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Statistically Left Outs and Socio-Historically Legitimized Groups in Nepal

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Abstract

This article explores the realities underpinning the statistically left outs and socio-historically legitimized groups in Nepal by relating the Vedic and Western theoretical perspectives to perceive the reality at the grassroots level. It does so by summarizing the Vedic perspectives and various sociological theories and then looking at the local issues linking with the Western perspectives with my reflection. It reveals that experiential knowledge, globalization, and legitimization are the major sociological aspects influencing the Structure of Nepalese society. The article concludes that the ruling class prepares Statistical data for their purpose, which leaves out the actual/accurate data about the subaltern, ethnic, and minority groups. Voices of the poor students, girls, ethnic and minority group of the School can be addressed by making the policy in education and transforming the school structure with inclusive pedagogy into equity and equality social environment for the students is the major implication of this article.

Keywords: *Vedic, legitimization, indigenous Tharus, transformative education, inclusive pedagogy.*

Introduction

Nepal is a multicultural, multilingual, multi-religious country as declared in the Constitution of Nepal 2015 (Secretariat of Constituent Assembly Nepal, 2015). Geographically, Nepal is divided into three main sectors - Hill, Mountain, and Tarai. Leaving behind the statistically gathered information by the country's state or institutions is controversial. Minority, marginalized, and disadvantaged groups are often the farthest behind in statistical data. "There have been very few attempts to estimate how many people identify as transgender in any UNECE (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe) country (UNECE, 2019). In the context of Nepal, there has been a debate between the government

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and the indigenous people's organization on the statistical data of the indigenous ones.

The different statistical methods estimate statistical facts about Nepalese society, but they are average and not real to all. In this vein, thirty-six percent (9.54 million) indigenous people out of the total population of Nepal (26.5 million) was noted in the 2011 census. However, Indigenous Peoples' Organizations (IPOs) in Nepal claim that their population stands more than 50 percent of the population. The data exposed in the census differ because indigenous peoples were under-represented in the census (LAHURNIP & NIWF, 2020).

Additionally, the government has legally recognized 59 indigenous communities in the country, but some of them are yet to be enlisted (LAHURNIP & NIWF, 2020). The government and IPO do not give information about indigenous people. They represent the average ones because counting them one by one is hard. That's why statisticians estimate only and show on average.

Bista (2008) claimed that the caste organization came from Kathmandu Valley at the time of King Jayasthiti Malla. He introduced caste principles and codes of conduct according to the *Manusmriti* code of Hindus. Many rules of the wearing of certain types of clothing, ornaments, and construction of houses were differentiated according to caste levels. Different castes were prescribed different professional activities. *Manusmriti* has been considered as standard and the most authoritative work on Hindus and contains information about the social, cultural, religious, ethical, educational, political, and judicial aspects of life.

Experiential facts are ideas that people emotionally and consciously experience. As long as a non-natural concept does not trespass on the domain of science (the natural world), it is an experiential fact. Experiential facts do not make objective claims about reality because they comprise of emotional brain states. These are acceptable beliefs under cultural naturalism. Love is an experiential fact. The underlying material causes of love are explained scientifically, but love itself does not exist outside the observer- that is, love is subjective. Sensation and experience of knowledge about the world differ in different places as Brown (2004) claims that experiential knowledge like "ignorance" and "emptiness" are defined differently in Eastern and Western philosophy.

Experiential knowledge of Hinduism and Buddhism towards the same thing (ignorance and emptiness) differs because of their emotion and consciousness. Similarly, according to Abraham and Morgan (1985, p. 184) "on the fundamentals, there was little difference between Weber and Marx in defining class". Marx believed that classes were separated by their "economic conditions of existence" and that it was this difference of conditions that put the classes "in hostile opposition, "whereas Weber believed that "People with the highest market capacity, those with the highest skills, will have the best life

chances, and it is this that creates the different classes” (Abraham & Morgan, 1985). In this way, what Karl Marx explained about contemporary society in one perception, and Max Weber stated in another way. Both of their conceptions are not real for all society. It is the contextual meaning.

Human activity is greatly affected by social forces. These forces exist outside the consciousness of the individual. French sociologist Emile Durkheim called such a force – Social facts. Durkheim defined social forces as ideas, feelings, and ways of behaving “that possess the remarkable property of existing outside the consciousness of the individual” (Ferrante, 2014, p. 4).

Social facts may be classified into material (society, structural and morphological components of the society) and non-material (morality, collective conscience, collective representative, and social currents. These social facts direct the individuals by existing outside them. Social facts are the structural reality that does not apply to all societies. As suicide is a human activity, and this is the product of social facts. Durkheim identified that there were significant differences in the suicide rate between societies and between social groups within each European society. He studied domestic and religious society and identified the different social facts which cause the suicide rate to be different. (Haralambos & Heald, 1980, pp. 495-497). The social facts, therefore, are the structural reality made by society.

Various theories explain Human behavior differently, verifying that social facts are contextual or socially made reality. Theories are developed in a particular social context, specific period, and certain respondents, so how can they be real for others in different societies? Human behaviors are directed by inner motivation. Glasser (1998) stated that the current behavior of human beings is determined by self-evaluating the internal motivating factors- choice theory, whereas interactionists believe that negotiated meanings direct the behavior of human beings. In this regard, Haralambos and Heald (1980) emphasized that every action of human beings proceeds through the negotiated meanings generated from ongoing interaction procedures. Further, they illustrated that functionalists believe that the role of the individual provided by the social system directs the behavior.

In a nutshell, social facts are real for a specific society for a specific period, not for all societies, since society is dynamic. In our society, I showed my behavior by carrying the role is given to me, but now I believe in interactionism. So, the social behavior of human beings is not only contextual but also specific causes. Various social theories are emerging whose main focus is on social activity.

The aforementioned realities embedded in the society-statistically lefts out, experiential knowledge, and socio-culturally stigmatized historically legitimized groups of Nepal- are unraveled through reviewing the various theoretical perspectives. Moreover, comparing and contrasting the Vedic and Western philosophies is the major idea to dig out the realities behind my three concerns. For this, I reviewed the secondary data as well as my reflections for analyzing the information related to the realities of the groups which are statistically lefts out, marginalized, and socio-historically legitimized. Additionally, experiential knowledge found in society is vivid in nature, or contextual are compared with various theories.

The paradox between Vedic and Nepalese caste system

Modern Nepal is a multicultural, multilingual, and multi-religious country. In ancient times Nepal adopted a caste system whose core value was laid by the Hindu Law long ago. This system was established by marginalizing Ethnic, Gender, and Caste peoples to benefit ruling elites. It is important to realize significant differences between the classical Hindu caste system, as described in The Bhagwat Gita (Chapter 4, verse 13), and Nepal's caste system. In the Vedic scriptures, there is only the classification of human beings in the varna which is based on the three characters of nature (Prakriti) – *Sat*, *Raj*, and *Tama*. The people with the supremacy of *sat gunas* are recognized as Brahmins, the people with a prominence of *sat* and *raj gunas* are Kshatriyas, Vaishyas have mixed *gunas* of *raj* and *Tama*, whereas shudras have *tamas gunas*. Regarding with the three *gunas* and activities of the people is deeply connected with the Varna system as described in *Chandoyga Upanishad* chapter IV. Similarly, Skanda Purana also describes the three natures of an individual and activities that determine the Varna as he/she is born as shudra and finally becomes Brahmin after purifying the status of the mind (Kumar, 2021). In the fourth chapter of the Bhagwat Gita, Lord Krishna declared that he created the fourfold varna system based on the triple *gunas* and mechanism of *karma* (verse 13) (Prabhupad, 1997, p. 176). By combining the belief in *karma* with the caste system, the ancient lawmakers prescribed different vocational and occupational duties for each Caste and expected people to follow them sincerely as an integral part of their religious duty.

The Gita does not discuss the Caste (*jat*), the hereditary qualities. But in Nepal, 's caste system is related to the *jat*, which the Hindus legitimize. The term *varna* refers to people of all castes, and *Jatin*, its more general meaning of species, refers to all communities, including castes as well as ethnic and religious communities (Sharma, 1997; Burghart, 1996; Hofer, 1979 as cited in Pradhan, 2007, p. 9). Although its history goes far back to the middle age but it was officially legitimized in 1854 AD with the proclamation of a National Code

Muluki Ain (Cox, 1994, p. 91). The National Code or Mulki Ain of 1854 roots back to Hindu law books – smritis and *dharmashastra* that officially introduced Caste hierarchic policy as envisaged by preceding Hindu religious scriptures such as Rig Veda (Book X, hymn xc. Purusa.12 as cited in Luitel, 2063 BS). The *Purusha sukta* in the tenth mandala of the rig Veda describes how the Verna came into existence from the parts of the Purusha. Analogically speaking, the Brahmins came out of his mouth, the *Kshatriyas* from his arms, the *Vaisyas* from his thighs, and the *sudras* from his feet.

Pradhan (2007) analyzed the Nepali society is based on legally sanctioned hierarchical structures and exclusion of statistically left outs. He pointed to the Structure of the Nepali society -the first category *tagadhari* comprised the ruling elite, mainly upper caste Brahmin, Thakuri and Chhetri. *Adivasi/janajatis* were classified as *matwalis* (liquor drinkers). Similarly, the lowest rank of the classification is currently known as Dalits. The norms, categories, and social construction of reality of the *Muluki Ain* (and Hinduism) were spread throughout the whole country as Bloom (1991) described that Plato's ideal society consists of three classes of people such as producers, auxiliaries, and guardians based on their functions in the society. Society exists when the relations among all three classes of people are right- they should perform their roles in the right position. The producers should do whatever skills are granted to them, like crafting, blacksmithing, etc.; rulers must rule, and auxiliaries must uphold the ruler's conviction. As a result, society runs smoothly after performing the societal role of the three classes of Plato's ideal society. In this context, Nepalese society is also categorized in a hierarchical caste system as their functions/ professions provided by the society; however, the reality is different-people conceptualize the system as it goes on by birth, not as their performance.

Globalization and ethnic/ minority groups

There are groups of people differentiated by their color, home language, and religion from ethnicity, such as tribes, races, nationalities, and castes. (Horowitz, 1985, as cited in Meerman, 2005). Functionalism addresses society as a whole in terms of the function of its constituent elements, such as norms, customs, traditions, institutions, etc. Social structures are stressed and placed at the center of analysis, and social functions are deduced from these structures as Max Weber emphasized the importance of changes in values and ideas as sources of structural transformation (Moore, 1978, p. 325).

Tharus are one of the ethnic people in Nepal. They have their own indigenous knowledge, culture, language, and way of living. But Tharus are labeled as “socially backward” in terms of illiteracy, lack of hygiene, bad dietary and drinking habits, as well as improper female dress and behavior (Odegaard, 1997). Now the mindset is changed that

the West is the best. Further, he stressed that the social interaction was marked due to the asymmetrical power relation between *Pahaari* and Tharu.

Similarly, according to Verma (2011), Tharus come in contact with other communities, and their socio-cultural practices have changed due to industrialization over the country. As a result, most of the Tharu cultures are assimilating into the other communities. Odegaard (1997) expressed “when people try to adjust to processes of modernization and to what is commonly known as modernity.” Due to the impact of modernization and globalization, other dominant communities - *Paharis* are also pressurized by Western culture. So, the knowledge, skills, norms, and values of the Tharus have been westernized gradually. Also, according to The Levin Institute, the state university of New York’s expansion of trade in cultural products is increasing the exposure of all societies to foreign cultures. And exposure to foreign cultural goods frequently brings about changes in local cultures, values, and traditions.

Certain forms of behavior, symbols, and meanings that are characteristic of the dominant group are seen as being inappropriate or undesirable. This tendency, which Ogbu calls cultural inversion, compels minority members to choose between conforming to their own group’s model of behavior or the model of the dominant (Ogbu, 1986 as cited in Luciak, 2004, p. 360).

In Nepal, there are many minority groups living in different parts of the country. Mushar, Raji, Pahari, Koche, and Sonaha are the minority groups. They are changing their behavior in accordance with the dominant groups - Brahmins and Chhetri’s group. As mentioned above, globalization affects the local cultures, the Brahmins and Chhetris are also the victim of modernity. In Ogbu’s words, “cultural inversion” compels them to adopt the behavior of the dominant group.

Globalization seemed to exert an increasingly hegemonic impact on localized human systems (Ludlow et al., 2016). This sort of transitional hegemony in *the Barghar* System as with the influence of globalization, has brought a sense of double bind in the *Barghar* system- the confrontational issues between classical and modern transition. Continuity and instructive parallel can be traced in an encounter by *Barghar* system with the modernized ruling class of Nepal, during the 21st century. These dynamics of struggles have evolved since the half of the 20th century. Persistent of *Barghar* system among Tharu community is evidence of their articulation capacity with the outsiders as Tharu also accepts some non-Tharu Barghars.

Legitimization of the Tharus of Nepal

Max Weber was interested in power as a factor of domination based on economic or authoritarian interests. He historically researched the sources of the formal authority that activates legitimate power. He identified three sources of legitimation for the activation of power: the charismatic, the traditional, and the rational-legal. Weber saw the organizational power of the bureaucracy as the source of the mechanization and routinization of human life. (Abraham & Morgan, 1985, pp. 183-188). I experienced the situation of the Tharu community as Weber expressed the power theory. The legitimate power of the government - the compulsory Nepali language used in the school and official works which puts the Tharu language in an oppressed position. Tharus are inspired to learn the Nepali language by the force of the unseen bureaucracy.

The Tharu culture and language are mechanized and routinized by the dominant language. As McDonaugh (1989) argued that “School, education, the radio, and the recent presence of residence of *Paharis* in significant numbers in the village are all eroding the local Tharu language.” (p.193). I am also the victim of this legitimization because even I can’t express my internal expression in Tharu rather than Nepali. As a Tharu, I use the Tharu language while working with the Tharus but dealing with non-Tharus, I prefer Nepali. This is because, first, there is no script in the Tharu language. And for meaningful understanding to other groups wider used language is Nepali. A “communication [theory](#)” is an attempted explanation of how and why humans communicate meaningfully with each other (Liden, n.d.). And secondly, there is no option to communicate with non-Tharus by using legitimized national language - Nepali. Thirdly, according to utility theory, I use the Nepali language for the preservation, transformation, and conservation of the cultural goods, knowledge, and skills in the country.

Social facts are contextual.

Social facts are not the same throughout the county, and it is different even in the same community. Structural realities are the main basis of planning and launching the country’s development activities. Policymakers and planners should know the reality of different societies and formulate policies. Realities based on race, religion, tradition, culture, etc., should be considered in the planning of the educational system of the country.

Feminism theory takes as its central theme the place and facts of women’s underprivileged status and their exploitation in a patriarchal-dominated society. Feminist sociology focuses on the particular disadvantages faced by women in society, including oppression and exploitation. The Badi was originally an entertainment caste - singers, dancers, and musicians. Men of the community also fished and manufactured *madal*, drums,

and fishing nets. It has been said that prostitution is the “traditional caste occupation” of the Badi, and it has often been defined thus as a part of the caste system. They are excluded in a patriarchal-dominated society. Another case is the *Deuki* system exists in far western Nepal, where families “gift” a young daughter to a temple, abandoning her to a fate of poverty, exploitation, and often enforced prostitution.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” is probably the most influential work in postcolonial theory. The hegemony, lack of opportunity given by the elite class, and oppressor groups are the main causes of suppression of the subaltern group’s knowledge, skills, and voices. (Spivak, 1988, pp. 271-313). Tharus have so much knowledge, Skill and practice in various sector. One of them is the “Barghar system”. In this system, all the tharu people believe the democratic values, rules and regulations. But due to the impact of Western democracy, this system will disappear in the near future. There is already by the people, for the people, and of the people. Tharus have an eco-friendly and collaborative system of working in the village. Still, we can see the ‘*Deshawar*’ system in the Tharu community of Kailali district. This is the emergent system of the ‘*Barghar* system’ (*Bhalmansa* system in kailali) in which one head from each family from the whole farming area should go to dig the canal for irrigation without any wages.

As in the report of Social Science Baha (n.d.) on the title Social Assessment of Rani Jamara Kulariya Irrigation Project, claimed that “Participation of women in the management of these *kulos* has been historically low” (p.49). This project is handling the *deshawar* system of the Tharu community. There are no female *Barghar*. Because ‘*Barghars*’ have traditionally been men and still command considerable decision-making power at the village level, there were greater barriers to women taking on the role, on the one hand. Thus, the participation of women in the *barghar* system is low. Some women take participate from households where male members are either ill, dead and/or working in India. Nowadays. There are some villages in kailali districts where the *Barghar* is female and female participation in the *deshawar* system is also increasing due to awareness.

Gayatri Spivak defines the historically-muted native subject as the non-elite or subaltern woman. The doubly-oppressed native woman is caught between the dominations of a native patriarchy and a foreign masculinist-imperialist ideology (Spivak, 1988, p. 129). In the Tharu community, I compare Kamlari, a girl servant, to Spivak’s subaltern for she is equally doubly burdened by her gender and racial status as well as by his derogatory role as a servant. Thus, I believe that Spivak’s theorem on the doubly oppressed Tharu woman how can she be a competitive citizen in the country. She only plays the role as a historically muted subject.

In this way, the aforementioned discussion shows the social facts are contextual. They are not applicable for all societies. Statistically, left-outs are many more in the country. Thus, the social Structure is the main cause, which can be balanced by raising the question to the Structure.

Conclusive Understanding

From the above literature, it can be seen that the Structure of the social system - hierarchical caste/ethnicity plays a vital role in the current situation of Nepalese society. The ruling class prepares statistical data for their purpose, which left out the actual/ real data about the subaltern, stigmatized, ethnic, and minority groups of people. Subaltern people also have the knowledge, Skill, and behaviors that can be marketized and lead to globalizing. Most of the research has been done on the Dalits, Tharus, and other ethnic groups by the non-Dalits, non-Tharus and non-ethnic scholars. They can't expose the real facts of what they feel and express in their own way. That's why experiential knowledge is the conceptual baggage for the minority and lower groups. This experiential knowledge left out the multiple causes of social activity.

The Structure of the religious and cultural system stigmatizes the people. Gender, Caste, ethnicity, and class are the social stigma. This creates a hierarchy in the society. As a result, stigmatized people are oppressed by the oppressor. Oppression means the absence of choices. These groups are socially and politically disabled, which can be seen in various sectors. They are forced to believe that stigma is their fate due to past experiences or karma.

The aforementioned conclusion can be applied to the socio-historically left outs, which is shown in the table below:

Table 1

Theories application to socio-historical left outs

Theories	Basic focus	Application to socio-historically left outs
Class Theory	This theory emphasizes on the conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.	State policy should play the role of mediator for minimizing the conflict between upper Caste and lower Caste.
Functional theory	Functionalists believe that role of the individual provided by the social system directs behavior.	For the enhancement of the livelihood of the left outs social structure should be reformed and transformed into an equity and equality social environment

Religious theory	Sacred beliefs and practices	Practices should be re-evaluated and re-analyzed in the mythological scriptures, Which uplifts the ethnic and Dalits socioeconomically.
Choice Theory	Choice Theory describes that we have some choice about how to behave.	Society should provide a degree of freedom and autonomy, which motivates the left outs to self-evaluation in selecting the suitable activity.
Interactionist theory	Interactionist believes that negotiated meanings direct the behavior of human beings.	Socially left outs people should raise questions to the Structure and change their behavior. Such as ethnic groups like Tharus can promote their cultural identity with this Hinduism society.
Experiential theory	Ideas that people emotionally and consciously experience.	Experiential knowledge emphasis on contextual reality. So, the causes of the left outs are many more, and treat them contextually.
Feminist theory	Feminist sociology focuses on the particular disadvantages faced by women in society, including oppression and exploitation.	Females of the upper class and lower class can do whatever males can do for the various social functions. A tharu female can be the <i>Barghar</i> and challenges the issues of society.
Subaltern Theory	Mainly focus on the voices of the oppressed groups	Indigenous knowledge, skills, and practices like <i>Barghar</i> system in tharu community may be fruitful to the state.

Note: various theories and their fundamental roots can be applied socio-historically left outs

Transformative education for the socio-historically left outs people

A vision of transformative learning issues such as lived experience, critical reflection, rational discourse, and independent thinking are central. In this way, education becomes a transformation that is premised on the interconnection and interdependence of communities, peoples, environments, as well as all social, cultural, and natural phenomena, through which various groups of people are linked with the cognitive, emotional, physical, and spiritual dimensions. "Education ought to address issues of development, equity, peace,

democracy, social and environmental justice, employing a pedagogy that is experiential, interactive, learner-centered, democratic, and change-oriented” (Mezirow, 1991).

The presence of diversity and plurality in identities, voices, perspectives, and ideals should be promoted for peaceful coexistence. It should help students construct diverse and effective values in the context of their culture, identities, and environment. Because education is not and cannot be value-free, neutral, or impartial, the values and principles should be promoted that do not contradict the multiplicity of identities and perspectives: diversity, pluralism, freedom of expression, creativity, mutual respect, and democracy.

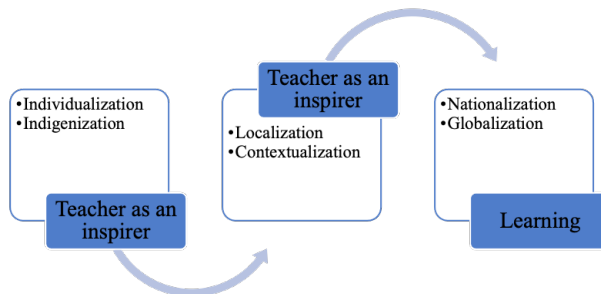
According to Chaube and Chaube (2002, p. 251), “John Dewey has remarked that school is a society. In the activities of the school, the shape of the society should be seen”. So, all the above discussion cases can be seen in the school environment. The curriculum is the backbone of the teaching and learning activities of the School. To improve the school system, educationists/ Curriculum specialists and educational planners should understand social activities in society.

Voices of the poor students, girls, ethnic and minority groups of the School can be addressed by making the policy in education. Bowels and Gintis (2002, p. 1) “School prepares people for adult work and without complaint in the hierarchical structure of the modern corporation”. Thus, School has a pivotal role for the future of students. Structure of the School is so structured that it influences the child to adopt the cultural models. Children practice the socialization process by “the rewards and Sanctions”. Therefore, the socializing process going in the School based on the correspondence principle should be realized. Classroom experience and school knowledge emphasized discrete knowledge and discipline for blue-collar occupations. In this way, the school structure can be transformed into an equity and equality social environment for the students by carefully analyzing the above theory.

Inclusive Pedagogy in Nepal

Figure 1

Spiral pedagogy as an inclusive pedagogy



Note: Inclusive pedagogy for the diversity of students in the classroom of Nepalese School

Nepal is a multicultural, multi-religious, multilingual, and multi-geographical country. There is also diversity in Caste, ethnicity, economic status, and so on. The education system is divided into different level. There is a certain curriculum at each level. Teaching Method (Pedagogy) is one of the country's most important components. Teacher plays a pivotal role in implementing the curriculum. Most of the teachers in Nepal have adopted the traditional method because of various causes. Really School is a miniature society where multiplicity and diversity can be found among the students. They have varied abilities (physical as well as mental), potentialities, learning capacities, needs, interests, language, creativity, etc. Besides this, they come from different family backgrounds - some are from the so-called lower and upper class, various ethnic groups, rich and poor etc. In this situation, it's a challenge for any teacher, but I think teachers should follow inclusive pedagogy to achieve the aim of teaching. I prefer Self- Inquiry cum self- Realization Method to tackle the situation in Nepal. For this, the teacher should be an inspiration for the students.

Another teaching method is based on *Rig Veda*. Learning is the main goal of the teaching. So, 'Learning' is the ultimate truth the students must achieve. But there are different types of students or diversity among students in a classroom. Inclusive pedagogy for this situation, as stated in Fig. 1 above, is the 'Spiral Pedagogy' that I prefer to reach the truth of the truth - 'Learning'.

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