

Transnational Perspective in the Theorization of Nepali Diaspora and its Literature

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Abstract

Can all Nepali expatriates be considered Nepali Diaspora? And what about their literary creations? These questions can be answered when Nepali Diaspora and its literature is theorized from the perspective of transnationalism. In the last decade there were a lot of generalizations on these ideas. In many cases all transnational migrant communities were wrongly termed as diaspora. In this context, based on my PhD dissertation and other further researches, this paper has categorized Nepali out-migrants and it has discussed their literary creations as per the types of emotions and imaginations these different communities cherish. The basis of this categorization is the theory of transnationalism as discussed by Janine Dahinden. This discussion has divided and exemplified all Nepali transnational communities into three broad categories: diaspora, transnational mobiles (both of the economic emigrants and cosmopolitans) and transnational outsiders. All these communities have different histories, life patterns, experiences, expectations, emotions and imaginations. The same are expressed in their literary creations. The pattern of Nepali transnational migration has been the base of the creation of Nepali Diaspora. Furthermore, the Nepali diaspora communities can also be divided into three specific categories: established

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diaspora, insipient diaspora and dormant diaspora. Their literary creations exhibit different qualities of their life and consequent emotions and imaginations. Examples have been drawn from Nepali poetry created by Nepali transnational migrants. It is hoped that this paper will contribute to the latest theorization of diaspora and its literature even beyond the Nepali context

1. Nepali Transnational Mobility

Cross-border migration of the people of Nepali origin is a millennia long practice. Before Nepal was unified as a modern state in the eighteenth century and its final border was fixed in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, there was not fixed homeland geography for Nepali transnational migration and consequent mobility. People had their movements across many small principalities in modern Nepal and India. The present border of Nepal was fixed after the Anglo Nepal War (1814-1816) that ended at the Treaty of Sugauli (1816). There is a recorded history of Nepali people's transnational movement in these last two centuries after that date.

The researchers of Nepali migration have divided the cross border migration of Nepali people into three waves. The first wave covers the time up to the fixation of the present border of Nepal in 1816. Then follows the second wave that extended from 1816 to 1970s followed by the third wave that extends from 1971 to the present (Limbu, 2012). The first phase of Nepali transnational migration is found to have taken place in present territories of India, Bhutan and China. It is older than the history of modern Nepal (NIDS, 2010). Michael James Hutt has claimed that many of these migrants did not opt to return to Nepal because they were not forcefully expelled;

instead, they left in search of better opportunities in life. Among them those who left just for economic reasons kept on crossing the border (Hutt, 1997). This was the beginning of Nepali transnational migration.

The second phase of Nepali transnational migration was mostly concentrated in India. A considerably small number was spread to Burma, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Fiji, England and some other parts of the world. Because of the Treaty of Sugauli, Nepal was unable to extend its relation to the countries other than India and England (Dhungel, 1999). At the same time, Nepali youths began to be recruited in British-Gurkha Regiments in India. The family members and relatives of the British-Gurkha soldiers also migrated to the places in India where the soldiers settled after their retirement. These soldiers were taken to Burma, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Fiji and England in course of different warfare; and finally many of them settled there.

The third phase of Nepali transnational migration has taken Nepali people to the global spread. The areas of concentration extended from the South Asia to the Europe, the Americas, the Oceania and West Asia. Rajendra Subedi noted that the trend started with the opening of Nepal to the world arena after the declaration of Nepal as a 'Zone of Peace' in 1975. It made Nepal known to the world and people began to migrate to different parts of the globe (Subedi, 2012). The report of the Government of Nepal mentioned that, in last thirty years, the trend of Nepali transnational migration has taken a paradigm shift. Up to 1981, the major destination for such migration was India amounting to 93.1 percentage. By 2011 it dropped to 37.6 percentage. The new trend of Nepali migration is to move to Malaysia (29.88%), Qatar (21.57%), Saudi Arabia (20.37%), UAE (10.62%), Kuwait (2.54%), South

Korea (1.32%), Bahrain (0.86%) and Oman (0.63%). The number of destination countries is growing every year. By 2018, Nepali people had been migrated to 153 countries of the globe (GON, 2018). This trend has shown the need of studies and analysis of such migration and the resultant creative writings of Nepali people who live outside the nation.

2. Types of Nepali Transnational Communities

Scholars of transnational migration tend to divide transnational communities into different categories. For the study of Nepali transnational communities I have taken the model used by Janine Dahinden in her 2010 paper published in *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories and Methods*. In her typology, the major focus is on the “*mobility and locality*” (emphasis original) of the communities. She argued that “transnational formations result from a combination of *transnational mobility*, on the one hand, and *locality in the sending or/and receiving country*, on the other” (emphasis original). By the term ‘mobility’ she refers to “the physical movement of people in transnational space”; and the term ‘locality’ refers to “being rooted or anchored – socially, economically or politically – in the country of immigration and/or in the sending country” that means “developing/having a set of social relations at specific places” (Dahinden, 2010). The nature of a transnational community is decided by the relation of their mobility and locality.

Based on these features she proposed to divide all transnational communities into four ideal types. The first type is “localized diasporic transnational formation” that “is characterized by low physical mobility and high degree

of local ties”. Similarly, the second type is “localized mobile transnational formation” with the feature of “high physical mobility and high locality”. Different from these two types is the third one which is named as “transnational mobile” that refers to the people “who are highly mobile but have a low degree of local anchorage”. And the final/fourth type is named as transnational outsiders who ‘display both low mobility and low degree of local anchorage’ (Dahinden, 2010). Nepali transnational community has all the four types.

The first of these four types is localized diasporic transnational formations. This can also be termed as an established diaspora community. The people of Nepali origin living in well settled communities in India, Bhutan, Myanmar and Fiji have made such a type. They rarely move out of their host land or the new places of generations-long settlements to go to Nepal; but in their imagination and spirit they always reach Nepal. This low level of physical mobility and high level of mental border crossing makes them fit in the first type. Most of these communities use Nepali language; follow Nepali culture; and believe that Nepal is their land of origin even though it has already been many generations that their forefathers have migrated away from this Himalayan nation.

The second type of Nepali transnational communities is localized mobile transnational formations. Such a community is “characterized by more elements of mobility, although the sedentary aspects remain highly relevant” (Dahinden, 2010). The Nepali communities that are growing in the Americas, the Europe and the Oceania in the last three decades exhibit these features. They are trying to settle forever in the host lands, but as most of them

belong to the first generations of the migrants, their contact and movement to their homeland (Nepal) is very frequent. They spend most part of their earning in the new land though their border-crossing is far higher than that of the Nepali communities permanently living in India, Bhutan, Burma and Fiji. They can also be termed as insipient diaspora or the growing Nepali Diaspora.

Dahinden's third ideal type of a transnational community is found in the Nepali communities living and working in different parts of the world as temporary labour and intellectual work forces. Members of such a community are "more or less permanently on the move with low levels of local anchorage in the receiving country" and so "mobility becomes an integral part of migrants' life strategies" (Dahinden, 2010). Dahinden gives the examples of executives, international officials, managers in multinational companies and the transnational elites. In case of transnational Nepali community, this category can be used to refer to temporary labour and intellectual migrants across the globe, and some cosmopolitan elites.

The Nepali labour migrants get permission to work for two or three years in the Arabian countries and the Malaysia. If they want to extend their duration of work, they need to go for the next round of permission process from both the company in the host land and the government of Nepal. They are not allowed to have a permanent settlement in those countries. So, they are always temporary and go on moving across the borders. Such people are found even in the countries where Nepali communities are already in the condition of established diaspora and the incipient/growing diaspora. The next group of Nepali transnational mobile is made up of the high class

businessmen who have their businesses in multiple locales in the globe. In course of their regular work they go on crossing the border without any limit and regularity. They are the cosmopolitan elites.

The last and the most vulnerable category of the transnational communities of any nation is the fourth one: transnational outsiders. Such a community has “low transnational mobility” and “low degree of local anchorage”. They are typically refugees, asylum seekers, illegal entrants and the people whose permission to stay in the host land is over. Such people do not have right to travel, right to work and right to settle in the hostland (Dahinden, 2010). In a sense, they are double outsiders: outside their homeland and legally outcast in the host land. Many Nepali transnational migrants in the West and the West Asia are in this condition. Though they do not form a fixed community, their number is significant and is mostly handled by either the Nepali embassies in the concerned nations or by NRNA country bodies there.

3. Features of Nepali Diaspora

Nepali Diaspora is the result of transnational migration of the people of Nepali origin out of the geographical area covered by modern Nepal. Looking at the history, trends and types of migration from Nepal; and the consequent permanent settlements it has been fostering in different nodes of the globe, the Nepali Diaspora can be put under two ideal types of Dahinden’s transnational communities: localized diasporic transnational formations or the established diaspora, and localized mobile transnational formations or the growing diaspora. These two categories are sometimes referred also as the Old Nepali Diaspora and the New Nepali Diaspora.

By now, the Nepali Diaspora conforms to the basic characteristic features of a diaspora community. Firstly, it is a community of permanent settlers in a place away from their land of origin, Nepal. Secondly, it, as a mass, cannot return and resettle in Nepal. Thirdly, it is a result of gradual accumulation of voluntary individual migrants. Fourthly, it has grown and is growing in gradual four stages. As the fifth feature, the Nepali Diaspora is made up of the people of Nepali origin. Conforming to the sixth feature, its consciousness and the consequent behaviours are shaped by love, mutual trust and relation with Nepal. It is displayed in the activities and writings of the diasporans. Many Nepalidiasporans' nostalgia about Nepal confirms the seventh feature. Similarly, a very strong and the eighth feature it has shown is in its maintenance of contact with Nepal in many types of personal and social levels; and even better in its collective involvement and investment in homeland development projects and in times of crisis in Nepal.

The next or the ninth feature of the Nepali Diaspora is its maintenance of homeland culture through institutions, iconography and community-involving activities in the host land. As the tenth feature, the Nepali Diaspora has developed hybridity in terms of their life patterns in the host land. In terms of maintaining traditional cultural practices, they are same to the people back in Nepal; but in terms of their work culture, they have followed the culture of the host land. For example, the Nepalis in the USA have taken up the local work culture there. So is the case of the Nepalis living in other host lands. It has created hybridity in their life patterns. The strongest feature of the Nepali Diaspora is its creation and maintenance of transnational networks among its members. NRNA is one of such organizations that connect the Nepalis across the globe. It inspires both the PNO (People of

Nepali Origin) and PON (People of Nepal) to be connected and work for the development of Nepali-ness and the development of Nepal. These features show that Nepali Diaspora is an exemplary community in the study of world diaspora at this juncture of global history.

4. Types of Nepali Diasporic Communities

Nepali Diasporic communities can be divided into three major categories: established diaspora, insipient diaspora and dormant diaspora. The first two types are also called Old Nepali Diaspora and New Nepali Diaspora respectively. The third type is a unique group inside the first one. It is found in India and Fiji. The Old or established Nepali Diaspora has all the features of a diasporic community. Unlike the Old one, the New Nepali Diaspora is incipient i.e. a growing diaspora.

4.1 Established Nepali Diaspora/Old Nepali Diaspora

The researchers on Nepali Diaspora argue that Indian Nepali Diaspora is an established Nepali Diaspora. David N. Gellner takes the Indian Nepali Diaspora as a classic example for the study of diaspora: it shows how Nepali Diaspora can continue its diasporic features long after its establishment. He adds that the Bhutanese and Burmese Nepali communities also display these features (Gellner, 2018). Bal Gopal Shrestha also has the similar argument based upon his research on the Nepali communities in India and Bhutan (Shrestha and Gellner, 2016). Similar features can be found in the Fiji Nepali Diaspora. All these form the Old or the established Nepali Diaspora. These diasporic communities can again be divided into two groups: Active

Old Nepali Diaspora and Dormant Old Nepali Diaspora.

4.1.1. Active Old Nepali Diaspora

The established diasporas that are culturally and identity-wise active in their connection with the homeland are called active old diasporas. The Nepali Diaspora in Burma/Myanmar and Bhutan are these types. Indian Nepali Diaspora had the features of this category until recently, but lately their diasporic consciousness has been latent and it has grown the features of dormant diaspora. An active old diaspora like the Nepali Diaspora in Bhutan and Burma exhibit some unique qualities. There is a long history of settlement in the host land and connection with the homeland in such a diaspora.

Sushma Joshi discusses such diasporic consciousness of the Nepali community in Burma/Myanmar. Many people of Nepali origin there proudly narrate the stories of their visit to Nepal to pay homage to Pashupatinath, the national god of Nepal. They still continue the worship of *nawagraha* [nine planets] that is nearly forgotten in modern Nepal. It shows how the diaspora preserves the culture of homeland even when the homeland forgets or modifies it. The *Deusi* and *Bhaili* of the time they left Nepal are still in practice there. Many Burmese have Nepali TV channels to be updated on Nepali society and culture. They take Burma as their home, but Nepal as a respected land of their ancestors. They have love for both lands, but cannot return to Nepal as a community for a permanent stay (Joshi, 2018). Such are the features of an established diaspora.

The next established Nepali Diaspora is in Bhutan. Bhutanese Nepali Diaspora is a classic case. Accumulated in Bhutan taking many centuries (from

the 8th century to the 20th), by 1980s, the people of Nepali origin made about one third of the total population of the kingdom of Bhutan. They settled in the southern plains of Bhutan and contributed to the building of modern Bhutan working as unpaid-for workers in many construction works. After 1955, they started to get the citizenship of Bhutan and the permission to establish Nepali medium schools. By late 1970s, they were politically and culturally active.

But suddenly, in the 1980s, the Bhutanese regime introduced the policy of ‘one nation, one culture’ that compelled the Nepalis there to follow the culture of the rulers and use Zhongkha, the language of the court. It was a difficult provision for them to say in Bhutan. They raised their voice against it and demanded that they should be allowed to practice their Hindu culture and use Nepali as their language. The tension grew to such an extent that the Bhutanese national army was deployed to vacate many Nepali settlements; and the people there were evicted. Then, more than one hundred thousand Bhutanese people of Nepali origin travelled to Nepal and lived in their forefathers’ land as refugees for about two decades. They continuously fought for their rights to return to Bhutan. But their attempts were in vain. Finally, they settled in the West i.e. Europe, America and the Oceania. Those who are still in Bhutan are compelled to live with curbed rights to practice their culture and language. So, the Bhutanese Nepali community is the Nepali equivalent to the Jews, the classic case in diaspora studies.

4.1.2. Dormant Old Nepali Diaspora

Though geographically very close to Nepal, the Indian Nepali Diaspora ex-

hibits unique features. For long, India was the first foreign destination of many Nepali people for various reasons, the settlement of Nepali community there is a centuries-long practice. There are all types of transnational Nepali communities: permanently settled, temporarily settled and non-settled. Among these types, the permanently settled people of Nepali lineage make the Indian Nepali Diaspora.

Many studies have shown their diasporic features; but these days many of them do not like to call themselves Nepali Diaspora. Instead, they like to call themselves the Indian Nepalis or the Nepali speaking people born in Indian land. It is because they want to show themselves different from the Nepali speaking people from Nepal. They are compelled to do so as the mainstream Indian society discriminates them as outsiders despite their generations-long stay and service to India as their own nation. The ‘chase-outsiders’ movements in the 1970s and 1980s in Assam (the North East India) made the Nepali community there terrified of their future in the land (Gellner, 2018). Then they began this discourse of being non-Nepalese but the Nepali speaking people of India. This discourse has developed to the extent that now many of them argue that they have no connection with Nepal except the common language (Wenner, 2016). They do not like to be called the Indian Nepali Diaspora, but only the Indian Nepalis or the Gorkhas. It means their diasporic consciousness has been latent.

Gabriel Sheffer describes such diasporic communities as ‘dormant diaspora’. He explains that when an established diaspora reaches to a certain stage, it gradually loosens its tie with the homeland, and begins to define the host land itself as a homeland. He gives the example of the Jewish Diaspora.

The number of Jews outside Israel is more than the Jews who live in Israel. Most of them do not think of returning to Israel, the homeland of every Jew. Histories describe them as Israelites, but they themselves do not think so. They are already well settled in the host land such as the USA and Canada; and so do not feel necessary to return to Israel as well. They do not even feel necessary to be in contact with Israel. The activities of diasporic organizations slowly decrease in such communities (Sheffer, 2011)). But sometimes such connection automatically surfaces and they begin to feel connected to the forgotten land of the ancestor. So, such communities do not seem to be diasporic on the surface, but their latent psychology is always diasporic one.

Studies show that the Nepali speaking community in India exhibits the qualities of a dormant diaspora. Tristan Brusley claims that the Nepali speaking people in India do not want to return to Nepal for permanent settlement back there. But when they have some problems in India, they begin to think of going to Nepal. In many occasions in the past, many of the Indian Nepalis returned to Nepal for safety and settlement (Brusley, 2016). David N. Gellner has the similar logic. He discusses the Nepal connection of the Nepali speaking people from Sikkim and Darjeeling of India. To establish themselves as pure Indians, during the Gorkhaland movement in 1992, they went to the extent of dismantling the statue of Bhanubhakta, the first poet of Nepali language, labeling him a foreign poet (Gellner, 2018). Michael Hutt, a researcher of Nepali community in South Asia, presents his findings about the connection of the South Asian transnational Nepali communities to Nepal, and argues that many of them have returned to Nepal when they had severe problems in their land of settlement. The examples are enough

in case of the returnees from Manipur and Assam of India just like the Nepali speaking people from Burma/Myanmar and Bhutan (Hutt, 1997). The Indian mainstream society always connects them with the land of Nepal and suspects that their Gorkhaland movement is the result of their desire to be unified with the land of Nepal. These conditions establish that the Indian Nepali Diaspora is a good example of a dormant diaspora.

The next example of dormant Nepali Diaspora is the Fijian Nepali Diaspora. Researchers have pointed that very few people of Nepal know about the settlement of Nepali people in Fiji. They reached there along with the North Indian indenture migrants in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. Later, the Nepalis who worked in the British Gurkha Regiment settled there. They could not continue their physical connection with Nepal; but they preserved Nepali family structure and love of Nepal in their mind. When Krishna Prasad Adhikari and Bhimsen Sapkota reached there to conduct a research on that community, they suddenly felt that they could return to their homeland Nepal at some point in their life. Some of them expressed the desire to smear the soil of Nepal all over their body if they could land on that sacred land of the ancestors. Their love of and connection with Nepal was suddenly awoken (Adhikari and Sapkota, 2018). This shows that the Nepali community in Fiji is a dormant Nepali Diaspora.

4.2. Incipient Nepali Diaspora

The Nepali Diaspora in the West i.e. Europe, America and Oceania is in the process of its formation. It is a growing diaspora and a recent phenomenon. A good case in point is British Nepali Diaspora. Despite the two hundred

years long history of the Gurkhas in the British Army, they were allowed to have permanent settlement there only recently. Surya Prasad Subedi writes: “the Gurkhas [...] are household names in the UK. But the current generation of Nepalis in the UK are the first to try to establish their identity as a distinct ethnic group” (Subedi, 2012). Krishna Prasad Adhikari supports this argument with the proof that “there is no evidence to suggest that Nepalis settled in the UK before 1950” and only “[b]y early 2000, the Nepali population in the UK was rising rapidly” (Adhikari, 2012). Similarly, historian Ramesh Kumar Dhungel finds that in the USA “the first Nepalese obtained a permanent residency in 1952” (Dhungel, 1999), but the settlement of a significant number is a post-1990 phenomena. These facts indicate the newness of the Western Nepali Diaspora. Brusley argues that such newly growing diasporic communities get organized for their political and economic security (Brusley, 2016). They still have to go a long way to be well established there.

As there is no long time gap of their leaving Nepal, they have strong physical and emotional ties with Nepal. They have many kiths, kins and friends back there. In this age of virtual connectivity and communication, they are in contact with many such relatives in Nepal. So, they frequently travel to Nepal. At the same time, they have to be established in the new land. So, they need to be active in personal, social and organizational levels, too. All these needs make them be active in both lands: Nepal and the host land.

The case of American Nepali Diaspora is also the same. It was 1952 when the first Nepali citizen got permission to settle permanently in the USA. But only from the 1980s, a significant number of Nepalis began to settle there

(Dhungal, 1999). The provision of DV lottery and its resultant green card for permanent residence caused the migration of all types of Nepalis to the USA. Added with them are the students-turned-professionals, wealthy Nepalis and asylum seekers-turned-permanent residents make American Nepali Diaspora. Similar is the case of the Nepali community in Canada. Many Bhutanese of Nepali origin also have settled in the USA, Australia and the New Zealand. The education and social security provisions in these lands have attracted many Nepali citizens to go for permanent stay and consequent establishment in these Western nations. They all are forming the New Nepali Diaspora. This Nepali Diaspora is hyper-active in cultural, creative and identity related concerns.

5. Transnational Nepali Literature and its Types

Literature created on the theme of transnational Nepali communities using their emotion, imagination and existential conditions is transnational Nepali literature. Just like the transnational Nepali communities, transnational Nepali literature also can be discussed under four categories: the literature of the established diaspora, that of the growing diaspora, that of transnational mobiles and that of transnational outsiders. The literature of the established diaspora displays the complete qualities of a diasporic life. In the literature of the growing diaspora, there is the mixture of the diasporic and transnational mobiles' emotions, feelings and thoughts. Whereas, the literatures of transnational mobiles and the transnational outsiders are filled up with the emotions, thoughts and feelings their life manages for them. This section exemplifies these types of transnational Nepali literature.

5.1. Diasporic Nepali Literature

Diasporic creative writings give expression to the emotion, feelings and thoughts caused by the existential condition in the diaspora. It is a type of conscious creation in which the identity of a diasporan takes a principal stage. Robin Cohen argues that diasporic creations primarily give expression to the feeling of isolation and insecurity in the host land. When the mainstream society in the new land discriminates the diasporans, their identity issue becomes severe. As a result, they feel as if they are the trees broken away from the roots i.e. the homeland society (Cohen, 2008). In the same line of thought, Laura Izara takes the creation of diasporic literature as a result of a discourse between the mainstream and the diasporic communities in the host land. Thus, such creativity brings the cultural, social, political and historical differences of the two lands together (Izara, 2014). Summing up these and other discourses on such creations, Ramji Timalisina has listed the following characteristic features of diasporic literature:

1. Diasporic literature is an aesthetic depiction of the existential reality (physical, social and psycho-emotional) and imagination of a diaspora.
2. It is third-space writing with hybridity in language, culture, subjectivity and technique.
3. It is both realistic and fictio-critical in orientation.
4. Fragmentation, satire, nostalgia, allegory and autobiographical tone are the major techniques used in the making of a diasporic

text.

5. It is used as a diaspora's defense mechanism in defining identity; creating and maintaining contact between homeland and hostland; and releasing the trauma of dispersion, dislocation and loss. So, it is a means of strengthening a diaspora and its identity formation, development and sustenance.
6. Thematically, literature by the first generation diasporans differs from the creations of their subsequent generations. Generally, the first generation focuses primarily on the homeland along with the hostland reality; whereas, the writers of the subsequent generations focus on the hostland realities.
7. Basically, the diasporans are the writers of diasporic literature. Sometimes, non-diasporans, too, can create it. (Timalisina , 2017)

Diasporic Nepali literature exhibits the same features. The following poem is an example of such a creation.

What's there!

HomnathSubedi (USA)

I'd expired while entering America

On the tomb I felt I noticed some flicker of light

Ever since I've lived the same night

Day! I've never seen

I've left him

In Nepal. (Subedi, 2015)

It is a meditative lyric composed by Nepali diasporic poet HomanathSubedi who has been living in the USA for more than three decades. He is the pioneer of Nepali diasporic literature and its global promotion through the organization named International Nepalese Literary Society (INLS). This poem has been translated from its Nepali title “Ke ChhaYahaa” into English by Amma Raj Joshi. It has been published in *Poems of the Nepali Diaspora* (2015). “I”, the speaker of the poem, is based on America. He ponders on the condition of his life in the diaspora and feels depressed. This emotion of helplessness has been supported in this six line poem with the fleeting emotions of despair, depression, deliberation and anxiety.

The title of the poem directly takes the readers into the theme of the poem. The title phrase “What’s there!” is a question without a question mark. Instead of the question mark, it has been followed by the exclamation mark in its English translation though the Nepali version has no punctuation mark. The exclamation mark indicates an emotional shock the diasporans get in the hostland. The high level expectations they have of the new land before they really experience it gets all damaged in reality. The humanity and satisfaction one gets in the homeland is an impossible dream in the new land so that they are compelled to think that they do not live there as humans. Every achievement seems insignificant in comparison with the mental peace and emotional satisfaction they have left back in the homeland. So, the speaker reaches to the level of emotional imbalance and uses the expression of

shock: What's there!

The use of the word 'there' in the title is meaningfully significant. The speaker lives in America; but he uses the word "there" for the same land. For him America is not 'here', but 'there'. It shows that his homeland Nepal is 'here' for him. This deictic deviation represents the deviation in his thought pattern. He uses the word 'there' for America to show that despite his decades-long stay in that land, he is not treated as its own people. He could never be lovely and emotionally close to this land. There is always an emotional distance between him and the land although there is physical proximity. At the same time, the emotional proximity with Nepal, despite their physical distance, shows the diasporan's basic emotion: the love of the homeland. This attachment is not the matter of logical reasoning but that of the emotional connection. Ultimately, this relation indicates that the diasporans always place the higher value to emotional reality in comparison with the material one. Thus, the title itself makes the poem symbolically diasporic.

The idea of diaspora is found even in the use of location and character in the poem. America is the immediate location of the poem; and Nepal comes here by cross reference. Even then Nepal seems to be far lovelier to the speaker than America is. He thinks that the new land i.e. America is a "tomb" (l. 2) for him. It has made him emotionally dead. Every moment he experiences there is the darkness like that of the night (l. 3). He believes that the day and light are left back in Nepal itself. Though sometimes he seems to see "some flicker of light" (l. 2) in the hostland, it is only his illusion. In reality, he lives a dead man's life there. His mind is attached with Nepal

where the light is ever glowing. With all these feelings, the speaker is found to be a lonely diasporan who is hopeless and has plunged into despair and ultimately to the state of depression. He represents the Nepalidiasporans in the America who live a very hopeless and helpless life. When their illusion of the possible heavenly life in the diaspora is broken, they begin to take the new land as their tomb and their existence like that of the dead body that is buried into the tomb.

The theme is intensified with the bizarre images, symbols and the paradoxes the poem is made up of. The image of a dead person speaking reminds us the existential characters from the mid-twentieth century literature. How is it possible for a dead man to speak and even more strange that how can a dead body from the tomb see even the “flicker of light”? This is not only a bizarre image, but also a serious paradox. Though it seems meaningless on the surface, it carries a serious meaning in the diasporic context: the life of the diasporans is always spiritually dead. When one is devoid of good spirit for living a life, everything begins to seem negative. The image cum symbol of “night” (l. 3) represents the same terribly depressive psychology of the speaker. In such a mentality, there are very few moments in life when the person feels hopeful and happy. It is rare like a dead body’s ability to see the light out of the tomb. The diasporans in such a psychic state find the homeland very bright in comparison with the darkness and difficulty in the land of naturalization. They think that the life they have lived and left back in the homeland is like the “Day!” which is a good time of happiness and emotional fulfillment. They always pine for the time they have left back just the way during the night we pine for the brightness of the day. This

dichotomy of day and night is the dichotomy of the emotional relation of a diasporan with the homeland and the hostland.

5.2. Transnational Mobiles' Nepali Literature

The theme and style of transnational mobiles' creations are different from that of the diasporic ones. Their differences can be discussed first in terms of the mentality of the speaker. Diasporic literature expresses the speaker's mental shock caused by homelessness, whereas the speaker of the transnational mobile's creations expresses the mental effect caused by a short term separation from the home, homeland and the family members. Similarly, diasporic creations present cultural hybridity, whereas the transnational mobile's creations just present cultural shock. The third difference is seen in terms of the speaker's 'self': diasporans have the divided self or double consciousness, whereas transnational mobiles have a limited self that is not as free as it used to be in the homeland. Similarly, the diasporans have the divided commitment both to the homeland and the host land, whereas the transnational mobiles have complete commitment to the homeland. At the same time, as the diasporans are long term residents of the host land their writing is influenced by the trend of the host land literary traditions, whereas the transnational mobiles' writing mostly use the literary trends of the homeland.

The following poem exemplifies the basic traits of Nepali transnational mobiles' creation.

Call of the motherland

Chiranjibi Dhakal (UK)

What do you do getting tired in this sinister foreign land?
You can be proud to shed sweat drops digging your own farmland.
What do you see when your Buddha is snatched away?
Your motherland is calling you with the tearful eyes.

What is the life to live as a slave full of troubles and tortures?
If this is life, how do you define death?
How much pain did the mother bear when you were small?
Why don't you return when the old mother calls you?

You may build a palace with wealth, but where do you purchase the
peace?
It lives in the Nepali forest and you know its meaning there.
What do you see being dumb when the border of blood is getting
erased?
Do you wipe the mother's tears or want to add it more?

When the empty belly sounds and the summer burns you
We remember the parents bearing that pain
The heart burns while touching the beloved's photo in her memory. I
will return to wipe the tears of weeping mother Nepal. (Dhakal,
2017) (My translation)

This poem presents the emotion of a Nepali citizen who has left his motherland in search of better economic possibilities than that of the homeland. He is alone in the host land; his family is back in Nepal. He remembers his mother, motherland and beloved during the painful time in the new land.

The speaker himself is the main character and he represents the millions of Nepali youths living out of the nation for certain time with a motive of earning good for the future of the family. While in the foreign land, he keeps track of all events and situation of Nepal. He is worried that the neighboring country has claimed the birthplace of Buddha to show that the Buddha was not born in Nepal. The speaker takes it as a serious identity issue Nepal has been undergoing. It is the duty of a responsible citizen to fight for the protection of their national identity; but he cannot do it because he has to be busy in the work in a foreign land.

He is full of pain in the works as well. He feels as if he is a modern day slave. He equates his living with death or even worse condition. He is dumbfounded when the blood-earned national border of Nepal is continuously erased and moved by the neighbor. With these thoughts, he compares his achievement in the foreign land with what he could do just staying in the homeland. He has earned a lot there; but it is not enough to purchase the peace that he could find in the Nepali nature. He can send money back home when necessary; but it is not the payment enough to sooth the weeping mother and motherland in troubles. He labours hard in the foreign land, and is dead tired; but he does not feel satisfied. He could have been satisfied if his sweat was spilled in the farmland back in Nepal.

His emotion gets intense when he has to work empty belly; he has to work in the deadly heat; and he can just look at the picture of the beloved wife when he is back from work. The picture cannot quench his physical and emotional desires that a wife with body and soul could provide him. Similarly, just the memory of the parents cannot shower the blessings and soothing

touches. So, finally, he is determined to return to the homeland i.e. Nepal so that his own life, the family life and the condition of the nation can be improved. This poem, finally, pleads all Nepali transnational mobiles to return to Nepal and work for the betterment of the self, the family, the immediate society and finally for the protection and development of the nation. Such a movement is now on in Nepal. Many transnational mobiles have started to settle well in the nation and use their skills they have learnt in the foreign land for the development of Nepal. With all these thematic concerns and stylistic features, this poem is a transnational mobiles' creation.

5.3 Transnational Outsiders' Nepali Literature

Whoever is the creator, if a creation gives expression to the emotion, feeling and thought of someone who is in the condition of transnational outsider, it is a transnational outsiders' literature. Their approach to the land they are in is that of an outsider's; and so the creation gives expression to the same condition. Tourists who cross national borders are one of such people. There are many stories, memoirs and poems in Nepali literature created by such tourists. At the same time, there are writings of Nepali asylum seekers, residential permissions expirers and other types of Nepalis living illegally in the Europe, the USA and the Oceania. These writing in total make the bulk of transnational outsiders' Nepali literature. This is a new area of exploration and studies in Nepali literary research and criticism.

6. Conclusion

The migration of Nepali people out of the nation has created transnational

Nepali community. This community can be divided into four ideal types as proposed by Janine Dahinden, a scholar of transnationalism: localized diasporic transnational formation, localized mobile transnational formation, transnational mobile, and transnational outsiders. The first type of Nepali community is also known as a permanent or the Old Nepali Diaspora and is found in India, Bhutan, Myanmar and Fiji. Similarly, the second type that is also known as incipient or growing diaspora is getting developed in the Europe, the Americas and the Oceania as the New Nepali Diaspora. The third type of transnational Nepali community is made up of economic migrants and cosmopolitan elites. Nepali people migrated to different countries of the world in the form of temporary workforce mainly in the Arabian lands, India and Malaysia make this community. And the transnational outsiders are found in any country of the world where there are other types of Nepali communities. There is growing trend of creating Nepali literature to give expression to the emotions, feelings and thoughts of all these communities. As their existential conditions and imaginations are different, the literary creations also have different features. This has emerged as a wide field of studies for both sociological and literary explorations.

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