



A Study of Human Relations and Discrimination in the *Ghātu* Site

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the Ghātu site from the human relations and discrimination perspectives. Human relations have been badly deteriorated and the individualist approach has been ameliorated in modern societies. This Ghātu site, which helps discourage this trend, is a good example of harmony and equality. Most Ghātu followers are from the lower middle working class known as the common people. In spite of their good friendship and unity, they are discriminated against by the bourgeois class. They are tagged lower class proletariats. The rich people always dominate and discriminate against the poor people as it is an ongoing process. They cannot raise their voice against the rich people because of their unspeakability. Most Ghātu participants are women and little girls who are doubly marginalized; by poverty and femininity. Both women and poor people are treated otherwise in societies. Marxist feminism raises the voice of females, proletariats, or the poor and concerns with how to promote the socio-economic condition of these people. Treating a man by another man as commodities is an issue for Marxist philosophy. So, this paper focuses on questions like, when will the harmonious relations between humans be maintained? Establishing a harmonious relationship between humans and equal socioeconomic status is the major focus of this study as projected in the field of literature. The study employs Marxist feminist theory and Elton Mayo's theory of human relations respectively for the analysis of this Ghātu site.

Keywords

class conflict, discrimination, *Ghaṭu*, Marxist feminism, human relations

Introduction

This paper analyzed the *Ghaṭu* site from the human relations and discrimination perspectives to highlight in literature. In industrial civilization, human relations have deteriorated, and the individualistic approach has been ameliorated. Man is detached from man and s/he is attached to the machine or artificial intelligence. *Ghaṭu* site encourages “to maintain harmony between man and man, and between man and nature” (Lewis 178). Man is alienated from nature first, and then from man. Later he is alienated from himself. Because of new technologies, a kind of unnecessary overconfidence has been built up in every individual. This worked well and deteriorated man to man relations. The friendship between man and man seems to have been obsolete, whereas their friendship with machines has been increased. Every man attempts “to sanction the relations between man and man, and yet ultimately this result is achieved in a circuitous manner” (Lewis 134). In spite of these facts, human relations have not been ameliorated. This is the essence of Lawrence’s *Sons and Lovers*, as, “relationships no longer hold together, families are fragmented” (Peck & Coyle 235). This is the real picture of modern societies. Gracia & Chambers state, “Changes in the global economy and the global flow of ideas correspond with changes in family relations and values” (23). The responsible factors for disintegrated family relations are the impacts of the global economy and the global flow of ideas that a man can survive without others’ help. In contrast, the *Ghaṭu* site explores the harmony of humans and it is only the referential example of maintaining good relations as every literature suggests.

Observing the *Ghaṭu* means maintaining the norms of teamwork and unity. This teamwork is almost impossible without unity and harmony between them. Most *Ghaṭu* followers are lower middle working class people known as the common people. Their harmonious relationship and good friendship make the *Ghāṭu* performance a source of inspiration to other people. In spite of their harmony and unity, the bourgeois class dominates and discriminates against them because of their low economic status. These poor against people are tagged as proletariats. They cannot raise their voice against the rich people. Therefore, the study explored the unspeakability of poor people.

The high-class people use the working-class people. This reflects feudalism. In most *Ghātu* performances, the participants are women and little girls who are doubly marginalized: by poverty and femininity. It is a Marxist feminist business that raises the voice of such marginalized groups. The purpose of Marxist feminism is to promote and enhance these people's socioeconomic conditions and make them stronger from several angles. Marxist feminist philosophy protests the trend of treating a female by males as commodities. It intends to establish an Egalitarian society. So, this paper sheds light on the "When will the harmonious relations between humans or male and female be maintained?" When will the Egalitarian society be established? Establishing a harmonious relationship between humans and equal socioeconomic status was the major focus of this study.

Although there are several kinds of discrimination like caste, class, colour, and gender, this study focused on class and gender discrimination. Solomon points out, "Engels's work was of critical importance for debates in Marxist-feminism around the at-least-dual structure of women's oppression in terms of both class and gender" (10). The patriarchal society oppresses women in terms of both class and gender. Class means because of economic condition and gender means because of femininity. The reason for class discrimination and domination is lower income. Most working-class females were and are paid less wages knowingly to dominate them. They are treated lower by class and gender as it is the patriarchal discourse.

It might be relevant to talk about what the impacts of domination and discrimination are like even if colour discrimination is not the focus of this study. It shows the level and nature of discrimination. For instance, white people have created a discourse against black people. This is a kind of politics to sustain their governing. Most white people discriminate and dominate the Negroes. They dominate as well as oppress them simultaneously. In 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. delivered a powerful and the most sensitizing unforgettable speech in Washington D. C. as "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today" (Sundquist 232). What he meant to say is that a man is to be treated as a man, not otherwise. King Jr. clarifies that there is a difference between colour, content, and character. Colour does

not determine the content; it is character. However, *Ghaṭu* does not explore this issue. It is all about gender discrimination.

The study employed Marx's feminist theory and Elton Mayo's theory of human relations for the analysis of this *Ghaṭu* site. In this cultural activity, the high-class people use the working-class people either by paying money or by giving them some incentives. For *Ghaṭu* performance, the dancing girls are given some incentives. In some villages, they are given dresses and some money to pay their tuition fees in school (personal talk with Janga Ras Gurung). Similarly, Gopal Aryal, the main dance master of *Ghaṭu* from Nuwakot, claims that the dancing girls are paid a certain amount of money that is collected for the performance. This shows that working-class people are easily used or hired by high-class people because they are unspeakable by nature. They are used to having scarcities most of the time so they do whatever work they are assigned even if there is some nominal income. They do not protest against the high-class people although it is unjust. They are used to living under injustice, domination, and dehumanization in the lack of the power access to fight against them. Marxist feminism always discourages this trend.

The high-class people treat the working-class people otherwise, as "people are forced to become the commodities of each other's desires" (Kershaw 218). The high-class people make the working-class people their commodities or tools. Marxism or Marxist feminism protests that man is man not a commodity. Comparatively, Americans are richer than non-Americans. "From the first decades of colonial America, European Americans have made oppression of non-Europeans" (Feagin 2). European Americans always discriminate non-European Americans. Feagin points out that "most European Americans have viewed non-Europeans from within an interpretive frame that persistently defines them as uncivilized compared to European Americans and as somehow alien and lesser human beings" (288). The European Americans are experts in generating such mythic-definitive discourse to oppress and suppress non-European Americans. They tag the non-Americans as uncivilized and savage. This is politically incorrect. Thus, Marxist feminism is a main literary device for depicting society in English literature.

The use of only girls and age-old women in *Ghātu* is a gender discrimination that depicts the patriarchal society. “Marxist feminism as a component part of the women’s liberation movement and a resource for thinking about social and cultural reproduction” (Solomon 6). The Americans discriminate the non-Americans as uncivilized, and the males discriminate the females as inferior and incapable compared to males. The women are crushed under the injustice of social construct. The Marxist feminism, which is the women’s liberation movement, advocates in favour of females as thinking about social and cultural reproduction is not possible until women’s freedom and liberation. Oppressing women is othering which deteriorates the social harmony. No humans entertain other people’s domination and oppression. This makes the victim group escape from the oppressor groups. They do not want to come in contact with them.

Most writers seem to be engaged in enhancing the socioeconomic condition of the society at large but they do not seem to be attracted toward the human relations issue. Sarachek points out, “[t]oday writers in the area of human relations are increasingly less apt to intone the name of Elton Mayo when citing their inspirational sources” (189). The human relations issue has not been discussed and made the buzz words by scholars as it has been a must. Warner “consistently portrays human relations are deeply problematic but also as deeply rewarding— as the source of our greatest disappointments and our highest joys” (9). According to him, human relations is deeply problematic in many societies. It can be deeply rewarding with the highest joys of life if integral relation is maintained. But in most cases, human relations have deteriorated. Most writers do not interest in this issue as this type of writing does not attract or sensitize the mass readers. The modern readers’ interest is otherwise. The writers’ write-up is based on the market value and its salability. The cold relationship generates the gap between rich and poor people, and discrimination gets started.

Except for the feminist approach, Marxist philosophy deals with the gap between the haves-and-have-nots. This gap generates conflict between them. The conflict between these two social classes is from time immemorial. The class conflict in the *Ghātu* performance, which is not noticed, indicates the late eighteenth century Germany, as “class conflict is portrayed in the light of pre-capitalist social conditions which were common in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in Germany” (Zipes 167).

Thus, *Ghātu* indicates the portrayal of pre-capitalist social conditions as it has a history of 500 years or more in Nepal. Though there is no direct domination by the rich people in *Ghātu*, the lower middle working class people and females are being used. The *Ghātu* gurus have never experimented the chanting on the males for dance performances. The domination and discrimination in this *Ghātu* is not extreme but it is there. Abadeer claims, “[d]ifferent aspects of gender discrimination against women are prevalent in almost all countries” (4). *Ghātu* is about gender discrimination against women. This shows that no country is free from gender discrimination. In developed countries, several women rightists raise the voice of women, whereas Solomon makes clear as “the authors argue that socialist revolution is not enough to ensure women’s liberation” (118). In many cases, the socialist revolution changes the social parameters but it cannot have liberated the women yet. This condition is more or less everywhere. The level can be different but discrimination is worldwide.

This discrimination causes conflict, and the conflict deteriorates the harmony. This paper focuses on how to maintain harmonious relations between humans or between males and females. Only the harmonious relation lays the foundation of sustainable development. *Ghātu* is a source of harmonious relations, unity, teamwork, and discipline as well. Discipline is mandatory in every aspect of life. This urges the villagers to observe such cultural activities. The rich people, like other lower middle-class people, indirectly manipulate the poor people. “People have been labeled ‘other’ because of their differences of religion, gender, geography, politics, colour, caste and class, et cetera” (Wallenius 55). In the *Ghātu*, it is class and gender. The lower middle-class people have been labeled as ‘other’. The supra-class people belittle the lower class people and rule them by othering. There is politics in othering, naming, and depriving of ruling class people.

However, *Ghātu* culture is on the verge of extinction. It does not guarantee a better life but poor people have hope. For example, the Tamangs from Baikutha village, Makawanpur, observe this *Ghātu* which they say that they have adopted from Gurung with the hope of better harvesting. They want to minimize their poverty through such cultural activities. Poor people are always afraid of poverty though they are already poor. They have the fear of going further down. They want to fill up the gap between

rich and poor with a dream of an Egalitarian society by working hard. This can enhance their economic condition to some extent so that they do not need to take help from rich people. Parker depicts that “[p]overty is living in a smell that never leaves. This is a smell of urine, sour milk, and spoiling food” (275). This is the extreme of poverty. The condition of *Ghāṭu* performers is not as alarming as Parker describes here but their situation is not satisfactory though they work hard for livelihood.

For whatever reasons the working class people participate in the *Ghāṭu* performance, and they have contributed to conserving these cultural activities. The high-class people just look at the performance and enjoy it as the heavenly king Indra does. The heavenly king Indra enjoys the dances of nymphs as it is given in the coming section of this paper. Most high-class people entertain the art and labour of working-class people. The males also enjoy the cooking arts and household work of females. This is what we find in the *Ghāṭu*. This cultural activity is supposed to be stereotypical of some indigenous people and one Khasa-Brahman community. The Khasa-Brahman also uses the lower middle-class people for performance. The hierarchy between males and females in the Khasa-Brahman community is more strictly followed than the indigenous groups. There is no harmony in this community, too, because of this conflict. This male-female dichotomy is portrayed in the *Ghāṭu* site.

Whosoever performs this *Ghāṭu* folk dance, there is the use of lower middle working class people and females. Generally, high-class people do not allow their daughters to participate in the performance except in an unavoidable condition. At that time, some allow their daughters to participate in the performance for healing. Every *Ghāṭu* village does not observe it for only one purpose. That varies from village to village. The villagers of Chandibhanjyang, Chitwan, and Baikuntha of Makawanpur believe that *Ghāṭu* bestows a good harvest and good health. The poor people have no access to sufficient money to buy expensive medicine and chemical fertilizers, so they are obliged to request the gods.

Not only *Ghāṭu*, the working class people observe different other cultural activities for their financial enhancements. They observe such cultural activities with the hope of “capitalism’s promise of economic opportunity for all seemed at its peak of fulfillment. “Get-rich-quick” schemes” abounded, and many of them succeeded” (Tyson

69), too. This is common that every human wants to get rich quick as soon as possible. The rich people can deal with everything with money. The poor people are compelled to believe such seemingly meaningless things and they work without question for “food and clothing have obvious biological functions” (Tyson 218). Food and clothes are the most concerning subjects of Marxism. Mostly, they work for survival. Survival is a major concern for middle-class and lower middle-class people. They always worry about how to sustain their life.

The *Ghaṭu* performance represents class discrimination as well as gender discrimination. Marxism advocates the equality of all humans in the world. So, it encourages the lower middle-class people and females to struggle against the rich people and males. “Ringling intentionally discriminated against her because of her sex/gender” (Gregory 179). This quote is about the conflict between an employer (Ringling) and an employee (Plaintiff). The case has been filed in the court and Ringling’s intention has been found. Women are discriminated against in different ways. This discrimination is in the workplace. The discrimination in *Ghaṭu* is gender discrimination. The girls under puberty stage are used in this folk drama.

The most remarkable and inhuman discrimination in *Ghaṭu* is the sati custom. After the death of the king in the battlefield, his consort has to jump into the burning pyre of her husband according to the story of *Ghaṭu*. It is a use of a human by another human. The sati system was an exploitation of women by men so the Rana Prime Minister, Chandra Shamsheer, abolished it in his time. But this is a ritual and culture to rule over the females. Or presents the record of an inscription about the sati custom, “a woman named Gangamadeviyar ‘who was entering the fire’” (SII 8.690); an inscription from Dharmapuri district, dated A. D. 1017, in which a wife is said to have ‘entered the fire.’” (112-13). This is a history of women’s self-immolation, the sati system that the female has to be so loyal, submissive, and dutiful to her husband. But the husbands were and are not compelled for being loyal to their wives. According to this inscription, the wife had to immolate entering the fire of the pyre with her dead husband. What an inhuman! According to the inscription, Gangamadeviyar is the first woman to enter the fire of her husband’s pyre. “It began in the tenth century in India and it came to Nepal in the Lichhabi dynasty by 500 B. C. It was in practice until the time of Chandra Shamsheer”

(Shrish Magar 57). Similarly, there is a stone engraved inscription in Nepal as “Acharya mentions the record of a stone inscription that is placed at the Changu Narayana temple in the north-eastern corner of the Kathmandu” (quoted in Gurung 279). These are the rituals of male discourse which is reflected in *Ghātu* cultural activity. Marxism strongly raises the voice against such activities. This is the politics of the high-class people.

Now the situation is different but there are several types of sati which dominate the females. Only the form is different. In many societies, daughters were intentionally made uneducated and they were compelled to be under the male’s suppression. It was a politics as “the worsening economic condition of the 1970s was a widening of the gap between the haves and have-nots” (Kershaw 136). Here, haves means male and have-nots means female. The females had to and have to depend on their husbands. Likewise, the dancing girls’ class can be considered as the have-nots in *Ghātu*. Marxists suggest that the gap between the rich and poor should be filled up by enhancing the economic condition of the poor for sustainable development.

A major concern of this paper is how to uplift the people from lower middle class to upper middle class or upper class, and from feudalism to capitalism. Selecting the dancing girls from the lower middle-class has been stereotypical. The high-class people do not give time to the conservation of such archives. Some of them have financially contributed to the performance but that is not sufficient. Therefore, this *Ghātu* performance has drawn the demarcation line between the haves-and-have-nots. Marxism emerges to delete the demarcation line or the gap between rich and poor. Can we make the distance between rich and poor shorter than it was before? Yes, it can be and it has been, too, though a hundred percent success has not taken place. But slowly and gradually, the worsened situation is getting better.

The working-class people were obliged to be the prey of the high-class people, “[d]uring periods of crisis, with falling wages and rising unemployment, they thought that class struggle would intensify as workers fought to resist the worsening of their lot” (Bell & Cleaver 3). Their wages were not good and unemployment was rising which worsened their situation. The situation compelled the working-class people to do what the high class people asked them to do. This is called emotional bankruptcy.

According to Hindu mythology, the god Indra has used the female. In “A Tale” by B. P. Koirala, Urbasi has been used by Him. “Indra [. . .] sent the comeliest and adroitest nymph of his court to the hermitage” (Koirala 308) where a sage was in deep meditation and his penance had to be broken. Indra planned to break the sage’s penance, he did it by using a nymph, a female. Similarly, in the poem, “Leda and the Swan”, by W. B. Yeats, Leda has been raped by the God Zeus or she has been used. In this way, males use females for several purposes. Unlikely, females are used in the *Ghātu* dance. It shows the use of low-class people. Even in high-class families, females are used and badly exploited. Marxist feminism points out the class conflict and gender discrimination in the *Ghātu* site.

Why are working-class people observing *Ghātu* like cultural activity? It is because “Hinduism talks about the previous and next life in addition to this one. It teaches that the suffering of the working class is the result of sin they committed in the previous life and the wealth of the rich people is the result of the previous good deeds” (Thapa 28-29). The working class people think that they had sinned in their previous life so they are suffering now. The high-class people interpret this so that they can use them. The rich people are used to ruling the working-class people. To be free from this oppression, the working-class people and females regularly participate in the performance with the hope of better life. This paper might be a revolution against the trend of use of the lower middle working class people and women and it supports the idea of “(like ‘No women’s liberation without socialism! No socialism without women’s liberation!’)” (Solomon 150). The main target of Marxism or Marxist feminism is to generate a classless and unbiased society and its philosophy is to make all the people financially sound so that no one would suffer because of basic needs.

Conclusion

This paper highlighted the issue of using one human by another human, and the conflict between two social classes, that is, haves and have-nots, and gender discrimination. The main focus of the study was how to minimize or put an end to the use of one human by another human. Although change is taking place in many societies of the world, it has not been changed as Marxism expected. This paper examined the *Ghātu* performance from the Marxist feminist point of view that there is inequality and class discrimination

yet. Marxist feminism is a literary device in English literature that analyzed this text. From the very beginning, the *Ghātu* has been observed by the lower middle-class people either in the ethnic groups or in the Khasa-Brahman community. The high-class people and males used the lower middle working-class people and females. They don't seem to be responsible for protecting cultural heritage. It is lower middle-class people who seem to be solely responsible to conserve the cultural heritage in many societies. Because the rich people do not take care of such cultural activities as they are busy with some other businesses. But the study is about maintaining the balance between culture and capital. The economic condition of the lower middle class should be upgraded by generating employment opportunities that will surely minimize their poverty. And their involvement in *Ghātu* performance should not be discouraged as it is the source of art and archives as well as the identity of the society. Thus, this paper concerns how to stabilize cultural activities as such permanently and mobilize the economic condition of the lower middle-class people effectively.

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