenced by non/essentialism believing that names are partly essential and partly not. This stage of no/naming is a dialectical stage of no/naming. Whilst believing so I bring some connotations of strategic essentialism in literacy classes for advocating the issues of subaltern Tharu women.

As to understand why I am drawn to the issues of identity of Tharu women, I feel it reflects my cultural and educational background, and more specifically, being the son of a Brahman and a university graduate man. My experiences as a male-learned-Brahman created

a sense of superiority for those Tharu women whose identity might have been doomed under the shadow of the several layers of exclusion and oppression (see Chapter III). I brought my reflections as a male-learned-Brahman (re)viewing how important is the identity of Tharu women in literacy programmes and practice.

Identity as Blaming

I raised a few agendas of literacy practice in previous chapters (see Chapter III and IV) as a social practice that involves not only the cognitive functions of reading and writing but also “values, attitudes, feelings and social relationship, including people’s awareness of literacy, constructions of literacy and how people talk about literacy and make sense of literacy” (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p.7). Here, I argue that blamed identities of Tharu women are reproduced by social and cultural hierarchies. At the same time I emphasized on the learning experiences of Tharu women which partly reflected their identity. In doing so the hierarchical structure of society (see Chapter III) seemed to negate their identity because of their cultural differences. I depicted the negation of their cultural differences as identity as blaming in literacy classrooms.

I observed various types of blaming such as that the facilitator blames Tharu women for not becoming able to read and write properly on one hand. On the other hand, Tharu women in literacy classes blamed the designers of literacy programmes. More so, I related the class/caste and gender hierarchies with pain giving literacy pedagogy (see Chapter III & IV) might have developed the identities as blaming among the Tharu women.

Being in the Mandap: “Am I Saiya?”

It’s towards the middle of July 2010; my field work for this research is heading towards the completion. By now, I am familiar with the names of the Tharu women and nature of work they do. On this July afternoon, when I am in literacy class, I am waiting when Tharu women come to class. Just to engage myself, I pick up an attendance register of

the Tharu women. Much to my surprise, I find the names in the register totally different from their calling names. They are called by their stereotypical names like ‘Maili and Saili’²⁹. I had assumed that they were comfortable with these names. Later on I come to know that they always wanted their first names to be called while being addressed. Isn’t that interesting?

On that particular day, I talk about their names. I start a conversation with one of the participants asking whether or not she feels comfortable calling her by stereotypical name. She tells me she is never ok with her stereotypical name. (Un) like any other person she wants her first name to be called.

“Namaste, ‘Saiya’ (addressed by her stereotypical name and can easily see the frown on her forehead).... S ssSusmita” I greet and we started conversing....

“Namaste” she replies, “First time I heard someone calling me by this name.”

(Stream of happiness was clearly visible on her face. I ask myself: Did she get her identity after calling by her name?)

“I am Susmita Chaudhary but people call me Saiya. I don’t understand why people do this. I like to be called Susmita,” she says leaning on the wall.

“I do agree with you, there is much more to our names, isn’t’ there?”

She seems confused at that moment. And says, “Might be.”

“Why do you want to be called Susmita? Don’t you think people know you better by your local name, Saiya? ” I further want to get her perception relating to her name identity.

“Yes, they mostly call me Saiya. But it doesn’t make me feel happy. Like Brahmins and any other upper castes I like to be called by my standard name. I cannot go against those who call me Saiya, no matter how successful I am. I believe this literacy will definitely give me my name.”

I become more curious to know about the history of her name.

²⁹ Stereotypical names of Tharu women drawn from the position (Maili- 2nd daughter or daughter in law, and Saili 3rd daughter or daughter in law) they hold at their homes.

“Do you know why people call you Saiya instead of Susmita?”

“I don’t know. Perhaps it was my parents who started calling me by this name at first. Then all call me Saiya and so do Brahmans and other people.”

“Are you blaming your parents for your name?” I asked her

She said, “It is not only my parents but the whole society that is responsible for distorting my name. My brother’s name has not been modified. It shows that my parents love my brother more than us (sisters). My parents feel happy and proud of their son although we do all the hard work and earns for them. Secondly, my family is poor and I feel such names reflect poverty and illiteracy. As I grew older, I came to know that my name was a stereotypical name. I felt if I had a name of my own as any other upper cast. I should to call myself “Susmita”. I started loving this name as it gave me a kind of confidence and freedom.

Then I ask, “Susmita, could you please tell me how you would feel if someone addressed you by your both names respectively?

“I would feel happy if someone called me Susmita and not Saiya”.

She continues, “it gives me satisfaction. Standard name makes me feel good and gives me a sense of freedom. “Well then, I will call you Susmita and I believe this will give you pleasure.”

So I joined literacy to get my name “Susmita”

One hot day in the month of July, I am among the participants talking about their identities and names. We are all sitting in the lounge of my house. I am talking about what identity means for them after participating in this literacy class. I started conversing with the participants

I: Ka bati halchal, Maili?(How do you do, Maili)(I am sorry, here I have used her stereotypical name instead of standard name just to observe her response and reaction.)

She: Maja bati.(Fine) (I can easily see the disagreement on her face.)

I let them to express about their experiences about names.

Participant 1: I am not educated so I am Tharu. Landlords use this name for scolding their children to show their dissatisfaction for any wrong doing. So I do not feel comfortable with these names.

Participant 2: You see it is our fate that makes us Tharu. If I was lucky I would be born in a Bahun family.

Me: Well then, what would you do if you were born to the Brahmins?

Participant 3: No work to be done. Rather I would have sufficient land and t education. I would be like you, an educated job holder having good quality of life. Sometimes I curse myself, my caste, ethnicity and gender.

Being in the Samsara: Name, Identity and Literacy

In this section, I expose the identity as blaming showing how names of Tharu women are being distorted within the social and cultural hierarchy. Believing that name is a primary unit of identity, I unpack the issue of names in the literacy classroom. Meanwhile, I am constantly struggling to explain Susmita's situation of blaming to her parents. I sometime accept that they became illiterate because of their parents. Probably, I blame existing social dis/order more which prevents them from being literate instead of blaming their parents who were not able to send them school. There might have been other influencing factors besides her parent's obligations that prevented her from going to school and to be an educated person like me. This might not be the newest argument; of course, I am just beginning to address the hierarchical structure of society and literacy practices through the narrative of Susmita.

Identity is an influential factor in adult literacy program participation is enacted as a “combination of thinking, feeling, doing, talking and belong-ing” (Wenger, 1998, p. 56).

Prologue: Situating Myself

It is 15 September, 2010. Since morning, it has been raining heavily today, which spoils my whole day. The wind is very high and I have been wondering if the Tharu women can make it to the literacy class on time in spite of the rain. I hear the roaring sound of the flooded River near my village. Who knows the river might be seeking vengeance against cruel people who cut trees. I suppose ‘maize’ planting season starts with this rainfall. Remembering the voice of a Tharu woman, “it’s not just maize. It’s our entire livelihood.” I have to cross the flooded river to reach my house, but I dare not cross it alone. I stand there a couple of hours waiting for someone who can help me cross the river.

*Nobody*³⁰ meets me there and shows sympathy to me. I think that s/he has the answer to all my problems. We walk side by side after

<p style="text-align: center;">Song</p> <p>Rich people move a lot We do work a lot We are always in hurry They have delicious curry</p>

crossing the river. Then all of sudden *Nobody* starts singing a song. I enjoy the song. I arrive at my house at 6:30 pm from the market. After having food in evening, I am lying on the bed and thinking “what’s my identity?” I am perplexed while going through the above piece of construction, ‘*Am I Saiya?*’ Can I relate my understanding of nation, class, caste, religion and work while articulating the identity of Tharu women? At the same time I have a question ‘Is it relative to raise an agenda of identity along with literacy programmes?’ for me advocating the agenda of literacy, it is one of the nation driven tools for women empowerment and social justice. Acharya (2004) says “literacy was viewed as an appropriate means to achieve the democratic practices in Nepal” (p. 1). How are democratic practices

³⁰ Nobody refers the identity crisis of Tharu women presented as somebody who needs to be literate for getting their names

enhanced by such types of the literacy classes where nobody wants to participate? If I have not understood differently, Tharu women can merely blame their parents, local and national elites for being illiterate. What types of democratic values are attained by literacy programmes?

Blamed Parents of Tharu Girls

Susmita was a young mother of three children. She was about 24 years old. I found the layers of difficulty for Susmita to attend the literacy classes. Referring to the data text, *‘Being in the Mandap: Am I Saiya?’* I would like to show that she did not like to be called Saiya by villagers and other people. I was concerned more on how her name was manipulated by the family and society. Susmita’s purpose of joining literacy classes was to get her own name but it would rather create a blaming situation for her. While, articulating Susmita’s blaming of her parents, the question ‘literacy for what?’ was pertinent for me. I was exploring the answer to “literacy for what? Who needs to be literate?” Does the purpose of literacy get fulfilled if they can read and write letters and alphabets? How can Tharu women start to develop harmony from their homes? Does literacy have something to do within their house? Can it hope to liberate them from the bondages of their houses? Or is it the space to blame Tharu women for their known inability to read and write?

Tharu women like Sustmita agreed that their names were first distorted by their parents, and thus imitated by the local elites. Literacy classes were inescapable from the social reproduction of hierarchies, and the literacy practitioners (facilitator and supervisor) used the stereotypical names of these Tharu women as a common sense.

Blamed Local Elites

I came to know that it was not only their parents who were responsible to distort their names. Local elites blamed that Tharu women are backward and thus unable to read and write in literacy class. So, local elites feel comfortable to call by their stereotypical names.

On the other hand Tharu people blamed local elites. I found that these elites hardly recognized Tharu women and their identity in the broader social context. I agreed with Susmita and her friends who blamed local elites for distorting their names. I was much humiliated because I used to call them by their stereotypical names. However I knew of their legal names from the literacy class attendance register.

The issues of caste/ class and gender hierarchy I raised in Chapter III led to an interpretation of oppressions in multiple forms. Thus they must have blamed local elites who have distorted their names to make them inferior. Here, literacy further created a clash between the elites and subaltern Tharu women following the hierarchical structures of society while calling Tharu women by their stereotypical names. For them, literacy aroused only hate and resentment because literacy transmitted the layers of oppression. From this standpoint, I argue that literacy divides people rather than unites them. They blamed elites that they could not read and write so I did blaming literacy practices which were limited to the words, numbers and alphabets which have nothing to do with their world.

The following two weeks of September, 2010, were unsettling for me, upon the deep reflection, I felt very ashamed of my so called learned reactions. I blamed both subaltern Tharu women as well as literacy practitioners. For me, blaming as identity was created by the social structures which distorted the names of Tharu women and their self might be doomed under hierarchical society. I realized that blaming as identity neither Tharu women nor literacy practitioners may be humble. What prevents Susmita to be Saiya? Is it feudal obligations and values? I observed that besides layers of oppressions, there might be other factors which denied the transition from Saiya to be Susmita. She believed that perhaps her name 'Susmita' created her identity in the society. Her aspirations were closely associated with the construction of 'self' rather than collective identity of being a wife of Tharu.

Blamed Tharu Women

When I got up in the morning, on a day in September, 2010, I found my mother was murmuring something. I didn't know what was wrong with her. I went nearer and asked, "What happened, Mom?" She was complaining about some Tharu women whom she'd called to clean the house.

Another time, when I was in the literacy class, the facilitator had been drilling multiplication tables whereas Tharu women were not catching her tone. On that particular moment, I noticed her desperate response. She said that they could never learn and they were doomed to cook, clean and work because they were Tharu women.

These two field notes reflected how the elites condemned subaltern Tharu women. They were blamed as being born to work, not to learn. I felt that local elites blamed Tharu women as they were barbaric and uncivilized and unable to read and write. Here, my understanding of colonialist interpretation was linked with the representation perpetuate negative stereotypes of non-Brahminical (like Non-European) people and cultures and how these stereotypes negatively affect the identity of Tharu women. In this moment I realize that neither literacy classroom nor social practices were inclusive and democratic for Tharu women. However, it was said that democratic practices might flourish with literacy programmes and practices. The role of Tharu women was set by the social hierarchies of caste, class and gender and thus their identity was shaped by these hierarchies.

Identity as Blaming: An Essentialist View

I understand these blaming situations as a "belief in the real, true essence of things," (Fuss, 1989, p. xi), here, I perceive identity as blaming has been taken for granted by the Tharu women (subaltern) as well as by the so called landlords and literacy programmers (elites). I hardly observed that elites might have recognized identity of Tharu women because they mostly blamed Tharu women as illiterate because of their caste, class and

gender. Following the line of essentialism, “the preferred mode of operation is static typologies and rigid classification, whose grids separate things that are everywhere, and under all circumstances, really separate” (Fuchs, 2005, p. 15), I question a universal claim of literacy as an elite project which helps to Tharu women to be empowered. Is it not an essentialist belief which never recognizes learning ways of Tharu women? At the same time I tried to find the shared characteristics of blaming as identity on the basis of essentialism “in which essences facilitate inferences based on group membership, it is unsurprising linked to essentialist beliefs to prejudice and stereotyping” (Morton, Hornsey & Postmes, 2009, p. 36).

My understanding of identity as blaming drew some components essentialism such as rigid categories of caste, gender and class of Tharu women. I also sometime get my identity associating with my family, society, class and gender. Sometimes it is easier for me to claim identity from categories (caste, class, and gender). Occasionally, I could be blamed for being activists. Perhaps, such circumstances erected on the base of social and hierarchical significance for imposing elite literacy project. I argue here that caste, class and gender hierarchies in the literacy class are maintained and justified under the broader ideas of essentialism.

One of the dominant categories of essentialism is gendered role of Tharu women. What makes the role of Tharu men and Tharu women different? Susmita asked me the question as an attempt to deconstruct the prevailing patriarchy which was dominant in literacy class. At that time I was not able to convince Susmita briefing the essentialist belief system however, it lead me to explore the dominant characteristics of ways of learning among Tharu women. What is it that divides male and female? Is it really nothing more than a category as an essentialist believes? Every time I learn of reproduction of gender roles in the literacy class. I wondered that have these people ever treated equally as the male in society? Were they ever called by their legal names in their family? I tried to uncover these

categories of Tharu women in relation of their identity. I agree that different cultural obligations are partly fixed with their roles in the literacy class. I came to know that that first they were named as Tharu women from their parents, like I was named by my parents and gradually their names were being spread in the village and community. These stereotypical names were reproduced in the literacy class as I raised the agendas of categories of identity from the essentialist view. The facilitator might not be so conscious about not using their stereotypical names. Nonetheless, their names in attendance register were different than their stereotypical names. They are being called by their stereotypical names and are being called illiterate. Thus the identity as blaming exists dominantly in the literacy class.

I was almost unsettling to this point. To what extent names are essential to Tharu women? Referring to the data text “*Being in the Mandap: Am I Saiya*” one of the participants said that “we are not rich enough and *bahuns* called us as distorting our names. These traditions had been followed in our community”. I was much stunned knowing that their social/economic hierarchies which are essential for them erase their names. I found that blaming subaltern Tharu women by elites as illiterate so as to intend literate them. Whereas, Tharu women blamed the existing caste/class hierarchy in which literacy linked thus, literacy project failed to give them their names. I opined that they wanted to be elite by their names at this stage, blaming others. So they were hopeful to be called by their legal names instead of stereotypical names. First they blamed their parents and second they blamed the local elites, senior Tharu women, men and members of Brahmins and Chettries community. Perhaps, a strange dream of Susmita to be recognized from the legal name at least in the literacy class might have been faded with time but her passion for writing legal names in the village register was supposed to flourish in the literacy discourse in the coming days.

Perhaps, there were some more reasonable arguments in blaming the elites for erasing their identity. However, I could not ignore other facets of reality that Saiya was more

popular by her stereotypical name. Everyone in the village and in her family called her Saiya instead of Susmita. I have never heard of incredible cries of Tharu women showing their anger to others. She took easily but she blamed that it was the dominating nature of landlords and elites to distort her name. This might be guided by essential beliefs such as homogeneous nature of names created a layer of prejudices in the literacy class. I would like to mention that “understanding the extent to which individuals hold essentialist beliefs about various social categories, and how such beliefs guide stereotyped perceptions and discriminatory behavior” ((Morton, Hornsey & Postmes, 2009, p. 36).

For me two categories of essentialism in literacy may affect the naming process of Tharu women. First category might be homogeneity of literacy class. The homogeneity was maintained by using the Nepalese language in literacy class as the national elitist norms and Tharu women are taught in Nepali language. They tempted to be named as elites in Nepali rather than names in Tharu language. Second category of essentialism may be the influences of transmissionist pedagogy (see Chapter IV) in existing hierarchies. Thus the dualism between caste, class, pedagogy partly exists in literacy programmes. Fichs (2005) states that essentialism often accompanied by a dualistic cosmology that draws deep distinctions both things natural and social, body and mindagency and structures (p. 15). In this regard, my opinion would be fair to blame the local and national elites for erasing their identity via names within the hierarchical structure of the society and transmissionist pedagogy.

Not only hierarchies and pedagogical practices but identity of Tharu women has been associated with the land politics as MacDonaugh (1990) said that the establishment *Tharu Kalyankarini Sabha* (Tharu Welfare Association) doomed the identity of Tharu women. He broadly raised the agenda of land among Tharu people claiming their identities. This might be a referent to me while raising agendas of essentialism and identity of Tharu people. His approach is partly interpreted from the essentialist perspective. He said that “the social and

economic situation in which the Tharu find themselves is one of gradually increasing diversity and complexity” (p. 297). Here, I would like raise a question ‘does literacy prevent to promote the essentialist beliefs under the diversity and complexity of land politics?’

I agree that the blaming of Tharu women is partly guided by an essentialist belief as maintaining the hierarchies in society. The society where they were destined to serve their landlords; where they were compelled to be *Kamaiya* and Kamlari; where they were bound to follow the social obligations which might maintain the status quo as literacy programmes do. Similarly, their identity could have been associated with the layers of oppression in the society. Identity as blaming of Tharu women in this phase get mixed with the perception of hierarchical structures of society. Thus, literacy programmes seldom reproduced in such a situation keeping a blaming relation among the participants. Perhaps, existing social values provide higher position to create the homogeneous names of the people among the Tharu women. I have used the term homogeneous here to indicate the reproduction of the Brahminical names among the Tharu community.

For me, expressions of Susmita about her positioning of class, caste and gender created a layer of their identity. These positionings are possible in blaming phase of identity and literacy class. I understood that she blamed her parents, local elites and literacy programmes. On the other hand, literacy practitioners blamed subaltern Tharu women. I could see a clear demarcation line between the elites and subalterns (Susmita and Literacy programmes). The boundaries between subaltern and elite have been further expanded by existing literacy practices as an essentialist belief system. However, I argue that identity may not something fixed and static, Tharu women and their agency could be active while attending the literacy class. I have not explored my identity after being graduated from the university, how I can present essentialist overview of blaming as identity in a structured way.

Moreover, I would like to play upon the shifting identities in literacy practices in the upcoming subsection of research.

Identity as (Re)naming and Literacy

As I continue the journey of writing this chapter, I come to realize that the metaphor of blaming is not sufficient while articulating the identity of Tharu women who involved in the literacy program. Thus, I raise few agendas of literacy articulating the identity as (re)naming. For me (re)naming is their social practice. In the previous section of identity as blaming, they changed their stereotypical names but here they often enjoys calling by their own name among Tharu women. I bring some performances of participants unpacking their ways of knowing from their situatedness as showing the (re)naming identity. Arriving at this part, why do I not oppose the essentialist identity as subaltern Tharu women who cannot read and write? Here, I argue that identities of Tharu women are partly shaped by their 'self' in that cases their identities was more affected by social and cultural background. At the same time I like to emphasize on their experiences that helped to shape their identity. The metaphor of (re)naming emerges from the concept of 'anarchy' (Chapter III) and 'pain killer pedagogy' (Chapter IV), showing the anti-oppressive situation of Tharu women. I include this stage of anti oppression identity of Tharu women under the metaphor of (re)naming, analyzing from the shifting essentialism perspective.

Being in Mandap: We Are Bound to Learn Nepali

Kauli is a bilingual, at the age of five she started to speak Nepali as well as Tharu language fluently. She speaks Tharu when she talks to the family members and local non Tharu people. Non Tharu people understand and speak Tharu language in this village. She even gets so many chances to attend rallies and fairs in the district headquarter in their traditional dresses. They speak Tharu language at home, in the field and in the forest. They

feel more comfortable speaking Tharu language rather than Nepali. But they can speak Nepali language fluently.

Sita Chaudahry says, "I mostly speak Tharu language talking to my family members."

Sohani continues, "I usually express my anger and hatred in Tharu language.

"If you were told not to speak Tharu, What would you do?" I ask another participant Kauli Chaudhary.

She smiles and says that, "It would be impossible because I have survived with my language." Kauli Chaudhary further says, "I do not have any complain to be Tharu, but sometimes I feel that my life would be more comfortable if I had studied like you."

Is it necessary to be named as Tharu women?" I ask further.

"I don't care whether (re)naming is important. People would know about our caste and culture from our names." She replies (I appreciate the (re)naming as a cultural embodiment)

Suddenly I hear another voice, "It is not always bad to be named like a daughter of Tharu."

I further move, "Do you feel any importance of literacy in (re)naming your children?"

Sohani replies, "We know from the broader society than the narrow classroom. We know nothing from the class. We are just focused to be learned the letters and numbers."

Kauli asks me further, "How does literacy help to name someone, it's not useful to us."

"Do you feel underestimated when you name as Kauli?" I ask further

"Never"

"Sometimes"

"Occasionally"

Each example Ms. Facilitator gives from his/ her own community while describing the lesson in the class. We never realize to include our names in the literacy class, but we have nothing to do with that course.

"I am a stranger
In this world,
And there is no one
In the universe
Who understands
The language I
speak."
- Kahlil Gibran

In the Samsara: Shifting essentialism and Literacy

For me essentialism is a set of characteristics which shaped the ways of learning, helps to maintain hierarchies. In my observation of Tharu women's learning practices perhaps were mis/interpreted on the basis of their caste, class and gender. However, these characteristics of caste, class and gender perhaps were reduced to undermine the learning process of Tharu women. Rather than essentialist beliefs, I experienced some sort of complex cultural and social complex networks of Tharu people to get their identity through their stereotypical names. In some cases, I found Saiya enjoying her stereotypical names very often. Sometimes, it sounded as a symbolic capital of her culture for me. Being more particular, whenever, they are among Tharu women; they didn't mind calling their stereotypical names. But whenever, they were with Other (non Tharu male and female) they believed that the stereotypical names were not suitable for them. Mostly Tharu women felt esteemed when they were called by their own legal names. At that moment, I felt that the use of legal name of Tharu women helped to attribute their identity. I perceived this episode of (re)naming process as shifting essentialism. For me, shifting essentialism may not reproduce the hierarchical prejudices and injustices in literacy class, rather 'allowing the variation' (Fichs, 2005, p. 15) of using their names. So I use the metaphor of (re)naming as showing the cultural connectivity with their names along with literacy class. Shifting essentialism allowed variations as an added advantage without making a philosophical choice for or against essentialism (Fichs, 2005, p. 16). I understood fluid essentialism to describe identity

as (re)naming based on my empirical observation, exploring the skeptical features of Tharu women, their multiple experiences of getting identity and constructivist literacy pedagogy.

Prologue: Allowing Variations

Let me start this paragraph juxtaposing the poem of Khalil Zibran ‘I am a stranger in this world....’ Nobody knows the language of their grievances. Kahlil Zibran rightly expressed the actual ground reality of Tharu women who have been participating in the literacy programmes. They looked like stranger at their houses where their parents treated them like a worker. Their parents might think that they were born to work, were born to get married, and were born to be Kamlaries. I partly understood their strong sense of hatred to parents and local elites during their work. I don’t mean that they would not love them. However, they could not tolerate the injustices in a family and in a society from their parents showed sense of hatred. Why did they show anger to their parents? What can be done to be recognized in the society? Believing that name is the primary basis of an individual’s identity, I have focused named as the elementary attachment of an individual. Strong belongingness to their individualism might give identity of Tharu women not only in literacy programmes but in the society. I sensitized my participants’ belief system of (re)naming which were keen to write their names after being literate. They wish that their names should sound unlike typical Tharu names like Saiya. I was further inquisitive to bring the nature of identity in the complex oppressive power networks in literacy programmes as fluid essentialist perspectives.

Language Variation and Literacy

When I completed the field visit in September, 2010 I was much inclined to critical pedagogical tradition to explore the diverse sources of information believing that criticality could respond to different forms of diversity of Tharu women rather than essentialist approach of identity as blaming. I focused the different point of views of the Tharu women

on what literacy meant for them. From autonomous tradition (see Chapter III) and constructivist literacy pedagogy (see Chapter IV) I claimed the stereotypical names of the Tharu women were produced by oppressive social power networks. Susmita was trying to struggle against these types of oppressive power networks through literacy (*Being in the Mandap: Am I Saiya*). I also believed from the essentialist perspective that such stereotypical names of these Tharu women were doomed with the shadow of local elites and hierarchy of the society. At the same time I would like to address the subjectivity of Tharu women, while articulating their eagerness of being called by their stereotypical names. In this stage I felt that stereotypical names of Tharu women might be associated with their language and culture. I come to realize that how “names classify objects and events and convey meanings and distinctions. Names carry weight, whether light or heavy. Names provide ways of knowing—and being. Names construct and reify human bonds and social divisions. We attach value to some names and dismiss others” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 396). Names of Tharu women were not similar the names of Brahmins and Chhetri as identity of Tharu women is not as static as an essentialist believes, it is shifting essentialism which recognizes the differences of their naming in their cultural practices and gives recognition through their names.

My mental horizon of literacy and language was expanded by the views of Kauli Chaudhry, who opined that she felt more comfortable speaking Tharu language. Now I am closer to Spolsky (1999) who says that language is a central feature of human identity. When we hear someone speak, we immediately make guess about gender, education level, age profession and place of origin. Beyond this individual matter, a language is a powerful symbol of national and ethnic identity (p.181). Kauli and two more participants raised the issues of their own native language. As they felt more comfortable speaking their mother tongue language but literacy lacked to be run in mother tongue based classes.

The report of Khadka, Chaudhary, Magar, Chaudhary, & Pokherel (2006) narrated the successful stories of mother tongue based literacy practice in Dang District. However, this group of Tharu women were deprived from the mother tongue based literacy. Tharu women would be benefited if literacy practices were designed in their mother tongue. Literacy learning in Nepalese language almost did not represent the voice of subalterns like Tharu women in heterogeneous society and their names were gradually distorted. Whether the society is heterogeneous or homogenous the name has a value as symbolic integrationists and socio psychologist in the micro sociology focused in the self and identity (Charmaz, 2006 & Cerulo, 1997). I came to know that some of my participants wanted to be named as Tharu. It was something like the process of (re)naming when they recognized the value of cultural insider as did I. I respected Kauli Chaudhary and her groups' consciousness to preserve Tharu language and culture if the literacy was designed in their own language.

Let me extend the data text of "*We Bound to Learn Nepali*" here, focusing my conversation to Kauli Chaudhary and her groups. Her opinion of valuing stereotypical names made me think from the fluid essentialist point of view. Some Tharu women like Kauli were bound to be literate in Nepali language. It situated Tharu women in their own positions as mothers, wives and laboureres. Literacy, in this context was much concerned for me to explore "the potential of literacy at the personal level lies in the development of self identity in social and emotional adjustment, in happiness and enjoyment" (Daniel, 2000, p. 3). Highlighting the values of stereotypical names of Tharu women challenged the essentialist belief system by interplaying of power in literacy classes for their identity to justice. "The foregrounding of identity in language and literacy education has led to a much more sophisticated understanding of language learners that locates them in the social, historical, political, and cultural contexts in which learning takes place and explores how learners

negotiate and sometimes resist the diverse positions those contexts offer them” (Mckinney & Norton, 2007, p 194).

Then I contemplated on the literacy pedagogy which was moreover transmissionist. Referring to the data text, “*We Bound to Learn Nepali*” I could say that it was the reproduction of the transmissionist pedagogy when they were made inferior in the family, society and literacy class. I would like to bring the sense of anti- oppression against the stereotypical names and their identity in the literacy class. It showed that they registered their legal names in the register and could enjoy to be called by their stereotypical names in their own community. For me it was not only blaming elites for manipulating their names but they challenged the oppressive situation in this stage. I found what they (re) name against identity as blaming which may be suitable for anti-oppressions because they were treated as the lower class/caste and gender people. The research of Narayan (2009) indicated that all *haliya/kamaiya* adults feel betrayed by the very people they worked for and regret failing to avoid this, largely because they were unable to read and write.

(Re) naming: A Shifting Essentialism

My argument of (re) naming draws some of the characteristics against essentialism as Fichs (2005) argues describing the multiple cultural experiences of Tharu women in the social complexities. However, I feel that use of the term ‘anti essentialism’ (describing skeptical, empirical observations and multiple observation) may be a positivist approach which could be further substantiated with dualism of essentialism and anti essentialism. Therefore, I think to use the term ‘shifting essentialism’ that may be apropos describing the shifting identities of Tharu women. In this case, I was suspicious to those Tharu women who might have been searching self identity rather than ethnic and communal identity through the literacy programmes. I was in a dilemma because it was difficult to explore to what extent

they would prefer essentialist identity and to what extent Tharu women want to be recognized by their ethnic identity.

I came to know the different myths beyond the naming process of Tharu women. Some of them were influenced by the recent Nepalese movies which showed the victory of protagonist against the feudal lords. Some of them affected with the local elites and renamed themselves. Some of them would like to continue rename from the day on which they were born. Like if they were born on Tuesday (Mangal Bar) they were renamed as *Mangali*. Their names in literacy class were not the same as they were called by villagers. Their wish to be (re) name was similar to the shifting essentialism, imitating the names from the communities for their identity and tried to be as local elites.

Tharu women have not got their (re) names in literacy programmes. However, they got names as working class women. Meanwhile I remembered a gloomy face of *Rajpure Saili* who threw the books and exercise books when she was embarrassed by her colloques and facilitator in literacy class. She was charged as a “crazy women”. What makes her crazy women? Is craziness her identity? Is it her fault that she could not write in exercise book which tore? Where can I see identity of Tharu women in literacy programmes? In this case, the identity of *Rajpure Saili* “constructionists conceptualize gender as an interactional accomplishment, an identity continually renegotiated via linguistic ex- change and social performance” (Cerulo, 1997, p. 387).

I would like to ask a question whether constructionist interpretation of literacy and identity has created a view of social justice not in terms of cultural preservation or autonomy, but rather as the “inclusion” of traditionally marginalized groups like Tharu women into a widening “democratic dialogue” with the literacy institutions and their cultures (Coulthard, 2004, p. 6) I would like to invent another metaphor of identity where people won’t confront

for their identity. The stage of no/naming in literacy can be enhanced in holarchy through the transformative pedagogies of literacy and creates the state of solitude.

Identity as No/ naming and Literacy

My metaphor of identity 'no/naming' imagines a culture of respect, solidarity and sensitivity to self and Others. In some ways, I articulate the sense of freedom through the new literacy practices which might recognize the differences from one person to the next. Shifting essentialist identity helped me to foreground the metaphor no/naming as strategic essentialism where names are partly needed and partly not to be recognized. Discussing my socialization and personal experiences within social settings of Tharu women I could envision freedom through new literacy practices to develop a sense of no/naming, creating a space for 'democratic dialogues'.

Being in the Mandap: My Interior Monologues

First the roaring sound of Tharu women, blaming elites for erasing their identity, and second the glorious sound celebrating their own language and learning practices. First type lamenting on the undermining behaviours of elite. Second types of sound lamenting on the loss of their names and identity. First sound complains to be an elite, second voice wants to be native. Where I am how we do elite create a state between blaming and (re)naming process. The process of (re)naming and blaming has been going on for the long time. I between I imagine a stage of no (re)naming. Why are we fighting or blaming each other for our identity? When will we literate to regard the other and their culture? Will we be literate to expand our heart to respect other? Do Bahun need to be literate to respect the language and culture of Tharu in my village?

Shall I be literate to call Tharu women by their names?

I am confused whom to be literate? Why do always impose the burden of letters and words to Tharu people? Can we be literate at first?

I am in dilemma to think that literacy programmes which have brought the radical changes among the Tharu women. I do not have patient to narrate the whole history of oppression of Tharu women from the subaltern perspective. Even, I see some sort of changes among the Tharu women after literating in the class. I can affirm that these changes might have brought by the literacy, awareness and education but I find it is the subaltern conscious.

Being in the Samsara: My Envisioning

I imagine here, how literacy practice could combine the blaming and (re)naming identity of Tharu women. I observed that blaming as identity was doomed with the hierarchical structures of society and instructivist literacy class (Chapter III and Chapter, IV). In this section, I argue that blurred demarcation of identity might be erased by new literacy practice. Hoping so, I envision the literacy practice which can develop the inclusive identities of Tharu women. They might participate in learning practices in the name of literacy. I have realized that name and identity of people could be justified with the time and space they lived. I was confused that what names have to do with their identity? Is it only names that give identity of the subalterns?

Prologue: Stretching my Words

I believe that heterogeneity of society might be reflected by the colorful picture of people. Thus, their names are different than others. It is a different pattern of naming. I do agree to some extent that the names of people carry their identity. I assume that names always do not have any relations to the identity. My grandfather used to say an Indian proverb, “*Nam se kya hota hei*” (Nothing to do with names!). But the passion of Susmita to be Susmita has something to explore. It is not only Susmita there were many men and women who were called by stereotypical names in Tharu community. She did not like to be called by the stereotypical names. Stereotypical naming process is a tradition of Tharu community. Other participants were not aware about the names as they got in the villages but

some of the participants were really haunted by the names. From the present practices of naming it was not homogeneous.

No/naming: Inclusive Identity and Empowering Literacy

I need sometime both names. Stereotypical names might give me my cultural identity along with the standard name does not let them to be inferior in front of the elites. Developing the same concept metaphor of identity is being emerged showing the dialectical relationship between the blaming (essentialism) and (re)naming (anti/essentialism) as a fusion of no/ naming (Strategic Essentialism). Let me extend the data text, “*Am I Saiya*”, Saiya joined literacy classes to be Susmita Chaudhary, she felt worthless to get her self-identity in the literacy discourse. Nonetheless literacy practices unlikely recognize the standard names of Tharu women. It might follow the elitism in a sense of being and keeping superior of others than the Tharu women. This distant dream of Sumira Chaudhary to be called by her standard name enforces her to be Susmita. Many times and I praised her attempts because she joined literacy classes three times in her life to get her standard name. “The fact that identity construction can be viewed as a process rather than a product should make change more foreseeable and open up many new political and interventionist possibilities” (Gosine, 2002, p. 94). Empowering literacy could be one of the interventions. In this case strategic essentialism could be one of the tools of liberating subaltern Tharu women that would open up engaging literacy.

Previously I raised the issues that identity as a very individual attachment (including the blaming) of the people. Later on I am not sure whether individual identity is associated with the ethnic identity of the Tharu women but when I begin to doubt that the invention of ethnic identity might be the western product. I called them by stereotypical names in the initial conversation but from the day when she raised question about her stereotypical name I felt guilty. I thought merely my ‘self’ respect and unaware to respect them. I felt that I was

pretending to be a critical researcher because I may need more than critiquing the tradition of (re)naming and literacy, being hopeful for transformation and literacy which must recognize their identity of Tharu women in society.

Susmita has been claiming to be a 'Susmita' which is obviously clear that she is woman from Tharu community. I asked myself that how identities have been constructed. Identity of Tharu women is temporal and spatial. Perhaps, Susmita's search of standard names could be another "common sense" of equalizing with the people of elite class. She compared to her status with the higher class and caste of the people and came to conclusion that it was not a justice to call Tharu women by their stereotypical names.

Narayan (2008) says that "their past is one that helps in their ongoing struggle of carving out their future against an oppressive present, constructing an identity that grants them the self-respect to elevate themselves above their present, still largely socially degraded status" (p.170). My research participants even were not radical to claim their names as standard form. They were habituated with the tradition followed in the village. One of the participants told me that she did not embarrass from the pseudo names as she was being by called others. The distinctions between the opinions of participants led me towards the social injustice. Though the tradition of calling male Tharus from their stereotypical names was another level of hierarchies maintained in the Tharu community. The narratives of Susmita made her to get her name as to escape from the dominance of the oppressions existing in her community.

Chapter Conclusion

I agree that Tharu women are conscious about their identity as self, communal and political. Self identity might be dominant aspirations whereas communal identity will be emerging consciousness of Tharu women but perhaps, political identity is injected identity of the Tharu women. These all types of identity have been shifting from the blaming stage to

no/ (re)naming state. One of the significant agendas of my research is to explore the interconnectedness of literacy and identity among Tharu women. I found that the agenda of literacy programmes which never perched to preserve their identity as diversified group of people. It rather assimilates the literacy elitism. Blaming as identity is the milestone to measure the literacy tendency among the participation. They hardly show that mutual cultural respect which might help to get their identity. Identity is particularly relevant in the context of Tharu women, for as I have observed, in certain circumstances they have been guided by essentialist notions of identity and literacy as a tool of oppressions, but as a way of overcoming these relations fluid essentialism is pertinent to describe. At last I envision the stage of no/naming creating an inclusive identity as engaging literacy.

CHAPTER VI RESISTANCE IN LITERACY: SILENCE, VOICE AND SOLITUDE

Overview of the Chapter

I shed light on the agendas of identity of Tharu women in literacy programmes and practice (Chapter V). While writing Chapter V, my understanding of literacy as a strong means of establishing identity changed. Before I visited field, I had an opinion that literacy helped minorities like Tharu women in becoming confident in reading and writing activities that helped them to be recognized. However, I found shattered confidence of Tharu women articulating agendas of literacy for them. They were rarely interested to join literacy class. I believed that their disinterestedness is a form of resistance. In this regard, I feel the need of linking their identity agendas with the ways they resist. In my journey of exploring identity of Tharu women from blaming to no/naming stage I heard exciting/painful voices of Tharu women. I formed a set of research questions, “how have Tharu women been resisting the literacy programmes? How can these resistances be morphed into the design of an engaging literacy programmes?” I picked some of stories of representing their resistance which show how subaltern Tharu women resist in the literacy class for their own spaces. In so doing, I represented their voice. I investigated their voices through their memoirs and oral tradition hoping to give space to their voices. Three metaphors of resistance: silence, voice and solitude emerged while engaging in such inquiry.

My Rainy Tears

My rainy tears

f

a

l

l. upon

the lawn of

autumn

Today,

I smell soil

in the first drop of

tear

An umbrella- rain

sweeps the dust of

narrow gulley

but my tears never

sweeps

dusty heart

clothed and tailored

with rusty mind

I perceived silence as dominant resistances among Tharu women. Similarly, voice as resistance can be visualized in their own circle. I uncovered the history of these Tharu

women while exploring silence and voice resistance in literacy class. I would analyze both types of resistance from the postcolonial perspectives. At the end of the chapter, I envisioned the solitude through the literacy practices among Tharu women. My envisioning at the stage would be an irresistible moment when mutual respect and social inclusion might be blended with their self formation in literacy programmes. This chapter explores the unheard voices of Tharu women in the literacy discourse under three major sections:

Unheard Voices of Tharu Women

I have been observing Ms. Apollo instructing Tharu women and asking for homework most of the time in literacy class. This event takes me back to when I was a school student. I was quite afraid of teacher and could not resist at all. I remember how I faced my teacher when I did not complete my homework. Did I speak against/to him? (Chapter IV) I ask myself this question when I observed that Tharu women have rejected the literacy class. My childhood reminiscences (Chapter IV) remind me I would have liked to resist against my *social studies teacher* but I couldn't because if I had shun from the class, my teachers and parents would have punished me. I guess that the same sort of situation might occur to subalterns like Tharu women in literacy class. I argue that they resist literacy class showing their ir/reluctance to participate in literacy. I would like to concentrate on the social injustices which have been subjected them to multiple forms of oppression and exclusion (Chapter III). Their voices are mostly supposed to be un/hearable and invisible but I believe that they have been resisting against the current literacy practices. Let me start this section by articulating a metaphorical narration of the portrait.

Being in the Mandap: "Portrait Speaks Up"

It is another hot day in June, 2010. I am opposite a portrait hanging on the wall near the blackboard in the literacy class. I am gazing at the portrait silently, sitting on a mat. I don't find myself engaged in the learning activities which are taking place in that class. I

rather enjoy viewing the portrait. Like me the ‘Other’ literacy participants might not be interested in learning activities. My observations make me think that some un/natural activities are going on there, without any purpose at all. All of sudden, I feel that the portrait smiling at me and I am shocked “Why does it smile at me?” Surprisingly the portrait starts speaking now:

“What do you think when your student leaves while you are teaching in the classroom?” The portrait asks me as if I were a teacher.

“Why does the portrait ask me such question?” I whisper to myself.

“I might feel embarrassed”, I say honestly.

“Do you feel hurt?”, It asks.

“Yes, of course it hurts me because I am a teacher.”

I think the portrait poses a bundle of questions to me, on my art of teaching, on my pedagogical knowledge and skills.

“Why do you feel so?”

I can’t answer immediately because I do not have any readymade answer. I might be looking like a philosopher contemplating on the question.

“I feel that I have failed in carrying out my duty as a teacher.” I say to it.

“Mr. Young man I am going to narrate to you a story of these participants who are thought to be literate in this room about why does ‘your’ literacy fails to attract these Tharu women. And it is very important to hear their silenced voice. It is not exactly you have described in Chapter III (Hierarchy, Anarchy and Holarchy)” says the portrait.

“How do I tolerate being hanged on the wall for 2 long months among these participants? I compare my situation and the situation of those literacy participants. Is it the same as the Tharu women hanging by the thread of literacy discourse? However, I cannot resist my presence on the wall, whereas these women started resisting the elite literacy

project. It is wonderful that they resist the literacy discourse silently. At first, there is a flicker of enthusiasm among them but it gradually dies down. Are they responsible for losing their interest in becoming literate? Can you propose an alternative discourse for them?"

"What do you think about their indifference towards your literacy?" Why does a 'teacher' always complain about them? Why do they move away when they know the class is about to begin?"

The portrait is narrating the day- to -day perceptions of these Tharu women who have never seen that education liberates them. "SA VIDYAM BIMUKTAYA" (Education liberates) has been taught only to the sons of Brahmins. The Tharu people are taught to work. How can a girl who spends nearly 15 years in the courtyard of Brahmins as a Kamlari be a literate like you? How does literacy serve the interest of Tharu women when they get married, become mothers, and produce babies? What is the use of literacy when they cannot escape from the bondage of Bahuns?

Being in the Samsara: Silenced Resistance of Tharu Women

In my composite, *Portrait Speaks Up*, the portrait has been hanging on the wall since literacy class began. I think that it is the only complete witness of the participants in the literacy class. I am articulating their silence in literacy class as resistance. Does their silence mean that they have accepted the existing literacy pedagogies in a meaningful way? A bit skeptical with their silence I further attempt to explore their perception from the resistance point of view. I perceive their silences as a form of resistance. I could answer literacy professionals and practitioners who usually blamed Tharu women as hard to make literate.

Probably, I need to contemplate on the 'archeological' structure of literacy which originally emphasized 3R (reading, writing and numeracy) which rarely motivate Tharu women to speak of their cultural experiences in the literacy class. I started to think of their silence as disruption of literacy programmes. I have come to realize that existing literacy practices further deepened their silence because a sort of national normative discourse of literacy dominates the voice of subaltern Tharu women.

My fate

I know
I wander
in opposite poles
have not declared a war yet,
a war to be fought
with silence
voice and
solitude
many times
I have been killed
in the forest
Sometime
I was butchered
in chaos
Sometime,
murdered in mass.

Resistance of Tharu women may not be hearable to elite right from the beginning of literacy programmes. Every year they take all the learning materials which are freely distributed by the elites (those who want to make them literate) but rarely used them. I ask one of the participants who smiles at the portrait, "Why do you take all the materials if you do not use them properly?" "It is useful to our children but it is worthless to us." she says. "I am called and requested to take this class but I am not really interested in literacies. I do not like to be regular in the literacy class."

Resistance and Learning

I brought some of my reflection on resistance are largely the outcomes of the Tharu women's conviction that they were unable to learn. I would like to focus on the contradiction in literacy programmes and practices through the narration of the portrait. It has been assumed that illiterate women may become more verbal and speak against the injustice they have been suffering from. I tried to search the soul of portrait in its narration fairly describing the situation of the Tharu women as literacy participants. Narration of the portrait may move around me and I possibly represent somewhere in the narration. I argue that dialogues in literacy classes could empower Tharu women, and the portrait was much more

dialogical than the participants. I created dialogues with a portrait which was hanging in the literacy class. I saw the portrait there on the wall the first time I visited the literacy class. How can I assume that this sort of silence in literacy class empowers subaltern Tharu women to speak of any sort of social prejudice and hierarchy? Indeed, I cannot see any hope of these Tharu women speaking against social and gender hierarchies.

I started by reflecting upon the vacant space in the literacy classroom of the subaltern Tharu women in the village. Vacant space for me is a gap among the participants and practitioners of literacy, as I raised the agendas of shared space of subaltern Tharu women and literacy practitioners (Chapter, IV) which and as a result the setting in of gradual silence. Those Tharu women, who just sat in the classroom, participated in the literacy programmes and helped increasing the number of literate did not have any changes in their lives. Same sort of feelings emerged when I observed that they would like to avoid literacy class silently.



Silence for me to some extent becomes a strategy for disruption because it is one of the forms of the resistance of Tharu women, exposing the limits of monotonous literacy programmes (3 Rs) which is as linear as the parroting alphabets, numbers and words. In this context, I remember a Mexican ancient tale in which a parrot became a teacher after spending some part of its time with a teacher (Eds, M. Nissani & Lohani, 2008, p. 99-101). I believe that a need of more comprehensive understanding of literacy to be resembled with the mode of silence of Tharu women. I need to take into consideration the manner in which Tharu women's physical presence in the literacy affects the relationship between literacy programmes and participants. Silence might be the core feature of their resistance against literacy discourse. At this stage I find that literacy has been guided by the UNESCO's notion in 1946 as a basic education.

Silence as a metaphor of resistance depicts how silently Tharu women avoid literacy. They pretended to work at their homes, to go field, and to fetch water instead of going to literacy class. Indeed, my experience revealed that Tharu women evaded the existing literacy practices silently. I argue that their physical absence in literacy class is a type of resistance which has been performed silently. In the literacy class they mostly remained silent in carrying out learning activities in the class. They think that it's better to spend their time working in the field, in the kitchen, in the cowshed and in the river rather than participating in literacy programmes. They were often called to take part in literacy class but they were disinterested to read and write in monotonous ways. It could be the impact of the dominant elite approach to educating (making literate) Tharu women (see Chapter IV) and resistance in the lives of the Tharu women belonging to the different cultural and political sphere of life is visible.

Resistance of Tharu women seems to me as “debates that are at the heart of the sociological perspective, including power and control, inequality and difference, and social context and interaction” (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004, p. 551). From this stand point, I am mindful about the resistance of these Tharu women who were victimized by social injustices and inequalities in the village. Can I assume that it is elitism that makes Tharu women silent? For me their silence could be understood as resistance because they were doomed under inequality and discrimination. I discovered a sort of resistance through their silence. I accepted that unspeakable voices of Tharu women have been reflected in their disinterestedness towards learning in the literacy class. I guess that their silenced voices may be ambivalent for the elites who have designed literacy programmes in a way that subalterns cannot adjust. It was hard for me to see any pedagogy of hope among the Tharu women in literacy programmes as described by the critical pedagogues (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1983;

*Still, I wonder in the forest
In the hilltop
around the trench
above the fence
like winter wind
In the first drop of rain
I smell soil*

McLaren, 1993). Critical pedagogues believed that literacy is inseparable from understanding their place and time in the world. As they consistently state to their members, their aim is not merely to contemplate the world but to act upon it. In total contrast is the absence of assimilation between the notion of literacy and the philosophy of critical literacy for Tharu women. I suspect that these elite literacy programmes may fail to honour the critical and creative world of the Tharu women and being merely a reproduction of elite practices that the subaltern like Tharu women cannot tolerate. The burden of the dead words and letters was so great that they tried to escape from the literacy class.

Voice: Metaphor of Visible Resistance

For me, the voice of subaltern like Tharu women brings “a revision or shift in perspective: agency of change is located in the insurgent or the ‘subaltern’” (Spivak, 1988, p. 3). I attempted to link the subaltern voice as Spivak used in the broader social/cultural context and the literacy discourse in this section. In this section I argue that literacy which gives a space to speak for Tharu women can change the historical perspectives of literacy philosophy to include their voice. Voice for me is stronger than silence, filled with consciousness of right and identity of Tharu women. I observe silence as a type of mild resistance in literacy class, though I find the de/motivating factors to attract Tharu women to the traditional literacy teaching and learning process. I rather search for the contradiction in literacy programmes representing voices of the subaltern Tharu women. I partly depend on one of the subaltern theories, not passively accepting a condition of eternal oppression but accepting, “subaltern conscious as an emergent collective conscious” (Spivak, 1988, 15).

Being in Mandap: “Literacy Sucks”!

On a bright sunny morning of May, 2010, I am talking to my research participants in the open barren land. I look around the field; cattle were grazing as free as the west wind. All of a sudden I hear a sound the melodious voice of Tharu women singing a song of the Mahabharata. They seem happy with their animals, fields, wind, knives, and leaves³¹. I approach nearer to one of the participants and started the discourse with Tharu women on literacy.

“I have never been admitted to any schools and such types of (literacy) classes in my life.” A middle aged Tharu woman is narrating her hi/story. My embodied experiences make me reclus that she was a victim of the social hierarchies and gender discrimination due to which she has never been admitted to schools or any other classes like literacy.

“Is it her resistance?” I ask myself.

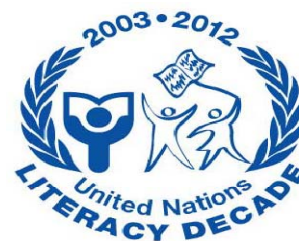
“Surely not!” I answer myself.

I am curious to know why she is not interested in learning and ask her, “Why don’t you join literacy?”

She boldly replies “literacy sucks!” I am surprised at her answer.

“Don’t you send your children to school? Can’t you engage them in the field instead of sending them to school?” I counter her.

Ignoring my question she says “My childhood was spent as a Kamlari in the courtyard of landlords. It was a sin even to think of going to school at that time for Tharu girls. For 10 years of my life I was imprisoned at landlord’s house. It was agony for me as a Kamlari. Then I got married at fourteen but my husband left me. I started staying at maternal home for which I was regularly condemned so I married again. I became a housewife. How can I read and write? I was trained to wash clothes, to work in gardens and



³¹ These leaves are used to make taparies (plates)

fields, to clean the houses of landlords, to work at their houses. When can I go to school? In my situations how do I dare to become literate? Do you think it is an appropriate time for me to be literate? What can I do by being literate? What is the use of being literate?"

She poses a bundle of questions to me which I am trying to answer in this section. , I give more space to her voices instead of my experiences.

"Have you ever thought at fighting against landlords, family and social hierarchies?" I want to hear her voices.

"When I am compelled to work with an empty stomach I get annoyed with the landlord and his family but never think of revolting against them. I usually talk to my family and husband about my compulsions to work in an empty stomach. They tell me to continue my work because if we do not work at landlord's houses and they will not give us land to plough. Angrily, I quarrel with my family members especially with father. My father hardly listens to me and backs my mother. I enjoy talking to my mother especially but she can not do anything for me and my family."

"Isn't it better to participate in literacy, to learn something, then?" I further ask her.

"Literacy sucks! No use at all for us. What can we do after reading and writing at this stage? It is particularly useless for us. I have not seen anyone rich or any jobholders who has benefitted from the literacy. They are just here to create a problem for us. Nothing could be changed through this type of class."

Being in the Samsara: Three Layers of Voice

For me, the data text *'Being in Mandap: "Literacy Sucks!"* presents elaborated sequence of events leading up to the visible voice(s) of Tharu women. I found them resisting against oppression/exploitation and against feudalism/Hinduism which were partly reflected in the literacy practices. The testimonio, *"Literacy Sucks!"* helped to explore the voice of Tharu women against the current literacy practices. Their voices were radical in this stage.

Realities of Tharu women of not participating in the literacy programmes might seem harsh for elite like me who might have designed the literacy discourse ignoring the socio-cultural aspects of women. Struggling to survive in life, they connect memories of their personal experiences with their cultural past, detailing rites and rituals, customs and traditions. Their cultural experiences led me to explore Tharu women's voices against feudalism, Hinduism and their reflection in literacy programmes. I focused in three layers of her voice.

Visible Resistance against Feudalism

I would like to bare the voices of Tharu women which were mainly against feudalism. She spent her precious time in the courtyard of landlord and destined to be a Kamlari. There was no way out for her to go to school and participate in literacy discourse. The voices of Tharu women force me to regard them as the protest against the feudal crust that appeared as main enemy to these Tharu women. Feudal lords were combination of landlords, moneylenders and village officials privileged to extract their *vetti* for cultivation of their land, construction of houses, grazing their cattle and other domestic and menial chores (Pathy, 1988, p.169). These Tharu women think that literacy might be designed by the feudal lords of the community to strengthen their own power and to fulfill their needs. Or else, literacy might have been designed in an easier way.

Remembering the days of servitude as a Kamlari in the past, she said that even her father could not speak for his daughter. In her narrative, I found that she was not satisfied with her father. She dichotomized the people of family into good and bad. The men are bad; the women are good. This extreme polarity was the result of the mistreatment by the males she worked for or encountered in her life. However, few females in the landlord's house were bad for her. I came to understand that these barriers for inclusive literacy class emerged with feudalism and they spoke out for erasing all the images and identity that imposed on to her and her culture.

For me, they spoke against the legacy of feudalism in the society. Like the participant in the above data text who rejected literacy because she was not sure to benefit from the literacy programmes “...in relatively closed caste societies such as Nepal, a number of types of ascribed attributes including caste (e.g. Dalit), ethnicity, Janajatie and religion (Muslim)- at as barriers (in addition to those of gender and rural residence) to literacy acquisition” (UNESCO, 2005, p. 175). They could not read and write because of existing feudalistic approach of educating marginalized group of people like Tharu women. Meanwhile, UNESCO on the basis of the progress reports has been celebrating the decade of literacy for freedom. But, how can I expect to celebrate the decade of literacy for freedom with those Tharu women?

Visible Resistance against Gendered Social Hierarchies

Let me start another theme of resistance against gendered social hierarchies that I found in the data text “*Literacy Sucks!*” Bringing the multi-layered voice of Tharu women, I depicted that Tharu women were oppressed and excluded because of their class, caste and gender (see Chapter III). Hierarchical social structures consist of the class/ caste and gender discriminations that they faced within their families and the village.

I found the strong voice of Tharu women against class, caste and gender hierarchies. The participants in the data text compared the roles of their father to the landlords and found that her father was even crueler than the landlord because he sent her to the landlord’s home to work. I heard how some of them were beaten by their husbands when they want to attend literacy class. Some of my participants were supported by their husbands and were ordered to participate in literacy. I discovered from their voice that literacy course ought to be designed for male enabling them to know the world. One of the participants said, “Why is literacy focused on us? My husband needs to take literacy class; other jobless and lazy people should be here instead of us.”

Literacy programmes are likely to be the continuation of landlordism and elitism as an elite project (Chapter IV). My explorative reflections in their resistance depended on the relation between oppressors and oppressed. I visualized the resistance of Tharu women in my home. I have heard of the dissatisfaction of my mother and grandmother against them complaining about their laziness, narrating nasty stories of Tharu women who worked as Kamlaries and bounded labourers. I agree that resistance of these Tharu women at my home were more silent. They did not speak against any injustices and oppressions. The situation has changed now days ever since the government abolished the Kamlari system (Giri, 2010). But it has to be awaited to agree with Robinson- Pant (2000) “literacy has been as the key to women’s development resulting in a proliferation of women’s literacy run by government and non government organizations” (p.1). For me, resistance might not always be in the collective form by a group of people, fighting against the hegemonic discourse like literacy which could be social, cultural and geographical. My assumptions regarding the resistance would be more reliant on their behaviours rather than movement and demonstration.

Resistance in Literacy Class

Though it was found that low literacy; poverty and exclusion are all the part of the same problem” (www.literacybc.ca). I disagree with the belief that “people from poor families as well as the long term unemployed, seniors, native people, prisoners, people with disabilities, racial and cultural minorities all have lower literacy and higher rates of poverty” (www.literacybc.ca). The concept of literacy in Nepal might have been guided by a similar sort of Canadian philosophy. Since, I found that literacy practitioners have same orientation of charging poverty and marginalized group of people like Tharu women in Nepal too. Who/what makes them poor and illiterate? Is it their fault because they were born in the Tharu family? Are the 3 Rs sufficient for those Tharu women? Should it be mingled with

mere functional perspectives of literacy? Whatever the forms and ways of literacy widespread in this village, these Tharu women resisted against it.

Let me answer the above questions that literacy programmes were disconnected from the lives of the Tharu women. The voice of Tharu women always sought some space for them to speak, to be more dialogic rather than passive recipients in the literacy class. But the literacy classes run with feudal legacy where they remained silent in many times. However, their voice has become stronger raising issues of their rights and identity (see Chapter V). I felt that they were revolting against the existing practice of literacy discourse and they spoke against it. Their voiced resistance against literacy discourse was meaningful to me though it could not be linked to any Tharu self renewal movements in which their consciousness has undergone, changed and liberated.

It could be shocking for the so-called educationists and development practitioners like me hearing 'literacy sucks!' However, the perception of Tharu women could have been addressed in the literacy programmes which could be something useless for elites. I saw Tharu women who expressed their irritation against literacy practices because they were supposed to be inferior in literacy class. So they did not like to participate in literacy class but it does not mean that they shun being educated. I highly respect their keen desire to be educated. Only the approach of literacy seemed not burdensome for Tharu women. They wanted to live the dignified lives with literacy skills but their expectation of being respected in their family and society were not fulfilled by literacy. I hardly noticed that literacy programmes brought any changes in their lives so they seemed completely ir/reluctant to attend literacy programmes.

I viewed the resistance of Tharu women in literacy discourse from postcolonial perspective. I don't find the "what they all share in common, however, is their critical intent, and indeed it the critique of the conventional genres of nationalist, colonialist and Marxist

historiography which is now the most familiar and impressive feature of the series” (O’ Hanlon, 1988, p. 190-191). Literacy to some extent has been guided by the as an elite structure (see Chapter IV). Like history of Nepal and general and functional theory of literacy might be inscribed within ideological frameworks that they have inherited from some nationalist and Marxist traditions. Consequently, their representation of subaltern agency can yield insights into their governing ideologies (Rao, 2004) in literacy class.

Lines of song I heard in the field *Dhani mania badri Kedar sarara garib manai pasina dharar* (Rich people travel the holy places *Badri* and *Kedar*³² while we poor people are toiling in the field) exemplified how they have been resisting through songs and cultural performances in their daily lives. Are these songs of Tharu women the product of the literacy? I never find the resistances of literacy as Laura Ahearn (2001) shows through literacy people have practiced to write love letters to start romantic courtship against the social norms among the Magars³³ of Junigaun. I would like to cite Seymour (2006) here she studies resistance in Gloria Goodwin Raheja, “implicit in women’s speech and songs, the often veiled, but sometimes overt and public, words and actions through which women communicate their resistance” (p. 308).

I believe that resistance of subalterns in the research area is a connotation with the agency of Tharu consciousness either standing against the feudal tradition. It might be patriarchal domination where Tharu girls were treated as minorities even within their houses. I strongly believe that they have not started to revolt against the capitalism and globalization or imperialism but as amongst literacy is a colonial project of the elite to colonize their traditional knowledge and impose letters and numbers. So, they resisted against literacy also. In this regard, I want to highlight that the resistance of Tharu women might be mainly guided and motivated with the subaltern consciousness and agencies.

³² Famous religious places of India, usually Hindu people go there for pilgrimage

³³ One of the ethnic communities of western Nepal

Literacy for Solitude: My Envisioning

This is one cool, cloudy evening of December, 2010. I am returning from the field, having discourses with Tharu women about their ways of learning. I go and collect strange sort of freedom among subaltern Tharu women. How dominant voices they raise against current strategies of literacy? I am walking in the field, open field is like a maze for me. I get lost or confused and turn back and try a different route. I, too, feel as though I am in a maze like place, extremely confused writing this section. In general, I depicted literacy from the traditional perspectives and presented how Tharu women resisted against literacy discourse. However, I feel that I was missing the important aspect of Tharu women beyond these two types of resistance. It is self understanding of Tharu women which I term and describe under the metaphor of solitude. I can bring myths and myths of their history showing their self consciousness in struggling for independence against oppression and exploitation.

While creating a metaphor of solitude I was influenced by the Barbour's perspective (2004), "solitude is not a simple alternative to engagement with others but a more complicated matter of different kinds of involvement that are always changing" (p. 2). I have attempted to link the ideas of Barbour in the literacy practices of Tharu women. So, my third metaphor solitude challenges the insurgencies, silence and voiced resistance. I would reconcile the self and Other in a state of solitude in between the dichotomy of literacy practice and programmes. By doing so I would incorporate a sense of solitude among the Tharu women which could be strengthened by literacy practices. My aim in this chapter is to find out the interests and abilities of Tharu women which lead them towards solitude. Can we (academicians and literacy practitioners) create contexts in which these interests and abilities supported their literacy learning? I don't know whether I could advocate for bestowing a justice for Tharu women in the village through literacy but I am much hopeful. I weave a metaphor of solitude describing my envisioning of literacy and resistance. I assume

that the resistance of self/other has been reflected in the literacy class and programmes. My envisioning in this section somehow is guided by my research methodology of transformative research imagining the autonomy of Tharu women in literacy class.

Being in Mandap: Saiya in 2015

I would like to fly with the wings of imagination in 2025. I start the time machine and reach the same village where those Tharu women live. It is the month of August, 2025. It's around four pm. Student are going back homes. Cows are returning from the forest. Around, 15 years after I completed my field visit for the research on Tharu women and their ways of learning and literacy programmes. I dimly remember the situation of those Tharu women who were deprived from education. As I get off from the time machine, I desperately want to meet Saiya, one of the subjects of my research. I cannot find her home in the village because the village has changed a lot. I see a young lady who I am sure is returning from school because of hers school uniform and ask her

"Can you tell me, which house belongs to Saiya?"

She says, "Follow me, I will take you to her house, it is quite near from here."

I cannot follow her silently and ask her, "Is she fine? Do you know anything about her?"

"Of course, I do. I am her daughter." She says in a single breath.

"Oh! That's a great surprise. I am sorry I could not recognize you. I am from the same village. Long ago we had discussions on literacy and learning patterns of Tharu women." I explain."

"Mother look, who is here? She shouts from the door.

Who? (a voice calls back from inside the house)

"Namaste Susmita Ji" I greet her

"Namaste Sir" She replies.

Ka bati halchal³⁴ Susmita” I ask

“Maja bati kahu³⁵” She replies.

“Congratulation! You have made your own house.

When did you make it?” I ask

“Thank you. Nearly five years ago, we made it” She says with smile.

“I am happy hearing that you have your own house.

Where is your son? Is he here? How is your husband?” I ask her a bundle of questions.

*In some of my pleasantest hours,
I see Saiya
In the same barren field
Counting pieces of bamboo sticks
Weaving a basket
With great deals of company
Learning craft woods
She is learning with elders
She is sharing her ideas
With them
They hold
new Naya Goreto
that is found at their house
in the garden*

She makes coffee for us and starts to recount her struggle, and achievements and I keep nodding my head for more than two hours. She asks me, “Do you drink Jaar (a type of liquor)? I cannot say yes because my Brahmin ego has alive has still alive.

She looks at her watch. It’s going to be 8 pm. She hurriedly has her Kalwa³⁶ and surprises me saying, “Let’s go”

Perplexed and I ask, “Where?”

She says, “To our literacy program.”

I say, “Are you still learning in literacy.”

She says, “Of course, I learn from my participants.”

Do you mean that you are a teacher?” I am bewildered and ask her.

“Not exclusively a teacher but a facilitator!” She says.

I am awestruck the moment I hear that she is a facilitator and not a teacher. What could be a more panic by than this to a learned person like me?

In the class I never feel lonesome; all of us engage in telling our stories.

³⁴ ‘How do you?’ In Tharu language

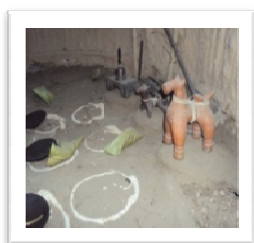
³⁵ We are fine in Tharu language

³⁶ Evening meals

This occasional visit in 2025 opens a space of emancipation and literacy for social mirth and pleasant views of Tharu women.

Literacy and Emancipation

Here I tried to impose a simple question to the literacy practitioners (elites) can literacy be a means of exploring subaltern subjectivity? Can Sonya be a literacy facilitator? As an educationist, I am simply inquisitive exploring 'engaging' literacy for subaltern like Tharu women. Engaging literacy appeared to me as a fusion of literacy, education and awareness through the self reflection of Tharu women. Engaging literacy could challenge the traditional literacy programmes which perhaps strengthened the status quo of the elite instead of serving the purpose of empowering the marginalized groups. At this stage I was closer to Hebermas and his emancipatory interest describing "independence from all that is outside the individual and a state of autonomy rather than libertinism" (Grundy, 1987, p. 16). The same can be applied to Saiya as a facilitator of the literacy class. Creative Tharu women could further furnish their skills and knowledge in the literacy class run by Saiya. For me these Tharu women were innovative too. Their skills making handicrafts from the bamboo and skills of weaving nets for fishing were like the skills of the engineers. Can literacy be designed on the basis of their art, language, tradition and culture emerging autonomously? If not literacy for emancipation could be a distant dream for them. It is visible through the



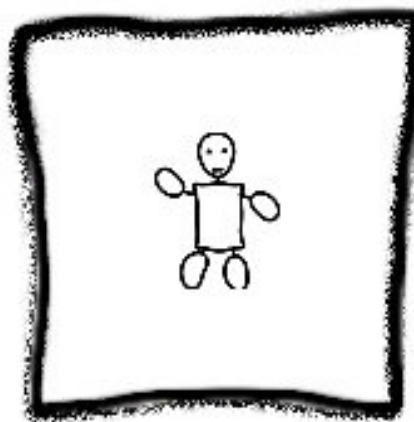
invisible activities of resisting Tharu women who are rejecting the elite imperatives of the literacy discourse. Only then could, literacy break the barriers of socio cultural exclusions and layers of oppressions.

In this regard, I would say that literacy programmes are mostly guided by technical reasoning and partly influenced by practical interest. At this stage I imagine literacy as "an interest in freeing persons from the coercion of the technical and the

possible deceit of the practical” (Grundy, 1987, p. 17). This stage of literacy might evoke the sense of solitude for subaltern Tharu women. It seemed to me a technical while understanding a saying of Saiya in the beginning of the research; I could not have grasped the essence of emancipation through the literacy when I was in the research field. At that time my understanding might have been guided by the practical aspect more than emancipatory. I valued all sorts of micro financing and goat farming as the ultimate goal of literacy programmes. While writing this section, I think a space to emancipate those Tharu women by literacy as autonomous as Saiya has to be explored by the national and international arena. I would like to be as autonomous as Saiya.

Literacy for Solitude

Inspired by Barbour (2004) as “solitude and life writing may each express a person’s search for a freely chosen personal identity. Both involve temporary detachment from a community in order to further the work of self formation” (p. 202), I understand detachment as departing from hierarchy/anarchy, pain



giver/pain killer and blaming / naming. I expect to reform the technical as well as practical aspect of literacy into the engaging literacy to make them solitude. In so doing my/their understanding of the pattern of culture, society, technology might be associated with the solitude.

If I understand the pair of ‘self/other’³⁷ as constituted dialectically, I understand that being a self may not be sufficient as an atomistic unit. From the same assumption I argue that solitude may help a person choose relationships which are most significant in identity

³⁷ Inspires from the auto/ethnography as describing the relationship of self and other, I attempt to link my methodology in a research theme.

and learning. My envisioning of literacy wishes to have a dialectical relation with the self/other for their emancipation at a stage of creating harmonious society. So literacy might help to dismantle the hierarchical (which is nearer to the technical interest of Hebermas) and anarchical (like practical interest) to create a solitude for self formation. I mean here that self formation does not happen in a cultural vacuum, solitude as a transformative research may help an individual to recover a sense of agency, to choose which among many social norms I³⁸ will affirm, and to decide that engaging in literacy helps to dismantle the binaries of technical and practical interest of literacy. I have taken solitude as a metaphor of individuation and self-formation wishing that it need not deny the importance of community or that most of the shared values. This sort of relationship is possible through the meaningful engagement with self/other in the literacy programmes.

Chapter Conclusion

While writing this chapter I bring the songs and stories of Tharu women in the form of resistance. They sing the songs of liberation, freedom and justice. I enjoy the melodious songs on one hand and I imagine the pedagogy of subaltern to empower them on the other. They sometimes whisper the agonies and pain of their lives, sometimes they cry in painful voices, sometimes I feel all the attempts they make to resist are silenced. Mostly, it is unbearable under the hegemonic discourse. It is not only the discourse of literacy which is resisted by the gendered subalterns. I heard the stories of mothers against their fathers, sons, and whole working system made by the male Tharu people. They resist. But the resistance does not bring any radical changes in their lives. I see that the burden of work of Tharu women has become lessen and are interested to learn with recognition and pride, so that they establish harmonious society through literacy.

³⁸ As a research participant.

CHAPTER VII EMERGENCE, FLUCTUATION, CONSOLIDATION

Woods are lovely dark and deep

But I have promises to keep

Miles to go before I sleep

Miles to go before I sleep

Robert Frost, (www.internal.org)

Chapter Overview

Robert Frost describes the beauty of the forest in the above stanza. I am also infatuated by the forest, by the field and by the stream as Robert Frost. Unlike Frost, I am not a romantic hero or poet who enjoys the rustic life of the Tharu women.

Presenting my conclusions of this inquiry, drawing from Chapter I to VI

of this research hopefully, I have mixed sort of experiences while

narrating stories of Tharu women. This depicts my research journey,

thereby articulating my approach to integral research to deal with my

research problems. In this chapter I have brought my experiences and reflections during the

research. How are my systematic researches agendas get changed during the research? How

my own perception of literacy programmes and practices 'U' turned in the research area?

What I have learnt in the research area? These are the few questions that I have addressed in

this chapter. Adopting the nature of emergent inquiry, various research questions emerged

and modified in the process of inquiry. This chapter narrates my flashback of this research



Emergences in/of My Research

As it goes with Robert Frost I say that I have promises to keep. I do also have so many promises to keep in 2011. One of the major promises is to complete this inquiry at the end of August 2011. It is unlike positivist research so I took few months to contemplate on

the complexities of Tharu women and their lives. However it has been emerging stronger at present, July 2011. My journey exploring the research agendas of voice of Tharu women in the literacy programmes has been associated with my experiences as Brahmin educated male. While unpacking my research agendas, I came to realize the need of the multi- paradigmatic research design space (Taylor, 2008), though I started to look this inquiry from the critical ethnographer (Carspecken, 1998). Another aspect I tried to look literacy from the functional perspective at first but it needed to inculcate general, critical, and cultural dimensions of literacy. I assumed that existing conventional literacy programmes might have positive influences of the Tharu women before I met them. They might have taken as granted for reading and writing activities. I have read some of the national reports and success stories of literacy practices that are always useful to Tharu women. At the same time, my embodied experiences showed that Tharu women have been suffering from the social oppression and injustices. Right from the beginning I would like to challenge the conventional literacy programmes which I think is not apt for those Tharu women who have been victimized by the social injustice.

At first, I tried to look existing literacy practices from subaltern perspective. I planned to use the term subaltern referring to Tharu women. Later on I think it may not be sufficient to limit my research on the subaltern perspective. When I first visited to the field I realized that it would be injustice if I ignored the other aspects of Tharu women. Then I planned to design my research as the postcolonial project. I remained almost busy exploring day to day activities of Tharu women. I started to write their narratives which perhaps are un/written. A sort of confidence I built from their narrative to develop my research on the transformative perspectives.

As being one of the participants of this research, I brought my experiences to describe the social hierarchies and oppression that exist in the same village. It helped me to sketch the

further map of literacy practices for Tharu women. Whatever I learnt about literacy philosophy and practices I made a utopia to design the best models of literacy for Tharu women through my envisioning. In the last part of each chapter I envisioned inclusive alternative to each problem.

My assumptions and field experiences were further articulated in research questions. First of all I have designed three research questions to explore the hierarchies, oppressions and literacy programmes. Later on, I realized that it is not sufficient to explore the hierarchies and oppressions of Tharu women in relation to the literacy programmes. After that, my plan of expanding research questions with the literacy pedagogy, identity and resistance of Tharu women in literacy discourse might have raised the key research agendas. From all the research agendas, my inquiry might seem that it has been guided by the postcolonial agendas of education and research.

Post/colonialism as a Key Theoretical Referent

In this research I used a number of theories and perspectives as a source of distilling my ideas. Similar to my experimental perspectives, theoretical perspectives helped enrich my creative understanding about issues under the study. However, I used all theories as a referent rather than framework. “I believe that referents do not rigidly ‘frame ‘ the researcher but enable him/her to view the world from multiple perspectives” (Luitel, 2009, p. 378).

My field experiences directed me to choose critical school of thought at first because I tried to look social hierarchies and oppression in the broader social spectrum. Next, my assumptions of reflecting hierarchical structures in the literacy discourse I adopted critical research methodology for granted. However, the shift from the interpretive meaning making process, critiquing self/other, generic representation of post/modernism shifted to the integralism. While doing so, I used theories as referent. I came to realize that using critical theories in this research was not sufficient and then postcolonial approach was fluctuating.

Moreover, my experiences of being Brahman educated male inspired me to draw the eastern perspectives looking at the literacy practices. Thereby, I brought the few perspectives from religious and philosophical Hindu text Vedas. Perhaps, using various theories and perspectives made me less absolute while dealing literacy and subaltern Tharu women. My insight further was sharpened while using a research tool of auto/ethnography which was my one of the methodological referent in this research.

Reflecting upon the research process it is my first research I undertook and tried to unpack the voice of Tharu women in literacy discourse. Thus far, I much inclined to the postcolonial theories. This research focuses on the research problems of contextualized literacy for Tharu women. Then after, I realized the use of some cultural theories. I further convinced that literacy practices needs a type of cultural assimilation of the Tharu women rather making isolated within the cultural theory and cultural literacy (Street,1993).

Moreover, re reading my narratives exploration of caste/class and gender hierarchies I portrayed much exclusionary types of literacy discourse. I always indent to be dialectical including the literacy practices from their day to day activities rather than dead letters and alphabets. I brought few references from Hindu epics, world class literature and fragmented images of literacy discourse.

Fluctuation: Problem Statement

Right from the beginning the statement problem was very positivist in which I liked to explore the rate and percentages of literate Tharu women. It would be easier to me to calculate the literate rate. Carrying a rucksack of critical and post colonial theories hardly allowed me to be positivist researcher, then fluctuation appeared in my research to be an ethnographer. Another important aspect which insisted me to explore the voice of Tharu women was my embodied experiences. I saw that Tharu women have been exploiting in a multiple layers since my childhood days. I understood the scenario of oppression as a

common sense when I was adolescent but a sense of humanity enforced me to explore the reality of Tharu women who even did not see of being human through literacy practices.

My focus on literacy programmes as I problematized in a three layers: first problem sets in the hierarchical structure of society. Second problem depicts the problem of transmissionist pedagogy in which they were '*taught*'. This problem of the research shows that literacy programmes are completely isolated with this group of Tharu women because of conventional literacy pedagogy. Travelling through the literacy journey of reflecting upon my experiences, a number of already convinced definitions and perceptions of literacy were insufficient to deal with the literacy practices of Tharu women. Then after issues of identity was viable for me because I assumed that literacy may help Tharu women for their identity. At last, I tried to see the link between resistance and identity in the literacy programmes which needs to address the voice of Tharu women.

Fluctuations: During the Write-Ups

Arriving at the middle of this research, it is a great challenge to maintain the quality standards of the research. First of all it was much easier to write in research proposal that I would maintain the following quality standards but later on it became something different in practice. Many times I asked myself and my supervisor "Am I in right track?" I was always answered with positive feedback and stimulation from my supervisor. Whenever I approached nearer to my supervisor with dissatisfaction and queries, I got different perspective to look upon these research issues.

Let me share one of my experiences which best describe my unsettling dilemma during this research. When I completed first draft in December, 2010, I sent it to my friends and well wishers. I got a bundle of feedback and comments from them. I was in a way to take long sigh of relief thinking that I was going to complete a *tedious* task very soon. Was it tedious till the date of the preparing this draft? I am enjoying a lot till this date. Then a sort

of realization motivates me to re/arranges all chapters in the current structure and I consumed almost a year. On that particular day I was having discussion with my supervisor regarding to the shape of the chapters on his small chamber in Kathmandu University. I was sitting in front of him and exploring metaphors of remaining chapters. We spent nearly five hours together discussing my research and contemporary global research practices.

Methodological Heuristics and Fluctuation

During writing process it was quite difficult for me to address the issues of subaltern Tharu women and literacy. Black cloud was hovering in the sky above the dark forest. I could not leave the forest at that time. I was infatuated with the beauty of forest as well as much worried to cultivate the forest with the spring of literacy and justice. When I was suffocating in this problem Taylor, Settellaier and Luitel, (In Press) showed a path to walk in the forest of Tharu women using methodological heuristics. I chose integralism as a research paradigm so that I could bring the different perspectives of Tharu women and my experience in this research.

Within integralism I weave a spider net of critical and performance ethnography influenced from Maddison (2005), auto/ethnography influenced from Richardson (2007) hoping that I can advocated for the social justice of Tharu women through literacy practice. I was optimistic as well as committed to empower Tharu women through the literacy programmes. It was dilemma either the utopia which I have provided as an alternatives of the each sort of the literacy problems could be real or not but I was sure that this approach would helpful to bring the invisible agendas of literacy discourse. Invisible agendas refer to the habituated practice of literacy discourse which was full of propaganda of the state to literate subaltern Tharu women.

I hardly followed merely a single aspect of the research either it is interpretative, critical and postmodern paradigm. I even brought the certain features of positivist and post

positivist paradigm. Some time I was more reflexive. At another time I caught emergences. At the same time I seemed to be postmodern. However, I never took any research paradigm for granted.

More over I was critically aware about the quality standard of the research. I hope that I have maintained the quality standard of the research like praxis, critical reflexivity, answerability, and pedagogical thoughtfulness and envisioning.

Consolidation: Gradual Landing

I am as one of the participants of the research and local non Tharu people have been asking me about my recent coverage of the literacy and Tharu women, wondering what sticks out in my memory. After some reflection, one part of my memory experience keeps rising including emergences and fluctuations under this section. I was slotted for the afternoon on 2nd June; I allotted the participants in the field. This whole day I was guided by an opinion of Madission's (2005) dialogues to the research participants till 4:30 p.m.

While exploring my conversations with my research participants I felt that current literacy practices maintain the status quo of the elites. During my research, I came to closer with academicians, literacy practitioners, and development workers. Very few of them appreciate the research process which I adopt but many of them commented as "nonsense". I still remember the comment of one of the foreigner visiting faculty of Kathmandu University who questions me that "what is the use of these postcolonial approaches to the literacy, it is the global need of the illiterate people." I listened and easily had forgotten these types of comments. Anyway thanks for all people who helps me to dismantle my way of knowing. Another question I remember at present that "Are they practicable always?" I never expect to get such types of queries regarding research and its application.

Birth of Research Questions: Consolidation Starts

I came to end of the following research questions at the end of the dilemma.

- In what ways are the existing hierarchical social structures translated in literacy programmes? How can an inclusive literacy be envisioned so as to address the problem of hierarchy manifested in literacy practices?
- How is transmissionist pedagogy mimicked in literacy class? In what ways can a transformative pedagogy for literacy be envisaged?
- In what ways has naming as a form of identity been related to literacy? How can an empowering literacy be envisioned for an inclusionary space for their identity?
- How have Tharu women been resisting the literacy program? How can these resistances be morphed into an engaging literacy program?

R. Q. 1 In what ways are the existing hierarchical social structures translated in literacy programmes? How can an inclusive literacy be envisioned so as to address the problem of hierarchy manifested in literacy practices?

Moving to the first research question I am much concerned with giving participants to ‘speak’ or to tell their stories about the effects of the literacy programmes and practices. These stories have been portrayed from the participants’ understandings and lived experiences of literacy practices. The dichotomy of discourse and practices remains in the literacy either it is functional, general, critical or cultural. Whatever the literacy was named under the different terms it is not justifiable for subaltern Tharu women. The stories told by participants occupy spaces that exist between literacy discourse and practices. I highlighted the legitimate role of literacy discourse which cannot be a part of the Tharu women and their world of knowing. I tried to be dialectical while exploring the voice of Tharu women in the literacy discourse and practices. First research question gave the spaces to explore three metaphors indicating the nature of society and literacy.

During this process, I coined three metaphors of social structures as hierarchy, anarchy and holarchy. I moved around these metaphors while exploring the obstacles of literacy participation of Tharu women. As a conclusion of the first research question my finding would be both current literacy practice was in/justifiable to those Tharu women who have been participating in the literacy discourse. Mostly, I was concerned with the conventional 3R philosophy of literacy and its disempowering practices among Tharu women. However, existing literacy might not sufficient to Tharu women. Tharu women have been living in the society where they were oppressed in terms of class/ caste and gender which might have been reflected in the literacy discourse. This research questions broadly explored the social issues hierarchies and oppressions of Tharu women which was been interrelated in the literacy discourse.

R.Q. 2 How is transmissionist pedagogy mimicked in literacy class? In what ways can a transformative pedagogy for literacy be envisaged

For me, social hierarchies were the hindrances participating in literacy programmes for Tharu women. Under such circumstances, the conventional literacy practice (3R) was reproducing in the diverse cultural context. It was equally important for me to show that literacy was not much enough reflective because of hierarchical structures in the literacy class. From the field experience I found that hierarchical structure of society always dominated the ways of knowing of Tharu women.

In such a problem of literacy pedagogy, I coined a metaphor of pain giver describing the transmissionist literacy pedagogy. Further, I focused in the on the constructivist impact on new literacies through the metaphor of anarchy. There were not merely reproductions of hierarchical structures in literacy class. I brought some autonomous events which slightly break the hierarchical structures of the society (but necessary to address in the literacy programmes) under the metaphor of anarchy. Anarchy for me is something autonomous

which occurs in the community as well as in literacy class. One of the examples I would like to mention here about the use of cell phone which is the part of their life but it was not been incorporated in the literacy programmes. I brought two different aspects of the anarchy. First one depicted the growing technology and second one was from their cultural practices. Both dimensions were failed to be incorporated in literacy programmes.

I provided an alternative of these types of problems under the metaphor of pain healer where I assumed to run the literacy programmes to mitigate the hierarchical practices for the transformative literacy. Literacy in this stage seems to be more than critical (Kincheloe, 2007) but more than this I envisaged developing an integral approach of literacy practices among the Tharu women.

Contemplating on the current literacy programmes from my position I envisaged the apt the pedagogical approaches in literacy programmes. “How don’t I ever learn in the classroom?” this main question I ask myself before asking to the research participants. Extending this metaphor with the help of the Freirian and Kinchloe’s approach I came to the conclusion that literacy pedagogy must be able to create conscientization of Tharu women. This metaphor portrayed the emerging ways of learning of Tharu women assimilating their culture and modern technology to learn about their world rather than word. This metaphor moved around the definitional understanding of literacy in the current practices.

RQ 3: In what ways has naming as a form of identity been related to literacy?

How can an empowering literacy be envisioned for an inclusionary space for their identity?

Is identity worthwhile issue to talk about literacy programmes and practice? I asked this question to my supervisor more than five times before I went to the field second time. When I returned from the field I was quite uncertain to address the issue of the identity of Tharu women through the literacy programmes and practice. After a long discussion with my

supervisor, I went to the research field again (Third Field Visit) to explore the issues of identity of Tharu women in literacy discourse. I tried to look at issues of identity from the postcolonial perspective rather than critical literacy. In this Chapter, I again coined three metaphors: Blaming, Naming and No/Naming. Literally this chapter seemed as evaluation of literacy programmes from the postcolonial perspective but later on I dealt it with the eastern perspectives along with postcolonial thought. I found postcolonial perspective was not sufficient to be dialectical enough. So I viewed the identity issues of Tharu women in three layers.

First my finding was closer to the Blaming stage. Mostly subaltern Tharu women blamed those elites who exploited them in different forms. This concept might be closely linked with the pain giver pedagogical practices in the hierarchical society. Secondly, literacy was associated with the name which they got in the society. It is touching for me to know that they would like to be called by the names of the elites in the society. I partly agree that name is the necessary aspect to refer to the issues of identity. Constantly I was feeling dilemma to bring the name friendly literacy discourse to all class and caste people in Nepal. Lastly, this chapter explored that naming is not only the part of the identity issues in the literacy discourse. No/naming concept was thus development to be dialectical enough in the literacy discourse.

RQ 4: How have Tharu women been resisting the literacy program? How can these resistances be morphed into an engaging literacy program?

I argue that in the case of Tharu women in the literacy class, the artistic silent expression is actually essential to the resistance of these women. But what is more silent in my view, how they were marking their silence with action a living history created through silent expression, wordlessly, stitching together their lost past and their survival as a people for the future ignoring silencing the fingers that identity of Tharu women might be a matter of

how do they tried to represent their voice in literacy discourse. My concerns to pick of their voices were substantiated in this chapter. I brought how Tharu women resisted the current literacy discourse along with the socio cultural injustices. Coining three metaphors to deal this chapter also repeated. First metaphor I coined silence to deal with the passive resistance of Tharu women in literacy discourse. They never denied taking part in the literacy discourse but their pretend seemed natural to avoid the engaging in the literacy discourse. I have raised the causes of their pretending in previous chapters. The form of silence might be found in the social hierarchies and pedagogical approaches.

Physical participation of Tharu women in literacy discourse does not represent their voice and mostly I found that their voice was doomed with the voice of the facilitator and other non Tharu women. Silently they have been resisting the literacy class. At the same time it was equally invisible to explore the voice of Tharu women who hardly showed their interest in literacy discourse. “Literacy Sucks!” I would represent their voice through the voiced form of resistance. At this stage I found myself as liberated from the chains of social hierarchies and structures. Their voice however, was not found to be incorporated in the literacy discourse. My wishful thinking to include their ways of learning where they learn from their cultural practices came through the solitude under another metaphor. I hope literacy would create a state of solitude to bring the justice and harmony reconciling all the people in the village developing mutual respects to each other culture and social norms. At this stage I could not believe to abolish the caste/ class hierarchies through the literacy practices I rather create a utopia of creating harmonious society through the literacy practices.

This chapter further raised questions to look at the dimensions of literacy. Is it merely a functional as the development practitioners perceived? Or did it mean to just teach 3R to the subalterns Tharu women? Does it have nothing to do with addressing their cultural practices

in literacy discourse? I would like to address these questions in the future directions the research made the trial to be moved for the literacy practitioners.

Future Directions

While working on the research, new direction of literacy programmes and practice have been emerged critiquing existing trend of literacy programmes and practice. First direction, critiquing on the positivistic features of literacy, has generated some new direction. This time, I emphasize that literacy may not be imposed to the subaltern Tharu women but it is equally needed for the so called elites like me to create the harmonious society. Similarly, in this section I argue that literacy cannot be isolated from the lives of people. Otherwise, the philosophy of literacy might be limited in the 3 R concepts. While doing so, I have focused on the definitional issues, and its practical dimensions. Second, I have envisioned the literacy pedagogy, imagining creating a hybrid space for learning practice of subaltern Tharu women. Thirdly, I raised the agendas of identity of Tharu women, who have some sort of identity, and

Literacy in Humanistic Approach

It is important to know the perception of Tharu women in existing literacy discourse. Literacy discourse has been dealt with mainly two perspectives in Nepal. Koirala and Acharya (2000) viewed that most women's literacy programmes predominately viewed from the functional perspective whereas professional defined it as a route of alternative education right from 3Rs to academic level (p. 6). For me both existing dimension of literacy seemed linear just to increase the number of the literate women, has nothing to do with transformation and justice for them. I felt that literacy as a national discourse attain the space in the national agendas of policy and research but still it is under the shadow of international donor agency. I really appreciate some few efforts of UNESCO launching mother tongue based literacy might be the part of the humanistic approach of the literacy. I hardly find the

sustainability of humanistic approach of the literacy could be appropriate for the subaltern Tharu women.

I along with my participants always confront with the positivist type of literacy discourse. This concept brought to challenge the existing practice of literacy discourse was not sufficient to empower subaltern Tharu women. Till when the state glories on the increasing rate of the women literacy?

Transformative Literacy and Research

I would like to pack up this writing realizing that literacy may not be merely the 3R activities. I have discussed that literacy is dynamic process of learning rather than an instrument of educating marginalized group of population like Tharu women. Literacy has been counted in terms of numbers and percents with the positivist assumptions that people who are familiar with the numbers and alphabets can achieve success. However, I can find the case of Tharu women which shows that literacy needs to be transformative. Similarly I find transformative research methods useful while exploring the complexities of social structures and literacy practices. Transformative literacy can emancipate marginalized group of people like Tharu women. I draw a conclusion of transformative literacy from the envisioning section of my each chapter. First chapter while addressing the first research question helps me to envision literacy as a holarchy, incorporating all the holons such as hierarchies and anarchies in glocal context. The glocal context creates a third space of learning literacy for Tharu women. Similarly, I envision the transformative pedagogy where they can link their world and word with the help of exports of literacy. Third research question lead me to envision the recognized identity through literacy programmes. The last research question ultimately explores the state of solitude through the literacy.

REFERENCES

- Acharya, S. (2004). *Democracy, gender equality and women's literacy: Experience from Nepal*. Kathmandu: UNESCO
- Acharya, S. & Koirala, B. N. (2006). *A comprehensive review of practices of literacy and non formal education in Nepal*. Kathmandu: UNESCO
- Agee, J. (2003). Literacy project development resources. *New Library World*, 104, 344-353.
- Agee, J. (2005). Literacy, aliteracy and lifelong learning. *New Library World*, 106, 244-252.
- Alexander, B.K. (2005). Performance ethnography. The re-enacting and inciting of culture. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Inquiry*, (3rd ed) (pp. 411-441). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Anderson, L. (2006). Analytic autoethnography. *The Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 35 (4). 373-395.
- Andreotti, V. (2006). An ethical engagement with the other: Spivak's ideas on education. *Critical literacy: Theories and Practices*, 1(1), 69-79.
- Asgharzadel, A. (2008). The return of the subalterns: International education and politics of voice. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 4 (12). 334-363. DOI: 10.1177/1028315307308137
- Atkinson, P., & Hammersely, M. (1994). Ethnography and participant observation. In N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousands Oaks : Sage Publication.
- Baker, T. L. (1998). *Doing social research* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.
- Barbour, J. D. (2004). *The value of solitude: The ethics and spirituality of aloneness in autobiography*. Virginia: University Press.

- Barton, D., & Hamilton, M. (2000). Literacy Practices. In D. Barton, M. Hamilton, & R. Ivanic (Eds.), *Situated literacies: Reading and writing in context* (pp.7-34). New York: Routledge.
- Batt, E. (2010). Favourites and other: Reflexivity and the shaping of subjectivities and data in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 10, (2). 159-173.
- Berry, K. S. (2006). Research as bricolage. In K. Tobin & J. Kincheloe (Eds). *Doing educational research* (pp. 87- 116). Rotterdam: Sense Publication.
- Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The location of culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Bhattarcharya, K. (2009). Negotiating shuttling between transnational experience: De/colonizing approach to performance ethnography. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 15 (6).1061-1083. DOI 10.1177/1077800409332746
- Bista, D. B. (2004). *People of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar.
- Blaxter, L., Hughes, C., & Tight, M. (2008). *How to research* (3rd ed.). Berkshire: England.
- Blommaert, J. (2005). *Discourse: A critical introduction*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Brun, M. (2010) Institution collide: A study of “caste based” collective criminality and female infanticide in India, 1789-1871: A critique of Nicholas Dirk’s castes of mind : colonialism and the making of modern India. *Development Studies Institute Working Paper Series 2010*. London: Development Studies Institute, London School of Economics and Political Science
- Byrne, E. M. (1978). *Women and education*. London: Tavistock Publications.
- Calhoun, C. & Karganis, J. (2001). Critical Theory. *Handbook of Social Theory*. Chapter DOI: 10.4135/978-1-84860-835-1.n15
- Carbonell, N.(n.d.). *Spivak or the voice of subaltern*. Retrieved from <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.5/legalcode>

- Carlile, O. & Jordan, A. (2005). It works in practice but will it work in theory? The theoretical underpinnings of pedagogy. *Emerging Issues in the Practice of University Learning and Teaching*, 1, 11-26.
- Carspecken, P. F. (1996). *Critical ethnography in educational research: A theoretical and practical guide*. New York: Routledge.
- Center for Education for All (CEFA). (2003). *Gender responsive non formal education in Nepal: A Case Study*. Kathmandu: UNESCO.
- Cerulo, K. A. (1997). Identity construction: New issues, new direction. *Annual Reviews of Sociology*, 23. 385-409.
- Chakrabarti, D. (2002). *Habitation of modernity: Essays in the wake of subaltern studies*. Delhi: Permanent Black.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). The power of names. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 35 (4). 396-399.
- Cheria, A. Kandangwa, N. K. & Upadhyaya, U. (2005). *Liberation is not enough: The Kamaiya movement in Nepal*. Kathmandu: Action Aid International Nepal.
- Cohen, L. Manion, L & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research methods in education* (5th ed.). London: Routledge.
- Corbetta, P. (2003). *Social research: Theory, methods, and techniques*. London: Sage Publication.
- Cresswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed). Thousand Oaks : Sage Publication.
- Dahal, D. P. (2003). Educational empowerment through critical literacy: The need of the nation. *Education and Development*, 41- 48.
- Daniel, P. (2000). Women literacy and power: An introduction. *Equal Opportunity International*, 19(2/3/4), 1-7.

- Day, R. J. F. (2005). *Gramsci is dead: Anarchist currents in the newest social movements*.
Hyderabad: Orient Longman.
- Denscombe, M. (1998). *The good research guide for small scale social research project*.
London: Open University Press.
- Denzin, K. N. (2006). Analytic autoethnography, or Déjà vu all over again. *The Journal of Contemporary ethnography*, 35 (4). 419-428.
- Denzin, N. K. (2003). *Performance ethnography: Critical pedagogy and the politics of culture*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 1-32). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publication.
- Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (2005). *Qualitative Research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publication.
- Denzin, N.K. (2003.) *Performance Ethnography: Critical Pedagogy and the Politics of Culture*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Dirks, N. B. (2001). *Castes of minds: Colonialism and the making of modern India*.
Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Doduka, N. (2010, Feb 25). Philosophical foundation of indigenous ways of knowing, epistemology. The paper presented at ECATU Seminar. Health Resource Center, Mthatha.
- Duncan, M. (2004). Autoethnography: Critical appreciation of an emerging art. *International Journal of qualitative methods*, 3 (4). 1-14.
- Ellis, C., & A. P. Bochner. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: researcher as subject. In N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*, (2nd ed)(pp. 733-68). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication.

- Emirbayer, M., & Mishe, A. (1998). What is agency? *American Journal of Sociology* 103 (4). 962-1023.
- Finley, S. (2005). Arts-based inquiry: Performing revolutionary pedagogy. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Inquiry*, (3rd ed.) (pp. 681- 694). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage publication.
- Finn, J. D., Reis, J., & Dulberg, L. (1980). Sex difference in educational attainment: The process. *Comparative Education Review*, 24 (2), 33-52.
- Foley, D. & Velenzuela, A. (2005). Critical Ethnography: The politics of collaboration. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 217-234). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publication.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Seabury Press.
- Friere, P. (1974). *Education for critical consciousness*. London: Continuum.
- Fuchs, S. (2005). *Against Essentialism: A theory of culture and society*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Fuss, D. (1989). *Essentially speaking: Feminism, nature and difference*. New York: Routeledge.
- Gandhi, L. (1998). *Postcolonial theory: A critical introduction*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Gergen, K. J. (2009). *Relational Being. Beyond self and community*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Giri, B. R. (2010). Bounded labour practice in Nepal: The promise of education as a magnet of child boundedness. *South Asia Research*. 30 (2). 145- 164. DOI 10.1177/026272801003000203
- Giroux, H. (1983). *Theory and resistance in education*. South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey.

- Goodwyn, A. & Findley K. (2002). Literature, literacy and the discourses of English teaching in England: A case study. *L1- Educational Studies in Language and Literature*, 2, 221-238.
- Gosine, K (2002). Essentialism versus Complexity: Conceptions of Racial Identity Construction in Educational Scholarship. *Canadian Journal of Education / Revue canadienne de l'éducation*, (27), 1, 81-99.
- Goulet, D. (1974). *Education for critical consciousness*. London: Continuum.
- Graceffo, M. (2001). Literacy to liberate a bibliography of Freirean pedagogy. *Collection Building*, 20(3), 113-118.
- Greckhamer, T., Ljungberg, M. K., Cilesiz, S., & Hayes, S. (2008). Demystifying interdisciplinary qualitative research. *Qualitative inquiry*, 14(2), 307-331.
- Grundy, S. (1987). *Curriculum: Product or Praxis*. London: Routledge Flamer.
- Hale Charlo, R. (Ed.). (2008). *Engaging contradiction: theories politics and methods of activist scholarship*. Barkely: Global area and international archieve University of California Press.
- Harman, D. (1987). *Illiteracy: A national dilemma*. New York: Cambridge the Adult Education.
- Hautecoeur, J. P. (1997). A political review of international literacy meetings in industrialized countries, 1981-1994. *International Review of Education*, 43(2/3), 135-158.
- Hirshleifer, J. (1995). Anarchy and its breakdown. *Journal of Political Economy*, 103, (1), 26-43.
- Hollander J., & Einwohner, R. (2004). Conceptualizing resistance. *Sociological Forum*, 19 (4), 533- 554.

- House, E. R. , Emmer, C., & Lawarance, N. (1991). Cultural literacy reconsidered. In E. H. Hiebert (Ed.), *Literacy for a diverse society: Perspectives, practices, and policies* (pp. 58-74). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Jones, B. T. (Producer) & Bender, G. & Jones, B. T. (Co-directors). (1997). *Still/here with Bill Moyers*. [Videotape]. USA: PBS.
- Jones, S. R. & McEwen, M. K. (2000). A conceptual model of multiple dimensions of identity. *Journal of College Student Development* (41), 4, 405-415.
- Kalman, J. (2009). Literacy Partnerships: Access to reading and writing through mediation. In K. Basu, B. Maddox, & A. Robinson-Pant (Eds.), *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Literacy and Development* (pp. 165-178). Oxen: Routeledge.
- Karthwohl, D. R. (1993). *Methods of Educational and social science research*. New York: Longman.
- Kemmis, S. & Mc Taggart, R. (2005). Participatory action research: Communicative action and the public sphere. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Inquiry* (3rd ed.) (pp. 559-603). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication.
- Khadka, A. , Chaudhary, T., Magar, K. J. , Chaudhary, A. , & Pokherel , R. (2006). *Literacies from a multi lingual perspective: Learning from Tharu, Tamang, Newar and Limbu language communities of Nepal*. UNESCO Kathmandu Series of monographs and Working Papers: No. 12. Kathmandu: UNESCO.
- Kincheloe, J. L., & McLaren, P. (2005). Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication. 303-342
- Kincheloe, J. L. (2008). *Knowledge and critical pedagogy: An Introduction*. Springer
- Koirala, B. N. (2003). Shifting cultivation in literacy education. *Education and Development* 34-40.

- Koirala, B. N. (2009). Various contexts: One NFE. In D. Awasthi, L. Khanal, M. Dahal, P. K. Sharma & D. Dahal (Eds.), *SHAKSHYARTA BISESANKA* (Literacy Special Issue). Bhaktapur: NFEC
- Kumar, P. K. (2008). Indian historiography and Ambedkar: Reading history from Dalit perspective. *International Journal of South Asian Studies*, 1 (1).
- Lam, W. S. E. (2000). L2 literacy and the design of the self: A case study of a teenager writing on the Internet. *TESOL Quarterly*, 34(3), 457 -481.
- Lamichhane, S. R. (1992). *An analysis of perspectives on non formal adult education: Implications for Nepal* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Alberta, Alberta.
- Lind, A. (2008). *Literacy for all: making a difference*. Paris: UNESCO
- Luden, D. (n.d.) . A brief history of subalternity. *Reading Subaltern Studies*. Retrieved from www.subalternstudies.com
- Luitel, B. C. (2009). *Culture, worldview and transformative philosophy of mathematics education in Nepal: A cultural philosophical inquiry*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation) University of Curtin: Australia.
- Madison, D. S. (2005). Critical ethnography as street performance: Reflections of home, race, murder, and justice. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 537-546). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publication.
- Madison, S. D. (2005). *Critical ethnography: Methods, ethics and performance*. Thousands Oakes: Sage Publication.
- Majumdar, P. K. (2005). *Research Methods in social science*. New Delhi: Viva Books.
- Maslak, M. A. (1999). *Determinants of adult's educational decision making for girls in rural Nepal*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Pennsylvania State University.

- May, T. (2001). *Social research: Issues methods and process* (3rd ed.) Buckingham: Open University Press.
- McDonaugh, C. (1990). Losing ground, gaining ground: Land and change in a Tharu community in Dang, West Nepal. In D. N. Gellner, J. Pfaff-Czarneka & J. Whelpton (Eds.) *Nationalism and Ethnicity in a Hindu Kingdom: The Politics of culture in Contemporary Nepal*. Australia: Harwood academic publishers.
- McKinney, C. & Noron, B. (2007). Identity in language and literacy education. In B. Spolsky & F. M. Hulf (Eds.). *The handbook of educational linguistics*. Blackwell Publishing : Blackwell Reference Online.
- McLaren (2000). *Che Guevara, Paulo Freire and the pedagogy of revolution*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield.
- McLaren, P. (1993). *Schooling as a ritual performance: Towards a political economy of educational symbols and gestures*. Newyork: Routledge.
- Miller, P. (2003). Transformation of patriarchal regimes, literacy, and schooling. *Interchange*, 134, (2/3), 297-312.
- Ministry of Education and Sport (MOES) (2002). *EFA Core Program, 2004 – 2009*. Kathmandu: Author.
- Morton, T. A., Matthew, J. H., & Postmes, T. (2009). Shifting ground: The variable use of essentialism in contexts of inclusion and exclusion. *British Journal of Social Psychology* 48, 35–59.
- Moustakas, C. E. (1990). *Heuristic research: design, methodology and application*. California: Sage Publication.
- Narayan, B. (2008). Demarginalization and history: Dalit re invention of the past. *South Asia Research*, 28, (2). 169- 184. DOI 10.1177/026272800802800203.

- NFEC (2009). *Anaupacharik Shikshya Kendra Ek Chinari* (An introduction of Non Formal Education Centre). Bhaktapur: Author.
- NFEC (2009). *Shakchharata Bishesankha* (Literacy Special Issue). Bhaktapur: Author.
- Nissani, M. & Lohani, S. (EdS) (2008). *Flax Golden Tales: Interdisciplinary approach to learning English*. Kathmandu: Ekta Books
- Noble, G. , Poynting, S., & Taber, P. (1999). Youth, ethnicity and the mapping of identities: Strategic essentialism and strategic hybridity among Male Arabic- specific Youth- western Sydney. *Communal/Plural*, 7 (1), 29- 45.
- O' Hanlon, R. (1988). Recovering the subject subalterns and histories of resistances in Colonial South Asia. *Modern Asian Studies*, 22 (1) 189- 224.
- Oberg, C. M. (2008). Performance Ethnography: Scholarly inquiry in the here and now. *Transformative Dialogues: Teaching and Learning Journal*, 2 (1) 1-4.
- Ortner, S. (1995). Resistance and the problem of the ethnographic refusal. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*.
- Panneerselvam, R. (2004). *Research techniques methodology*. New Delhi: Prentice Hall.
- Robinson-Pant, A. R. (2000a). *Why eat green cucumber at the time of dying?: Women literacy and development*. Germany: UNESCO Institute for Education.
- Robinson-Pant, A. R. (2000). Women and literacy: a Nepal perspective. *International Journal of Education Development*, 20, 349-364.
- Pathy, J. (1998). *Ethnic minorities in the process of development*. Jaipur: Rawat Publication.
- Patricia, D. (2000). Women literacy and power: An introduction. *Equal Opportunities International*, 19(2/3/4), 3-7.
- Rao, N. (2004). Resistance and representation: Postcolonial fictions of nations in crisis. *Postcolonial Text* 1 (1) retrieved from postcolonial.com

- Richardson, L. (1997). Skirting a pleated text: De-disciplining an academic life. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 3 (3), 295-303.
- Richardson, L. (2000). Writing: A Method of Inquiry. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research (2nd Ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication.
- Richardson, L. (2002). Poetic Representations of Interviews. In J. Gubrium & J. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of Interview Research*. London: Sage Publication.
- Richardson, V. (2003). Constructivist pedagogy. *Teacher College Record (105)*, 9. 1621640
- Robertson, R. (1995). Glocalization: Time-space and homogeneity-heterogeneity. In M. Featherstone, S. Lash & R. Robertson (Eds.), *Global modernities* (pp. 25–44). London, New Delhi, Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Robertson, T. (2005). Class issues: A critical ethnography of corporate domination within the classroom. *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, 3(2). Retrieved from www.jceps.com
- Roy, M. S. (2006). Speaking silence: Narrative of gender in the historiography of the Naxalbari movement in west Bengal (1967-75). *Journal of South Asian Development*, 1 (2), 207-230.
- Sen, A. (2006). *Identity and violence: The illusion of destiny*. New Delhi: Penguin groups
- Seymour, S. (2006). Resistance. *Anthropological Theory*, 6 (3), 303-321.
- Singh, U. (2007). Socio cultural system of Tharu community. In B. N. Koirala, A. Khadka, & R. Khadka (Eds.), *Democratic indigenous practice of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Nepal Center for Creative Research.
- Soja, E. W. (1996). *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and other real-imagined places*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Spivak, G. (1988). Can subaltern speak? In C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the interpretation of culture*. London: Macmillian.

- Spry, T. (2001). Performing autoethnography: An embodied methodological praxis. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7 (6), 706-732.
- Stash, S., & Hannum, E. (2001). Who goes to school? Educational stratification by gender, caste and ethnicity in Nepal. *Comparative Education Review* 45, (3), 354-378.
- Street, B. ((1993). *Cross cultural approaches to literacy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University.
- Suna- karo, K. (2010). Review of Gyanendra Pandey, (ed) Subaltern Citizen and Their histories: investigation from India and the USA. *Journal of Postcolonial Theory and Theology*, 1, 2-6.
- Taylor, P. C. (2008). Multi-paradigmatic research design spaces for cultural studies researcher embodying post colonial theorizing. *Cultural Studies of science Education*, 3 (4). 881-889.
- Taylor, P. C., Settelmaier, E. Luitel, B. C. (In press). Multi- paradigmatic transformative research as/for teacher education: An integral perspective. *Second International Handbook of Science education*. Springer
- The Rising Nepal* (2010, February 14). Literacy campaign kicks off. p.3.
- Thorat, S. (2007). Economic exclusion and poverty in Asia. *2020 focus brief on the world's poor and hungry people*. Washington : International Food Policy Research Institute.
- Tuladhar, S. K. (1994). *Development of a participatory community video model as post literacy activity in Nepal* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Massachusetts : University of Massachusetts.
- Tuladhar, S. K. (2001). Role of NGOs in achieving EFA goal. *Education and Development* 2001, 49-55.
- Tuncel. R. (2009). The effect of constructivist classroom procedures in FL writing development. *Conference of the International Journal of Arts and Sciences*, 1(20), 83-88.

- UNESCO (1997). *Technical consultation on literacy as a tool for the empowerment of the poor: Draft final report*. Bangkok: UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
- UNESCO (2005). *Literacy for life: EFA global monitoring report 2006*. Paris: UNESCO.
- UNESCO (2006). *Literacy for Life: Regional review south and west Asia*. Retrieved from [www. Unesco.org/images](http://www.Unesco.org/images)
- UNESCO (2006). Literacy: The core of Education for All. *Education for All Monitoring Report*.
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Williams, P. & Chrisman, L. (Eds.) (1994). *Colonial discourse and post colonial theory*. Harlow: Pearson Education.
- Williams, P. J. (2009). Technological literacy: a multiliteracies approach for democracy. *Int J Technol Des Educ*, 19. 237-254. DOI 10.1007/s10798-007-9046-0