

**CULTURAL DISLOCATION IN SELECT WORKS BY
MANJUSHREE THAPA**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY**

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MZU REGISTRATION NO.: 2231 of 2010-11

Ph.D. REGISTRATION NO.: MZU/Ph.D./1705 of 01.11.2020



**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND CULTURE STUDIES
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND LANGUAGES
NOVEMBER, 2025**

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Submitted

In partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
English and Culture Studies of Mizoram University, Aizawl.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND CULTURE STUDIES

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled, “Cultural Dislocation in Select Works by Manjushree Thapa” is the bonafide research conducted by Ms. Shraddha Subba under my supervision. Ms. Shraddha Subba worked methodically for this thesis being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of English and Culture Studies, Mizoram University.

This is to further certify that the research conducted by Ms. Shraddha Subba has not been submitted in any other University/Institute.

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DECLARATION
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I **Shraddha Subba**, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form the basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institute.

This is being submitted to the Mizoram University for the **Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English and Culture Studies**.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I am grateful to God for giving me strength and blessings throughout my research work.

I render my profound regard to my supervisor, Prof. Margaret L. Pachuau, for her unwavering faith in me. Her captivating, honest and true embodiment has inspired me to explore and develop myself on a number of levels.

I extend my gratitude towards the Department of English and Culture Studies, Mizoram University for giving me the opportunity to pursue this research.

I am also deeply indebted towards my friends for their cooperation and prayers during different phases of my studies.

And lastly, I thank my parents, Ama and Baba for their unconditional love and support.

Dated: 28th. November, 2025

(SHRADDHA SUBBA)

Place: Aizawl, Mizoram

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Manjushree Thapa (1968-) is a well-known journalist, essayist, fiction writer, translator, and editor of Nepali descent from Nepal. She is one of South Asia's highly acclaimed new-generation Nepali writers who write fiction and non-fiction. She has compiled and translated a collection of Nepali stories, poems, and a novel in English. Her writing style is simple, which provides enough detail to lend authenticity to the story's setting. She earned her reputation of being a chronicler as she breaks down conventional modes of writing by openly discussing issues of caste, class, gender, violence and sexual orientation. The study explores contrasting stories of Nepalis who live in contemporary Nepal and other nations. Thapa's works unravel the postcolonial concepts of politics, diaspora, cultural change, identity, and hybridity. The study is situated on the premise that cultural dislocation and dilemma are permanent human conditions and the hybridised identity due to globalisation and intermingling with new culture is more about the understanding of culture than about confrontation.

Thapa has published four fictions and four non-fictions and also translated collections of works. Her fictions are namely: *The Tutor of History* (2001), *Tilled Earth: Stories* (2007), *Seasons of Flight* (2010), and *All of Us in Our Own Lives* (2016). Her non-fictions are namely: *Mustang Bhot in Fragments* (1992), *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy* (2005), *A Boy from Siklis: The Life and Times of Chandra Gurung* (2009) and *The Lives We Have Lost: Essays and Opinions on Nepal* (2011). She has translated various works, namely *A Leaf in a Begging Bowl: Modern Nepali Stories* (2000) by Ramesh Vikal, *The Country is Yours: Contemporary Nepali Literature* (2009), (collections of works of forty-nine Nepali writers) and *There's a Carnival Today* (2017) by Indra Bahadur Rai. She has also co-edited and translated with her contemporary writers, Frank Stewart and Samrat Upadhyay, *Secret Places: New Writing From Nepal* (2001) and also contributed essays in a monograph with Natalie Lettner in *Carl Pruscha, Singular Personality: Architect, Bohemian, Activist* (2020). The thesis delves into the dynamics of the complex and diverse culture of the Nepalis and how they survive within webs of differences, with particular emphasis on Manjushree Thapa's four fictions, namely *The Tutor of History* (2001), *Tilled Earth: Stories* (2007), *Seasons of Flight* (2010),

and *All of Us in Our Own Lives* (2016). The primary texts are comprehensible and reflective. They constantly display Nepal and its culture as reference points from the rise and fall of the monarchy to the contemporary accounts of the socio-political situations. Social criticism and social problems such as the caste system, class differences, gender discrimination, and bad governance are themes explored through Thapa's fiction and non-fiction. They are elements that add deeper layers of meaning while aiming to raise awareness about social problems and issues of the time. As the research identifies the concept of cultural dislocation in the light of Thapa's narratives, this chapter explores Thapa's contributions and achievements to Nepali society, her literary career and an overview of the selected texts. Born in Kathmandu in 1968, Thapa was raised in Nepal, Canada, and the United States, and now lives in Toronto, Canada. She studied at St. Mary's School, Kathmandu, at the National Cathedral School, and earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in photography at the Rhode Island School of Design. She also has a Master of Fine Arts in creative writing from the University of Washington in Seattle and excels equally in critical and creative writing in English and Nepali language. She is also the recipient of the Joseph S. Stauffer Prize, a Fulbright Fellowship, and has lectured at different institutions. Her works have been published in the Bellingham Review, Tampa Review, Artful Dodge, Himal South Asia, and others. Several prestigious institutions and the press have praised and applauded her creative works. Nepali writing in English has thus achieved its canonical status with her works. As a writer of the diaspora, the subject of an unsettled dilemma and a desire to belong in a place becomes her recurrent theme. In an interview Thapa was asked, "Is Nepal home?" she answered by saying:

Nepal is home. Toronto has been kind to me, but it's not home yet; it's where I'm living right now. I've had a very mixed upbringing...I'm very much a hybrid, rooted in Nepal but influenced by International displacement...Nepal is one of those countries where everyone is traveling and living elsewhere for a while. Nepali identity is very transnational right now (Smithsonian Institution).

Thapa writes about Nepal, which is nestled in the Himalayas between China and India. It is geographically, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically a diverse

country, in which multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-religious groups amalgamate, forming a diverse culture. With its rich and unique cultural heritage, Nepal has evolved over centuries, and its multi-dimensional heritage encompassed the diversities of its ethnic groups. There are about one hundred and twenty-six ethnic groups and are classified into two major groups: Tibeto-Burman or Mongolians from the North and Indo-Aryans from the South, namely: Brahmins, Chhetris, Kirats, Newars, Tamang, Magar, Gurung, Thakalis, amongst others. These distinct ethnic groups have their separate customs while sharing certain common cultural attributes and historical associations. Some ways of their lifestyles have been hybridised while they remain as a distinct group, practising their norms and beliefs and indulging in different patterns of life. Regardless of differentiation in various spheres, they do share a certain common social and cultural characteristic that binds them together amidst diversity. In “Ethnicity and Making of a Hindu Nation in Nepal”, Dastider conveys the multiethnic, multireligious, complex and diverse character of Nepal and writes:

...social scientists have highlighted that the cultural milieu of Nepal is essentially the expression of geographical as well as historical factors. The present ethnic complexity is attributed to the migration of various ethnic and linguistic groups from North, South and Southwest frontiers into Nepal. The main waves of migration were those of Mongoloids (Kirats) from the east and north, and of Caucasoids (Khasa) from west and south (Dastider 48).

Thapa started her career in writing, in the early 1990s when Nepal was witnessing various conflicts and controversies. As such, the country experienced: a civil war that broke out by the emergence of different social activists, the fall of the monarchy, the formation of a new government, and the consciousness of economic migration. Her depictions of Nepal’s socio-political conditions and its culture promote awareness and are critically observed. She presents who Nepalis are in the past and the present situations. Viewing from the historical background, Nepal has experienced different transformations of powers and authorities from the beginning of the nation-state formation. Even after many civil wars and socio-political mishappenings, Nepal and its people are still surviving amid every hardship. The rulers and government who

lead and regulate have a significant role in bringing Nepal together to date. Richard Burghart in “The Formation of the Concept of Nation-State in Nepal” writes about the history of Nepalis in which he mentions how the present-day polity begins with Prithvi Narayan Shah:

...who ruled the Kingdom of Gorkha during the mid-eighteenth century...The Gorkha rulers, like many of their counterparts in the Ganges basin, claimed their sovereignty by exercising proprietary authority upon their possessions (muluk), and ritual authority within their realm (desa)...Each of these three concepts- possessions, realm, and country- specified a different relation between ruler, land and people, and each was legitimated with respect of different kinds of authority- proprietary, ritual and ancestral (Burghart 102 and 103).

The history of the past in the form of art, literature, and tradition has come to be the significant institutions of who Nepalis are today. Mary Shepherd Slusser in *Nepal Mandala: A Cultural Study of the Kathmandu Valley* denotes the ancestral monuments of the Kathmandu Valley and writes:

They function vigorously in contemporary Nepali culture. Through legend and folklore, the names of rulers whose dynasties have been extinct for a thousand years or more remain vividly alive, if historically garbled...The great body of primary institutions that govern contemporary Nepalese lives- religious, social, and often political-are the lineal descendants of those that governed Valley society of the past (4).

Thapa situates her works mostly in historical places. By weaving her stories with the historical issues in the background she has gained a large amount of audience and recognition.

This research examines Nepalis who are diverse in culture, ethnicities, beliefs and traditions. A country whose population has a diverse culture with different ethnicities is indeed a difficult subject to deal with. The reason behind this is that each ethnic group have their way of beliefs, languages, and customs. On the other

hand, it is solely the traditions and culture of Nepalis that binds each ethnic group as one. Xaxa (2006) emphasises that diversity has been a defining characteristic of Indian society. Unlike Western societies, which primarily acquire significant diversity after World War II, India's heterogeneity is a product of a long and complex historical evolution. While diverse in nature, the primary axes of difference in India have been caste, language, religion and region. Despite their ethnic differences, Thapa has skillfully portrayed the Nepalis and uses certain methods to convey the message of unity and open-mindedness. "Her books have its light, humorous moments, but underneath them, she shows her care for people, their joys and their pain. Thus, countries adopt the changes but larger challenge is of individuals" (Kolambe 89).

In the capital city of Nepal, Kathmandu, Thapa also helps to manage 'Martin Chautari,' a foundation and center for public interest and advocacy. It was an informal discussion group among development workers during the 1990s. Seminars, lectures, and various other social upliftment programs are held and telecast on national television and other social media in the name of this foundation. Thapa's contribution to this foundation helps to strengthen the Nepali society and share insight and experiences with the larger audience, which is the primary motive behind this foundation. She was also involved in ending the 'Kamaya Liberation Movement,' which was to end the bonded labour among the adults in Kathmandu. By engaging actively in such activities, she has become more connected with contemporary Nepal's problems. Her intellectual career in many ways has mounted upon a significant contribution to the introduction of Nepali society to the world. Roy (2018) in "Understanding Social Works" asserts that social work's goal is still to assist people and organisations in determining the most fulfilling course of action without restricting their freedom of choice, unless doing so would jeopardise the rights and well-being of others. Thapa has been contributing her time in social work before actually starting her career in the literary field. Some of the significant topics and developing issues in Nepali culture have frequently been developed in her works. It investigates the reality and its critiques of the government. She also writes regularly in the print media in Nepal (The Nepali Times) and also translates Nepali

literature into English. Her translation of Nepali to English work was published in *The Country is Yours: Contemporary Nepali Literature* (2009), a collection of stories and poems by forty-nine Nepali writers. Throughout her career, as a writer, Thapa has moved across genres and produced consulting documents related to gender and development, as well as articles, essays, and editorials composed in English and Nepali for leading newspapers and journals such as Kantipur, The Kathmandu Post, Himal Southasian, London Review of Books, Newsweek, Hindustan Times, Foreign Policy, Walrus, Nepali Times, New York Times and The Globe and Mail. Her works have been widely recognised and received wide acclaim and awards for her literary achievements.

Writing has become the most effective medium for highlighting Nepal and its culture for Thapa. In one of her interviews, Thapa talks about her preference for working and choosing fiction writing over non-fiction writing and said:

I miss non-fiction because it is a lot less tortured. Non-fiction doesn't have that inner imaginative work that you have to do for fiction. So it's not always full of self-doubt, unlike fiction where there are always questions about why this character, why this sentence, why this word choice...Non-fiction is more straightforward. Non-fiction, especially when it is personal, also runs the risk of being too self-involved (Rana).

Based on Thapa's non-fiction such as *Mustang Bhot in Fragments*, *The Lives We Have Lost: Essays and Opinions on Nepal*, and *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy*, the picture of Nepali culture and society can be seen and examined in terms of socio-political issues and conflicts. They highlight some of the controversial and sensitive topics regarding Nepal. Her works can be termed as historical, intellectual, and cultural representations of Nepali society, as the strong sense of nationalism conveys a deep sense of loss, identity crises, and nostalgia.

Thapa has attempted to create cultural consciousness by reflecting the economic, socio-political, and psychological issues revolving around Nepal in her works and she has thus observed the social realities of Nepal and portrayed the different aspects of it. She gives an effective account of how many parts of Nepal are

still lacking basic needs and development. In *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy*, Thapa sketches Nepalis' culture and society at a critical juncture of change and the whole process of change and states, "In 1990 more than 40 percent of Nepalis were living below the poverty level" (145). She highlighted the formation of class structure to the awareness regarding their self-consciousness and familiarised the Nepalis with the world at large. As her contributions to non-fiction writing and reporting suggest, she has explored Nepal widely and deeply and acquired a sense of Nepal's small towns and rural locations. This micro-local sensibility is reflected in one of her works, *The Tutor of History*, published in 2001. It is Thapa's first book, which highlights the arrival of a new voice to the literary world of Nepali writing in English. It is the portrayal of a society in change and is ultimately a story of idealism, alienation, and love. Thapa is very much concerned with illustrating the uses of political scenarios in Nepal. The book highlights the human lives and relationships of the late 1990s constitutional democracy of Nepal. Dissenting and breaking away from age-old tradition in the literary scene for the first time, she gives a picture of what the uniqueness of an archetypal Nepali village looks like in a contemporary time. It fascinated the readers with its intricate portrayal of local politics and the people whose lives intersect. The story takes place in Khairani Tar, a small town in Kathmandu, and also in Pokhara when the constitutional democracy of Nepal was new and the elected government collapsed. The major political parties contesting the elections in the story are Congress, UML (Communist), and the People's Party. All the lives of the characters, such as Rishi Parajuli, Giridhar Adhikari, Om Gurung, and Binita Dahal, are touched and highlighted in some manner as the election activities took place. It gradually reveals the dimensions of the political games played and the mass reality of the lives of Nepalis in Nepal. The story comes to a point in which the crises and obligations in their lives begin to rise. Each household lacked economic stability and their basic needs and rights, which led to poverty and injustices all around. "The town's physical structure mirrored its challenging ethos" (Thapa 23). Thapa portrays disparities in terms of money, class, and caste system, which are some of the roots of social evil within Nepali society. One of the main characters, Rishi Parajuli, a private tutor in history, reflects an ordinary man's life in Nepal, who works hard daily to survive the harsh realities of life. Thapa denotes:

His presence in the city was slim. In his birth village, he had a fuller identity- he was so-and-so's grandson, so-and-so's son, a member of a select caste and class-but in Kathmandu he was anonymous, a slip of a man like all the others, a shadow moving against a wall and disappearing when the sky clouded over (Thapa 12 and 13).

Thapa conveys that people living in their land do not have any identity as long as they are rich and have fame. Class differences and social disparities are deeply rooted within Nepali society, as also in India. Both nations have been facing such issues from time immemorial. Anand Chakravarti in "Some Aspects of Inequality in Rural India: A Sociological Perspective" writes about inequalities within Indian society, depicting, "Caste, however, is not the only source of inequality in Indian society, and major disparities also exist in the distribution of property and power" (Chakravarti 129). Each of the characters in *The Tutor of History* has different crises in their lives. The reality of a third-world country whose citizens struggle to move on in life is depicted. To escape violence or the nation's instability in maintaining a balanced livelihood, most of the characters in the story migrate to another city or foreign countries for better futures. They choose to remain bold and rooted not only for their country but also for their rights and futures. The book has a "recurrent theme of politics and also about the lives of number of people in Khairani Tar, a small town. All of the main characters are connected in one way or other in a small political party trying to get just a few seats in the national parliament" (Kolambe 87).

Thapa in *The Tutor of History* bravely stresses the conventional customs which was practised by the elites. She not only gives her opinions and understandings of the politics happening inside the nation to Nepali readers but to the world as well. Her decision to write in the English language is also linked with the deep sense of her awareness within the Nepali domain. As the written form of the Nepali language was only understood by the so-called Hindu elite or the bourgeois, both poetry and prose were written in an incomprehensible way as such, the majority of the Nepali find it hard to read them. In *Modern Literary Nepali: An Introductory Reader*, Michael J. Hutt writes, "In the early years of the 20th. century Nepali literature had only just begun to emerge...Despite these early signs of a modernizing

impulse, Nepali poetry remained largely Sanskritised, strictly metrical, and the exclusive preserve of the educated Brahman male” (6). It is quite clear that language itself was presented in the literary world only for the elite group. The book became a positive sign towards the budding of a literary world for Nepalis and gained a lot of positive critical responses after the publication to its wide audience. The English language becomes a tool for Thapa to present the Nepali realities. Thapa, regarding her translated works, also shows immense approval in the literary field. Indra Bahadur Rai, one of the tallest pillars in the field of Nepali literature also gives a review of the book by praising Thapa for her writings and writes:

The novel having been written in English, a language alien to the community described, assumes the aspect of clinical detachment and so the picture that emerges is, in large measure, an evaluation of us...Thapa has while writing the novel in English, refused to follow the easier way of catering to the taste of westerners or pandering to their preconceived notions. For her, writing is a mission, a sacred covenant between the writer and the Nepali people (Rai).

Thapas’ writings have therefore a stamp of originality. While retaining her identity and also being a diasporic writer, she becomes a spokesperson for Nepali mosaic. She writes with compassion about the Nepali minorities within the nation as well as Nepali migrants from different parts of the world. She not only engages with problems regarding national concerns but also the social, political, and environmental issues that will determine the survival of the nation. Her extraordinary empathy for representatives of diverse Nepali cultures and people is often attributed to her deep sensitivity towards her bond with her native land. She has thus constructed her work on knowledge of the history of her predecessors. Even more importantly, she has absorbed and utilised those qualities which characterise the different types of stories in the diaspora genre.

Thapa, in *Mustang Bhot in Fragments*, gives a glimpse of a remote corner of Nepal in which she confronts the realities of a third-world nation. It is a kind of report or diary writing published in 1992. It was written on account of travelling to a remote area of Nepal called Mustang during the nineties, which is situated behind the

high Himalayas. It is covered by her interaction and dialogues she carried out with the natives of the Mustang region during the 1990s. She renders a voice to the native people living in the area and deals with the politics within. The beginning of the book starts with the title, “Forget Kathmandu,” in which Thapa speaks about her life in Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal. It focuses on her return (after her studies) from America to Kathmandu. As the book is narrated in the first-person narrative, Thapa in this chapter tries to tell the audience about the bond she has with the place she was born, i.e. Nepal. The place had given her nostalgia after many years of being in a foreign land and writes, “I had returned to Nepal, America-educated, wanting to reacquaint myself with the country I had lived in as a child. The Nepal of my girlhood had consisted of convent school propriety, birthday parties, music and art lessons -cosy, sheltered days of privilege” (Thapa 16).

Thapa was brought up in a well-to-do family, who had all the comforts and luxuries in life, in contrast with the Mustang natives whom she met during her visits. The native people of Mustang also called the Bhot or Bhutia, who is part of the nation, share little with other Nepalis. She describes how these natives are disconnected from Nepal and their rights by living in extremely deteriorated conditions for decades. The causes of the failure of the development were due to the geographical structure of the place as transportation and communication were impossible and hard to reach even as corruption was the main cause. Due to its high altitude and lack of transportation, the region was unknown to many, even to the people living within the nation. It was opened up for tourists only after the introduction of democracy in Nepal. Thapa after reaching the place writes:

I was disoriented by the place I had reached, and confused because I had seen nothing that looked like “real” Nepal-which in my mind had lush terraced fields and green woods settled by little hamlets. Where was the Nepal I had read about in textbooks as a child, and in guide books and development reports as an adult?...The people I saw were just as removed from mainstream Nepal as I was (Thapa 25).

Inequality of rights, disparity of governance, and the system of class distinctions are

the dark realities of Nepal that Thapa was unaware of. She uses conversations, analogies, and anecdotes while providing her reaction to the harsh realities of the region. “There are chasms to bridge in Mustang, and long-festering wounds to heal. Nothing short of a course that vests the local people with the right, and the responsibility, to control their own lives will be able to help change a long history of helplessness and frustration” (Thapa 123). Being aware of her origins and her academic prestige and power within the Nepali class-structured society, Thapa reminds her audience in the book about how privileged she has been throughout her life. A literary critic and writer, Elen Turner, in a blog, writes about Thapa’s experience in the Mustang region and writes:

From an elite background, where only English was spoken at home, she knows in theory before she embarks on the journey to Mustang that the upper class’ sense of entitlement is wrong, and seeks to find out why, and how...In this sense, Mustang Bhot in Fragments is a fairly formulaic travel narrative, an individual embarking on a journey to find themselves...as she returns to Kathmandu at the end even more disillusioned with Nepal than she had been before, feeling even more cut off from it (Turner).

In one of the chapters, “Be like a Nepali”, Thapa pour out her anger upon the unjust rule and partiality the Kathmandu elite have towards the people of Mustang and writes: “Those who knew about the Bhotias referred to them jokingly. Are they still waging battles on horseback? someone asked. How is their king? Does he want to secede?” (Thapa 115). They intentionally criticise people due to economic and class differences. Manoranjan Mohanty is right when he says that inequality “among human beings is not the identification of qualitative or quantitative differences between them. A condition of inequality exists when such differences actually or potentially cause one to dominate over others” (Mohanty 243). Thapa’s realisation of the imbalanced situations of people in her native land gives a strong impression of Nepal’s power strata where disparities are seen everywhere.

The Lives We Have Lost: Essays and Opinions on Nepal (2011) give an insight into the transformation of Nepal caused by the disorganised law and order

within the country. It is a collection of essays and opinions highlighting the politics of Nepal. As stated in the very beginning of the book titled, “Introduction: This is Nepal”, Thapa starts with a brief account of the experiences of Nepalis and the socio-political situations of Nepal and writes:

So much has happened during the years that this collection spans, from the height of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)’s, People’s War’, through King Gyanendra’s military coup, its overthrow, and the collapse of the ‘old’ Nepal- a Nepal predicted on the democratic Constitution of 1990-to the launch of a peace process and an ambitious if conflict-ridden, attempt to transform the country into a ‘new’ Nepal (Thapa 1).

The book is divided into different chapters in which Thapa raises questions and doubts she has about the law and order of Nepal and writes, “The Constitution will determine whether the country will finally end up a communist republic, as the Maoists would have it, or a liberal republic, as the democratic political parties would strongly prefer. The inexperience on all sides will likely prove dangerous” (Thapa 199). It gives details and factual events accordingly by sketching the history and changes Nepal has been experiencing to date. Thapa also probes upon the dramatic transformations witnessed by Nepal in *All of Us in Our Own Lives* (2016). She uses history as a serving text and situates the book in Nepal along with the use of issues regarding an identity crisis, class division, social exclusion, gender inequality, migrant workers, foreign employment, and human trafficking. She reveals certain aspects of Nepalis’ culture, traditions, and beliefs and highlights the picture of the socio-economic and cultural ethos of Nepalis living within and outside Nepal. The story centres around four main characters and their experiences of life. Thapa gives voice to everyday life in circumstances of changes, corruption, sexism, isolation, disconnection, and cultural expectations. In a book review, McCauley stated that Thapa’s scenes all underscore the themes of transition and connection. He writes about *All of Us in Our Own Lives* and says the book is about:

...the spaces in which an ending transforms into a beginning, the spaces in which central characters trade places of prominence with minor characters,

and the space in which despair transforms into hope. As characters move beyond their familiar territory to meet other characters...the narrative web loosens and tightens to accommodate changes in perspective. The connections build credibility and invite readers more fully into the story (McCauley).

Thapa concentrates on the main character, Ava Berriden, who recounts most of the narrative. She brings out strong characters like Indira Sharma, Vishwa Bista, Sapana Karki, and Chandra, who help one another to achieve their goals. The narrative is shifted back and forth from Ontario to Nepal about a quarter of the way. It deals with the cynical and corrupted workers who work in international aid and also brings out the massive earthquake that shook Nepal in 2015. Ava and Indira, both characters, work in an aid sector, which makes the story revolve around each other, though living in a different country. Their connection is the key to the book's development, and their professional position allows them to bridge the gap with other minor characters, as they are from different levels of privilege in society. Thapa also situates the history of Nepal's issues and conflicts regarding the drafting of the Nepal constitution in the backdrop of the story. She depicted Nepalis and their hardships in one frame through the experiences of various characters who are in search of or longing to find their belongings and identity. Ava is a Canadian lawyer who quits her job and starts an aid project as a Director of the Women's Empowerment Programme in Nepal. Nepal, for her, is a past that forged a connection within her, as it was where her parents adopted her. Her struggles to launch a new career in international aid let her to Indira Sharma, who is also a leading Gender Expert from Nepal, Kathmandu. Each of their stories connects and shapes each others' lives no matter where they are and from what background they belong. Ava, instead of going back to her past, works for the upliftment and equality of people whose voices were unheard of due to injustices and unstable laws of Nepal. Another character named Sapana Karki from a small village plays an important role in the book. Her motives towards progression and changes can be seen by the way she works hard to achieve it. Through the help of foreign aid and Ava's guidance, she and her Women's Committee find their way towards development. Their voices were heard for the very first time within the

society. On the other hand, one of the characters, Gyanu Karki, who is a migrant worker in Dubai, finds the foreign land more secure and vibrant than his homeland, Nepal. “Outside of Nepal, the desert -the Gulf- was the only home he’d known. It was a difficult thing to love a land you could never call your own” (Thapa 15). Unfortunately, Gyanu failed to go back to Dubai and met many obstacles, but after Ava’s guidance, he finally settled down with his family in Canada. Thus, every character’s journey plays a significant part in building and achieving the goals of others’ lives. Each character in the story builds their future even after their roots and identity are displaced both inside the nation and in foreign lands. Thapa portrays the women as strong and determined characters who change the lives of others. The story ends in a positive way and towards a change for development- big or small, but it does bring development in each of their lives. Various other themes like isolation, identity crisis, class division, social exclusion, gender inequality, and human trafficking are also highlighted in the book.

The subject of Nepal being a third-world country and lacking various needs may be heard and written about by other writers widely, even as Thapa’s intellectual treatment of depicting Nepal to the world is at a whole new level. She crafted and maintained a fair balance between observation and narration and has, in a way, examined, re-narrated, and highlighted the very essence of Nepal and its people. Her contributions towards Nepali society are not limited to the stories and lives of Nepalis from Nepal but also from other parts of the nation where Nepalis are settled. One of them is the book written by a renowned figure of Nepali literature, Indra Bahadur Rai’s *Aja Ramita Chha* (1964), which is based on the stories and lives of the Nepalis from Darjeeling, India. Thapa translated the book into English in 2017, and the title was *There’s a Carnival Today*. Among her translations, the book is one of the most challenging works according to Thapa. It was Indra Bahadur Rai’s debut novel and her translation which won the 2017 PEN America Heim Translation Grant. The setting of the book is Darjeeling in the 1950s, foreshadowing the issues of identity in the region. Anjana Basu reviewed the book and wrote, “On the whole though it is a story about lost, hopes and the constant political haggling that still plagues the hills today” (Basu). By translating the book, Thapa has enriched Nepali

literature and also gives a brief account of the history and lifestyle of Nepalis from North East, India. It brings out the socio-political situations and reflects the traditions and culture of Nepalis from a different country. Her translation of such a classic work makes her audience realise how vast the Nepali diaspora has spread around the globe. Considered one of the leading contemporary diasporic voices of Nepal, Thapa exhibited a dialogic relationship with Nepal and the adopted land and questioned the concept of identities and nationalities of Nepalis. Given the importance of the concept of diaspora, she evokes and discusses the dilemma and emotional turmoil of herself in greater depth. Deeply attached to her native land, Nepal, she presents the life and struggles of the Nepali diaspora and immigrants specifically originating from Nepal. In her works, the characters are not able to associate with the native land and are haunted by the fact of being in an in-between situation. Their consciousness may acquire multiple identities, but the longing for a lost home always is there as a deep structure. She represents the lives of immigrants who have to deal with the outcomes of the cultural clashes they have to face throughout their lives in their new homes. The effect of the change of culture and environment due to the migrations to another country is reflected in *Seasons of Flight* (2010). Here, the characters are Nepalis negotiating and witnessing the long-isolated country confronting the modern world geographically, socially, politically, and economically. They highlight the new generation Nepalis who are in a way globalised or modernised by their environment and are affected by its impacts in various spheres. They are people who are on the path of achieving effective changes and opportunities to pursue, such as better career prospects, education, and better economic facilities. Thapa combines and deals with the sentiments, perspectives, and experiences that bring out a clearer picture of the characters' experiences. It portrays the life of Nepali immigrants who are uprooted and displaced from their native land resulting in cultural shock and dislocation. The term 'dislocation' can refer to different things- physical, psychological, emotional, and political. It "refers to the changing dynamics in the formation of community membership. When boundaries between the territorial dimensions are intermingled and blurred, the intersectional divisions between 'us' and 'them' are also contested by the both-and dynamics of belonging" (Ahponen 4 and 5). Thapa has produced issues that are relevant to present-day Nepal and the Nepalis who are grounded in an

inbetweenness, both as a citizen inside the nation and as a foreigner in another nation. By using personal narration and dialogical form in her works, she has created a real account and provides evidence through her literary skills. Prema, the main character in the book, who left her native land after winning a green card lottery to America, portrays people who are in between and dislocated geographically, socially, and culturally. “‘I do not have a world!’ Prema cried. ‘I left the world I had, and do not belong in the one I am in now-your world...’” (Thapa 212). Other characters do bring out the contradictions of being in a homeland and a host country. Thapa highlights how Nepalis in other nations survived and are sometimes misrepresented for their identity. Throughout the story, Prema tries to explain her identity to people who are unaware of where Nepal is and who Nepalis are. She would simply tell them, “‘It is near India,’ or ‘Where Mount Everest is’” (Thapa 11). The book focuses on the experiences Prema encounters in the diasporic space and delves into the lives of people who are in search of their identity in different nations. M.S. Pande in “Describing Diaspora: Discussing Literature” writes:

The term diaspora refers to, dispersal or scattering of seeds...Currently, the term diaspora and diasporic community are taken as expatriates, expelles, refugees, alien residents, immigrants, etc. In every diaspora, however, there is a notion of movement and displacement which embodies social, cultural, and political consequences and implementations of such diasporic community (Pande 1).

There have been many waves of Nepali diaspora who suffered from a certain break with the motherland. This break was not voluntary but enforced by the physical distance between the motherland and the diasporic settlement- the slow modes of travel or lack of economic means. People have voluntarily relocated themselves for better opportunities and economic gain. Most creations from the diaspora speak of the importance of being a Nepali in a distant land. The role of the Nepali diaspora writers has been very strong in bringing about consciousness on the issues and nature of Nepal and its people. Thapa, being a diaspora writer has widened the knowledge and perspectives of the new generation of Nepalis who are cut off from Nepal and their old values and culture. A considerable debate and controversy among Nepali

diasporic theorists and critics have been generated due to various socio-political situations happening in Nepal. Their intention is not only to trace the changes needed to be adopted by Nepalis but to understand and try to attempt to make the worth of their nation as well as themselves, which is drowning in the pond of corruption, poverty and lack of education. T. Louise Brown in *The Challenge to Democracy in Nepal: A Political History* writes about the situation of the socio-political reality of Nepal and the corrupted laws that dominate the citizens. He writes:

The first four years of Nepali democracy had little effect upon the lives of the poor. The declarations in the Constitution that all Nepalis were equal did not have any immediate impact upon the distribution of resources, upon the empowerment of women, and neither did it facilitate the entry of marginalized ethnic groups into the political system...Democracy did not accelerate the pace of Nepal's economic development (205).

The number of books in Nepali diaspora writing in English is increasing and has been published by Nepali writers in recent years. As books have the potential to socialise readers and transmit values to them, they also have the potential to affect upon the readers' self-image, attitudes, and emotional and intellectual development. The Nepali diaspora writings, whether in prose or poetry, are marked by the ingredients of loss, alienation, memory, and recovery. Their movements to the neighbouring countries pose cultural challenges and crises regarding civilisational norms and focus more on the nation they left behind. Thapa has taken over in the wider world and has carried a lot of implications in contributing her time to represent Nepal and its culture. She has become a source of inspiration for many aspiring writers, especially from Nepal to write about their land and culture in the English language. The Nepali diaspora writers have thus recorded remarkable acclamation in the contemporary world by producing collections of Nepali diaspora literary output in the English language. These writers have invariably opted for the English language as the medium of their creativity and attempted practically all the literary genres. Thapa's deep social awareness therefore leads to a sense of alienation, a hyphenated and fractured existence. *Seasons of Flight* highlights Prema's self-discovery, isolation, disconnection and alienation in the foreign land even after tons

of self-doubt and turmoil in her life. As Prema came to the United States by winning a lottery, her perspectives in various spheres changed. “She took a chance on the lottery, the lottery of life” (Thapa 253). Such changes in one’s identity can be extended to what Homi Bhabha’s concept of hybridity explains. In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha writes:

The borderline work of culture demands an encounter with ‘newness’ that is not part of the continuum of past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation...it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent ‘in-between’ space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present. The ‘past-present’ becomes part of the necessity, not the nostalgia, of living (10).

To a large degree, no culture remains pure after an encounter with another. A change and shift in views and lifestyles are inculcated automatically. Such processes of change are seen in the lives of contemporary Nepalis. Ashcroft (2002) posits that hybridity is celebrated and valued as a form of superior cultural intelligence. This stems from the perceived advantages of existing in “in-between” cultures, straddling two or more cultural contexts, and possessing the ability to navigate and negotiate these differences effectively. Changes in the core values of Nepalis’ culture do not undergo total transformation but they change slowly as it adapts itself to new values. Discontented with the situation in Nepal, Thapa illustrates the tensions and impacts of globalisation in which Nepalis are heavily distorted, dismantled, disturbed, and trapped in their lives. With time, Nepali identity has developed in the context of their sufferings in their homeland as well as in the diasporic space. “As objects are returned to the communities from which they came, the descendants of their owners reanimate them with new lives and enliven with their histories with new futures” (Harris 14).

Thapa’s first collection of short stories, *Tilled Earth: Stories* (2007), offers a glimpse of the social reality of contemporary Nepal and the Nepalis around the world. The book becomes relevant on the subject of diversity in which Thapa gives the following description of the subject of diversity by highlighting Nepalis from

different ethnic groups and backgrounds. The book has twenty-one stories that confine a variety of lives of several characters with a diversified background set in Nepal and other countries. Most of the characters in the stories encompass their journey of finding their inner selves and the results of what they find. They have fallen into a state of in-betweenness in the shifting times and location, and are caught between multiple cultures and modernity. In one of the stories, “Friends,” Hrishikesh Pandey, who comes from abroad with an idealistic vision to serve his country, has to leave Nepal ultimately because he finds it impossible to negotiate the negative social environment and unfriendly attitudes of his colleagues. “Perhaps he didn’t know how to behave, how to fit in, be like a real Nepali, he thought” (Thapa 53). While the other character, Kamal Malla, who is a computer programmer, born and brought up in Nepal feels confined in Nepal and wants to leave but cannot do so. The thought of getting a job easily or settling in a foreign land is a misconception people from third world countries bear. From these two characters, Thapa foregrounds from two different perspectives, the depressing state in which the country and its people are deeply immersed. Her attempt to deconstruct the concept of the “American Dream” summarises the existing reality of people from third-world countries who dream big to achieve newer possibilities in life. Thapa, through the situational dilemma and crisis of diasporic people, foregrounds new meaning to diasporic conceptualisation leading to insightfulness to the discourse. In another story, titled “Heera Maharjan Loses His Way,” Heera, the protagonist, is a woodworker who is trapped in an identity crisis caused by the negative impacts of globalisation in his birthland, Nepal. The story describes the spiritual journey he took from the temple road and eventually turns into a modern world of concrete and brick which he is unfamiliar with. The path towards the global trend trapped him immensely, leading him to a neighbourhood of walls. He saw changes not only in people but also in the natural landscape which is heavily dominated by new infrastructures and technologies. His loss of the way vividly gives an example of two worlds, the contrasting old ways versus modernity, which he finds difficult to adapt. Heera Maharjan portrays Nepalis who are affected by the existing reality of the globalised world. Thapa also portrays social problems and events like the current trend of migration into foreign nations, and the concept of displacement, homelessness, and loneliness in the book. Most of

the characters are caught up between multiple cultures and globalisation; hence the impacts and effects of it have disturbed them in various ways. Their cultural identities remain unbridgeable in many circumstances, which make it difficult to adjust to their world. Thapa presents the characters from one locale going to another terrain, facing different cultural difficulties and ultimately finding themselves in a state of in-betweenness. They encounter problems and can neither fully adapt themselves to the alien culture nor forget the previous and find their identity swinging in-between. Thapa, therefore, presents the blend of fact and fiction of Nepalis while criticising the ongoing situation in Nepal where the government fails to utilise the power of the younger generations. Nepali youths are misused rather than exploited in a certain field, due to which they are unable to have a firm career choice. Torn into two parts, as their bodies wander in a foreign land and their heart ponders into their homeland, they belong to two different geographical locations and cultural poles. Through these different stories, Thapa has brought out the changes and impacts of globalisation within the Nepali society. Globalisation of the last few decades has brought forth some unexpected developments that in turn have recast the perspectives on modern history. As globalisation and development find their way by intermingling with other nations through aid and education, the Nepali identity has also changed- in terms of socio-economic development, education and globalisation. Parekh (2000) asserts that a society's culture is inextricably tied up with its economic, political, and other institutions. No civilisation first produces culture and then these institutions or vice versa. They all are equally necessary for its survival, arise and grow together.

Thapa handles a heavy dose of history and tradition masterfully in her works. During an interview in "National Critics Choice Online News," conducted by Robin Stienberg, she explained what inspires her to write about Nepal and the issues that are happening in her writings. She described the changes that happened during the 1990s when Nepal became a democratic country and explained how "political turbulence" occurred and said, "all around, you see people's life changing and all of the conflicts that come with modern Nepali life" (Thapa). Such circumstances made her choose to write about Nepal and its people as she has been experiencing the

phase of changes that are happening and had happened during those days. In an attempt to explain contemporary Nepal to a larger audience, Thapa's *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy* (2005) evokes history and anecdotes highlighting the post-1990 parliamentary failure. It is a close representation of her observations and experiences in Nepal and was nominated for the finalist in the 2006 Lettre Ulysses Award for Art of Reportage. She has re-narrated the events and incidents of various factual happenings of Nepal and writes: "its 26 million people an intricate social tangle...There is no such thing as a typical Nepali...Each has its own origin myths, its own history and its own particular relationship to state power in Kathmandu" (Thapa 11 and 12). The opening lines in the book start with an introduction, dealing with the conflict and unjust happening in Nepal stating: "When, in June 2001, King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah and his family were killed in a massacre at the Narayanhiti royal palace, the world took new notice of Nepal. Soon thereafter, the country plunged into chaos" (Thapa 11). Thapa describes the worries of the liberals of the capital, Kathmandu, as the Maoists gained ground in rural areas of Nepal for a new democracy. It goes on to project how the monarch seized power once again after the insurgency took place several times till the contemporary period when Nepal became democratic. The book gives an impression of a corrupted nation and for this Thapa was once hunted down mercilessly and relentlessly by the Nepal government after the publication. She was immediately acclaimed as a striking new voice for two reasons: first, because the book embodied an unrelenting social realism, and second, because of its urban setting, both of which were uncommon in the literary world of Nepal at the time. In the book, Thapa has stated that:

Nepal was said by our textbooks to be a nation of four castes and thirty-six ethnic nationalities. In reality, though, just three groups ruled the country...Everywhere in power were the Chettris, Bahuns and Newars...More than 90 per cent of the country's population, therefore, found no representation at all (Thapa 66 and 67).

The system of the age-old monarchies in Nepal has marked various boundaries in the socio-political arena. Over centuries, the rules and regulations of the monarch have differentiated people into different spheres. "It is strange that the monarchy has an

open mind for the socio-economic advancement of the country, but has shown its dislike for broadening the political system to function in a democratic way” (Upreti 194). From post colonial premises, Thapa gives an effective account of the historical elements and shapes her creative works to stand up for those without power and voice. The study suggests that Thapa wants her audience to be aware and educated to protect one’s rights. “Promotion and protecting of human rights is a continuing struggle which need to be waged at various fronts. Since human rights are essentially the rights of the people, both as individuals and in groups, there is need for persistence vigilance and living action by the people themselves” (Joshi 45). As Nepal was ruled under a monarchical system it generated divisions between the people and the royals, and distinctions in terms of caste, class, and others were formed among the citizens. “The identity of Nepal as a Hindu kingdom was reinforced greatly by its rulers during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, glossing over the country’s immense ethnic and linguistic diversities, and later government suppressed the development of local cultural identity” (Hutt 4). People were distinguished and separated from even the kind of work they did. The hierarchical social structure and the reason for the backwardness of Nepali society are the root causes of injustices and discrimination adopted by the so-called rulers of Nepal. The characters in Thapa’s works are affected by the unjust rules of the elite, the social discrimination and poverty represent the coherent classes - “bourgeoisie” and “proletariat” of the Marxist perspective. Thapa, therefore, foregrounds the very aspects of Nepalis’ lives in which the government and the elites seek to brush the realities under the carpet relentlessly. “What resulted was a democracy that looked like a democracy, but that functioned as an elite class and caste cartel, a democracy lacking democracy, a postmodern democracy” (Thapa 146). As it is asserted here, this applies to Marx’s critique of class struggle. As Marx noticed, the dominant usually made economic inequality seem just right; likewise, they also made the rule of those in dominance seem legitimate. Thapa, with her uncompromising and honest portrayals, gave a detailed account of the history and the present situation of Nepal’s government in a manner no other Nepali writers dared to. Thus, the conflict between the so-called elites and minorities over the country’s new constitution is still an ongoing process. She explains how she wrote *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for*

Democracy in the thick of events with various hardships and says:

Like many Nepalis, I had grown tired of what Edward Said has called the perplexity of living...My own decision was to record what happened, to write what it has been like to watch democracy come, and slip away...I left Nepal so that I might write in favour of democracy without fear. Many other dissidents soon gathered in India, while others choose to stay in Nepal and go underground, or to openly defy what they saw as a rogue regime (Thapa 15).

Even after years of democracy and new governance, there are still conflicts that delay the growth of Nepal. The conflicts are not only regarding the socio-political issues but also that of an individual who tries to adjust to his or her world. Tamar Hermann states, “conflict situations are much more interesting than harmonious ones. If for no reason, this is because, in the socio-political arena, conflicts of various levels and intensity are far more common than harmonious state” (Hermann 77). In present-day Nepal, changes and reformation in terms of socio-political aspects are seen, but the progress is slow. There are still distinctions and class struggles going on within the nation. In *Understanding Nepal: Muslims in a Plural Society*, Mollica Dastider writes, “The Hindu caste hierarchy which became a state protected ideology in Nepal since 1854, also played its role in shaping the character of the national society where the Parbatiya castes through its cultural legacy continued to dominate the political power structure of modern Nepali state” (62). Thapa, hence, succeeded in capturing some of these conflicts and changes and has been both praised and criticised on account of her frank and uninhibited expression of the realities of Nepal.

Democracy, as one of the most recognised forms of governance, due to its widespread has become a necessity all over the world. Every state and nation wants to enjoy their rights and wants peace and order inside its surroundings. As such, Nepal, after passing through various critical stages, has transformed into an established democracy with rights and freedom. Such rights and freedom are not achieved fully, but they can be seen in the stability of the economy and other developments that are happening throughout the nation gradually. “Nationalism in Nepal started taking shape only after the 1951 political change” (Upreti 188). Nepal

has entered a new era in the development of politics and social transitions, where various conflicts arose from within the nation. Urbanisation or globalisation has brought various changes among all sections of people. She voices her concerns relating to the nation and the concept of cultural consciousness, as in nationalism, domination, patriarchy, and identity in most of her works. All of these issues and problems play a significant role in the formation of who Nepalis are and how they are perceived by the outside world as well as within the nation.

The linking of the familial experience with historical consciousness is a feature that runs through the works of Thapa. *The Tutor of History*, and *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy* situates the period of Nepal's political and social upheaval during the 1990s and the millennium. Thapa stresses the nostalgia of collective people who look back, often in an attitude of love-hate, to the past, at once drawn towards and repelled by it. The long period of political crises and the massive socio-political issues have been restructured and changed, resulting from the phase of globalisation. Thapa hence sees her works as an opportunity to inculcate and educate her audience with race, gender sensitivity, and identity politics.

Deeply rooted in her native land, Thapa simultaneously accepts living amidst different cultures and explores the aesthetic values of hybridity and globalisation. Her diasporic sensibilities have been elucidated marvellously in her works. The attachment and dislocation from the native soil visualise the social milieu of Nepali's ethos. Various Nepali writers also write about such issues in Nepal but very few of them write in the English language. Dr. Sangita Swechcha, in one of her blogs, posted about an article titled, "A sneak peek into Nepali English writing" by Uday Adhikari. Here, Adhikari writes about the background of Nepali English writing and writes:

During the Rana regime, no common people could get as much privilege as the elite Ranas themselves...Then came Laxmi Prasad Devkota aka Mahakavi (poet laureate)...After Devkota, writers like Mani Dixit, Abhi Subedi, and many more continued the legacy but this was at a slow pace (Swechcha).

Uday Adhikari continues tracing the history of Nepali English writing and was pleased to find Manjushree Thapa's works. However, when Thapa's book was published, he was unable to find them, as it "was limited to a closed group of erudite readers. It may be that the debutant book found a hard time traveling around the globe" (Swechcha). He denotes how people were excited about the accessible development of works at the beginning of the millennium and writes:

The writers were scaling new heights and Manjushree Thapa from Nepal was trying not to miss the train of South Asian English writing. She fought back with her second book, her novel 'The Tutor of History,' published in 2001 from Penguin. Comparatively a bulky novel, it helped in establishing the writer's faith in local content. And, it is probably a fine example of how a novel could be written in an international language with local content (Swechcha).

Critics and other Nepali audiences around the world became aware of Thapa's works soon after her first novel, *The Tutor of History*. She has become one of the contemporary voices of Nepal who writes about contemporary issues and politics in the English language. Other Nepali writers who write in English are Prajwal Parajuly, Rabi Thapa, Shradha Ghale, Samrat Upadhyay, and many others whose works were also based on contemporary social and political issues of Nepal. They dramatise the experiences of both the Nepalis and the Nepali diaspora. In their discourses, cultural representations and political movements of Nepal have played a key ingredient and project Nepal as the national space to return to. They are therefore persistently augmenting world literature, enriching it with multiculturalism, post-nationalism, and post-modernism and have been at the centre stage in contemporary times and play a significant role in various fields because of the theoretical formulation being generated by their works. By looking at the diaspora literature from a broader perspective, it is seen that such literature helps in understanding various cultures, breaking the barriers between different countries, globalising the global, and even spreading universal peace. As the diaspora writers live on the margins of two different countries, theories are generated to construct new identities. Though global in outlook, they are local inhabitants and deeply rooted in their native

country, Nepal, taking up issues in their writings. They experience the dilemma of in-betweenness as well as the issues of dislocation and relocation, which has resulted in the perennial search for identity. Living on the margins of two countries and cultures, these diaspora writers attempt to do justice to both. These writers, who are both from an earlier Nepali diaspora and modern diaspora, show peculiarities; they are in a state of dislocated lives, whether it be voluntary or involuntary migration. Kazanjian (2016) in “Cultural dislocation: finding intercultural possibilities in exile” emphasizes that one of the main issues exiles have is trying to deal with the stress and anxiety of being uprooted as well as the requirement to establish roots in a new community and culture. The Nepali diaspora writers, despite peculiarities, exhibit that there is an inherent exilic state in all dislocated lives. As such, displacement or dislocation, whether forced or self-imposed, is in many ways a calamity. Thapa consciously tries to justify one end, simultaneously, but unconsciously arises a longing for the other, which can be seen from the situations of the characters in her works. In *Seasons of Flight*, Thapa situates Prema’s emotions, shifting back and forth between longing for her native land, Nepal, and accepting her new settlement at the same time. Prema often wonders and questions herself, “...is this really where I should be living?...should I stay, should I go? Have I gone too far, or not far enough? Was this progress enough?” (Thapa 233). The book gives vivid expressions of Nepalis’ experiences who in their homeland and host country find alienation, in-betweenness, and rejections throughout. Thapa’s fictional setting of the book creates the plight of people in a diaspora, who are in search of their identity. Thapa has thus tried to expose the perplexing situation encountered by diasporic people and the existing reality of contemporary Nepalis. Comparing the two worlds of Prema and her situations, Thapa has contributed to presenting the socio-cultural observation of the Nepali diaspora. For example, a similar subject is also presented by prominent Indian diaspora writers in English, who belong to the diaspora. In their writings, the sense of longing for their motherland is the most overwhelming sentiment of the Indian diaspora and so is for other diasporas as well. Hence, nostalgia and attachments to one’s native land gave birth to diaspora literature. Thapa has also explored the sense of displacement not only with a geographical dislocation but also a socio-cultural sense of displacement within and outside Nepal. The predicament

can be explained in Thapa's words from *The Lives We Have Lost: Essays and Opinions of Nepal* (2011). She writes, "We Nepalis are still baffled about how to be part of the modern world. For this we are still, and seemingly forever, waiting" (203).

Thapa, as a diaspora writer, divides her life between Nepal and Canada and works in various fields and non-government organisations for the upliftment of the downtrodden of Nepal. It is a natural phenomenon for diaspora writers that they find themselves attached to their ancestral home, culture and religion. The diaspora writings capture the state of exile, the homeland of the diasporas, as well as the experiences within the host country. The theme of cultural alienation, assimilation, and acculturation has been an important aspect of Thapa's works. Diaspora, on the other hand, can be described as a journey towards self-recognition. As such, the dual national feeling of insecurity and in-betweenness are the prominent features of diasporas. It is therefore an attempt to negotiate between these two polarities. They are indeed mediums for the expression of such consciousness. "The diaspora as a mode of cultural production emphasizes the currents of cultural objects, images, and meanings back and forth...It refers to the production and reproduction of transnational social and cultural phenomena" (Oonk 18). Thapa has creatively brought to light the Nepali diaspora to the world and the characters redefine their lives and accept them from a globalised consciousness. Unravelling existing realities and formulating a diasporic identity significantly elucidate subtle dimensions of Thapa's creative vision. Thus, Thapa's stories and the characters are distinct from those of her contemporaries.

Diaspora writing, especially in the age of globalisation, is a consciousness-raising genre where political inequality runs alongside themes of nostalgia, imagination, reconstructions of the homeland, and identities. The concept of identity in diaspora writing is not only an exercise in examining multiplicities of location and subject-hoods, but is a bigger political matter of global justice, cultural rights, self-determination, and learning. Despite being dispersed and scattered, Nepalis in other countries are increasingly getting involved in expanding the Nepali literature. Some of the works of Mahesh Pudyal, Yuyutsu Sharma, and other translated works by

various poets also highlight the lives and hardships faced by Nepalis within and outside Nepal. Their works stress their efforts to maintain connections with people in their homeland. Besides, it highlights the attempt to assimilate and integrate into the host countries in their dislocated state. Thapa and other Nepali diaspora writers have established networks back in their country of origin and tried to influence their homeland's politics and also support various activities. They comprise distinct classes- those who have spent a part of their life in Nepal and those who have been bred since childhood outside Nepal. Thapa is one of those writers whose portrayal of dislocated characters gained immense importance in contemporary times. One of the widespread Nepali diasporic communities is in India. "India continues to be the highest recipient of Nepali labour migrants. Among the other Nepali migrant-receiving countries, until 2000/01, Saudi Arabia was where the highest number of Nepali migrant workers went" (Sijapati 18). The large-scale migration was the result of the colonials' need for soldiers and workers, as there was a lack of opportunities for employment in the feudal, poverty-stricken Nepal. Peu Ghosh in *International Relations* writes, "The main guideline of Indo-Nepal relation has been the Indo-Nepal Peace Friendship Treaty of 1950...India gave huge economic, technological and other kinds of support to Nepal to help in emergence of a strong Nepal" (452). Migration and dispersion are agonising and natural phenomena human beings have been experiencing from their original habitat for a long time. Migrating to other parts of Nepal and other nations has become a tradition in every Nepali household, especially within Nepal. The adaptation, acceptance and intermingling of culture, religion, lifestyle and language of other nations has become the Nepali reality. *Seasons of Flight* has presented migration, not as a mere physical movement of the characters but as carries with them socio-cultural baggage, a set of religious beliefs and practices, some set norms and values, good habits, and language. The book applies to Homi Bhabha's concept of "third space". Here, Thapa revealed the dynamic "in-between" of the diasporic lives of Nepalis where cultures change, boundaries blur and identities transform. It serves to analyse the issue of cultural dislocation and its consequences, portraying Prema's life in her newfound land and examining the different dimensions of how she and other characters are culturally dislocated from their native land as well as in their present setting. The idea of the

“American Dream” is reprehended through Prema’s story, where she dwindles between roots and uproots social and cultural situations. Hence, the changes in her life form a hybrid identity into a “third space.” The “third space” therefore, is a crucial concept in Bhabha’s theory, representing the liminal zone where cultures collide and hybrid identities emerge. This in-between space is neither fully absorbed by the dominant culture nor purely resistant to its influence. Instead, it becomes a fertile ground for negotiation and transformation of new identities. Prema’s transition has thus highlighted the stories of migrants and immigrants who struggle to cope in life despite the changes that come along.

In the modern era, no area of human life is unaffected by its penetrating influence- be it social, political, economic, psychological, emotional, or moral. Nepal is also gradually becoming a part of the global culture. Modernity with its agenda has brought about all kinds of changes. Along with modernity, economic migration has become one of the processes of livelihood in Nepal. The impact of it has ignited a drastic change in terms of the economy, politics, education, and sensibility of Nepal and the Nepalis. The need for protecting and preserving one’s culture, values, traditions, and language is an abiding concern of every community or nation. Thapa has therefore highlighted these issues and the background of Nepali society to a larger audience to represent who Nepalis are in contemporary times.

Nepal, being a homeland of distinct people is still practising various traditional norms and ethos even after a huge population of its citizens are spread across the globe. Thapa has examined the cultural and social aspects of Nepalis which can be seen from their different ways of representation, as in, art, literature, customs, and languages. Culture, therefore, is “the man-made part of the environment. Implicit in this is the recognition that man’s life is lived in a dual setting, the natural habitat and his social environment” (Herskovits 17). Through her contribution to the literary field, Thapa has examined, re-narrated, and highlighted the very essence of Nepal and its people. *Mustang Bhot in Fragments* is portrayed as an eye-opener in which the confrontation with the realities of Nepal has been highlighted by Thapa. The people of Mustang “were enmeshed in struggle that was not theirs” (Thapa 117). Due to various lack of opportunities and corrupt government

within the nation, economic migration has become a part and partial of Nepali existence. Thapa deals with the lives of the migrants and immigrants whose miseries and problems are related universally. Because of the struggling democracy and bad politics, Nepalis migrate in search of jobs and higher education leaving behind their family and nation. Here, Thapa stated: “I understood this impulse to venture out. This was the path all of Nepal took in the 1950s: the one leading out, to prosperity. This was the path my own family took, generations ago” (Thapa 77). Changes, therefore, in terms of economy and globalisation, have indeed impacted the nation and the citizens enormously after economic migration. Moreover, due to the close inter and trans-cultural communication with other ethnic groups within and outside the nation, hybridity occupies a central place.

A change and shift in views and lifestyles are inculcated automatically when one is shifted into a different environment. No culture or nation remains pure after an encounter with one another. Identity is contextualised to the land, artefacts, language, existential conditions, and experiences. Hence, identity is formed not in isolation but in context with culture. In this manner, the identity of the Nepalis centres on the tradition and customs that provide a foundational structure and building materials. It has brought considerable transformation in the social structure by bringing some changes in society at the interpersonal level, family level, and the wider socio-cultural level. A glimpse into the representation of poor governance can be seen in Thapas’ *Mustang Bhot in Fragments*. Thapa has portrayed the people of the Mustang region as the citizens who were far away from modernity at that time. While confronting the place, Thapa realised how Nepalis in rural areas are still cut off from modernity. In the closing chapter, she exclaimed, “I am no longer sure if I am a member of a new Nepal or a continuation of the old one, but I am certain that living with this schismed identity is what it means to be a Nepali” (Thapa 124). Thus Thapa was baffled by the poor conditions of people who are still away from modernisation socially, politically as well and geographically. She has been contributing her time to social work before her career in the literary field. On the other hand, she has been indulging in the process of writing and collecting materials from her trips and findings. She experiences the lack of many things in Mustang; she wants her people

to know the importance of being educated. Whether it is economically or socially, education plays a vital role in the growth of these two important factors. Nepalis, as a result of ignorance and illiteracy, somehow remain in-between without growing fully within or outside the nation. She wants people to be educated to build one's identity and image. Such is the change Thapa yearns to instill in her readers as well.

Thapa's works are emblematic of the new Nepal and Nepalis who walk out of the old customs for a change. As globalisation took place and Nepal began to improve a bit, economic migration became a central part of the Nepalis. The country has experienced changes in various dimensions in terms of living, culture, beliefs, and language and this has brought about a positive impact. Thapa's works have thus probed into the Nepali cultural consciousness after intermingling with other cultures and also, due to globalisation. Social change, as a field of inquiry, has attracted attention among diverse thinkers in various fields of education. It may be understood as a universal phenomenon, as there is no society, whether primitive or modern, that remains unaffected by the process of change. Change which can be seen in Nepal is after witnessing different changes from the autocratic monarchy to parliamentary democracy. *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy* stresses how the political institution of Nepal changed abruptly. It was when the "Parliamentary democracy-won late, in 1990 was lost to a gradual, staggered coup that began in October 2002, and culminated in February 2005, with a military takeover by King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah" (Thapa 11). It was only after the adoption of different norms and regulations imposed by the communist party of Nepal (Maoists) that some positivity emerged. Unfortunately, even after trials of fighting for the rights and equality of the Nepalis, and before the movement could reach its final destination, the Maoists joined the political mainstream. In the second half of the twentieth century, Nepal, after witnessing the introduction of a parliamentary democracy the policy of the government does not change the situation. The democratic upheavals led by the Maoists and other social activists have indeed changed by providing stability and value for the people and the nation. Even though, there are still imbalanced and unmaintained regions and people who still are away from development.

Migration can be said to be another change that affected the lives of Nepalis

enormously. As the nation has failed to provide the citizens' basic needs, migration has taken place. Thapa's characters are in a way the representation of Nepalis who are forced to leave their nation due to many obstacles within their nation. Bandita Sijapati and Amrita Limbu denote how foreign labour migration has become a part of Nepali daily life and write:

It has also become a source of lucrative business for those involved in sending workers abroad...Nepal's foreign labour migration is part of the transnational movement of people that has become a prominent feature of today's modern world. International migration has been made possible by increased globalisation which has brought about greater flexibility in state policies, and facilitated by better communication and transportation (Sijapati 1).

Economic migration plays a significant role in the building of Nepal, as a nation, as well as the economic stability of the Nepalis. Every Nepali household in Nepal has at least one member who has migrated to another nation or other region. In this direction, Nepalis from around the world began to evolve new cultural traits which are a mixture of two worlds by bringing stability and development in various spheres. Thapa, in *Mustang Bhot in Fragments*, writes migration is "the only lucrative option left, had become more of a necessity than a choice" (Thapa 77). Changes leading to development or modernity can be either contradictory or conflicting experiences. There can be both positive experiences relating to the spirit of freedom and development and even an experience relating to cultural anguish. Development can be equated with economic development, i.e., enhancement of the economic well-being of individuals, and households, access to primary education, and access to primary health care. On negative aspects, changes in living style, loss of cultural values and even identity loss may cause serious issues. Changes taking place both at the level of social institutions, organisations, and social groups and at the level of culture demand equal attention. Thapa places the people and the culture of Nepalis in a phase of transition. Despite numerous crises and struggles in the characters' lives, their outlook is changed and modified accordingly. As modernity itself, is invariably related to freedom, a change in one's views and ideas can also

occur; similarly, culture is also changeable. This aspect of variability makes culture distinct from one society to another, from one polity to another, and from one generation to the next. People and culture therefore draw the role of flexibility as such; no culture is static. In *The Lives We Have Lost: Essays and Opinions on Nepal* (2011), Thapa writes, “Nepalis today are embedded in the world; and the world is embedded in Nepal. So Nepal has changed. It has even, at great cost, made some progress. But it is difficult to discern how much of this progress is fleeting and how much will last, at least for a while” (Thapa 11). Homi Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* writes that the notion that any culture or identity is pure or essential is disputable. As such, one must be aware of the dangers of fixity and fetishism of identities since “all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity” (211). Identity is established with a series of differences that have become socially recognised. If they did not co-exist as differences, they would not exist in their distinctness and solidity. Fixed identities are likely insensitive to changes and therefore confined to one place. However, this does not mean that Nepalis now have a completely different culture. Instead, to understand the culture of the Nepalis, one must avoid looking in terms of opposites and instead think in terms of hybridity. Herskovits writes, “Culture, being learned, can be relearned...culture is stable and yet, at the same time, is in continuous change” (Herskovits 627). Society as a whole is to be understood not by just one mode of production but by an articulation of several. Thapa has thus tried to situate the lives of her characters with those of the Nepalis who have been affected by the process of changes that come in their lives.

Thapa has demonstrated a picture of a war-torn Nepal whose innocent people are caught in the crossfire. She portrayed sensitively how incidents of human rights violations occur on an unequal level and affect the lives of the common people. She challenges various platforms of the nations, even if it is regarding the historical account of the domination by the kings, the insurgency that shocked the nation, or economic migration. She constantly explores and responds to the issues of migration and collapse in cultures and human relationships. The kind of words and satire she puts in her works are against those in power, who had done wrong and are still in the process of doing so. Eventually, her main concern and sympathies are towards the

unheard and suppressed voices. By all accounts, Thapa can be said to be an outstanding writer, especially in her techniques to accommodate history in her writings, which are often neglected in mainstream accounts. Her treatment of history in subverting the very notion of facts is the most prominent feature of her writings. In the evolution of contemporary Nepali writing in English, she not only writes about facts but also speaks with knowledge and insight about Nepal and draws an accurate picture of Nepal and Nepali culture, which indicates the increasing awareness among the diverse ethnic groups of Nepal.

Thapa's contributions to Nepal and to the Nepali literary world are immense. In a very significant way, Thapa has deconstructed the experiences of diasporic communities by illustrating the concept of the "third space." As such, living between cultures, Nepalis in a foreign land negotiate, blend and reimagine their cultural identities. It is the in-between space that carries the burden and meaning of culture and this is what makes the notion of hybridity so important. Though complex and contested, hybridity theory remains a vital lens for comprehending our interconnected world. Her critical approach to figures of authority and her cynical view of the law and order of Nepal through her questioning and projecting demand attention and seek amendments for a peaceful coexistence in a multi-cultural and pluralistic society. She has thus given expression to issues and problems of humanity in a very significant way. In this light, her works underscore enduring values and contemporary Nepali realities, which have thus given her fame and respect throughout the globe.

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Manjushree Thapa's works articulate conflicts by exposing the causes and effects the age-old Hindu elites put upon Nepali society. This chapter investigates the intricate effects of the historical domination and oppression of the rulers by employing a theoretical framework on post-colonial theory, feminism and Marxism. It demonstrates how Nepalis have been facing cultural dislocation not only outside Nepal but also how it started within the nation. It highlights the co-existing realities and affinities of Nepal and India, which outlines the demographic makeup of Nepal.

Thapa's stories can be considered 'realist fiction' as they sketch the lived experiences of the Nepalis globally. This chapter endeavours to resurrect contemporary Nepal and Nepalis' problems by invoking class or caste distinction, abuse of power, subjugation of women, corruption, and alienation. It engages in a comprehensive analysis of the primary text *Mustang Bhot in Fragments*, *All of Us in Our Own Lives*, and *The Tutor of History*, and from the collection of stories, *Tilled Earth: Stories*. Through different stories, the research delves into the dynamics of Nepalis' complex and diverse culture and how they survive within a web of differences. Thapa has highlighted culture as a description of a particular way of life that expresses certain meanings and values of Nepali society.

Thapa observes and brings out the issues of individual and collective identities of the Nepali community, who adhere to different beliefs and ideologies. Prakash Upadhyay in "Ethnicity, Stereotypes and Ethnic Movements in Nepal" writes:

The size of various ethnic/caste groups in the total population was hardly known before 1990 despite Nepal being a multiethnic, multilingual, and multicultural country. The eleventh census of 2011, for the first time, identified more than 125 ethnic/caste groups and more than 123 languages in multiethnic Nepal (65).

What defines Nepali society is precisely the culture in which religion, language, custom, tradition and food have been the foundations and medium that holds them to express their identity. Culture covers significant aspects of life and the circumstances determining people's lives. In *Cultures of the World: Nepal*, Jon Burbank attempts to

portray the different aspects of Nepal in all its geographical splendour, ethnic diversity and rich cultural heritage and writes:

If people know about Nepal at all, they know it as the home of Mount Everest...but they are not the whole story...Living on Nepal's mountain sides and in its narrow valleys are dozens of different ethnic groups, speaking different languages, worshipping different gods, and living in different cultures...Somehow, all these different groups have lived together in peace...(3).

Culture, therefore, “is an important explanatory concept to understand and study a society. It has been explained and interpreted in a variety of ways and from different theoretical perspectives” (Farooqui 273). To understand people and their society, one must learn their culture in terms of knowledge, beliefs, morals, art, law and custom. Nepalis do have their set of ideas, norms and traditions. Such embodiment of those values and ideologies of the Nepalis is in a process of change. Thus, the cultural embodiments start to take different moulds and the dislocation of culture can be seen in various aspects. For decades, different ethnicities lived in harmony despite their differences. Based on shared ancestry, cultural traditions, customs and lifestyles, they display the ethnic strength of Nepal. The identity of Nepali ethnic groups in the past was always their rich cultural heritage and their ethnicities, which made them different from one another. Despite their differences, they intermingle with one another in every aspect of life. Consciousness of ethnic identity was inadequate in the pre-colonial period in Nepal. Poverty, corruption and inequality have thus resulted in several revival movements and violent protests in the post-colonial period in Nepal. Thapa's *Tilled Earth: Stories* distinctly characterises the centrality of culture within Nepali society. The different stories of Nepalis aptly portray the perpetual struggles of people living in a third-world nation, yielding deep-rooted insights into their collective experiences and resonating with diverse coexisting realities within Nepal and other nations. Culture, therefore, is a “distinctly human means of adapting to circumstances and transmitting this coping skill and knowledge to subsequent generations” (Moran 6).

The term ‘Cultural Dislocation,’ means a change or shift of order or ways of life within a society in different aspects. Such changes in the lives of the Nepalis are due to the result of dominant law and order, poverty, unsettling wars, and illiteracy. The force towards cultural change comes from within in the form of class or caste hierarchy, abuse of power, and unsettling wars. They affect the inquisitiveness of the Nepalis, leading to a dislocated identity, which leads to a dislocated culture. Poverty, as well as the geographical conditions of the nation in different regions are the main reasons for backwardness. “Nepal’s geography, its lack of almost any natural resources and its high population growth rate make improving its economic situation very difficult” (Burbank 31). An imbalance in the distribution of power and administration fails to enhance the formation of a peaceful nation. It was only after “the coronation of King Mahendra in 1955 it opened up to the world. Roads, schools and hospitals were built, Nepal became a member of the United Nations, and foreign aid began to flow in, followed by the first tourists” (Hutt 5). Beginning from the rule of the kings till the revolutionary movements led by the Maoists and other social activists, Nepal has evolved in various spheres. The path to democracy and the progress of the nation in various spheres have been complicated and unorganised. The Rana rulers, the Shah rulers, and other rulers remained dominant in the building of Nepal’s law and order. Throughout history, the conflict between the rulers and people can be seen as a clash between the aspirations of democracy and greed for unlimited power. The Maoists, therefore, raised indigenous questions to address ethnic oppression and class or caste hierarchy. “Maoists Peoples’ War’s firm commitment towards heterogenous identity of the Nepali nation, therefore remained the most significant contribution of the movement to the Nepalese democracy” writes Mollica Dastider (86). Domination and power led by the so-called Hindu elite in the past and present have caused various issues. Such propositions of authority engendered Karl Marx’s proposition. Benoit Cailmail in *The Fall of Hindu Monarchy: Maoists in Power in Nepal* writes:

Prithvi Narayan Shah, founder of the kingdom of Nepal in 1768, asserted in his *Dibya Upadesh* that the kingdom was a garden of four varna and 36 jat, which were all under the authority of the ruler of Gorkha. In so doing, he

underlined the plurality of Nepalese society while simultaneously establishing the supremacy of the higher castes over the country's minorities (6).

Power has always been the first cause of cultural and social dislocation of Nepalis. It has been one of the root causes which starts from the pre-colonial period when the Hindu elite ruled over the nation. The history of Nepal is, therefore, incomplete without the rulers who ruled the nation for generations. In the introduction of *The History of Nepal*, John Whelpton writes:

Nepal as a state emerged in its present form only in the late eighteenth century when the small hill kingdom of Gorkha, some fifty miles west of Kathmandu, brought much of the Himalayan foothills and an adjoining strip of the North Indian plain under its control, and the kingdom's Shah dynasty moved its court to the Kathmandu Valley (1).

The rulers of Nepal have modified Nepali ethnic identity, "so that they could deal with it in terms of a classical Hindu framework, but for many sections of the population, in particular hill communities speaking Tibeto-Burman languages, their precise position within the hierarchy was of little importance" (Hutt 4). Despite an ongoing constitutional process in a democratic nation, the role of power and authority by the traditional Hindu elite still prevails. In the year 2008, the monarchy was abolished, yet many Nepalis and their age-old traditions and culture remain attached according to the royal ideologies. Tracing back to the traditional Nepali society, the position of the monarch was legitimised by his status as a reincarnation of the Hindu God, 'Vishnu,' thus, the nation sees how monarchic power gradually became an ideal god. "The identity of Nepal as a Hindu kingdom was reinforced greatly by its rulers during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, glossing over the country's immense ethnic and linguistic diversities, and later government suppressed the development of local cultural identity" (Hutt 4). Being a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-lingual country, Nepal has a history of ethnic discrimination that has profound effects on the society. Richard Burghart in *The Journal of Asian Studies* gives a brief account of the concept of how the nation,

Nepal was formed and writes, “...there are many different ethnic groups in Nepal, each with its own customs, language, and homeland. At the turn of the nineteenth century each of these groups was thought of as a country, and in 1854 as a species; now they are all registered in the census as language groups” (121).

As an important social criticism, in favour of the backward class of the society, Thapa has exposed the process by which the Hindu elites bring their dominating power to the society. Based on the idea that ‘power’ tends to accumulate at the top of an organisation or institution, theories of domination seek to clarify what it is to be vulnerable, defenceless and suppressed against unrestrained power. One of the dark realities of the traditional Nepali social system is the insertion of the caste system within the society, which was borrowed from the classical Hindu model. The caste system in both India and Nepal divides people into social classes based on four varnas, namely Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. Both countries follow a system of social classification where the society is divided between the higher class, middle class and lower class. Arranging in order from the top hierarchy towards the lower level, the different classes have different forms of occupations that suit their title and status as implemented by the custom. In the case of Nepal, the caste system is more complex than India’s because of its multi-ethnic makeup, varied cultures and language. The social hierarchy has brought vehement protests on various issues of ethnic identity and protest. Marx’s approach and his emphasis on class conflict and social change were powerful perspectives. From a Marxist perspective, the change within Nepali society evokes a significant ingredient of the colonial powers’ exploitation. Thapa’s assertion of the class struggle critically addresses Nepal’s failed development paradigm. Based on Thapa’s reflection on Nepali society about Nepal’s unending war between the elite and the citizens, in *The Lives We Have Lost: Essays and Opinions on Nepal*, she writes, “Nothing in Nepal, particularly now, is ‘just politics.’ Nepal is in the throes of a revolution-not, I would argue, a Maoist revolution, but a democratic revolution, one that has been underway...” (83). The system of class or caste distinction is not new in Nepal but an age-old system that has become a way of life in Nepali society. They are severe forms of human rights violation and are bound by strict rules such as who they can touch, where they can

go, who they can marry and also which jobs they can do. It is a complex system that is defined by many elements such as rights, ethnicity, occupation, power and financial status. The class distinction and other inequalities that are seen in Thapa's works are the realities of Nepal, which Karl Marx's critical theory represents about human societies. In Marxist methodology, a method of economic and sophisticated enquiry known as historical materialism is used to analyse and criticise the development of capitalism and the role of class struggle in systematic economic change. The Marxist perspective brings to the forefront the class conflict between 'the bourgeoisie' and 'the proletariat' or the 'Other.' Hence, the notion of 'Other' can be linked with the low-caste ethnic groups of the Nepalis. Jon Burbank in *Cultures of the World: Nepal* writes:

At the lower end of the Hindu hierarchy are the occupational castes. People of these castes take their names from traditional jobs. Some examples are Kami (blacksmiths), Damai (tailors and musicians) and Sarki (cobblers)...They are traditionally looked down on by the rest of Nepalese society and have to endure discrimination all their lives...(40).

To a great extent, the class or caste system in Nepal has had a serious effect on the growth of Nepali society. They have adapted their ways of life to such an order that it has become a custom. The so-called elite "inherited a highly feudal and hierarchical social order" (Upreti 15). Harsha Bahadur Khadka in *The Tutor of History* offers a description of Marxism navigating the class struggle between the 'bourgeoisie' and the 'proletariat' representing the Rawal boy as the 'proletariat' and Sani as the 'bourgeoisie.' The story echoes the concept of critiquing 'the other' while destabilising the space given by the Hindu elite of Nepal. Harsha Bahadur represents a low self-esteem character who is afraid of expressing his feelings for a girl named Sani, who is from a high caste. One of his cousins, a Maoist, tries to explain to him how the Nepali society is all about class and caste system and wants him to forget Sani: "Bourgeois girls want to marry bourgeois boys" (Thapa 101). Thapa is attentive to the marginalised ethnic group, authentically capturing their issues within the society. They are individuals who have no right to vote of their choice and must follow according to their superiors' choice. "“No question of free choice here,” one

man from a settlement of Damai tailors said with a smile. ‘We’ll vote as our landlord tells us to’” (Thapa 268). The book reveals certain aspects of Nepali customs, beliefs and traditions that had been implemented upon the Nepalis in the name of class hierarchy. As such, inter-caste or inter-ethnic marriage or relationships were seen as a taboo and are still relevant in some parts of Nepal that follow such rules. *Nepali Cultural Orientation* (2009) provides the in-depth nature of Nepali culture and writes about how marriages in Nepal are regarded as sacred and divine. It says, “...they are carefully planned to take place between members of the same ethnic group and caste. If members of different castes marry, both the husband and wife may be disowned by their respective families, with no future social contact allowed between them” (99). The authoritative stance and rules of the age-old rulers have caused the cultural dislocation of Nepalis.

In a world of rapidly changing political, cultural and economic scenarios, religion occupies the centre stage in bringing and understanding the Nepali culture. In Nepal, religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and other animist traditions are followed by the Nepalis. Among them, Hinduism is the most widely followed religion in Nepal. The majority of the people living in Nepal are either Hindu or Buddhist, while they have co-existed in harmony. As religion has been one of the foundations of the traditional Nepali society, it has a deep impact even in contemporary times. On the contrary, as cultural changes took place, religion, especially Hinduism was given importance rather than the religious norms and practices of other ethnic groups of the society. “Nepal is a very hierarchical society, largely influenced by the caste system which originated from Nepal’s dominant religion, Hinduism, and further institutionalized by the early Malla kings of Nepal” (Burbank 37). Hinduism slowly overpowered the nation and was widely announced to be a Hindu nation until 2008. History is the formation of culture, which is the identity of a community. Likewise, the historical past of Nepal reflects who the Nepalis are now in contemporary times. By equating history with fiction, Thapa tries to retrieve history and writes back as a means of resistance. Thapa’s *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy* gave out the contradictory situation of the society in which the country is still in conflict with its law and order. She evokes an

ironical remark about Nepal's law and its fulfilment as she watches one of the former ruler's statues outside the palace and writes, "Dalits, women, the landless, bonded labourers and ethnic nationalities gathered here regularly, demanding the liberty and equality that they thought they had won in 1990, but that, as it turned out, they had not" (145). Historically, Nepalis have endured discrimination oppressively and the system itself has generated divisions between the people and the royals in terms of caste, class, and even occupation. Thapa's observation resonates with Marx's conceptual interest in the proletariat's poverty and suffering. The social structures of Nepal from the very beginning of the rule of the monarch were displaced in an oppressive way. Dr Bimala Shrestha, in *Social Life in Nepal (1885-1950)*, portrayed one of the rulers of Nepal, Jayasthiti Malla, and writes:

He initiated reforms in the social structure by introducing caste system on the basis of their occupation...This factor was also one of the causes of the division of his kingdom, which later on, was to lead to fatal conflicts among the different social classes comprising sixty-four occupational groups (1 and 2).

In India, one of the backward castes, 'Dalits' have the same social stigma, which makes them vulnerable within their land. Amit Ahuja in *Mobilizing the Marginalized: Ethnic Parties Without Ethnic Movements* opened up and projected inquiry about caste and politics in India. He writes:

Dalits, as one of the most marginalised groups in India, generally lag behind non-Dalits across key indicators of human well-being. These gaps between Dalits and non-Dalits reveal Dalits' relative lack of economic opportunity and economic freedom, disadvantages that in turn constitute more of an obstruction for Dalits than other caste groups in terms of the ability to develop diverse interests and discover possibilities for adopting new social identities (179).

In both countries, society marginalises people and often fails them. Even though both nations outlawed the practice of untouchability and social disparities, it is widely practised in the private as well as public domain. As both nations share a

connection to Hinduism and Buddhism, they have close socio-cultural and religious ties. Mary M. Anderson, in *The Festivals of Nepal*, writes, “For there is no natural barrier between Nepal and India, and whatever happens in India has always been reflected in Nepal” (22). By focusing on Marxist theory of power, those who own the means of production have power, while the working class has little or no power. An important aspect of Thapa’s ideas as expressed in her literary works reveals how much Nepal and its people are dislocated under the suppression of power. As the elite possess ‘authoritative power,’ inequalities, status and privileges widely differ among the Nepalis. The concept encapsulates Marx’s perception of class struggle, characterised by a ceaseless clash between socio-economic classes. Nepalis have undergone historical and political trauma of untold suffering and marginalisation, registering various voices that need to be heard and understood in the context of Nepal’s multicultural notion. The neglect and absence of equality among the Nepali citizens caused a feeling of insecurity and displacement in their land that had taken root in the minds of the Nepalis. Discontented with the situation, Thapa’s fiction has created a clash between different socio-political situations, where the stories and the characters portrayed the Nepali society and Nepalis who are affected by various issues resulting in the dislocation of culture.

In the process of change, one of the components of culture that binds the Nepalis together is language. It is the means of projecting the identity of a community. Writers and researchers have dealt with the factors behind the nation having numerous languages and dialects, which according to them are due to “its location at the convergence area of different linguistic groups from diverse sources...Another factor is the diversity and ruggedness of topography that confine languages into discrete areas as well as induce regional variation into dialects” (Gurung 71). Every ethnic group have their own language which differs from one another. When dealing with the formation and making a mandatory official language in Nepal, it has been changed and shifted throughout history by different governmental or political reasons. Language, which is a medium to express one’s identity has become a tool to control people’s identities. Michael James Hutt in *Nepali: A National Language and its Literature* writes:

Since the 17th. Century, Nepali has been the language of the majority of those Nepalese who can loosely be termed the “middle-hill peoples” of western and central Nepal. Typically, it was the mother-tongue of the predominantly Hindu population of this region...An important factor is the spread of Nepali as lingua-franca is the policy of His Majesty’s Government, which promotes Nepali as its rastra-bhasa, or national language (22 and 23).

Despite being a multi-lingual nation, Hindu elites have given one language importance over other languages. ‘Nepali’ becomes the official language of Nepal, which is “derived from Khasa-Kura language of Khasa, with transitional apparitions as Parbate and Gorkhali. It has since established itself as the Khas-Kura or the principal speech of Nepal” (Gurung 72). It is spoken by Nepalis from Nepal and from different nations, who are of Nepali descent. Premankur Biswas, in an article, writes, “...in 1961, Nepali was recognized as an official language of West Bengal, and in 1992, Nepali was recognized as one of the official Languages of India under the VIIIth Schedule of the Indian Constitution” (Biswas). As ‘Nepali’ became the official language, the different ethnic groups’ way of communicating modes and scripts gradually lost their authenticity. As such, displacement occurs when language is not given importance. Likewise, the political history and formation of the nation-state Nepal is not a well-documented event, especially in a language that the majority can understand. Those which are documented and framed history are destroyed with time, while those which are left are written by the so-called Hindu elite, who portray stories within their perspectives and experiences. In the book, *Nepali Cultural Orientation* (2009), it says:

The body of knowledge about Nepal’s history is limited due to a number of factors. As late as 1951, the country was a closed kingdom, cut off from communication and isolated from outside influence. Existing written records, dating approximately 5th. century B.C.E, concentrate on the area of the Kathmandu Valley...Further, the historical records have been written from the narrow viewpoint of the upper caste (13).

The politics of becoming superior over others has been one of the social means of the

elites of Nepal, who even dominate and rule over the use of particular language and diction. Language is therefore the means that binds the Nepalis as well as the means that generates disparities.

Another component of culture that binds Nepalis together is food, which reflects the cultural background of the people and what they were in the past. Every culture has their way of food habits according to the availability in their place. People in Nepal consume food depending on their geographical conditions and lifestyle. Gyanu's story in *All of Us in Our Own Lives* portrays migrants who are homesick in a new environment where food reminds them of home. The love for Nepali food in a foreign land has played as nostalgia for migrant workers like him. Being a chef in Dubai at the Indian Hotel, whenever Gyanu had time, he "made meals flavoured with fenugreek and mustard, turmeric and fried chives, the hard rock and soil of his childhood in Nepal"(4). Food has occupied a high place in Nepali culture; whether they are away from their homeland or have migrated to other nations, it is always their rich cuisine that has represented who Nepalis are. Although home has always been a place of disappointment for migrant workers and immigrants from third-world nations, it has been related to consciousness where tradition, culture, food and religion play an important role. As such, Thapa's characters are people who show deep-rooted relations that are beyond any definition. The notion of 'self' in some way or the other is connected to the discourse of 'home.' The feeling of in-betweenness is never a complete project. It is an impossible task to denounce roots completely even if they get a place in a higher class or have a better dream. The vision of the homeland always makes them nostalgic and emotional. Thapa's dramatisation of immigrants and migrant workers' tensions, in-betweenness and nostalgia attempts to construct a hybrid identity. Such identity represents potential sites of resistance to modernity. By creating migrant workers and immigrants like Gyanu and Prema in her works, Thapa demonstrates the impossibility of identifying a true, authentic Nepali identity. Instead, she shows contemporary citizens who create his or her identity by embracing cultural multiplicity and diversity. Nevertheless, it is a culture that binds the Nepalis in different regions and places. Jamil Farooqui writes, "...culture refers to all those

elements, subjective and objective, spiritual and material, that a human adopts and uses to lead a dignified life on earth” (Farooqui 273). Diasporic literature has superseded the conventional wisdom of evoking feelings of love, sympathy, nature, or social evils over issues of nationality and ethnic identity in literary works. The roles of Nepali diasporic theorists have been very strong in bringing about consciousness of the identity and culture of Nepal and its people. Patil (2004) argues that all diasporic literature inherently reflects a duality: a pull towards both the alien (the new land) and the indigenous (the homeland). This inevitably leads to constant cultural comparisons and a recurring tension between “us” and “them,” the land of immigration and the mother country. Thapa therefore tries to unmask and question the socio-political turmoil that had neglected the nation for a very long time. Contemporary Nepal is now a democratic nation but injustices, corruption and poverty have been a series of conflicts disrupting the normal life of the people till now. *The Lives We Have Lost: Essays and Opinions on Nepal* made a point about contemporary Nepal that it “is living with the result: a political impasse that offers no straightforward resolution” (Thapa 204).

Nepal, which was established as a Hindu kingdom divides the indigenous population, who had their forms of ideologies. The social hierarchy and suppression within the nation started when the “majority of the indigenous population (Magars, Gurungs, Limbus, Rais, etc.), whose tribal structures and occasional small chiefdoms had been only partly destroyed by the establishment of these Hindu Kingdoms” (Seddon 25). The attitudes and projections of hierarchy and authority within Nepali society initially engendered Marx’s proposition, i.e., a kind of ruling and oppressed class of a society in which the state is necessarily an instrument of class domination. Apart from that, the monarch, who ruled generations after generations was praised and respected by the people truly. Prem Raman Uprety writes:

First, religion is still a determinant variable that affects the life of a Nepali from birth to death. Second, the monarch is still regarded by a sizeable segment of the Nepali society as an incarnation of God Vishnu and thirdly Nepal is clearly defined as a Hindu state and the king has to be adherent of Aryan culture and Hindu religion (88).

The decisions and orders given to them were accepted without any objections by the majority of the people of Nepal. The monarchy was not just about an economic, military or political process but one that radically affected culture and identity across the nation. During the rule of the monarch, a sense of inferiority and insignificance from the so-called upper caste was instilled in the people of Nepal that had led to a profound loss in every sphere of life. Kusum Shreshtha in “Critical Assessment of the Political Role of the Monarchy” reveals:

Throughout the centuries, monarchy has been the focal point and a vital centre of Nepalese polity. Dynasties have changed, but the institution of monarchy has endured. Monarchy has left its permanent impress on the social structure, legal codes, administrative procedures and the economic set-up of Nepalese society (239).

The growing awareness among contemporary Nepali writers regarding class struggle is not a new issue but, rather, intertwined with the monarch’s power from their reign. It has led many scholars to explore the many relationships about this issue. Such an innovative change in focus has caused development on many levels. Thapa in *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy* outlines how socio-political upheavals and the change of ruler did not do any good for the country and writes, “In the unseemly clutter live the political leaders, intellectuals, social activists and bourgeoisie who have influenced the course of events in Nepal over the last half century...In Nepal, the enlightenment has followed a tortuous path. Sometimes it feels as though it is still on its way here” (Thapa 100). Thapa’s representation of the Nepali reality goes beyond the political headlines that dominate newspapers, magazines and other social sites that delve deep into contemporary society. It helps in understanding the question of the past, the politics and the reality more than most other modes of articulation. The book spans the beginning of the monarchy towards the early democratic movement to contemporary Nepali society, in which Thapa adds a personal voice and gives the readers the experience of the same situations. Insofar as Thapa herself ventured into historical research, one cannot deny that her results were received with considerable criticism, especially by the so-called traditional Hindu elite of Nepal. The book was published only a few days before King Gyanendra Bir

Bikram Shah's royal proclamation on the 1st. February. 2005. Thapa's projection of all the facts and the royal massacre that took place are projected in the book, which is in itself a courageous enterprise in publishing. Rumours about the book's disappearance from various bookshelves in Kathmandu had been a sensational report. Some bookshops claimed that it had been banned by the higher officials of the nation, while some proclaimed it to be in high demand among readers. Thus, the mystery of the book's disappearance during that time is unclear till now.

The system of the age-old monarchies has marked various boundaries in the socio-political arena. "It is strange that the monarchy has an open mind for the socio-economic advancement of the country, but has shown its dislike for broadening the political system to function in a democratic way" (Upreti 194). The domination as a whole is analogous to the subjugation of the colonised by the coloniser mentioned by Homi Bhabha. In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha writes that colonial discourse is "a form of discourse crucial to the binding of a range of differences and discriminations that inform the discursive and political practices of racial and cultural hierarchization" (67). Visible at different levels, the social consciousness of differences and disparity in status among the different ethnicities of Nepal increases because of the hierarchy imposed by the so-called rulers of the nation. Such differentiation caused turmoil and displacement of identity within the nation. Corruption, hierarchy, injustices, the caste system, patriarchy, and various other social evils resonate in *The Tutor of History*. She gives a glimpse of socio-political turmoil and blends it with the people's lives of Khaireni Tar. Most of the people in Khaireni Tar are in the midst of the political election campaign, while the traditional system of hierarchy restrains the people of low caste from participating in it. The turmoil within the community during the election between the multi-party represents Nepali society in every corner of the nation. On the occasion, one of the political parties, from the Janmukti party, gave a speech that highlighted the age-old historical scenario and said, "Originally we were egalitarian, peaceful folks. We had no hierarchies. There were no castes. Our women weren't oppressed by men...we must restore our glorious past" (Thapa 220 and 221). Hierarchy is placed as a significant tool for forcing power in Nepal. The book vividly illustrates the harsh living

conditions of the lower classes of Nepali society, which sheds light on the injustices perpetuated by the ruling class of Nepal. Marx saw classes in relation to property and this relation defined different life situations and opposing latent interests. He highlighted the role of property ownership, whether of land, power or domination. Historically, Marx saw primary social relations, ideology and culture as reflecting property relationships, and in a capitalist society it is always the bourgeoisie who controls and does business with the state. Likewise, the Hindu elites of Nepal are representations of such authority who control and dominate the poor, landless and illiterate. Disparities and unequal treatment have affected the roots of Nepali society. Kalpana Jha in *The Kathmandu Post* writes:

Land has long been monopolised by a handful of self-styled ‘high caste’ elites...Therefore, the Maoist insurgency emerged as a revolution for not just the simple reason of land redistribution, but liberation from debt bondage and freedom from patronage that started with control over land but later pervaded the entire state mechanism (Jha).

Tracing back to the historical facts about agriculture, rural farmers were contracted on a tenancy, as a customary and hereditary basis. Over centuries, the power structure was directly under the elite or landlord, in which the landless or the marginalised groups and women had to go through various humiliations. Prakash Upadhyay in “Ethnicity Stereotypes and Ethnic Movements in Nepal” evokes contemporary Nepal, where disparities are still seen. He writes:

The caste-ridden and priest-ridden Nepali society depicts a highly asymmetrical society in which caste, ethnic, religion and political factors plays a vital role in determining the status of an individual and a group. The unequal allocation of natural resources including farming land in an agricultural country like Nepal demonstrates how undemocratic Nepal is in a real sense (70).

The elites were placed at the top of the religious hierarchy during the king’s rule in Nepal. Harka Gurung in “State and Society in Nepal” writes, “The formulation of Nepalese history and the interpretation of Nepalese culture has been very much the

construct of dominant castes. Thus, Nepalese socio-cultural discussion has remained a monologue with no voices from below” (Gurung 496). The rulers and government of Nepal had deliberately kept the society backwards as it suited their interests. They seem to exist for the so-called elite rather than the people. “Nationalism in Nepal started taking shape only after the 1951 political change” (Upreti 188). The country has passed through critical stages of political transition to established democracy, leading to cultural dislocation. Such dislocation from one’s landforms conflicts and pushes the younger generations towards revolutionary ideologies. The causes of conflicts range from the violent guerrilla warfare led by the Maoists to political instability and human rights violations had added more traumas to the nation. The war was held against the unjust rule led by the monarch and the high-caste Hindu elite, but before the movement reached its final goal, the insurgency ended by signing a peace accord with the government. The social, economic, and cultural life of the Nepalis for decades was fully under the domination of the monarch. Hence, even if the monarchy was abolished in 2008, the country is still ruled by the traditional Hindu elite, who call themselves the privileged caste of the Nepali society. In *Mustang Bhot in Fragments*, Thapa highlighted how caste hierarchy was prevalent even during her childhood and how “inequality structured Nepali reality” (37). One of the inherent problems of a postcolonial society is the impossibility of finding and embodying one true, authentic identity. *The Tutor of History* also situates the postcolonial ethos by giving marginalised and displaced individuals a resounding voice within the grand narratives of mainstream discourse. The difficulties in determining one’s identity within one’s land remain central to the book. Giridhar Adhikari, one of the chairmen of the People’s Party in Khairani Tar, renders a dislocated identity. Once a bank manager, Giridhar “had been dismissed from his position...It wasn’t his fault: there had been civil service reforms, and everyone who’d worked for more than twenty years had lost their jobs regardless of capability, regardless of qualification” (Thapa 27). As he drinks continuously, people gossip about him as a failure, which affects his mental health. “He did not feel he had the courage to venture onto future grounds-ambitions, achievements-all too precarious to support him” (Thapa 28). Apart from that, in the ongoing political scenario, he began to dislike one of the spokesmen of the political party, Nayan Raj Dahal, who stands

for the upcoming post in the election. The fear of losing seats in the election seeped into Giridhar's thoughts. He led his life thinking of being alienated, hated and unwanted by society and becoming the victim of his thoughts. In the end, though both Giridhar and Nayan Raj did not win the election, Nayan Raj led his previous life as an actor in the city, while Giridhar lost hope in his life, politics and everything and stayed inside drinking heavily. Power, status and hierarchy become the failure of Giridhar's life. With all the changes and reforms he dreamt of in his small town, he becomes unfulfilled and finished with his loss of hope. Giridhar represents the existing reality of educated Nepalis who become stagnant in a corrupt nation. Thapa's dilemma in finding appropriately democratic means of representing Nepali society is visualised in the following statement made by Nayan Raj Dahal while making his appeal for votes. He tries to highlight the domination of the so-called elite of the society and says:

In every political party, in every organization, in every government office, in all sectors of society, Chettri-Bahun castes hold power while the ethnic Sherpa, Tamang, Magar, Gurung, Rai, Limbu people remain suppressed in the hills, and other ethnic groups remain oppressed in the southern Tarai plains...With our constitution defining Nepal as a Hindu Kingdom, Buddhists and other religious minorities remain oppressed by the Hindu hegemony (Thapa 220).

The issue of political transformation in a positive and organised system could not be generated for the common man's well-being in Nepal. Under this atmosphere, Nepalis have to adapt themselves through the process of alienation, marginalisation and dislocation, which leads to changes in various spheres. Firstly, changes due to the political upheaval have caused a ten-year-long Maoist insurgency between the political rulers and the Maoists, causing socio-political and economic turmoil. In another case, changes due to natural calamities such as earthquakes, floods, and droughts have caused a huge amount of loss in the economic field. Another major change that led the nation's socio-economic status to grow is globalisation, which leads to economic migration. Such calamities and situations have led the nation in layers of transformations- in both positive and negative ways.

Shedding light on identity formation and the complexities of belonging in a third-world nation, Thapa highlights various tensions and injustices. The impact of socio-political oppression in Nepali society towards minorities and women has brought out conflicts in many spheres. Being treated or alienated as untouchables and low class caused severe psychological effects on them. Those worst affected are women, who frequently become victims of rape, abuse, torture and molestation. The principles of equal respect and the democratic rights of citizens are central to all democratic states, while the people of Nepal are deprived of such status within the nation. The social solidarity the Nepalis once enjoyed has come under stress with differentiations along religious, political, economic and social lines. History therefore plays a vital role in churning out a nation. It is an instrument as well as a crucial element in almost all of the postcolonial and postmodern writings used for dominance and colonisation. To imagine a nation without history would be to imagine history without wars. James Joyce says, with flawless precision that “History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake” (Waugh 354). The history of Nepal plays as a key facet of who contemporary Nepalis are today. Thapa contributes to the history and fiction in *The Tutor of History*, which questions all the prevailing notions of caste, gender and class structure of Nepal. Her characters are entombed between the cultural values and beliefs of their homeland and the unfamiliar circumstances of their present home. The representation of Nepali culture finds another form of expression in the tradition and politics of *The Tutor of History*. The book came out into the public domain while bringing out the late 1990s by featuring the beginnings of some significant moments in Nepal’s history and the constitutional structure. Thapa implies the reconstruction of different ethnicities and their political context and an attempt at reconstructing the image and self-image of the Nepali consciousness. A great deal of historical and political research has been carried out in the story, which enabled the readers to have broader discussions and research on ethnic identities and the formation of the nation. Thapa has created a world, Khaireni Tar, a small town of Nepal in the book, where the socio-political scenarios and the challenges faced by contemporary Nepalis are portrayed. Here, Thapa advocates for inclusivity, attacking the so-called high class of Nepali society and seeking to deconstruct the complex hierarchy. The characters are Nepalis who

struggle for their rights and who are under social suppression in a corrupted society. In the book, a young Maoist told one of his cousins, Harsha Bahadur, about the nation's status and said:

We live in the turbulent transition time from a feudal to a capitalist system. But capitalism creates a bourgeois society that won't give us what we deserve. Parliamentary democracy is just a pawn of the rich, that's why we workers and peasants must reject reform efforts and fight for true revolution we must claim what is rightfully ours (Thapa 102).

This sums up the power dynamics that empower Nepal and its people by creating more chaos in their lives. The issue of displacement and alienation within Nepal built up difficulties, obstacles and failure in the life of the Nepalis. The situation of Khaireni Tar in *The Tutor of History* shows how every political power remained committed to their ideology during the early phase but gradually failed to blend their powers and promises for the people. The opening of the book highlights one of the characters, Rishi Parajuli as a dislocated individual in which he read out the headlines of newspapers “about the ‘pharmacy scandal,’ accusing the Health Minister of taking bribes from foreign pharmaceuticals that sold expired drugs. Another had printed a story about the ‘spinach scandal’, claiming that the Minister of Agriculture helped vegetable cartels to hike the price of spinach” (Thapa 12). As Rishi's identity has been lost in city life, the news gives him more trauma and emotional pressure to survive. The story is not only about Rishis' hardships and sufferings but also about various other characters in the story who experienced the same. Such a fabric of Nepali realities is what Thapa closely examines and portrays within her narratives. Thus, to have a better life and education, Nepalis began to migrate in different directions. Migration has indeed become one of the only options left for people living in a third-world nation. Among the selected stories from Thapa's *Tilled Earth: Stories* (2007), “Friends,” “The Eldest Son Thinks of Home,” “Tilled Earth,” and “The European Fling,” they also highlights Nepalis who experience a sense of dislocations, nostalgia, and ambivalence in a diaspora. The characters, namely Kamal Malla in “Friends,” the unnamed protagonists in both “The Eldest Son Thinks of Home,” and “Tilled Earth,” and Sharada in “The European

Fing” serve as examples of individuals who experienced cultural dislocations in different nations. The unnamed protagonist in “Tilled Earth” reflects each of their experiences and nostalgia in a foreign land:

Some days she feels a sharp, undirected longing for everything she sees, even asphalt damp with sleet, reflecting winter clouds. These longings come suddenly, and give way to the throb of nostalgia for the grey of early morning fog, the bone-chill of her childhood winters. Nostalgia soon passes into pain as she thinks about her lover (Thapa176).

Despite all the difficulties and obstacles, their experiences demonstrate how important it is for contemporary Nepalis to migrate to other nations.

From time immemorial, the social hierarchy and patriarchal tradition imposed by the so-called high caste, ‘Chhetri’ and ‘Bahun,’ acted as the supreme authority of Nepali society. Thapa relates the plight of Nepali women who are still judged and dominated in the present day in the name of traditions and rituals. *The Tutor of History* gives out men’s problems in coping with politics and reflects the needs and rights men try to achieve and fight for in the name of politics and rights. Thapa has created mostly male characters who are involved in politics in the rural region of Nepal. As traditional Nepali society, dominated by the so-called Hindu elite, was patriarchal, women were left behind and their presence in men’s lives only was to support them when they needed help. It shows that the characters of men in the story represent the old Nepali traditional culture, where women were dominated by men in every aspect of life. On the other hand, Thapa portrays Nepali women’s joy, pain and suffering which represent the internal sufferings of contemporary Nepali women in a patriarchal society. A character named Binita portrays the life of a widow in rural Nepal. Her day-to-day life depicts the lives of women who are single in a male-dominated society. Regarding societal politics, the tradition of the male being the head in every aspect facilitates the continual redefinition of roles and statuses. After her husband’s death, Binita opened a tea shop where she met and found time to socialise and regain her strength to cope with the world. To gain respect and get equal status, Binita “had maintained reserve with strangers and townspeople

alike...she tried to ward off critical voices by subduing herself” (Thapa 15). Thapa has created Binita in a way where widows, unlike circumstances in the past, try to come out of societal judgements and patriarchal dominations. As a widow, she struggles and moulds her life in such a way that she stands up to defeat the judgemental society that considers her weak, cheap, or even a disgrace to society. Binita’s life echoes the concept of the problematisation of the space and status imposed by the so-called Hindu traditions towards Nepali women. From a stereotypical and conventional Hindu elite’s perspective, being a single woman with a child and no man in the house is the lowest status a woman can have. “The more conservative Chettri-Bahun families of the town shunned her for her unseemly decision to continue living alone, with only her little daughter for company” (Thapa 26). Binita’s motifs and willpower illustrate how women in contemporary Nepal stand for their rights. The story of Binita is vital to Thapa’s enactment of the strategies of survival within the patriarchal society. Marxist feminists’ observations on the issue of patriarchy within Nepali society analyse how women are exploited as individual owners of private property or through capitalism. Here, the capitalist denotes the traditional Hindu elite and the law and order imposed on the Nepali women in the society. Michele Barrett in “Capitalism and Women’s Liberation” writes:

For if women’s oppression is entrenched in the structure of capitalism then the struggle for women’s liberation and the struggle for socialism cannot wholly be disengaged. Just as we cannot conceive of women’s liberation under the oppression of capitalism so we cannot conceive of a socialism whose principles of equality, freedom and dignity are vitiated by the familiar iniquities of gender (Barrett 258 and 259).

In contemporary Nepal, women are still striving to gain respect and rights. Their position within their household has affected their self-consciousness. The alienation and oppression of women in Nepal somehow resonate with Margaret Atwood’s female prisoners from her controversial feminist dystopian novel, *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1984). They are both tortured and marginalised under the guise of power, religion and tradition. Atwood asserts that women are oppressed by two authorities,

such as the power of tradition and that of physical and cultural colonisation. Thus it can be viewed as a kind of double colonisation. Similarly, women in Nepal are oppressed by both aspects of colonisation. Michel Foucault challenges the idea that power is wielded by people or groups by way of episodic or sovereign acts of domination or coercion, seeing it instead as dispersed and pervasive. In *The History of Sexuality* (1976), he articulates the complex and formidable paradoxical relationship between sexuality and power. Here, he argues how power dictates its law to sex:

To deal with sex, power employs nothing more than a law of prohibition. Its objective: that sex renounce itself. Its instrument: the threat of a punishment that is nothing other than the suppression of sex...Power constrains sex only through a taboo that plays on the alternative between two non-existences (96).

Women in both Nepal and Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* are oppressed, silenced, marginalised and victimised through history, culture and religion. In this context, the socio-cultural integrity of Nepal and its people has been complex and subsided, leading to cultural dislocation. Examining both the past and the present situation, which is linked to the causes and impacts of cultural dislocation, Thapa has contributed towards a full understanding of the Nepalis' dilemma and alienation.

Thapa applied a theoretical framework based on trauma, mourning, identity, and recognition. In *Seasons of Flight* (2010), she presents an expressive form of the lives of Nepalis who felt alienated and confused in their lives. The story goes back and forth between the two nations, Nepal and America, where Prema tries to adjust to both lands. While depicting immigrant characters like Prema, Thapa explores the theme of the dislocation of culture that happens in both countries. For Prema, life in Nepal depicts the dark socio-political conflicts where insurgency took place now and then while leaving the citizens displaced. The country was in chaos because of a massive earthquake, drought and other natural calamities that have brought the nation's economy backwards. Therefore, good opportunities and stability in Nepal seem to be far at hand. Prema, after winning the lottery, went to pursue her future in

a foreign land to find more stability where people are more open-minded, free and independent than in Nepal. One of the minor characters, named Kanchha, who worked in his father's cybercafe, disappeared during the outbreak of Nepal's civil war. From the unfortunate story of Kanchha, Thapa has portrayed many untold sufferings, forced displacement, arbitrary searches, captures and incidents of torture that happened during the insurgency in Nepal. Even after migrating to a foreign country, Prema still hears news about the long Maoist insurgency in Nepal, which was accompanied by violence and trauma. Whenever she wrote letters or sent emails to her former boyfriend, Rajan, back in Nepal, she used to ask about Kanchha's whereabouts. While Rajan used to write back and say, "None of the political parties cares about anything but power. And Nepal has not signed the necessary charters to try war crimes internationally. But we are trying to find a way, And who knows? The boy may still be alive somewhere" (Thapa 214). Prema's memories of Nepal are only about the miseries and sufferings she had faced and heard while staying in Nepal. Thapa also portrays Prema's sister Bijaya, who voluntarily joined the Maoists during the insurgency. She represents the youths of Nepal, who prefer to join the war rather than suffer at home being dominated by the rule of an unjust government. Thousands of Nepalis especially youths were involved in the long insurgency. Some were forced or abducted, while some voluntarily joined the revolutionary movement. At some point, Prema felt the privilege of having come to a foreign land far away from her poverty-stricken land, where there is no war, no poverty and no fear. Back in her mind, she always blamed herself for leaving behind her sister in Nepal. Nepal has witnessed a series of turmoil and outbreaks of violence, which has disrupted the lives of the people by rendering many homeless, destitute and displaced. By adding the Maoist insurgency into the backdrop of the story, Thapa has incorporated an insight into the past realities in the form of a narrative.

Displacement or dislocation of one's identity makes people migrate to other nations in Nepal and thus, migration has played a significant role in the lives of the Nepalis. It has indeed become a culture and a way of Nepali life. Madan Gopal Shrestha, in one of his articles, "Role of Friends of Sankhu on Safe Migration and Prevention of Human Trafficking," writes:

Nepal has opened up 107 countries for foreign labor employment as of December 2009 and nearly 1.43 million Nepalese workers are reported to be involved in foreign employment in many different countries after getting permission from Department of Foreign Employment, the Government of Nepal...This has made foreign labor migration as an important source of income for the country (Shrestha 101).

From the very beginning, Nepal remained isolated from the outside world. “Nepal was the mysterious forbidden land where no outsider could enter without permission. Only Tibetan, Chinese and Indian pilgrims and traders entered the country. After World War II, the picture began to change” (Shreshtha 1). Thapa’s *Mustang Bhot in Fragments* brings out such projections while reflecting that Nepal in the nineties was still unknown to many. When Thapa visited the region with Bikas, one of her friends and an engineer, to check on electrical power plants in the region, some people were angry and confused because of their presence in their isolated region. Being neglected and given false promises by the government and their countrymen, all they can do is rage upon them. ““We don’t want your electricity,” one old man yelled, and his face turned purple with anger. “We lived our whole lives without it and we don’t need it now”” (Thapa 93). There are still numerous regions, districts and sub-districts in Nepal that are in underdeveloped conditions. The difference between the lifestyle of Thapa and that of the Mustang natives was vastly different then. It is the social division that gives a deep and extended meaning to Karl Marx’s class struggle. For Marx, history is the process of an agonistic or warlike process- in which his view of history is that it is a struggle in which different classes compete. In *The Communist Manifesto*, it is stated that:

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guildmaster and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, that each time ended, either in the revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes (Marx 1).

To Marx, history does not move on from the past to the present smoothly, but it is a history of struggle for each class for their interest. In the process of struggle, some win and some lose, but overall the history of this world is the history of this class struggle. Thapa had thus figured out the presence of the class hierarchy that was alive in Nepal for a very long period and pointed out by saying that she too “had heatedly chosen sides, passed judgement, pitted one group against the other in my mind. For all my modernity, I hadn’t been able to rise above the fragmented social system” (Thapa 99). After coming back from Mustang, Thapa began to question herself. “I could explain the stunning beauty of the land and the spirituality of the old culture, but I couldn’t explain the enforced poverty, the dissolution of self-governance, the anger and mistrust that snagged a modest development project. I couldn’t explain how carelessly Kathmandu treated Mustang” (Thapa 115). The book plays an important role in analysing the concept of class struggle that has been present in Nepali society for decades. Nepal’s socio-political issues are not a new topic to the world. Domination and suppression of various ethnic groups have been going on from the past. The complexities of Nepali society and its polity do not end in class distinction and inequalities only. Various other socio-cultural issues have both positive and negative impacts on Nepali sensibilities. For instance, the instability of the economy has been the major factor that leads the country backwards. “The development experience in the world over the last century has shown that economic growth cannot be sustained without taking into consideration the social and political development of vulnerable populations, including greater recognition of minority rights” (Cao 13). Such rights and development of the Nepalis are only attainable if the people are educated and if the age-old superstitious beliefs and class hierarchy are eradicated from the mindset of the people. Likewise, gradual evolutions and abrupt changes have brought changes to their world outlook in various spheres. Firstly, globalisation has made the country familiar with the outside world, and so has the recruitment of soldiers and workers to other nations rapidly begun. Economic migration led by globalisation has indeed caused a huge impact on the culture and lifestyle of the Nepali. Acharya (2002) in “Boundaries Exposed: Coming Out of Isolation” highlights the historical precedent of Nepali youth serving as mercenaries in the British and Indian armies (Gorkhas). This not only introduced Nepalis valour

and courage to the world but also resulted in cultural exchange. A significant outcome was the emergence of a strong desire among rural Nepali youth to seek better economic opportunities abroad and experience the wider world.

As a nation comes in contact with the outside world, changes automatically are adopted by the people and the system of the society. Therefore, the results can lead to advantages as well as disadvantages of acquiring or losing different forms of socio-cultural aspects. Cultural dislocation happens without any warning but occurs due to various reasons and situations that change the lifestyles of people. When culture is dislocated, it means some changes have taken place within the society or in the life of an individual. Such changes may occur because of war, politics, globalisation, and migration as well. “Culture and life ways are assumed to have been largely timeless and unchanging (i.e., ‘traditional’) until Nepal opened its borders to foreigners and started large-scale ‘development’ in 1951” (Mikesell 50). Cultural dislocation of the Nepalis not only occurs after migrating to other nations or hybridising with new cultures but also because of the unequal rights and discrimination caused by the age-old customs and the laws made by the traditional Nepali society within Nepal. It starts from within Nepal, where disparities and injustices start to cause trouble to the people. Hence, it leads to identity crises within one’s nation, which leads to cultural dislocation in most cases. Cultural dislocation as in change and shift in ideologies, religion, language and lifestyle can be seen. One of the rapid changes that led contemporary Nepalis’ lives to change drastically is economic migration. Nepal, as a nation, has experienced economic migration of its people in different parts of the world as well as within the nation. Tracing back to the past, migration has been adopted by the Nepalis for their livelihood. Harka Gurung in *Nepal: Social Demography and Expressions* writes that “Nepal has experienced considerable population redistribution through spontaneous migration. Population migration in the past was primarily directed eastwards along the hill corridor” (14). He further explains that the “Movement of population across the international border of Nepal includes two streams. The first is emigration or Nepal-born population reported as absentees abroad, and second, immigration or foreign born population reported in Nepal” (15). The majority of Nepalis who have migrated are due to

economic reasons. As a result, migration occurs in every corner of the nation. In contemporary society, education, globalisation and migration have led countries and their people to change in various spheres. Likewise, the Nepali culture has also undergone change over some time. Thapa in *The Lives We Have Lost: Essays and Opinions on Nepal* indicates Nepal's future and exclaims:

Should the new Nepal be an Indian-style parliamentary democracy or a Chinese-style party dictatorship?...instead of waiting for something as constructive and exalted as a Constitution, the Nepalis are waiting for more mundane things like for the strike to end, for electricity and water to return (203).

Thapa's *All of Us in Our Own Lives* demonstrates the complexities associated with inequalities within the Nepali household as well as the nation's power, which provides an insight into the social norm. The story revolves around a drastic political change in which the subsequent drafting of a new constitution was imminent in Nepal. People were confused and uncertain in such a scenario. Thapa has continued to explore the cultural dislocation in the book, focusing on the lives of Nepalis from different parts of the world. It depicts the themes of identity, displacement, and age-old issues of caste and gender disparities within Nepali society. The story goes back and forth about each character's life- their sufferings, progress, failures and relationships with their families, co-workers and strangers. Thapa portrayed women who are from different economic backgrounds as well as from different generations who reinforce the status given by the male-dominated society. Such women build themselves up and help one another overcome many obstacles in life. There are also other characters who, after migrating to other nations, developed a broad mindset after their exposure to other cultures. Those migrations are voluntary and they comprise migrants who leave their homeland for economic reasons rather than political reasons. It is seen that people not only migrate because of the political issues that affect their livelihood but also due to their own choice in finding better opportunities. However, it is seen that most of them never considered re-migrating to their homeland, Nepal. They may have felt some cultural ties with their motherland, but the economic, political and family ties sent them elsewhere. The book represents

migrants and immigrants who have no other choice than settling in a new place. In the book, Gyanu, a migrant worker in Dubai, struggles between continuing his career in a foreign land and returning to his homeland. Thinking about the time he spent being poor in his homeland makes him feel rootless and displaced. His childhood memories in the Third World nation and after his return from Dubai were changed only a little. Gyanu's life from the very beginning depicts the harsh reality of a common man of Nepal, who was born poor in a poverty-stricken nation. Nepal rendered his childhood in a hapless situation, lacking quality education, a good home and a better career. His childhood passed under the guidance of his step-father and step-sister, Sapana Karki, who loved him equally. He left his home to work in a foreign land to support himself and felt an urge not to trouble his family back home. After staying in Dubai, he once got news about his father's illness and his sister requested him to come home and conveyed that their father "needs a son to light the funeral pyre..." (Thapa 5). As he was working in Dubai, far from Nepal, travelling expenses and going home became hard enough. Such is the problem faced by people who stay away from their nation. Economic instability is therefore the root cause of the backwardness of every third-world nation. Being in an unknown land, Gyanu is aware of everything that is happening around him. His manager in his workplace, Five Spices, named Shantanu Kumar, used to "called him his Nepali Beta, his Nepali son; but Gyanu knew that no one was indispensable in the desert" (Thapa 5). His manager, Shantanu Kumar, called him and advised him by saying:

You travel to faraway lands, you work day and night, you prove yourself, you advance-and then? You throw away everything for a fallow plot of land in the hills'...'Free yourself from your entanglements there. The village is the past, it holds you back. The future is in the cities like Dubai. For people like us, opportunities don't come by easily, Beta. You have to take them when you can (Thapa 73 and 74).

Gyanu becomes more frustrated and lost in Nepal after coming from Dubai. He saw disruptions everywhere and even in the family house where he lived with his family. It was "small but proud. It had fallen into neglect over the years. The kitchen table and chairs needed repairing. Everything needed repainting: where earlier the doors

and windows used to be a deep sea green, they were now a muddy brown” (Thapa 32). In a short period, Gyanu built and rearranged every corner of their village house for Sapana while he was losing his career and his job, as he was postponing his return to Dubai. Nepal, for Gyanu, was not only the place where he had his family but also the place where he had the urge to find his better version. Even though he was worried about Sapana’s life, he too was not sure about his. In the beginning, Gyanu had quite the opposite idea about being a migrant worker in a foreign land. His aspirations and big dreams were shattered trying to adjust to a new land. Despite the challenges he faced while adapting to a new culture, he learned to accept his conditions slowly. His life therefore depicts millions of Nepalis who migrate to lead a good life. Thapa has thus skilfully illuminated the intricate lives of dislocated Nepalis through Gyanu’s story. Ava Berriden, one of the main characters from *All of Us in Our Own Lives*, portrays a contemporary woman who is strong, independent and bold. Being adopted from Nepal to Canada, she had the privilege of acquiring quality education and a better career. The dark reality of her past life makes Ava realise how privileged she is in her new home. Her experience after working in Nepal shows how people below the poverty line survived. The lack of education, poverty and slow progress of the country leads to many social evils and injustices. Ava, who was thrown into a child’s home care in her childhood, is the result of such misfortune that had happened in Nepal in the past and is still happening in some parts of the nation. Despite questioning her identity and researching her dark past, she quits her job in Toronto, leaves her passionless marriage and moves to Nepal. Throughout her journey, she struggles to launch a new career in Nepal in International Aid while trying to connect with her birthplace and uplift people who are in need. As she worked with the Nepali staff and other co-workers from other nations, Ava became aware of the Nepali culture, where hierarchy and patriarchy still ruled the nation. After coming in contact with one of her co-workers named Indira Sharma, who is a leading gender expert in Kathmandu, Nepal, Ava began to see things and experience them more clearly. Indira, even after working her whole life, shaping other’s lives, seems to be trapped in her so-called typical Nepali ways. She had to deal with age-old traditions where she had to think twice before doing things that were against the traditions. Despite being independent and educated, they are still stuck in the age-old

traditions and societal norms that are expected from society. These demarcations delineate a power dynamic that empowers Nepali women. Patriarchy has therefore caused depression on an individualistic as well as societal level. All cultures have accorded sex and gender a central place in explanations of how the world is and should be. Most significantly, every culture has been patriarchal to some degree. Likewise, the status of women in Nepal posited by fundamentalist patriarchy has therefore divided them into rigid categories based on function. Sexuality, as a result, has become an increasingly important social, political and moral issue. One of the effects of a historical approach to sexuality was to see power over sexuality as productive rather than negative or repressive. The rejection of a repression model-what Foucault called the ‘repressive hypothesis’ does not mean that all regimes of sexual regulation are of equal force or effectiveness. For instance, some are harsh, while some are authoritarian and some are more oppressive than others. Thus, the issues of sexuality are increasingly important in the whole working of power in contemporary society. By articulating the complex and formidable paradoxical relation between sexuality and power on how power dictates its law to sex, Foucault writes:

Renounce yourself or suffer the penalty of being suppressed; do not appear if you do not want to disappear. Your existence will be maintained only at the cost of your nullification. Power constraints sex only through a taboo that plays on the alternative between two non-existence (Foucault 96).

Women, especially the Aryan tribes, namely the Chhetri and Bahun dominate their women and are socially excluded in various rituals, works and places. They are even opposed to entering the kitchen to cook or eat and are not even allowed to enter the temple to pray during menstruation. Such rules and regulations over women are still practised in contemporary Nepali society, which Thapa evokes through Indira Sharma’s story even as she represents the upper caste of Nepali society. Indira, being a working woman who is independent economically, cannot enjoy her independence within her own home. Once, Indira refused to have wine in her house when asked by Ava but preferred to have apple juice instead. Indira wondered how Ava would have felt about rejecting a cup of wine and wondered, “What would foreigners know of

the restrictions on a Nepali daughter-in-law?” (Thapa 57). On that particular day, she hides her menstruation from her husband “because how could she possibly supervise a dinner party if she were barred from the kitchen?” (Thapa 55). According to the so-called Hindu tradition, menstruation is looked at as impure. During those days, women are not allowed to enter the kitchen and holy places, which makes women untouchable human beings. This leads to their disconnectedness from their own life and power. Prativa Subedi in “Women and Society” writes:

Unfortunately, it is the women in our society who perpetuate this practice and emphasize the difference in gender roles to such an extent that it can create a real gap between a boy and a girl...With this socially imposed segregation girls are set apart- in a negative way- and are more apt to be teased, harassed and victimized (4).

The realities of the Nepali household in Nepal can be observed through women’s experiences in Thapa’s works. Jimmawal Sharma, in *The Tutor of History*, portrays the so-called Hindu elite who are afraid to become impure even by the touch of women outside their family, as they might have their menstruation. When he is offered a cup of tea by Giridhar Adhikari’s wife, he simply rejects the offer and says, “I never eat food prepared outside my own kitchen. There’ll be no tea for me” (Thapa 55). Thapa’s acknowledgements of women’s plight within the nation encapsulate Marxism, which recognises that women are oppressed and attributes the oppression to the capitalist or the private property system. Elisabeth Armstrong in “Marxist and Socialist Feminism” writes, “Women’s subordination was neither biologically natural nor God-given; instead, the class relations of capitalism enforced the gender hierarchies that anchored women’s oppression” (Armstrong 4). In the case of Nepali women, the traditional Hindu ritual and patriarchy dominate them in the name of culture. The class relation of capitalism enforced the gender hierarchies toward women’s oppression, which is relevant in the so-called upper caste of the Nepali household. Nepali women’s situation clearly illustrates Simon de Beauvoir’s assertion in *The Second Sex* (1949) about men defining women not as autonomous beings but as simply to be subdued: “For him she is sex-absolute sex, no less. She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not with reference to her...He is

the subject, he is the Absolute- she is the other” (Millet 47). *All of Us in Our Own Lives* links and identifies power and authority with patriarchal domination. The patriarchal tradition of Nepal is played out with the representation of the male characters in the story in the form of personal power and authority within their workspace and community. The women here portray the daily experiences of contemporary Nepali women’s lives, who are always expected to carry out the traditions, beliefs and rituals in most cultures. Indira Sharma once introduced her husband to a former colleague without mentioning his name in order to maintain the respect she must show as a Nepali wife. “Nepali womanly decorousness prevented her from uttering her husband’s name in public” (Thapa 149). Lines such as this highlight the fact that women must accord respect to men who are represented by the patriarchal society as higher in status than their female counterparts. There is even an unequal citizenship law that treats women differently from men. In the book, when Ava decides to leave for Nepal for her work, her brother, Luke, says, “I’ve been doing some background reading, women can’t even confer citizenship to their children” (Thapa 24). It shows how the identity of a woman, being a Nepali citizen, depends solely on their husband’s identity. Thapa has skillfully blended the life of Gyanu’s mother in *All of Us in Our Own Lives* with Nepali women who come to such situations. His mother’s life before his stepfather stepped into their lives was not known to him and only on her deathbed did his mother told him, “You had to give up your past so I could live...I couldn’t even give you your own identity” (Thapa 37). Gyanu’s mother suffers and is humiliated being a single mother in a patriarchal society. It was not until she remarried that she gave Gyanu a new identity. It conveys that women, especially with children, cannot confer citizenship to their own children in the absence of a male partner. Women in Nepal are still far away from having fundamental rights and are the victims of such unfortunate situations as they are dominated in the name of tradition or law and order. Ajay Pradhan, in one of the reputed English weekly Newspaper of Nepal, “Nepali Times,” writes:

Just as Nepal came out of its first phase of lockdown on 21 June, the ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP) tabled a revised Citizenship Bill in the Federal Parliament...It granted foreign females naturalised citizenship

through their Nepali husbands. But there is a catch- they need to have spent a minimum of seven years in Nepal before they become eligible (Pradhan).

The citizenship bill before this was more complicated, making the lives of Nepali women more miserable. Thapa has mentioned the plight of women's lives regarding the unequal citizenship law in her works and interviews. Being a citizen of Nepal, Thapa had even burned her Nepali citizenship after hearing the unequal laws amended by the constitution of Nepal. Pranaya SJB Rana in "The Kathmandu Post" writes about his interview with Manjushree Thapa after the incident happens. In the interview, Thapa talks about the discrimination and unequal rights imposed on the Nepali women in the country by saying:

I had had the option of applying for Canadian citizenship for many years but I hadn't done it because we Nepalis have this sentimental connection to the country. But my relationship to the state broke. I felt that if the state is not going to be loyal to me, I don't need to be loyal to it (Rana).

Thapa evoked the same emotions and raised her voice not only on social media but also highlighted contemporary women's woes and their sufferings. Indira's story in *All of Us in Our Own Lives* highlights the same. In the book, patriarchal domination as well as the social hierarchy can be seen inside the workplace. The males in the workplace compete and conspire against their women co-workers to acquire hierarchy. Chandi Shrestha, one of Indira's rivals, once commented about the need to empower men and women in which they shared their perspectives on who needs to be more empowered, in which Chandi Shrestha says, "We're the ones who are holding you back" (Thapa 166). For Indira, "Men were always patronizing her, talking down to her, telling her that of course she was superior, but also letting her know-through connotation, inference, signs and body language- that they were in charge" (Thapa 166). Women, whether they are educated or illiterate, both have to face the dual constraints of casteism and patriarchy. And yet, there is resistance from within the Nepali community against measures of upliftment or empowerment that the so-called Hindus viewed as against religion and tradition. Indira portrays contemporary Nepali women, who are stuck between tradition and modernity. She

remains a quintessential character whose plight resounds among many women today. Her decision to live her life as she wants represents her strong will to inspire change. As the plot developed, every character was assured of their rightful decision in life. Indira and Ava, along with Sapana Karki, raised their voices towards women's empowerment through a women's committee to invent and consolidate a position in the dominating society. Likewise, Binita, from *The Tutor of History*, cultivates herself strongly, despite being a widow in a society where widows are still portrayed as outcasts. The struggle to fit in a patriarchal society and get equal rights with their male counterpart combines constraints and dislocation. Thapa expresses the ways Nepalis' lives are structured by linking and identifying power and authority with patriarchal domination. *All of Us in Our Own Lives* opens up new ways of understanding the cultural contexts that shaped societal transformation. Thapa intentionally draws the reader's attention to become independent both mentally and financially. Through her women characters in her works, she displays life with renewed strength. Her concept of recovery and acceptance is truly an element that can be found in the book. It reflects how Nepalis in their displaced situations fight and accept the changes that come along their way. Nepal, therefore, is in a phase of transition as youths are moving out of their comfort zones as well, and literacy has made them welcome change to adapt to a peaceful life. The setting of the story, amid political upheavals, has seen many changes within the community and in the lives of the people.

Displaced or dislocated due to various socio-political issues, the culture of the contemporary Nepalis has changed in many ways. Thapa's works elucidate upon the complicated world of modern Nepal with the specific context of politics and traditionally gendered ideologies. The cultural complexities of the Nepalis have reached a wider audience through the works of Thapa. Unlike her contemporaries, she allowed her imagination to go beyond the established boundaries by creating fictions that fit the Nepali milieu of the past till the present day. The issue of cultural dislocation has attempted to provide a space for discussion and research that helps to deepen understanding of the contemporary writings from Nepal through a variety of critical stances. Through her independent voice, she exposes the control of unfair

authorities that dominate Nepali society. The marginalised or socially outcast characters in her works express a progressive framework of resistance and survival. Val Burris in “The Dialectic of Women’s Oppression: Notes on the Relation Between Capitalism and Patriarchy” writes:

A number of feminist writers have attempted to conceptualize patriarchy in a manner directly analogous to Marx’s conception of social classes. According to this conception, the various structures of hierarchy and domination are intertwined with the class system and reinforced through economic relations (Burris 56).

Thapa’s works perhaps confirm Marx’s observation that the class structure is the overlaying of the social hierarchy and patriarchy of the Nepali society, which resulted in the dislocation of culture within Nepal. The Nepali society, therefore, dominated by the so-called Hindu elite has been compromising for decades. In a great measure, the democratic rights and norms, however limited for the Nepali citizens, are due to the unequal system having taken root and survived for decades.

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The term ‘globalisation’ has become what we refer to as an essentially contested concept. The very notion of its term is problematic. The meaning can be many partial, divergent, and often contradictory claims surrounding the idea. It is expanding and transforming Nepali society in various forms and degrees. This chapter unfolds the breadth, depth and pace of changes underway in contemporary Nepalis’ lives in a theoretical reflection on globalisation. It examines from a global standpoint how Nepalis experience the global cultural flows, reflecting the challenges and adjustments within and outside Nepal. This chapter deals with the transformation of contemporary Nepalis’ identity and brings out how they have adopted new ideologies, skills, and culture to a large extent. Thapa’s works can be called the first serious discussions and analyses in which the concept of social responsibility has become the basis of her creative works.

The critical view of globalisation is not new, for its origins began in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with the work of intellectuals such as Karl Marx and Saint Simon. It owes much to Karl Marx which often sweep in the *Communist Manifesto* (1848). Both Marx and Simon noticed that the fast-growing intellectual and machinery advancements were taking over the entire globe. However, the term globalisation was first defined by others. Globalisation, in a way, was affecting the lives of the individuals and the human condition in many ways; such arguments have been reinforced by many critical thinkers. It can also be addressed from the perspective of people who are in a position to plan and implement actions that help to create a better world. The pace of social change and transformation seems to have quickened in the 21st. century with implications for various dimensions of social life and human culture. Such change is related to increasing connectivity among people and nations worldwide. Globalisation has shaped and created a new framework for Nepalis’ socio-political and economic change. An important aspect of globalisation that changes the Nepali sensibility is economic migration. Being displaced or dislocated from one’s land, migrating to a different region or nation has become a tradition for Nepalis in Nepal. Thapa allows her readers to peep into the paradox and complexity of Nepalis who are spread all over the world as migrant workers and immigrants. In the context of Nepal, the

reason behind migration has always been the backward conditions of the nation. Nepal's population mostly depends on agriculture, but due to its low production, Nepalis have to move out to earn money. Dr. Shyam K. Shrestha in *WTO: South Asia and Nepal* writes that since Nepal "is an agrarian country, it remains as the backbone of the country's economic development...However the agriculture productivity has remained at a very low level despite huge resources spent in this sector" (2). There have been many waves of migration from Nepal, and it is often applied to the armed forces and militaries who were recruited by the Britishers to different nations. Prakash Upadhyay in *Crossing the Border: International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* writes:

The emerging trend of globalization in early nineties amid rising unemployment and political instability inspired many young people (from all caste and ethnicities) to seek jobs in gulf countries and south-east Asian countries instead of looking for occupations in India and other neighbouring countries where their ancestors had been going for the past many centuries for making a living (90).

Migration is seen not just as a characteristic of a globalised world but as a key factor producing global change. One of the Nepali writers, Madhu Raman Acharya, speculated that as globalisation opened up chains of improvements and opportunities to the Nepalis all around the globe, "the Nepalese people started to witness the unleashing of a "Culture Shift" era" (Acharya 25). For instance, globalisation has brought various changes in the lives of contemporary Nepalis. Kazanjian (2016) contends that the cultural dislocation experienced by exiles can be a catalyst for the creation of new life meanings. The liminal spaces between the "other" and the "self" are disrupted, and exiles, living within these cultural interstitial zones, become agents of possibility in an increasingly interconnected world. Migrating to other nations has thus become a norm and a way of life in Nepal. The physical movement of people and cultures is often seen as emblematic of a globalised world in which connections and mobilities across the world are intensified and enhanced. Each new migrant worker or immigrant in their host land confronts dynamic tension between assimilation to a normative foreign identity that degraded cultural differences. In

Seasons of Flight, Prema accommodates herself to the new overseas styles and tries to disconnect herself from her birthplace, Nepal, where she has strife for her rights. To escape from the third-world nation, she migrates to America. Living in a society where women have to go through various rules, for Prema, America seems to be a place of independence. She gradually sees the difference between Nepal and America and becomes aware of her rights and wants to explore her true potential in a new space by dismissing the socially defined roles. She often thinks, "...why were Americans so light spirit? Why should they not be?" (Thapa 154). When dealing with relationships and attachments, Prema's love and sexual awakening transform her in her diaspora. She gets into several relationships and "went on dates and these dates sometimes led to sex. Casual sex. And that was that. For she felt no sweet, mute emotion with these men" (Thapa 234). She gradually fosters new cultural spaces and reaffirms the notion that borders are not fixed. Despite a shift or change in patterns and culture, it does not mean that Prema's identity has been completely replaced but rather her new form of space and identity is in the process of constant expansion. In this situation, unknowingly, she finds herself committed to diaspora by going beyond her boundaries. Thus, this leads to or gives birth to a new culture or identity that, according to Homi Bhabha, is 'hybrid in culture.' In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha signifies that for diasporic people, home does not mean a particular place as it changes according to their migration to different locations. This concept of hybrid identity and culture for the dislocated people is positive in the sense that it allows them to exceed the limit of nation-states and helps exclude the binary between developing and developed countries. The transformation and transition of Prema's life as an optimistic journey create a new world consisting of new ideas and values that unmask her of the changes that occur in a globalised world. The age-old traditions and morality enforced by society in one way or another cannot remain static. As Homi Bhabha asserts, identities are possible only in distinctive relations. Thus, for Bhabha, identity moves perpetually between positions, displacing others and being displaced. Thapa's characters in their diaspora gradually learn to adapt and intermingle with new cultures, forming a new identity. Migrants are often represented as outsiders or strangers and are thought to take the space of the indigenous. Matters of identity, belonging, and home are bound up in changing

relations of proximity and distance. These relations are made rather than given. On the one hand, migrants sometimes express a sense of belonging to more than one place when they maintain loyalties to, or connections with, where they live, as well as where they came from. Homi Bhabha in “How Newness Enters The World” writes that the “liminality of migrant experience is no less a transitional phenomenon than a translational one; there is no resolution to it because the two conditions are ambivalently enjoined in the ‘survival’ of migrant life” (Bhabha 321). Thapa, in the introductory part of *The Lives We Have Lost: Essays and Opinions on Nepal*, writes about Nepal and its people’s struggles, where migrating to foreign lands has become the only option left to have a secure life, and writes, “For Nepalis there is no alternative to trying to understand all that has happened-and all that has not...Everything affects everything here; everything is interdependent” (3). In a globalised era, the movement or migration to foreign nations in search of jobs and opportunities has been quite a practice among the Nepalis from Nepal. Among different nations, India can be called a diasporic space for Nepalis. The open-border system between India and Nepal has caused a maximum number of migrations every year. As both countries have signed a treaty of peace and friendship to cultivate good ties between them, a passport or visa is not required for Nepalis to cross the border. “Migration between India and Nepal is an age-old practice; people have migrated under different migration streams...The open nature of the border and keeping no record while crossing the border make it difficult to estimate the exact number of migrants” (Kirti 169 and 170). The large-scale migration was the result of the colonials’ need for soldiers and workers, as the lack of opportunity was scarce in poverty-stricken Nepal. Thapa in *The Lives We Have Lost: Essays and Opinions on Nepal* writes, “Today this is a country of some 28 million, up to 6 million of who live across the open border, in India. Hundreds of thousands more live and work in the Far East and the Middle East...Migration to the developed world has never been higher” (8 and 9).

Diasporic writings have helped cast a new aura around global Nepal and have also contributed to building a novel image of Nepal abroad. Hence, it helps in strengthening bonds between various countries and also begins to relate through

historical, cultural, social, traditional and economic ties. Emerging Nepali writers in English, other than Manjushree Thapa, such as Rabi Thapa, Chandra Gurung, Samrat Upadhyay and Shradha Ghale have been aiming at re-inventing Nepal through their works while living as a diaspora. They have explored the politics of culture, citizenship, sexuality and identity of Nepalis in a considerable amount of literature. Deepa Pradhan in “Anglo-Nepali Creative Writers/Translators of Different Genres” writes:

Contemporary Nepali writers in English have explored a platform for all meeting at one place through their writings. Their efforts establish the nuances of the contemporary Nepali life and consciousness. They are now presenting the literary scenario of Nepal to the English speaking world through their creative writings. They are attracting a growing number of readers and also receiving a wide appreciation from critics (Pradhan195).

Diaspora writers look back at Nepal and record their experiences away from Nepal as expatriates and have the advantage of looking at their homeland from outside as well. Thus the distance affords them the detachment that is necessary to have a clear perception of their native land. In that sense, through their writing, they help to define Nepal. Homi Bhabha in “The Postcolonial And The Postmodern: The question of agency” writes:

The enunciative position of contemporary cultural studies is both complex and problematic. It attempts to institutionalize a range of transgressive discourses whose strategies are elaborated around non-equivalent sites of representation where a history of discrimination and misrepresentation is common...these theoretical concepts, produce the most useful descriptions of the formation of ‘postmodern’ cultural subjects (Bhabha 252).

Thapa acknowledges Nepal and its culture and values and draws upon the culture and outlook of the land she has migrated to. It is also worth noting that she draws upon her roots and fuses them with the new perspectives and angles of reality she faced in the diaspora. Having adopted Western thought and culture, Thapa, in her diaspora, acquires a new identity. Her characters in the stories have the urge to find

themselves, to create space for themselves the way she did it in her newfound land. It is this ability to dream, to be imaginative, and to construct pictures and stories of the world in one's mind that enables her to look back at Nepal with a new perspective. "Nations in the twenty-first century have embraced globalization as multicultural diversity increased and intercultural identities emerge" (Kazanjian 9). Like all other Nepali diaspora writers, Thapa also looks at herself both as an insider and an outsider in a foreign land. From a distance, she views events regarding Nepal and projects the lives of Nepalis who are spread globally. More importantly, she brings out the pathos of Nepali society in a globalised era.

Nepalis, due to the positive impacts of globalisation have become more informed, enlightened, and connected with the outside world. Changes such as family structures and gender roles have taken new forms. In light of this, Thapa's reflections on contemporary Nepalis grow towards larger societal transformations as well as the well-being of Nepali society. Today, Nepal is experiencing a new phase of globalisation rapidly and has accelerated its growth and expanded its horizons in many ways. However, the other side of this has to be cautious, as it might be dangerous to the cultural identity and values of the Nepalis. The positive aspects lie in bringing people and different countries closer and increasing the flow of trade, education, technologies and economic progress. One can say that "...globalisation is a mixed bag; there are benefits to garner, and prices to pay. Hence, the impact of globalisation has been uneven across regions, countries and sectors, depending on what the respective countries could manage to eke out of the process of global integration" (Karmakar 18). One of the most significant discussions is that globalisation as a process is transforming, in varying forms and degrees, within Nepali society. It expands the scope and speed of cultural interactions across societal boundaries. Roland Robertson in "Mapping the Global Condition: Globalization as the Central Concept" writes, "Globalization as a topic is, in other words, a conceptual entry to the problem of world order in the most general sense...It is, moreover, a phenomenon which clearly requires what is conventionally called interdisciplinary treatment" (Robertson 400). There is increasing concern that globalisation has both positive and negative impacts on the lives of the Nepalis. The

internal conflict due to socio-political upheavals has resulted in the forming of new movements and ideologies that have thus stirred Nepal socially and politically. Injustices and unstable laws have made the nation suffer for decades. People are seen in the streets and on social media fighting for justice while traditional values and family norms are gradually losing their hold on the community due to globalisation or in their quest for individual freedom. These changes within a nation are having a serious effect on the Nepali identity. In *The Lives We Have Lost: Essays and Opinions on Nepal*, Thapa writes about Nepal which is changing in terms of politics, economy and ideologies and questions herself:

Women, Dalits and Janajatis have yet to write themselves into our history. And new facts about Nepal are emerging every day. New perspectives are opening up. Are we brave Gurkha soldiers or exploited mercenaries? We don't know. Should women really be equal to men? We are not sure...What is obvious is the day-to-day muddle of a country undergoing immense social and political transformation (80).

Thapa mentioned how Nepal as a nation is changing enormously. No doubt, globalisation leads to the homogenisation of cultures in some significant aspects throughout the world. It involves interdependency, reciprocity, and exchange of mutual skills, language, and culture in a large measure. Globalisation has played an important role in the changes and exchanges of various ways of life in the lives of contemporary Nepalis. Thapa's *The Tutor of History* (2001) embraces a portrait of contemporary Nepal while highlighting the struggles, disorder, and changes that globalisation offers. The story portrays the arrival of a new voice where the individuals break away from traditions and adopt a revolutionary step towards modernity and politics. The book portrays the political upheavals of the late twentieth century when Nepal became a democratic nation and people came together for a fresh election to maintain a more balanced law and order at the community level. It is seen that people from different social statuses and professions came together on the occasion. This indicates that the conventional class struggle between 'high' and 'low' within Nepali society has joined hands for the development of the society. In the story, it is seen that, during their campaign for the coming elections,

every party member from different political parties worked hard to gain a seat in the election. As the election rallies and campaigns progressed, Rishi worked under the communist party and “was put in charge of a group of workers responsible for all publicity work: painting signs, sticking posters, pinning up party banners” (Thapa 197). At the beginning of the story, Rishi, before coming to the party, was confused about his career. Gradually, he becomes more active and self-conscious about working for the development of his people and the party. Changes in the views and situations of the characters in the story depict the changes brought by globalisation. Likewise, women in a patriarchal society who faced challenges daily in the story started to cope with life gradually. Dr. Bimala Shrestha in *Social Life in Nepal (1885-1950)* writes, “A few women in the different parts of Nepal were already conscious of the sad plight of women in the kingdom and they played a predominant role in bringing about a social and political change as early as in 1913” (2). Contrary to that, women in Nepal are still victims of various social evils. Rishi and Binita’s story highlights the clash of tradition versus modernity, where widows are not allowed to remarry or have any relationship with other men. Both of them keep their relationship a secret and are planning to start a new life together, and their stories become open-ended. “For Rishi there was no more revolution-just the permanent unrest of those who moved unseen through the land...he now contented himself with the private dignity of individuals. Himself. His students. People who passed through his life. Binita” (Thapa 465). In the book, not only men were indulged in giving voice for the betterment of society through politics, but women too are seen uplifting each other. Women formed a committee called ‘Mother’s Group’ in which young unmarried women, married women and widows from different castes and economic backgrounds were enrolled. Caste or class distinction is seen as a social evil in the minds of the people of Khairani Tar. Changes in perspectives and viewing things become pivotal in the story. Everyone was seen as one group without any differences. Politics and revolution become significant means for everyone. One of the owners of the Himal Lodge Restaurant Bar, called by everyone in the town as Thakalni-aama, a Thakali tribe of the Nepali community, came to Binita’s teashop one day “to fetch her for the mother’s group meeting” and motivated Binita and other women to join them and said:

‘Mothers are forming groups all over the country. Why shouldn’t we?’...‘Old mothers like me and young mothers like you getting together and creating a ruckus-I tell you there’s no big objective. Even after you’ve lost all your teeth it’s important to have fun. You’ll find out when you reach my age’ (Thapa 286 and 287).

The book brings out contemporary individuals who are aware of their happiness as well as helps others to prosper without any social disparities. Thapa’s portrayal of every character in the story brings out changes and new ways of life in every individual who tries to come out of suppressions and old ways. Schrader (2003) asserts that globalisation is inextricably linked to modernity. A prevalent assumption is that globalisation originates in the West and leads to homogenisation and standardisation through the spread of Western technology, commerce, and culture.

Even though globalisation has brought positive impacts on the lives of Nepalis, there are negative impacts too. *All of Us in Our Own Lives* highlights human trafficking through the story of Chandra while depicting the harsh realities of women’s lives in a Third-World country where thousands of crimes occur daily and where women and girls are sold to the neighbouring regions and nations every year. Thapa advocates human rights for women and wants to create a favourable atmosphere to develop the personality of women according to their interests. One of the Nepali writers from Nepal, Prativa Subedi, in her work, *Nepali Women Rising*, also writes about the importance of educating women and girls in a globalised world where various social evils like women trafficking, rape, murder, and kidnapping are happening and have become a commercial norm. She writes, “Sufficient information should be provided to young people and adults through the formal and non-formal curricula about the actual condition and adverse effects of trafficking...Unless people are able to resist the lure of the sex trade, the question of helping others does not arise” (39). Given all that has been mentioned so far, it is clear that women in every society are exploited, suppressed, and judged for being a woman. Thapa is concerned with the alignment of power that exerts social, physical, political, and economic control over the woman to fragment her. Her deconstruction of patriarchal structures of power and domination, therefore, is not gender-specific but a comprehensive

criticism of all power structures that inferiorise and dehumanise individuals, especially women. D. Gopal in, “India’s Security Concerns: Post 9/11 Era”, writes:

India, like most other countries, is no exception to having to deal with an array of transnational security threats. Of these, the most menacing is the spiralling illegal drug trade, trafficking and attendant violence...Resulting instability has caused internal migration and illegal immigration from outside. These, in turn, affect the already shaky socio-economic framework of metropolitan areas (Gopal 102 and 103).

The dark reality of Thapa’s portrayal of contemporary women in Nepal shows how they are still struggling to dispossess themselves of the social myths, which cripple their power in a globalised era. Mary Wollstonecraft, in her remarkable book, *The Vindication of the Rights of Women*, strongly advocated the equality of the sexes and attacked the aristocracy and the hierarchy prevalent in male-oriented society. Through her writings, she inspires and declares that both men and women are human beings endowed with inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. She advocates education as the key for women to achieve a sense of self-respect and a new self-image that can enable them to live to their full capabilities. In examining education, she reflects upon the idea of philosopher Rousseau, who in his work *Emile* (1762) described the ideal education for young women. According to him, education for both boys and girls must recognise the natural differences in ability. For him, as men and women have natures and abilities that are not the same, their biological differences can determine their role in society and the kind of education they receive. Wollstonecraft rejected Rousseau’s idea by expressing that femininity is a social construct rather than a woman’s true ability. For this reason, Wollstonecraft advocated for educational reformation. For her, the reformation of education was particularly important for women because she believed that women’s lack of continuous and substantial education was the main reason for their subordination. Therefore, she suggests that men and women must be educated equally, to a greater degree, by the opinions and manners of the society they live in. Likewise, Thapa, through her portrayal of contemporary Nepali women, wants Nepali women to be independent and makes them able to exercise their reason in any situation. As such,

Wollstonecraft sees a direct link between the development of individual character and knowledge and writes, “Education should be geared at the cultivation of minds and teach children how to think” (Wollstonecraft 163).

Thapa allows her readers to peep into the sufferings of Nepalis within Nepal on the one hand and the paradox and complexity of Nepalis who are abroad on the other hand. *Tilled Earth: Stories* (2007) is one such example that opens up a new consciousness of being in a globalised world. The collection of stories in the book shows how globalisation has rendered a considerable amount of changes in their day-to-day life as their identity began to grow and intermingle with new cultures. The characters in the stories expose their deepest insecurities and are caught between tradition and modernisation. From one of the stories, “Tilled Earth,” the protagonist’s life in America reflects just like Prema’s in *Seasons of Flight*. She faced cultural differences in America, which made her life challenging. She wonders that “If she were Indian she could explain herself better. Everyone here knows India” (174). The story explains the struggles the Nepali diaspora faced to achieve their dream of settling in a more organised condition where social hierarchy, caste system, and gender disparity are no more to be heard of or seen in their new world. Thapa shows how different lives with a diversified background set in Nepal and other countries are affected due to globalisation. In one of the stories, “The Buddha in the Earth-Touching Posture,” the narrator, a retired bureaucrat, tired from the modern materialistic world, travels to Lumbini, the birthplace of Buddha, in Nepal. His travel can be related to the philosophy of Gautama Buddha in search of eternal peace and a complete solution to life. As he reaches his destination, to his surprise he becomes more sceptical about how the impacts of globalisation have changed the world, even in a holy place like Lumbini. Being astonished by the marvellous buildings of stupas and modern technological infrastructure around the place, he begins to question himself: “...where was the compassion, the main teaching of the Mahayana school? As for wisdom, or insight-the Buddha’s main teaching-how could it be attained in this gaudy Buddhist wonderland?” (Thapa 147). The interdependence and interconnectedness with foreign lands and aid towards innovations have led the holy place to develop drastically while losing its authenticity. Therefore, the narrator is

not able to habituate and immerse himself completely in the environment where the effects of globalisation have changed the place immensely. This raises questions about the negative impacts of globalisation. Similarly in “Heera Maharjan Loses His Way,” Thapa highlights the momentous cultural change and exchange in lifestyle caused by the impact of globalisation. It portrays how the new generations are influenced and inspired by Western ideas while the older generations, like Heera Maharjan, a prolific woodworker, are stuck between the new and the old ways of life. One day, as he passes by the city to attend the death anniversary of his former patron, Sridhar Jung Rana, he finds development in every corner of the city where he had grown up, and “he no longer recognized this land” (Thapa 11). Newly modernised appliances and technologies have replaced the door and window frames, cupboards, closets, and racks he had made by hand. As he reached closer to his destination, “he stepped back and looked around. Brick and concrete. How to get back to the old temple road?” (Thapa 12). Thapa shows how the fast pace of globalisation has caused various problems for middle-class people like him. With the growth of the world, people like him are suffering and surviving within Nepal to keep up with the changes globalisation has offered. Unequal financial issues among Nepalis have caused a serious issue of displaced identity in a globalised era. Similarly, another story from the book, “Solitaire,” highlights the same issue Heera Maharjan and contemporary Nepalis are facing. Hit Bahadur Khadka, a clerk in the Ministry of Home Affairs, “had a mere six months left till retirement. He was learning to play solitaire on the computer, late in life perhaps” (Thapa 15). For senior citizens like them, coping with the fast pace of changes has been difficult, leading them to feel alienated, displaced, or dislocated within their land. The story highlights the changes going on in the life of Hit Bahadur. A shift from traditional ways to modern ways has affected Nepali society in various ways. These stories represent the real struggle of older generations who are, in a way, left behind in a globalised world, and unfortunately, the impacts of globalisation fail them. S.L. Doshi conveys the same effects of globalisation where older generations faced various issues in India and says:

People of older generation do not even hesitate to say that the earlier times were far better than the present epoch of modernity. Their life was easy; there were no business hurry and flurry. Modernity, that is, belief in the possibility of human progress, has proved false. The high-ups in the society have cornered most of the benefits of urbanization, democracy and centralized planning (Doshi 10).

Thapa skilfully captures how the negative forces of globalisation have caused displacement in various spheres. Contrary to that, there are positive aspects that change Nepal and Nepalis in a good way and one such example is tourism. In contemporary times, tourism has become one of the largest industries in Nepal. A large number of Nepalis who depend on tourism have started opening their own businesses and have become entrepreneurs in their land. In Nepal, destination places like Mustang, Chitwan, Pokhara, and Kathmandu have gained a large number of visitors every year. With the accelerating pace of technological innovation and the continuing trend toward globalisation, Nepal too is not left behind such progress. The positive impact of globalisation not only provided new employment opportunities in Nepal but also produced a means of earning foreign exchange in various goods and products. Even though Thapa, in *Mustang Bhot in Fragments*, depicts her anger towards Nepal's rulers and the government, who neglected the Bhotias from Nepal, the beauty of the Mustang region has indeed opened up the curiosity of people to visit the place in contemporary times. As such, Nepal's largest source of foreign exchange and revenue is tourism. It has therefore improved in retaining its historic integrity and has proved to be resilient in times of economic crisis for Nepal. In the book, *Tilled Earth: Stories*, one of the stories, "Friends," captures 'Thamel,' a tourist region of the capital city of Nepal, in which Thapa gives a detailed description of growing Nepal. Here, Thapa vividly portrays traditions that meet modernity while creating an amalgamation of globalised nature within Nepali society. It highlights conflicting scenarios, where the old culture meets new cultures. The story starts with the descriptions of Thamel and writes:

By day, Kathmandu's tourist district Thamel hawks trinkets and curios. The Dutch, the Italian, the German, the Japanese, the French, the American, the

Israeli-tourists, all-come to the memorabilia shops here to buy Buddhist mandalas, turquoise bracelets, Gurkha knives, bottled water, pashmina shawls, demon masks, rice-paper notebooks, chocolate bars, hiking boots, embroidered T-shirts that read I Love Mount Everest (Thapa 45).

Thamel portrays colourful areas where one can see various modernised concepts and is widely known as a “small tourist area,” where an amalgamation of different cultures and traditions can be seen. The place is a commercial neighbourhood and is a nightlife zone of Kathmandu city that depicts the lives of Nepalis who are torn between mixed cultures of a global world. “The more traditional Nepalis who inhabit Thamel, however, cannot begin to identify the syncopated beat of Bob Marley drowned by the wail of Joan Baez as they turn a corner” (Thapa 46). Here, the Nepalis are seen as being hybridised due to coming in close contact with foreigners who come to visit Nepal. As Thamel depends upon tourism, Nepalis in the area are “Hoping to profit from the neighbourhood’s tourist bent, most of the locals have rented out their houses to hotels, restaurants and shops, moving their families to quieter neighbourhoods” (Thapa 46). The positive as well as negative impacts of globalisation are projected through the stories of two friends, Kamal Malla, a young computer programmer, and Hrishikesh Pandey, a Nepali man who returned from the United States. They bring out various disparities and differences in views, ideas, and thinking and are baffled and insecure about staying in Nepal despite the changes that globalisation has brought up in the present times. Kamal portrays the majority of Nepali youths of Nepal who yearn to leave Nepal and work in a foreign land. It is therefore the reason why he loves the tourist area, Thamel, despite being in Nepal. As he walks past Thamel:

He is charmed by this part of the city, so different from his own staid, duty-bound parts of Kathmandu. When the sky darkens and halogen lights switch on of their own accord, he hears old men and women greet each other anew, as per custom, as though a new day has begun, and indeed it always seems to have. Rust-coloured lights warm the air (Thapa 47).

Kamal, on some days adored Thamel, and on other days he felt insecure working

and living in a Third World nation. He felt displaced, confused, and unworthy every time he thought about his life. He feels confined and wants to leave Nepal, but due to his responsibilities towards his family, he cannot do so. Inequalities and disparities among people are still seen within his workplace; therefore, Nepal seems to be a shabby place for him. On the other hand, Hrishikesh, being a foreign returnee, felt the same way as he stayed longer in Nepal. He had returned to Nepal with an idealistic vision to serve Nepal, but he left Nepal ultimately as he found it difficult to deal with people and the environment around him. Despite the colourful and growing neighbourhood like Thamel, both of them find difficulties in adjusting. In one of their meetings, Hrishikesh told Kamal, “I get so tired...I write my own articles, and edit everyone’s else’s, but nobody ever says good job, nobody gives a shit” (Thapa 54). He also added about the injustice such as class struggle within Nepali society and said, “You don’t know, Kathmandu’s people are mean...They are very devious, you don’t know...I have grown here all my life, and I have seen all what they do to each other with their small-small minds...These government offices, are all crap” (Thapa 54 and 55). It is seen that Kamal and Hrishikesh are less fortunate. Disparities, injustices, and hierarchies are everywhere. Their stories represent a capitalist society in which strength, money, and power are the most valued. It symbolises the class struggle between the ‘bourgeoisie’ and the ‘proletariat.’ The search for identity, security, and career generates youth of the Third World nations in search of a good future in other nations rather than their own. In Marx’s sense, the creation of human desires and needs cannot be satisfied within a capitalist framework. What is expressly demanded of Marxism today is the writing of proper, objective history, necessitating thereby the opening up of history. This demands accommodation of the notion of difference, warranting the proper recognition of the voices of dissent and the discourses of the silent minority. The political instability, insurgency, and natural calamities within Nepal cause injustices, inequality, and domination within Nepali society. On that note, Thapa’s characters are contemporary Nepalis who balance both worlds- their birthland, Nepal, and their host land, namely, foreign-nations through adapting, accepting, and adjusting. Even after various turmoils and injustices within the nation, the two friends in the story portray contemporary Nepali youths who learn to adapt to whatever situations they are in.

When dealing with the positive impacts of globalisation, it has offered employment and has created interdependence and interconnectedness with foreign lands in contemporary times. The negative impacts caused migrant workers to suffer in the workplace as they had unequal income and were subject to discrimination. Burgmann (2016) argues that the capitalist tendency to exploit vulnerable workers is amplified during periods of globalisation. The increasing heterogeneity of the workforce, driven by globalisation's impact on migration patterns and the integration of previously marginalised groups into wage labour, exacerbates this vulnerability. The fictional narrative of migrating or settling in a foreign nation depicts a picture of the real world of contemporary Nepal. "Between 1970 and 2005, the number of international migrants more than doubled, from 81.3 million to 190.6 million" (Audebert and Dorai 7). Migration has therefore become the source of economic stability for many in present-day Nepal. *All of Us in Our Own Lives* portrays contemporary Nepalis who are disoriented by their present lives and the struggle to achieve their goals in a globalised world. Thapa has created people who come across new cultures and form new identities. She portrayed the stories of the struggles Nepalis faced in foreign lands through Gyanu's experiences. The journey of migrating and settling had never been easy for many. Throughout the story, he has made efforts to survive in the foreign land and has to face many difficulties in holding his job. There were times when he felt disappointed working as a chef in 'Five Spices.' Various incidents and misfortunes used to take place with the staff who were from different countries as well. Migration is seen not just as a characteristic of a globalised world but as a key factor producing global change. Behind such changes, there are also issues such as suffering, in-betweenness, as well as alienation and nostalgia for the homeland, which makes the migrants confused in their host countries. In the book, *Structural Violence and Social Suffering among Marginal Nepali Migrants*, Antonio Donini, Jeevan Raj Sharma, and Sanjaya Aryal capture the social sufferings of migrant workers from Nepal, India, and other nations. In their findings, they depict that migration has become the only hope to survive for the Nepalis in Nepal and write:

Push and pull factors combine in the decision to migrate: poverty, the

structural violence of the caste system and semi-feudal labor arrangements in the agricultural sector, family pressure (real or presumed), the aspiration for change and a better life, on one side, and the role of agents who scour the countryside looking for potential migrants, on the other (36).

In contemporary Nepal, economic and educational migration has played a pivotal role in the lives of Nepalis. It has led the nation to an increase in exchanges due to the rise in financial transactions and trade of goods and services. The portrayal of cross-cultural experiences not only offers a distinguishing essence to Thapa's works but also renders a global touch in depicting the characters. Another aspect of globalisation viewed as connectivity is 'openness,' and to operate freely and move forward requires openness where there are no barriers. Thapa projects the existing reality of a globalised era in which she attempts to dismantle the dominant narrative of Nepal. Through her displaced Nepalis from her works, she tries to expose the reality to a larger audience. As such, changes led by the impact of globalisation can be seen in *All of Us in Our Own Lives* in Gyanu's adoption and intermingling with new cultures. To assimilate, he adopted the Western culture openly, which he could not have done in his homeland. His openness to undertaking a new culture portrays contemporary Nepalis in a globalised era. His relationship with a divorced woman, Maleah, who is also a migrant worker from the Philippines, illustrates his openness and acceptance of changes. As in a traditional Nepali custom, one who marries or forms a relationship outside their caste or class is met with severe criticism and shame. Gyanu, being aware of such consequences, took a bold decision to continue the bond. Both Gyanu and Maleah, in their diaspora found solace in one another. Gyanu becomes entwined in new cultures other than his own. Living together out of wedlock also highlights the steps Gyanu would barely take in his homeland. Marriage, in Nepali society, is endogamous in nature, which is governed by the customary laws of each ethnicity. In *Nepali Cultural Orientation*, it writes, "...wedding customs vary by caste and ethnicity in Nepal. In keeping with tradition, many parents still arrange their children's marriage, trying to match caste, educational level, and earning potential" (51). However, in contemporary times, customs and laws are in a process of change. Likewise, people like Gyanu and

Maleah adapt themselves to their new space. Gyanu “found escape from his past in Maleah” (Thapa 4). Their love expresses the understanding and acceptance they both have for each other’s culture. This aligns with Bhabha’s “DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation.” Here, Bhabha proposes the interstitial space of cultural encounter in which the coloniser and the colonised negotiate by producing hybridity in culture. The cultural collisions and interchanges of both Gyanu and Maleah bring an invisible openness to change, which leads to the hybridisation of culture. “Cultural difference is to be found where the ‘loss’ of meaning enters, as a cutting edge, into the representation of the fullness of the demands of culture” (Bhabha 313). Culture, therefore, is a unified relationship between people and an idea where they influence one another, which is an integral part of people’s lives. It cannot be static, but it rather transforms with time. Gyanu’s life seems to be a straightforward battle between the old and the new in the modernised world where traditional beliefs and customs are hybridised. He resists change and accepts the new ways and ideas to learn and survive in the host country and adapt to a new space. Sari Hanafi in *Migration in A Globalised World: New Research Issues and Prospects* writes, “Migrants are a site of conflict between different ideologies, values and lifestyles...The diasporic space in which a migrant lives entails an inter-polarity and multi-polarity of his other set of the relationship” (66). What mainly comes under diasporic scrutiny is the complex experience of migration, encompassing both cultural hybridisation and assimilation on the one hand and lingering nostalgia and cultural alienation on the other. Diaspora, therefore, is a journey towards self-realisation, self-recognition, self-knowledge, and self-definition.

The impact of globalisation does not end here; rather, it has led to the interchange of worldviews, ideas, and aspects of culture. It has both negative and positive impacts on the community, and as such, Nepalis are also affected by the changes brought by it. Social change, a consequence of human action, is conditioned by the challenges faced by society from time to time. In today’s world, any society or culture that remains static or fixed is not possible. To progress, one has to accommodate the new forces that demand change. Nepalis in the present day are

experiencing and experimenting with new things and lifestyles. The positive impact of globalisation on Nepalis is that it makes them more self-conscious and confident about their culture, tradition, and identity. On the other hand, they are trying to keep intact their identity as well as keep pace with the global changing trends. Globalisation has thus opened numerous routes and has shaped the culture of Nepalis. In the words of Homi Bhabha in *The Location of Culture*, in “The Commitment to Theory,” he writes, “Culture only emerges as a problem, or a problematic, at the point at which there is a loss of meaning in the contestation and articulation of everyday life, between classes, genders, races, nations” (50).

In the past, Nepal and its citizens have had the chance to investigate prospects for their development since the 1990s, when globalisation and democracy arrived. It is also equally important that political democracy alone does not work to be a developed nation, but it has also to be substantiated by social and economic democracy. In recent times, new forces of change, such as advanced information technology, modernisation, production, and economy, have caused rapid changes globally, and Nepal has tended to accelerate in most of the processes of change. These changes have promoted linkages and interactions while, such interconnectedness between two cultures often leads to displacement or alienation. Thapa has portrayed such scenarios in which two cultures find it impossible to become one or unite to create a new culture and new ideas. “Sounds That the Tongue Learns to Make” and “The European Fling,” from *Tilled Earth: Stories*, highlight contemporary youths’ relationships in which their ideologies clash, leading to disconnection. In “Sounds That the Tongue Learns to Make” and “The European Fling,” both stories of the main protagonists, who are Nepalis, are seen having a relationship with other nationalities, but in the end, their cultural differences and views break them apart. In “Sounds That the Tongue Learns to Make,” the relationship between Sarah, an American, and Keshab, a Nepali, merges with certain differences, creating a conflicting situation in their budding relationship. Their cultural identities remain unbridgeable in many circumstances, and it becomes difficult to adjust their worlds. Thapa presents the characters from one locale going to other terrains and facing different cultural difficulties. As the two of them went out

for adventurous trekking, Keshab became aware of the societal prejudices and remarks. “‘People will be knowing me soon,’ he said as they put down their packs. ‘Two days from district headquarters, they will be recognizing me’” (Thapa 31). Keshab, on his part, cannot announce or show his feelings for Sarah openly. There was no hope for Sarah either to lean on a man who was ashamed of her identity. Their stories reflect upon how people, after coming in contact and intermingling, can neither accept the situation fully nor reject it. The in-between situation and societal values come between them and create a space. Having a bond with people outside one’s caste or class is unacceptable in the view of Keshab. He represents Nepalis who are afraid to move out of societal boundaries and remain firm with their traditional structured ideologies. “The European Fling,” highlights the same amount of challenges that a couple- a Nepali, Sharada, and an American, Matt- faced. In the beginning, they arranged to meet in Europe in December. “Their emails became coy as the end of December approached. ‘Maybe we’ll even fall in love,’ Matt wrote-a bit jarringly, Sharada felt-in an email she received in Aix-en-Provence” (Thapa 188). Soon after their meeting, they lose interest in each other and find it hard to adjust to their cultural differences. On many occasions, Sharada finds Matt’s attitude irritating, and he seems to be misunderstanding things she tries to express. The sudden changes in views, ideas, culture, and lifestyle make them confused, which sometimes leads to in-betweenness and dislocation of culture. George Modelski holds the view that “Globalisation is transformational-institutional, because it traces successive steps in what we might call the development of a planetary constitutional design” (Modelski 14).

Thapa highlights the change in cultural perspectives that Nepalis within and outside Nepal go through in contemporary times while portraying the insight of an individual in their dual identity. She has put together a new consciousness- a consciousness of the border identity of contemporary Nepalis through her works. Change is therefore a subjective constant, and it means different things to different individuals. To some people, change is a welcome respite, whereas, to some, it is only a hesitant alternative to adopting the means to achieve things. One of the major improvements or changes that brought stability to the nation due to globalisation is

economic migration. It has indeed become the central part of the Nepali identity and has helped in shaping who they are. The nation's lack of opportunities and corrupt government within the nation did not improve for the nation while economic migration has become a part and partial of Nepali existence. "Migration is an integral part of all societies and those that have little movement of their populations are also likely to be stagnant economically" (Skeldon 157). The characters in Thapa's works are emblematic of new Nepalis who walk out of the old customs for a change or who are adapting to change. Mostly, the changes culminate in longing to belong where they live or whether it is their birthplace or their diaspora. They are Nepalis who adapt themselves to the new environment where new names and new cultures are the divided milestones of progression. Towards the end of the stories, Thapa's characters become integrated personalities and ultimately blend with the ethos of the globalised milieu wherever they settle. They underscore their fluidity and flexibility even as they position their identity as a resistance against social norms and the impacts of globalisation. In this vein, David Punter elaborates on how modernity paves a new way by a change in order to progress and writes:

Modernity is different from the past but also, more crucially, it is not merely the same as 'the present'. It is therefore always different from 'what is', it comes to challenge stasis and to point up the ways in which even the present is passing away under the tides of the new (8).

This fluidity resonates in the text, exemplified by the contemporary Nepali women in *All of Us in Our Own Lives*. Thapa, through the character Sapana Karki, highlights younger generations of Nepalis who build their future through education and also educating others. Her life in the village depicts the country's backwardness, where she still has to use "Petromax and slipped in between the mean, frozen sheets" at night during the winter season (Thapa 27). The village life in the story portrays the harshness of surviving in a poor nation, where one has to go through many hurdles. Despite many obstacles and sufferings, Sapana's dream for progression and change can be seen by the way she works hard to achieve it. As a young girl, Sapana teaches and imparts knowledge to her fellow women in her village, which makes all the difference. Educating and empowering one another through their small committee

becomes the first step towards development. Their involvement in forming a committee affects the very dynamics and nature of their increasing networks and linkages outside their culture. Towards the end of the story, every character becomes economically independent and emotionally stronger as they experience and learn new things from their shared experiences. Globalisation is therefore one of the means of change that brings a huge transformation in the lives of contemporary Nepalis. Their stories bring forth contemporary Nepalis who represent independence, boldness, and strong personalities of the globalised era. The mode of the depiction of Nepali society in the book also shows several changes in lifestyles, adaptation, and hybridisation with new cultures. It emphasises the struggles of an individual in contemporary times who tries to build their future despite the socio-political issues of Nepal. It enumerates the changes that a literary work about Nepal undergoes in contemporary settings. Globalisation as a process expands the scope and speed of cultural interactions across societal boundaries. No doubt, globalisation leads to the homogenisation of cultures in some significant aspects throughout the world. It involves interdependency, reciprocity, and exchange of mutual skills, language, and culture in a large measure. Thus, the changes and awareness Nepal has experienced and the ongoing transformations within Nepali society are portrayed by Thapa in the book. Her presentations of characters like Gyanu, Ava Berriden, Indira Sharma, and Sapana Karki, who manage to survive in their changed situations, are people who adopt their new selves without totally losing their identity. The loss of cultural identity has been a serious issue in a globalised world.

From the time of economic migration that took place in Nepali society, it has resulted in innovative social constructions and practices. Thus, economic migration plays a significant role in the building of a nation as well as the economic stability of an individual. The rate of return of the diaspora is also minimal in comparison to the outflow, resulting in having different citizens in a different nation. In this direction, Nepalis from around the world began to evolve new cultural traits that are a mixture of two worlds. On the other hand, the migration of Nepalis over the globe brings stability and development in various spheres. In *Mustang Bhot in Fragments*, Thapa evokes the importance of migration for the Bhotias of the Mustang region. Even

though they had to leave and walk miles and miles in search of food and jobs, some changes were seen within the region. She writes:

People had gone the way of money, and whether that Hinduised them or westernised them or Nepalised them didn't matter much. Their exposure brought back into the restricted area fragments of the world: transistor radios, smokeless stoves, electricity, running shoes, windbreakers, and new languages- Nepali, Hindi, some English (77).

From the stories of the Bhotias, it is clear that economic migration has indeed changed contemporary Nepali's livelihood. It plays a key role within the Nepali community. It is seen that more than half of the nation's income comes from the remittances sent from abroad by their families. In one of the reputed English newspapers of Nepal, "The Kathmandu Post," Tsering Ngodup Lama writes, "...every household has at least one member working abroad...Remittance money is the single largest contributor to Nepal's GDP" (Lama 1).

To elucidate upon the cultural facts and lifestyles of Nepalis, Thapa uses human relationships and human survival of contemporary times to highlight the reality of Nepal in *All of Us in Our Own Lives*. Globalisation has brought various changes in the lives of various characters in the story. Gyanu represents one such character who is not afraid of a change. He is a chef in a foreign land, unlike men of traditional Nepal, who feel that cooking is only a duty meant for women. This hybrid space of the contemporary world with its global links and a new culture is what Gyanu makes his home. His diasporic identity in Dubai is connected with the opportunities and achievements that he finds more rewarding than those of his sister Sapana's aspirations in community service in Nepal. The diasporic identity that Gyanu has is the outcome of an intersection of cultural and psychological forces. The hybrid urban space can accommodate various conflicting and struggling stories of migrant workers yet, Gyanu is allowed to do things he wants to do in life. The merging of two cultures or spaces liberates him to achieve his goals and pursue his realms, which he could not do in Nepal.

Globalisation has thus offered interconnectedness with new cultures, leading

to an amalgamation of new values and ideas, thereby creating a ‘third space.’ This third space, in Bhabha’s theory of hybridity, suggests that new identities are created through the intermingling of cultures. It explains an ambiguous area that develops when two or more individuals or cultures interact. Gyanu and Maleah’s love story also offers profound insights into the intricate dynamics and pluralistic dimensions underlying identity formation in a diasporic context. They accept their cultures and find solace in each other’s company. “He found escape from his past in Maleah” (Thapa 4). The feeling of being confused and being different in a new space gives them new identity and independence in various aspects. The intermingling of culture can be depicted in the way both of them cook for each other and share their cuisine every day while living in their rented flat in Dubai. In “Dissemination: Time, narrative and the margins of the modern nation,” Homi Bhabha writes:

The subject of the discourse of cultural difference is dialogical or transferential in the style of psychoanalysis. It is constituted through the locus of the Other which suggests both that the object of identification is ambivalent, and, more significantly, that the agency of identification is never pure or holistic but always constituted in a process of substitution, displacement or projection (Bhabha 233).

Gyanu and Maleah’s relationship becomes stronger as they share cultures and accept one another despite their differences. As food represents one’s culture and identity, both of them used to make dishes with spices and ingredients that represent their respective cuisines. Their love for their cuisine shows their love for their culture, respectively, which symbolises the intermingling of two cultures encompassing themes of love and hybridity. Maleah used to cook “sea bass for Gyanu, infusing his room with the aroma of coconut, lemongrass, lime leaf: evocations of her fishing village...Gyanu also cooked: he made meals flavoured with fenugreek and mustard, turmeric and fried chives, the hard rock and soil of his childhood in Nepal” (Thapa 4). Gyanu’s emptiness and alienated self become fulfilled only when he is around Maleah. Their relationship portrays the changing perspectives of contemporary societies, who are not afraid to cut off the age-old traditions. The traditional Nepali society adopts strict rules when dealing with marriages. In the book, *Nepali Cultural*

Orientation (2009), it states that:

Marriages in Nepal are considered sacred and divine...they are carefully planned to take place between members of the same ethnic group and cast. If members of different castes marry, both the husband and wife may be disowned by their respective families, with no future social contact allowed between them (99).

Contemporary Nepalis, despite societal pressure and traditional norms, have become more informed, educated, enlightened, and connected with the outside world than before. Globalisation has brought changes in their social perceptions in forming new ideologies. In a traditional family structure, important decisions in the family were only a task advocated for men, while women indulged only in house chores and looking after children. Changes are now seen in gender roles where both men and women perform chores without labelling it only a woman's duty. In most societies, a woman has always been the object of male subjectivity and has been defined in terms of her relation to male needs. Her social role and position in society are also assigned by the rules and laws of society. The general concept of male supremacy considers women as an object, and there is always consistent subject deprivation of women in society. In the context of Nepali society, the position of women has always been contradictory. Traditional Hindu households still follow strict rules. "Gender problems in Nepal differ considerably according to community in Nepal. However, with over 80% of the population of the country professing Hinduism, the problems of women in Hindu society are common to most women in Nepal" (Gall 720). Contrary to that, the impact of globalisation is causing the Nepali community's attitude toward broader perspectives and replacing the age-old traditional norms imposed upon women within the society. *All of Us in Our Own Lives* brings out stories of contemporary Nepali women from different parts of the world who represent women in a globalised world. Women in Nepal have long been subjected to deep-rooted cultural biases that perpetuate the valuing of sons over daughters and are often seen as an economic burden by their families. They were not allowed to socialise or be involved in any kind of socio-political fields, nor were they able to pursue higher studies or set their careers. Even in the process of decision-making about their

marriage, they have to obey the rules made for them. The household constitutes the ideological ground on which gender differences and women's oppression are constructed. Likewise, many of the minor women characters in the book also live anonymous lives within an oppressive environment. They are still governed by various taboos and patriarchal traditions and are specifically viewed and scrutinised as objects of speculation. Thapa's women protest not only for equality but for the right to be acknowledged as individuals. In the present situation, the women's movement has assumed an individualistic nature where women demand human rights and personal independence while dismissing the erstwhile socially defined roles. However, this does not imply that women today wish to disturb the existing social and economic parameters but are aware of their exploitation and conscious of their rights. Thus, the Nepali women presented in Thapa's works behave unlike the ones in traditional novels where women were portrayed only as objects and subjugated in the name of following the culture and tradition. Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* conveys that a woman's identity is other and her fundamental alienation derives in part from her body, especially her reproductive capacity. As an existentialist, she sees women as having a moral choice and asserts that they are women of substance, not merely sex objects or sacrificing persons in the family. Likewise, Thapa also observes the fact that women in a globalised era are no less than men. In the book, she represents how women, after gaining education, overturned their status within their household and society. Indira Sharma and Sapana Karki in *All of Us in Our Own Lives* represent a remarkable change in the role and status of women in Nepali society. Indira's economic independence and Sapana's new form programme to lift the rural Nepali women gave way to women's rights, freedom, and empowerment within the society. On the other hand, the book provides considerable evidence that there is still a distinctive division of gender in contemporary Nepali society. Marginalisation and domination of women epitomise the deep-rooted social hierarchy and prejudices Nepali society has upon their women. Foregrounding marginalised voices and the status of women in Nepal, Thapa's works underscore literature's capacity to confront social evils and illuminate overlooked perspectives.

Thapa has not only highlighted the positive impacts of globalisation in her

works but also tries to make her audience aware of the negative impacts led by the exposure of globalisation and interconnectedness in the present times. Migrating to another region or nation brings economic stability to an individual or the nation, and it also leads a person to an unwanted or unavoidable situation. With the growth and changes within Nepali society, there is increasing concern over the rate of crime. In a globalised world, various crimes are occurring daily in the name of migration, jobs, and education. One such crime is the trafficking of women and girls from Nepal to various nations. Young girls and women are offered jobs and good income by the trafficker, especially those families who are uneducated and economically backward. Such mishappenings show that migrating to other nations can also be a risk if it is not enquired properly. The Nepal-India border has been regarded as one of the high-alert zones globally where thousands of girls and women are sold or abducted every year. The open border system of the India- Nepal border has caused several issues leading to the high amount of crime rates in both countries. Pannalal Dhar in “Nepal: Indo-Nepal Relations” writes:

According to Nepal the open border has posed a problem in distribution of citizenship documents in Nepal and without regulation India’s complaint of terrorists operating from Nepal may not be met effectively. It would appear that only a visa system could effectively check the free flow but that will need a vast infrastructure for each country (381).

As the demand for domestic workers is high in foreign countries, every year women and girls migrate to different nations with the hope of a better future legally. A majority of women and girls, especially from rural regions, are kidnapped, sold, and bluffed by manpower and traitors within and outside the nation illegally. In the book, *All of Us in Our Own Lives*, one of the characters named Surya exemplifies thousands of Nepalis who faced such issues. Her story is tantamount to being the victim of trafficking when a manpower agent from Kathmandu sent her to India. Being the eldest daughter in her family, Surya decided to migrate to India after discussing with her parents and the agents with whom she exchanged money and documents for a new job in Delhi, the capital city of India. While leaving her home, she tells her parents that she will “be the son you never had...I’ll send money home

so that Chandra and little Tara can study” (Thapa 11). Surya, due to her low economic situation, made up her mind to move out of the nation to build not only her future but her family too. She sacrificed her education for both of her sisters, Chandra and Tara’s future. When Surya’s parents “phoned the agent, they found his line disconnected. Neither they nor the other families ever heard from their daughters again” (Thapa 11). Madan Gopal Shrestha in “Role of Friends of Sankhu on Safe Migration and Prevention of Human Trafficking” writes:

...unsafe foreign labor migration has landed many innocent Nepalese workers in the hands of unscrupulous persons who are subjecting them all sorts of exploitation including trafficking in the name of foreign employment. There is possibility of workers being trafficked at various points of foreign labor migration, namely-before departing for the destination country, during departure and working at the destination country (Shrestha 101 and 102).

Towards the end of the story, they receive a letter from Surya that makes her family emotional. She writes:

...in a town called Ghaziabad, near India’s capital, Delhi. This was where the middleman had taken her, right at the start. She worked as a maidservant in the house of a wealthy master. Over the years, she’d worked for other masters too. Her present master paid her modestly, but didn’t work her too hard (Thapa 135).

In the end, with the help of Ava Berriden and the non-government organisation of Kathmandu, they located Surya. The story of Surya depicts the realities of the citizens of Third World nations where human trafficking occurs daily. Thapa warns her audience about the dark realities of migrating to different nations, which can be sometimes dreadful and unexpected. Prativa Subedi in *Nepali Women Rising* also deals with the status of Nepali women and their situations in the present day. She gives voice to the challenges and sufferings society has imposed upon her for decades and highlights the dark realities to her audience and writes, “According to different researchers, 5,000-7,000 Nepali girls are sold every year in India alone. Not only are they easily taken across the border, but they are also trafficked inside Nepal

itself, despite the fact that prostitution and trafficking are illegal both here and in India” (Subedi 23). Nepal has been in a pathetic situation where a large number of people are involved in such crimes. Women from every age group are exploited and sold every year in large numbers. Indrani Sinha in “Women, Globalization and Trafficking” writes about the consequences of migration and the plight of women in India and writes that “Globalization hits the poor the hardest, and among them, it hits women even harder...women have become vulnerable to trafficking for commercial exploitation, which is a huge and thriving market in all parts of India” (Sinha 97 and 98). Women, along with men, are also exploited and suppressed both inside and outside their native lands. The negative impact of globalisation navigates how much change it has brought into the lives of Nepalis globally. Nepalis have been experiencing a dislocated identity within their land as well as in a foreign land. Thapa’s works evoke the traditional power structure where caste and class struggle always sent the Nepali society into turmoil. Adding to that, the negative impacts of globalisation have rendered serious effects on them. It has adversely affected people who work under strict and unjust officials. Hierarchies of control, income inequalities, and discrimination are hence seen by Marxists as oppression in the name of globalisation or development. Thapa’s works are hence closer to the Marxist approach of power structure in a capitalist society in which she has incorporated the lives of immigrants and migrant workers who suffer and survive in their diasporic situations. The book, *Tilled Earth: Stories*, is among her works in which she has highlighted various contemporary issues that Nepalis are undergoing throughout their lives. One of the stories, “The Eldest Son Thinks of Home,” highlights the homesickness and nostalgia a Nepali youth had about his homeland, Nepal. Here, the unnamed protagonist goes to Chicago in search of a job and writes about his daily life to his father at home in Nepal. He faces culture shock and many difficulties in his host land and experiences things that are alien to him. He exclaimed, “I saw a ten-year old screaming at his mother” (Thapa 171). Life in a foreign land becomes shocking and puzzling for him. He “looked for some pure emotion and tried not to stare at lovers embracing” (Thapa 171). Emotions and feelings were not expressed publicly in Nepal, and foreigners embracing each other passionately became a new experience for him. He also told his father that he will soon send half of his first

month's salary after he gets a job. In the end, he also adds how much he misses his homeland and says, "I pray all is well in the village. The tile flooring of my rented room reminds me of the corner shop where I used to buy you loose sticks of Yak cigarettes" (Thapa 171). The boy portrays the lives of migrant workers whose lives are neither dramatic nor melodramatic but rather an intense world. It describes how the concept of home manifests through the memory of the diasporic people in a new environment. The promise to send money to his father despite being jobless highlights the displaced Nepali reality. Thapa has thus exposed the unexplainable situation encountered by diasporic Nepalis. Day by day, millions of Nepalis from Nepal and other nations are migrating, and most of them are oppressed and exploited by their superiors in their workplace and host land. Thus, various non-governmental organisations and other unions are organised to support the workers who suffer from various forms of discrimination or difficulties. In *Globalization and Labour in the Twenty-First Century*, Verity Burgmann writes about how globalisation has affected the working class around the world. She implies that the working class are exploited and subjugated by the private and government superiors in contemporary times. For Burgmann, globalisation "is knowingly pursued by those who gain from it. It is a strategy of capital to subdue labour internationally to increase profit levels" (8). Due to the increase in crime rates and injustices caused to migrant workers, rules and regulations regarding migrating to or moving to another region or crossing borders have become stricter than before in Nepal. "More people than ever before are moving throughout the world, so states are enacting even tougher border control and immigration laws at the same time as barriers to capital flows have been significantly reduced or completely abandoned" (Burgmann 138).

Thapa, without any inhibition, focussed more on gender issues like marginalisation and oppression of women in the patriarchal value system. She highlights the existing social orders and causes of women's liberation by depicting through her stories the plight of Nepali women in Nepali society. Despite being educated and financially independent, most women still have to yield and surrender to the so-called oppressions led by traditions and society. In the case of migration or working in a foreign land, the number of males is more in number than females,

which represents the norms and values of the power structure within Nepali society. “Despite the equal sex ratio in Nepal, extreme forms of gender based violence (GBV) and discriminations still do exist in Nepal...The Interim Plan has committed to eliminate gender inequality through the legal reforms” (Upadhyay 95). Thapa has come forward to upgrade the status of women in Nepali society. She is never satisfied with the stand of Nepali women, so she gives a realistic observation of society and feminine sensibility, which makes her unique among other contemporary writers of Nepal. Though there is no overt feminism in her works, she tries to achieve a texture of sociological realism and thus trace the pattern of women’s role in the changing form of Nepali society. The negative impact of the globalised era has affected women to a greater extent than men. Likewise, the crisis of adaptation is deeper in the lives of women than those of men within Nepali society. Thapa shows skilfulness in her selection of characters and situations and points out unacknowledged and undervalued topics about Nepali society and its effects on the society. Her women characters represent a wide spectrum: peasants, gender experts, immigrants, migrant workers, and rural and city bred. The major female protagonists are usually educated, intelligent, middle-class, urban, and career women who are familiar with modern thoughts and trends. They face the challenges and try to find a solution to the situation they are placed in. Thapa’s women aspire and attempt to strive and be true to their selves and lives not merely as wives, daughters, or mothers but as individuals in their own right. They resist the wrongs within the culturally determined space and gain an identity of their own. Thapa’s works, therefore, offer different analyses of the causes and nature of women’s status and thus of the possible solutions. It is concerned with women’s equality and seeks to represent a realistic picture of Nepal and the Nepalis who are easily beaten from every angle. This accentuates that Nepal cannot get its full independence without women’s liberation from patriarchal authorities and the constraints of society. Deepa Pradhan writes about Thapa and says:

Her subject of choice in creative writing whether it is a fiction or non-fiction, is human freedom, especially psychological freedom and its elusiveness. The main message in her creative writing is to encourage the youth to create a

new society, which is the real challenge (Pradhan 189).

Indira Sharma's life in *All of Us in Our Own Lives* proved that Nepali women have the power to go against the norms of patriarchy and dare to express their emotions and feelings to the world. In contrast to her mother-in-law's ideologies, her actions reveal the changing face of Nepali women in the globalised era. She felt the need to seek her own identity, to determine her position in the scheme of family and society. One of the most important measures for women's empowerment in the story is education, as it becomes an escape route and independence for every character. "The underlying cause of the inequality of women is that their roles are primarily domestic (mother, wife, homemaker, subsistence farmer), and although these are vital to the well-being of their families and to society, they are undervalued and unpaid" (Lindsey 139). Little was known or heard about the plight of women in Nepal. Thapa's aim is to explore the female psyche, boldly countering male prejudice and revealing a chain of women marching from tradition to modernity. Elisha Shrestha, in one of the reputed daily newspapers of Nepal, 'The Kathmandu Post,' writes, "The presence of women at the top, even in a position as symbolic as that of the President, has not translated into similar successes for female leaders in other state organs" (4). Changes regarding women's status in Nepal are slow, but contemporary Nepali writers are providing a vast collection of outpourings from the unheard voices of women, which, in a way, is a positive aspect of globalisation in a literary genre. The empowering factor in Thapa's stories is that her women are not seen as victims but as courageous and strong humans. As the story has a contemporary activist background, the involvement and agreement under the umbrella of the foreign authorities regarding women's empowerment later became the stepping stone for women who are in need. Ava Berriden is one such character who is strong and represents the voice of contemporary women. She breaks through the traditional image of a self-denying woman by opting out to live separately once she realises that her relationship with her husband is meaningless. Eventually, after going back to Nepal, she comes out towards self-discovery by helping people who are more lost in their lives, which gives her a sense of complete independence. In the story, Sapana, who is a girl from rural Nepal, exemplifies the large mass of underprivileged women in

Nepal. She is not at all a girl easily defeated by circumstances, but her quest to succeed makes her more flexible in the poverty-stricken nation. Confronted with family issues in the absence of her brother, Gyanu, misfortunes and natural calamities like earthquakes cross her path. Her spirit of acceptance and endurance helps her to change her future and emerge as more positive. She also attains clarity in accepting her place and position in the orbit of her family and later in society. Education becomes her goal in bringing equality and peace within her small village and helps people seek to fulfil their career goals. Undoubtedly, women in the story are victims of social and economic pressures and disparities, but education and economic independence change their outlook and their attitude towards relationships, marriage, and sex. Thus the process of their emergence in a new form brightens with new thoughts and ideas, which are the positive impacts of globalisation. Prativa Subedi in “Women and Politics” describes Nepali women’s sufferings while they were treated and given equal rights in the field of politics at some point in time:

As far back as 1814, Nepali women exhibited their strength in the historical battle of Kalanga Fort at Nalapani against the British and their canons by using khukuris (knives) and stones. In 1917, the first women’s organization “Women Committee” was formed in Siraha District with the purpose of making people aware of their political and social conditions (129).

Thapa’s endeavour to write about her people’s lives is an acknowledgement of her bond with her birthplace, which has changed, shifted, and built with time. Being of Nepali descent, her choice to write in English surely is not just her love for the English language but also her intention to reach out to the larger reading public across the world. It is, therefore, not just an act of writing about Nepal and the Nepalis but a creative urge to reveal to the world the seamy and unheard-of issues in contemporary Nepal. Elen Turner, in a book review of Thapa’s *The Tutor of History*, writes, “If you can only read one Nepali author, make it Manjushree Thapa...This novel is a good way to get a better understanding of Nepal’s complicated political situation without turning to dry political histories” (Turner).

Thapa’s voice is distinct and consistent, and her interpretations and

justifications subtly reveal information that is not usually displayed. When looking at advancements and exposures in different spheres, education and economic migration have been regarded as solving fundamental problems of the Nepalis. The intermingling with new cultures and education has changed their worldview and values. “The complexity of a culture is to be found not only in its variable processes and their social definitions-traditions, institutions, and formations-but also in the dynamic interrelations, at every point in the process, of historically varied and variable elements” (Williams 121). As the concept of identity is complex, it refers to how one identifies as well as defines oneself about others. Contemporary Nepali identities have changed and thus distinguish themselves from others by defining their individuality in the globalised era. On a positive note, contemporary Nepalis are seen to progress and reshape their identity as globalisation has become a foundational force in uplifting them.

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‘Displacement’ or ‘dislocation’ refers to changes or movements from one place or situation to another. In the context of Nepal, the everyday struggles under the forces of domination, alienation, and marginalisation are reasons for displacement. Such challenges and struggles lead to positive and negative impacts on the people and nation. The reason behind Thapa’s projection of displaced Nepalis is to reconstruct the historical narrative of Nepal in which a realistic representation of the country and its people is unheard of. This chapter offers an insightful perspective of Thapa on the socio-cultural and political displacement of the Nepalis as an act of resistance and counter-discourse. It offers insightful perspectives on Thapa’s literary narratives while focusing contemporary complexities on the cultural dislocation of Nepalis globally. The primary texts incorporated in this chapter observe Thapa’s representation of displaced Nepalis who are living under the forces of postcolonial conditions. It also unveils the significant role of migration in shaping the diasporic sensibilities of Nepalis.

Thapa, through her works, has tried to shed light on the bitter past of Nepal’s law and order to a large audience. Her self-imposed duty as a Nepali writer is to bring out attitudes and experiences of displaced Nepalis’ lives into the literary world. To her, writing and contributing literature is to promote and propagate the ideas and culture of her birthplace, Nepal. Her assessments of ‘What is wrong?’ or ‘Why it is so?’ or ‘What might be done?’ are reasoned, balanced, and clear in her writing. Bringing out the deep cultural undertones and political anxiety, Thapa portrays how much displacement has affected the Nepalis globally. For her, displacement asserts the conditions of mankind, which are caused in the form of physical, psychological, and emotional displacement. It can be regarded as a process of every individual as well as a group of people’s phase of life, where he or she becomes affected. As a writer, Thapa has a conception of an appropriate tone, style, pace, and detail.

When dealing with migration or displacement, people are no longer rooted in one single place but have different engagements and obligations in at least two and often more places. Many things changed during the movement from one place to another. It is hence an old established social practice not only in Nepal but also in other nations as well. Migrating to a foreign land has become an attraction, especially

for the new generations of Nepal as it allows them the opportunity to build their careers and security in life. People no longer try to settle in one place where disappointments and insecurities arise now and then. Thapa, therefore, delved deep into the Nepali diaspora, which has pictured their varied experiences with great adaptability and maintains a realistic representation. By drawing on the concept of diasporic writings, an extensive range of Indian diaspora writers set out the same ways that Thapa has traced in her works. V.S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Bharati Mukherjee, and other Indian diaspora writers have a perpetual quest for their roots, mythologise their history, and realise the importance of cultural encounters and the bicultural pulls, which finally helps in the emergence of new hybridity. There is an element of creativity present in the diasporic writings, and this creation stands as compensation for the many losses suffered. As such, Thapa's writings have produced a clear perception of Nepal. Her ability to explore the past and attempts to reconstruct it through her historical narratives bring forth the ongoing need for caution from loss of identity.

Thapa's works foreshadow the issues of identity that inform the readers about Nepal's socio-political and cultural realities. Even while she is writing or presenting history against the backdrop of her works, her creative energy is seen to shift and differ between the 'then' and 'now.' This is evident in most of her works wherein she brings out the historical facts and relates them to the attitude of the contemporary society. In her historical and recent narratives, she is thus making use of fiction to postulate culture as the basis of Nepali identity. The sense of displacement she conveys in her works serves as a representation of contemporary Nepali sensibility. Thapa has therefore intentionally alerted attention to particular aspects of the importance of highlighting and reflecting on various changes within Nepali society. What becomes important is that Thapa is a cosmopolitan intellectual who represents Nepal to a predominantly Nepali and Western audience from a safe perch. Thapa, like other diaspora writers, is based in the West but offers fiction of the Nepali periphery to the audience worldwide. One of the reasons behind this is that, for her, the circumstantial, political, and social determinants of Nepal and the Nepalis are inescapable. In the current political milieu, she has intentionally or inadvertently

become the informed intellectual who represents Nepal. Therefore, because of her lived experience, her multicultural background, and the plethora of assumptions are associated with it. Thus, she automatically assumes the role of the cultural informant who represents Nepal to the West.

The role and impact of literature from Nepal are now being recognised in an academic platform. In fact, in contemporary times, more writings in the English language, as well as Nepali language and other translated works, are generated from the nation. Even though Nepal has different ethnic groups, religions, cultures, and languages, they do share the same tinge of crises. Just like Thapa, there are a few other Nepali diaspora writers who belong to diverse spaces, cultures, languages and beliefs that collectively represent the ethos of Nepal and the stories of the Nepalis. Prajwal Parajuly, Rabi Thapa, Shradha Ghale, Mahesh Pudyal, Yuyutsu Sharma, and Krishna Bajgai are among those who based their works on contemporary social and political issues of Nepal and also dramatised the experiences of both the Nepalis and the Nepali diaspora. In an interview, hosted by Sangita Swechcha in “Global Voice” with one of the Nepali diaspora writers, Krishna Bajgai, when asked about the global Nepali diaspora’s advancement, he says:

In the past decade, the Nepali Diaspora has remarkably extended its presence all over the world. One notable aspect of the diaspora community is that they encounter difficulties in preserving their identity and ethnicity while also aspiring to integrate with the mainstream population of their host countries...Through literature, the Nepali diaspora expresses its struggles and experiences, contributing not only a fresh perspective to Nepali mainstream literature but also aiding in the preservation and restoration of their own identity and recognition (Swechcha).

History is a crucial element in almost all postcolonial and postmodernist writings, and how history is approached in postcolonial writing is rather complex. Likewise, Thapa works in an attempt to provide greater truth to Nepali images and the history of Nepal. In its sheer expansion and sprawling range of cultural sources, as well as its attempt to include as much of Nepal’s vast cultural identity and contemporary history

as possible, Thapa's works complete a reflection of the life and character of the nation. She has been successful in dismantling and unmasking the nation's history and its impacts on contemporary Nepali lives. Drawing on an extensive range of sources from Thapa's works, it is commonly argued that the history of Nepal and its people was based on the interpretation of the so-called elite of Nepal. These findings have important implications for understanding and observing the reality of the Nepalis. In the introductory part of the book, *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy* (2005), Thapa starts the book by writing, "The events in Nepal mystified the world, including Nepalis. The truth is that this is a complicated country..." (11). Thapa holds the view that her works give an insight into the issues and problems that plague Nepali society. In an era of globalisation, Nepal still lacks multiple means and measures to eradicate social evils that cause the displacement of its citizens. Lack of economic progress has increased social inequalities and produced further marginalisation of minority groups throughout the country. The inclusion of the displacement of Nepalis from Nepal as well as from their host lands is not a recent engagement for Nepali writers in the Nepali language. They have engaged their time in researching struggles and given voice to the struggles that Nepalis have been facing globally. Their stories share a common bond of a deep sense of rootedness with Nepal- the search for identity and the unheard stories suppressed under power and politics. Thapa's contribution of highlighting the Nepali realities in the English language gives a unique flavour and a voice to the vast audience who are not aware of Nepal and its culture.

Thapa offers an insightful portrayal of displaced Nepalis in *The Tutor of History* (2001). It is replete with references that conjure up images of contemporary Nepali society in which images of rallies, meetings, campaigns, gossip, sufferings, and disappointments of people reflect the harsh lives of Nepalis within Nepal. Most of the characters in the book represent displaced citizens who have begun to take new steps in their lives. Some had already taken steps in their new phase of life, while some of them were more puzzled. Bringing out issues like multiparty politics and the atmosphere of election campaigns, it shows Thapa's intellectual level about Nepal's politics. Her depictions of the turmoil regarding power structure and politics

display knowledge of the socio-political issues of Nepal. Contrary to that, people often come together to support each other. Hardships and sufferings had made them kind to each other, "...there was a rich humanity in Khaireni Tar. In fact there was so much humanity here it was a challenge at times to attend to each individual life. Society was dense, obligations were aplenty...People were big-hearted here. In times of need, they always helped each other" (Thapa 17). In the book, Om Gurung is one of the characters who is filled with love and compassion towards others, displaying noble people from rural regions, whose motive in life is only to bring happiness to others' lives. He represents the global migrant workers, who left their birthplace to establish a secure life in foreign lands. After his retirement, he wandered for more than fourteen to fifteen years "through Kathmandu taking on business ventures which brought him money but no inner satisfaction-he'd finally settled back in his own birthplace" (Thapa 16). As his wife, Asha, had told him to remain in his birthplace and use his ideas and energy in the town, he "decided to spend all his savings on an English-medium boarding school with standards as high as any Kathmandu school: the Pure Hearts Boarding School" (Thapa 17). Even after five years of opening his boarding school, Om still cannot find improvements regarding financial matters. His presence in Khaireni Tar portrays people with firm determination who manage to tackle life even after various hardships they had experienced in a foreign land. He represents contemporary Nepalis who are open and eager to help others despite being displaced in various spheres. Thapa balanced her intellectual skills and raised a clear view of what Nepal has become in the present days while focusing on the emotions and feelings of citizens from the marginalised to people from different backgrounds of society. "The conflicts that produce the canon occur on the levels of production and reception; they involve writers' confrontations with inherited tradition and the evaluation of texts in relation to it" (Lawrence 2). The themes and motifs of the literary works of the past ages continue to strive for their influence on the literature of the present age. Thapa, on the other hand, does not repeat or follow the tradition of what the so-called Nepali elite writers did in the past. Her intention in her writings comes across creativity and reality in which her concerns touch upon ethnicity, belongingness, hybridity, and issues. Being a diaspora writer, most of her works are, to some extent, her reflections on life being a Nepali in a foreign land. "As a concept,

diaspora produces powerful insights into that world, but it can also produce some powerful distortions, depending on how the term is used and for what purpose” (Kenny). The diasporic identity carries its problematic conditions or situations in which the lives of a person in a diaspora are displaced and straddle between two worlds. “The quintessential diaspora literature involves an idea of a home land, a place from where the displacement occurs and narratives of harsh journeys undertaken on account of economic compulsions” (Gangopadhyay 212). Thapa introduces the problems of postcolonial identity using critical concepts such as social justice, democracy, and hybridity. She explores the problems of postcoloniality as one’s point of personal or national origin, the impossibility of finding and achieving personal and national authentic identity, and the problems in determining one’s personal and national history. Her representations of contemporary Nepali stories in her works are the embodiment of hybridity, as every aspect of their stories are instilled with the mixing and melding of various elements and characteristics.

In Nepal, people who are from underprivileged groups of society are not free to utilise their rights or get an opportunity for representation on various platforms. Despite being vulnerable in their land, they are displaced even outside the nation and are unable to cope with the new land and culture to where they have migrated or settled. It is explicit and clear in *Tilled Earth: Stories* (2007), in which Thapa expresses the lives of Nepalis caught in between Nepal and the host lands where they migrate. Most of the characters are disappointed by their situations and conditions in their lives. In one of the stories, “The Eldest Son Thinks of Home,” Thapa establishes a narrative of a Nepali in a foreign land who expresses his experiences and homesickness to his father. The complexities in the story are brought together and brought to life by Thapa through simple expressions and smooth narrative movements. Here, Thapa draws on how migration becomes an important cultural phenomenon in the formation of cultural identity for the Nepalis. Experiences of various new situations and several changes are met in a diaspora. Through the youths’ experiences, the story tells the emotions, vulnerability, needs, and struggles of a migrant’s life in a new environment. To keep hold of the values of the homeland in the new atmosphere, the youth in the story is seen expressing to his father his

confusion, amazement, hopes, and expectations of his new situation and says:

At Chicago's Lincoln Zoo, the tamarind monkeys with saffron tails and droopy white whiskers frisked about in a cage with a background of painted blue skies. The sky in the snow leopard's cage was cloudy. I saw a ten-year old screaming at his mother. I looked for some pure emotion and tried not to stare at lovers embracing...At night, in the drugstore, a sign announced it was National Ice Cream Month (Thapa 171).

The youth represent global immigrants and migrant workers who face culture shock in a new space. Despite the hardships and struggles in his new land, he is in the process of adjusting and giving hope and aspirations to his old father, who is in a third-world nation, where his other family members have to suffer and survive under harsh conditions. In a comforting tone, he even promised his father by saying, "Father, I'll send you half my first month's salary as soon as I find work" (Thapa 171). Such issues in contemporary Nepal are stories in every household. Thapa exposed the insecurities and emotions Nepalis have been facing in a diaspora. What is interesting in this situation is how Thapa has absorbed the cultural perspectives of both lands and can feel the nostalgia and the yearning of the migrants who seem helpless in their diaspora. She has attempted to look at literature as an expression of life through the medium of her works. It is for this reason that Thapa prepares her readers on what to expect about Nepal and the Nepalis who have been under various oppressive rules and regulations for decades. Her works seek to reflect how Nepal has failed to balance equal opportunities and give rights to the citizens. Dhruva Joshy in *Nepal's Republic and India: Corridors of Power* writes:

It is too early yet to conjecture on the future course of Nepali polity...A general hopelessness of thinking pervades national life. The political parties in their lust for power are unsavoury accomplices in bringing democracy to such an awkward predicament. They are the purveyors of hopelessness, fighting to sit at the captain's chair on the Titanic for a few more hours rather than man the bridge for insuring a successful passage to democracy (35).

Issues like identity, diaspora, exile, nationalism, and transnationalism have

been the focus of much critical attention in contemporary times and are portrayed by Thapa in the book *Seasons of Flight* (2010) as well. She has undertaken a variety of themes with the fictionalisation of historical facts and figures in her works. Among her themes, diaspora has played a significant role in expressing the Nepali identity. It has become an increasingly important area in applied linguistics and a more open-ended field of enquiry in recent years. It refers more to communities of individuals residing and working outside their country of origin, usually mediating through family and friends in their homelands. In the book, Thapa interweaves historical records of Nepal in which she highlights Nepal's national history regarding the Maoist insurgency of 1996 to 2006 and the tremors of earthquakes that struck Nepal occasionally at the backdrop of the story. Just as the book attempts to depict more accurate versions of Nepali history, Prema seeks to create her own familial identity through the narrative. Their movements to the neighbouring countries or the West pose cultural challenges and create crises regarding civilisational norms. Diasporic movements from the regions of Nepal are not a new thing, but these have not been in a critical discussion so far. Nepalis are not only dislocated due to various injustices in Nepal, but they are dislocated as well in foreign lands where they began to experience in-betweenness. To some extent, hybridity is now the lived reality of the Nepalis, and there is continued influence of other cultures in their host lands. A large number of Nepalis especially from Nepal migrate to various nations every year for employment prospects. Among them, the Middle East has had the highest number of Nepalis who prefer to migrate. With the advent of the coronavirus in the year 2020 to 2021, not only Nepalis were stuck and affected by the pandemic, but the whole world was suffering from different obstacles. During the pandemic, various issues of Nepali migrant workers were seen through social media. In "The Kathmandu Post," Chandan Kumar Mandal writes:

With one of the top labour destinations for Nepali migrant workers announcing a temporary ban, the fate of thousands of Nepali workers planning to migrate to the Gulf nation now hangs in the balance...Any upheaval in the gas rich nation will have serious ramifications for Nepal, which is the second largest source of labour for Qatar. Last fiscal year, a total

of 161,215 Nepali workers left for Qatar. More than 400,000 Nepalis live and work in Qatar (Mandal 1).

There are positive as well as negative impacts of migration, which has played a pivotal role in changing the lifestyles of Nepalis. To some degree, migrating to other nations and helping their families through remittance money becomes beneficial for the Nepalis, while on the other hand, the humility and harshness of being in a host land and surviving in a new environment is unimaginable. More than half of the Nepali citizens in Nepal depend upon the remittance money sent by their relatives from abroad. While the economic support through remittance has been useful for the receiver, some misuse the value of hard work their relatives have sent them from abroad. In an article in *The Kathmandu Post*, Tsering Ngodup Lama writes:

Numerous studies and reports have pointed out the pitfalls of remittance, primarily the fact that it is creating an unhealthy dependence and that the money sent back is not being used productively. Most reports show that remittance is used for consumption, with some even suggesting that remittance is leading Nepalis to work less (Lama 8).

On the contrary, Tsering Ngodup Lama further writes that women, especially from Jugepani, of Nawalpur District, one of the rural regions of Nepal, try hard to improve their lives by making good use of the remittance their husbands sent them from foreign lands. He writes that women like Phumisara Thapa from the region try to make good use of her time, her strength, and the remittance her husband sent into a profitable means and writes:

...women like Thapa are not sitting around, waiting for their husbands to send home money. What is happening here contradicts established opinion. The women from Jugepani have been using the remittance money sent by their husbands to start businesses, helping create a thriving local economy. Some of the women have even become successful enough to convince husbands to return home (Lama 8).

Economic migration has played a crucial role in changing the lives of millions of Nepalis. The Nepali diaspora is hence spread all over the world, trying to find their livelihood and security for their future and their families back in Nepal. Over time, migration has become the key to cultural change within Nepali society. In this regard, Prema in *Seasons of Flight* and other characters in *Tilled Earth: Stories* serve as Nepalis who experience changes in the process of migration. In the book, Thapa presents an expressive form of the diasporic lives of people from different parts of the country. The life of Prema exposes the present-day society of people who are away from their homeland in search of a well-settled life. It demonstrates the desire of Prema to settle down in the diaspora due to the instability of the socio-economic situation in her native land, Nepal. Using both Nepal and America, the story's setting with their religious diversities, social differences, and multiplicity allows the book to illustrate the struggles of forming a new identity in a new land. America, itself, is a hybrid of many nationalities that come together. Prema began to experience various folds of new things that gradually changed her perspectives and her lifestyle. Such a presentation of displaced characters gains immense importance if seen against the geo-political background of the vast country of Nepal. By examining the identity formation complexity of Prema in a new country, Thapa encapsulates diverse thematic agendas. In particular, a prominent thematic focus revolves around the exploration of both the personal and cultural identity of Prema in both worlds, i.e. Nepal and America. Here, Thapa attempts to analyse the existing reality about the globalised world. Prema remains confused by her own identity and describes her experience of how she has been called and mistaken by people in America with different identities. Being asked and questioned several times about her native country and her identity, she sometimes answered them with incorrect information by denoting that she is from India and she believes, "Americans had at least heard of India. She envied Indians this" (Thapa 12). Deeply disturbed by the incorrect portrayal of the Nepalis and Nepal as a country, she strongly feels that Nepalis have been dealt unfairly by foreigners all around the globe. The difficulties in determining one's identity remain central to the book, yet Prema embraces her various identities, realising that one of the inherent problems of contemporary society is the impossibility of finding and embodying one true, authentic identity. Thapa's

intention in portraying a displaced character like Prema in her work is to represent millions of Nepali youths who are in the same situation. Gurung (2004) discusses the numerous challenges faced by Nepali migrant workers both within and outside Nepal. These challenges include exploitation by recruitment agencies, fraudulent practices by both domestic and foreign agents, and exploitative labour conditions in destination countries.

Thapa sways the story of Prema between the past and the present, attempting to come to terms with the two worlds, one of nativity (Nepal) and the other of an immigrant in America. As the story goes on, Prema's journey and her quest for a new self transform into an independent self. The notion that Prema could embody a diverse, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-religious nation like Nepal and the Nepalis around the world encapsulates one of the book's fundamental concerns. The dynamic relationship between Prema's individual life and the collective life of America suggests that public and private will always influence one another, but it remains unclear whether they can be completely equated with one another. It attempts to create alternative perspectives on reality by blending the political and macrocosmic events with the personal and microcosmic life of Prema. Also, history as an objective arrangement of causes and effects is deconstructed through conceptual as well as formal means. Hence, in terms of forms and structures, the narrative jumps back and forth between the present and the past effectively, i.e. Nepal and America, rearranging history and memory to produce a new perspective of reality in the story. Memory thus activates the narrative, revealing the fluidity of memory as well as the choices that one makes in remembering the past in a particular way. Through the device of interlocking the destinies of millions of Nepali migrants and immigrants, Prema, like Thapa, becomes a historical witness to the emergence of a new Nepal whose citizens become dislocated not only in Nepal but in other nations as well. The bitter experiences in Nepal haunt Prema's life, which inspires her actions to move to a new country. Prema's story takes on new meaning as she attempts to discover the true point of her identity in diaspora.

Humankind lives in groups, and among groups, there are differences in origin, structure, and development. Based on such differences, societies have been

stratified as low and high. Class, estate, and caste are the important types of stratification found in societies, though one may also find differentiation based on race, religion, or language. Likewise, Nepali society is also a complex society and is characterised by a high degree of social stratification and inequality based on caste, religion, colour, region, and social origin. Most of Thapa's works describe Nepalis as the silenced victims of social hierarchy. Thapa has thus opened up perspectives on how the displacement of Nepalis started. Of her representation of chaotic, poverty-stricken worlds, injustices, and suppression by elites, the concepts and questions of identity and meaning of life unravel Thapa's creativity. The relationship between history and power is perhaps confronted with one of the oldest and most traditional subjects of historiography and the rule of the monarch as well. Thapa's creative skill of representing old and new cultural clashes of Nepalis shows the contemporary situations of Nepalis. The autocratic rule propagated by the Hindu rulers in Nepal, where monarchy and religion played firm roles in governance, thereafter was fuelled by ministerial rule. During the period of each ruler, harmony and identity within the nation were maintained strictly in Hindu laws. The rulers, therefore, use their power in a hierarchical framework of the Hindu caste structure. As such, after struggles and revolutions, democracy was restored in the 1990s. Since then, people who were suppressed under the rule and unjust laws started voicing their grievances. Susan Hangen in *Creating a "New Nepal": The Ethnic Dimension* writes, "During the Panchayat era (1962-90), the state solidified the idea of Nepal as a Hindu society and sought to create a culturally homogenous population. The state promoted the Hindu religion, the Hindu monarchy, and the Nepali language as signifiers of the national community" (12). The everlasting hatred and contrast between the so-called upper class and the lower class of Nepali society have aggravated over the years. Thus the basic device of Thapa's works is an opposition to the social hierarchy and the injustices done to the lives of millions of Nepalis. In this regard, T. Louise Brown writes:

Nepal's traditional, centralised and hierarchical political culture suggests that real decentralization will be difficult both to institute and to maintain. Previously marginalised groups have not been given greater access to the

political system because this would dilute the power of hill elites. And hill elites will be reluctant to surrender their own authority and control over the political system in so far as this will mean surrendering their monopoly over the nation's limited resources (Brown 218).

Criticism of the superior mentality of the Nepali elite in imposing the right to dominate over any weaker beings is a theme that Thapa incorporated in most of her works. According to her, it is where the displacement of Nepalis started leaving the people in a state of in-betweenness. *Mustang Bhot in Fragments* (1992) denotes an insight into how class hierarchy was prevalent even during her childhood. There is increasing concern that rural regions of Nepal have been excluded from different kinds of development schemes and upliftments by the ruling government. It is the social division that gives a deep and extended meaning to Marxism. The crisis in Marxism is not new and has reappeared periodically since the turn of the twentieth century and poses a different character than the issues surrounding socialism. First of all, since Marxism considers itself a critical or positive science, it is linked to socialist politics, which have a distinctly ideological character and are indirect. Patricia Waugh defines Marxist aesthetics as a theory, "to be sure- a way of thinking about literature and its sister arts; but it is also a praxis- a way of understanding the world, and thus of living and acting in it" (Waugh 150). Marxism must be understood as a special form of intentional action. As of now, the nature of science is unending self-transformation, and the meaning of human liberty is continually shaped and reshaped by the historical process in general and by class conflict in particular. Hence, it is class distinctions and the so-called law and order that have made the Nepalis' lives miserable. Marx's theory, which encompasses class conflicts and the exposing of the exploiting mentality of the capitalists, served as a powerful testament to the complex socio-political issue of Nepalis in Nepal. The displacement of Nepalis underscores the Marxist approach to the gender and class struggle. Foregrounding the marginalised voices, Thapa's works reveal the complex power dynamic and controversial history of Nepal, which results in the cultural dislocation of Nepalis. The concept of class has become a part of common usage in the contemporary world. Yet it is a difficult concept with a range of meanings varying

with the context of discourse. Thapa's assertion in her works signifies the class-based exploitation between the so-called high caste and the majority of other ethnic groups of Nepal. Their crises convey the idea that Nepalis strive for freedom and are living under the forces of the historical aspects of socio-cultural and political formations. In every society, it has always been women and children who suffer and are humiliated in every possible way. They are cast into difficult situations that lead to many injustices. Thapa depicts the patriarchal structures of domination and power of Nepal and the women's quest for meaningful identity in *All of Us in Our Own Lives* (2016), *The Tutor of History* (2001), and her other work through her women characters. In contemporary Nepal, the age-old traditional beliefs have not changed much among the Nepali orthodox Hindus. Despite the discrimination, violence, domination, and ill-treatment against women, fewer issues and headlines are heard or seen in the literary world or any other social media. Through the character Binita, in *The Tutor of History*, and other minor characters in the story, Thapa creates Binita's account to represent a realistic picture of Nepali women in Nepal who are still humiliated by masculine power and societal prejudices. Looking through a wider perspective, it is where displacement starts. Kate Millett in "Theory of Sexual Politics" writes:

The feeling that woman's sexual functions are impure is both world-wide and persistent. One sees evidence of it everywhere in literature, in myth, in primitive and civilized life. It is striking how the notion persists today...Nearly all patriarchies enforce taboos against women touching ritual objects (those of war or religion) or food. In ancient and preliterate societies women are generally not permitted to eat with men (Millet 47).

The theme of corrupted law and women's plight recurs in most of Thapa's works, which emphasises that Nepal cannot get its full power or independence from patriarchal authorities. To a large degree, the notion of dislocation forced the individual to seek out independence or a new identity. Contemporary Nepali women like Binita in *The Tutor of History*, Indira Sharma in *All of Us in Our Own Lives*, and Prema in *Seasons of Flight* have exhibited openness to change. Forced by changing circumstances and displacement, they all have accepted their new and unfamiliar roles and paths even in an environment where independence and self-assertion are

not possible to some degree. In Nepali society and culture, power, therefore, acts as a source of social, political, and legal justification to the monarch. Unless the culture of power is uprooted, history will rule the nation in the name of democracy. As such, the voice of the underprivileged of society and women will remain unheard. The age-old restrictions and laws implemented by the rulers and the government have led to limited rights for the citizens of Nepal in many ways. The measures introduced by the two-hundred-and-forty-year-old regime were built on domination and a hierarchical structure. The saga of constitutional development in Nepal is a case of systemic conflict between Nepalis' aspiration for democracy and the monarch's ambitions for unlimited power. Thus, these factors explain that the rules of the monarch have taken away the liberty, democracy, and development of Nepalis for decades. Thapa, in the book, *The Lives We Have Lost: Essays and Opinions on Nepal* (2011), mentioned how the power of Nepali rulers and the past wars within the nation had transformed Nepal, leading to displaced Nepalis all over the nation:

Too often, they have risked everything- the peace, the lives of Nepali citizens, the future-to attain, and hold on to, power- or at least to block their rivals from attaining and holding on to power. Only under pressure by the country's many civil rights, human rights, and political rights movements have they agreed to any progress...They have gone about creating a new Nepal in a mean and miserly spirit, always poisoning the joy (1).

In response to the unending wars and unsystematic law and order of Nepal, Thapa in her works demonstrates how Nepal and its law have been responsible for creating a nation that makes the citizens displaced in every way. Power is indeed tied with the history of Nepal, where the rulers were powerful in maintaining law and order over their inferiors, namely the citizens of Nepal. As such, she exposed the socio-political structure of Nepal and the dynamics of unequal power as both, the oppressed and oppressor, the subaltern and the superior. *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy* (2005), one of Thapa's non-fiction works, exposes the socio-political issues of Nepal and its people's lives where the power- monarchy fails to build the nation and meet the needs and rights of the citizens. The book gives an insight into a troubled nation while rendering a sensitive phase of Nepal's history. "...democracy

has disappointed countless Nepalis who saw the ending of monarchical absolutism as the culmination of a historic struggle rather than merely as a new chapter in the lengthy process of political and economic development” (Brown 212). Thapa’s insight and her findings regarding social hierarchy and patriarchy situate the aspects of Marxism that are pertinent to Nepali society. Mollica Dastider in “Decade of Democratic Transition” writes:

The rise in consciousness among ethnic groups about their indigenous identity and about the oppressive system of caste hierarchy undoubtedly was a historic development in the transitional society of Nepal. The beginning of Maoist movement...hence remained the most serious political development that democratic Nepal faced after its transition from absolute monarchy to representative polity in the last decade (Dastider 86).

Though the monarch has become outdated in Nepal, its power still prevails in contemporary Nepal in the form of the new government and their laws that are run by the Hindu elite of the society. Democracy, as in ‘New Nepal’ in contemporary times, has not met the aspirations of the citizens of Nepal. Elite politics and greed for power have escalated more conflicts and struggles for marginalised citizens. Most importantly, the rights of women within the nation have been neglected for a long time. Women from Nepal had suffered at the hands of their own nation and hence experience more hardships than men wherever they settle. Society has thus viewed and treated women unequally as compared to men. As the present is built on its history, so is the case with the status of women in Nepal. Contemporary Nepali women are fighting for individual rights, citizenship bills, gender, stereotypes, and freedom from patriarchy. Thapa undoubtedly succeeded not only in challenging the patriarchal construct of female stereotyping but also in dismantling the evils of patriarchy through women’s education in Nepal. The patriarchal nature and hierarchy of authority are seen as troubling the intersection of space in Indira’s life. It is the system of patriarchy that has confined women within the four walls of a house and deprived them of freedom, education, rights, and opportunities. In the book, the space of the workplace emerges as silent but aggressively masculine. Ava Berriden,

who after coming to Nepal from Toronto also realised how unhealthy the environment was even as she worked in the organisation. She soon realised:

Without as much as acknowledging Ava, the woman sat at the far side of the hall. This was in keeping with the institutional culture at IDAF. No one at the office smiled or said hello to each other; or none of the international staff did...There was an unspoken, if rigorous, hierarchy at IDAF separating the support staff from the programme staff (39).

The book dangles between two worlds- one of sanity, which is overshadowed by their social surroundings where women are expected to behave well, and the other is their psychological phenomena, which are prevailed upon by their emotional upheavals. Women in Thapa's work struggle to achieve a peaceful destination, where they can sit and heave a sigh of relief after undergoing physical, sexual, and spiritual turmoil. As an unhealthy environment forces an individual to feel depressed, frustrated, and alienated, Thapa's women, on the other hand, break man-made laws and move on towards a search for their happiness. The book also portrays the increasing role of non-governmental organisations in developing assistance, especially in the remotest areas of Nepal where development assistance has failed. Thapa has raised her voice to the deprived citizens and women who have been dominated by the power and politics of the lawmakers. She has encouraged women of her time who are torn between rules and responsibilities. Thapa has portrayed the changing Nepali society where rural women step forward to become independent financially. Gender roles are the result of power relations and ultimately social constructs, according to Michel Foucault, and his conceptualisation of power acts as a critique of the dominant political theories that revolve around the idea of power as an inflexible, repressive structure exercised by a particular oppressive individual, system, or class. Power, therefore, is the ability to influence or control the behaviour of people.

Displacement, according to Thapa in the selected works, occurs not only in a foreign land where the Nepalis felt alienated but also within Nepal. In *Tilled Earth: Stories*, through the collection of stories it explains how Nepalis experienced

displacement in their daily life. Some characters in the stories struggle to adjust due to the impact of globalisation, while some are affected by the traditional and cultural practices implemented upon them. Displacement, according to Thapa, starts from Nepal, causing multiple effects on an individual as well as the nation. Stories such as “Heera Maharjan Loses His Way,” “The Buddha in the Earth- Touching Posture,” and “Friends” describe how traditions and values are displaced by modern and technological development. The feeling of being alienated, unwanted and displaced in one’s land has become a serious issue in contemporary times. The protagonists are Nepalis who are defeated by the impact of globalisation. The agony of the displaced citizens of Nepal is portrayed in “The Buddha in the Earth- Touching Posture,” by the protagonist who finds people and technologies vague and questions the corrupted lifestyles of contemporary Nepalis and the rapid transformations of the world. As he travels along the Lumbini area, the vastness of the monasteries built by different Buddhist nations and the sum of money spent on the construction process make him more disappointed and in deep introspection. He “discovered that more than twenty-four million rupees were being spent on the construction of the Tata Foundation monastery...More than forty million rupees were going into the Korean Dae Sung Sa Ga Monastery” (Thapa 149). The reason behind his disappointment was the large sum of money that was spent on building the area while millions of Nepalis were suffering and struggling in Nepal. The wide disparities in socio-economic conditions between the lawmakers and the underprivileged citizens of Nepal become more transparent to him. His thoughts took him to how Nepalis “relied on subsistence farming. To supplement the family income, many men migrated to India or the Gulf states in search of work, leaving an increasing number of women in charge of impoverished households” (Thapa 149). The story, therefore, highlights the realities of Nepal, where the nation is striving to survive in an imbalanced structure of law and order. The void between socioeconomic disparities has thus caused displacement in many ways. Thapa’s portrayal of Kamal and Hrishikesh in “Friends” represents Nepali youths of Nepal who are disappointed with the law and order. They are educated, skilled, and intelligent youths stuck in the corrupt socio-political milieu of Nepal. They blamed the leaders of Nepal for their misfortunes and hapless situations. “We could do programming in Nepal, too, but the government is too unstable- who

would like to invest money? Every six months a new government. If the government were stable we could start software industry” (Thapa 55). Likewise, “The Secretary of the Student Union Makes a Career Choice,” also portrays Ramesh, a displaced Nepali youth of contemporary Nepal who is confused about making a choice and plans. In his struggle to make a good career choice, he cannot accomplish his dream due to the country’s unorganised and poor facilities. Thapa’s portrayal of characters like Ramesh informed her audiences about the realities of Nepal, where Nepalis are disappointed and disheartened by the so-called political rules and unjust laws implemented upon them. In Nepal, debates about inequalities and exclusion have emerged, which has been a controversial and much disputed subject within the field of socio-political concern. The past decade of Nepal has seen that secure jobs and good education are only for the so-called privileged elites of the nation, while the majority of the citizens are left behind to perform labour or migrate in search of a stable job. In both stories, “Friends” and “The Secretary of the Student Union Makes a Career Choice,” Thapa demonstrates how the younger generations of Nepal, like Ramesh, Hrishikesh and Kamal are displaced in their land due to the socio-political conflicts and injustices that the Nepalis government had been imposing for decades. Man-made laws as well as natural calamities are disrupting their future goals, leading to displacement in one’s land. The only option left for them is that they are impelled to find a job, which leads them to migrate to a foreign nation for their livelihood. Hence, Nepali youths like them are displaced people who are involuntarily forced to migrate in search of independence and peace. The country has been operated by corrupted officials, and they have destroyed millions of Nepalis’ futures, thereby leading to migration only to meet with more difficulties in other nations. Both stories have similar postcolonial relationships in which both of them belong to the world of contemporary Nepali society. The youths from neither of the stories are accepted nor given privileges by the so-called laws of the society. As a result, both of the stories have ambivalent feelings of attitudes towards Nepali laws and the rights of the people. Unemployment and underemployment are serious realities that affect Nepalis in many ways, and it has resulted in a huge number of migrations of Nepalis every year. Displacement within the nation indeed occurs because of political instability, natural calamities, and unequal opportunities. Migrating to other countries and

moving from one region to another region in a rapid manner has become the reality of life. One can say that politically, Nepal is still recovering and rebuilding from all destruction to move to a place where survival is much easier.

The institutions, namely religion, society, and politics, that controlled Nepal for decades are still the ones that govern contemporary Nepali lives. The social disparities and the centralised control of power by the Hindu elites have heightened conflicts, particularly in the underdeveloped regions of Nepal. Hence, to achieve freedom and enjoy equal rights from the unjust rule, Nepalis, especially from the marginalised groups of Nepal were involved in the Maoist insurgency- some forced while some voluntarily participated. The book, *Seasons of Flight*, represents such an issue in which Prema's sister, Bijaya, was taken away by the rebels to fight with them in the war. In the story, Prema, after migrating to America, distances herself from her family and contacts them rarely. As she began to live in a foreign land, she soon realised her strong bond with Nepal and her family and started communicating with her father. It is an indication of her new maturity and the ultimate point of endurance she began to display after a long absence from their lives. She then began to realise the difficulties her family had to go through every day in Nepal. Prema, in her conversation with her father, came to realise the difficulties they have faced in her absence. Her father told her that:

...So much has happened since you left'...Her sister Bijaya had come home after the ceasefire. She had spent the war years travelling from village to village, finding new recruits for the Party. After the ceasefire, she had married a member of the rebel militia, and then had a baby, a boy. She had returned to the village for his help in raising the boy (Thapa 206).

Bijaya represents many women who were used, abused, and killed during the Maoist insurgency in Nepal. The citizens of Nepal had no other choice other than voluntarily following the orders implemented by the Maoists during the war. During the insurgency, women were used especially as a tool, while they are still categorised by law as second-class citizens of Nepal. Being deprived of economic, social, and educational development, they were used as human shields and also to fulfill their

sexual desires. Thousands of children were also displaced, orphaned, and dead during the Maoist insurgency, and therefore, a large number of migrations took place from one region to another because of the fear of persecution. In this operation, it is always the common men and the marginalised sections of society who are the worst sufferers. Technically, the Maoist insurgency of Nepal had pushed thousands of Nepalis from the Western and Midwestern hills to leave their homes and move to various other districts. Hence, irregular human development and increasing inequality triggered the Maoist insurgency, which exploited widespread grievances to gain support. Nepal is still affected and has created severe social crises, and the movement has created widespread disillusionment among the youth. Despite promising emancipation to the common people, they have undertaken action that furthers their interest to the detriment of society at large. They may raise revolutionary slogans to stir up popular sentiments, but their actions are not guided by any high ideals. Hence, permanent political instability has proved to be a further obstacle to economic progress in Nepal. The Maoist insurgency in Nepal is, therefore, one of the causes of the displacement of Nepalis. Thapa's fictional as well as her non-fictional works have been the subject of critical scrutiny and consistently inform her audience as to how the nation has become a society that has degenerated because of many obstacles which come throughout their lives. Migrating to lead a better life has thus become a norm in Nepali society.

The sense of living between cultures can be seen to reflect Thapa's predicament. Even after being born and raised in a privileged Hindu elite in Nepal, she writes about the lives of the downtrodden and the realities of Nepali society. Her writings are as much an exploration of history and the relationship between the past and the present. It can be said that Nepalis in reality are in the process of hybridity, and their motivation to settle abroad is an intense form of contemporary reality. They have been migrating to various nations from time immemorial, while the exact date and information about when and how many Nepalis started migrating are unclear. Bandita Sijapati and Amrita Limbu, in the book *Governing Labour Migration in Nepal: An Analysis of Existing Policies and Institutional Mechanism*, write:

The top destinations to which Nepalis migrate for work include the Gulf countries and Malaysia, but their origin can be traced to each of the 75 districts of Nepal...Unavailability of data is much greater with regard to Nepalis migrating to India for employment since neither the Nepali nor the Indian government has any mechanism to keep records of those going to India (13).

Thapa reflects people's lives in a diaspora that are complex and uncertain. So far as migration is concerned, every year a large number of Nepalis migrate to the nearest border of the nation, i.e. India. In most of Thapa's works, the depiction of migrating to India is elucidated. Many young girls are sold each day through the Nepal-India border. Some people migrate legally in search of jobs and education, while the majority of Nepalis face challenges while migrating. In the past, migrating to India was different, and men migrated in order to be recruited into the army or to find jobs in different companies. Today, globalisation has caused a serious effect in the name of migration, and it often leads to human trafficking, prostitution, illegal work, and crimes. K. K. Muktan in *The Gorkhas in the Freedom Struggle of India* writes about how Nepalis had participated in the Indian freedom movement as an Indian National Army. Muktan gives glimpses into the socio-political history of the Indian Gorkhas residing in India who have merged and have become politically conscious with the natives. He writes that Nepalis from Nepal not only came to India to serve in the Indian military but that the "movement of population between the two countries has been primarily caused due to geographical proximity, similarity of languages, cultures and religion besides economic reasons" (12). The growing rate of migrating and settling in a foreign land has been a general trend in Nepal for decades. Amidst such interpretation that can be inferred from Thapa's works, migrating to foreign nations is projected as an important place for the characters, as it enables them to be financially independent and provides an opportunity for upward mobility. With the ability to make money comes a sense of independence, which is a stepping stone for an individual. Thapa relates the psychological effects of her characters in her works similar to those people in the diaspora. Like every other diaspora writer, she reflects some sense of loss, some urge to highlight and rewrite the history of Nepal and also

the present situation of the people. Her works heighten a sense of a world that is not ordered or fixed but relative and composed of various realities of the nation and its people.

Seasons of Flight represents a contemporary phenomenon that involves the migration of people from third-world nations to developed countries. Likewise, in the book, *All of Us in Our Own Lives*, Gyanu also represents Nepali migrant workers of contemporary times, who learn to adapt and adjust to a foreign land. The characters are free to make choices and are not tied down by the so-called traditional ways. The displacement and the feeling of rejection in Nepal helped them move on to a new land where they began to form a new space and identity gradually. Migration is “often explained in terms of violent conflicts or the attraction of labour markets in rich countries or urban centres...it is political or economic causes that are ordinarily used to distinguish between forced migration and voluntary migration” (Monsutti 107). In the context of Nepal, forced migration is not implemented directly but the backward conditions of the nation make Nepalis choose to do so. In *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy*, Thapa writes, “Systematic discrimination against the ‘low’ Dalit castes and the ethnic nationalities forced millions of Nepalis to lead desperate lives, or to leave the country to find work abroad” (145). When talking about the negative impact of migration, it is mostly women and children who suffer at the hands of society. Severe crimes such as human trafficking, rape and abduction occur every day in Nepal. In “Women and Trafficking”, Prativa Subedi writes that women trafficking evolved when Nepal was under the rule of monarchy and has increased in contemporary times as well:

Most of the traffickers are themselves Nepali. These agents usually take the girls to the various red-light districts located in Bombay, Calcutta, Lucknow, Banaras, and Madras. The majority of these unfortunate young women leave for India in the expectation of having a comfortable life...Those who go are mostly victims of social injustices (a polygamous marriage) who are despised or abandoned (by husband and family), and those already devastated by poverty (Subedi 23).

Thapa reserves special sympathy for women in Nepal. They have indeed been dominated and suppressed in their land by men and society. Being concerned about the status of Nepali women, Thapa has been working within the Non-Governmental Organisation for the upliftment of Nepali women and children. Through “Girl Rising”, a collection of documentary films organised by ‘Journalists of the Documentary Group’, Thapa has written about ‘Suma’, a Nepali bonded labour girl’s story, in which the story is used as a means to change the way the world values girls and their education. The collections of films in “Girl Rising” are global campaigns for girls’ education and have been projected about the powerless girls who are mistreated and dominated by society. Thapa’s contribution to the global network has gained more attention to the importance of empowering Nepali women and their rights. Hence, most of the female characters in her works are based on the true stories of many Nepalis who are trapped in such conditions. The issue has grown in importance and has been a controversial and much-raised subject in contemporary times.

Thapa’s *The Tutor of History*, highlights the institutionalised exercise of power in the hands of the so-called upper caste and masculine forces of the Nepali society. It opened up the reader’s perception to question the power structure that caused displacement of one’s identity. In the book, Rishi Parajuli is also among the characters who have been struggling in Nepal and have been living in the capital city for twelve years in search of a secure job. He even fought and performed rallies in politics but no improvement and hope was seen for him and his countrymen. He became distressed by the socio-political issues of Nepal, which had no improvements since he was in the Nepal Communist Party (United Marxist Leninist) and “was jailed during a students’ demonstration for democracy” (Thapa 11). The only aspects he finds in Kathmandu are people in distress, tired, sad and confused in life- some who work as porters, some children who wash dishes in hotels and some as auto drivers who argue with customers. For him, city life is filled with the sufferings of poor people where everybody is struggling to achieve something in their life. He often heard people say:

‘I work as a peon at a factory’...‘I’m a driver at a hotel’...‘I arrange visas for boys to go to Korea’. ‘I have a farm in the district’...‘I didn’t weigh enough to qualify for the army, but I’ll try again next year’ (Thapa 66).

These young Nepalis who came to the city to feed themselves and their families and try hard to adjust to the third-world nation remind Rishi of his plight, where he too is searching for jobs to secure a stable life. When people asked him about his job, they “assumed he was in between jobs on the way to a more stable position” (Thapa 66). But the truth is that he has been cut off from his own family and lies to people by saying he is a teacher at a local school. To fit in the big city where social hierarchy prevails, Rishi, who has no connections in politics and is superior in government platforms, goes through many psychological dilemmas. His life in the village is more meaningful and valuable than his life in Kathmandu, where he is only “a shadow moving against a wall and disappearing when the sky clouded over” in the city (Thapa 12 and 13). There was always an unsettled and unresolved question that he could not find in city life. Educated youths like Rishi are victims of unstable and unfair superiors with power in their hands who have been controlling the nation as according to their whims and fancies. To fit in one’s land has been one of the reasons why Rishi felt displaced. Within Michel Foucault’s theory of power, he advocates overcoming domination through resistance to the process of subject formation. As such, he suggests that resistance comes from freedom, which is the other or opposite of power. In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Foucault writes:

The power in the hierarchized surveillance of the disciplines is not possessed as a thing, or transferred as a property; it functions like a piece of machinery. And, although it is true that its pyramidal organization gives it a ‘head’, it is the apparatus as a whole that produces ‘power’ and distributes individuals in this permanent and continuous field (177).

The overall story of Nepali youths like Rishi draws upon the entire thesis, tying up the various theoretical and empirical strands by highlighting Nepalis in their displaced situations, either in Nepal or outside Nepal. Hence, Nepal’s disparities, injustices, hierarchies and displaced citizens fall under the corrupt leaders whose

powers are held high only for profit. The search for identity, security and career goads youths of Nepal like Rishi to search for a promising future in other countries rather than their own land. Strong evidence of hierarchy and unjust politics is found in Thapa's *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy* in which she highlights the complex and troubled Nepali society. Power in the hands of a small number of the so-called Hindu elite in Nepal has caused turmoil for a long time. Thapa has thus introduced *The Tutor of History* to her audience with its intricate portrayal of local politics and the people whose lives have been displaced because of many unjust laws. One of the characters, Giridhar Adhikari lost his job "regardless of capability, regardless of qualification. It was a matter of regulation. It didn't reflect on his ability" (Thapa 27). The narrow-minded people and competitive society treated Giridhar as a failure for not being able to hold his job. He also heard people spreading rumours about him "implying that he'd been fired from the bank due to incompetence, and he deserved it, he wasn't capable" (Thapa 27). The multiple problems and hardships of Giridhar represent many Nepalis who have been torn between the power and injustices around them. Some end their lives while others leave the nation in search of better places and work.

Thapa has depicted not only the negative outcome of the contemporary lives of the Nepalis but also highlights the positive impact of globalisation in the story. In Khaireni Tar, despite its severe drawbacks, the natives are learning to live amidst the changes in which time and desperate situations prevail. "Young men from the town's finest families no longer just joined the British, Indian or Nepali armed forces but went to work as migrant labourers in Seoul, Osaka, Australia and Dubai" (Thapa 22). Various changes and developments within Khaireni Tar demonstrate how the Nepalis are working hard and trying to change their harsh situations in a liveable place. Thapa projects displaced characters like Giridhar, Rishi, Om and Binita in the book as Nepalis who are caught between tradition and modernity. Their displaced identities render an insight into the structure of Nepali society, where power is the tool of the superiors over the Nepalis. Amid the dismal economic and political environment, many Nepali youths increasingly turned towards migrating to a foreign nation for various reasons. The outflow of migrants was especially high during the

war in order to avoid being recruited into the war led by the Maoists. Nepal is hence losing a substantial fraction of its youths to foreign migration every year and international migration has therefore become a significant aspect of Nepal's economy. Even the poorest households have migrants either within the nation or to the nearest border, India while the relatively well-off families have migrants in the Middle East and East Asia, and the rich have migrants in other developed countries. It is clear that the political environment, characterised by repeated strikes, closures and an investment-unfriendly setting has thus driven many youths out of the country. In addition to these push and pull factors, other aspects such as government regulations, migrant networks and social pressures also affect the decision to migrate. Migration can be said to be the roots and routes of forming a new identity. It has been practised for generations and is a key livelihood strategy for the Nepalis.

Thapa in her works focuses on the intimate and the inner world of each character who is lost in their present situation. Among her works, the character, Prema, in *Seasons of Flight* portrays Nepalis who begins to start a new life in a foreign land. Neither America nor Nepal satisfied her in the beginning. She questioned herself, ““Where are you from?’ Why did American ask this when they were so unprepared for the reply?” (Thapa 14). Her disconnection between inner and outer life stems partly from her resistance to deep intimacy with people. She understands that one's life only holds meaning during interaction with others and only when she is alone can she feel life truly intensely. Prema's story highlights contemporary Nepalis who have changed their worldview and have become hybridised in their new environment. Thapa's works have significantly highlighted Nepalis and their cultural displacement which express a complex issue of a globalised world. *Tilled Earth: Stories* (2007) produces such an issue where contemporary Nepalis are displaced in every sphere. It represents the contemporary condition of ambivalent cultural moods, forms, transitions and reformations within Nepali society. Thapa distorts, repeats actions, and empowers her audiences to question their society and their cultural identity. The collections of stories exercise a strong imprint on the minds of the readers. The multiple layers of Nepali society, the paradoxes of stereotypical mindset, social disparities, poverty, insecurities and

displacement are highlighted from the perspectives of both the older and younger generations of contemporary Nepal. Every story in the book reflects an act of introspection and retrospection. The scenes lead to self-discoveries amongst the Nepali readers, where the characters gain both pity and respect not by simple contradiction of Nepali society but by representing hybridised contemporary Nepalis. Their stories correctly point out the intersections that are true to the setting of contemporary Nepali society. It poses fundamental questions and presents the protagonists' lives in reflection to contemporary Nepalis who are displaced and also reformed due to globalisation and hybridisation. Hence, it also demands the answer of whether Nepal is progressing massively while leaving behind the true self. Prakash Upadhyay states:

Nepali peoples have not yet been able to experience the changes in their day to day life...The government has not implemented its commitments...The caste ridden and priest ridden Nepali society depicts a highly asymmetrical society in which caste, ethnic, religion and political factors plays a vital role in determining the status of an individual and a group (Upadhyay 89).

In contemporary times, gradual evolutions and abrupt changes occur in science, technology, and also in people's world outlooks. Therefore, the most significant of these changes are referred to as revolution or reformation. Indeed culture cannot be understood in a set of static terms, rather they are always in a process of transformation. In a way, leaving behind cultural dogmas and creating more informed, and intercultural practices can lead to global intellectualism. It is hence, important to understand alternative perceptions of the world, meanings, values, opinions, and attitudes to be engaged and informed. In fact, many things that the Nepalis could not accomplish in Nepal have been made possible by economic migration therefore there has been a lot of improvement. Migration studies highlight the fact that attachment and movement are neither linear nor sequential, but capable of rotating back and forth. In the process of globalisation, both migrants and nation-states undergo a major change. Globalisation processes ultimately change the economic structure of the countries and the lifestyles as well. In the context of Nepal, the Nepalis gradually began to change due to hybridisation. *All of Us in Our Own*

Lives introduces the readers to the lives of people who are in between two nations, and the impacts of globalisation in both worlds. The portrayal of cross-cultural experiences not only offers a distinguishing essence to Thapa's work but also renders a global touch in the depiction of the characters. By focusing upon contemporary issues, Thapa has created people who come across new cultures and form new identities in a globalised world. From the experiences and the stories of each character from the book, it is noted that the culture of the Nepali does not remain static and permanent to the changes that are taking place in contemporary times. They are influenced directly or indirectly by various developments that are happening around them in the form of globalisation, modernisation, and migration. These factors seem to change the very essence of the traditional Nepali culture leading to a new form of culture. Such changes are subject to a continuous process of transformation and therefore foster new cultural spaces and reaffirm the notion that borders are not fixed. As Bhabha's works explore the idea of hybridity, Thapa's characters resonate with the postcolonial context vividly portraying the 'liminal space'. It is within this 'liminal space' that contemporary Nepalis assert their lives and negotiate their identity. Despite a shift or change in patterns and culture, it does not mean that the primary cultural space has been completely replaced but that the individual or society is in the process of constant expansion. Likewise, in *Seasons of Flight*, America, allows the book's stylistic innovations and various forms of hybridity to flourish. It embodies the multiplicity, diversity and ethnicity of different people living together from different nations. As America itself is a hybrid of many nationalities that come together, Thapa's presentation of Prema's life in America is able to express new versions of Nepalis and their struggles and hardships in contemporary times. The book, therefore, remains the embodiment of hybridity, as every aspect of the novel is imbued with the mixing and melding of various elements and characteristics. Homi Bhabha, in *The Location of Culture*, provides a theory of cultural hybridity and the translation of social differences that goes beyond the polarities of self and other, East and West. His writing emphasises upon the hybridity of cultures, which on one level simply refers to the mixedness or even impurity of cultures. In the case of cultural identities, hybridity refers to the fact that cultures are not discrete phenomena; instead, they are always in contact with one another, and

this contact leads to cultural mixedness. Even though Bhabha's work complicates one's understanding of majority and minority cultures, some of his works explore the connection between discourses of culture and discourses of human rights by focusing on cultural rights. Bhabha insists less on hybridity than on hybridisation. For him, there are no cultures that come together leading to hybrid forms; instead, cultures are the consequences of attempts to still the flux of cultural hybridities. Contemporary culture is therefore hybrid, just like the colonial culture. The idea of hybridity usefully characterises the mechanisms of the colonial psychic economy. In the same way, as the structures of colonial identity can also be found in contemporary cultures, they are consequences of the historical process. He contends that hybridity is not a consequence of other, allegedly pure positions thrust together. Further, he implies the logical structure of the dialectic which has more practical relevance. More generally, Karl Marx and other thinkers assert that the logical structure of hybridity is not merely logical, but has pertinence to the understanding of social structures. This crossover between the logical and the socio-political is a concept that Bhabha has explored particularly concerning human rights issues. David Oswell in "Identity: Between Subject and Object" writes, "Bhabha's work on hybridity thus points equally to a democratic space, a space within which cultural authority and cultural identity are always questioned" (Oswell 118).

Cultures have not existed from time immemorial, as is sometimes implied. Nor do cultures exist in the present; they are not a matter of being, but of becoming, and culture is thus crafted, sculpted or narrated objects like traditions and cultures are invented. This is where Bhabha's idea of hybridity becomes significant. It suggests that cultures come after the hybridising process, rather than existing before. In colonial relationships, this is just as true of the coloniser as of the colonised, and cultures are part of an ongoing process. By understanding *Seasons of Flight*, with its complete embodiment of hybridity, it becomes possible to understand the difficulties and problems associated with Nepalis around the world, along with an understanding of displacement itself. It employs different levels of hybridisation, each depending on the other to exist. Being displaced both in Nepal and in a host land, the cultural identity of Nepalis undergoes constant transformations. Hybridity is the lived reality

of the Nepalis and, there is a continued influence of migration in search of more security for the future. Hence, contemporary Nepalis have become more exposed to and influenced by the new culture. It thus becomes pertinent to consider Thapa's experience and contribution in the literary field as one of the finest contributions to Nepali Writing in English in contemporary times. She seeks to render a voice to the issues that have made the lives of Nepalis miserable. Prema in *Seasons of Flight* portrays one such realistic work in which the lives of thousands of Nepalis in search of stability in life are portrayed. It is a modern-era perspective which highlights the migration of Nepali who are tormented by the constant turmoil back in the nation. To escape this dilemma, some philosophers attempted to define identity as the continuity of situations. As such, an inquiry into the issue of identity presupposes the notion of the other. In other words, identity is formed basically based on difference and such changes in one's identity can be extended to the Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity. Bhabha, who has been profoundly a voice in the study of globalised culture emphasises the hybridity of cultures, which on one level simply refers to the fact that cultures are not discrete phenomena, instead, they are always in contact with one another, and this contact leads to cultural mixedness. For Bhabha, hybridisation is a kind of negotiation- both cultural and political between the coloniser and the colonised. What Bhabha has emphasized upon is that both the coloniser and the colonised are interdependent. In *The Location of Culture*, he writes:

The borderline work of culture demands an encounter with 'newness' that is not part of the continuum of past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation. Such art does not merely recall the past as a social cause or aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent 'in-between' space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present. The 'past-present' becomes part of the necessity, not the nostalgia, of living (10).

It is Bhabha's usage of the concept of hybridity that has been the most influential and controversial within recent postcolonial studies. Differing from other postcolonial critics, Bhabha shifts focus from the colonised/coloniser confrontation to a third space beyond the binary structure, which is neither the indigenous past nor the

colonised present. He mainly focuses on the hybridity of culture which is hence the product of the intermingling of the two different worlds. Thus the notion of hybridity conjures up the notion of in-betweenness which is further elaborated by the accompanying concept of diaspora.

The primary texts incorporated in the research elucidates upon how Nepalis in their new environment develop identities which are created through cultural exchange. To a large degree, no culture remains pure after an encounter with another and a change and shift in views and lifestyles are inculcated automatically. Such a process of change is exemplified in the life of contemporary Nepalis. Thus, cultural changes begin with economy, technology, patterns of consumption and living style. Changes in the core values of the culture which belong to the independent or categorical structure of values of a society, and those that constitute the cultural identities of its people do not undergo a total transformation. It changes slowly as it adapts itself to new values. Changes, leading to development or modernity can be either contradictory or conflicting experiences. There can be both positive experiences relating to the spirit of freedom, changes and development, and even experiences relating to cultural anguish. As modernity itself, is invariably related to freedom, a change in one's views and ideas can also occur, and similarly, culture is also changeable. This aspect of variability makes culture distinct from one society to another; from one polity to another and from one generation to the next. Changes in terms of the economy, therefore, lead to the attainment of having proper facilities and other well-being of life. Therefore, after coming in contact with the outside world, Nepali's identity has changed gradually. "Cross-cultural exchange and the transformation of objects and traditions through cultural interaction has been the subject of several recent scholarly works. The product of postcolonial thinking about cultural materials, recent publications have focused on the way culture changes over time and place" (Harris 10). Identity, therefore, is contextualised to the land, artefacts, language, existential conditions, and experiences, which in turn draw upon history, culture, socio-economic and political conditions. It is formed not in isolation, but in the context of a culture. Culture, therefore, is "the man-made part of the environment. Implicit in this is the recognition that man's life is lived in a dual

setting, the natural habitat and his social environment” (Herskovits 17). In this manner, the identity of the Nepalis which Thapa tries to portray in her texts centres around the tradition and customs which provide a foundational structure towards building Nepal reality. It has brought considerable transformation in the social structure by bringing some changes in society at the interpersonal level, family level and the wider socio-cultural level. The problems of cultural dynamics thus are seen to take on a positive as well as a negative aspect. In rural Nepal, social networks based on caste, kin and the origin of the village are important, but in a diaspora, the sense of belonging is a new means of fulfilling the dreams of achieving one’s goals. Identity is hence displayed and celebrated within local, national and international spheres, where difference is strengthened through the process of globalisation.

Change, therefore comes about from either within a society or from outside of it, which results from a process of borrowing or cultural transmission. In the context of the Nepalis, the change is the result of intermingling with other nations as well as due to globalisation and education. “Culture is the instrument whereby the individual adjusts to his total setting, and gains the means for creative expression” (Herskovits 640). Thapa observes how Nepalis meet displacement in every sphere which results in negotiating their identity in a globalised world. It has thus evolved a fictional technique which keeps in balance the reality of the world outside and that of the individual within. Foregrounding contemporary Nepali voices, her works have therefore held a historical significance as they carry within themselves the kernel of Nepal’s history and culture.

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The concluding chapter provides a new understanding of the dynamics of cultural dislocation and the impact of globalisation on Nepalis in contemporary times. The chapter outlines the central concerns of the research, even as it demonstrates the continued displacements and backwardness of Nepalis portrayed in the selected works of Manjushree Thapa. It highlights the findings of the thesis, which is believed to explain the changing nature of the societal structure and cultural values of Nepalis in recent times. The chapter unveils the transformation of the Nepali community through the cultural implications of socioeconomic issues, community ethos, globalisation, and hybridisation. Thapa's works put forward economic migration and hybridisation as a means for the changes within the Nepali culture. It elaborates upon how the Nepali identity is seen in the process of transformation from the traditional mode of life to contemporary ways of life in lifestyle and perspectives.

Over the past few decades, there has been a dramatic increase in migration of Nepalis to different nations in search of jobs and education, which has resulted in cross-cultural interactions. The alienated and dislocated existence of Nepalis in Nepal has therefore opened up voluntary migration to different nations. At the same time, they are thoughtfully preserving their roots and culture, even after the impact of globalisation and migration. The main purpose of this study has been to develop an understanding of how Nepalis have become more concerned and aware of maintaining their roots and culture in the present day. With the acceptance and openness of cultural hybridity, their postcolonial conditions under the corrupted law and order of Nepal and their displaced identity have taken shape in the present times. Identity, therefore, is an ongoing process that develops or changes gradually with time. Amartya Sen in "Culture and Captivity" is right when he says:

Our cultural identities can be extremely important, but they do not stand starkly alone and aloof from other influences on our understanding and priorities. There are a number of qualifications that have to be made while acknowledging the influence of culture on human lives and actions...culture does not sit still...culture interacts with other determinants of social perception and action (Sen 112 and 113).

The research discloses the phase of change and transformation of Nepalis where the old is replaced by the new. Various positive and negative impacts of globalisation have resulted in the creation of the hybrid culture of Nepalis. Yet the core of Nepalis has become stronger and made them aware of their roots and identity. One can say that the positive impact of globalisation has changed not only the perspectives of Nepalis who have migrated and settled in other nations for decades but also ignited an interest in other cultures as well. In contemporary times, cultural consciousness and the search for one's identity have been pivotal, and so have Nepali lives. The primary texts incorporated in the research have added richness to the literary field and have attempted to inform other cultures who seek to know who the Nepalis are in reality. Thapa's graceful style of writing and her appropriate use of images and articulation about Nepalis reveal her creativity in presenting reality. Her detailed study of Nepal's socio-political and cultural realities identifies her achievement as marking a turning point in Nepali literary history. Her works demonstrate indisputably that Nepali Writing in English has come to acquire a distinct identity of its own. Earlier, the number of publications and writers was minimal in numbers. As such, limited works were published regarding the ground reality of Nepal and the Nepalis. Thapa gets fully involved and committed to her writings, and most of her fiction draws on subject matter similar to that found in her collections of short stories. She lets her characters grow, change, and transform wherever life leads them. Literature has a wide direction in which poets, critics, and writers have their style, views, and principles as it reflects human life and society. Nepali Writing in English is a platform where contemporary writers like Manjushree Thapa and her other contemporary Nepali writers project themes and topics that shed light on Nepali society. The inclusion of Nepali Writing in English in the contemporary literary genre is a recent phenomenon. Through their works, the Nepali realities such as endless poverty, class distinction, and corrupt government have been projected lately by contemporary writers.

Thapa's works focus more on feeling and emotion rather than thought, in which intuition is more reliable than reason, the expression of experience is real, and the nature of her projection is connected with Nepali reality. *Forget Kathmandu: An*

Elegy for Democracy (2005) is among her critical writings that invoke the past of Nepal and had a huge impact on the contemporary world regarding the reality of Nepal's history and its people. The knowledge of Nepal's socio-political issues in her non-fictional work is what makes Thapa a prominent literary figure among her contemporaries. With the growth of modernisation and globalisation in the contemporary era, Nepali society has attained a culture where hybridisation takes place. As a result of coming to terms with a new culture and society, the Nepalis within and outside Nepal have generated a new identity in which the old and new traditions, cultures, and lifestyles clashed predominantly in contemporary times. The concept of hybridity has had considerable implications for any future reinvention of Nepal and any reconstructed sense of nationhood and identity. They are centred on the adaptation and transformation of culture and identity that seeks to integrate and overcome the embeddedness of past antagonism. In a sense, through the depiction of Thapa's character in her works, economic migration and hybridisation of culture and identity within Nepali society offer a strategy to survive in a displaced situation. First of all, economic migration has contributed enormously to bringing changes in the lives of Nepalis globally. The constant intermingling with new places and people in the course of migration has deeply made the Nepalis more attracted to various cultures. Nepalis have thus undergone a noticeable transition as a result of their contact with new cultures in different countries, in which economic migration has caused tremendous changes in the lives of the Nepali as well as to the nation's economy. Thapa's works evoke how globalisation, along with education, has generated social awakening. On the other hand, globalisation has not reached every corner of Nepal. Thapa, through the depictions of small towns like Khairani Tar in the book *The Tutor of History* and rural regions in some of the stories in *Tilled Earth: Stories*, denotes that modernisation along with human basic needs has not yet reached them. There are still disparities and a huge gap between 'modern Nepal' and 'rural Nepal' and between the various ethnic groups of the society. Ignoring the realities and focusing on the development in the capital cities and the privileged elite's lives does not portray the actual life of the Nepalis. Thapa, therefore, displays what the lives of the Nepalis in reality are, and she brings out and stresses the realities of Nepal and the Nepalis from the lowest strata to the privileged class of

society. She observed that the disparity among Nepalis is still common to date. The elites of contemporary Nepal had always exercised dominant collective economic, social, and political power in all stages of their history. It has always been strongly hierarchical in every sphere towards the underprivileged of society, and till now, it is prevalent in contemporary Nepal. Thus, there has always been a fraction of that class that governs the dominant heights of the socio-economic system of Nepal. Hence, that privileged access gives them a particular and powerful authority in the shaping of the nation, which they regulate for their profit. The laws of the so-called elites of Nepal have been deeply rooted in the social formation of the nation in which the underprivileged sections of the nation were kept out of the decision-making power for a very long time. Their rights are still proclaimed formally and are not guaranteed, whereas in a democratic nation, the citizens are given equality, justice, and liberty in every sphere. It is in this context that Marx defines the concept of democracy to be classless and based upon the absence of exploitation of man by man. Hence, Nepalis have been facing injustice, which has led to the dislocation of culture and identity. Thapa brilliantly depicts Nepali reality through her works. Instead of living a harsh life and surviving in a third-world nation, people migrate or settle legally or illegally in many nations in contemporary times, and some survive while others do not. This is the harsh reality of contemporary Nepal and the Nepalis who are living a life full of misery and danger in their own country as well as in a foreign land. Kusum Shrestha in “Critical Assessment of the Political Role of the Monarchy” writes, “The advances of science and technology and waves of modernising influences have not been able to sweep across the high mountains that surround the country. Thus the remote hamlets still continue to live in the traditions of the remote past” (Shrestha 253). Poverty and the corrupt laws of Nepal have led the nation and its people to lead a life under many obstacles to date.

Thapa’s *Tilled Earth: Stories* highlights the lives of Nepalis through the lens of irony and satire. Bringing up the tension between traditions, the ways of hierarchies, and unequal gender relations of Nepalis in Nepal, she conveys how corrupted and unorganised the nation has become. Thapa’s characters in the books are Nepalis who work for both high-level and low-level government agencies as well

as non-governmental organisations. They encounter confusion, ambivalence, and difficulty in their lives, while some are filled with various kinds of emotions due to their displaced situations within their social circles. Every character, old and young, has fallen into a state of in-betweenness and alienation, which leads to cultural dislocation. They are Nepalis who are conscious of the crisis and the unavoidable circumstances that have caused tremendous changes in their lives. They are caught up in a world where the traditions, histories, rituals, and languages are scattered in different zones and remain displaced and confused in their worlds. Hence, the book embodies the existence of Nepalis whose lives are surrounded by instances in which their private moments are affected by the actions of their families, neighbours, and societies. They are in search of their true identity, which has been displaced by the rules and regulations implemented by the society for decades due to cultural differences and hybridisation both in Nepal and foreign lands. *Seasons of Flight* also reveals contemporary issues of Nepalis in a diaspora through Prema's journey. The book stresses that though there is no essential core to cultures, they are always hybrid, formed out of interactions and movement with new cultures and environments. The intermingling and shifts in culture are seen as Prema continues her diasporic life in America. The book ends with Prema's hybridised self, which brings her bond with her native land stronger than before. Through her self-discovery and sexual awakening in the foreign land, Thapa maintains a balance between narrating a story and making socio-cultural observations of contemporary Nepalis all around the world. Prema's self-awareness and adapting to a new environment around new cultures and space are indeed Nepali realities. Nepalis all around the globe are hence living a life that is hybridised and transforming due to globalisation as well as migration, even as every individual culture is always already a hybrid construct. Migrant workers like Gyanu in *All of Us in Our Own Lives*, immigrants like Prema in *Seasons of Flight* and the narrator in "The Eldest Son Thinks of Home" in *Tilled Earth: Stories* eventually develop a sense of 'third space' or hybrid identity at the end. In Thapa's works, the third space is often implied when the protagonist migrates to another nation. Migration, therefore, becomes a powerful symbol for every character's transformations and changes that make their life different. In the book, *Seasons of Flight*, for example, the title 'Seasons of Flight' signifies several things.

In the story, the endangered El Segundo blue butterflies are a specimen Prema researches on, and their life cycle gradually awakens her to a fragile sense of belonging. Thapa has creatively expressed the butterflies' life cycle with that of Prema's search for belongingness and identity while exploring the many struggles she has to face in order to reach her freedom. As Prema's colleague, Randa, an entomologist, one who is an expert in the branch of zoology concerned with insects, explained to her about the butterflies, she began to find their existence similar to hers. On one occasion, Randa explains to her about the butterflies in detail and says:

One year ago, on a late summer's day like today, a female would have lain scores of waxy eggs on a flower-head of one of these coastal buckwheat plants. A male would have then fertilized the eggs. When the eggs hatched a week later, caterpillars would have emerged, ravenous... Their wing patterns would have come to definition... enlarging dramatically, and transforming, messily, from caterpillar to butterfly. They would have eventually emerged from below the ground, fully formed (Thapa 227).

As Randa explains to Prema the details about the life cycle of the endangered butterfly, Prema begins to find it more fascinating and similar to the way she has been struggling to meet her freedom and space in life. Ironically, the title of the book can also mean the life cycle of thousands of Nepalis who migrate every year to different nations in search of a secure life and identity. Being displaced within their country and due to various socio-political crises within Nepal, the Nepalis gradually learn to adapt and adjust to attaining a new hybrid space where age-old restrictions, class differentiation, and domination by the so-called rulers of Nepal no longer trouble them. Hybridisation has thus become an ongoing process that brings a sense of belongingness in the new space of contemporary Nepalis, which is similar to Prema's freedom in America.

Cultural identity refers to the sense of belonging with a connection to religion, ethnicity, nationality, language, and social class. From the representation of Thapa's characters in most of her works, contemporary Nepalis, whether they are within or outside Nepal have adopted a hybridised way of living. Thapa and Homi

Bhabha have successfully blended typical issues concerning migrant identities and cultural diversity with postmodernist theory. Both have pointed to a concept regarding their personal and social aspects of mankind, and such is the concept of in-betweenness, a space between one's own and another's culture. Prema's search for a 'sense of self' in *Seasons of Flight* is what prompted Thapa and other contemporary Nepali writers to write about the question of Nepali identity. It refers to Bhabha's theory of conceptualising a 'third space' that is used to deconstruct the boundaries between the self and the other. It is this search for identity and belongingness that most of Thapa's works elaborate upon, particularly as the dislocation of culture and identity constitutes the central metaphor in her works. Thapa's characters are people who struggle across in-between situations and learn to accept the dislocated self after various experiences.

The research supports the view that the lives of Nepalis in postcolonial conditions have created cultural hybridity. By observing the lives of contemporary Nepalis it advocates the view that the facet of individuality and cross-cultural interactions has led the Nepalis into the modern trends of globalisation. "As all countries are gradually exposed to the products of the same scientific discoveries in the form of modern technology, and as they play an important role in culture change, some authors have concluded that all societies will become more and more similar" (Hofstede 343). When looking back at the history of Nepal, the lifestyles of the Nepalis and their worldviews have thus changed enormously in the changing times. Adopting new cultural views and ideas have made similar aspects of culture with others, and globalisation, as well as, economic migration has become significant means for change in Nepali society. Thapa's characters thus represent the reality of the society where some survived and learnt lessons while some of them are still in the process of struggling to cope with the world. Migrating to a foreign land has indeed become one of the important aspects of the Nepali reality in Nepal. In the concluding chapter of the book, *Governing Labour Migration in Nepal: An Analysis of Existing Policies and Institutional Mechanism*, it writes:

The return of migrants to Nepal poses important questions: What kind of future do returnees have in Nepal? What are their prospects for employment

and livelihood opportunities? Will they be able to utilize their expertise...it should be noted that, without job opportunities within the country, and the pressure to make a living and provide for their family, for a large number of Nepalis seeking employment abroad, foreign labour migration will continue to be the only choice available (Sijapati and Amrita Limbu 126).

Thapa has used her narrative skills against the discontent brewing up at various levels due to political instability and the failure of governments' promises in Nepal. Her writings, especially the Nepali diasporic writings, are a powerful network that connects and helps in the circulation of information and facts. It works as a channel between Nepalis and other communities at large. Diasporic writing hence serves as an outlet for pent-up passions, emotions, and feelings, providing a ventilator to grievances and grudges of people living in a new environment. The welfare and well-being of the overseas Nepalis, a sense of security for them, and Nepal's greater concern for them are brought out through these writings. Looking at it optimistically, diasporic literature helps in creating goodwill, a cordial relationship, and in spreading values, virtues, and universal peace. No doubt, many Nepalis have left their motherland to seek an anchor in various other countries. The reasons for this movement range from confined labour to seeking better prospects. Thapa has played a pivotal role in bringing the Nepalis' lives in front of people around the world through literature. Along with Thapa, other Nepali diaspora writers, through their literary contributions, have greatly enriched Nepali Writing in English.

Hybridisation of culture was not new to the Nepalis, as it has become an essential means to survive for decades through migration. This can be said with certainty since it is a historical fact that the Nepalis were in direct contact with other peoples and cultures around them. Moving from place to place in search of better places and work had been practised for decades. Most of Thapa's fictional characters depict the struggle to belong either inside Nepal or outside Nepal. Homi Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* denotes that cultural hybridity and the translation of social differences go beyond the polarities of 'self' and 'other.' He has developed his concept of hybridity from literary and cultural theory to describe the construction of culture and identity within conditions of colonial antagonism and inequity. As such,

Bhabha defines culture as a product of another culture. In contemporary times the Nepali identity has been changed and reformed due to hybridisation and globalisation. The selected works of Thapa in the research have represented hybridised individuals who seek to acquire and adapt to the changes that come along with globalisation. Also, the culture one is brought up in cannot be easily ascribed to place and cultural roots. It is because they are the product of diversity and intermingling with other places and cultures. The social structure of a society is subject to constant change and the process of social change is responsive to many types of changes- physical, biological, cultural, and technological factors. The changes in the ways of life also indicate growing in a different or new dimension through dispersing and borrowing cultures. With the influence of foreign cultures, the Nepali culture had been exposed to a new world, leading to cultural hybridisation. Some of the practices, traditions, and lifestyles transformed while most beliefs and traditions have continued with some modifications. Thapa has attempted to bring out the dynamics of cultural change among the Nepalis with particular reference to adopting and adjusting to new spaces through her fictional characters. Some of the important dimensions of culture in a community, such as languages, cuisine, traditions, and attitudes, have changed form in the lives of contemporary Nepalis. Hari Prasad Bhattarai in “Cultural Diversity, Social Exclusion, and Identity Politics in Nepal” writes:

...different forms of ethnic politics and activism are gradually beginning to emerge in Nepal. This has been generally so after the restoration of democracy in 1990, but more particularly after the April Revolution of 2006...It has reshaped political discourse by persistently challenging the previously accepted dominant view of national culture, religion, and language. There are growing demands for the restructuring of the state as a multicultural, multilingual, and multi-religious nation in a true sense (Bhattarai 138).

Globalisation and modernisation have been the modes of change that bring the Nepalis closer to cultural hybridisation. The characters in Thapa's works gradually build themselves while blending with modernity and the outside world.

They are contemporary Nepalis who accept changes and welcome new ways in their lives. The characters such as Prema in *Seasons of Flight*, Indira Sharma, Gyanu and Sapana in *All of Us in Our Own Lives*, Rishi Parajuli, Binita, and Om Gurung in *The Tutor of History*, and various other characters and minor characters from *Tilled Earth: Stories* represent contemporary Nepalis who expressed their rights and voices to gain independence from traditional rules. They point out the corrupted law and order of the nation and welcome the change that comes along with globalisation in their lives. Changes, therefore, are the process of development that comes naturally in human life. Cultural transformation in language, religion, cuisine, fashion, and many other aspects are generated automatically when two individuals live or share. Thapa's works have proved that contemporary Nepalis, even after intermingling with other cultures, did not lose traces of their original culture and values. Even though some transformations and changes are seen, the Nepali sensibility is still intact in some way or the other. As globalisation has become a beneficial approach to future world economic development, it has a negative impact on people and culture as well. Many see it as an economic phenomenon, growth in international trade, investment, or capital flows, but it also has various impacts on human life and well-being. The process of globalisation not only opened up the economy and goods to society but is also infected by pollution, criminalisation, disease, and many other complex phenomena as well. Amartya Sen in "Globalization and Voice" writes:

The world is both spectacularly rich and distressingly impoverished. There is unprecedented opulence in contemporary living, and the massive command over resources, knowledge, and technology that we now take for granted would have been hard for our ancestors to imagine...Massive inequalities in the opportunities different people have encourages skepticism about the ability of globalization to serve the interests of the underdogs (Sen 120).

Change is a historical necessity for the survival of mankind. It is, therefore, the law of life that every human society goes through. Change in various aspects of Nepali society is the result of the influence they gain from other cultures, and thus, a change in one has invariably promoted a change in the other. Thapa's representations of changes in the selected texts have both positive and negative impacts on the lives

of the Nepalis. Modernity, along with economic migration, has caused a lot of change in the lives of Nepalis. In the process of preserving their traditions and culture, today different ethnic groups of Nepalis in Nepal have formed various organisations. Non-governmental organisations and many other institutions are trying hard to preserve the Nepali culture. Education has therefore paved a smooth transition in accepting new ideas and lifestyles. Thapa's contemporary Nepali women characters are examples of such changes. They not only enlighten their future but help them succeed in demonstrating the right path to others as well. Among them, women characters like Indira Sharma, Ava Beridden, and Sapana Karki in *All of Us in Our Own Lives* depict women of intelligence, bravery, hard work, and nobility. They are open to accepting changes and risking their lives, which leads them to many sufferings but succeeds in achieving their respective goals in the end. Throughout Thapa's fictional characters, it is elucidated that contemporary Nepali society has become passive and has been flexible to change with the reality that surrounds their lives. The so-called class distinctions, caste system, and other disparities within the society among the various ethnic groups of the society have been ignored and given a divided lack of importance by contemporary Nepalis. Despite the tremendous changes, the culture of the Nepalis remains a significant institution in the lives of the Nepalis wherever they settle.

Globalisation, along with migration and education, has transformed the perspectives of Nepalis around the world. However, the contemporary Nepalis in Thapa's works preserve their culture despite social hierarchy within the nation and even in the diaspora through language, food habits, and beliefs. Every society attempts to explain and control its environment through religion, as is the Nepali society, where the different ethnic groups were forced to follow Hinduism during and after the rule of the monarchy. The patterns of ideologies and ways of beliefs differ from their original ways and the so-called Hindu elites still prefer to call themselves the upper caste of Nepali society. The elites of the society who worked under the monarch built their roots stronger through religion and through their principles to rule the nation to date. A character like Jimmawal Sharma, in *The Tutor of History*, belongs to the so-called high caste of the Hindu society of Nepal, who sees other

ethnic groups as low and untouchable. They put themselves as god-like figures who do not even touch the food made by people below their caste. In contemporary Nepal, as seen in Thapa's works, most Nepalis still follow traditional Hindu beliefs, while some of them follow their roots and ancestral norms to preserve their respective cultures. In the selected works, religion plays a significant role in every character's life, whether they are in a diaspora or their native land. Dr. Bimala Shrestha, in one of the chapters from *Social Life in Nepal (1885-1950)* writes:

Since time immemorial Nepal had been regarded a country of deities as well as the land of festivals with rich cultural heritage. Not a single month passed without the observance of a great religious day or one or other sort of festival...Everything in Nepalese life always began with some thing like religious ceremonies and moved with social spirit and passed with the feast and merry-making for all (111).

Thapa's observation of Nepali beliefs and customs in most of her works provides an understanding of the kernel of the Nepali culture. It brings forth the significance and attitudes of the Nepalis clearly and has therefore left deep-rooted imprints on them. *The Tutor of History* invokes the importance of Nepalis' religious beliefs in the day-to-day life of the people living in Khairani Tar. In every step of their lives, it is the religious beliefs and the traditions that have united the villagers even after the crises they had been facing since time immemorial. It is seen that even in the opening of a new party office, election campaigns, and the starting of women's organisations in the small town, the rites and rituals are performed by men and women. Likewise, *Seasons of Flight* also brings out the significance of religious beliefs as the identity of Nepali. Though the book portrays Prema's life in a diaspora and represents millions of migrants and immigrants from different nations, the book also presents the Nepali subjectivity and consciousness not only in a new atmosphere but also invokes the importance of the cultural and religious beliefs of Nepalis in a foreign land. One of the remarkable things Prema carried on and treasured about Nepal and her identity after she migrated to America was her mother's "ammonite, a lustrous stone the colour of shale, the shape of a lopsided egg," which she kept as a symbol of the religious shrine after her mother's death (Thapa 12). Thapa has highlighted how

an individual becomes conscious about their culture, their land and loved ones even in a diaspora. Through Prema's ways of maintaining her identity even after having an 'American Dream' that millions of Nepalis dreamt of, she still maintains her roots to become closer to her native land and its culture. For Prema, her mother's ammonite was like a token of love and remembrance of her mother. "Her mother, devout, used to worship the coil at the centre as a shaligram, an avatar of Bishnu. She kept it in her bedroom shrine, and every morning sprinkled rice grains on it and made offerings of flower and vermilion powder" (Thapa 13). Prema's performing rituals in a diaspora highlights how contemporary Nepalis still follow their roots, which have become stronger in many ways. In a diaspora, people often become displaced, alienated, or confused, which results in cultural consciousness. On the other hand, Prema's cultural consciousness makes her more connected to her roots and culture. Likewise, Gyanu, in *All of Us in Our Own Lives*, also presents how traditions and beliefs are still a connection between loved ones and one's native land in the lives of contemporary Nepalis. Even after several years of living in a foreign land, he had to come back to his native land, Nepal, to perform rituals for his deceased stepfather. His return from the foreign land makes him realise how alien he had already become to his birthplace. After reaching their ancestral house in the village in Nepal, Gyanu started performing the rituals. Just like he had done for his deceased mother's rites, he had "shorn his hair, worn white clothes and lit the funeral pyre...For thirteen days he'd received the company of mourners from all over the village. At mealtimes, he'd eaten unsalted food, and at night he'd slept fitfully under thin, unstitched sheets" (Thapa 30). To fulfil his sister Sapana's wish to perform their father's rites, Gyanu came back to Nepal without any delay. Even though such rituals and strict mourning of the Hindu beliefs might be illogical to many, it is their love and respect towards their roots that has indeed become a bridge to their bond at the end. It is, therefore, the roots and culture that enhance who Nepalis are and what they have become.

Cultural change is the theoretical observation that refers to the changes in societies of various cultures. The life of a human continues in the process of birth, growth, and death, and as such, culture is also a continuous process of human activity that continues from generation to generation. Throughout history, human habitations

and culture consistently changed in different ways, and so has Nepali society. With this understanding, Thapa's works have shown such transformations within the Nepali lifestyles, but their cultural root is what makes their identity different from others even after they settle or migrate to other nations. Traditionally, the Nepalis' work culture is for the production of economic goods that are based on the basic needs of an individual, family, and community. Within the domination and the rule of the monarchs, the different ethnic groups of the Nepalis' works were also differentiated according to their class hierarchy. For decades the laws implemented upon the Nepalis of Nepal by the rulers of the traditional law were very unfair and harsh, and therefore, the social structure of Nepal has become deeply rooted and controlled by the elites of the society to date. The old tradition and the illogical norms now clash with the modern Nepali perspectives. Being displaced and alienated in their own country, the lives of the underprivileged groups of Nepal ignite a way to locate themselves in a new space. Hence, globalisation has forced the Nepalis to choose their path. Since the outset of Nepalis entering into contact through migration, formal education, and social outlook toward cultural consciousness, the work culture and the types of works implemented by the age-old traditions have transformed immediately. As migration and the intermingling with new cultures and new environments began, the attitudes and minds of the Nepalis were also influenced by situational circumstances. Changes in various dimensions lead to new space where they adapt and learn to accept openly. In consequence, the knowledge of Nepali society widened, and their needs increased with the embrace of a new social outlook. The underprivileged groups of Nepali society in contemporary times now adopt a work culture that is uniform as well as similar to one another. Nepalis, especially those who work abroad despite their caste, class, or ethnicity, can work the same job as other castes do, and the enforcing of a particular job according to social hierarchy is not applicable in a foreign land. Even in Nepal, such traditional rules are less seen or heard. On the other hand, some people still follow the rules enforced by the so-called Hindu elites of the society because of a lack of education. Nepalis, therefore, are in a process of change where developments of the nation as well as the mindset of Nepalis are gradually shifting.

Despite the drastic changes in their lifestyles, contemporary Nepalis have retained their cultural values and roots in the changing world. Likewise, in contemporary times every nation has been changing and adopting new values and ways of life. Thapa's portrayal of displaced Nepalis within and outside Nepal is a thought-provoking and powerful reflection on the contemporary world. As hypocrisy and inequality within Nepali society have evolved since time immemorial, the social structure of the nation has become hollow and degenerated. On that note, T.K. Balakrishanan in *Globalisation of World Politics* writes:

It is not uncommon to assume that problems of poverty, environmental degradation, and violations of human rights outside one's own country are also beyond one's moral responsibility. For instance, there is a tendency to argue that so-called "burdened" societies are backward because of intrinsic or historical domestic reasons and that the responsibility for addressing these ought to lie with the leadership of these societies (51).

Consequently, nothing around the people of Nepal can provide peace in their lives. As such, economic migration has become the common means of survival for contemporary Nepalis, and within or outside Nepal, the Nepalis are experiencing a life that is fragmented and alienated. Besides the alienation, homesickness, and displacement, the movement of the Nepalis from one place to another has generated the notion of carrying their culture with them while meeting other cultures.

The conclusion of the thesis sums up Thapa's creative skills in revealing and dismantling Nepali identity, their voices and sufferings in front of the world. The research supports the view that Nepalis around the globe learn to adapt and adjust their dislocated culture and identities by forming new spaces and new identities. It provides a new understanding of the changing nature of the Nepali culture as the impact of globalisation and hybridisation begins. Whether they are within Nepal working as migrant workers or even immigrants from different countries, Nepalis are becoming hybridised in their new space while maintaining multiple linkages to their homeland and preserving their identity. With the emergence of technological advancements such as fast transportation, communication, and social media,

contemporary Nepalis have gained much information and connectivity, which has played a pivotal role in maintaining their culture and identity while living a life in a diaspora. In a way, Manjushree Thapa has played a major role in spreading awareness regarding the Nepalis to her wider audiences through her literary works. Globalisation, at some point, has proved to be a significant means of generating changes and transformations within the Nepali community. Contact with Western culture and values has become an aspect of being in a globalised era, and the acceptance of adopting new cultural values has initiated the process of social and cultural change among Nepalis around the world. Even though the acceptance of new ideas, values, and technologies is seen as cultural loss or hybridity, the cultural consciousness after intermingling with new culture and environment has created greater influence and progress towards their culture. Their 'liminal space' or 'third space' foregrounds connections and openness, which is the reality of a globalised era.

From the modernist point of view, it is believed that a sense of purpose and continuity that had previously been the core of human existence is disrupted and fragmented. Likewise, the impact of globalisation has led the Nepali sensibility to change in many aspects. Globalisation, therefore, is the process in which the interchange of worldviews, products, ideas, and other aspects of culture takes place. It transforms not only the Nepali identity and culture but also changes the world far beyond its traditional self-image. Thapa's strategic use of postcolonial techniques and her creativity in aligning reality with fiction have opened up perspectives and possibilities of creative space. Furthermore, her narratives empower the Nepali identity by promoting sensibility and rendering insight into overlooked perspectives.

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List of Publications:

Sl. No	YEAR	TITLE OF CHAPTER/RESEARCH PAPER	NAME OF BOOK/JOURNAL	PUBLICATION DETAILS (Place/Publishers with ISBN/ISSN)
1.	2022	Seasons of Flight: An Interpretation of Nepali Diaspora by Manjushree Thapa.	International Virtual Conference on Cultural Studies (Abstract Proceedings).	Department of English (SF) Holy Cross College (Autonomous), Cape Comorin Publisher, Nagercoil, Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu E-ISBN: 978-93-94510-17-3
2.	2023	Manjushree Thapa's All of Us in Our Own Lives: Role and Places of Women.	Harvest: An International Multidisciplinary and Multilingual Research Journal Volume III Special Issue I (January 2023). (A Peer-Reviewed Journal)	PG Department of English, Nesamony Memorial Christian College, Marthandam, Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu E-ISSN: 2582-9866.
3.	2024	Displacement of Nepalis as Portrayed by Manjushree Thapa in The Tutor of History	Transcript: Journal of Literature and Culture Studies, Volume-10, 2024, (A Peer-Reviewed Journal).	Department of English, Bodoland University, Kokrajhar, Assam ISSN 2347-1743.

Lists of Paper Presented:

1. Presented paper on “Manjushree Thapa’s All of Us in Our Own Lives: Role and Places of Women” at the “International Conference on *Women in Literature*” on 17th. November. 2022 organised under P G Department of English, Nesamony Memorial Christian College, Marthandam, Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu, India and Cape Comorin Trust, India and Cape Comorin Publisher, India.
2. Presented paper on “Seasons of Flight: An Interpretation of Nepali Diaspora by Manjushree Thapa” at the “International Virtual Conference on Cultural Studies” on 18th. December. 2022 organised by Department of English (SF), Holy Cross College, Nagercoil, Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu, India in collaboration with Cape Comorin Trust, India.
3. Presented a paper on National Seminar- “Manuscript and Literary Traditions of India: Special Focus on the Northeast” on 13th. June. 2023 organised jointly by Dr. Ambedkar Chair, Assam University, Silchar and Committee for the Celebration of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, AUS at Assam University, Silchar.

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DEPARTMENT	:	Department of English and Culture Studies
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DATE OF ADMISSION	:	1 st November. 2020
APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL		
1. DRC	:	06. 10. 2021
2. BOARD OF STUDIES	:	20. 10. 2021
3. SCHOOL BOARD	:	03. 11. 2021
4. MZU REGISTRATION NO	:	2231 of 2010-11
5. REGISTRATION NO & DATE	:	MZU/Ph.D./ 1705 of 01.11. 2020
6. EXTENSION (IF ANY)	:	NIL

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ABSTRACT

**CULTURAL DISLOCATION IN SELECT WORKS BY
MANJUSHREE THAPA**

**AN ABSTRACT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY**

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND CULTURE STUDIES
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND LANGUAGES
NOVEMBER, 2025**

CULTURAL DISLOCATION IN SELECT WORKS BY MANJUSHREE THAPA

BY

SHRADDHA SUBBA

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND CULTURE STUDIES

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Submitted

In partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
English and Culture Studies of Mizoram University, Aizawl.

The study explores the contrasting stories of Nepalis who live in Nepal and other nations by unravelling the postcolonial concepts of politics, diaspora, cultural change, identity, and hybridity. It is situated on the premise that cultural dislocation is a permanent human condition. Hybridised identity due to globalisation and intermingling with new culture is more about the understanding of culture than about confrontation. The thesis delves into the dynamics of the complex and diverse culture of the Nepalis and how they survive within webs of differences with particular emphasis on the selected texts of Manjushree Thapa, namely *The Tutor of History* (2001), *Tilled Earth: Stories* (2007), *Seasons of Flight* (2010), and *All of Us in Our Own Lives* (2016). The primary texts aptly portray the deep cultural undertones, political anxiety, and how displacement has affected the Nepalis globally. These stories are comprehensible and reflective. They constantly display Nepal and its culture as reference points from the rise and fall of the monarchy to the contemporary accounts of the socio-political situations. The study focuses on how Nepalis have become more concerned and aware about maintaining their roots and culture in the present day. With the acceptance and openness of cultural hybridity, their postcolonial conditions under the corrupted law and order of Nepal have taken shape in the present times while giving rise to a displaced identity. The research discloses the phase of change and transformation of Nepalis where the old is replaced by the new.

Manjushree Thapa (1968-) belongs to one of South Asia's highly acclaimed new generations of Nepali writers who write fiction and non-fiction. She is also a well-known journalist, essayist, translator, and editor, and the first writer of Nepali descent who writes in English to be published internationally. Her writing style is simple, which provides enough detail to lend authenticity to the story's setting. During an interview, Thapa explained what inspires her to write about Nepal and the issues in her writings. She described the changes that happened during the 1990s when Nepal became a democratic country and explained how "political turbulence" occurred and said, "All around, you see people's lives changing and all of the conflicts that come with modern Nepali life" (Thapa). By all accounts, Thapa can be said to be an outstanding writer, especially in her techniques to accommodate history

in her writings, which are often neglected in mainstream accounts. She has published four fiction and four non-fictional texts. She has co-edited and translated with her contemporary writers.

As a writer of the diaspora, the subject of an unsettled dilemma and a desire to belong to a place becomes Thapa's recurrent theme. "Her books have its light, humorous moments, but underneath them, she shows her care for people, their joys and their pain. Thus, countries adopt the changes but larger challenge is of individuals" (Kolambe 89). The socio-cultural and political forces at play in the dislocation of Nepali culture and identity are thus examined with Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity. Culture and identity are ongoing processes that develop or change gradually over time. Cultures are not defined solely by what is internal to them but by how they constitute themselves over and against other cultures. The following lines sum up the theoretical position that the study maintains throughout that cultural identities:

...can be extremely important, but they do not stand starkly alone and aloof from other influences on our understanding and priorities. There are a number of qualifications that have to be made while acknowledging the influence of culture on human lives and actions...culture does not sit still...culture interacts with other determinants of social perception and action (Sen 112 and 113).

The term 'Cultural Dislocation' conveys a change or shift of order or ways of life within a society in different aspects. Thapa's portrayal of displaced Nepalis within and outside Nepal is a thought-provoking and powerful reflection on the contemporary world. Being displaced within their country and due to various socio-political crises, the Nepalis gradually learnt to adapt and adjust to attaining a new hybrid space where age-old restrictions, class differentiation, and domination by the so-called rulers of Nepal no longer trouble them. Hybridisation has thus become a process of change that brings a sense of belongingness in the new space of contemporary Nepalis.

Chapter-1: An Author: Manjushree Thapa

The introductory chapter denotes a brief account of Manjushree Thapa's biography, highlighting her achievements and contributions to Nepali society, and an overview of the primary texts. It provides an outline of Thapa's role in the socio-cultural and political aspects of Nepal. It outlines the concept of diaspora in which Thapa creatively brought to light the lives of contemporary Nepalis from a globalised consciousness. The linking of the familial experience with historical consciousness is a feature that runs through the works of Thapa. Thapa hence sees her works as an opportunity to inculcate and educate her audience with race, gender sensitivity, and identity politics.

Born in Kathmandu in 1968, Thapa was raised in Nepal, Canada, and the United States, and now lives in Toronto, Canada. She studied at St. Mary's School, Kathmandu, at the National Cathedral School, and earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in photography at the Rhode Island School of Design. She also has a Master of Fine Arts in creative writing from the University of Washington in Seattle and excels equally in critical and creative writing in English and Nepali. Her works have been published in the Bellingham Review, Tampa Review, Artful Dodge, Himal South Asia, and others. She also writes regularly in the print media in Nepal (The Nepali Times) and also translates Nepali literature into English. She has published four fictions and four non-fictions and also translated collections of works. Her fictions are namely: *The Tutor of History* (2001), *Tilled Earth: Stories* (2007), *Seasons of Flight* (2010), and *All of Us in Our Own Lives* (2016). Her non-fictions are namely: *Mustang Bhot in Fragments* (1992), *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy* (2005), *A Boy from Siklis: The Life and Times of Chandra Gurung* (2009), and *The Lives We Have Lost: Essays and Opinions on Nepal* (2011). She has translated various works, namely *A Leaf in a Begging Bowl: Modern Nepali Stories* (2000) by Ramesh Vikal, *The Country is Yours: Contemporary Nepali Literature* (2009) (collections of works of forty-nine Nepali writers), and *There's a Carnival Today* (2017) by Indra Bahadur Rai. She has also co-edited and translated with her contemporary writers, Frank Stewart and Samrat Upadhyay, *Secret Places: New Writing From Nepal* (2001) and also contributed essays in a monograph with Natalie

Lettner in *Carl Pruscha, Singular Personality: Architect, Bohemian, Activist* (2020). Writing has become the most effective medium for highlighting Nepal and its culture for Thapa. In one of her interviews, Thapa talks about her preference for working and choosing fiction writing over non-fiction writing and said:

I miss non-fiction because it is a lot less tortured. Non-fiction doesn't have that inner imaginative work that you have to do for fiction. So it's not always full of self-doubt, unlike fiction where there are always questions about why this character, why this sentence, why this word choice...Non-fiction is more straightforward. Non-fiction, especially when it is personal, also runs the risk of being too self-involved (Rana).

Throughout her career, as a writer, Thapa has moved across genres and produced consulting documents related to gender and development, as well as articles, essays, and editorials composed in English and Nepali for leading newspapers and journals such as Kantipur, The Kathmandu Post, Himal Southasian, London Review of Books, Newsweek, Hindustan Times, Foreign Policy, Walrus, Nepali Times, New York Times, and The Globe and Mail. Her works have been widely recognised. They highlight some of the controversial and sensitive topics regarding Nepal and can be termed as historical, intellectual, and cultural representations of Nepali society, as the strong sense of nationalism conveys a deep sense of loss, identity crises, and nostalgia.

Chapter-2: Cultural Dislocation and the Nepali

This chapter engages in a comprehensive analysis of the selected texts of Thapa and investigates the intricate effects of the historical domination and oppression of the rulers by employing a theoretical framework on postcolonial theory, feminism, and Marxism. It demonstrates how Nepalis have been facing cultural dislocation not only outside Nepal but also how it started within Nepal at the juncture of royal rule. It highlights the coexisting realities and affinities of Nepal and India, which outlines the demographic makeup of Nepal.

‘Power’ has always been the first cause of cultural and social dislocation of Nepalis, which started from the pre-colonial period when the Hindu elite ruled over Nepal. The history of Nepal is, therefore, incomplete without the rulers who ruled the nation for generations. In the introduction of *The History of Nepal*, John Whelpton writes:

Nepal as a state emerged in its present form only in the late eighteenth century when the small hill kingdom of Gorkha, some fifty miles west of Kathmandu, brought much of the Himalayan foothills and an adjoining strip of the North Indian plain under its control, and the kingdom's Shah dynasty moved its court to the Kathmandu Valley (1).

The rulers of Nepal have modified Nepali ethnic identity, “so that they could deal with it in terms of a classical Hindu framework, but for many sections of the population, in particular hill communities speaking Tibeto-Burman languages, their precise position within the hierarchy was of little importance” (Hutt 4). Despite an ongoing constitutional process in a democratic nation, the role of power and authority by the traditional Hindu elite still prevails. The so-called elite “inherited a highly feudal and hierarchical social order” (Upreti 15). As the elite possess ‘authoritative power,’ inequalities, status, and privileges widely differ among the Nepalis. The concept encapsulates Marx’s perception of class struggle, characterised by a ceaseless clash between socio-economic classes. To a great extent, the class or caste system in Nepal has had a serious effect on the growth of Nepali society. Corruption, hierarchy, injustices, the caste system, patriarchy, and various other social evils resonate in *The Tutor of History* (2001). Here, Thapa gives a glimpse of socio-political turmoil and blends it with the people’s lives in the small town of Khaireni Tar. Most of the people in Khaireni Tar are in the midst of an election campaign, while the traditional system of hierarchy restrains the people of low caste from participating in it. On that note, one of the candidates of the ‘Janmukti party’ gave a speech and said, “Originally we were egalitarian, peaceful folks. We had no hierarchies. There were no castes. Our women weren’t oppressed by men...we must restore our glorious past” (Thapa 220 and 221). Hierarchy, therefore, is placed as a significant tool for forcing power in Nepal. Thapa situates the postcolonial ethos by

giving marginalised and displaced individuals a resounding voice within the grand narratives of mainstream discourse. In the book, Binita Dahal symbolises the life of a widow in a male-dominated society, and “had maintained reserve with strangers and townspeople alike...she tried to ward off critical voices by subduing herself” (Thapa 15). Her life echoes the concept of the problematisation of the space and status imposed by the so-called Hindu traditions towards women. Thapa’s acknowledgements of women’s plight within the nation are situated along Marxist lines, which recognise that women are oppressed under the rule of the capitalist or the private property system. The situation of the Nepali women clearly illustrates Simon de Beauvoir’s assertion in *The Second Sex* (1949) about men defining women not as autonomous beings but as simply to be subdued: “For him she is sex-absolute sex, no less. She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not with reference to her...He is the subject, he is the Absolute- she is the other” (Millet 47). The alienation and oppression of women in Nepal somehow resonates with Margaret Atwood’s female prisoners from her controversial feminist dystopian novel, *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1984). The women are both tortured and marginalised under the guise of power, religion, and tradition. Atwood asserts that women are oppressed by two authorities, such as the power of tradition and that of physical and cultural colonisation. Thus it can be viewed as a kind of double colonisation. Similarly, women in Nepal are oppressed by both. In *The History of Sexuality* (1976), Michel Foucault articulates the complex and formidable paradoxical relationship between sexuality and power. Here, he argues how power dictates its law to sex:

To deal with sex, power employs nothing more than a law of prohibition. Its objective: that sex renounce itself. Its instrument: the threat of a punishment that is nothing other than the suppression of sex...Power constrains sex only through a taboo that plays on the alternative between two non-existences (96).

The complexities of Nepali society and its polity do not end in class distinction and inequalities only. For instance, the instability of the economy has been the major factor that leads the country backwards. “The development experience in the world over the last century has shown that economic growth cannot

be sustained without taking into consideration the social and political development of vulnerable populations, including greater recognition of minority rights” (Cao 13). *Mustang Bhot in Fragments* (1992) highlights how social hierarchy was prevalent even during Thapa’s childhood and how “inequality structured Nepali reality” (37). It gives a glimpse of a remote corner of Nepal in which Thapa confronts the realities of a third-world nation. It is a kind of report or diary writing published in 1992. It was written on account of travelling to a remote area of Nepal called Mustang during the nineties, which is situated behind the high Himalayas. The native people of Mustang, also called the Bhot or Bhutia, who are part of the nation, share little with other Nepalis. She describes how these natives are disconnected from Nepal and their rights by living in extremely deteriorated conditions for decades. Inequality of rights, disparity of governance, and the system of class distinctions are the dark realities of Nepal that Thapa was unaware of. She uses conversations, analogies, and anecdotes while providing her reaction to the harsh realities of the region. “There are chasms to bridge in Mustang, and long-festering wounds to heal. Nothing short of a course that vests the local people with the right, and the responsibility, to control their own lives will be able to help change a long history of helplessness and frustration” (Thapa 123). The marginalised or socially outcast characters in Thapa’s works express a progressive framework of resistance and survival. Thapa’s *All of Us in Our Own Lives* (2016) demonstrates the complexities associated with inequalities within the Nepali household as well as the nation’s power, which provides an insight into the social norm. She uses history as a serving text and situates the book in Nepal along with the use of issues regarding an identity crisis, class division, social exclusion, gender inequality, migrant workers, foreign employment, and human trafficking. She reveals certain aspects of Nepalis’ culture, traditions, and beliefs and highlights the picture of the socio-economic and cultural ethos of Nepalis living within and outside Nepal. The story centres around four main characters and their experiences of life. Thapa gives voice to everyday life in circumstances of changes, corruption, sexism, isolation, disconnection, and cultural expectations. Through her women characters, Thapa displays life with renewed strength and reflects how Nepalis in their displaced situations fight and accept the changes that come along their way.

Chapter-3: Globalisation and the Nepali

This chapter unfolds the breadth, depth, and pace of changes underway in the lives of contemporary Nepalis through a theoretical reflection on globalisation. It looks at how Nepalis perceive the global cultural flows from a global perspective, taking into account the difficulties and adaptations both inside and outside of Nepal. The chapter focuses on the significance of education and economic migration, which are a result of the influence of globalisation and hybridisation, and explores how globalisation has affected the Nepalis, which in turn plays a significant role in shaping their culture and identity.

The term ‘globalisation’ has become an essentially contested concept. The very notion of its term is problematic. It has shaped and created a new framework for socio-political and economic change of the Nepalis, and an important aspect of it that changes the Nepali sensibility is economic migration. Being displaced or dislocated from one’s land, migrating to a different region or nation has become a tradition for Nepalis, especially in Nepal. In the context of Nepal, the reason behind migration has always been the backward conditions of the nation. Thapa allows her readers to delve into the paradox and complexity of Nepalis who are spread all over the world as migrant workers and immigrants. Prakash Upadhyay in *Crossing the Border: International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* writes:

The emerging trend of globalization in early nineties amid rising unemployment and political instability inspired many young people (from all castes and ethnicities) to seek jobs in gulf countries and south-east Asian countries instead of looking for occupations in India and other neighbouring countries where their ancestors had been going for the past many centuries for making a living (90).

Migration is seen not just as a characteristic of a globalised world but as a key factor producing global change. No doubt, globalisation leads to the homogenisation of cultures in some significant aspects throughout the world. It involves interdependency, reciprocity, and exchange of mutual skills, language, and culture in a large measure. Thapa’s *The Tutor of History* (2001) embraces a portrait of

contemporary Nepal while highlighting the struggles, disorder, and changes that globalisation offers. It portrays the arrival of a new voice where the individuals break away from traditions and adopt a revolutionary step towards modernity and politics. Even though globalisation has brought positive impacts on the lives of Nepalis, there are negative impacts too. The book highlights human trafficking through the story of Chandra while depicting the harsh realities of women's lives in a Third World country. Prativa Subedi in *Nepali Women Rising* writes about the importance of educating women and girls where various social evils like women trafficking, rape, murder, and kidnapping are happening and have become a commercial norm in Nepal. She writes, "Sufficient information should be provided to young people and adults through the formal and non-formal curricula about the actual condition and adverse effects of trafficking...Unless people are able to resist the lure of the sex trade, the question of helping others does not arise" (Subedi 39). Thapa is concerned with the alignment of power that exerts social, physical, political, and economic control over the woman to fragment her. Her deconstruction of patriarchal structures of power and domination is not gender-specific but a comprehensive criticism of all power structures that inferiorise and dehumanise individuals, especially women. The collection of stories in the book *Tilled Earth: Stories* (2007) is one such example that exhibits how globalisation has brought about a considerable amount of changes in the day-to-day life of the Nepalis as their identity began to grow and intermingle with new cultures. The characters in the stories expose their deepest insecurities and are caught between tradition and modernisation. In stories such as "The Buddha in the Earth- Touching Posture," "Heera Maharjan Loses His Way," and "Solitaire," Thapa highlights the momentous cultural change and exchange in lifestyle caused by the impact of globalisation. Likewise, Thapa's *All of Us in Our Own Lives* (2016) portrays contemporary Nepalis who are disoriented by their present lives and the struggle to achieve their goals in a globalised world. Contrary to that, it also provides considerable evidence that there is still a distinctive division of gender in contemporary Nepali society. Foregrounding marginalised voices and the status of women in Nepal, Thapa's works underscore literature's capacity to confront social evils and illuminate overlooked perspectives. Deepa Pradhan writes about Thapa's works and says:

Her subject of choice in creative writing whether it is a fiction or non-fiction, is human freedom, especially psychological freedom and its elusiveness. The main message in her creative writing is to encourage the youth to create a new society, which is the real challenge (Pradhan 189).

Another aspect of globalisation viewed as connectivity is ‘openness.’ To operate freely and move forward requires openness where there are no barriers. Thapa, through the displaced Nepalis from her works, tries to expose reality to a larger audience. The portrayal of cross-cultural experiences not only offers a distinguishing essence to Thapa’s works but also renders a global touch in depicting the characters. In the book, *All of Us in Our Own Lives*, changes led by the impact of globalisation can be seen in Gyanu’s adoption and intermingling with new cultures in Dubai. To assimilate, Gyanu adopted the Western culture openly, which he could not have done in Nepal. His relationship with a divorced woman, Maleah, who is also a migrant worker from the Philippines, demonstrates his openness and acceptance of changes. In contemporary times, customs and laws are in a process of change. Gyanu “found escape from his past in Maleah” (Thapa 4). The cultural collisions and interchanges of both Gyanu and Maleah bring an invisible openness to change, which leads to the hybridisation of culture. “Cultural difference is to be found where the ‘loss’ of meaning enters, as a cutting edge, into the representation of the fullness of the demands of culture” (Bhabha 313). Culture, therefore, is a unified relationship between people and an idea where they influence one another, which is an integral part of people’s lives. It cannot be static, but rather it transforms with time. In today’s world, any society or culture that remains static or fixed is not possible. To progress, one has to accommodate the new forces that demand change. Nepalis in the present day are experiencing and experimenting with new lifestyles. The positive impact of globalisation on Nepalis is that it makes them more self-conscious and confident about their culture, tradition, and identity. On the other hand, they are trying to keep their identity intact and, at the same time, keep pace with the global changing trends. On a positive note, contemporary Nepalis are seen to progress and reshape their identity as globalisation has become a foundational force in uplifting them.

Chapter-4: Displacement as Portrayed by Manjushree Thapa

This chapter offers an insightful perspective of Manjushree Thapa on the socio-cultural displacement of contemporary Nepalis as an act of resistance and counter-discourse. It dwells upon the issues of displacement and its consequences and focuses on how it has created a sense of cultural consciousness and belongingness in the contemporary era.

Thapa has delved deep into the Nepali diaspora, which has pictured their varied experiences with great adaptability and maintained a realistic representation. In *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy* (2005), Thapa writes, “The events in Nepal mystified the world, including Nepalis. The truth is that this is a complicated country...” (11). Thapa holds the view that her works give an insight into the issues and problems that plague Nepali society. She offers an insightful portrayal of displaced Nepalis in *The Tutor of History* (2001). One of the main characters, Rishi Parajuli, significantly portrays Nepalis and their cultural displacement, which expresses a complex issue of a globalised world. He is among the characters who have been struggling in Nepal and have been living in the capital city for twelve years in search of a secure job. He often heard people say:

‘I work as a peon at a factory’...‘I’m a driver at a hotel’...‘I arrange visas for boys to go to Korea’. ‘I have a farm in the district’...‘I didn’t weigh enough to qualify for the army, but I’ll try again next year’ (Thapa 66).

The chapter traces the ‘in-between’ situation of contemporary Nepalis tying up the various theoretical and empirical strands by highlighting Nepalis in their displaced situations, either in Nepal or outside Nepal. The overall stories of educated Nepali youths like Rishi and other characters are that they remain victims of unstable and unfair superiors. Likewise, Thapa’s *Tilled Earth: Stories* (2007) expresses the multiple layers of Nepali society, the paradoxes of stereotypical mindset, social disparities, poverty, insecurities, and displacement from the perspectives of both the older and younger generations of contemporary Nepal. Their stories pose fundamental questions and present the protagonists’ lives in reflection with contemporary Nepalis who are displaced and reformed due to globalisation. Hence, it

also questions whether Nepal is progressing massively while leaving behind the true self. The predicament can be explained in Thapa's words from *The Lives We Have Lost: Essays and Opinions of Nepal* (2011). She writes, "We Nepalis are still baffled about how to be part of the modern world. For this we are still, and seemingly forever, waiting" (203). In one of the stories from *Tilled Earth: Stories*, "The Eldest Son Thinks of Home," Thapa establishes a narrative of a Nepali youth in a foreign land who represents global immigrants and migrant workers. In a comforting tone, he promises his father and says, "Father, I'll send you half my first month's salary as soon as I find work" (Thapa 171). Here, Thapa has absorbed the cultural perspectives of both lands and can feel the nostalgia and the yearning of the migrants who seem helpless in their diaspora.

Economic migration has played a crucial role in changing the lives of millions of Nepalis. In this regard, the effect of the change of culture and environment due to migration to another country is reflected in *Seasons of Flight* (2010). Here, the characters are Nepalis negotiating and witnessing the long-isolated country confronting the modern world geographically, socially, politically, and economically. In the book, Prema represents the Nepali who experiences the changes in the process of migration. The book remains the embodiment of hybridity, as every aspect of it is imbued with the mixing and melding of various elements and characteristics. By examining the complex identity formation of Prema in a new country, Thapa encapsulates diverse thematic agendas. In particular, a prominent thematic focus revolves around the exploration of the personal and cultural identity of Prema in both worlds. Being asked and questioned several times about her identity, she sometimes answered them with incorrect information by saying that she was from India, and she believed, "Americans had at least heard of India. She envied Indians this" (Thapa 12). She also wonders, "If she were Indian she could explain herself better. Everyone here knows India" (Thapa 174). The difficulties in determining one's identity remain central to the book, yet Prema embraces her various identities, realising that one of the inherent problems of contemporary society is the impossibility of finding and embodying one true, authentic identity. Migration studies highlight the fact that attachment and movement are neither linear

nor sequential but capable of rotating back and forth. Thapa's characters resonate within the postcolonial context, vividly portraying the 'liminal space,' and it is within this 'liminal space' that contemporary Nepalis assert their lives and negotiate their identity. Despite a shift or change in patterns and culture, it does not mean that the primary cultural space has been completely replaced, but the individual or society is in the process of constant expansion. In the case of cultural identities, hybridity refers to the fact that cultures are not discrete phenomena; instead, they are always in contact with one another, and this contact leads to cultural mixedness. An important factor for the construction of identity, that is, the notion of 'others' as differentiated from 'us,' should not be ignored. It cannot be defined without reference to what stands outside of it or what is different from it. In other words, identity is based on difference. Such changes in one's identity can be extended to what Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity explains. In *The Location of Culture*, he writes:

The borderline work of culture demands an encounter with 'newness' that is not part of the continuum of past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation. Such art does not merely recall the past as a social cause or aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent 'in-between' space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present. The 'past-present' becomes part of the necessity, not the nostalgia, of living (10).

Thapa has thus observed how Nepalis meet displacement in every sphere, which results in negotiating their identity in a globalised world. Foregrounding contemporary Nepali voices, her works have therefore held a historical significance as they carry within themselves the kernel of Nepal's history and culture. To a large degree, the notion of dislocation has forced the individual to seek out independence or a new identity.

Chapter-5: Conclusion

The concluding chapter analyses and summarises the preceding chapters and provides a new understanding of the dynamics of cultural dislocation and the impacts of globalisation. It outlines the central concerns of the research while demonstrating

the continued displacements and backwardness of Nepalis portrayed in the selected works of Manjushree Thapa. In this sense, the selected works are lived reality and are reflective of contemporary Nepal and the Nepalis. Globalisation, at some point, has proved to be a significant means of generating changes and transformations within the Nepali community. Contact with Western culture and values has become an aspect of being in a globalised era, and the acceptance of adopting new cultural values has initiated the process of social and cultural change among Nepalis around the world. Even though the acceptance of new ideas, values, and technologies is seen as cultural loss or hybridity, the cultural consciousness after intermingling with new culture and environment has created greater influence and progress towards their culture.

Taken together, it highlights the findings of the thesis, which has attempted to explain the changing nature of the societal structure and cultural values of Nepalis in contemporary times. This chapter sums up and supports the view that Nepalis around the globe have learnt to adapt and adjust towards their dislocated culture and identities by forming new spaces and new identities. Their 'liminal space' or 'third space' foregrounds connections and openness, which is the reality of a globalised era. Bhabha has thus opined that no culture remains rooted or pure, and change in some aspects is seen gradually. Thapa's strategic use of postcolonial techniques and her creativity in aligning reality with fiction have opened up perspectives and possibilities of creative space. It has shed light on how Thapa's narratives empower the Nepali identity by promoting a sense of the self and demonstrating insight into overlooked perspectives.

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