

**GRADPARENTS PERPECTIVE ABOUT RITUALS
TRANSFORMATION TO NEW GENERATION AMONG
GRANDPARENTS**

(A study of Sanfebagar Municipality, Achham)



A Thesis

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DECLARATION

I hereby certify that I have prepared and submitted to the Central Department of Social Work, Tribhuvan University, the study entitled *Grandparents Perspective About Ritual Transformation to New Generation Among Grandparents* under the supervision of Asst. Prof. Laxman Subedi. All the information and statistics that are provided in this report to my best knowledge are authentic and true. The study was undertaken under the partial completion of the Master of Social Work (MSW) program, 4th semester, Tribhuvan University.

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

This is to certify that the study entitled *Grandparents Perspective About Ritual Transformation to New Generation Among Grandparents* has been prepared and submitted by Mr. Binod Swar under my academic supervision.

The structure and content of the study have been also carefully scrutinized and I feel it is a good attempt of original work. Thus, I would suggest this thesis to be sent to the external evaluation and viva voice as a partial fulfillment of the Master of Social Work (MSW) in Tribhuvan University.

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the transformation of traditional rituals across generations in Sanfebagar Municipality, Ward No. 2, through the lived experiences of 38 grandparents from diverse caste and gender backgrounds. Drawing from their memories and reflections, the research uncovers how once-deeply rooted practices around birth, marriage, and death have shifted due to modernization, migration, digital influences, and changing family structures. Many elders shared a deep sense of loss as rituals that once unified families and communities have become shorter, symbolic, or forgotten. Gender roles, caste identity, and spiritual healing traditions have all been affected, and intergenerational gaps in ritual knowledge are growing.

Despite these changes, the study highlights that rituals still carry emotional and cultural value for older generations. The findings emphasize the need to bridge generational disconnects through community education, school curricula, and storytelling initiatives led by elders. By valuing grandparents as living carriers of tradition and encouraging youth engagement, social workers, local agencies, and policy-makers can ensure rituals evolve meaningfully retaining their heart and purpose. This study calls for collaborative efforts between families, communities, and institutions to preserve Nepal's intangible heritage while adapting to the realities of modern life.

Keywords; *Ritual Change, Grandparents, Cultural Continuity, Intergenerational Learning, Traditional practice.*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

This paper tries to examine the terms of the transformation of the ritual practices to new generation under the setting of Achham District. To the extent that Nepal has witnessed a number of change in 20 years. Achham is a location with a lot of culture and cultural practices. Nepal has experienced social, economic and political transformation over the last two decades, which has impacted the different facets of life, including ritual practice. This paper examines how these practices are changing with the transfer of these practices to new generations in Achham.

Rituals are not exclusively spiritual/religious, but also a means of intergenerational continuity and formation of identity (Durkheim, 1912/2001). Rituals in traditional societies such as that of Achham usually represent collective memory, indigenous knowledge and morality. Nevertheless, globalization, modernization and structural transformation in Nepal have caused significant changes in the way these rituals are performed, understood and passed on to the new generations (Gellner, 2001; Liechty, 2003).

Cultural rituals are kept and passed over through the elderly population especially grandparents who have a fundamental role in keeping and passing on cultural rituals. They are usually considered as the keeper of tradition and oral history. However, with the rising migration, the exposure to the digital world and the poor rural-urban communication, their role has slowly become weaker. Gaining an insight into how grandparents react and respond to the process of the changing rituals is crucial in determining the strength or deterioration of the culture in marginalized societies such as Achham.

The shift of Nepal to a federal democratic republic in general and the adoption of the Constitution in 2015, in particular, caused local policy reforms and decentralization processes. These politics as well as the growing literacy and access to mobile technologies has allowed young people to be more individualistic or hybrid

(Pigg, 1992). As a result, the normal practices are either altered, shortened, or changed to modern equivalents, which often lack the deeper symbolism that is meant.

Rituals play an important role in Nepali society as they define the passage of life journey from birth to death. Hindus traditionally have about 48 major rituals which are all highly spiritual, social and cultural in meaning (Bell, 1997; Rappaport, 1999). These are all that are mostly in practice today, with modernization and the effect of changing lifestyles, there are only approximately 8 of them mostly practiced in simplified forms (Bista, 1991; Gellner, 2001).

This paper has analyzed three of the most important life-cycle rituals birth, marriage and death that still characterize family and community life despite the impact of modernity (Durkheim, 2001; Turner, 1969). Birth ceremonies embody happiness, safety and family blessings to the child and the mother (Fuller, 2004). The rituals during marriage refer not only to a marriage between two people but also to the relationship between families and generations (Geertz, 1973; Bennett, 2005). Rites of passage to death are the last path of the soul between spiritual ideologies and the collective help and memory (Parsons, 1951; Van Gennep, 1960).

Other rituals such as naming ceremonies, first feeding or seasonal festivals are also significant, but birth, marriage and death can be considered universal rites of passage binding generations together. Although migration, education, and urban lifestyles change these practices, they are at the same time a key strand of identity, memory, and continuity in Nepali society (Liechty, 2003; Thapa, 2020).

1.1.1 Political and Legal Changes

Because of the absence of these opportunities to get jobs and access to basic amenities, a large percentage of the people in Achham have migrated to towns or foreign lands, namely, India and the Gulf states. This trend has interfered with the normal family setup and, in most cases, the young generation is alienated to their cultures (Sijapati & Limbu, 2012). Children are often brought up in nuclear or transnational families that did not experience a lot of exposure to nativity rituals.

Greater exposure to formal education has also offered new thought patterns and inquiring the status quo of culture. Although this will bring about critical thinking

and awareness of human rights, it has also resulted in questioning practices that used to be accepted without questioning, such as some gendered or cast-based rituals (Bennett, 2005). In this way, ritual transfer is not a passive process anymore since it is frequently confronted or re-interpreted by educated young people.

1.1.2 Social and Economic Changes

Since the reorganization of the local governments under the federal system, the communities have become more empowered in the running of their cultural activities. The local governments have started some cultural preservation and documentation programs that can be very sporadic and underfunded (Upreti et al., 2018). The role of grandparents in these programs is very important yet it is neglected. Different national policies focus on cultural diversity and preservation, among them being the Local Government Operation Act (2017), yet application is not uniform. In addition to this, certain rituals practices particularly the ones believed to be discriminatory have been limited or prohibited and this influences the transmission of such rituals by the elders to children (Thapa, 2020). Such legal intervention introduces a disjuncture between the traditional knowledge and modern acceptability.

1.1.3 Technological Advancements

The digital technology has transformed the interaction of people with traditions. Rituals are now being shared, reinterpreted or even commercialized on platforms such as Facebook, Tik Tok and YouTube. As an example, younger individuals can record or even live-stream family ceremonies and thus change the original communal character of them (Tamang, 2020).

The disconnect between generations is that grandparents are usually left out of these digital stories. As digital archives and ethnographic recordings become more common, the majority of recording activities are initiated by NGOs, academics, or the government as opposed to those communities. Such an external method may cause misrepresentation or DE contextualizing of rituals and this is why elders should be included in the process (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2008).

1.1.4 Cultural Shifts

The intergenerational gap is widening not only chronologically but also in the worldview. Whereas the older generation perceives rituals as sacred and compulsory, the young people can consider them optional or symbolic. The development of intergenerational communication using storytelling, local workshops, or school-related curriculum is in the developmental phase in rural regions, such as Achham (UNESCO, 2019). The younger generations tend to combine the old with new and come up with some kind of a hybrid practice, which can be both novel and scandalous. To give an example, marriage rituals may be a mix of Hindu and Western beauty, or rituals of death may be condensed so that it becomes convenient.

This hybridization process is an adaptation process and is at the same time prone to cultural dilution in the event that it is not instilled in genuine transmission (Bista, 1991).

In the case of Achham, including the grandparental view of the ritual transformation can provide a new insight into the way traditional knowledge is maintained, traded, or forgotten under the pressure of the swift changes. This paper therefore seeks to record and examine these intergenerational ones in order to develop culturally sensitive policies in development, education and preservation.

1.1.5 Rituals Practice

In Achham District, rituals are part of life and very much connected to the Hindu traditions and cultural values. They celebrate the most significant points in life birth, marriage, and death as both religious and societal rituals that help to unite families and societies.

Achham birth rituals revolve around care, protection and blessings of the infant and the mother who are considered spiritually sensitive at this period. Conventionally, home births are done, with the assistance of local midwives, and the family observes certain diets.

Cleaning rituals like bathing the baby, anointing with oil, and isolation period. The *Chhaiti* ceremony performed on the sixth day by priests who ask blessings of

ancestors and guarantees the health of the child. In spite of the rising number of institutional births, these practices are still revered.

Marriage or *Bibaha* is not viewed only as a union of two people but as a holy connection between families and generations. Marriages are usually done according to caste, family name and horoscope matching but love marriages are on the increase. Spiritual unity is represented by rituals like *kanyadaan* (giving away of the bride), *sindur dan* and circumambulation of the sacred fire. Weddings are ceremonious, including Brahmin priests, Vedic music, and community feasts, and music and folk dances are used to enhance the festive mood. The main role of the grandparents involves giving blessings but their power over choice of partners is diminishing slowly.

Antyeshthi Sanskar is the last life passage and soul journey and is identified as death rituals. The corps is washed, dressed in a white linen and cremated close to the river or holy place. There is a strict period of 13 days mourning starting immediately after which the family makes daily offerings and prayers so that the deceased soul rests in peace. Other rituals practiced by the priests include *Pinda Dan* and *Shraddha*, which are thought to feed the soul in the ancestral world. The thirteenth day is marked by a joint celebration and charity, which are symptoms of the completion of mourning and the reintegration of the family into the social activities.

Emotional and cultural significance is attached to rites like the *Nwaran* (naming ceremony), *Annaprashan* (first feeding), *Mundan* (hair-cutting), *Karnabheda* (ear-piercing), and *Bratabandha* (initiation). Festivals such as *Dashain*, *Tihar*, *Teej* and agricultural festivals such as *Asar 15* allow people to unite within a community, and they combine devotion with elation. Modern living conditions, migration, education and modernization has made some of these practices easy, but they are still strong indicators of identity and continuity. These traditions have been passed on and are still being passed on by the grandparents who are the keepers of the culture to the younger generations.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study has been able to discuss how deeply the ritual practices have changed as viewed by the grandparents of Sanfebagar Municipality. Through active

listening to elders who are the custodians of the ancestral wisdom we tried to learn how cultural traditions are practiced by grandchildren nowadays as opposed to previous generations. In a time of such social change, the paper has shown us the precarious ballet of culture transmission: what survives, what evolves, what dies. The lived experience of grandparents did not only shed light upon changes in practice, but upon the emotional pulse of what is saved, reinvented, or destroyed with time.

Traditional rituals have long played a central role in maintaining a sense of cultural identity, passing values on, and in creating social cohesion in Nepalese society (Bell, 1997; Turner, 1969). These practices that were easily transferred between generations are increasingly getting challenged in the Sanfebagar Municipality. The living memory of cultural wisdom (Bennett, 2005) that is grandparents can provide a distinct view of the evolution of these rituals and the way they are approached by younger generations now. The paper is devoted to their perspectives, because it is necessary to find out whether these practices are maintained, modified or slowly discarded under the pressure of the fast social change (Appadurai, 1996).

The lives of the youth in Nepal have changed dramatically due to modernization, migration, formal education and media presence in all parts of the globe (Pigg, 1992; Liechty, 2003). These pressures tend to shift the focus to school, work, and independence, and there is little time and inclination to observe traditional practices. Nuclear family formations and emigration of the youth to either the city or abroad in the Sanfebagar area has diluted intergenerational relationships that previously saw a smooth handing down of the rituals. As a result, several practices are either abridged, altered, or forgotten. Seeing this change in the light of elders is crucial to the assessment of its cultural meaning.

The loss of attendance in rituals threatens to destroy cultural identity and community collective memory, which keeps communities united (Durkheim, 1912; Cohen, 1985). Rituals do not only serve as symbolic expressions, but also help people to feel belonging, continuity and rootedness in their own traditions. Their absence would mean that those in the newer generations would not have the cultural foundation they require to learn about and relate to their roots which could lead to their permanent cultural breakdown over time. This issue becomes more acute when

disagreements between generations occur: the older people see rituals as something sacred and necessary, on the contrary, young people can perceive them as something obsolete and unnecessary, which leads to misunderstandings and emotional distancing, as well as lack of communication in the family (Goody, 2000).

Although cultural survival may require adaptation, too much of culture may be modified or even commoditized to the point of destroying its authenticity and sacredness (Handler & Linnekin, 1984). Digitalization or commercialization as convenient as it might be can remove deeper symbolic meanings turning formerly communal acts into performative gestures. Simultaneously, the erosion of community-wide events undermines social cohesion, limits the chances of supporting one another as well as celebrating together (Putnam, 2000). The loss of these kinds of practices in rural communities such as Sanfebagar can break up communal living and reduce the role of elders as cultural leaders, when previously festivals were used to unify neighborhoods.

Against this background, this study aims to document the lived experiences and the understandings of change in ritual among the grandparents of the Sanfebagar Municipality. The research will help to understand the cultural future of the community as the study will record which aspects remain the same, which have changed, and which are fading away. In conclusion, it serves to enlighten wider debates about how to reconcile the need to keep significant traditions with the realities of a highly dynamic Nepalese society (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983).

1.3 Research Questions

- i. How do the elderly and new generation perceive towards ritual practice?
- ii. What is the present condition of generational ritual transformation?

1.4 Research Objectives

The objective of the research objective are:

- i. To explore perception of the ritual practice among generation.
- ii. To analyzes the condition of the elderly and new generation in ritual transformation.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study has important social work practice, policy, and scholarship implications. The study enables a paradigm shift in the conceptualization of the multifaceted aspects of family life, ritual continuity, and social change in the rural areas of Nepal because it has given voice to grandparents as the transmitters of the culture and integral part of intergenerational bonding. Within the context of the ritual transformation illuminated by elder generations in the Sanfebagar Municipality, this research puts the lived experience and perception of individuals who have seen the gradual erosion or evolution of the traditional practices through the ages.

On the part of social work, the practical consequence of this study would be the creation of culturally responsive interventions and support systems that reflect sensitivity to the changing aspect of rituals in family and community lives. In multicultural or indigenous settings, social workers need an extensive knowledge about the cultural heritage to deliver effective services that respect and incorporate traditional beliefs (Gray, Coates, & Yellow Bird, 2008). The present study will provide culturally relevant information that can be applied in child and family welfare work, elderly care, and community outreach programs based on respect to the indigenous cultures.

Moreover, the results of this study can be used by policymakers to influence the community development activities that will aid in preservation and revitalization of traditional ritual practices. The local cultural traditions are threatened to be washed away or lost in the course of globalization, modernization and migration. This problem can be resolved through policy initiatives focused on intergenerational learning, cultural education and community-based cultural programs. The research provides a basis on which policy-making decisions can be offered to enhance cultural sustainability, identity preservation, and family integrity in the evolving socio-cultural contexts (UNESCO, 2003).

Culturally, the study will help in documenting and analyzing intangible cultural heritage in that it will record rituals being practiced in a specific way as practiced by elders. Since most of the rituals are orally transmitted within such a community as Achham, the research paper will serve as a written source that would

enable future generations to reconnect to their traditions. The protection of such practices is not only a way to strengthen community identity, but preserve diversity within the context of the overall Nepali culture (Gurung, 2014).

Regarding the community empowerment, the study findings can be used to guide community-based interventions empowering the grandparents as custodians of the culture.

Grandparents may be made active participants in cultural transmission, as opposed to passive observers of its demise. Formal intergenerational discourse, community forums, and mentorship initiatives can be established to support valuable sharing between generations of ritual knowledge and values. These activities build social unity and appreciation of one generation to the other (King & Elder, 1997).

It is also important to have policy implications of the study. Recommendations formulated using the results should be evidence-based and able to guide policies made and implemented in a culturally sensitive and contextually responsive manner. In the context of social welfare, education, and community health, rituals cannot be regarded as outdated customs but a living process capable of being involved in the comprehensive well-being. By promoting policies that allow the inclusion of cultural elements in developmental schemes, one can be guaranteed that the process of modernization does not go hand in hand with the erasure of culture.

Academically, the paper is relevant to the interdisciplinary conversation because it interconnects the disciplines of social work, anthropology, cultural studies, and gerontology. It informs theoretical models on intergenerational processes, theory of rituals and culture.

Methodologically, it presents a situated, qualitative way of conceptualizing cultural transformation, which may become the basis of future ethnographic or participatory action research in indigenous or rural society.

Overall, the study is useful in many ways, recording the lived cultural knowledge, empowering the communities, guiding the responsive policies, and broadening scholarship on the nature of ritual and its changing role in the contemporary family systems. With the constant changes in the form and meaning of

rituals, this paper aims at making sure that the content of culture identity is preserved and would be of relevance to future generations.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

As much as this study has managed to elicit relevant information about the changing nature of traditional rituals through the lens of the grandparents in Sanfebagar Municipality, there are limitations that need to be established to correctly contextualize the scope and meaning of the results.

To begin with, the study will only concentrate on the voice of the senior citizens who, in this case, are persons who have reached the age of 60 years and above, as stipulated in the Senior Citizen Act, 2006 of Nepal. Although these elders are considered the major cultural actors and custodians of cultural rituals, the study lacks the opinion of younger generations especially the grand children whose input is necessary in comprehending the ways in which these rituals are currently being modified or discarded. This means that the intergenerational communication is incompletely displayed, which can restrict the sensitivity of the results in the case of the analysis at the family level of the cultural transmission.

Second, is the geographic focus of the research, which is Ward No. 2 of Sanfebagar Municipality in Achham District, which is a culturally rich and geographically remote and underrepresented region of western Nepal. Although this setting provided a great depth and cultural specifics, the results could not be applied to other communities throughout Nepal where socio-economic status, caste composition, religious practices, or regional customs could vary widely. Even practices within adjacent toles (settlements) may differ significantly and hence this research must be interpreted as a localized study as opposed to a national one.

Thirdly, the data gathering exercise using intensive face to face interviews of 38 respondents who are elders was enriching but also challenging. Although such qualitative approach permitted the development of trust and gathering of rich stories, it was also associated with the risk of some biases. In other cases, respondents could have given idealistic or socially acceptable answers as opposed to completely open thoughts and reflections, because of the culture of respect or awkwardness of personal criticism. Moreover, hearing loss, memory lapses, or emotional

vulnerabilities during the recollection of some sensitive rituals sometimes influenced the clarity and completeness of answers due to age related failings.

Lastly, the study was carried out within real-life limitations of time, mobility, and weather of rural Nepal. The rugged landscape, isolated dwellings (Bhagbhidi, Swartola, Palla Jhakale, Kriti Kham, Goyalpani and Loli), and travel interruptions were logistical challenges to accessing respondents and to conduct the interviews. These issues were addressed with a degree of flexibility and community cooperation but they did affect the general speed and scope of the study.

Notwithstanding these shortcomings, the study makes meaningful and poignant input to the study of ritual transformation as perceived by elder members of the community. The recognition of these limitations would assist in situating the findings alongside also identifying the key future research areas, particularly the studies including the voices of the youth, studies involving comparison among different wards or districts, and the studies looking at the ritual change in a caste- or gender-specific way.

1.7 Organization of the Study

The study is structured in five main chapters that have helped to achieve a deep understanding of the ritual transformation that the grandparents undergo in Sanfebagar Municipality, Ward No. 2, Achham District. In the first chapter, an introduction to the study is given which contains the background, the objectives, the statement of the problem, the significance of the research, the scope and limitations, and the structure of the study itself.

The second chapter entails literature review of the available literature with respect to the topic. It covers past research on ritual change, intergenerational transfer of knowledge, the role of caste and gender in the practice of rituals and the effects of modernization on indigenous practices. In the third chapter, the research methodology that will be used in this study is explained. It explains how the research was conducted, sampling procedures, area and population of study, data sources, data collection methods, tools and ethics that informed the study. The chapter itself indicates the way the research was carried out in the field with 38 elderly participants in various localities of Sanfebagar Municipality Ward No. 2.

The fourth chapter gives the analysis and interpretation of the data collected in the fieldwork. It states both qualitative and quantitative results of the lived experience and outlook of the elderly participants, providing information on the continuous change of rites like birth, death, marriage, and healing practices.

The last chapter (chapter five) provides the summary of the study major findings and conclusions that are drawn based on the analysis. It also offers functional suggestions of cultural preservation, policy wizards, and social work protocols that will be able to facilitate substantive rituals through the generations. This structure will enable a logical and coherent presentation of the research process and findings and implications that would help in advancing not only academic knowledge but also provide solutions to the problem in the context of social work.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review can be considered as a critical background of any academic study as through it a researcher is able to explore past literature and academic discourses that cover the very issues of the current study. It helps to gain a full picture of the research field, discover knowledge gaps, and support the justification of the present study. The literature reviews as used in this research on the transformation of ritual practices across generations with the scope of grandparents not only offers the theoretical but also the empirical viewpoints, which are of paramount importance to support the framing of the inquiry.

Machi and McEvoy (2016) point out that a literature review helps a scholar to establish a background of existing knowledge and refines research questions and develops methodological paths. The present research is based on a diverse literature that examines intergenerational relations, ritual processes, cultural persistence, and identity construction and the issues of modernity.

By conducting a literature review, the researcher will be able to understand the definitions of rituals, how they take place, and how they are adapted in various socio-cultural settings. Moreover, as the literature shows, the role of elders in maintaining the traditional knowledge is of paramount importance and thus their worldviews cannot be ignored when conducting studies on such a topic as transmission of culture. This review does not only precondition the current research but also marks its scholarly and practical importance.

2.1 Ritual and Concept

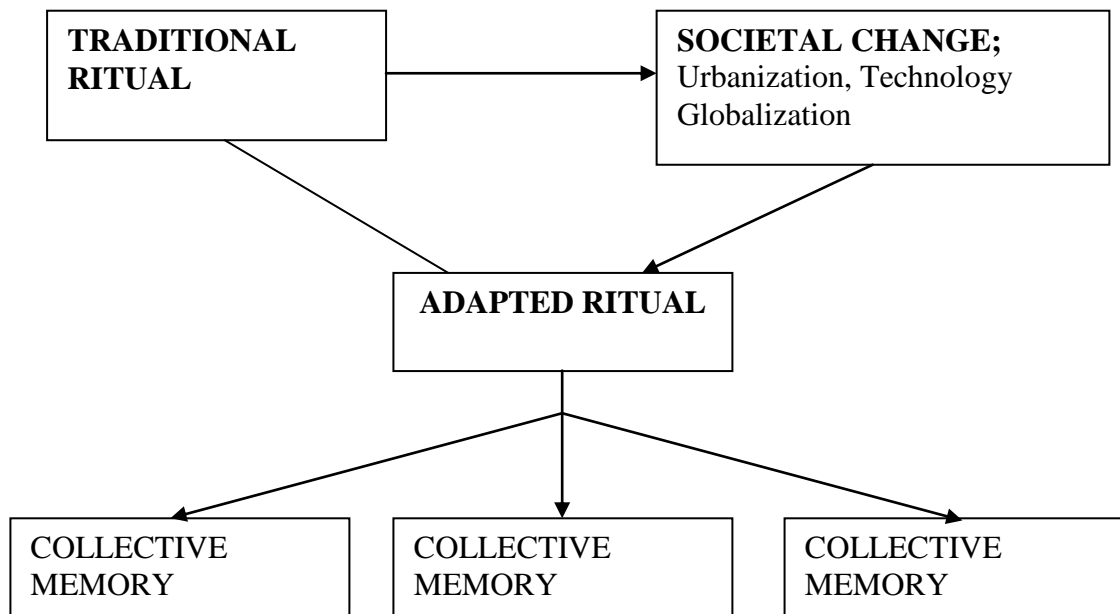
The changing nature of rituals between generations calls for multidisciplinary theory based on anthropology, sociology, and indigenous systems of knowledge. This paper focusing on the views of grandparents in Sanfebagar Municipality examines the changes of rituals that are being affected by the factors of modernization, globalization, and social adjustments. A number of theories can be useful in the analysis of these changes, among them being functional theory, Social Change Theory and Modernization Theory.

2.1.1 Functional Theory and Ritual Transformation

The Functional Theory, contributed by Emile Durkheim, presents a useful insight on the role and endurance of rituals in the society. Durkheim did not only regard rituals as symbolic acts but he also regarded them as the most significant means of ensuring social cohesion, collective consciousness and moral order. To him, all cultural practices including rituals have a social purpose which enhances stability and solidarity of the community. Based on this thesis topic on Rituals Transformation to the New Generation (Grandparents Perspectives), Functional Theory can be used to explain the reason as to why some rituals are able to prevail even in the face of societal changes. The grandparents tend to highlight that rituals are more than traditions, as they are the social glue that connects people to the community, establishing the feeling of belonging and the connected identity.

Through rituals people unite as they develop solidarity. Although the forms may be changing, such as using small gatherings rather than large gatherings or using forms that are more urban-friendly in terms of ceremony the same basic role they perform of uniting people is still there. Moral lessons, cultural knowledge and collective memories are usually encoded in rituals. When the younger generations are adapting these rituals, they have the potential to change the shape but retain some of the most important messages and values. Rituals in traditional settings are used to affirm group membership. In contemporary adaptations, this role can change to accommodate hybrid identities, local and global at the same time.

According to Durkheim, rituals change in order to keep the society relevant in the new order of things in the society. As an illustration, weddings in Sanfebagar Municipality, which used to be several days long with wide participation of the community, could be reduced in length under the influence of economic and urban limitations. Yet they nevertheless play the role of connecting families, signifying life transition and articulation of common values, functions that Durkheim would have deemed essential shared values functions that Durkheim would consider

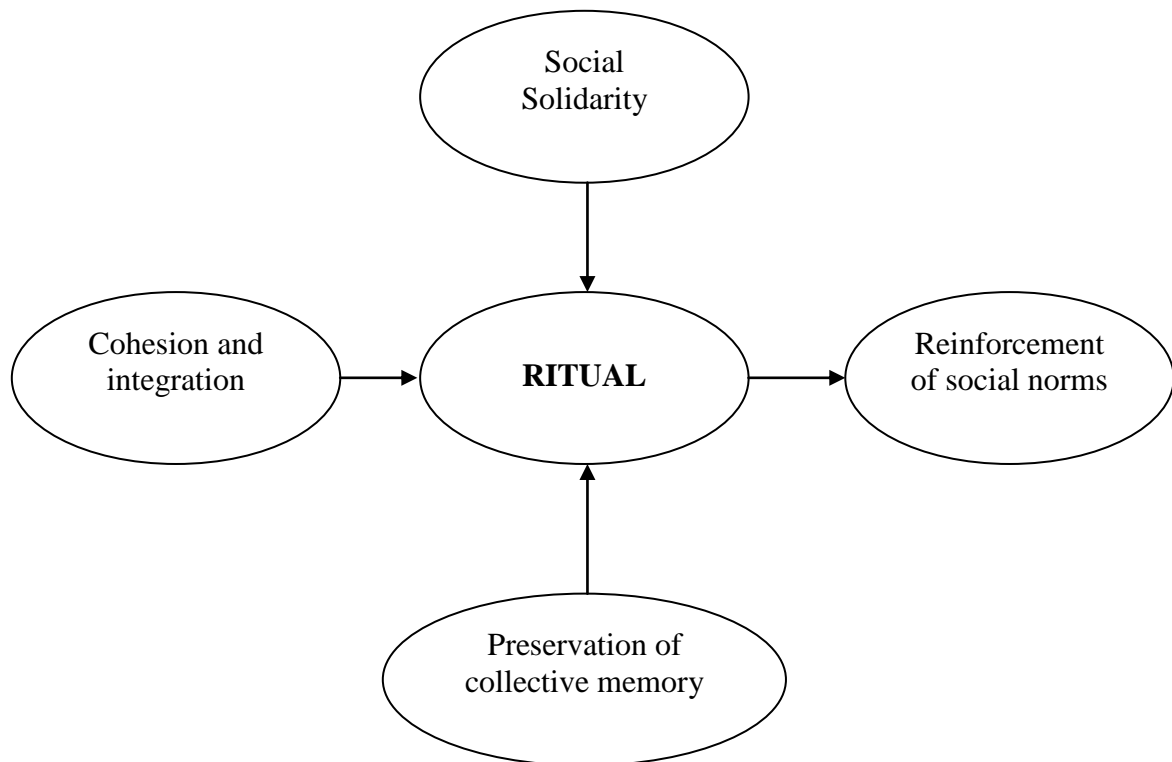


Sources: Researcher's ideas

This image shows that societal transformation alters the form of rituals but not their fundamental social functions as outlined by Durkheim which proves resistant.

With the integration of Functional Theory, Van Gennep Rites of Passage, Social Change Theory, Indigenous Theory and Modernization Theory we have a wholesome vision of how rituals change. Whereas the other theories define how change occurs and what motivates it, Functional Theory will make us aware of the lasting reasons that rituals serve the purposes that grandparents tend to defend at all costs.

FUNCTIONLIST- THEORY



Sources: Researcher's ideas

The Functionalist Theory of Emile Durkheim considers rituals to be essential social processes that maintain the order and balance of any given society. Rituals do not just mean cultural performances but they are dynamic processes which sew people into the fabric of society. A major role of theirs is promoting social solidarity which serves to enhance the emotional ties among group members. By jointly partaking of the ceremonies and traditions, people build a feeling of belonging and trust to each other.

Rituals also guarantee unity and integration of the various members of the society through the convergence of various members to a similar cultural and moral code. In their capacity as festivals, religious observances or communal events, these common activities provide a space where individuals can put aside individual differences and strive towards communal harmony. Moreover, they will help in strengthening social norms since they will constantly remind the participants over the behaviors, values, and traditions that determine acceptable behavior within their society. As an illustration, wedding traditions tend to buttress social norms of family roles and duties.

The other important use of rituals is the saving of group memory. Their role is to pass historical accounts, ancestral knowledge and cultural identity to the next generation. Through the celebrations of significant occasions and paying respects to the pivotal traditions of the past, rituals can be regarded as an archive of the collective memory of a community. These functional interrelations in the view of Durkheim, make rituals essential in the stability of society, allowing communities to have continuity, shared meaning and moral direction as time goes on (Durkheim, 1912/1995; Bell, 1997).

2.1.2 Social Change Theory and Ritual Transformation

The Social Change Theory looks at the changes that societies and cultures experience over a period as a result of different factors in terms of technology, economy, politics, social movements, and generational changes. This theory is important in determining the causes, patterns and implications of such a change when examining the status of ritual change amongst a new generation.

Social Change Theory assists in answering the question why the rituals change because of the changes in the values of the society, family, exposure to the new ideas, technology, and contact with the other cultural systems. As an example, ancient rituals may get updated with the use of digital media, relocation of the venue into cities, or even shortened due to the busy schedules. These changes are symptomatic of more general socio-economic and cultural change.

In this theory, the adoption or rejection of new rituals by the younger generation is also examined. Some of the influential aspects are generational gap, modern day education, mass media, media presentation, and access to global culture. Certain young people might adjust traditional practices to fit their values and some others may completely discard them. The notion of cultural lag provided by Ogburn that cultural practices have a hard time catching up to the pace of technological or societal changes is especially applicable in this change in ritual participation (Ogburn, 1922).

This theoretical perspective confirms the fact that the change of rituals is not only a social change but also an answer to a broader scope of societal changes that either challenge or reform tradition.

2.1.3 Indigenous Theory and Ritual Transformation

Indigenous Theory is concerned with the comprehension and appreciation of knowledge, practices, and views of world of indigenous peoples. This theory focuses on the significance of retaining cultural integrity, community identity and fighting against the influence of outside pressure that can wear down the traditional practices or rituals. Indigenous Theory raises the specific intention to retain traditional rituals and their meaning despite the process of modernization and globalization. Such rituals tend to have spiritual, ecological and ethical meanings. Rituals are not merely a ceremony, but they have been used as a way of storytelling, healing as well as a way of moral education, and a way of passing identity.

This theory highlights the importance of rituals to the community identity, intergenerational continuation and spiritual harmony. Although it acknowledges that there is need to modify rituals to the new situation, it argues that the modification should be done with consideration of values, meanings and knowledge systems that lie in the indigenous worldview.

As an example, younger generations may redefine or modernize the rituals to make them relevant whilst still preserving their basic symbolic and cultural meaning. The role of grandparents in this process is imperative as the keepers of the heritage and they provide an insight into the traditional nature of rituals and their changing relevance. Smith (1999) claims that the process of social research should be decolonizing, and change in the practice of the ritual should be carried out by the community in their own terms, not by an outsider.

2.1.4 Modernization Theory and Ritual Transformation

Modernization Theory is a sociological theory that attempts to answer the question of how a society changes traditional to modern. This theory was developed in the middle of the 20 th century, and it describes the processes of economic development, advances of technology, education, urbanization, and globalization, which transform cultural practices, such as rituals.

Pre-modern societies use the rituals to underline the communal identity and group action. They are entrenched in religious beliefs, moral codes and communal

goals. Due to emergence of individualism and secularism, most rituals have been changed to personal or family rituals. Communal rituals on a large scale are sometimes supplanted by more individualistic rituals which are about personal values and not about communal identity. Rituals by their very nature are tied to face-to-face communication and are usually dependent on sacred time and places. Technology brings new forms of virtual ceremonies, live-streamed events and digital memorials that change the way rituals take place. These new ways of accessing things add accessibility, but can also lower the depth of the sensory and communal experience.

A great deal of the rituals is connected to agrarian life and seasonal activities such as planting and harvesting and seasonal celebrations. Such rituals can become symbolic in urbanized and industrial societies, or turn into commercial events. An example is that a harvest festival can turn into a commercial fair or a tourism-based event. Rituals were maintained and passed on through oral word, experience and social respect (sometimes elders). Critical questioning of rituals, their purpose and relevance can be caused by the impact of formal education and rational mindsets in the world. The young people brought up in science-based systems might consider some of these rituals as obsolete or superstitious and thus reinterpret them or reject them.

Rituals had localized contexts with little outside influence. Hybrid rituals have been created due to the mixing of cultural practices. Another example is that a marriage ceremony can now consist of traditional blessings as well as Western style vows or clothing. That can be innovative but also can conflict with conventional values. They practiced their rituals in large, rural areas where the extended family was involved. There is also the element of lack of space in urban centers, speed of life and fractured family units where in many cases traditional rituals are hard to carry out. Adjustments may involve simplification of ceremonies or the employment of such places as theaters to recreate traditional places.

Modernization Theory brings into focus the interaction between social development and cultural persistence. It assists in the understanding of how rituals are affected by the dynamics of economic status, technological advancements, the exposure to the global environment, and the systems of education. Modernization actually changes rituals instead of eliminating them and enables them to adapt to the

times, and in the process it sometimes questions their authenticity and its usefulness to the community.

Analyzing rituals to newer generations using the perspectives of Van Gennep Rites of Passage, Social Change Theory, Indigenous Theory, and Modernization Theory, it is possible to say that the process of changing the rituals to newer generations is a multi-layered process. All of these frameworks help to understand better the ways of preserving, adapting, or transforming rituals, especially in the view of grandparents who are crucial to the connection between past traditions and future interpretations.

2.2 Ritual and Transformational knowledge

Generational shifts in rituals is a deep area of research that crosses several fields including sociology, anthropology, cultural studies and psychology. Rituals being a cultural expression occur as a symbolism and are used to mark different life transitions, strengthen social relations, preserve collective identity, and secure the continuity of past knowledge. This is because the ever-changing society usually reconstructs the way these rituals are perceived and performed. It has been empirically revealed that the practice of rituals is growing, prone to social, economic and technological variations. As in the case of the Indigenous and rural communities, rituals are still performed in ways that are culturally authentic. On the contrary, the result is frequently seen in the decline or even the extinction of such practices in urbanized and globalized settings (Chan, 2018).

A comparative culture study conducted by the Journal of Chinese Sociology explored the development of initiation rites, showing that although rites that are physical in nature and use the body to mark (for example, the initiation practice of the Nuer community) endure, other cultures have changed into more abstract or ceremonial types. Such transformation is usually a reflection of changing values, societal norms and reinterpretations across generations.

The generational view is of particular concern. In their study on social generations, Moreno and Urraco (2018) state that every generation translates traditions in terms of its lived experiences. Traditional rituals can be outdated or irrelevant to younger generations who are affected by globalization, education and

media. This disparity in perception usually results in either adaptation or rejection of rituals a phenomenon that is especially prominent in the already fast modernizing societies.

Moreover, globalization, technological progress, and urbanization are leading factors in transforming the ritual practices. Based on an article published in *Frontiers in Sociology*, most agricultural societies have resorted to using ancient rituals to discuss contemporary threats to the environment and climate change. Combining the experience of generations and scientific information, societies manage to reflect the main principles of rituals and make them applicable in contemporary situations.

Grandparents are the main repositories of the intergenerational wisdom, and their role is that they also act as custodians of culture. Their stories represent continuity and change where they give firsthand accounts of the way rituals used to be conducted and how they are changing in the current times. Chan (2018) underlines the mediating power of grandparents between tradition and modernity, who are the keepers and interpreters of ritual performance.

Rituals can also be used as emotional strength and family cohesiveness. Fiese and Kline (1993) have also demonstrated that family ritual can be applied as a tool to manage the stressful or transitional life to enhance emotional bonds and identity. The breakage of the extended family systems, the increase in nuclear families, and the dependence on electronic communication have, however, changed the mode and frequency of participation in the rituals. As noted by other scholars, including Bell (1997) and Durkheim (1912), rituals are significant in the creation of social reality. Bell claims that rituals are not only retrospective.

They perform and re-perform and therefore constitutive of social structure, they establish relations and hierarchies within a cultural context. Geertz (1973) also explains that rituals, which are cultural performances, are symbolic performances of values and beliefs.

Traditional rituals are very much incorporated in family and community life in Nepalese context. Nevertheless, there have been radical changes brought about by modernization, migration due to employment and exposure to international cultures. Jackson (2019) warns that, although adaptation is a natural process in the cultural

evolution, the process of commodification or superficial adaptation of rituals may destroy their originality and spiritual value.

This literature has a multidimensional explanation of ritual transformation. It is an active relationship between tradition and change depending on individual decisions, social happenings, economic factors and environmental demands.

Notably, it also points out that the views of elders particularly grandparents who are channels between the past and the present need to be recorded and comprehended.

2.2.1 Rituals Practice

The cultural life of Achham District, a land that is recognized as an area with rich heritage and traditional values, focuses on rituals and practices during birth to death. These are traditional practices with strong Hindu backgrounds and they are practiced in different ways and in different degrees of intensity whether it is in a household form or in a more formal and religiously oriented ceremony. They identify important life transitions, birth, puberty, marriage, and death, and serve as the necessary instruments to foster social connection, spiritual faith, and construction of a shared identity.

The rituals of birth in Achham are influenced by spiritual aspects and socio-cultural norms and values, since it is a celebration of life as well as a profound protective measure of the newborn baby and its mother who is spiritually weak at this stage of her life. Family members take care of women and some eating habits including ghee or turmeric-rich food are used to regain strength and warmth. They usually give birth at home in the presence of local midwives especially in remote villages where health institutions are not easily accessible.

It is also a warm environment with fire or heated stones, which are thought to make the birth easier and avert sickness. The baby is bathed after birth and rituals done like the application of oil and ash to guarantee purity and well-being. To safeguard the mother and child against evil spirits and witches they are usually isolated anywhere between 11-13 days a practice that is still very strong culturally. Under the influence of modernity, some families now welcome children in

institutions, although they continue to follow sixth-day ceremony, which involve purification rituals, blessings by ancestors and astral protection by priests.

The *Nwaran* ceremony does more than naming of the child it is the official acceptance of the child in the family and the community. This is a spiritual and social ritual, which is traditionally celebrated on the eleventh or twelfth day of birth. When the baby is dressed in new garments and being washed, an elder (usually the grandfather or the senior uncle) whispers his or her name in the ear of the baby. Astrological charts (*janma lagna*) are referred to when selecting auspicious letters or syllables to use as a name. Priests can also come to families and perform a puja with gifts, mantra, and lamp-lighting, which is why this ceremony unites all the family members and develops kinship and social bonds.

The initial feeding, is a special occasion which is done when a child is at around five to six months. It is a ceremonial feeding of solid food to a child, usually rice pudding (kheer), or mashed rice, which represents development and further maturity into a new stage of life. This is a blessing and prayer of a grandfather or maternal uncle and it is regarded as an act of blessing the child and his health and wellbeing. Included in some families are the priests to cleanse the food and perform a prayer ritual which would bring divine protection and blessing to the child.

Even though this ceremony has been diminishing in size as time goes by, its sentimental worth has continued to act as a link among generations.

The first hair-cutting and ear piercing are essential rites of childhood, which is thought to cleanse and enhance a child both spiritually and physically. Historically this was done when the child was between the ages of one and three, commonly by a local barber who shaved the hair and then presented it as a sacrifice/purification to a river or bury it. It is believed that the benefits of ear piercing include health and beauty, particularly in girls who are normally pierced by the local goldsmith or a female elder. Such rituals are characterized by blessings, social meetings, and modest feasts. In other families, the rituals are performed by priests who chant mantras and invoke blessings of the ancestors, which gives these rituals a stronger religious context.

Bratabandha is a spiritual and social transformation rite of passage of a boy becoming an adult and is mainly practiced by Brahmin and Chhetri families. In this ceremony, the lad is given the holy thread (*Janai*) and taught Vedic mantras, meaning that he is ready to perform religious practices and moral obligations. It can be a proud moment of the grandparents who consider it as an extension of their cultural and spiritual heritage.

Some families perform simpler ceremonies which include symbolic acts and blessings, whereas other families hold a large ceremony with priests, fire rituals and feasts stressing the social status of the family. A marriage in achham is not just a personal bond, it is a religious bond between two families and their lineages. Matrimonial unions are normally arranged, and consideration is paid to caste, family image, and stars match (*kunda milan*), but love marriage is slowly catching on to the younger generations. Simple betel nuts, tika or feasts are exchanged during engagements (*tikadhari or swayambar*).

Weddings are very grand, and they entail things such as *kanyadaan*, *sindur dan*, taking one round a holy fire, which shows the spiritual union of the couple. In the families of formal traditions, Brahmin priests execute Vedic rituals like *Saptapadi* (seven vows) and astrologers calculate the auspicious dates (*shubh muhurta*). The event turns out to be a lively representation of community life through music, local dances, and community feasts. Grandparents usually serve as a ceremonial influence in the blessing of the couple, but their input in the selection of partners is waning with the contemporary preferences.

One of the most serious rituals in Achham is referred to as death rituals or *Antyeshthi Sanskar* and symbolizes the last trip of the soul. In the event of a death, immediate relatives, usually sons or male relatives, wash and cover the body with a white cloth and cremate it either beside a river or in a fixed cremation site which is considered to facilitate spiritual freedom. The family maintains a strict period of 13 days of mourning and does not engage in any festivities and everyday rituals such as lighting lamps, offering water (*tarpan*) are carried out so that the soul may have peace. Priests can perform religious rituals like Pinda Daan (rice balls offering) and Shradha rituals which are said to feed the dead in the other world.

After thirteen days, there is a communal feast, when the end of mourning is celebrated and when to normal life, and charitable deeds like to the poor, cows, or priests, which are regarded as meritorious. In addition to such life-cycle rituals, other seasonal, agricultural, and religious events are also celebrated by Achham residents that define their community life and cultural identity. *Dashain*, *Tihar*, and *Teej* are some of the festivals celebrated in a local manner with local cultural practices such as planting *Jamara*, sacrifice of animals, lighting of lights, and songs that enhance social cohesion.

Festivals such as agricultural milestones, *Asar 15* (day of paddy plantation), *Maghe Sankranti* (festival of winter solstice) are associated with communal meals, offerings and folk rituals to appease gods and goddesses and to bring good harvests. There are also special *pujas*, *yagyas* and pilgrimages to temples of the region organized by families, led by priests and followed by sacred chanting and offerings. Though these traditions are changing due to migration, education, and modern lifestyles, they are still important means of passing values and the cultural wisdom especially through the grandparents who are the custodians of these ancient practices.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

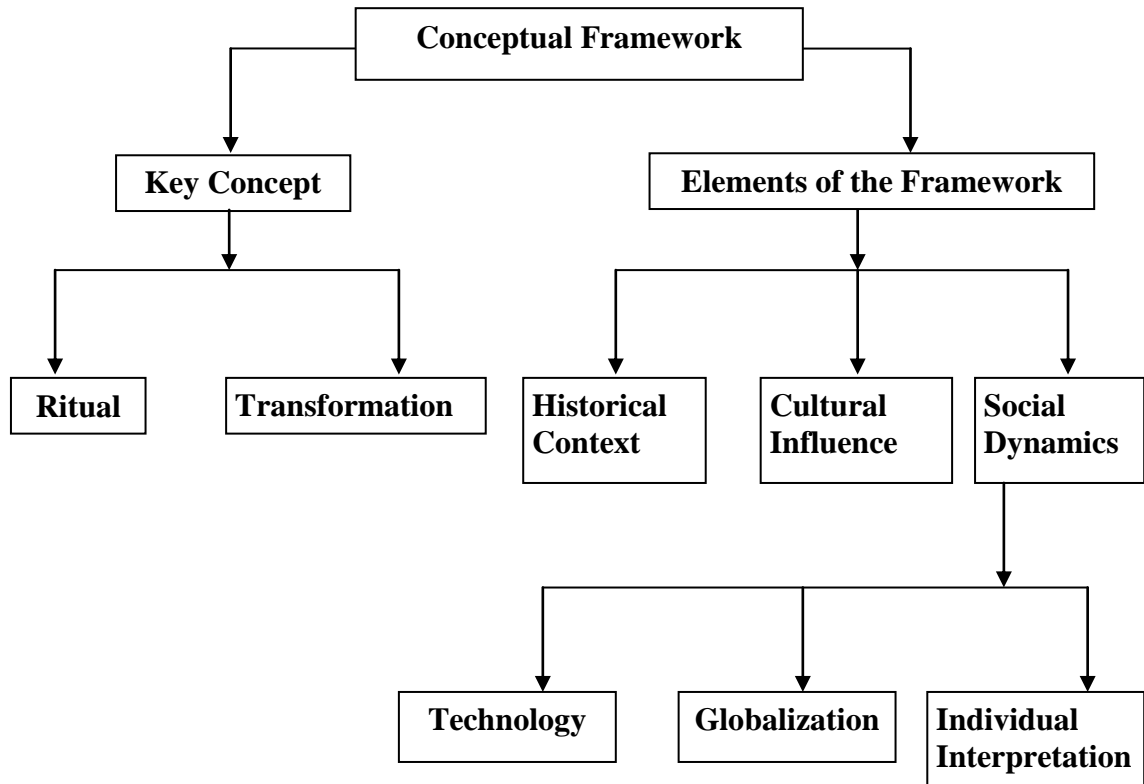
A conceptual framework works as a guide to comprehend the method and reason behind the changes that rituals undergo with different generations. It groups the ideas and theories into a coherent structure which presents a road map to analyze the nature, causes and consequences of ritual transformation as perceived by grandparents. The conceptual framework is also quite applicable in the context of this study to explore how tradition and change interact in terms of ritual practices among communities living in Sanfebagar Municipality, Achham District.

This model takes into account a number of dimensions that are related to each other: the systems of traditional knowledge, contemporary factors, generational views, and the social environment. It focuses on the intergenerational transfer, the transformation of a society, or the cultural beliefs that favor the maintenance or trigger the change of rituals.

In this light, we examine the channels through which the traditional rituals maintain their cultural values or are transformed in a meaningful way so as to become

compatible with the present day realities. Their incorporation of the opinions of the grandparents further enriches the study with firsthand information of what has been lost, preserved or transformed

Conceptual Framework



Sources: Researcher's ideas

A conceptual framework is a way to organize ideas and concepts to better understand a topic. In this case, we're looking at how rituals (traditional or cultural practices) change over time.

2.4 Research Gap

Gap analysis can be described as a methodology that is employed in the evaluation of the gap that exists between the present and the initial state of a particular phenomenon in this case, cultural rituals. The identification of these gaps can allow one to learn about the scale and the character of changes in the practices of rituals, their causes, and results. It is not just to record what has changed but also to analytically assess how such changes promote or erode the cultural, spiritual, and communal value of the rituals. This is recording the way the ritual used to take place. These are the characteristics of who did it, where, when, what symbols and materials,

and what spiritual, moral or social objective is intended. Important sources can be oral histories and elderly testimonies.

This procedure involves watching or taking notes of how the ritual is currently done. Such factors as the utilization of modern tools, time differences, decreased engagement, or different meanings are observed. Through a logical comparison of the traditional and the current forms, it is possible to determine certain gaps that may include lost practices, changes of roles or watering down of symbolic aspects. It is important to comprehend what caused the change.

These are: scrutinizing technological changes, urbanization, migration, education, press impacts, intermarriage, and changes in religious or philosophical views. Lastly, the impact of these changes on the individual identity, collective unity and cultural continuity is evaluated. There are changes that could make it more inclusive or relevant and other changes that could translate to loss of cultural heritage.

Case in point: Weddings in such a case had conventional practices done in the presence of community elders or religious leaders. These were in form of mandatory dress code, recitation of religious prayer, usage of culturally important artifacts, and the inclusion of extended family and community.

The weddings of our time may have electronic invitations, social streaming, more modern fashion, inter-faith or civil ceremonies and less attendees because of cost or logistical reasons. Modern technology, impact of the outside culture whether global or urban, less dependency on religious leaders, and weakened local community involvement. Greater access to internet, exposure to foreign culture, focus on nuclear families and the rising cost of traditional ceremony.

The communal and religious nature of the rite might not be so much of the emphasis despite still having the essence of family and festivity. Nevertheless, the level of personalization and inclusivity has grown, and now couples can express personal values and contemporary identities. The possibility to explore the cultural continuity and change comprehensively relates to the understanding of how rituals are transformed due to the conceptual framework and gap analysis. This methodology would allow both researchers and the community members to understand the dynamic nature of cultural rituals because the inquiry will be based on both the theory, as well

as the real practice. Such frameworks are especially useful on the part of grandparents. They aid in shedding light not only on what is changing but on the affective and figurative burden of these changes. Finally, this approach can be used to reflectively approach the tradition, and thus rituals can be developed further in ways that do not ignore their original meaning but still make sense to present generations.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employed explorative research design to determine the nature of the changes in rituals through generations with special emphasis on the perspective of the grandparents. The strategy was appropriate since there is research done on this subject in Sanfebagar Municipality, Achham District, and thus a need to visit the area.

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to collect valuable insights by means of semi-structured interviews and reviews of the already existing literature. Interviews were conducted using an open-ended questionnaire that allowed the participants to freely talk about their personal experience and thoughts.

The primary aim was to reveal the perspectives of grandparents on the change in rituals from their era to nowadays, identifying the major reasons of such changes and what it implies to the culture preservation. It was this approach to the topic that allowed grasping the flavor of generation differences, cultural adaptations, and harmony or conflict between the tradition and modernity influence.

3.2 Universe and Sample

The universe of the study was comprised of all the old-aged people in Ward No. 2 of Sanfebagar Municipality that were aged 60 years and above and had at least one grandchild. These grandparents were deemed to be the most appropriate key informants due to their life experiences that enabled them to make comparison between the past and the current practice in terms of their rituals.

As per the local ward office records there were a total of 226 people who fall in these categories 92 men, 134 women. This gave a wide and varied foundation to choose the participants who had different views of transformation of rituals.

The approach of purposive non-probability sampling method was used to determine participants. The sampled population was confined to the elderly population that witnessed considerable changes in culture and social aspects personally. In order to be included, one had to fit the following criteria:

- i) Be 60 years or above,
- ii) Get at least one grandchild.
- iii) Been a long time resident in the community to witness and experience changes in ritual practices.

Basing on these parameters, 38 participants were sampled in various settlements in Ward No. 2. This figure was considered as the adequate one representing a range of experiences, and yet remaining feasible to conduct intensive fieldwork. The research was conducted in line with the definition of a senior citizen as provided in the Senior Citizens Act of the Nepal law that defines senior citizens as those aged 60 years and old. This legal criterion made the sample reflect the national policy on representation of the elder population and gave a uniform participant selection criterion.

3.3 Rationale of the Sampling

Purposive sampling was felt to be suitable given that it would allow the participation of respondents who had rich, relevant experiences that would be important in answering the research questions. Because the research was aimed at not making statistical generalizations but rather at gaining perceptions, the quality of information was given precedence over quantity. The sampled grandparents had lived through the traditional practices and were able to compare to the rituals that are practiced today by their children and grandchildren.

Also, the purposive sampling enabled the researcher to involve participants with strong cultures and ability to remember the ritual practices and discuss their meanings. The approach allowed incorporating people with different socio- economic backgrounds in the same municipality, which contributed to the more comprehensive and subtle picture of the ritual change.

3.4 Nature of Data

This study adopts a qualitative approach to deeply explore how cultural rituals have evolved across generations, particularly from the perspective of grandparents.

3.4.1 Primary Data

The semi structured interview instrument was used to collect primary data through the aid of a questionnaire comprising of different pertinent open ended questions. The in-person interviews with grandparents were used to collect the primary data since it allows the latter to provide their personal memories, experience, and emotional connections to rituals. The interviews provided an opportunity to the participants to narrate stories, describe symbolic practices and comment on the changes they have observed with time.

3.4.2 Secondary Data

The secondary data consisted of different materials that provided a theoretical, historical, and cultural context to interpret primary findings (Wilson, 2017). These sources included:

- i) Scholarly books and journal articles of theory of ritual, culture change, caste relations, and intergenerational relations.
- ii) Traditional Nepalese traditional histories.
- iii) Past research on the topic of ritual transformation in Nepal and other cultures of the same kind.
- iv) Heritage preservation reports, cultural policies and government reports.

3.5 Data Collection Tools and Techniques

In order to obtain meaningful, accurate and culturally sensitive data of the grandparents of Sanfebagar Municipality, selection of various qualitative instruments and methods were meticulously selected. All methods were chosen in order to form a respectful environment and to make the participants feel free to share their memories, emotions, and views concerning ritual transformation.

3.5.1 Semi-Structured Interview

The main tool of data collection was a semi-structured interview guide. It also contained open questions which prompted the participants to think a lot over some rituals like the birth ceremonies, wedding customs and death rites and how they have evolved over time. The semi-structured format was structured well enough to ensure

that the interview conversation would maintain a sense of focus but there was also the flexibility to pursue interesting lines of thought or stories that naturally arose as part of the interview process.

3.5.2 Projective Techniques

Projective techniques were applied in order to stimulate more emotional and symbolic reactions. They were shown photographs, ritual items (such as oil lamps or holy threads) or they were asked to visualize certain situations. These prompts tended to elicit very strong memories, stories, reflections, and assist them in describing how some of these rituals were important to them, personally and culturally.

All the tools were sensitively used and sensitivity to the age, background, and comfort level was put into consideration. It was not just a gathering of information but it was also a way of celebrating the lived experiences of the participants. The semi-structured interviews allowed them to talk freely, and observations and symbolic signs assisted in bringing out meanings that would not have been easy to be conveyed by words.

3.6 Data Collection Process

The research involved opinions of grandparents on the changes that have occurred in rituals. They were very conscious of their age, culture, and dignity and the process was well planned.

3.6.1 Questionnaire Preparation

An open-ended questionnaire was developed to explore grandparents' personal experiences with rituals related to birth, marriage, and death. The questions encouraged free storytelling rather than short answers.

3.6.2 Final Design

The questionnaire was simplified, made easy and conversational by incorporating feedback so that it is easy to use.

3.6.3 Community Entry

The researcher went and conducted a visit in the Sanfebagar Municipality Ward No. 2, interacted with people, described the study, and then got possible participants identified in the villages such as Bagabhidi, Swartola, Pallo Jhakale, Kritikham, Goyalpani, and Loli.

3.6.4 Home Interviews

The interviews were conducted on a face-to-face basis in the home of the participants in a relaxed environment. Some were recorded with consent using audio recordings and field notes were used to record expressions and non-verbal details. Such a warm and intimate method enabled the grandparents to speak freely and provided the research with true and valuable data.

3.7 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data in depth and explore detailed and insightful information, and it is appropriate when rich, nuanced data are sought. To begin with, transcription of all semi-structured interview recordings was carefully done to ensure no detail is left behind. Microsoft Excel was used to put demographic data in order.

The reading mixed individual experiences of the participants with broader cultural systems. This method enabled the results to be well anchored on the voices of the elders and at the same time related them to the broader social changes. The combination of qualitative depth and contextual reasoning made the analysis give a clear picture of the manner and reasons of transformation of rituals across generations.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in high regards to ethical concern and cultural respect. Throughout all the stages of the work, the researcher has met with academic mentors, professors, and the research supervisor to make sure that both methodology and approach were ethically sound and respectful of the communities in question.

Special attention was paid to aligning the research with ethical principles that are demanded in social work research, particularly in cases of working with elderly groups and their traditions that are based on culture.

The researcher had it in mind to respect the beliefs, values, and traditions of the participant in Sanfebagar Municipality. Special consideration was given so that the research would not intrude and insult the divine aspect of the rituals under discussion. They were sensitive to issues of caste, gender, and generational differences as these aspects have a profound influence on the conception and performance of rituals.

The ethical approach included informed consent as one of its components. Prior to data collection, the participants were informed in written and verbal form about the aim of the research, the use of the information and the activities involved in the research participation. The researcher ensured that all the respondents were free to reject or to abandon the research without any fear of judgment or penalty.

This safeguarded the independence of every individual and that it was totally voluntary. Confidentiality was also favored. The personal information was treated with care and the names or other identifying information remained confidential unless one expressly gave consent. The quotes of the interviewees were presented in a respectable and honest way and were not misrepresented or taken out of context.

Most important, human dignity was the guiding principle in the research. Elders who are the custodians of traditions in their societies, were not approached as the source of data but as the source of knowledge. They have been listened to and their stories, emotions, and reflections were accepted with gratitude. Having ethics at the centre of the research, the study was not only meant to carry out some decent academic work, but also to create trust and understanding with the people giving the opportunities to have the research done and to respect them.

CHAPTER IV

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND FINDING

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

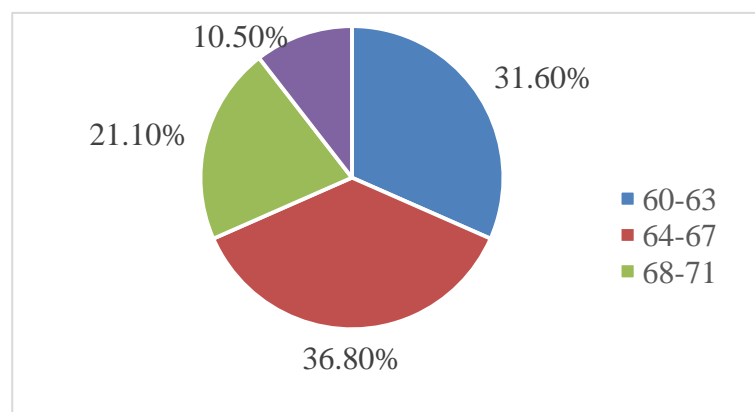
It is imperative to have a demographic understanding of the respondents in the study to put in context their views on ritual transformation. The 38 grandparents who participated in the respondents were selected purposively in 6 important localities in Ward No. 2 of Sanfebagar Municipality in Achham District. Such locations are Bhagbhidi, Jhakale, Pallo Jhakale, Kirtikham, Goyalpani, and Loli. The age of the participants was 61 to 75 years with the majority of the participants (approximately 37percent) falling between 64 to 67 years old. The regions have their own distinct caste distribution and ritual customs and give varied perspectives through which the rituals are passed on and modified.

4.1.1 Age Distribution of Respondents

This study consisted of 38 grandparent respondents aged between 61-75 years. The youngest group comprised 60 and the oldest participant was 75. These age groups are representative of the generation of grandparents who are active and experienced having observed great changes in the ritual practices. Their experiences give them a sense of generation to know how traditions have changed throughout the ages. This age group assists in the capture of new adaptation as well as rich cultural memory.

Figure 4.1

Age Distribution of Respondents



Source: Field of Survey, 2024

In the pie chart, there are some significant trends in the age of the grandparents used in this research. The respondents who were the majority of about 37 percent were aged between 64 to 67. This area is commonly referred to as the young-old category of the elderly whereby they might have experienced many shifts in culture, but are still active and engaged in the community and family. These grandparents are particularly significant as they can be regarded as a bridge between the older traditions and the newer ways of doing things. Their experience makes us comprehend the past and the present.

There is a decrease in the number of participants with increase in age. Take, as an example, the ages 61 to 63 years which was approximately 32 percent as compared to the ages 72 to 75 which was approximately 11 percent. This might be due to the fact that there are fewer old people or they were physically or medically challenged to the extent that they found it difficult to attend. Considering the entire situation, nearly 70 percent of the total participants were below the age of 68. This would inform us that the research is dominated by the opinions of active, engaged, grandparents who are still big in their households. The age pattern also provides us with the understanding on how traditions and rituals are transferred.

The most likely grandparents who are actively conversing and instructing their grandchildren are those in early 60s. Conversely, the older responses (more than 68 years old) tend to be more traditional and original in their knowledge of rituals that have not changed so much over a long period of time. The fact that no respondents were older than 75 years old could be a limitation, but it also shows the urgency of the process of getting the information of the elderly community members before it is gone.

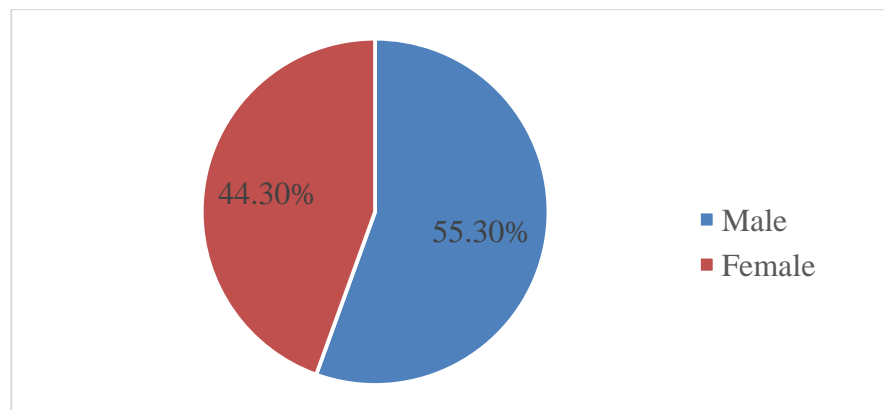
Study-wise, the fact that majority of respondents fall in the age bracket of 61-67 is a good indicator that the findings will be particularly helpful in contributing to the knowledge about the current generation of grandparents who are nearest to their grandchildren. Nevertheless, the opinions of the older participants, although in a smaller number, are necessary. They add a wider, longer perspectives and they add to the balancing of the picture. This distribution of ages enables us to examine the way age and life experience influences attitudes of a grandparent towards changing rituals and how such changes are communicated to the younger generation.

4.1.2 Gender Distribution of Respondents

To have a balanced perspective on the study of the transfer of rituals through generations, the study was keen on including grandparents of both genders. The number of participants was 21 males and 17 females. This balanced illustration was able to reflect the distinct experiences and roles the grandfathers and the grandmothers have in maintaining and passing of cultural traditions. The gender distribution of the respondents taking part in the research is contained in the table below.

Figure 2.2

Gender Distribution of Respondents



Source; Field of Survey, 2024

The gender makeup of our respondents gives meaningful insight into how family traditions are kept alive. In this study, we spoke with 21 grandfathers (55percent) and 17 grandmothers (45percent), showing a slight male majority. This difference reflects a common pattern in Nepali culture, where older men are often more involved in leading public and formal rituals.

Still, both male and female voices are well represented, helping us understand different sides of cultural practice. Grandmothers often carry deep knowledge of home-based and nurturing rituals, while grandfathers tend to take charge of formal ceremonies. Including both allows us to see how traditions are passed on in both public and private spaces.

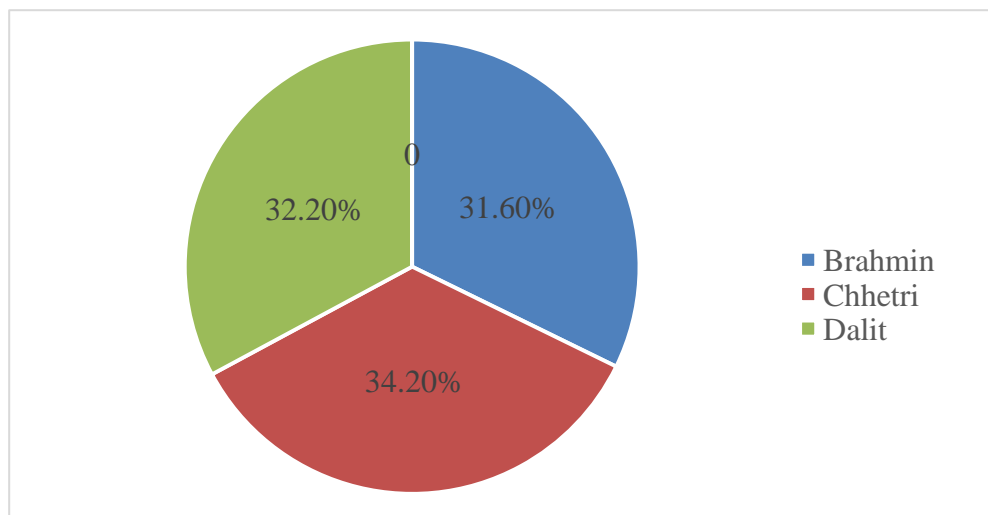
This balanced perspective is important; especially as Nepali families change with time. While grandfathers shared more formal ritual experiences, grandmothers offered rich insights into everyday traditions that are often overlooked but equally important. Together, their voices give a fuller, more human view of how rituals are preserved, adapted, and taught to younger generations.

4.1.3 Cast Wise Distribution of Respondents

The caste distribution of our respondents offers valuable insights into how different community groups experience changing traditions. By examining where our participants come from in Nepal's social structure, we can better understand how ritual practices transform across generations in various cultural contexts. The following breakdown shows the caste representation among the grandparents who shared their wisdom with us, helping us see how tradition evolves differently in Brahmin, Chhetri, and Dalit families.

Figure 4.3

Caste Distribution of Respondents



Source; Field of Survey, 2024

This study included grandparents who belonged to three major castes in almost equal proportions 12 Brahmins (31.6percent), 13 Chhetris (34.2percent) and 13 Dalits (34.2percent). This equal blend makes us realize how rituals are evolving in

other societies. The traditions of each caste are different and therefore by hearing all of them, we obtain a more comprehensive image of cultural change in Nepal.

Grandparents who were Brahmins although they were not as so many in numbers, were very rich in their understanding of formal religious practices. There was a lot of Sanskrit prayers and priest ceremonies in their stories. Conversely, Chhetri and Dalit grandparents revealed other types of traditions: Chhetris tend to confuse religion with ancient family traditions, whereas Dalits preserve their own folk traditions and spiritual practices which are transferred by means of narrating and healing.

The significance of this information is that it indicates that all caste groups regardless of their origin are experiencing the same issues today. Most of the grandparents said that they are less eager about passing on old customs to their grandchildren. To Dalit families particularly, this study is significant in that their rituals are usually overlooked or taken lightly in the mainstream society yet in this case they are awarded the same space and attention.

In the perspective of social work, this balance aids us to consider what a particular group of people may require. Brahmins might be interested in assistance with protecting their intricate religious practices. Dalits may require help to safeguard and transmit their oral traditions. Chhetris might require leadership because they marry tradition with the family in a modern family.

Eventually, this even cast representation demonstrates that the process of ritual transformation is taking place anywhere, but in various forms. One family may be losing a tradition and another family gaining it. In hearing grandparents across castes we celebrate the diversity of how Nepali culture has expanded and evolved to thrive and evolve through the generations.

4.1.4 Distribution of Respondents by Level of Education

The education level of the grandparents in our study assists us in the understanding of the transmission of knowledge and rituals in the family structure. As the education system of Nepal has evolved over time significantly, our participants

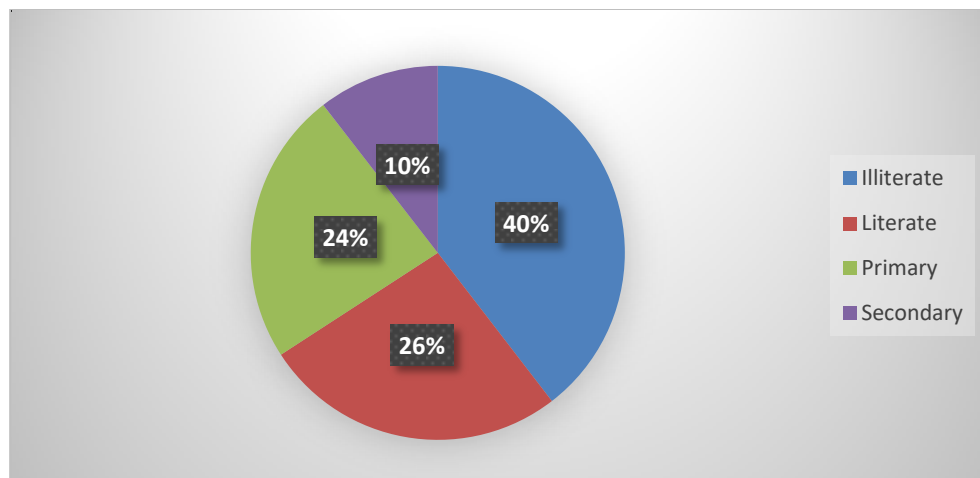
have varying learning experiences with some never attending school, and others as high as secondary education.

These variations are important since the level of formal education that one may have may influence the level at which he or she remembers, explains, and communicates the traditional practices to their grandchildren. To illustrate, grandparents who have not received any formal education might use oral narration and personal experience more fervently, whereas those with a little education can combine written information and their personal experiences.

Taking a closer look at the educational background of our participants, we would find useful information regarding the survival and adaptation of rituals over the generations even where the literacy rates differ. In the table below, it is possible to see the number of respondents in each education group.

Figure 4.4

Education Distribution of Respondent



Source: Field of Survey, 2024

The figure 4.4 provides us with a clear picture on the education background of the 38 grandparents who participated in this study. Almost half 40 percent never attended school at all, which demonstrates the extent to which education opportunities were restricted when they were young, particularly in rural Nepal. This group is the older generation that acquired traditions and rituals by hands- on experience, community teachings and oral stories, not by books or formal schooling. Then, there is 26percent of respondents who were literate but had not finished primary school.

This implies that they were able to read and write to a certain level and did not do the full formal education system.

Such people may continue to be strongly dependent on memory and personal experience when it comes to sharing rituals, yet they may also make use of written aids such as calendars, prayer books or leaflets, should they exist. This combination of literacies and traditional knowledge displays the beginnings of how education can influence the way rituals are taught and transmitted.

Further on, 24percent completed primary education, which typically, in the Nepali system, is up to grade 5. These grandparents were usually exposed, in some way, to formal education as well as local customs. They will tend to modify rituals by incorporating cultural practices with modernity. To give an example, they may continue to conduct the same death rituals but shift the time of conducting them or the magnitude to accommodate new working hours or urban environments. The latter is a cultural intermediary between illiterate elderly and more literate young people.

The least group of only 10percent had attended studies to secondary level. Such grandparents can be more comfortable with printed religious books, written regulations, and even online devices. They might be greatly involved in updating the rituals without having a break with tradition. But their current knowledge may occasionally clash with more ancient, purely oral traditions of practice. Nonetheless, their voices are significant because they can elaborate the traditions in a manner that the younger school-going generations might relate to and understand.

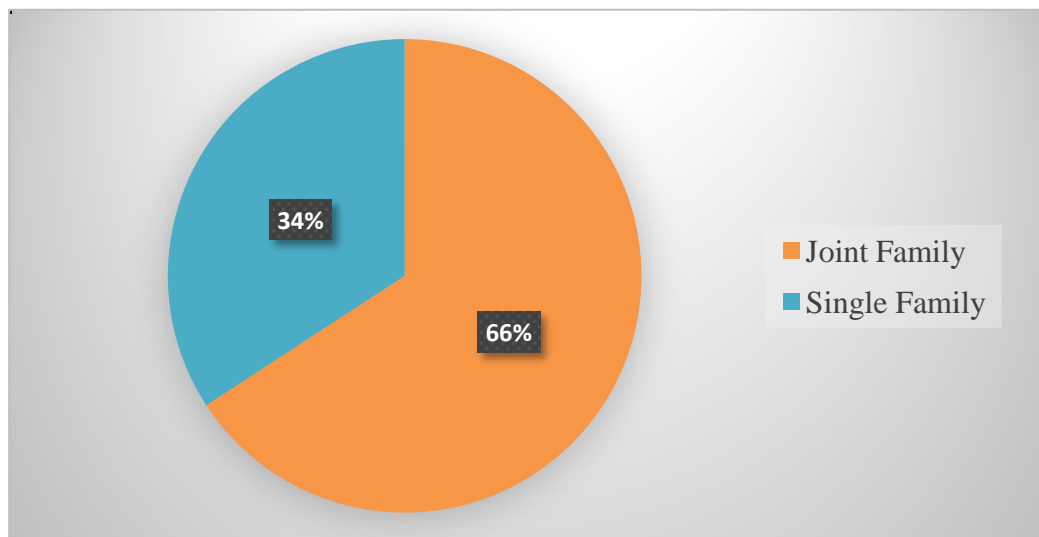
In general, the table indicates that about two-thirds of the respondents 66 percent, are either illiterate or literate only, so most of the cultural knowledge is communicated through verbal communication or observation. What this means is that, rituals in societies such as Sanfebagar are largely maintained by narration, emulation, and experience but not by writing. It also implies that in the future as education levels will increase we have to discover methods to record and translate oral traditions before they are lost. This distribution will not only explain to us who possesses traditional knowledge, but also the way it is transferred in a changing world.

4.1.5 *Distribution of Respondents by Living Arrangement*

Location of grandparents makes it more evident that grandparents share their cultural knowledge and traditions. In this paper, we examined the living arrangements of the grandparents; that is, whether they were living in joint families (the children and grandchildren were together in a household) or in single/nuclear families (alone or with a spouse only).

Figure 4.5

Distribution of Respondents by Living Arrangement



Source; Field of Survey, 2024

Pie chart 4.5 shows the household status of 38 grandparents who were the participants in this research. As per data, 25 respondents (66 percent) were in joint family and 13 respondents (34 percent) in single or nuclear family. The significance of such a difference is that the family structure plays a critical role in the way cultural rituals are performed, recalled, and transmitted to the younger generations. Joint families, in which several generations are in the same home, are, of course, more likely to share traditions, stories, and values day-to-day.

The grandparents are the source of tradition and living libraries in joint families. The grandchildren living close by them can give them greater opportunities to show, teach about the rituals and even have younger relatives participate in them. In this paper, most of the joint-family grandparents indicated that their rituals were

still alive as they had someone to whom they could transfer the rituals. Such an arrangement facilitates frequent contact, and learning about culture becomes a natural part of family life. Such rituals as pujas, death ceremonies or seasonal ceremonies are likely to happen more when the family is staying under one roof.

Conversely, the 13 grandparents (34percent) who reside in single-family arrangements have greater problems. These elders tend to reside alone or together with their spouse and this means that they have less chance to practice rituals with grandchildren. Others complained that they were lonely or marginalized in the family customs. With urban migration or contemporary family planning, young generations have a tendency of being very distant to their grandparents. Consequently, the knowledge about rituals such as the time to perform some rituals or the way to prepare offerings is at risk of being lost unless they are recorded or communicated.

Other than passage of rituals, emotional well-being is also influenced by the living arrangements. In joint families, grandparents tended to feel more involved and more respected. They discussed how children observe and assist during the festivals or enquire about traditions. By contrast, individuals in nuclear environments sometimes lamented, echoing the cultural divide with an emotional disconnect, that, there was, now, no one left to learn. These subjective sentiments give more color to the facts indicating that rites are not mere traditions but are closely related to bonding and meaning.

In a social work perspective, the results of this position have been identified to create a dire need of community programs to fill the generational divide particularly in the elders living in nuclear or isolated living settings. One of the ways to preserve culture is by holding intergenerational workshops, community meetings or even digital storytelling platforms where the elders can pass on their information. The Table 4.5 reiterates the fact that although joint families offer good foundation to maintain the rituals, the contemporary living style is changing and some proactive measures are required to maintain the traditional knowledge.

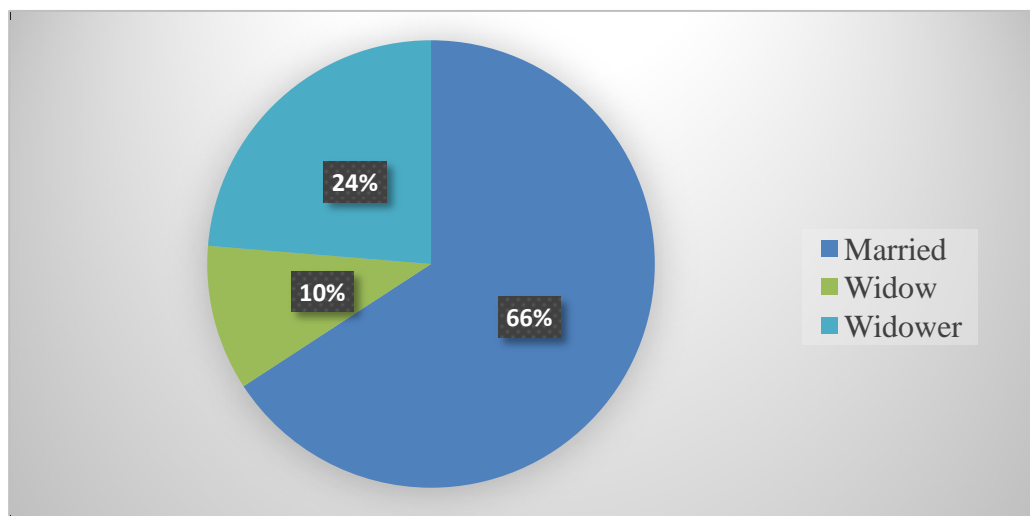
4.1.6 Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status

Information about the marital status of grandparents married, widowed, or living alone also provides us with significant hints about their position in the family

and the contribution they make to the transmission of rituals. Nepali culture ensures that the married grandparents tend to take part in organizing and leading traditional family events. Conversely, widows and widowers can experience some alterations in their participation in such rituals. They may become less responsible or their roles may have changed because their husband or wife is gone. Such information makes us realize that the situation of a grandparent can influence the transfer of cultural knowledge to the younger generation.

Figure 4.6

Marital Status Distribution of Respondents



Source; Field of Survey, 2024

The statistics indicate that most of the grandparents who were surveyed (25 out of 38), or 66 percent, are already married. This category is extremely important when it comes to preserving and performing family rituals. They are more often than not still in an intact household unit since they are married and are probably living with children and grandchildren. Birth ceremonies, weddings and religious festivities are also rituals that are collective in these households and are performed collectively. These grandparents are usually the living connection between the generations who educate the family members about the values, traditions, and religious traditional prayers or practices.

The widows among the respondents cover 10percent of the respondents, which are four. In the Nepali society, there are certain social restrictions imposed on widows, especially in conservative families traditionally.

Nevertheless, numerous widowed grandmothers still play major roles in the preparation of rituals especially at the household level such as in food offerings, storytelling, and dealing with daily cultural activities. Certain rituals might not be able to attend some rituals because of the beliefs about purity and mourning in their culture, but their knowledge and remembering of rituals will be important aspects of tradition maintenance in the home.

Nine respondents (24percent) are widowers i.e., they had lost their wives. Within Nepali families, grandfathers usually preside over more formalized, priest-centered or public rituals and the loss of a spouse may alter their performance or attitude towards these rituals. Others may proceed with death rites, religious ceremonies or pujas whereas some may recede owing to emotional or physical inabilities. The evidence indicates that even though widowers are still recognized as highly valued members in ritual areas, they can be involved differently, depending on family relations and health conditions.

The combination of the widows and the widowers constitutes 34 percent of the total sample size. This is a great percentage particularly, when one considers the emotional and pragmatic consequences of losing a spouse. Most of these grandparents tend to have more solitary lives particularly where their children have migrated or they are in nuclear families. This may complicate the way they perform rituals as they did before. It can also restrict the possibilities of these people teaching their grandchildren about such practices unless particular efforts are taken to involve them in family gatherings or oral history passing.

This is a very useful indication in regard to social work and cultural preservation perspective of the marital status distribution. Married elders can continue as active transmitters of culture whereas widowed elders may require more emotional or social assistance to remain in the ritual life. This gap can be bridged by programs that foster intergenerational interaction or neighborhood get together. More to the point, however, this disintegration acts as a reminder that both of these married and

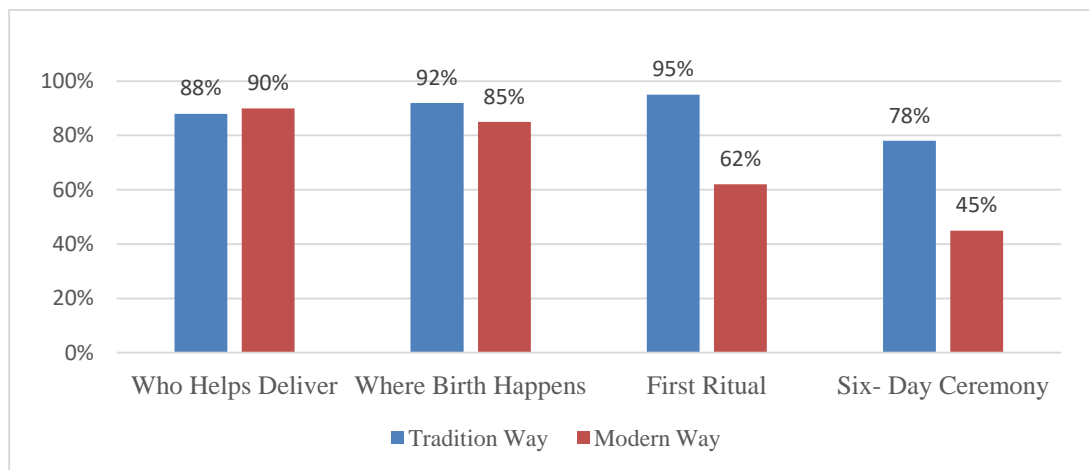
single grandparents have something special and worthy of contribution to the ongoing narrative of ritual change in the Nepalese society.

4.2 Birth Rituals: Traditional Home Practices vs. Modern Professional Care

The statistics point out to a sharp change in the reception of newborns into the family with profound alterations in the historical home centered practice and the contemporary medical care. How about breaking these figures down to what they actually mean to families in Sanfebagar?

Figure 4.7

The Changing Face of Birth Practice



Source; Field of Survey, 2024

The figures indicate a distinct shift in the mode of welcoming babies in the family with two broad trends the old fashioned home-based care and the new trend of hospital-based births. Grandparents told stories about how such rituals of birth have evolved in their lifetimes. Traditional practices are dying out and some are slowly changing in line with the modern world.

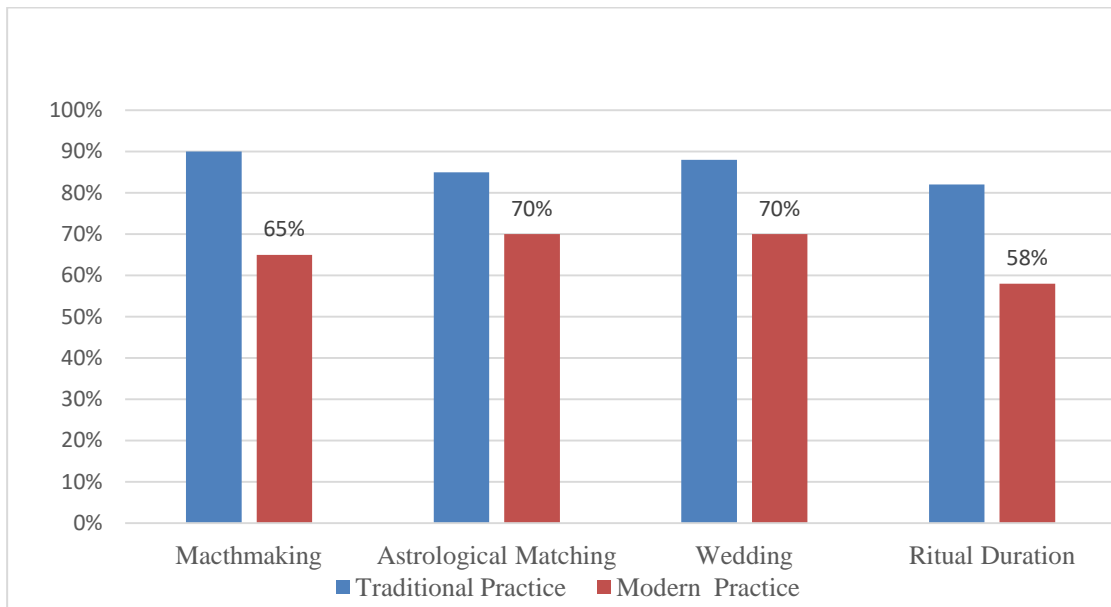
A very large majority of elderly respondents (92percent) recalled home births with assistance of local midwives (*dhai*), in which the whole family would participate in relevant rituals. *Jaat Karma* (95percent), ritual bath of the baby in herbs and protective blessings were prevalent. One 72-year-old Bhagbhidi grandmother stated, “We used to tie a sacred thread and sing old songs now they just get hospital tags.”

Chhathi ceremony (78percent) was a family oriented warming event where women made special food throughout six days. Nowadays, 85percent of the births occur in hospitals and in 90percent of the cases, midwives have been substituted by doctors. This is safer, but has impacted on customs *Jaat Karma* is avoided by 62percent, and the *Chhathi* as led by a priest is now rushed through in 45percent. One young mother in Goyalpani told me, “When I had a C-section we simply had a priest bless us, no six days.” Families have now attempted to find a middle ground between culture and health, and will forego rituals in lieu of convenience.

Although, new hospitals are safer, the deprivation of traditional postpartum rituals influences the attachment to spirituality and family integration. There are also families that attempt to integrate both worlds, with the help of medical care and preserving certain rituals at home. According to a 68-year old *dhai* of Loli, ” The herbs and chants we applied contained power of their own I hope young parents do not forget that.” The trick is preserving the meaning of the rituals and continuing with contemporary care.

4.3 The Changing Face of Marriage Rituals

The statistics show that there has been a significant change in the way weddings are organized shifting out of the custom practices of the communities to the individual and modernized styles. Grandparents remember weddings as several-day spiritual occasions, very much unlike the fast-paced practical marriage ceremonies that we have nowadays.

Figure 4.8*Marriage Practice Comparison*

Source: Field of Survey, 2024

Earlier, majority of the marriages (90percent) were done by family and kundali matching (85percent) considered as a mandatory requirement. Rituals and community participation were rich in celebrations which lasted 3-5 days (82percent) at home or temples. One grandfather (76, Kirtikham) recalled: “Seven days of prayer, feasting and bonding of two families were done in the whole village.” Marriage was not just a marriage but a societal celebration of values. Weddings today are more personal and fast. Most people (65percent) now select their mates, and a big proportion of them do not take part in horoscope matching (70percent). Faster pace of life is captured by the short one day events (58percent) that are held in banquet halls (75percent). One of the brides (27, Jhakale) told me: We did retain some things such as the garland and seven steps, but five days? These days impossible.” The use of symbolism is still there, but there is a lot of efficiency that informs decisions.

These changes are indicative of social change in general. Although the contemporary wedding parties give more freedom, some older generation people fear the elimination of spiritual richness. One of the priests (62, Goyalpani) said: “Omitting such rituals as kundali matching strips off protection.” However, there is a trend of blending the old and the new whereby most families retain important rituals

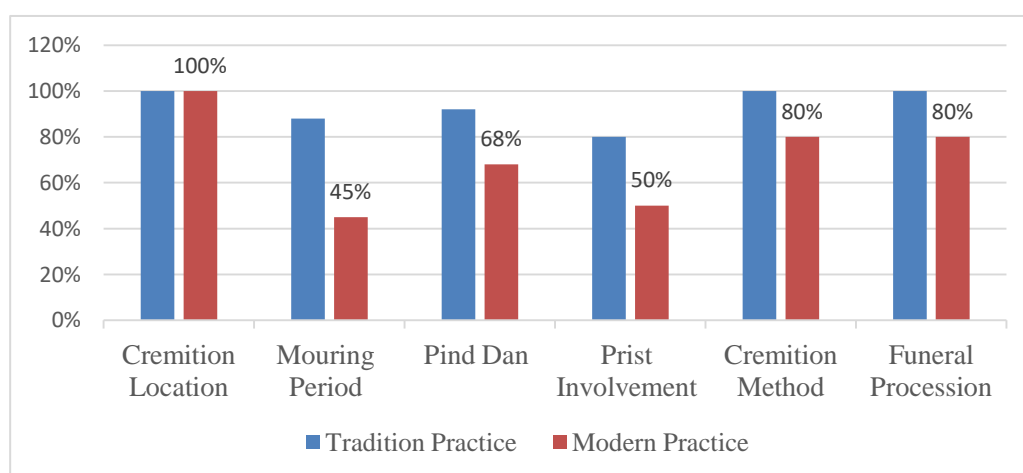
such as Kanyadaan and modernize others. The real test is how to maintain the sacred nature and at the same time embrace the changing times.

4.4 How Death Rituals Are Changing

In our findings, we have found that the sacred death rites are still very much upheld in Nepal but there are some that are adapting to the modern life. Families are coming up with new means of grieving, which involves a balance of tradition and current pressures.

Figure 4.9

Death Ritual Comparison



Source; Field of Survey, 2024

Still, a very strong spiritual aspect is associated with cremation on the riverbank (100percent), proving the durability of some of the basic beliefs. A 72-year-old Brahmin man at Kirtikham said: The river takes the soul to freedom, which no machine can match that. Nevertheless, 40percent of them now resort to crematoriums that are powered by electricity due to urbanization, pollution and scarcity of wood.

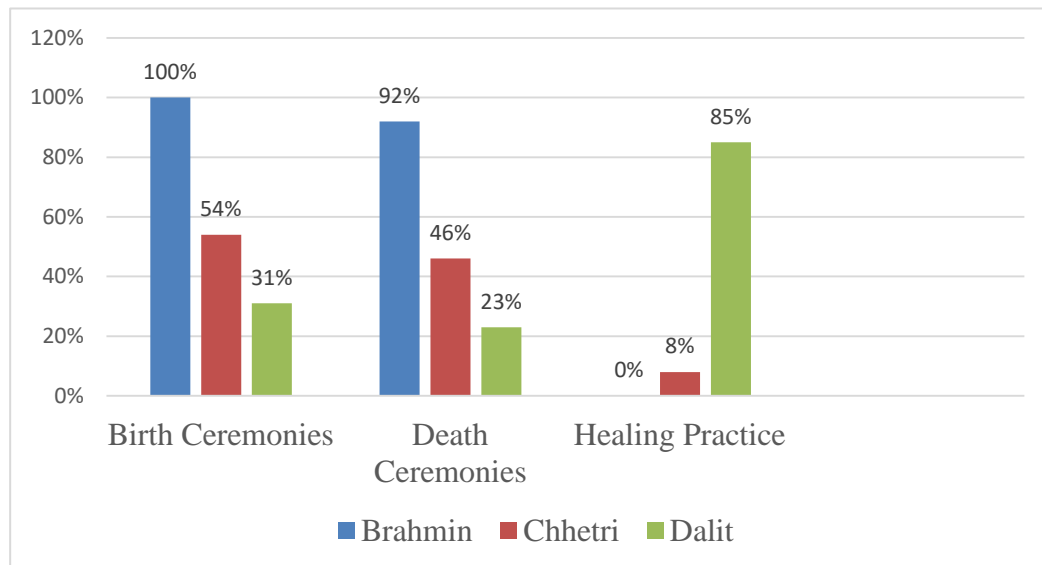
The conventional 13 days of grief has been reduced to 3-5 days in close to half of the families. One of the grandmothers (68, Goyalpani) stated that she mourned her father one year, whereas her son could only take three days off. Pind Daan, which used to be compulsory (92percent), now has 68percent missing it; many of them due to time and monetary constraints. One of the younger characters (32, Loli) even confessed: “We have abridged all of it to merely a couple of days of rituals these days

instead of an entire year.” The funeral practices are evolving rapidly. The Goreto Bato procession which used to be walked by everyone (100percent) is now carried out by car (80percent).

Wood pyres are being replaced by chemical assistance and tires (80percent) so as to cremate quickly. According to a funeral worker (45, Jhakale): “Families want it quick the old is time consuming and requires much wood.” Such changes show the way that death rites are being reconsidered by people. The core rituals are still in existence but are taking new forms. According to a Dalit elder (70, Bhagbhidi) young people are preserving the shell of the rituals and losing the soul. They will travel to the river but they will miss the 13 days of prayer that the soul requires.” The statistics indicate that there is a cultural balancing act of keeping hold of meaning whilst living in a modern world.

4.5 Caste-Based Ritual Practices

In this section, the article discusses the extent that the caste of an individual continues to have a significant influence on the manner in which rituals are carried out and transmitted in Sanfekar Municipality. On the basis of information provided by 38 grandparents (Brahmin = 12, Chhetri = 13, Dalit = 13), we discovered that each of the caste groups differed considerably in terms of their approach to birth, death and rituals of healing. Such results confirm previous studies that demonstrate that the maintenance or modification of rituals depends on social roles and cultural meanings (Durkheim, 1912; Geertz, 1973).

Figure 4.10*Professional Vs Normal Ritual Engagement by Caste*

Source; Field of Survey, 2024

Rituals with the Brahmin respondents and particularly the *Upadhya* priests are highly formal and strictly adhere to religious texts. Such grandparents continue to practice elaborate rituals such as *Nwaran* (naming), *Annaprashan* (feeding) and *Antyeshthi* (funeral) using Sanskrit mantra, religious diagrams, and customary offerings. Said one 72-year-old priest of Goyalpani, "Rituals are nothing without Sanskrit mantras. In doing it the way our ancestors taught us is what gives us the strength." This is an indication of how Brahmins serve as ritual specialists and tradition guardians.

Dalit communities on the other hand are more folk oriented. Most are Dhamis or *Hudkes* and preside over curing ceremonies and involve trance, fire, and herbs. Close to 85 percent of respondents of Dalit caste indicated that they conduct spiritual healing or ancestral rituals without priests. A 68-year-old Dhami of Loli said: we do not need priests the spirits talk through us. My grandfather showed me how to hear dreams, the wind and the fire." The practices are based on the oral teachings that are traditionally transmitted within the family and represent high level of local spiritual identity (Smith 1999).

The Chhetri participants displayed hybridization of old and new manners of performing rituals. More than half (54percent) reported that they managed birth and death rites themselves at home with the assistance of elders or neighbours, although they also occasionally hired a priest. One of the elders of Bhagbhidi (70) told: "We have both elders and guide us, but on a big occasion we call a priest. Our children and grandchildren prefer easier ceremonies." It is a combination of rituals that indicates that Chhetri families are modifying rituals to meet the tradition and changing lifestyles as it was the cultural change theory by Ogburn (1922).

Most elders of different castes claimed that young people in their families do not want to learn rituals. The Brahmin priests are concerned about the continuation of the intricate rituals, and the Dhamis are afraid of the disappearance of the healing knowledge because of the young people moving to urban centers. Unless the next generation supports or shows interest in them, such valuable traditions can die, and Fiese and Kline (1993) are right in thinking that the family rituals are the core to the identity and should be maintained.

In spite of the fears, there were positive indicators. Other families particularly Chhetri are mixing Brahmin and folk. Video calling was adopted by one family to involve family members in rites. The other one substituted animal sacrifices with the symbolic ones. These transformations are manifestations of what Bell (1997) referred to as the ritualization of modernity in which new means are discovered to maintain meaning alive as the practices change.

Caste still influences the manner of doing rituals, although each group is adapting differently. Brahmins maintain strict rituals, Dalits are into spiritual healing and Chhetris combine the two. That is how plentiful and varied the ritual life of Nepal is. The way to preserve this heritage is by respecting and promoting all the traditions both formal and folk as good entities of our culture.

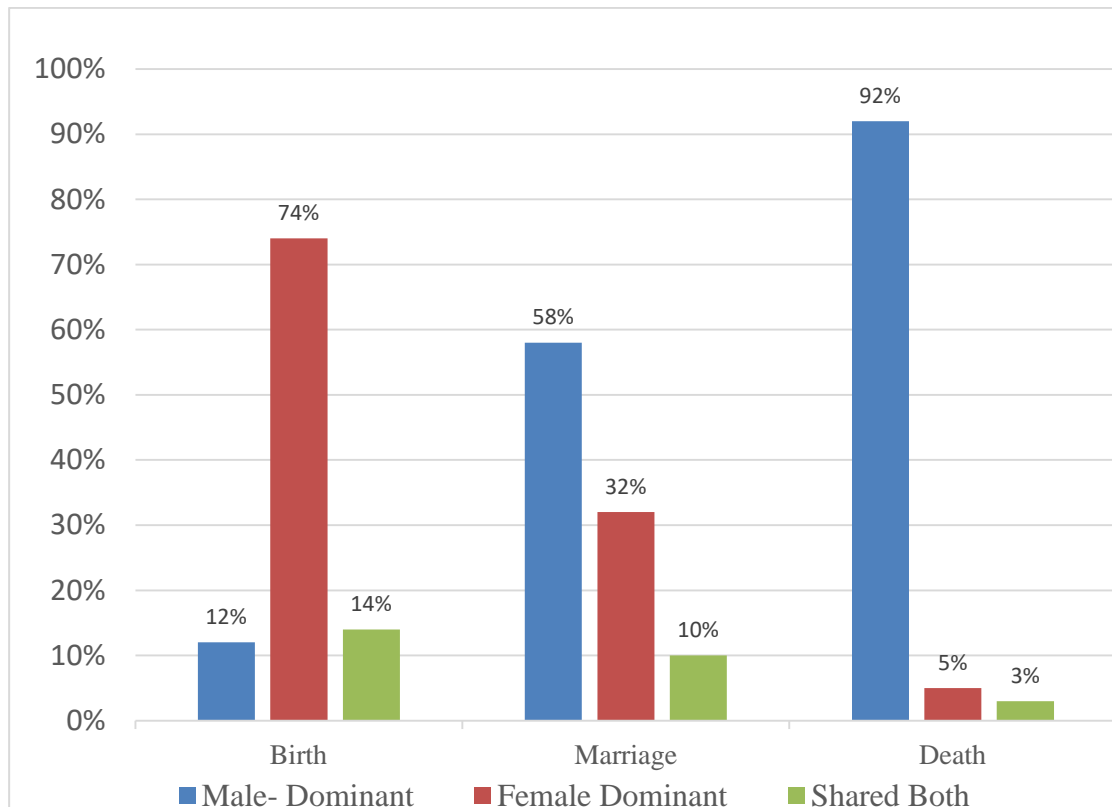
4.6 The Gendered Landscape of Ritual Participation

This study results indicate that gender is a significant factor that dictates the way individuals participate in cultural rituals in Nepali families. Although most of the traditions have evolved over the years, gender affects men and women differently,

which creates a distinct pattern about who does what when certain events occur in their lives.

Figure 4.11

Gender Roles in Rituals



Source; Field of Survey, 2024

After the birth is given, mostly women lead rituals (74percent) as it demonstrates their great role in the birth of new life. According to one of the grandmothers (69, Goyalpani): the initial 11 days of a baby born is to mothers and daughters. We sing special songs and massage and massage to heal, which none of the priests knows." Preparation of food before weddings is also left to women (32percent), as the women preserve the traditional recipes with the men taking the official roles.

Majority of death rituals done in a public way are mostly presided over by men (92percent), and other important aspects of marriage such as giving the bride away (58percent). A Brahmin priest (65, Kirtikham) replied: Lighting the funeral fire or giving the bride is the son of duty--a sacred thing to do. This demonstrates how the religious practices in Nepal grant men the majority of the spiritual authority in the

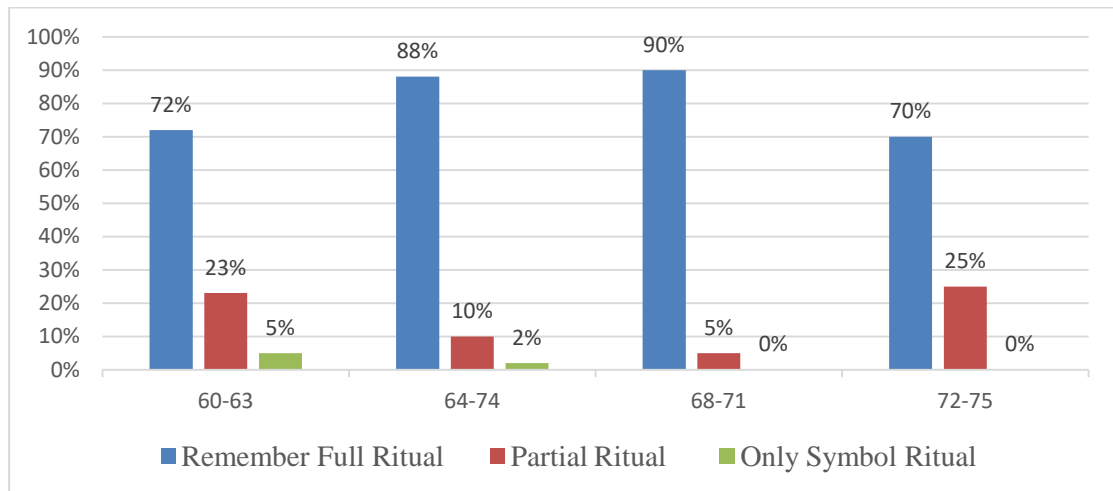
outside world, whereas women possess more knowledge in the domestic and family practices. Very few rituals are actually shared (10 -14percent). One young couple (28/26, Jhakale) wrote of their experience: he takes care of the religious aspect of the wedding, she does the food. But we both do selfies! It is demonstrated in these small examples that change is taking place, but there are still powerful gender roles that exist.

With the transformation of rituals, it is possible that the traditional knowledge of women such as care during childbirth and songs of mourning will be the first to be lost because they are generally not recorded and remain in the domestic sphere. One 71-year- old midwife (Loli) stated that her granddaughters want to go to hospitals and do not appreciate old methods to learn how to do this as our mothers taught us. The statistics indicate that in case we want to preserve the entire culture of Nepal, we should encourage the ritual knowledge of women instead of giving attention only to the male-dominated rituals that people witness in society.

4.7 Age-Based Ritual Memory

Here, this study explores the remembering of traditional rituals by the grandparents in the Municipality of Sanfebagar, across age groups. Age is also an important factor since rituals are usually transferred orally.

Role in the extent to which elders recall. This knowledge makes us realize the transformation of ritual knowledge generation by generation.

Figure 4.12*Ritual Recall by Age*

Source; Field of Survey, 2024

This figure gives us an important insight into how well different age groups of grandparents remember traditional rituals. The age group of 68–71 years shows the highest level of full recall (90percent), which means most of them clearly remember how rituals used to be performed. The next highest group is 64–67 years (88percent), showing that people in their mid-to-late 60s also retain strong knowledge. This tells us that grandparents in these age brackets are especially valuable when it comes to keeping cultural traditions alive. Interestingly, the youngest group (60–63) has a slightly lower full recall (72percent), with 23percent recalling only parts of the rituals.

This could be because they experienced fewer traditional rituals in their youth due to early signs of modernization. On the other side, the oldest group (72–75) also has a slightly lower full memory (70percent) and a higher percentage with only partial recall (25percent). This may be because memory fades slightly with age or because they have witnessed more changes, making the old ways blend with newer ones over time.

Across all groups, very few participants remember only symbols without the actual rituals. The highest symbolic-only memory is in the 60–63 group at just 5percent. This is a good sign it shows that most grandparents still remember at least parts of the rituals in detail. However, as modernization continues, future generations

might only remember symbols unless active steps are taken to preserve complete knowledge.

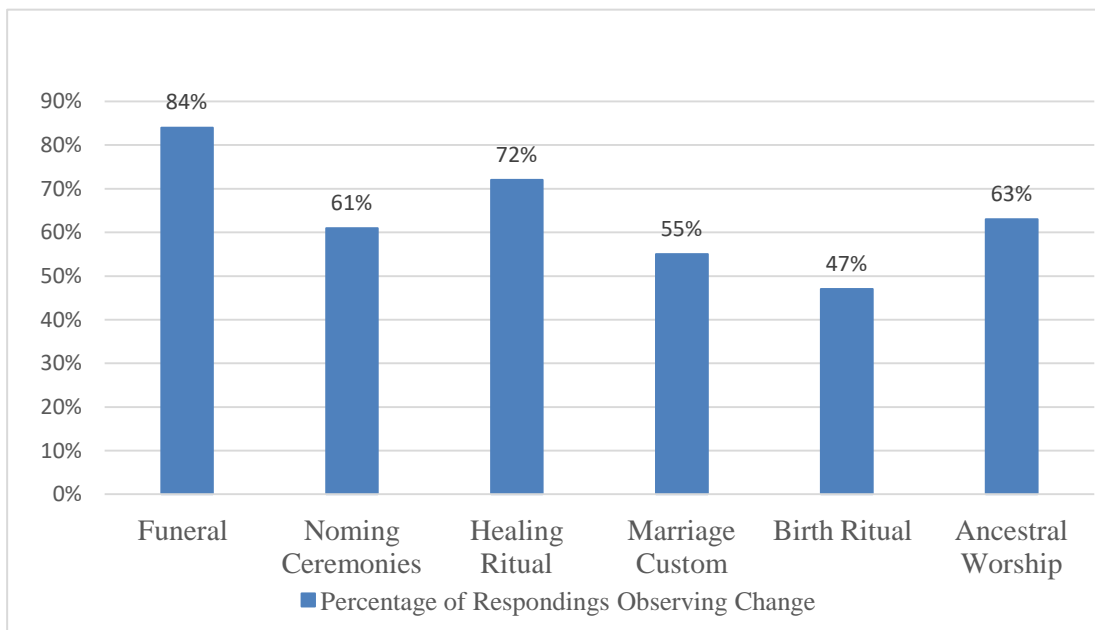
From a social work and cultural preservation point of view, these findings highlight the urgent need to document and pass on this ritual knowledge now. The groups between 64 and 71 years show strong memory and can act as mentors. Programs, storytelling sessions, or community events can help capture their knowledge before it fades. It also stresses the importance of creating spaces where younger generations can learn directly from these elder cultural bearers.

4.8 Ritual Modification and Modern Influences

Changes in rituals are not consistent in all aspects of different cultures but they are also dependent on the kind of ritual being transformed and the extent of the community to modernization and the generational demands. The evidence of 38 respondents shows clearly that the rituals do not disappear completely, but are selectively shortened, changed or mixed with new ones to adapt to the changing lifestyles.

Figure 4.13

Percentage of Responding Observing Change



Source; Field of Survey, 2024

The 13 days that are used to perform the funeral rituals have been greatly cut down to 3 or even 1 day in most families. Eighty-four percent of the respondents pointed out this shift, which is mainly caused by urban migration, time shortage related to employment, and logistics of gathering extended families. Said one 78-year-old Brahmin male of Goyalpani: Now they only put on the fire and burn it all off. No time to mourn in full. This point is consistent with the Parsons theory of structural differentiation in which the institutions such as family and religion become functionally differentiated and overlap no longer occurs (Parsons, 1951).

The *nwaran* (naming ceremony) is still practiced, especially by Brahmin families, although the practice has included the introduction of English or foreign names as noted by 61 percent of respondents. This hybridization is associated with educational desires, formation of cosmopolitan identity and global media influence. A 68-year old Brahmin woman of Loli told: the priest said the name but they call her Sophia. The conflict between religious naming and secular identity presents an example of what Giddens (1991) calls, reflexive modernization, in which people struggle between tradition and their expression of self.

Adequate ritual-based healing is decreasing among the Dalits, particularly Dharmi practitioners. Although 88 percent of traditional healing practices are still conducted by Dhamis, 72 percent of the respondents admitted that there is a drop in community trusting Dhamis especially the youth who are now opting to go to hospitals. According to one 69-year old Dharmi of Bhagbhidi: Now they desire hospital pills, not spirits. This is a definite disenchantment of world according to Weberian sense (Weber, 1922) where mythicism is substituted by rationality.

Marriages though still traditional, have also taken to western style where cake cutting ceremonies, white bridal, gowns and even pre-wedding photoshoots are observed. This was observed by 55 percent of the respondents especially the Chhetri families. Grandmother Kirtikham said: “They wore a sari and a gown both!” It is a fusion that indicates the impact of the transnational media, Nepali diaspora culture, and shifting gender roles in ritual performances.

The postnatal time that is followed by a complex ceremonial treatment of a mother and a child has been cut short or eliminated altogether surprisingly in urban

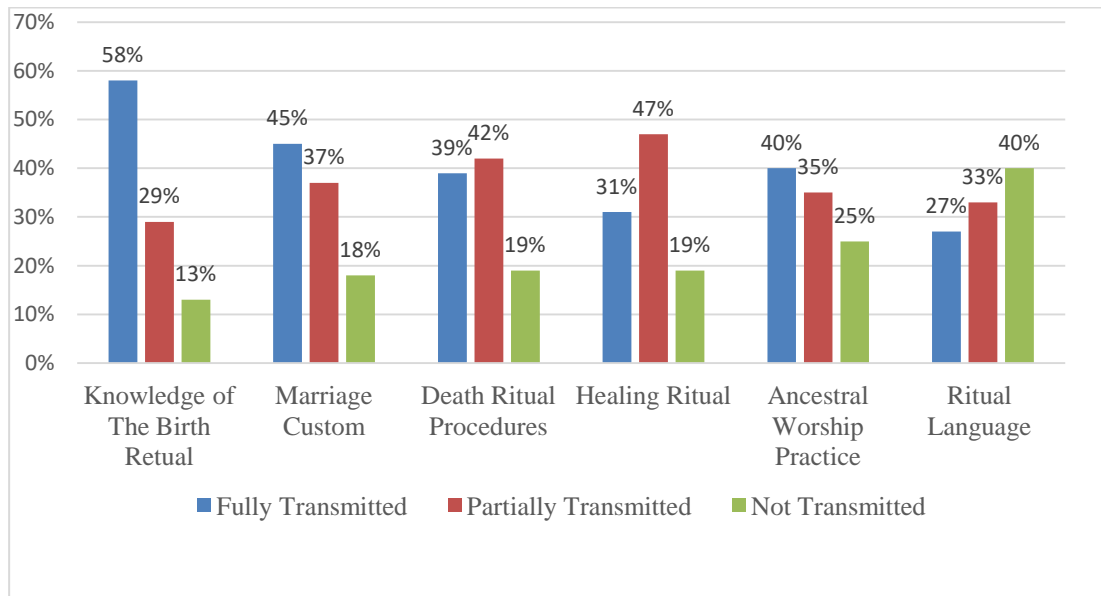
nuclear families. Approximately 47percent of the respondents reported such changes with less intergenerational cohabitation and medicalization of childbirth listed as some of the reasons that they attributed to such changes. One Dalit woman of 76 years of age cried out: I did *nwaran* alone on behalf of my grandson in Kathmandu. These experiences show how urban patterns that live fragmented extended family networks affect the continuity of rituals (Appadurai, 1996).

Such rituals as *shraddha* (ancestral offerings) are being more and more done through online temple donations, proxy priests or merely monetary offerings sent home. This is an adaptation that is reported by 63percent of respondents and is viewed as a functional change given the fact of migration, remittance culture, and convenience of digital approaches. A 72-year-old Chhetri male has said: They send money rather than light the lamp together. There are elders who embrace these changes as being needed and those who fear they will lose emotional connection and ritual sacredness.

Such changes in ritual indicate that cultural change is not a linear loss, but a reconfiguration. Elders feel continuity and compromise. The theory of modernity developed by Anthony Giddens states that the traditions are always reinterpreted in new circumstances of the modern life (Giddens, 1994). Similarly, the concept of identity construction presented by Stuart Hall (1996) argues in support of the hypothesis that rituals are changing due to the balance between the heritage and modern values experienced by communities.

4.9 Intergenerational Perspectives and Transmission Gaps

This part discusses the differences in the perceptions of the traditional rituals held by the grandparents and the manner the grandparents witness the practice or appreciation of the same by their grandchildren nowadays. On the basis of firsthand interviews of 38 elderly people living in six wards of Sanfebagar Municipality, it was observed that there were broad differences between generations in terms of knowledge, interest and participation in rituals.

Figure 4.14*Ritual Transmission Assessment by Grandparents*

Source; Field of Survey, 2024

Based on the statistics, 27percent of the elders feel that their grandchildren have acquired the sacred languages (Sanskrit or chants) to perform the traditional rituals. They perform the rites, said one 80- year- old Brahmin grandfather of Goyalpani: But they do not know what they are talking. It is similar to singing with no sense." This lends credence to the claim by Bell (1997) that ritual efficacy is bound to symbolic perception as opposed to actions. Devoid of language, rituals will run the risk of turning into performative shells. The biggest damage was noted in the case of Dhami-based healing traditions where 47percent of the grandparents complained that this aspect of the tradition is neither believed in nor being practiced by the new generation.

An elderly Dhami (73) of Loli told me: Spirits will die with me when I die. Its superstition, says my grandson." This underscores replacement of indigenous epistemologies (Smith, 1999) with biomedical stories and education-related skepticism. Modernization enhances health access at the expense of the position of folk healers in the cultural system. Birth (58percent) and marriage (45percent) rituals were relatively higher in terms of their transmission. Grandparents said that even though some things had changed these rituals are still practiced, although in modified

forms with diminished timings and using modern elements such as DJs, photography, or gifts instead of symbolic objects. This relates to what Giddens (1991) says about reflexive traditions in which individuals preserve rituals but adjust them to suit the existing way of life.

Physical distance and migration were the main hindrance to transmission as 76 percent of respondents perceived. The grandchildren are usually residing in Kathmandu or outside the country, thus it is hard to teach them directly and observe them. A 70-year-old woman at Bhagbhidi said: They come only during Dashain. What are they going to learn the ways in two days?"

The implication of this is that ritual erosion does not only depend on disinterest in its performance but also on contextual absence due to the mobility and changed family structure (Appadurai, 1996).

Other grandparents (approximately 18percent) hoped that videos, You Tube instructions, and electronic means could enable youth to reconnect with rituals, even when they were away. An elderly man of the Chhetri community in Jhakale told me: My granddaughter asked me to demonstrate the tika ceremony on video.

Perhaps they will be taught that way." This conforms to the concept of the network society which was pioneered by Castells (2010) in which culture is increasingly being shared digitally.

These gaps in transmission depict a generation transition of identity, through which the traditions are refracted through the prism of modernization, schooling and exposure to media. Using a Social Change Theory angle (Ogburn, 1922), the ritual expectations of the older generation and the actions of the young people would also be clear to note the cultural lag. Moreover, the Indigenous Theory (Smith, 1999) reminds us that in case of non-transmission of culture the communities lose more than rituals they lose worldviews. Such intergenerational conflict in the rituals of knowledge and practice is not only a matter of forgetting, it is transformation, negotiation, redefinition. Grandparents witness loss and adaptation, the question is whether rituals can live without their content or should they be changed to be significant.

4.10 Lived Experiences of Grandparents About Ritual Transformation

In this part we go more in-depth into the lived experiences of grandparents that took part in the study. Whereas the prior sections concentrated on the quantitative data, this segment puts emphasis on their own voices, emotions, and memories, attracting the evolvement of rituals to a human and emotional level. Applying the method of thematic analysis of interviews, a number of themes were cited repeatedly that characterize the essence of ritual change not only in practice, but in meaning.

4.10.1 Rituals Were Our Rhythm of Life

Most of the older individuals recounted rituals as something that cannot be avoided in life. A 74-year-old grandfather of Brahmin caste at Goyalpani told:

In every month a festival, in every season a ceremony. We did not use calendars; our lives had rituals.” In this generation, rituals were not an option or irregular; they were time and nature based as well as community based. These rituals helped to frame life and provide a source of spirituality, be it in the form of birth rites to harvest festivals. They were connected to the agricultural ways of life and local gods.

4.10.2 Now, Everything Feels Rushed or Forgotten

The loss and disconnection was very much in the narratives. A 66-year old grandmother in Jhakale said: “Previously, we used to plan a wedding in weeks. It is over now in a day, and the main part of it in a hall, not in our courtyard.” Numerous people complained that the contemporary rituals are shorter, commercialized, or substituted by digital traditions. Long community meetings have been replaced with rituals being handled by event organizers or confined to nuclear families and this has reduced the aspect of community learning and sharing of stories.

4.10.3 Our Grandchildren Are Curious, But Busy

Generational divides were evidently experienced. Although many grandparents were proud of educating their grandchildren, they also noted: “They ask questions sometimes but they do not sit long enough to learn the complete story,” said a 70-year-old Dalit grandfather of Bhagbhidi. This is representative of a larger trend

as the younger generations are interested, but detached, either through schooling, migration or modern lifestyles. The grandparents always feel like a living library that nobody would open.

4.10.4 We Adjust, Because That's What Elders Do

Instead of rejecting change, a good number of grandparents talked about transforming their roles. Others were already simplifying pujas, others making use of the phone to send blessings or even record chanting. A 69-year-old Chhetri woman in Loli added: "I did a video call with my grandson and taught him the Dashain tika mantra. He was in Kathmandu and I here. It seemed holy, nevertheless." This is an indication of how many of the elders are adapting to ways of bridging the new and the old and demonstrating resilience, and flexibility even in the face of change in the social aspects that are rapidly changing.

4.10.5 Some Things We Just Can't Pass On

There were respondents who shared rituals that have a risk of being eroded. As one Dhami of Bhagbhidi told me: I used to dance the *Masto* once a year. My boys looked on. they had never learnt the steps. They believe it to be humiliating." This motif of cultural defenselessness particularly with folk and indigenous rituals was very pronounced with professional ritualists. Some traditions will die in a single generation without active transmission

4.10.6 Blessings Are Still the Same

Blessings, values, and love were the only theme that did not change throughout all the transformations. Nearly all the grandparents interviewed reported that they continued to apply tika, or bless, or instruct little rituals in their grandchildren. In the words of one of the participants:

The ritual may vary but the sentiment remains: I want them to be happy, to be safe, and to be associated with our fore fathers.

These stories bring to mind that rituals are more than actions they are forms of identity, memory and bonding. Grandparents do not only observe the change but are busy contributors in coping with and salvaging what they can. Their voices remind of

the necessity of inclusive preservation of the culture, where tradition and innovation could coexist.

4.11 To Explore Perception of Ritual Practice

Understanding how grandparents perceive rituals today is essential in tracing the transformation of these practices from past to present. This objective allowed us to explore their emotions, meanings, and personal reflections tied to rituals passed down through generations in Sanfebagar Municipality.

Grandparents shared that rituals were once considered sacred and mandatory. They expressed that every ritual, whether for birth, marriage, or death, was tied to their identity. One 70-year-old from Goyalpani said, "We didn't question rituals. They were part of life, like breathing." Most grandparents believe that rituals have become less meaningful over time. They feel today's youth follow rituals more for formality or convenience. This shift worries elders, who fear that the cultural spirit behind the traditions may disappear.

Many respondents pointed out that rituals once created unity in families and communities. Gathering for a ritual meant storytelling, food sharing, and collective emotion. Now, they feel rituals are shorter, more isolated, and sometimes skipped altogether. A few elders acknowledged that modernization has helped in some ways. For example, using phones for video participation allows distant family members to join. Yet they still miss the full presence and attention given in earlier times. Some participants mentioned that rituals provided moral lessons. For example, the naming ceremony wasn't just to give a name it reminded families of their ancestors and values. One grandmother from Bhagbhidi explained, "When we named a baby, we remembered the great-grandfather. It was a lesson in history."

The perception of rituals as a source of identity was strong among Brahmin participants. They viewed their priestly role as a duty to society. They often worried that their knowledge might end with them. In Dalit and Chhetri communities, the perception was more adaptive. These grandparents spoke of combining rituals with local customs. They believe rituals are meant to evolve with time, though they still fear losing the core meaning. The emotional connection to rituals remains strong, even when the practice changes. A 68-year-old Chhetri grandfather said, "Even if we

can't do all the steps, we still light a lamp and remember. That small act carries big meaning.”

Some grandparents felt excluded from today's rituals due to mobility issues or generational gaps. They want to participate but feel that modern rituals move too fast or are too unfamiliar. Several participants expressed sadness that their grandchildren are not curious about rituals. They feel that unless children ask questions and show interest, the cultural chain may break. Others are hopeful. Some said their grandchildren still enjoy wearing traditional clothes and hearing ritual songs. One 66-year-old woman said, “When I sing old songs, my granddaughter claps. That's enough to give me hope.” Participants described rituals as life lessons, emotional moments, and spiritual duties. They feel these lessons are fading as people become more focused on material success.

The research also revealed that rituals once linked people to nature and environment. For example, using leaves, fire, and water had symbolic meanings, now replaced by synthetic items or skipped altogether. In most households, women played a major role in preparing and leading rituals related to food, birth, and home blessings. Their role, while often unseen, was deeply respected by the elders. In male-led rituals, participants emphasized structure and formal correctness. Grandfathers shared that they practiced mantras from memory, guided by priests or elders.

They believe this discipline gave depth to the ritual. In both male and female narratives, one theme was constant rituals created belonging. A 73-year-old man said, “We knew who we were because of what we did during rituals. They reminded us of our place in the world.” Even though modernization has brought hospitals, phones, and education, most grandparents felt rituals still have value. They want society to respect these practices even if adapted.

They hope that schools and local programs could help preserve rituals by teaching their meanings, not just steps. As one elder said, “We don't need to do everything the old way but we must not forget why we did them.” Overall, the grandparents' perception shows that rituals are not just customs they are memories, morals, and identity. While practices may transform, the meaning behind them must be remembered and passed on thoughtfully.

4.12 Analyze the Condition of the Elderly and New Generation

The representatives of the elder generation who were interviewed responded that the current younger generation is not as interested in the traditional rituals as they used to be. Most of the grandparents were sad because their grandchildren do not know or do not inquire about rituals. A 74-year-old Jhakale man said his grandson favors phones to fire rituals. He is in his room sitting through the puja.” In joint families, there was also perceived to be minimal interaction between generations. Grandparents described that they are living together with their grandchildren, but seldom do they share rituals. A 69-year-old grandmother of Bhagbhidi said, “They are watching YouTube when I chant mantras.” This shows a knowledge gap not only in the form of knowledge, but also in the form of engagement.

It was tradition to have the elderly conduct the rituals of the household. Most of them said today their roles are reducing. One of the elders of the Brahmin caste Upadhya said, I used to be the priest at home before. Now they bring somebody, and when I am sitting there. Such loss of agency is of concern to several older participants. This transition of joint to nuclear families was usually attributed to the migration of youths to get an education or a job. Grandparents revealed that due to migration of children to towns or other countries, there is a break in continuity of rituals. An elder Dalit in Loli who was 70 years old said, “My son is in Dubai. His boy does not even know the name of our village deity.”

Education has helped the new generation to be empowered; however, it has also distanced the population to cultural practices. The elders observed that local traditions are hardly mentioned in English medium schools and in modern curriculum. An elderly Chhetri said, “My granddaughter speaks very good English, and does not even know about our Chhathi.” Technology is a connection as well as a disconnection. Others among the respondents claimed that phones enable them to teach rituals through video calls. Some felt that screens are in competition with time in regards to learning culture.

One grandma in Goyalpani explained, “I do the blessings on video but it is not like putting a tika with my hands.” The older generation observed that the youth today are more interested in studies, employment and contemporary celebrations compared

to rituals. One Dhami deplored, saying that they do not celebrate the anniversary of death as they celebrate birthdays. This change of values is transforming the role of rituals. A number of the elders observed that old age is an obstacle in its own right. A 75-year-old man said: I want to show my grandson how to do the ritual, but I can no longer sit with my legs crossed.

The physical constraints also affect them as they are not active carriers of tradition. Even though the majority of youths still give their elders some respect, it is usually doubted that the knowledge of their elders is relevant. “They One Chhetri grandmother said, say they love me but my stories are old-fashioned. This is an indication of a cultural distance in the appreciation of lived wisdom. There are families that observe rituals that are easy or pleasant to them and miss others.

Grandparents told that weddings are still attended in a traditional way, but birth or death celebrations are abridged or omitted. One elder said, they just pose. Some elders had a hope that curiosity might bring tradition back. As one of the grandfathers said, his grandson inquired about the fire that is lit during *Maghe Sankranti*. I told him the whole business. He even kindled it on himself.” These are minor instances of potential. Grandparents indicated that cultural education should be something where they are engaged at the local programs or schools. I will go, one old man told me, when the school calls me in to discuss rituals. They desire to be considered as good culture instructors. Food-based or birth rites were commonly taught by elder women whereas formal ceremonies were headed by men.

Due to the disintegration these gender roles over the years, there has been a lot of confusion in who should teach what. As per the elders, they noticed that the traditional things such as sacred threads, copper pots, or fire altars are replaced by plastic or skipped. A Dalit elder said, his granddaughter thought the mustard oil lamp was ornamental. There were rituals that used to be sacred but that have been viewed as being burdensome. Elders observed, now they say is it really necessary? Such disposition is detrimental to emotional attachment to the past.

The change towards the elimination of the position of ritual guide emotionally impacts the elders. One Upadhyia elder told me that she felt invisible during puja. Rituals were the identity of many. Loss of this position impacts on self-worth. Some families continue to engage elders on a regular basis. According to one Chhetri

female, her son asks her to bless the harvest. He waits to hear me.” These examples indicate that the generational bridge can take place.

A lot of grandparents proposed to simplify the rites instead of leaving them. A grandmother said to do half, but with heart. In their opinion, meaning can be maintained, and then culture will survive. Elders living in villages such as Bhagbhidi and Goyalpani gave more ritual activity record than that of more connected village such as Jhakale. This implies that modernization is more devastating to certain areas than others. The respondents demanded greater intergenerational communication. One elder demanded to know why we are doing things rather than how.

Communication can establish a rapport and a connection. Others proposed that priests or Dhamis would be useful in teaching the youth particularly where stories are used. This is because one of the elders remarked: Let the Dhami narrate the stories of gods to the children.” New celebrations are being combined with some rituals. There is one family that now celebrates birthdays with traditional blessings. Said a grandmother, the candle and the tika can go together.

Most grandparents are afraid that these rituals will vanish unless they are given priority. A 75-year old said: One day there will be no one who will know why we do things. This is not only change that it is losing. The analysis indicates a profound disconnect between older and young generations in terms of ritual knowledge that is formed by immigration, contemporary values and shifting lifestyles. It also indicates ways of closing this gap through empowerment of the elders and engaging the youth with curiosity and respect.

4.13 Major Findings

The key insights that were acquired during the study are summarized in the following major findings.

- i) Rituals that have been shortened greatly include wedding ceremonies and mourning ceremonies where the family members would prefer to have a less time-consuming shorter ceremony as opposed to the traditional practices that go on for days.
- ii) The styles of rituals continue to vary by caste, and gender distinctions in rituals persist, with women being the predominant leaders in

domestic rituals and men being in charge of most of the routines in the public and the ceremonial functions.

- iii) Childbirth has become less homely and more hospitalized with the traditional midwives left behind and some of the child birth rituals such as Jaat Karma being omitted by many as a result of the busy lifestyles and time factor.
- iv) The rituals are still remembered by grandparents but not as well by younger generations particularly sacred languages, the transmission of rituals can be clearly observed to be in decline.
- v) City life, nuclear families and technology have changed the ways in which the rituals are conducted in some instances facilitating remote participation, but in others diminishing the shared and emotional richness of the activities.
- vi) As other practices are being discarded or worn out, families will also be seen to creatively blend the ancient practices with the new celebrations and we have seen that rituals are not vanishing but being transformed.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATION AND SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION

5.1 Conclusion

The study was done on the ritual transformation of the grandparents in Sanfebagar Municipality, Ward No. 2 (Tolas of Bagabhidi, Swartola, Pallo Jhakale, Kritikham, Goyalpani, and Loli). In these communities 38 grandparents were interviewed and all of these people became a treasure trove of personal experience and cultural recollection. The voices of these people make the core of the study that brings light to the remembrance, transformation, and transition of rituals over generations in this part of rural Nepal.

This paper has analyzed in-depth the changing nature of traditional rituals in the Sanfebagar Municipality with particular reference to the experiences and voices of grandparents who have witnessed generations of the changing cultures. It is these grandparents who bear witness to how things were when rituals united people and that a birth or a death was not just an event that was marked by prayer but by presence, care and meaning.

Most grandparents explained how rituals that used to dominate day to day life have either been reduced to a fraction or completely vanished. Childbirths that used to occur at home in the presence of midwives and relatives are nowadays largely in hospitals. The weddings which were before lasting several days are being condensed into one. Rituals of death that were highly emotional and spiritual have been reduced or omitted and replaced with symbolic actions. This change, which is frequently motivated by safety, time and cost, is also one in which there is a loss of connection with traditions that previously bound generations together.

It was observed in the study that there is a distinct generational divide. Grandparents who are older and in particular those between the ages of 68 and 71 are able to recollect rituals in full details. However, as the age decreases, such memory deteriorates. Grandparents between 60 and 63 years of age forgot some or only used symbols. The younger generations tend to view rituals as a choice or something not

needed, something that is concerning to many elders. Migration to the cities and smaller families also minimizes daily chances to pass these practices to the grandchildren. Caste is still significant as a factor in the performance of rituals.

Brahmins continue to live by elaborate priest-led customs whereas Dalit families largely depend on spiritual healers such as Dhamis. Chhetri families tend to merge the two together, and new traditions of commemorating the life milestones emerge. However, due to movement of youth or desire of more modern lifestyles, these caste specific customs are under threat of being forgotten.

Who does what is also determined by gender. Women still have the dominant role in the rituals at home, particularly those during birth, but men are more exposed to those in the society such as in cremations. However, with the increasing number of women getting educated and into the labor force, they tend to have less time to teach these practices and it has become a very long chain of knowledge that has been transferred amongst the mothers and daughters.

Rituals have not been left out either in the field of technology. Other families video-call so that relatives can be in the ceremony, or seek rituals online. Although this assists in maintaining connections, most of the elders argue that it is not warm and does not have the presence of the past. A small proportion (about 18percent) have the view that technology can in fact maintain the essence of tradition.

Simplification is also caused by practical difficulties. Families cannot afford to follow rituals such as Pind Daan as they have limited time and money. Mourning used to take thirteen days and now usually ends in three or five. The families that live in cities can send prayers or money as opposed to being physically present. Such minor shifts, in the long run, change the core of rituals.

Conventional medicine is diminishing. The same grandparents who used to believe in local Dhamis observe young people going to doctors and hospitals. The holy languages such as Sanskrit are hardly studied by the new generation and therefore ancient mantras do not sound like strong chants but empty words. What is lost here is not merely a set of rituals but an entire mode of explaining the world.

There are rituals that are only practiced in a form but not in the spirit. The old generation observes the young people wearing traditional attires or practicing rituals

very fast, without understanding what they mean. It is as though having the body but losing the soul of a ritual. This scares most of the grandparents because they may lose the deeper teachings of respect, unity and gratitude. To most of the elders, this is a painful loss. They recall when everything was united by rituals, children were taught to be good people, and rituals helped to deal with a loss. Others are sad saying, one day nobody will remember why we were doing these things. They do not only talk about nostalgia they are a warning and a call to action.

And there is hope yet. Families in some homes are discovering lovely ways of melding the new and the old. The use of tika along with birthday candles, the study of mantras via video applications, or the participation of grandparents in Internet rituals proves that tradition can be modified without being deprived of its value. Intention and respect is what matters.

According to the grandparents in this research, the schools and communities can offer more. They do not only want children to be in a position to know how to perform a ritual, but also why it is done. Their vision is of storytelling circles, community arts workshops, and spaces in which culture may be passed across generations no longer dreamed of, but experienced.

What the study actually demonstrates is that rituals are not merely the steps to be undertaken.

They are the way we greet life, mourn loss, show love and pay homage to our ancestors. They lead us to one another, to the past, and to that which is larger than ourselves. The shapes might be different but the essence of these rituals the sense, the blessing, the belonging, still may remain. It is up to both the elders and youth to carry the future of these traditions. When they go hand in hand elders with pains and younger generations with new strength then rituals will not disappear. They will change as life does, and pass the soul of a people onward with love and purpose.

5.2 Recommendations

The study founded on the insights of 38 grandparents of Sanfebagar Municipality Ward No. 2 depicts that there is an urgent need to conserve and modify Nepal rich ritual inheritances to the young generation. According to the findings,

transformation is unavoidable yet meaningful preservation is still possible particularly when agencies, local governments, civil society leaders, and other interested bodies act in unison.

5.2.1 To Civil Society Leaders and Non-Governmental Organizations

- i) The leaders of the civil society should establish cultural mentorship systems in which grandparents can actively pass the rituals to children and young people.
- ii) To reinstate matrilineal information such as postpartum ceremonies and spiritual culinary practices, NGOs operating in the areas of cultural conservation and gender equality ought to attend training sessions, specifically young women.
- iii) Bring in inclusive programming that acknowledges Dalit, Dhimi and indigenous practices and ensure that they are documented and distributed with mainstream practices.

5.2.2 To Grandparents and Families

- i) Grandparents ought to be empowered and invited to be cultural ambassadors in their respective families and communities.
- ii) The neighborhood or ward level can be set up as Ritual Memory Circles where elders exchange tales, mantras and healing practices in a relaxed oral form.
- iii) The families are encouraged to incorporate the contemporary practices with traditional practices such as lighting oil lamps in front of birthday cakes or blessing in local languages in addition to prayers.

5.2.3 Use of Technology

- i) Youth clubs and local governments can work together to develop the digital learning materials such as mobile applications, short videos, or audio guides on how to understand the meaning behind rituals and not just the steps.
- ii) Societies are advised to conduct video conference services, online prayer sessions, or virtual *shraddha* sites to accommodate relatives that are not in the vicinity, albeit at the expense of the core of physical ritual observances.

- iii) Technology is not a replacement but a bridge that can help to keep the memory and not lose the sense of communal contact and the use of senses.

5.2.4 To Provincial and Local Government

- i) Ritual education must be conducted through municipalities and ward offices where elders can publicly show rituals and show their meaning to the youth and family in community openings.
- ii) Establish local heritage clubs or cultural documentation units who can collaborate with elderly citizens to document local practices, chants, or healing, which is unique in the area.
- iii) Be sure to give the same degree of recognition and support to all caste and ethnic groups, with priority funding and documentation of marginalized forms of ritual.

5.2.5 Policy, Curriculum, and Educational Institutions

- i) Ritual knowledge should be incorporated into school curricula, with the assistance of education departments and culture ministries this can be accomplished through interviews by the elders, field trips and local ritual festivals.
- ii) The preservation of cultural heritage must become a policy priority, where the budgets will be devoted to intergenerational activities, digital archiving, and teaching young people the art of documenting oral history. The schools, colleges and the social work training institutions must work with elders to design culturally informed materials and community based projects that have the aim of transmitting rituals.

5.3 Social Work Interventions

The case of rituals in Sanfebagar Municipality, Ward No. 2 (which comprises Bagabhidi, Swartola, Pallo Jhakale, Kritikham, Goyalpani, and Loli) is indicative of how fragile and strong cultural traditions are. With the evolution of rituals or their disappearance due to the impact of modernization and migration and altered family patterns, social work has a vital place in maintaining meaning in the face of practical

adaptation. The strategies that can be used by social workers to intervene at various levels micro (individual/family), mezzo (community), and macro (society/policy) and help maintain cultural preservation, foster intergenerational communication, and establish the respectful ways of the ritual development are provided below.

5.3.1 Micro-Level Interventions

Social workers may be able to facilitate the meeting between grandparents and the younger members of the family in order to hold informal classes. During these meetings, the elders may narrate some stories, perform rituals such as *Tika, Jaat Karma, or Mundan*, and tell their significance. Such interactions can be seen to strengthen the family ties and make sure that the knowledge is not lost. Families are struggling to find ways in which they can make traditional rituals work in their contemporary lives, and the social workers can facilitate effective family discussions. Such discussions enable the elders and the young ones to voice their opinions, reach a mutual ground in a decent manner, and decide collectively on which rituals to maintain, adjust, and change.

Not all senior citizens, particularly the ones who are less mobile, will be able to attend community events. Social workers can arrange small, in home classes in which grandparents can teach about tradition in a familiar environment and keep learning of rituals hands on and personal. In the current busy world, truncated death rituals might not enable the families to come to terms with grief. Social workers are able to combine short mourning rituals with emotional assistance, thereby allowing the families to respect the deceased in a manner that is both spiritual and applicable to the constraints of contemporary life.

A number of grandparents are left behind by technology. They can be trained by social workers to use smartphones and video platforms to be able to share rituals with family members in other countries to maintain traditions even across long distances. The rituals of the household are usually camouflaged on the women. Social workers are able to identify their role in such a way by establishing female groups where grandmothers and mothers educate each other and young women so that such traditions are appreciated and proudly transferred.

Most of families' desire to uphold traditions, but they are not aware of the steps. Social workers can collaborate with the elders in coming up with simple visual guides or videos that can explain rituals in a manner that makes them accessible to busy families and to urban families. The role of traditional healers such as Dhamis is still very strong in the community. Social workers can record their rituals and demand they should be respected and integrated with the health services in a decent manner, and this spiritual heritage will not be lost but will be perceived together with the biomedical care.

5.3.2 Mezzo-Level Interventions

Ritual learning can be transformed into fun, participatory experiences by hosting festivals that are focused on storytelling, dancing, cooking, or ritual demonstrations that bring elders and youth together. Such occasions can be nerve wracking means of bridging all generations. Social workers can get the stories, chants, rituals, and healing techniques of the elders by using schools, libraries or ward offices. produce community archives on video, audio and photos. This will help these precious traditions not to be forgotten in memory and it will encourage the students to learn about their traditions either through drama, poetry, or even podcasts and develop pride in heritage. Teachers and grandparents can lead these clubs, which connects learning in school and cultural heritage. Rituals are different according to caste, yet they all have meanings.

Social workers can conduct the respectful discussion circle with Brahmin, Chhetri, and Dalit elders discussing their practices, and such a circle would lead to empathy, inclusion, and mutual appreciation.

Trained volunteers who may be the older youth or retired teachers can visit door to door to help elders to teach rituals to the family that may have forgotten them or never learnt them. This forms a workable connection between modernity and tradition. Most of the elders are lonely or frustrated when their cultural roles are not observed. Social workers are able to assist in forming peer groups where the grandparents can gather, discuss their concerns and help one another maintain the family traditions.

Traditional midwives and community healers are living textbooks. They can be assisted by social workers to conduct community workshops particularly on rituals related to birth, sickness or spiritual protection. Create open debates where families sit down and discuss how to change the rituals in a respectful way either using environmentally friendly materials or identifying other methods of cleansing that are symbolic to animal sacrifice. Such sessions encourage the pursuit of creativity and the respect of the past.

5.3.3 Macro-Level Interventions

Social workers and cultural advocates need to cooperate to ensure the local or provincial funding that promotes heritage events, teaching programs run by elders, and digital storytelling projects. Ritual literacy may form the official study program. Social workers can collaborate with teachers to develop modules in which students study local customs and holy languages and what underlies rituals via field trips or old-time guest lecturers.

Senior citizens should be incorporated as advisors to the local and municipal cultural bodies. Their practice and knowledge of rituals play a significant role in the construction of effective heritage policies.

Support legislation which enables the families to have time off in important rituals (e.g. funerals, naming ceremonies) without deductions in salaries. This secures the right of the people to practice tradition without the economic cost. It should be encouraged that hospitals and health posts include room to bless, spiritual practice, or family-led postpartum care that will not impede medical care but will enhance it.

Make sure that rituals and popular festivals are all-inclusive and that equal attention and visibility are paid to Dalit and indigenous customs. Social workers are able to track and report caste-based exclusion. Work with NGOs and digital innovators to create apps on platforms, YouTube, community radio where elders can share rituals and knowledge in an accessible, entertaining way. Initiate promotions that would promote the cultural diversity of Nepal and that would do so with positive stories of families that combine the old and the new. This assists in normalizing adaptation without embarrassment, and creates national pride over ritual heritage.

Rituals are not mere customs they are emotional, spiritual, cultural lifelines between generations. In Sanfebagar, like elsewhere in Nepal, grandparents are at a juncture with modernity of youth. Through the above interventions administered in a considerate way, social workers can become cultural connectors so that rituals do not vanish but transform in a meaningful way. It is not about the preservation of the past but continuing the spirit of the traditions with pride, creativity, and responsibility to the future generations.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire of Thesis

1. What is ritual?
2. When do you celebrate them?
3. Which rituals are most significance in your culture?
4. Who take part to celebrate the rituals?
5. Do new generation take part in the ritual practice?
6. How do you feel when you participate these rituals?
7. Do new generation take part in the ritual practice?
8. How do you perceive the younger generation attitude towards these ritual?
9. How do you perceive the younger generation attitude towards these rituals?
10. In your opinion, do the younger generation understand the significance of these rituals?
11. How do you feel about the changes, if any, that the younger generation has made to these rituals?
12. Do you think the younger generation values these rituals as much as your generation does?
13. What differences, if any, have you noticed in your generation and the younger generation practice in rituals?
14. How have these rituals transformed over the time within your community?
15. Are these any rituals that have been lost or are no longer practiced?
16. What role do you think modern technology and globalization play in the transformation of these rituals?
17. How do you teach the younger generation about these rituals?
18. What challenges do you face in passing down these rituals to the younger generation?
19. How do you encourage the new generation to participate in the rituals?
20. What suggestion do you have for ensuring these rituals are preserved and respected future generation?

Appendix 2: Letter from the Sanfebagar Municipality Ward No. 2



साँफेबगर नगरपालिका
२ नं. वडा कार्यालय

जाल्पादेवी, अछाम
सुदूरपश्चिम प्रदेश नेपाल



प.सं.२०८२/०८३

च.नं. २४

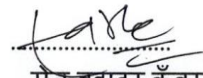
मिति: २०८२/०४/०९

ने. सं. ११४५ गुंलाथ्व १ शुक्रबार

बिषय: सिफारिस सम्बन्धमा ।

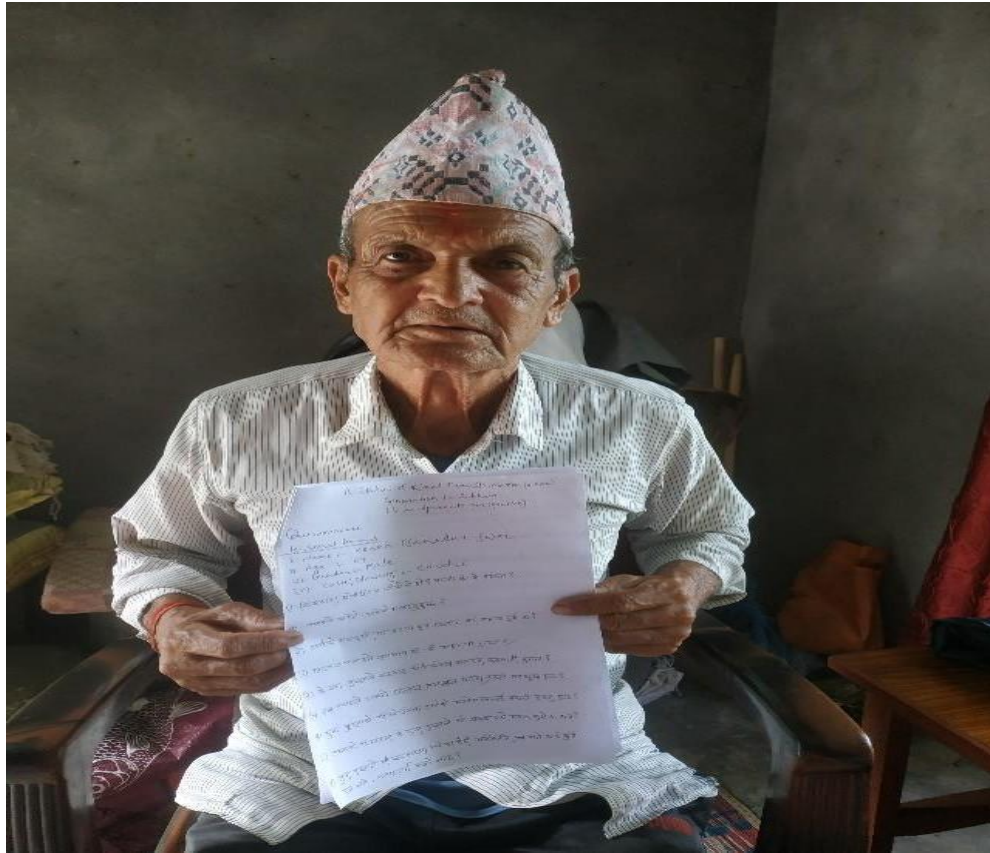
श्री जो जस संग सम्बन्ध राख्दछ ।

प्रस्तुत विषय सम्बन्धमा यस साँफेबगर नगरपालिका वडा नं. ०२ जाल्पादेवीमा बस्ने श्री लाल बहादुर स्वारको नाति श्री रमेश बहादुर स्वारको छोरा श्री विनोद स्वारले त्रिभुवन विश्वविद्यालयको सामाजिक कार्य विभागमा स्नातकोत्तर ८ औं Batch मा अध्ययनरत निज विनोद स्वारले Thesis को डाटा संकलनको लागि Status of Ritual Transformation to New Generation भन्ने विषयमा यस साँफेबगर नगरपालिका वडा नं. ०२ जाल्पादेवीमा अध्ययनको शिलशिलामा आवश्यक डाटा संकलन गरेको ब्यहोरा प्रमाणित गरिन्छ ।

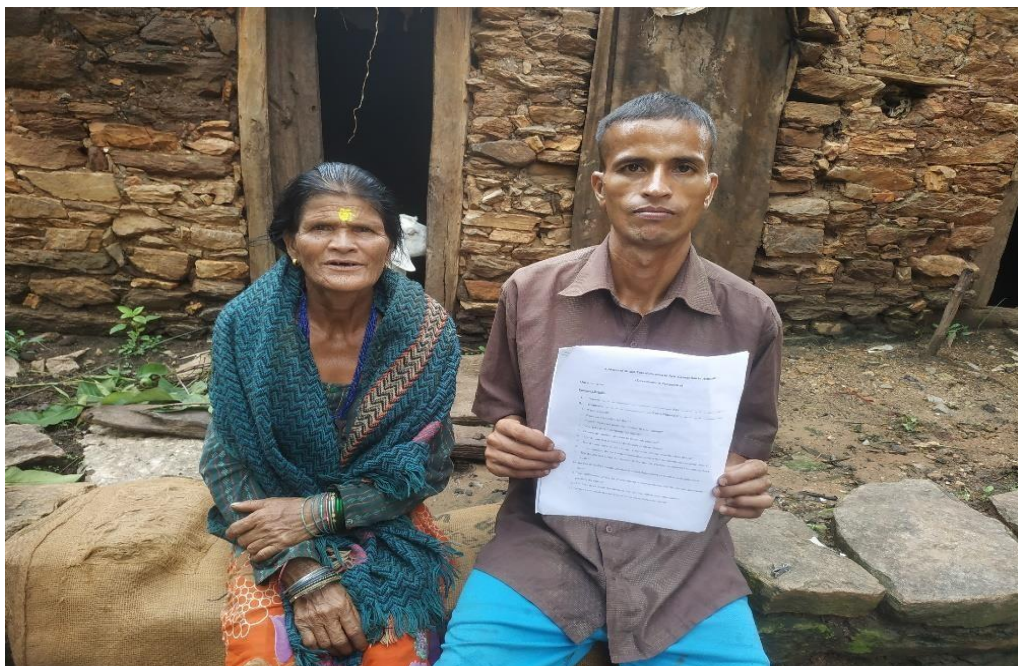

सेत बहादुर कुँवर
वडा अध्यक्ष

सेत बहादुर कुँवर
वडा अध्यक्ष

Appendix 3: *Picture of Grandparent of Jhakale, Sanfebagar Municipality Ward No. 2.*



Appendix 4: *Picture of Grandparent of Goyalpani, Sanfebagar Municipality Ward No. 2.*



Appendix 5: *Picture of Grandparent of Swarwada, Sanfebagar Municipality Ward
No. 2.*



To,
Central Department of Social work
Tribhuvan University
Kirtipur, Kathmandu

Subject: Self- declaration

Dear Sir/Ma'am

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Academic Level: Masters

Document Type: Thesis

Submitted to: Central Department of Social work
Faculty of Humanities and Social Science
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