many methodological questions about the theory and concept of trauma as such, for example, how the discourse of trauma stigmatizes the fundamental gender differences that underlie the social order, how much the problems of oppression and subordination are alienated and reduced in it and much more.

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Ethnicity and democracy in the eastern Himalayan borderland: constructing democracy, by Mona Chettri, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2017, 184 pp., $105.00 (hardback), ISBN: 9789089648860

Historically, the Eastern Himalayan has been seen as a fluid space with multiple species of a different kind (both human and non-human) reinforcing each other in their movement for various activities. However, the concretization of geo-political borders has re-shaped such movement and institutionalized new values and customs thereby giving new meaning to culture and ethnicity. In fact, borders and borderland are a modern concept that takes a concrete shape only after the history of colonialism. Thus, colonialism not only transformed the physical identity of the space but creates a huge cultural transformation by institutionalizing ethnic value and custom within modern civil jurisdiction. Borders and borderland perceive new meaning thereafter and many local and cultural boundaries which were earlier fluid get concretized in the form of institutional manner. Borders in the Eastern Himalayas are dynamic in nature having certain cultural and historical meaning. More than a geographical line, the boundaries in the eastern Himalayas is a meeting place for different race, culture and linguistic groups largely homogenized under the rubric of Nepali identity. Thus, Ethnicity and Democracy in the Eastern Himalayan Borderland is an attempt to showcase the dynamic of ‘being Nepali’ and its ethnic assertion in contemporary politics in which the articulation of ‘ethnicity’ has become an important mechanism to negotiation not only with the policy of modern nation-state but even with everyday struggle of the people for the resource as well as recognition.

This book with rich ethnographic data is a scholarly endeavor to capture politico-cultural expression of ethnicity in the Eastern Himalayas therein mapping the construction of democracy in such a fluid and strategic borders mostly between Nepal, India and Sikkim. The regional interpretation of democracy through ethnic mobilization in the Eastern Himalayas is the main question that the author seeks to express in this book and hence three Nepali dominated regions Darjeeling, Sikkim and Ilam district (Eastern Nepal) of Eastern Himalayas has been taken as a site of field study. The articulation of ethnic identity
in these three different regions is different even though they hold the same ethnic tag of being Nepali. This variation of ethnic politics is due to the nature of democracy and also the structurally embedded notion of borders and borderland that the nation produced in its entirety. However, these variations of ethnic articulation within national framework vis-à-vis homogenous ethnic tags of 'being Nepalis' makes 'ethnicity' a prime marker of everyday life in the Eastern Himalayas.

Tracing the historical lineage of Nepali identity since the formation of Gorkha Kingdom in the early seventeenth century, this book tried to show how the social and cultural linkage of Nepali in different space produces different meaning determined by social, religious and cultural boundaries more than geographical line and exhibit potential for politicization in the modern democratic framework. The growing colonization of the Indian subcontinent by the British and the transformation of the petty Himalayan kingdom due to the expansion of the Gorkha Kingdom provide a departure point for the Nepali identity to consolidate into a new imagination of 'being Nepali'. On the one hand, the expansion of Gorkha kingdom aims to consolidate discrete ethnic entities under a homogenized Nepali identity in order to make Nepal a land of true Hindu (Asal Hindustan) and hence religion i.e. Hindu religion became an important mechanism to sustain its political interest. This led to rapid Hinduization and the rise of Hindu elites (mostly upper caste bahuns) in the region. While on the other hand, the colonization of Indian subcontinent by the British provides a new opportunity for many ethnic groups to migrate into India in order to escape the oppressive Hindu elite which, in fact, are an important aspect of the social-history of almost all ethnic groups in the eastern Himalaya (39).

However, both these system propelled the Nepali into the lower strata of the social hierarchy in which the colonialism even though providing a new opportunity to escape oppressive Hindu elite only bound Nepal to servitude in another side of the border (colonial empire). Thus, chapter two of the book showcases the formation of homogenous Nepali identity outside Nepal that is grounded on the common cause of economic deprivation in colonial empire. Amidst of these was the Nepali language that soon became a lingua franca and its literary status in comparison to their colonized Indian counterpart was used as a signifier for community development(jati unmati). Nevertheless, the British colonialism – or the reaction again British colonialism at least – had an important role to play in the construction of the Nepali identity (47) and henceforth, Nepali identity entered into a new domain of modern nationalist imagination embedded deeply into the patriotic feeling of Indian national sentiment. This was further accentuated by the colonial discourse of 'Gorkha' identity largely crystallized around the notion of bir Gorkhali (brave Gorkhali) that appeared as a popular rhetoric of the post–colonial identity politics in Darjeeling and its adjoining region.

Unlike in Nepal where Nepali identity appeared as a dominant national identity, the Nepalis in post-independence India became a victim of racial and cultural discrimination and hence their subject of being Indian citizen was often questioned. The reaction to such discrimination and economic subjugation of Nepalis were manifested in their struggle for 'Homeland' in India that gave rise to the Gorkhaland movement in Darjeeling district of West Bengal. Locating in such a context of homogenized Nepali identity, Mona Chettri in her book moved further to interrogate internal fraction of ethnic politics within larger Nepali identity that took a different route of politics but with similar grievances. Thus, the chapter three of the book looked into the ethnic politics in three different regions of the eastern Himalayas (Darjeeling, Sikkim and eastern Nepal) each determined by their own governing institutions. Centralizing the notion of 'ethnicity' as a mode of expressing grievances in the eastern Himalayas, the author claim that 'in Darjeeling and east Nepal, there is a deep, underlying perception that these existential
problems have been exacerbated by their affiliation with specific ethnic identities that are different to those who are at the helm of the state. On the other hand, in Sikkim, ethnic identity is considered to be a legitimate mode of accessing public goods and benefits, and is in fact a resource that is being promoted and cultivated by the state itself (66). Thus, the author argued that ethnicity has become a world-view of people’s imagination of politics in the Eastern Himalayas that installed the institution of democracy within the ethnic framework.

The ethnicization of everyday politics in the Eastern Himalayas produces the institution of the state as something that is natural and pre-existing that deemed unnecessary to challenge or question it. However, the state while understanding the significance of ethnicity reciprocates either by encouraging ethnic claims or by refusing to accommodate ethnic grievances. Thus, this interconnected relationship between the state and ethnicity in the Eastern Himalayas gave rise to the system of patronage which work through the medium of political or family network (afnomanche) (67). Given this ethnic nature of contestation, the author with rich ethnographic narratives tried to show about how ethnic framework has become an ultimate mechanism to negotiate with the state, may it be in the lushly tea plantation of Darjeeling hills or in the rural fringe of Sikkim or in the eastern corridor of Nepal. The issue of class, caste and gender get conflated with the issue of ethnicity and hence, ethnic lens direct the vision of politics in the eastern Himalayas.

Underlying such contestation between state and ethnicity, the author argued that ‘in the eastern Himalaya, ethnic politics is played out within the leeway that is given by the state and is not typically aimed at de-stabilizing or challenging the prevailing political structures’ (p.16). In Darjeeling and Eastern Nepal, ethnicity has been used to challenge the hitherto existing dominant groups like Bengali in Darjeeling and Hindu upper caste Bahun (Brahmin) in eastern Nepal and both these claims has been accentuated by the political demand for self-administration: Gorkhaland movement in Darjeeling district and Limbuwan movement in Eastern Nepal. However, in Sikkim ‘ethnic identity is not used as a platform to contest the state, but it is utilized to partake in the politics of re-distribution which is patronized by the state’ (91). Thus, this book is successful in documenting the picture of ethnic politics travelling across the hills and plains of the eastern Himalayas, sometimes crossing the border, sometimes contesting the structure of the governing institute while sometimes modifying within it to reproduce a new political meaning. Amidst of this rupture was the ethnic ‘other’ who seems to be a reason for underdevelopment and unequal development in the region. The process of resistance to such ethnic other is therefore expressed through the ethnic lens thereby making ethnicity a politically loaded term.

Interestingly, this ethnic manifestation is determined by the material culture being overtly performed to legitimize the demand for ethnic separation, and hence chapter four of the book explained this phenomenon of ethnic performance during Gorkhaland movement in Darjeeling where the imposition of ethnic dress code vividly resonate the tangible expression of ethnic culture. Consequently, such ethnic manifestation led to the increasing rise of ethnic and political elites in the eastern Himalayas who not only negotiate with the state for welfare and re-distribution (sic) of public goods but also transformed ethnicity into mere political resources, which according to the author makes democracy more inclusive at the regional level.

Broadly, this book is an excellent account of the dynamic and contradiction underlying ethnic politics in the borderland of the eastern Himalayas and is thus a worthy of scholarly attention. Notwithstanding the limitation and critics concerning the ideas, regions and dynamic of ethnicity, this book steers the research on ethnicity into a new framework in our contemporary times through an in-depth overview of ‘what democracy mean for people in the eastern Himalayas’.
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The book entitled Dilli Wich Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Naal Sambandhit Sathana Di Nisaandehi (Identification of the Places Related to Baba Banda Singh Bahadur in Delhi) written in Punjabi language is the outcome of a fieldwork by Dr Harbans Kaur Sagoo. Her ardent endeavour was to locate the places in Delhi that are connected with Baba Banda Singh Bahadur who was the first sovereign king of the Sikh ethnic community. The history has not done justice to Baba Banda Singh Bahadur as historians have undermined and neglected his contributions. It is a matter of great astonishment that historical sources, both Persian as well as Indian, have valid references but have remained lost in the layers of history.

Having depicted in short the life sketch of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur that is an example of unflinching valour, indomitable spirit and unparalleled sacrifice, the author proceeds to unravel the obscurities in locating various places especially in and around Delhi related to him. For example, after Baba Ji was arrested from the fort of Gurdas Nangal, he was taken as captive to Lahore and Delhi. The caravan of Baba Ji halted at Agharabad in Delhi from where Mughal Emperor Farukh Siyar was divulged information to this effect. The contemporary Persian historians give testimony to it. Yahya Khan Mir Munshi and Khafi Khan consider it a place outside Delhi from where Baba Banda Singh Bahadur was brought into the city of Delhi. From various sources, the author authenticates the exact location of the captivity of Banda Singh as approximately 8 km further from Delhi called as Agharabad, the present-day Shalimar Bagh. Agharabad served as the summer palace of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb with a beautiful Shalimar Bagh and Shish Mahal inside its complex.

The next destination of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur was Quila-i-Mubarak (Red Fort) through ‘Loon Mandi’ but its location is not very clear. The author plausibly grasps the fact that during those times, the ‘mandis’ were at the outskirts of the main city and as per her observation, Sangam Park (Opposite Nanak Piao Gurudwara) is where Mandvi-i-Namak was situated during the Mughal period. Even today Gurmandi can be seen which is diagonally opposite to Sangam Park. Mohammad Hairsi, the writer of