

Representation of Ethnicity, Cultural Identity and Marginalized Voices in Nepali Literature

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ABSTRACT

This article critically explores the representation of ethnicity, cultural identity, and marginalized voices in Nepali literature, focusing on how literary texts reflect and negotiate the diverse socio-cultural realities of Nepal. It analyses works by writers from various caste and ethnic communities, highlighting the ways in which language, narrative traditions, and local histories shape literary expression. Special attentions is given to the depiction of Indigenous nationalities, Dalits, women and other underrepresented groups whose experiences have often been overlooked within mainstream literary discourse. Historically dominated by the perspectives of so-called high-caste hill elites, Nepali literature is now witnessing the emergence of narratives that reflect the lived experiences, languages, and traditions of marginalized communities. Drawing on postcolonial, intersectional, and cultural theories, this study analyzes key literary works and scholarly critiques that highlight both the exclusion and resurgence of ethnic and indigenous expression in Nepali literature. The paper argues that contemporary literary voices contribute significantly to redefining national identity by challenging dominant narratives and foregrounding pluralistic understandings of belonging, identity, and social justice in Nepal.

Keywords: representation, ethnicity, cultural identity, marginalized voice, Nepali literature

INTRODUCTION

Nepal's rich literary tradition reflects the country's cultural and linguistic plurality, shaped by its ethnically diverse population. According to the National Population and Housing Census (2021), Nepal is home to 142 castes and ethnic groups and 125 spoken languages. Within this diverse landscape, the representation of cultural identity and indigenous voices—particularly those of historically marginalized communities such as the

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Limbus, Rais, Magars, Dalits, Madhesis, and women—has become increasingly prominent. This shift has been especially noticeable in the context of Nepal's political transformations and the rise of ethnic consciousness, as literature becomes a platform for expressing identity, resistance, and belonging. In recent decades, ethnic, cultural, and indigenous people's literature in Nepal has increasingly challenged dominant narratives shaped by state-centric, often Hindu-Brahmanical perspectives, offering a platform to articulate histories, traditions, and struggles that were long excluded or silenced. Historically, however, this reflection has been partial and exclusionary, dominated by the voices of high-caste, hill-centric, and male authors (Subedi, 2010). It shows how Nepali literature, once dominated by a monolithic national narrative, has increasingly become a platform for subaltern expressions.

The representation of ethnicity, cultural identity, and marginalized voices in literature is a complex process deeply informed by theoretical frameworks from cultural studies, postcolonialism, intersectionality, and critical race theory. Representation and cultural theorist Stuart Hall argues that representation is not just about reflecting reality, but about actively constructing meaning. As he states, "Representation is the production of meaning through language. It is the link between concepts and language which enables us to refer to the world" (Hall, 1997, p. 17). In this context, literature serves as a space where ethnic and marginalized identities are either misrepresented through stereotypes or empowered through authentic narratives that contest dominant discourses. These frameworks help uncover how power operates within literary texts and how literature becomes a space for both reinforcing and resisting dominant ideologies.

This article explores how ethnicity, cultural identity, and marginalized voices are represented in contemporary Nepali literature. Using postcolonial theory (Said, 1978; Spivak, 1988; Bhabha, 1994), cultural theory (Hall, 1990), and intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) as its analytical framework, the study examines how literature serves as a platform for both resistance and identity reconstruction. Representative literary works by authors such as Shrawan Mukarung, Rajan Mukarung, Bhupal Rai, Parijat, B.P. Koirala, Lekhnath Paudyal, Dha. Cha. Gotame, Ganesh Nembang, Desh Subba, Hangyug Agyat, Sarita Tiwari, and among others are analyzed to explore how narratives by and about marginalized groups challenge hegemonic discourses and reflect the plurality of Nepal's cultural landscape.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This article adopts an interdisciplinary methodology grounded in postcolonial theory, intersectionality, and cultural studies. Edward Said's (1978) concept of *Orientalism* is employed to critique internal forms of hegemony in Nepal, where dominant cultural and caste groups construct and marginalize the "other." Gayatri Spivak's (1988) analysis of *Subaltern silence* and Homi Bhabha's (1994) notion of hybridity inform the examination of narrative agency and the power dynamics within literary discourse. Kimberle Crenshaw's (1994) theory of intersectionality provides a lens to explore how overlapping structures of marginalization—such as gender, caste, and ethnicity—shape literary representation. Additionally, Michel Foucault's (1978) work on discourse and power in literature reproduce

or subvert dominant ideologies, and Stuart Hall's (1990) understanding of cultural identity as a fluid, evolving process enhances the interpretation of identity formation and negotiation within Nepali literary texts.

By integrating these theories, the study enables a holistic and critical analysis of literary texts. In doing so, cultural theory situates the literary work within broader discourses of identity, representation, and meaning-making. Postcolonial theory addresses the historical and structural foundations of domination and the resistance embedded in the text. Intersectionality uncovers the layered experiences of characters shaped by multiple systems of inequality.

Ethnicity and Marginalized Identity in Literature

Postcolonial theory examines how literature addresses issues of marginalization, subjugation and cultural erasure. Postcolonial theorists such as Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi K. Bhabha emphasize how colonial and dominant national discourses marginalize indigenous and subaltern voices. Edward Said's (1978) *Orientalism* argues that Western narratives often create a dichotomy between the "civilized West" and the "exotic East," thereby justifying colonial dominance. Spivak's (1988) foundational essay, *Can Subaltern Speak?*, questions whether marginalized groups can represent themselves in a literary space dominated by hegemonic discourses. Likewise, Homi Bhabha's (1994) key concepts such as hybridity, mimicry, and the third space explain how postcolonial subjects negotiate cultural identity in spaces shaped by both resistance and assimilation.

Nepali writers who belong to multiple marginalized groups often reflect the complexity in their literary works. Amongst them, Rajan Mukarung's *Damini Bhir* (2012), Ganesh Nembang's *Sirijanga and Yakthung Identity* (2014), Desh Subba's *Adibasi* (2007), Lekhnath Paudyal's *Tarun Tapasi* (1953), Dha. Cha. Gotame's *Ghamka Pailaharu* (1979 BS), among others are examples of literary works representing ethnicity, identity, and discussing voices of marginalized communities.

Rajan Mukarung's *Damini Bhir* (2012), critiques the centralization of Nepali language and calls for linguistic pluralism. He states, "Those who make fun of us when we speak our own language, teach us nationalism" (*Damini Bhir*, p. 67). This line reflects the double standards faced by indigenous languages, marginalized in official spaces despite being crucial to cultural survival. Moreover, the hegemonic narrative typically privileges hill high-caste Hindu culture and the Nepali language, rendering indigenous practices invisible or inferior. Mukarung writes, "The songs of our culture are not played on any radio; our language is not spoken in any court" (p. 54). This invisibility perpetuates systemic inequality, denying Indigenous peoples access to political power and cultural representation. The novel also critiques how so-called development and modernization ignore ethnic realities. He says, "Roads are built, but villages remain unchanged. Schools teach in Nepali, but students lose their native tongue" (p. 133). This shows the double-edged nature of progress, where education alienates children from their heritage instead of empowering them.

Through poetic storytelling and political insight, Mukarung's *Damini Bhir* gives voice to Nepal's indigenous communities, calling for a more inclusive national identity. The novel challenges monolithic notions of Nepali culture and demands that ethnic pluralism, mother tongues, and indigenous histories be recognized in the fabric of the state.

Similarly, Ganesh Nembang's *Sirijanga and Yakthung Identity* (2014) emphasizes the revival of the Sirijanga script as central to Yakthung/Limbu identity. As Nembang asserts, "The revival of the Sirijanga script was a revival of the self-respect of the Yakthung people"² (p. 61), highlighting how the reclamation of language is deeply intertwined with regaining political and cultural dignity. Nembang portrays Sirijanga as a cultural icon who resisted cultural erasure by reviving the ancient Yakthung script (Sirijanga) and educating the Yakthung people in their own language and history. He highlights how the Sirijanga script became a symbol of resistance against Nepali linguistic domination, which historically suppressed indigenous languages. He states, "To keep our language alive is to keep our existence alive. Sirijanga gave us back our alphabet"³ (p. 26). Here, Nembang stresses that the survival of the Yakthung language is intrinsically tied to cultural survival. He critically examines how the Nepali state historically suppressed the identities of indigenous groups through policies like one-language nationalism and centralized religion. He recalls, "When the center imposed on us [national policy of] 'one language, one dress', our Yakthung Laje's existence was in danger"⁴ (p. 38). Here, Nembang highlights the oppressive impact of monolithic nationalism, where ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversities were sidelined to project a singular Nepali identity. Nembang laments how mainstream historiography ignored or erased oral traditions, festivals, rituals, and folklore of marginalized communities. He claims, "Our history is not written on paper, but in songs, stories, and in the Mundhum"⁵ (p. 42). By validating indigenous epistemology and oral Mundhum, Nembang tries to restore the dignity of alternative historical records that were systematically devalued. He links cultural revival to political awakening. Therefore, he asserts, "The struggle of Sirijanga is still incomplete today, until we can demand our rights in our language"⁶ (p. 57). This statement shows that the Yakthung identity struggle is ongoing – the fight for language rights, self-governance, and cultural inclusion continues in modern Nepal.

Thus, Nembang's work on *Sirijanga and Yakthung identity* goes beyond historical documentation – it is a powerful call for cultural justice, linguistic preservation, and indigenous self-determination. He frames Sirijanga not just as a script creator and promoter, but as a visionary leader who laid the foundation for Yakthung cultural resistance.

Another significant work that explores indigenous identity is Desh Subba's *Adibasi* (2007), later published in English as *Journey to Fearless* (2015). Best known for founding the concept of Fearism, Subba's narrative focuses on the historical and psychological marginalization of Yakthung/Limbu people, promoting a cultural awakening through the revival of myth,

2 Sirijaṅgā lipikō punarjāgaraṇa yākthūṅ jātikō ātmasam'mānakō punarjāgaraṇa thiyō.

3 Hāmro bhāṣā bāncnu bhanēkō hāmro astitva bāncnu hō. Sirijaṅgālē hāmīlā'ti hāmro akṣara pharkā'idi'ē.

4 Kēndralē hāmīlā'ti'ēka bhāṣā, ēka bhēṣa' bhanī thōpardā, hāmro yākthūna lājēkō astitva saṅkaṭamā parēkō thiyō

5 Hāmro itihāsa kāgajamā hō'ina, gītāmā, kathāmā, ra mundhumamā lēkhi'ēkō cha.

6 "Sirijaṅgākō saṅgharṣa āja pani adhūrō cha, jabaṣam'ma hāmī hāmro adhikāra hāmro bhāṣāmā māgna sakdainauri."

language, and political consciousness. Subba writes, “Indigenous people are forgetting their original identity and are losing their identity in the culture of others” (2015, p. 74). Here, Subba critiques the gradual cultural erosion of indigenous communities as they assimilate into dominant narratives.

Subba’s *Adibasi* is a landmark novel that gives powerful expression to ethnicity, cultural identity, and indigenous voice. In doing so, Subba not only elevates the Yakthung/Limbu experience but also contributes to the broader discourse on indigeneity, resistance, and self-determination in world literature. The protagonist in the novel is a tribesman shaped by traditional beliefs—spirits, ancestral rituals, oral myths, and forest deities. The novelist writes, “The lifestyle, rituals, and beliefs of indigenous people living in different parts of the world are deeply interconnected. They reflect a common ancestral connection to land and nature” (p. 28). This connection to land, ancestors, and community marks a critical part of ethnic identity, often overlooked in mainstream Nepali literature that tends to prioritize dominant cultural norms.

B. P. Koirala’s novel *Sumnima* (1969) explores the inner conflict between Brahminical orthodoxy and indigenous naturalism through the relationship between the characters Somdutta, as a high-caste Brahmin youth, and Sumnima, an indigenous Kirati girl. Though the novel is often analyzed for its philosophical depth and psychological realism, it also offers profound insights into caste and cultural hierarchies in Nepalese society.

The novel critiques how Hindu caste ideology, when rigidly followed, leads to emotional repression, alienation, and loss of human connection. It exposes how caste superiority and spiritual pride alienate individuals from the richness of natural human relationships and cultural diversity. Somdutta, the Brahmin protagonist, embodies the deeply internalized values of caste purity, spiritual austerity, and cultural arrogance. He believes that bodily desires and emotions are impure, which must be controlled in the pursuit of spiritual perfection. He asserts, “The body is a means of defiling the soul, so suppressing lust is the first step to liberating the soul” (*Sumnima*, p. 21). This shows how caste-based spiritual training teaches Somdutta to reject natural human instincts as lower or impure. His spiritual superiority, shaped by Brahminic ideology, distances him not only from Sumnima but from himself too.

Sumnima, in contrast, represents indigenous natural values, which are rooted in harmony with nature, acceptance of bodily existence, and emotional honesty. While Somdutta tries to suppress desire, Sumnima embraces life and love without guilt. She says, “Why are you Brahmins so harsh? We need fun; if we want to live, we have to live laughing and crying”⁸ (*Sumnima*, p. 34). This line reveals the cultural contrast and caste-based arrogance: Somdutta sees indigenous culture as undisciplined and inferior, while Sumnima sees Brahmanism as unnatural and emotionally sterile.

7. *ḡḡ'ri:ra ta: a:ṡṡa'la:i əpə'viṡṡə bə'na:une: sa:ḡḡəṡə ho, ṡṡəṡaile: ka:mə'bḡa:ṡəna:la:i ḡəba:'unu a:ṡṡa muk'ṡṡiko: pə'hilo: pa:'ila: ho.*

8. *ṡṡimi:ḡəru: brə:ḡiməṡḡəḡəru: kiṡə jəṡṡi kəṡḡo:rə ḡia:u? ḡia:mi:la:i: ṡṡə rəma:ilo: ca:ḡineḡə, ṡṡi:unu ḡio: bḡəne: ḡia:ṡṡḡa:i rə ro:e:rə pəṡi ṡi:unupəṡəḡə.*

The novel also represents gender and caste-based power dynamics. Somdutta's rejection of Sumnima's love is not just personal but also shaped by gendered caste norms. As a Brahmin male, loving a girl other than his caste is socially unfair, and emotionally threatening to his identity. He declares, "I am a Brahmin, I cannot do all this, my religion does not allow it"⁹ (*Sumnima*, p. 39). This opinion illustrates how caste status regulates emotional relationships, turning love into a question of purity and dharma. Sumnima is "othered" and made unworthy of spiritual love because of her ethnic and cultural background.

At the end of the novel, Somdutta regrets realizing that in denying his feelings for Sumnima, he also denied his humanity. His caste pride and spiritual obsession led to a lonely life, full of emptiness. He asserts, "Sumnima, the love you gave me was pure. I am entangled in the web of my ego and religion"¹⁰ (*Sumnima*, p. 51). This is the key moment of repentance, which critiques how social structures like caste, when absolutized, destroy personal fulfilment and love.

Hence, B. P. Koirala's *Sumnima* is not just a love story but a psychological and sociocultural critique of caste-based pride and cultural exclusion. Through the tension between Somdutta and Sumnima, the novel illustrates how rigid caste ideology suppresses natural human emotions and marginalizes other cultural worldviews. In novel, Koirala advocates for cultural pluralism, emotional authenticity, and the need to transcend socially constructed barriers to embrace deeper human values.

Lekh Nath Paudyal's poem, *Tarun Tapasi* (1953), critiques the unjust social order and expresses empathy for those marginalized by caste and custom. Although the poem is not written from an indigenous perspective, it engages deeply with questions of ethnic diversity, cultural identity, and voices from the margins. The poem narrates both spiritual and social themes, critiquing inequality, caste rigidity, and cultural alienation. According to Keshav Raj Chalise (2024), Paudyal has played a significant role in Nepali literature in connecting two dominant literary eras, medieval and modern in the matter of form and content of poetry (p. 53). In this sense, he is a classical poet with new themes and issues like population, humanity, devotion, and national identity. The *Tapasi*, despite being wise and morally elevated, was mistreated by society as many indigenous people in Nepal were treated historically.

Paudyal's use of rural imagery, natural symbols, and empathy for the poor creates space to reflect on the pluralistic cultural identity of Nepal. The *Tapasi* reflects, "The world is a battlefield of selfishness/Where truth is wounded and lies are honoured" (Canto VII). These lines question the moral foundations of society, indirectly calling for a cultural renewal that values diversity and justice—key concerns of marginalized ethnic and indigenous communities. Hence, the poem has not given a direct voice to indigenous communities but prepares the literary soil for their emergence.

Dha. Cha. Gotame's novel *Ghamka Pailaharu* (1979), translated as *Footsteps of the Sun*, stands as a powerful representation of Nepal's multi-ethnic reality. It is a vivid portrayal of class conflict, cultural displacement, and the gradual emergence of indigenous consciousness.

⁹ ma ta bra:maṇḇ hū:, meile jo sabḇ garna milḇena, mero ḇḇermale jo svikṛti dimḇena

¹⁰ Sumnima: ḇimi:le dieko pre:ma ta suḇ:ḇa ḇḇijo ma ta mero aḇam ra ḇḇarmako ḇḇalama: alḇḇiḇeḇu

According to Keshav Raj Chalise (2024), “Through its characters and their interactions, the novel explores the inequalities and tensions rooted in the hierarchical social structure of Nepal’s Terai region (p. 8). Gotame’s characters are ethnically and socially diverse, portraying Dalits, Madhesis, Janajatis, and working-class individuals not as stereotypes but as complex figures with agency and voice. The novel includes those characters who are marginalized economically and culturally, and yet carry their own values, languages, and identities often resisting assimilation into the dominant high-caste, Kathmandu-centered narrative. Rather than making indigenous characters merely symbolic, Gotame renders them with dignity and emotional depth. As Dasarath Neupane (2019) argues, “Gotame’s strength lies in his ability to make the margins visible – not through romanticization but through honest, empathetic storytelling” (p. 98). This argument highlights the literary power of the writer in representing marginalized communities with authenticity and sensitivity.

Dalit and Caste-based Marginalization

For much of Nepal’s history, Nepali literature was shaped by the language, worldviews, and interests of the hill high-caste elite, particularly Brahmin and Chhetri men. As Hutt points out, “Mainstream Nepali literature has long marginalized the languages and experiences of ethnic and regional minorities” (Hutt, 1991, p. 13). This demonstrates that the literary canon has historically been shaped by the dominance of the elite voices.

Dalit literature in Nepal has emerged as a potent literary movement that challenges the deep-rooted caste-based discrimination entrenched in society. For centuries, Dalits were excluded from mainstream literary narratives, but in recent decades, their voices have gained visibility through poetry, short stories, novels and autobiographies, reflecting lived experiences of untouchability, marginalization, and resistance. As Chaitanya Subba (2014) notes, “Dalit literature is not just a genre but a movement of protest – a declaration of identity and dignity from the margins.” Poet Dhurba Kumari (2011) has boldly articulated the pain of caste-based exclusion. In her powerful poem “*Ma Dalit Chhu*” (“I Am a Dalit”), she writes, “I am Dalit; this is my identity, whose pain is written nowhere,” thereby reclaiming her identity and drawing attention to centuries of invisibility and suffering. As Mohan Kumar Bishwakarma (2015) argues, “Dalit literature is a revolutionary tool that transforms pain into power, silence into speech.” Thus, Dalit literature in Nepal is not only a cultural and political expression of resistance but also a transformative force reshaping national consciousness.

Shyam Lal Magarati and Rinju Sherpa (2024) explore the cultural representation of Dalits in Nepali literature authored by both Dalit and non-Dalit writers. Through a comparative analysis of novels like *Likhe* (2073 BS) by Sarad Paudel and *Itihāsko Ek Paikā* (2066 BS) by Ranendra Barali, they examine key issues faced by Dalits, including socio-cultural marginalization, illiteracy, political exclusion, poverty, religious discrimination, caste-based oppression, and untouchable practices.

Overall, the depiction of caste and social hierarchy in Nepali literature serves both as a mirror and a weapon – exposing systemic injustices and advocating for social transformation.

Cultural Identity and Language

Language is central to cultural identity. Hall (1990) views cultural identity as a process of becoming rather than a fixed essence. Likewise, Michel Foucault's (1978) work on discourse and power informs how language and narrative structures in literature reproduce or subvert dominant ideologies. Over the past few decades, literature has served not only as a creative medium but also as a socio-cultural platform where various marginalized and indigenous communities articulate their lived realities, histories, and worldviews. Through poetry, fiction, and essays, writers foreground cultural heritage, resist erasure, and redefine what it means to be "Nepali." For example, Shrawan Mukarung, an indigenous poet and cultural activist, exposes ethnic marginalization and cultural assertion in his poem *Naya Sadakko Geet* ("Song of Naya Sadak"). In one powerful stanza, he writes, "On Naya Sadak all castes walk, but only one caste rules the talk" (Mukarung, 2007, p. 18). This verse highlights the symbolic control of cultural spaces by dominant groups and the silencing of minority voices.

Similarly, Bhupal Rai, a poet from the marginalized Kirat (Rai) community, expresses the pain of historical erasure and the pride in indigenous identity. His poem *Ma Bhancho Aago Chhu* (2015) ("I Say I am Fire") asserts, "I say I am fire, I keep burning, / my word, my language is my voice"¹¹ (Rai, p. 22). This line resists the linguistic and cultural dominance of the Nepali-speaking elite and reaffirms the power of native languages and oral traditions in sustaining identity. His declaration signifies not just emotional intensity but cultural awakening. By claiming his own language ("bhasa") and voice ("awaj"), Rai emphasizes linguistic identity as a core element of cultural identity. The poem critiques the legacy of cultural domination and the systemic marginalization of indigenous people. According to Abhi Subedi (2016), indigenous literature in Nepal is not just aesthetic but "deeply political, rooted in collective memory and struggle for recognition" (p. 4). Rai's *Ma Bhancho Aago Chhu* resists the narrative that equates being "Nepali" solely with high-caste, Hindu, and hill-based norms. The poet metaphorically challenges this cultural erasure by positioning himself as "aago" – an illuminating and disruptive force.

Although language is a powerful marker of cultural identity, the Nepali language was historically promoted as the unifying medium, often at the cost of minority languages. The use of indigenous identity as a poetic subject, what Hangyug Agyat (2013) calls ethnic consciousness, is crucial in reclaiming dignity and historical space for marginalized communities. Writers like Agyat challenge the monolingual nationalism by promoting *Adivasi Sahitya* (Indigenous Literature) in native languages. He argues, "The foundation of ethnic literature is the preservation and progressive transformation of local languages and cultures" (Agyat, 2013, p. 42). The poet argues that by advocating for the use of mother tongues and indigenous knowledge systems, such literature becomes a crucial vehicle for cultural self-determination.

11 ma b^hantsu a:go t̃su, d̃zaldai gaṛtsu,
mero sabḍa mero b^hasa mero a:wad̃z fio.

Gender and Intersectional Identity

Nepali literature is increasingly becoming a space where intersectional identities are not only represented but also critically examined. Intersectionality, a concept developed by Kimberle Crenshaw (1989), refers to the overlapping and interconnected nature of social identities and how these intersections contribute to unique experiences of oppression and privilege. Whether it is the feminist existentialism of Parijat, the caste-gender consciousness of Sarita Tiwari, or the ethnic-cultural reflections of Madhesi and indigenous women writers, literature now gives voice to Nepal's multiple and overlapping forms of marginalization.

Women writers also employ literature to articulate gendered cultural identities and critique patriarchal norms. Parijat's novel *Shiris Ko Phool* (1965) presents a deeply introspective female protagonist, Sakambari, who resists traditional gender roles and expresses emotional and existential autonomy. She asserts, "I am free, and my pain is mine alone" (Parijat, p. 89). This assertion of personal identity reflects a broader resistance to cultural expectations placed upon women.

Dalit women experience double oppression—as Dalits in a casteist society and as women in a patriarchal one. Poets like Sarita Tiwari (2014) explore these intersecting injustices in her collection *Bhumigat Prashnaharu* ("Underground Questions"), where she gives voice to women crushed by both patriarchy and caste hierarchy. Tiwari writes, "Just once I want to touch the soil of the word 'equality'"¹² (p. 41). These lines resonate with her yearning not only for liberation as a woman but also as a Dalit. Hence, modern women writers foreground intersectional themes—how caste, class, ethnicity and patriarchy overlap to suppress women's agency. Their writing serves as both personal testimony and political critique.

Nepali literature emerging from the Maoist conflict (1996-2006) has also reflected on rural, working-class women who took part in the revolution. Characters such as Siddhartha's female comrade in Narayan Wagle's *Palpasa Café* (2005) reflect the new roles women played during the insurgency. These women are not just passive victims of war. They are political agents, often driven to arms by intersectional grievances like poverty, patriarchy, and ethnic exclusion.

CONCLUSION

The landscape of Nepali literature has undergone a significant transformation. The representation of ethnicity, cultural identity, and marginalized voices in Nepali literature has shifted from silence and erasure to visibility and resistance. Writers from diverse social and ethnic backgrounds are reshaping the literary canon by asserting their own histories, languages, and perspectives. By foregrounding personal and collective experiences of exclusion, trauma, resilience, and pride, their works deconstruct hegemonic representations and illuminate the complex realities of Nepal's multicultural society.

12 ma ek patak ts^ha: 'fiants^hu,
saman'ta b^han:e 'fʌbda:ko 'ma:to ts^hu:ne.

Through the integration of postcolonial, intersectional, and cultural theoretical frameworks, it becomes evident that literature functions as both a mirror and a medium—reflecting the lived experiences of marginalized communities while also shaping national consciousness and cultural memory. As Nepali literature continues to evolve, the representation of ethnicity, cultural identity and marginalized perspectives will remain vital, not only for academic analysis but also for fostering empathy, solidarity, and social change. The representational Nepali literary works discussed in this paper are not only artistic but also political acts of reclaiming space in a society that has long marginalized them.

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