

Transnational Mobiles in *Bhramar* and *Dak Bangala***Ramji Timalina, PhD**

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<https://doi.org/10.3126/dristikon.v14i1.66056>**Abstract**

This article has discussed the Nepali transnational mobiles as the characters in two of the early Nepali novels written by the Indian Nepali novelists. In the early twentieth century when India referred to British India that covered present India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Myanmar (Burma), Nepali people used to migrate there in search of works and opportunities. When they left home, they thought to return after certain earnings. But the life was not so easy, and finally most of them stranded in life never to reach anywhere. Rupnarayan Singh's *Bhramar* (1970/1936) and Shivakumar Rai's *Dak bangala* (2020/1957) have used such Nepali transnational mobiles as the characters. These characters have always been found in the transition as they are wanderers without any fixed place to settle and feel the peace of mind. Mobility is their common quality. The analysis has been based on Janine Dahinden and Steven Vertovec's idea of transnationalism. They have termed the cross-border migrants who never get permanently settled in the hostland as the transnational mobiles. This article has picked up such characters from both of the novels and discussed their life, culture, mentality and conditions of existence. This article can be a sample for further analysis of Nepali novels from transnational perspective.

Keywords: character, transition, transnationalism, transnational mobiles

Introduction**Historical Background of the Novels**

The trend of Nepali people's migration to other neighboring countries in the South Asia is an age-long practice. Gyawali (1970) claimed that Nepali people were migrants by their nature. Till the Anglo-Nepal War (1814-16), the migration was mostly northward. But after the war, it started southward. Gyawali mentioned that Nepali people began to migrate to India to get recruitment in the Anglo-Indian Army (the Gurkha) and to work for their livelihood. As a result, by 1936, the number of Nepali people living in India was about six hundred thousand. Hutt (1998) confirmed Gyawali's findings. Hutt claimed that "many people forsook their native hills for Muglan, moving eastward into British India, where the grass was somewhat greener"

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(p. 195). Hutt mentioned that “the hills of eastern Nepal supplied tens of thousands of tea garden labourers, as well as Gurkha recruits for the British Indian Army” (p. 202). Later the relatives of the retired Gurkha soldiers began to settle in the areas where there were British Gurkha Army camps (Timalsina, 2019, p. 9). This trend of migration developed the society of Nepali speaking people in India.

Nepali communities in India developed some distinct features from other communities in the area they settled. Timsina (1992) described that the Nepalis “are a group of people who share a common language that is Nepali” (p. 13). Gyawali (1970) described the way Nepali migrants developed cultural mix in those settlements. They learned many ideas about life and living from the regional Indian cultures and world-wide expansion of European culture through English learning and British politics in India. As a result, many Nepalis in India adopted Christianity and Islam as their religions. Such learnings began to make the Nepali migrants create distances from their traditional cultures. Owing to this cultural distance, Gyawali claimed, the people of Nepal began to dislike those border-crossers. So, the term *muglan* is primarily an indicator of contempt for the people who have geographically and culturally distanced themselves from Nepal. On the other hand, the Nepali people in India blamed their relatives back in Nepal as ignorant fools. Gyawali further claimed that the Nepali literary creations helped to remove the misunderstanding between the Nepalis of two countries. This is one of the cultural values of Nepali literature in India.

Bhramar [Bumble-bee] (1936) by Rupnarayan Singh and *Dak bangala* [Inn] (1957) by Shivakumar Rai are two Nepali novels written by Nepali people living in India. Both of them are set in the Nepali communities in contemporary British-India. The major geographical locations of both of these novels are Darjeeling, Kolkota, Banaras, Assam and Burma. These are the areas where the number of Nepali migrants is high. Even among them, Darjeeling has the majority population of Nepali migrants. “During the mid- and late-nineteenth century, ‘going to Muglan’ for most people in eastern Nepal meant ‘going to Darjeeling’” (Hutt 1998, p. 202). Pradhan (2010) reported that the Nepalis are the major ethnic group of Darjeeling. It is Darjeeling where the feeling of Nepaliness is significantly high. They have maintained cultural and other differences from the local people there. In the same line of finding, Singh (1992) observed that ‘the Indian Nepalis’ have created a distinct ethnic entity. Their features reflect “a range of practices and institutions linking migrants, people and organizations in their homelands or elsewhere in a diaspora” (Vertovec, 2009, p. 13). Thus, these novels depict the life of Nepali transnational communities in India.

These two novels represent the theme of migrations and settlement of Nepali migrants to India. Sharma (2018) claimed that Singh and Rai are two major novelists of the Romantic trend of Indian Nepali literature. She described Singh’s *Bhramar* as a novel that depicted everyday material world along with the realities of a self-centered character. Rai (2014) Multi-disciplinary Peer-reviewed Research Journal; Dharan, M. M. Campus, TU.

analysed *Bhramar* as the first complete modern Nepali novel in terms of both its subject matter and style. He showed its connection with the ethnic (Nepali) awareness of Indian Nepalis. Rai claimed that Singh had used the distancing of the actual life of the Indian Nepalis in terms of emotions, not in material terms. Pradhan (1970) had the view similar to Rai. Pradhan claimed that *Bhramar* started the tradition of writing modernist Nepali novel outside Nepal. It depicted the middleclass psychology and has recounted the history of Darjeeling. Gyawali (1970) claimed that as *Bhramar* was the first Nepali novel in the realistic mode, it was an original creation. Here, India refers to British India that covered present India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Myanmar (Burma).

Rai's *Dak bangala* (2020/1957) also had the similar trend in term of both subject matter and style. Sharma (2018) claimed that *Dak bangala* has followed the style of *Bhramar*. She reported that the depiction of the life of the Nepali people who took part in the Second World War, got injured in it, left Burma because of the local people's movement against the foreigners and wandered back to Assam and Darjeeling made the novel a story of Nepali people's historic pain and sufferings. These two novels in total depict the troublesome life of the Nepali transnational migrants of one and a half century i. e. from Sugauli Treaty (1816) to 1950s.

On this background, this article has attempted to find how the life of the Nepali people in India has been depicted in these two novels. As both of them present Nepali people as their characters, it is the study on the transnational characters. Among three types of transnational characters (diasporans, transnational mobiles, and transnational outsiders), most of the characters in both of the novels are wanderers with legal provisions to move anywhere in contemporary India. As in the study of transnationalism, such wanderers are termed as transnational mobiles, this article has analysed the features of these characters as Nepali transnational mobiles in India.

Research Questions

To achieve this major objective, the article has tried to answer the following research questions:

- Who are the major transnational mobiles used as characters in both of the novels?
- What features of transnational mobiles do these characters exhibit?
- How do these characters reflect the life of Nepali migrants who live in India?

Research Materials and Method

This article is based on qualitative research. It has used the theory of transnationalism for the interpretation of the novels *Bhramar* and *Dak bangala*. Here, the novels provide the

primary data for the research. Texts on the theory of transnationalism and reviews on the novels have been used as secondary data to support the analysis.

Dahinden (2010) claimed that since the early 1990s, “studies on transnationalism have proliferated and transnationalism has become one of the fundamental ways of understanding contemporary practices taking place across national borders, especially when speaking of migrants” (p. 51). Out of the major three types of transnational migrants, transnational mobiles are in constant “moving back and forth” as they “have a house or land (or both) in the country of origin” (p. 55). They are “more or less permanently on the move, with low levels of local anchorage in the receiving country” (p. 56). Transnational mobiles have “mental effects caused by a short-term separation from the home, homeland and family members”, “cultural shock”, a limited self (not free enough like in the homeland) and “complete commitment to the homeland” (Timalsina, 2019, p. 28). This approach is appropriate in the study of Nepali communities and its members who are constantly in the move in both of the novels. Thus, in the analysis of the text my interpretation of the incidents has been included with the support from the theoretical inputs.

Results and Discussion

Characters in *Bhramar*

The characters in Singh’s *Bhramar* give the picture of the life of the Nepali people in India and Burma. All the characters are the people migrated from Nepal to these destinations and the children of such migrants. They migrated across the border of Nepal in search of a better life than that of back in Nepal. The characters in Singh’s *Bhramar* were the Nepali people living outside Nepal. They were not the low-class Nepalis there. They actually were the high-class Nepalis who had access to good education and opportunities (Gyawali, 1970; Pradhan, 1970). Indrashekhar, Veena, Gauri, Maya, Raghubir (Mota) Rai, Mohanvikram, Parashuram Basnet, Lalitsingh, Ranaveersingh and Tulasi Baje are the significant characters in the novel.

Sharma (2018) discussed how *Bhramar* established a milestone in modern Nepali novel with the depiction of the reality of the life of the Nepali communities in Darjeeling, Kolkata, Assam and Burma. Their social, educational and cultural realities have been reflected in the novel. The travel of the main character Indrashekhar has taken the readers to these places and displayed the realities there. Though Romantic character in personal features with the belief on freedom of every kind (Sharma 2018), Indrashekhar is a lady hunter modified into a social activist (Pradhan, 1970). A well learned man born in Darjeeling, he studied BA in Kolkata and had a multidimensional talent in singing, painting and composing poems. He was an atheist unlike many Nepali youths in India of the time (1920s). He was not very close to his parents

because he had to live away from them for his education. He wanted to be an outsider in the society till he met Veena.

Maya's hatred for his deception and Veena's love despite his fouls taught him serious life lessons. Then he found himself unfit to stay in the Nepali community and left India to go to Burma with the hope that he would be away from the Nepali community there. He thought that "I would be away from Kolkata and Nepali society [*Ma kalakataa ra nepaalee samaajadekhi dherai tadhaa hunechhu*]" (p. 41). This travel was a form of repentance for his evil deeds against many young Nepali girls in Darjeeling and Kolkata. Many Nepali youths left Nepal because of the same reason. Here, Indrashekhar is their representative.

He was not sure where he would reach in the days ahead. He boarded the ship to Burma but was not sure about the place he would reach and the work he would start. When he reached Rangoon, he thought of searching for a job. But he left the idea when Raghubir Rai wanted him to accompany his family to go to the banks of Irrawaddy River and live there with the Nepali cattle-herds. When he reached Burma, he found its natural beauty very pleasing: "Indrashekhar was stunned at looking the beautiful scenes in the free nature [*Indrashekhar stabdha bhaera mukta prakritiko manoram drishya heriraheko chha*]" (p. 55). Then he decided to live there working for the improvement of the condition and consciousness of the Nepali people settled in Burma for generations. Taking Gauri's assistance, he taught the cattle herds for six months. Then he began to be nostalgic of Darjeeling. His mother, Maya and Veena kept on haunting his consciousness. Time and again the tears flowed down his cheeks. This is the condition of a transnational mobile.

Indrashekhar found himself a "wandering traveler—aimless way-farer [*udbhranta batuwaa – niruddheshya pathik*]" (p. 62). But still he told the cattle-herds that he had to return to his home and family in Darjeeling. This was also the thought of the transnational mobiles who left their homes for a short time to return to it after the completion of some mission they had undertaken. But even when he left Burma to reach Madras he was not certain what he would do there. He tried to search for a job there, but finally left the place to reach Kolkata. There he spent some months helping the sick Nepali people who stayed there for work and earning for their home back in Nepal. These poor Nepali people are also other transnational mobiles. After some adventures and misfortunes, he met his family, got married and returned to Darjeeling to work for the progress of Nepali community. Thus, Indrashekhar is a model transnational mobile depicted in the novel.

Mohanvikram was the next wanderer in the novel. He left Darjeeling for his studies; stayed in Banaras; and finally settled in Kolkata. The next wanderer in the novel was Parashuramsingh Basnet. Basnet, a social and critical thinker, was a jolly man who went to Banaras in his youth in search of some job. He learnt the business skill there and went of Assam to start his own cattle farm. Unlike many Nepali transnational mobiles in India, Basnet

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earned a lot there. When the flood destroyed all his property, he started other businesses and earned a lot once more. After the death of his wife, he left Assam and settled in Darjeeling. Even there he was shocked when Indrashekhar deceived his daughter. Then he travelled to many religious places and finally settled in Kolkata for his daughter's education.

With these and other characters as well, the novel has presented a glimpse of Nepali transnational mobiles' life in India and Burma. Though the major characters are the people from the high-middle class, the novel has, time and again, referred to the poor Nepali transnational migrants. Either the poor or the rich ones, the Nepali community in India and Burma has the high level of insecurity of people, animals, insects, diseases and future. This is the common fear of transnational mobiles.

Characters in *Dak Bangala*

Dak bangala has presented the transnational mobiles as its characters. Chandraprakash, Kanta, Chaukidar Laldhoj Rai, Kanta's father, Kanta's husband, Rupa and the people returning home from Burma are such characters.

Chandraprakash was born in Nepal. He went to Darjeeling for his studies. From there he got recruited in the British India Regiment during the Second World War and reached Burma. He got wounded in the war fighting against the Japanese force. Then he was taken to a temporary war hospital in Machina. When he recovered the wound in his arm, he lost enthusiasm for life. In one Easter evening party, when everyone was enjoying the dance, his heart was devoid of any happiness, enthusiasm and hope. He was lying on the bed like a dead log. Even when he met his childhood friend Rupa, he could not express his feelings. This is the common mentality of transnational mobiles in the hostland.

When Chandrashekhar accompanied the Burmese Nepalis back to Darjeeling, he did not have good feeling on the way. The narrator reported that he was returning home without any aim and enthusiasm. He was like a dead body losing its life in the field of life. When the team arrived at Ledo, his way-mates started to search for their own relatives; but he did not have anyone to meet and had nowhere to go. He had to return to Nepal; but did not want to go there, too. At the end, the novel left him stranded around the tomb of his beloved Ratna. With all these conditions Chandrashekhar represents the conditions and feeling of a transnational mobile.

Chaukidar Laldhoj Rai is the next example of a transnational mobile. He was born in Sukiyapokahari in Darjeeling district from the parents whose parents migrated there from Okhaldhunga, Nepal. But he never felt that he belonged to India. They thought their home was Nepal, but did not know where the real home was. But later when they could not live there, they returned to Okhaldhunga. Nearly the diasporans, the Rai family displayed the transitoriness of the Nepali people's stay in India despite their generations-long settlement

there. The Burmese Nepalis who had to leave their settlement after generations are other such examples. They said that *pahad* [the hill] was their real home and wanted to reach there.

Kanta's father was the next example of the transnational mobiles in the novel. He was a *subedar* in Burma Second Rangoon Battalion. After his retirement, he settled in Darjeeling. Later Kanta was married to a middle-aged soldier and went to Burma with her husband. She was not happy to leave her birth place. But it is the fate of the transnational mobiles to have such feelings in life. She stayed in Burma for some years. But when the Second World War caused great turmoil for the Burmese Nepalis, she had to flee to save her life. But on the way back to Darjeeling, she died in an inn. By chance, Chandraprakash found her dead body and her alive baby. He buried her body and took charge of the baby. Her life finished in transitions.

Kainlo Bhujel and Kainli Bhujelni are two other transnational characters in the novel. They had their inter-caste marriage that the then Nepali society did not approve of. So, they had to leave their home in Nepal and entered India in search of work and opportunities. Bhujelni expressed her worry in the plight of spending a tiresome life away from her birthplace and relatives. She wanted to go back; but was not sure when and how. In the same way, the Nepali soldiers in Indian Gurkha Regiments were collectively transnational mobiles. They were given the job and after retirement they had to return Nepal to take care of their families. The other collective Nepali transnational mobiles were seen in Guwahati. The Nepali youths migrated to India in search of work and opportunities were seen sleeping in the open field in the cold morning. The scene was the example of the sorry plight of the Nepali transnational mobiles.

Nature of Transnational Nepali Communities

Ethnic Affinity

Both of the novels depict the basic nature of Nepali communities in India in the first half of the twentieth century. Singh has mentioned that every year many ignorant Nepalis leave Nepal to reach *muglan*. Their main motive is to improve their economic status. There was the rumour in Nepal that the tree plants shed money for the workers in India. But the reality was not so. That is why when they reached there, they could not make a significant progress; instead, they fell into the condition that was shameful to describe. The narrator in *Bhramar* opines that the Nepalis in India do not know how to work on their own. They simply work as the helpers for others, and so they cannot act equal to the people of other ethnic communities. Most of the Nepalis in India at that time were simply the manual workers either in the army or different fields, mostly in tea estates.

Owing to the lack of enough earning and prestige of the transnational mobiles, Lalitsingh is not happy in his son Indrashekhar's leaving the home without any fixed destination to reach. He thinks his son is "scurvy, hypocrite, bad son [*paajee, paakhandee, kuputra*]" and so he does not want to look at his face that may take him to the hell. He asks:

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“What great thing did he do with his education? As he has left the nation, how could he come back to show his face here?” (my translation) (Singh, p. 42). The parents back in Nepal used to think the same about their sons who left Nepal to be transnational migrants at that time.

Rai’s novel *Dak bangala* describes how the Nepalis left Nepal and settled in India. The novelist states that many Nepalis have lived for generations in the tea estates of Darjeeling and Dooars. There is a large number of Nepalis in the coal and gas mines in Assam. A large number is found on the banks of Brahmaputra and Irrawaddy. They have been affected by great floods and have to struggle against the wild animals such as tigers, bears and elephants. Rai further mentions the pains in the wars the Nepali youths have taken part. They won the battles with Japanese, German and Italian forces in South and South-east Asia. He has mentioned that he has tried to depict the pain of the Nepali people evacuated from Burma during the Second World War. They had to leave Burma and return to Nepal, their own homeland for shelter. The location of the inn [*dak bangala*] is at the border of Nepal and India so that the travelers can stay there after and before they cross the Nepal-India border.

All these stories and the locations are related to travel and mobility. It shows that constant movement from place to place has become the fate of Nepali people in India. They are unable to stay settled and peacefully secure at any place in the host land. It is because most of the Nepalis living in Darjeeling were proletariat labourers (Pradhan, 2010). At the same time the social structure of the settlements back in Nepal was reflected in the Indian Nepali communities in terms of their variety of castes, ethnic groups, religions, pattern of settlement, dress ups, festivals, songs and dances, and customs they follow (Sharma, 1996). So, the whole Nepali community itself looks like a moving Nepal across the borders.

A significant aspect of Nepali community in India is its ethnic affinity. Timsina (1992) discusses Nepali ethnicity in India as “a symbol of peoplehood and of a cultural boundary” (p. 4). This affinity is always there because “[m]ost of the Nepalis in India, except in Sikkim, feel highly insecure” (31). This insecurity has inspired the writers to raise ethnic consciousness in the community. Sharma (2018) claimed that Singh’s *Bhramar* has done the same. Sharma (1992) recounted the movements and activities of Nepali communities in India for the increase of ethnic consciousness and awareness. He stated that “various cultural, literary and other activities have been undertaken to awaken the masses about their plight in India since 1907” (np). Timsina (1992) had similar findings: “With a very few exceptions, the people speak the same language and share common cultural heritage” (4) that prepare the ground for ethnic affinity.

Both of the novels exhibit ethnic affinity. In *Bhramar*, when Ranaveersingh fell ill in Kharasang, Lalitsingh went to support him. After his death, Lalitsingh took charge of Ranaveer’s family. His family treated Ranaveer’s daughter Veena as their own daughter. The

Nepali friends helped Veena a lot when she got an accident. In the same novel, Mohanvikram helped Parashuramsingh Basnet in Banaras when the old man was troubled by the loss of his daughter Maya in the crowd on the bank of the Ganges. The narrator reports: the old man became impatient with delight when he happened to meet a person of his own ethnic community in a foreign land, moreover in time of such an emergency. The old man felt happy when his daughter Maya and the young man Mohanvikram wanted to work for the promotion of Nepali communities in India. The narrator describes the happiness of these three Nepali people when they met in the hostland. Though it was their first meeting, they talked as if they had been living in the same family for a long time.

Raghubir Rai's words and works also displayed ethnic affinity among the people of Nepali origin in the hostland. Rai lived in Burma taking care of large property of his family. When he met Indrashekhar in a ship to Rangoon, he became so happy that "We transnational Nepalis feel a lot of happiness when we see other Nepali brothers and sisters [*haamee pravaasee nepaaleelaaii aru nepaalee bhaai dekhdaa ... khub aananda aauchha*]" (Singh, 1970, p. 46). When Raghubir or Mota Rai fell sick in the ship, Shekhar helped him. They felt as if they were the brothers from the same family. This affinity increased when Indrashekhar met Raghubir's family at Rangoon and Rai's wife and daughters treated him as if he was their own family member. Even in the cattle sheds inside the Burmese wilderness, the Nepali migrants lived as if they belonged to the same family. Indrashekhar got the heartfelt love from all the cattle-herds. There are references to marriages among the members of different ethnicity in the Nepali community. They also indicate and increase the ethnic affinity.

Ethnic affinity is seen among the characters of Rai's *Dak bangala*, too. When Ratna was in trouble after Chandraprakash made her pregnant and ran away deceiving her, and her uncle chased her away from home, the couple of Maila Bhujel helped her. They kept her in their home as they belonged to the same ethnic group i.e. Nepalis in India. Similarly, when Rupadevi met Chandraprakash in Burma she opined that "I feel delighted when I meet the people of the same nation in this foreign land [*paradeshamaa deshvaasee dekhdaa aananda laagchh*]" (p. 210). This affinity was displayed among the Nepalis when they were leaving Burma in mass and returning in search of their home back in India and Nepal. On the way, Bire's father died and his way-mates buried him, the team leader Kebalsingh Khadka praised the dead souls and opined that the dead man was fortunate to have his country-mates to offer the handful of soil to his dead body. The way-mates waved a meal in the memory of the dead one with the feeling that they were like the family members. These incidents show the close emotional connection among the people of Nepali origin in Burma and India.

When the mass of Nepalis reached India and found the Nepali workers in Ledo coal mine, Chandraprakash felt they reached home. Here, home refers to the condition of being close to the people of Nepali origin. An interesting character Jarmansing displays this affinity

in the novel. Wherever he meets the people of Nepali origin, he leaves every work he has been doing and talks to them about his past, present and future plan. Chandraprakash's meeting with an old woman returning to Darjeeling in search of her relatives after being expelled from Burma displayed the next level of ethnic affinity among the Nepalis in host land. In the train, when Chandraprakash was alone and hungry for days, the old woman offered him some pieces of bread. Then she reported him her history and finally wanted Chandraprakash to help her meet her relatives in Darjeeling. She recounted the suffering of her family and discussed the upcoming problems.

Most of the passengers in the train were the Nepalis evacuated from Burma. The narrator reports that they were happy with the hope that the next morning they would reach Darjeeling. As Darjeeling was the centre of Nepali settlement in India, they hoped to get help to sustain their life there. They began to experience the warmth of their mother's lap even in the thought of reaching to Darjeeling. They began to see the light of the oven and felt their heart was getting light after months-long troubles and sufferings on the way back from Burma.

Love of Nepali Tradition and Culture

The next nature of Indian Nepali society is their love for Nepali tradition and culture. Both of the novels display this nature through the relation and behavior of their characters. The characters have displayed this in terms of their dress, religious purity, music and festivals.

Most of the characters put on Nepali dress: *daura* and *suruwal* for the men and *sari* for women. In *Bhramar Veena*, Maya and other women are always found sari-clad. Even in Burma, Raghubir's wife is clad in Nepali style sari. Their daughters are found putting on Burmese dress mixed up with some Nepali style clothes and ornaments. But when Indrashekhar started raising awareness in the Nepali community there, these young girls also shifted to pure Nepali style *sari* and *choli*. Even Indrashekhar, who was always coat clad as a young generation Nepali, started putting on *daura* and *suruwal* in Burma. He continued the same dress throughout the novel. Even after their retirement from the British Army, they do not forget to put on their Nepali dress.

The next aspect of Nepali culture and tradition is displayed in the following of Hindu faiths. Most of the characters had faith on the god. Lalitsingh requested Veena to remember the god at the final stage of her father's life. In other occasions also Veena displayed her devotion to Nepali tradition and culture. She opined that she loved the modern time and wanted education and progress, but she is "committed to continue her traditional ideals [*praachin aadarsha atut raakhnu ma aaphno kartavya thaanchhu*]" (Singh, 1970, p. 22). Raghubir Rai also had the similar belief. Though his family was Aryasamaji that does not discriminate people in the name of caste and culture, he could not completely leave Nepali culture that he acquired by birth. Parashuramsingh Basnet followed Hindu Nepali tradition wherever he reached and in

whatever troubles he found himself in. He had the desire to worship Ganges every day and die on her lap. So, he had shifted to Banaras from Darjeeling.

Sometimes, even the inhuman practices of Hindu Nepali cultures have lived with the characters. The Khadka family shifted to Kolkota from Darjeeling suffered from the fear of the violation of their Hindu purity that was supposed to be impure when the people of other religion touched them. The untouchability rampant in Hindu Nepali families during that period was the reason for this fear. The old woman of the family was worried: “My God, how could I protect my religion from these bad-castes in this old age? [*Raam! Raam! Budhesakaalamaa kujaataharoodekhi dharmako rakshaa kasaree garne?*]” (Singh, 1970, p. 73). In other occasions, too, the old generation Nepalis in India were found anxious of preserving their religion and customs from the non-castes.

In terms of music and festivals, the Nepalis in India found themselves very protective. Despite their sufferings, the characters in both of the novels were found to be delighted during the festivals and the play of Nepali music and songs. Two Nepali coolies sang *jhyaure* songs in the ship that was going to Burma in the novel *Bhramar*. They forgot the pains and enjoyed the moment. In the cattle-sheds in the Burmese wilderness on the bank of Irrawaddy River, the cow and buffalo herds sang Nepali songs in the evening. These songs were the means of forgetting their day-long hard work and feel delighted.

Nepali festivals, especially Dashain and Tihar, brought excitement among the Nepalis in India. *Bhramar* describes the delight Dashain had brought among the Nepalis in Darjeeling. Just like the way Dashain was celebrated in Nepal, the people in Darjeeling took this occasion as the time to meet their long-separated relatives, receive *teeka* and blessings from the elders and forget the pains that they underwent throughout the year. In *Dak bangala*, too, Nepali people collectively as a character celebrated Dashain even in the time of the Second World War that had limited their income. Every household established the *Navadurga*; grew the *jamara* and prepared the household weapons to use on the day of *Maha Astami* when they had to kill the goats in the name of the goddess Kali. So was Tihar in the community. They painted their houses for Laxmi Pooja. The garlands of freshly plucked flowers and the paper lamps at the top of tall bamboo poles added the beauty to the whole community. People from the children to old ones moved around the settlements and enjoyed the beauty of the festival of light. This was the display of Nepaliness in the transnational Nepali community.

Conclusion

Bhramar and *Dak bangala* have presented Nepali transnational mobiles as the major characters. The main characters Indrashekhar in *Bhramar* and Chandraprakash in *Dak bangala* are the constant wanderers from Nepal to India to Burma and back to India. Their life is always in transition. Wherever they reach, they try to work for the well-being of the Nepali

community. But their dream of returning home with prestige and progress is never fulfilled. They reach to different Nepali communities in India and Burma and give the chance for the readers to find the life pattern and love of Nepal prevalent in these communities. They meet many Nepali migrants to India and Burma who have migrated to those places in search of work and opportunities but have been in worse troubles than that of the home they left back in Nepal.

Despite the troublesome life in the hostland, the transnational Nepalis enjoy the occasions like Dashain and Tihar and other Nepali cultural festivals celebrating them incorporating Nepali songs, dances, dresses, food and enthusiasm. They have not deserted the dream of returning Nepal to make the home back there better than at the time they left it. The characters in both of the novels show that the life of Nepali transnational mobiles in India and Burma was full of troubles and sufferings.

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