

Tribhuvan University

Ritualistic Modification on Mewahang Marriage: An Impact of Increasing Migration

A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in English

By

Shanta Rai

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

January 2016

Tribhuvan University

Central Department of English

Letter of Recommendation

Ms. Shanta Rai has completed her thesis “Ritualistic Modification on Mewahang Marriage: An impact of Increasing Migration” under my supervision. She carried out this research paper from June 2015 to January 2016. I, hereby, recommend this thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

.....

Shankar Subedi

Supervisor

Date.....

Tribhuvan University
Central department of English

Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Ritualistic Modification on Mewahang Marriage: An Impact of Increasing Migration” by Shanta Rai has been submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University. It has been approved by the undersign members of the research committee.

Members of the Research Committee

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Head

Central Department of English

Date: _____

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the help and support I received from all those who gave me time and shared their knowledge for completing this work.

The greatest debt which I incurred the work is to the people of Mangtewa VDC, Sankhuwasava and the people of Suntale VDC and Tinghare, Ilam who generously shared their knowledge and experience and gave me their valuable time and energy during the field work. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Mr. Shankar Subedi sir under his guidance this thesis takes the complete form.

I am immensely indebted to Subash Mewahang Rai sir from Ilam and his family without sir and his families' valuable support this work could not be the complete work. I would like to thank him for his kind support. Similarly, I indebted to Shankar Das Mewahang uncle from Mangtewa VDC (now dharan). I would like to thank him as well because of his authentic informations this work has complete.

I am also indebted to the central department of English for providing me an opportunity to conduct this research work. I am grateful to my Department Chief, Prof. Dr. Amma Raj Joshi for his efficient administration and management.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to my good friend Ritesh Sharma who was always with me during my field work in Ilam. I am equally indebted to my brother Suraj Rai, my friend Bimala Rai, uncle Lilabhadur Rai, aunt Tara Rai. Without their kind support this work could not be in complete form. And finally to my dear parents lots of love and warmth, without your kind support i could not complete this valuable work. Thank you everyone.

January 2016

Shanta Rai

Abstract

This field based research “Ritualistic Modification on Mewahang Marriage: An Impact of Increasing Migration” delineates the issues of an ethnic culture from eastern part of Nepal. Basically, it presents the difference between traditional and modern Mewahang culture and the causes of this cultural transformation from Mangtewa VDC, Sankhuwasava to Tinghare and Suntale VDC ,Ilam respectively. This research not only exposes the performance of marriage ritual of Mewahang rai but it also explores how the migration and the globalization affect one owns culture. Globalization makes the world narrow and modernity imports the cultural homogenization. Our culture glorifies us in and beyond the country. Therefore, it is very important to preserve our culture. The tradition culture of Mewahang Rai has been transferring into the hybrid culture. In fact, modernity erases the traditional norms and values. In fact, every ethnic community is affected by the consumer culture. Thus, this research mainly focuses upon the affect of modernity in Mewahang ethnic culture.

Table of Contents

	Page No.
Acknowledgements	
Abstract	
Modernity in Mewahang Marriage Performance	1-26
Works Cited	

Modernity in Mewahang Marriage Performance

This present research deals with the marriage ritual performance of traditional Mewahang Rai and their cultural modification within an increase of migrations.

Mewahang is a sub group of Rai one of the ethnic communities who have been living mostly in the different places of eastern part of Nepal. This research basically focus on the traditional marriage of Mangtewa VDC Sankhuwasava district and the modification Mewahang culture of Suntale and Tinghare VDC Ilam district overall. Traditionally, Mewahang Rai have their certain culture to perform. According to the Mewahang people Maghi biha (arranged marriage) and the Chori biha (abduction marriage) is popular sort of marriage in the community. However, Jari Biha (if the man marries with married woman paying some amount of money to her previous husband) also used to be a popular kind of marriage. In all kind of marriage the matchmaker (kalliya) plays the vital role. However, the culture has been transforming now. Today in Mewahang culture we can widely find the love marriage instead of arranged marriage or abduction marriage. Matchmaker is a very crucial person to conduct any sort of marriage.

The cultural hybridization erases the originality of ethnic identity. Nepal is recognized as multilingual, multiethnic and multicultural country. If the traditional culture would be hybridized, it also leaves the negative impact not for the ethnic group but for the country as well. The cultural hybridization plays the huge role in changing the cultural pattern of Mewahang Rai. The way Mewahang people speak and the way they live is totally different from Sankhuwasava district and Ilam district. The way of conducting the marriage is totally different in these two Mewahang territories. The cultural pattern has been changing day by day. The noticeable point is many Mewahang are adopting the Christian religion in Ilam because they even don't know that they are Mewahang Rai. Within the culture the religion has also been transforming here. Basically their livelihood run by cultivates the land; apart from this Mewahang have also fine economic background as well. Some of the Mewahang rai are recruited in the British army, Indian army, Nepal army and in the Singapore policeforce and they have better income than others.

Originally Mewahang are the inhabitants of Sankhuwasava distirct but now, this ethnic group is also the residence of different areas of eastern Nepal. Mewahang have their certain culture to perform and they have their certain distinct language. Martin Gaenzsle writes in his book *Origin and Migration Kinship, Mythology, and Ethnic Identity among the Mewahang Rai of East Nepal* "the Mewahang Rai are one of more than fifteen linguistically and to a certain extent- culturally distinct groups subsumed under the ethnonym 'Rai' and numbered among the "autochthonous" inhabitants of the eastern Nepal hill area, who are generally known as Kiranti." In this way Gaenzsle identify the Mewahang people are the sub group of Rai community who have their distinct language and culture to perform. He further identifies them as a part of other Tibeto- Buraman group of east Nepal which is also known as Kiranti and ruled for

many centuries in Kathmandu valleys. Therefore, Mewahang are the indigenous ethnic people of Nepal. Mewahang are the inhabitants of eastern hill area. Especially, larger number of Mewahang is the inhabitants of Sankhuwasava district. But in these days they are widely scattered in different eastern areas of Nepal like Sunsari, Morang, Jhapa, Ilam. It can be seen that within the migration, the cultural pattern also been changed.

Mark liechty, in his book *Suitably Modern* illustrates how the culture has been transferring or changing here in Nepal. His main focus is to demonstrate the modernizations in culture due to various reasons. According to him, "process of urbanization, market penetration, bureaucratization, industrialization, and class formation play themselves out in ever- changing power relations that bring the local and global together in explosive and unpredictable ways" (9).

The culture is changed not only because living with multicultural society; rather it changed because the society follows the trend of modernity on the global periphery. If we analyze the Mewahang culture, the migration creates huge gap between their traditional and modern culture performances. Basically, Youths and the media play the main role to make local culture to global. He further claims that youth are themselves actively engaged in constructing the new cultural space. Marking it off as their own, and imagining themselves as its inhabitants. Therefore, youth are the responsible agent of cultural modification. He depicts the changing cultural pattern of Kathmandu penetrating the class culture. He further mentions that media and youth are constitutive elements of a larger process of cultural formation that is underway in the lives and practices of middle class people in Kathmandu. Although he is talking about the modernity in Kathmandu, it is the true story of whole country. Directly or indirectly modernity spread everywhere so it seems on Mewahang culture too.

Similarly, culture is related with the performance. In theatre, we perform the dance and the drama. In the same manner we perform or show our culture by doing different activities, showing different gestures and following different procedure. The difference is we perform in theatre for an entertainment but we perform in culture to preserve our tradition and make our identity alive.

Ritual is strictly programmed, expressing the individual's submission to forces "larger" or at least "other" than oneself. Ritual is epitomizing the reality principle, the agreement to obey rules that are given. Games, sports, and theatre (dance, music) meditate between these extremes. It is in these activities that people express their social behavior.

(Schemer, 3)

Thus, marriage is about actions and the behavior. It is conducted through with certain rules and regulations. The bride and the bridegroom have to follow the procedure what has been already made to follow. For example, in Christianity people follow the principles of bibles conducting the marriage, in the same way Mewahang follow the guideline of their muddhum.

In this way marriage ritual is a social process that has to follow and perform certain procedure. It does not go beyond the certain norms and cultural values which are already established in the society. Therefore Mewahang marriage is a unique example of performance. However, increasing migration has been modifying the traditional practices; however originality in culture is being shadow, nowadays. I found some of the Mewahang from hill areas still attach with their traditional culture. Although there is the hybridization in languages, they conduct their marriage ceremony following their own muddhum.

In Mewahang marriage, in both **Magghi biha** and the **Chori biha** matchmaker is the center person who has to conduct the marriage peacefully. Infact, matchmaker is the priest to conduct the marriage ceremony and obviously, the importance of matchmaker is related with the myth of Sumnima and Paaruhang (goddess of Kirat religion). Sumnima got pregnant by the Paaruhang but due to her humiliating behavior towards Paaruhang earlier, he got angry and turned the whole world dried. When Sumnima was dying out by thirst the chipurke (bird) goes to search the Paaruhang and speak the Sumnima's words. And brought Paaruhang down to the earth to bring the peace. According to the myth of Mewahang it is the chipurke bird that makes the bond relationship of Sumnima and Paaruhang. The chipurke is the **kaliya parexcellence**: this restless bird flies constantly between the two worlds and acts as an intermediary. It flies up into the sky and fetches Paaruhang down to the earth. In most of the version it is the creature that concocts the scheme for Paaruhang to 'dry out' Sumnima, and, usually too it is the one that splashes the 'water' with its tail in sumnima's direction (241). In the similar manner the kaliya (matchmaker) play the role of chipurke in the marriage ceremony. His work is making the two bonds together peacefully. However, during my research I came to know that now within the time Chori biha or abduction marriage has almost disappeared from Mewahang culture. Now, the matchmaker is not so important while conducting the marriage in ilam. The wide trend of love marriage shadows the importance of matchmaker. It does not only change the traditional way of marriage, it rather shows the extinction of Mewahang traditional cultural value.

While conducting the traditional arranged marriage, the possibility that the parents and close relations of the man go about arranging the marriage from the very beginning and establish contact with the family of potential bride associated among

the mewahang with the greatest prestige and can be regarded as ideal. This type of marriage called Maghi Biha (arranged marriage). For this marriage two matchmakers are negotiate from the bridegroom side and sent to them to bride's house with homemade two kathuwa raksi (wooden container). Two elder people must be uncles of the bridegroom and who are the familiar about this also are sent to the bride's house for the proposal of marriage. When they arrived at the girl's house they pretended to be the night guest and requested for the shelter. The marriage proposal often does at night in Mewahang culture. They use their muddhum while doing this. If the girl accept this proposal then she requested to accept those stuffs to her family if she does not then they don't even touch those alcohol. If they accept the proposal it will be finale to getting marriage. After accepting the proposal they come again for the second time bringing the same stuff (alcohol). This process continues until the marriage date will not be fixed. Normally the marriage date is finalize at 4 to 5 times. This process mostly happens in arranged marriage in Sankhuwasava distirct.

While culture is concerned with tradition and social reproduction, it is also a matter of creativity and change (68). Chris barker in his book *making sense of cultural studies* argues that the whole world is culturally imperialized because of the global media culture. People around the world are adopting the world culture and the lifestyles therefore they are living in the shadow of cultural imperialism. He further asserts that we are not being homogenized rather we are being heterogenized. Because of identity, contact zone two cultures are meet formulating hybrid culture. Ilam is so close to the border zone of India. Although Nepali and the Indian culture are quite simila,r it effects largely on ethnic culture. During my research in Suntale VDC and the Tinghare VDC of Ilam, I had come through that although there is a large number of Mewahang, they are totally ignorant about traditional pattern of marriage

procedure. People don't use muddhum while going to girl's house for marriage proposal. For example, in Ilam, marriage is often finalized at 2 times. Bridegroom side doesn't come again and again with bringing the gifts of alcohol to finalize the marriage day. Similarly they don't use alcohol necessarily while going for marriage proposal in the girl's house. Here, maximum people don't use alcohol. No doubt this is the impact of living with the multicultural society. And of course youths play the vital role here. Educated people don't like to have alcohol even it is necessary for their culture. Today's youth wants modernity. Modernity is essentially related with the foreign commodity. They prefer more foreignness rather than ownness. Leitchy argued

To the extent that commercial forces are able to construct a new consumer oriented space of "youth culture" in Kathmandu, they are able to construct the framework of a new social identity that is intimately bound to the market. What we see is the simultaneous construction and colonization, by media and allied commercial forces, of a new conceptual and experiential space that I am calling the consumer sphere. These new mediated consumer spaces exist both conceptually in people's imaginations and experientially as people move through commercially mediated spaces in the city. Yet these spaces co-exist alongside other conceptual and physical spaces in the city. Here I have used the insid/outside distinction as one example of a critical contrastive awareness whereby people in Kathmandu demarcate different cultural spaces with different cultural logics (44-45).

Youths are more attached with the consumerism and it shows mainly in the youngster of urban areas rather than rural areas. In this contemporary period, everything is being commercialized. Leitchy mentions that it's very compulsory to do a fashion in developing country like Nepal. Everybody seems in different kind of western dresses, read most fashion magazine so that they can be up to date in doing fashion as celebrities. For example in Nepal Indian dresses are most popular to women. Western fashions are also more popular but Indian culture and tradition mostly affect the country and this seems in ethnic culture too. The culture is colonized by the media which play the huge role to make the people adopt foreignness. It's the media that communicate with the world and within the dresses people also started adopt the foreign languages and culture.

Marriage ceremonies may be seen as especial emphasizing social bonds between husband and wife and their kin group. In most human history, romantic love has not been the means by which spouses are selected. Social costume has limited marriage among certain classes of people (23-24). Marriage is an inevitable part of the culture. Therefore, it is performed under certain rules and regulations. In the marriage day the matchmakers and some older person go to bride's house before bridegroom and other people for fulfill the **rit** (cultural value) according to their culture groom side has to always paid for the **rit** to the bride side after finishing marriage too. They brought themselves seven **rit** for seven different people of bride's side. Before go to the bride's house there is especial dance perform in the groom's house called "**dewannaach**". This is very important part of Mewahang culture. Cheli (sisters) and maiti (brothers) dance around **dewan** sharing their reunion joy. This is also related with myth of the culture hero Khakchulukpa. It is particularly important during marriages, as well as during house consecration, that the sisters of the head of the

household turn up at their maiti for the occasion. Khakchulukpa is the kirati culture hero who was known as the first person to make the house and begin the life. In the myth of Mewahang, Khakchulukpa started to life by building the house with wood and bamboo and married first taking a decisive from “nature” to “culture”. According to the myth he has two elder sisters Khewa and Tangwa. He has departed with his sisters. He was left by his sisters when he was sleeping. The sisters thought that he was dead. At last Khakchulukpa was left alone in the jungle. He was growing up alone in jungle but the witch frequently troubled him. Finally he was able to kill the witch and married with the girl name Wihilimma and started the life. Years later he was success to find out his sisters and invite them on the occasion of his house consecration. They celebrate it happily dancing celi with playing jhyamta (musical instrument of rai culture). This is said that in Mewahang culture since then the ceremony of dewan naach is established and the performance of hang celi. It is celebrate on the occasion of joyful meeting of the sisters and the brothers after long time. Therefore dewan is significantly related with the myth of khukchulukpa.

In the than (place) of the **dewan**, the branch of the chestnut tree (musure katusko hanga) should be dig in the middle of the courtyard then there should be full container of local alcohale (ek kathuwa jaad) and one bottle beer (ek bottle raksi) is hanged in there. The pig must be hold and the purkhas worship the than by akchyata (ginger and rice). This must be done for the best wishes of the married couple. But, in Ilam people have forgotten that procedure. The important point of this process is to kill the pig by an arrow and anticipated the good or bad omen of the marriage couple. Here, neither they killed the pig nor they dance around dewan. Few elder people said that they used to follow this ritual act but according to the time there comes the huge changed. Now they don't killed the pig and perform the hang celi around it. Now,

dewan naach, we can rarely find in ilam. But if we go to Sankhuwasava we can still see the huge practice of dewan naach.

The expert person kills the pig by an arrow. He should kill it at least in three times from the right side. If the pig fall down by the right side and the blood appeared from its nose and ear then it is regarded as ill omen in the Mewahang culture. After that they perform the hang celi dance around the dewan. Only the Mewahang rai can dance dewan naach on the very occasion. They dance playing with the instrument called **jhyamtaa** which related with the myth of Khakchulukpa and his elder sister tayama and khiyama. The meat and the beer is prepared for the koseli to fulfil the seven rit and the kalliya carried it to the bride's house before the janti. Here, the seven rit means the meat and the raksi as a gift from groom side to the bride's seven family members. For example, to the gaaji (bride's parents) one side of pig thigh and three container of raksi. And to the matchmaker (khidi), two and half kg of meat (sungurko ek dharni fila) and two container beer. Likewise, the sisters (ngokme chukme~M) and other elder members (purkhas), grandmother (muma), including hangbopla (king of kirat) are the main members of taking the gift from groom (rit khane). They all get the meat of pig which was killed in **dewan** earlier and the some kind of beer or homemade alcohol. This is the central part in the marriage ceremony of Mewahang culture. These ten rit does not exist in Ilam. Neither people killed the pig nor do they bring the ten rit to the bride's house. They are adopting the Hindu rit. Instead of meat and alcohol they exchange the gift of fruits and chocolates. Instead of using alcohol they use milk in every ritual act. Their ritual act either seems like Hindu culture or Christian. They are affected with "cultural imperialism". As letchy says that modernity is essentially a foreign commodity, we can see in Mewahang culture too.

While in the marriage day, the matchmaker and the purkhas (elder people) goes to the bride's home at first carries with those seven **rit** before the groom. They give it to the bride's family and then return to the groom but they don't reach at home. On the way they met with janti and go to the bride together. Significantly, the groom is welcomed in the bride's gate.

Hybridity is the concept that originated from biological term hybrid. Originally from biology and referring to the selective breeding of plants to produce new varieties with specific qualities of improved performance, its initial use in wider discourse was as a stigma in association with colonial ideas about racial purity and horror of miscegenation (6-7). Hybridity is visible everywhere in present world. Hybridity is a fundamental feature of what is now commonly termed 'the postmodern condition'. This concept is popularized as post colonial trope by homi k bhabha. In this post modern world the ethnic culture also becomes hybrid one and becomes the confusing culture. Using the term "cultural imperialism" Mark Leitchy illustrate that foreignness has been an important dynamic in modern Nepal history functioning both as the basis for a contrastive awareness vis-à-vis other region and power, and as a resource for constructing identities and social distinction. To be clear, in terai, Dhimal are one of the indigenous ethnic people of Nepal, gradually losing their performance of linguistic power. Now, in terai, there are multicultural people live together, the impact we can see directly in Dhimal community. Now, in Dhimal community within the language their cultural behavior also has been changing. They used to make their clothes '**petani**' ownself and used to wear only petani. But this costume is only shows occasionally now. Only the elder people seem to speak their language and wear their costume but in youngster we can't see this trend now on this community. In fact, the

change is not only appeared in this community, it is rather spread widely in all ethnic community as well if we analyze it.

As we see in Mewahang marriage, another ritual act called **ca: ri henkhuwa** is another crucial part which has conducted after the bride enter into the groom's house for the first time. It is a kind of sir uthaune (rising of head) of both bride and the bridegroom. During this process, there is a long white Saul spread from the main entrance (door) to the courtyard of the house for the bride to enter into the house. Mother in law worship the bride before enters into the **khamang** room (living room of Mewahang goddess). The bride is kept in the main room (khamang~M,ancestral shrine). From this day the girl belongs to the one of the family member of her husband (kulma vitrinu).

In general **ca:ri henkhuwa** is conducted to see the couple's future (chinga herna N). Symbolically the death of the chicken implies the meaning of the marriage couple's future. Or we can say ca:ri hengkhuwa is kind of raising the head of the marriage couple(sir uthaune N). This is made in both bride's and the groom's side. In love marriage or in abduction marriage this ceremony conduct first in the male's house. After this ceremony small wedding (sagun) is complete in chori biha. But in the arranged marriage preliminary this is conducted in the girl's house. This is regarded as a kind of one rit among the ten rit of Mewahang marriage. To introduce this process, there should be some materials like two full container of alcohale(dui chindo jaad), pairs of light (diyo N), a couple of chicken(a hen and cock) and the some akchyata (aduwa ra chamal N, piece of ginger and rice) for worship the chicken.

First of all, the elder people who have the knowledge about this or the matchmaker indicate the boy saying his clans (pacha) and similar process goes on to the girl. Then chicken is worshiped by alcohol, ginger and the rice then it is killed by

hitting the back with khurpa (a kind of armor). If the chicken died in once then it is assumed the positive marital life of the couples. Remember that the hen is killed for the bride and cock is for the groom. The blood is kept in the plate (tapari~N, plate made by leaf). As soon as they have to drink the alcohol in same vessel (jutho misaunu~N mixing of impurity), and finally friend of the groom, coming from the background, briefly knocks the pair's two heads together. This is the process of doing henkhuwa, the vital ritual act.

However, ca: ri henkhuwa is rarely practice in ilam. If the people do it, their way of doing is different from traditional one. Some elders are conscious about it. But maximum people don't follow the traditional pattern. The youngster seems more ignorant about it. Some people say, they practice this ritual act but using milk instead of beer and alcohol. However, some other says that they don't know what the 'henkhuwa' is. According to my survey, more than 50% Mewahang culture is changed due to migration and living with the multicultural society. As leitchy says that like all culturally constructed social categories, the modern concept of "youth" has a history tied to particular socioeconomic process. Supporting his argument I strongly believe that youths are more responsible to make traditional culture alive or dead. For example, from suntale VDC many youngsters agree to alive their culture but they don't know their traditional culture. Youths are conscious about their culture but they are also following the modern trend that's why the culture becomes hybrid ones.

Dhuri salamiko rit or **saino kinnu** or to recognizing the relatives is another ritualistic performance of Mewahang marriage. This process also conducted in the both side. The groom has to recognize the bride's relatives and so does the bride. After putting the tikas from relatives and the guest this ceremony hold. The matchmaker

give the money (char aana~N) to the relatives of the bride introducing them with their relation and groom has to greet them as their relations. It begins with the bride's own parents, brothers and other close relatives. This same process will repeat in house of bridegroom to recognize the bride's relations with his relatives. This is one of the customs of traditional Mewahang marriage. Unfortunately, within the migration people also forget to practice this ritualistic act. In Ilam people don't know about this. They say that they never heard about this process. Migrated people forget their traditional ritualistic act. People don't practice this ritual act in Ilam.

Similarly, **Dhito dharan** is another significant celebration of Mewahang marriage which is similar to the bagdatta. This is a dialogue or making promise of both marital sides to make two side's bond stronger. While speaking the baagdatt Mewahang people made dhito dharan at the same time. To be clear, we can further say that it is a promise making from the groom (kutumba) side to the bride family (maiti) to make assure that now all the responsibility of the bride goes to the groom from that day. It means from now the girl belongs to her husband (kutumba). From now all the responsibility of the girl's goes to her husband and her kutumba. In this process, both sides of matchmakers exchange the bottles of raksi according to their muddhum. This is also conducted by the elder people from both sides who have sufficient knowledge about this. Bride side asked the groom side to make sure the security of their daughter. For instance, the bride's side asks the bridegroom's side, "will you follow the path of our daughter all the way back to her parents' house in order to retrieve her? the groom's side must assure that they will do everything to prevent such a breach in order to keep the woman" (179). As soon as the matchmaker exchange gift of bottles of alcohols and meat. This process continues until not finished the proposal of maiti to the kutumba. What the maiti side make them to

promise the kutumba accept everything on this occasion. Then maiti give their daughter to the kutumba. This is the climax part of the marriage. Now she belongs to her husband clans (kul) legitimately. Dhito Dharan is like a baagdatta but it only made in arrange marriage.

Baagdatta is also kind of making promise (bachan baagdatta bolnu N).

By means of baagdatta the bridegroom is accorded certain rights with respects to the woman, such as the full legitimacy of their offsprings and partial claims upon her labor capacity; further, the condition of divorce are defined for both sides. The woman, however, remains a member of her parental clan, which continues to take responsibility for her acts, and with which she maintains close ties – for instance, by frequent visits to her *maiti*N (wife's parents house), into whose household ancestral shrine (khamang M) she would enter in case she died before the celebration of the Big Wedding. Thus the husband or his clan is not in “possession” of the wife; full rights over her are rather merely “promised” (175). Yes, until the Baagdatta the girl is still belongs to her maiti's clan. After her death to all the responsibility goes to her maiti. Only after this act she belongs to her husband's clan. Her parental family is free from their responsibility after this ritual act. Therefore, in Mewahang culture this is essential part of the marriage. In both places Sankhuwasa and Ilam Baagdatta is widely practiced.

Chori biha (abduction marriage) represent more traditional cultural value than the Maghi biha (arranged marriage). Chori biha (abduction marriage) or milijuli biha (love marriage) has quite different customs (rit) at the initial phase, indeed. But, there is an equal marriage procedure later. Abduction marriage or force marriage was popular among the Mewahang community. But now this has totally disappeared from the traditional Mewahang villages too. But according to the Mewahang Mudhum

these kinds of marriage represent the identification of traditional Mewahng marriage. During my survey of Mangtewa VDC I came to know that people do not encounter this sort of marriage since three decades. Now, instead of abduction marriage there is a wide trend of love marriage. If the young man likes the young girl but she refused to go with him in that case the boys and his friends abduct her from the market or the field. They forcefully pulled her and make her voice silent. After taken to the boy's home she is persuaded by giving clothes and jeweler if in case her family members come to search for her they make her to say she has come with the boy willingly. However, if she did not spent the night there is also the trend of make her return to the home. But if she spent the night, society looks at her as humiliation. There was also the some escaping case if the girl does not want to be here with the boy but this rarely happens by the strong determined girl. Most of the girl had to marry despite of their unwillingness.

According to Martin Gaenzle that "during his survey in Bala he found 83.6% of marriage fall under the category of chori biha N, a mere 13.1% were Magi biha, while 3.3% came about through adultery (jari biha)" (170). However during my research most of the people agree with the disappearing condition of the Chori biha. Although I have no exact data about this, maximum Mewahang people have agreed that there is no more existence of the abduction marriage. In recent period, there is a wide trend of love marriage and the arrange marriage in MangtewaVDC. In chori biha, when the first time the girl enters the house there hold the small ceremony called **ca: ri henkhuwa** (see above). This is the first ritualistic act in the Chori Biha. After the ca:ri hengkhuwa (M) and is a kind of sir uthaune (N) (raising of head) for the sake of two intriguers the matchmaker (khidi M) goes to the girl's house to inform about the abduction of their daughter and he said them that their daughter is with under the

care of boy's family. It is only then that two matchmakers (kalliya N, khidi M) are appointed to inform the girl's family of what has happened (chor ko sor N, voice of the thief). Taking gifts of rakshi and meat, they have a face to face meeting and announce that the missing daughter is well and under their care. The girl's family is naturally taken aback. They usually reject the gifts at first, but then eventually come to terms within a long, likewise highly ritualized process of negotiation (171)

The girl's family doesn't accept the gift until the girl allows them to accept it. They asked her about "abduction" and what she thinks about the bond. This ritual exchange of word is termed *raji biraji N*. the bride being asked whether she went along willingly (raji N) or unwillingly (biraji N). If she says she came willingly then further marriage procedure go ahead but if she says she is unwillingly abducted to marry in that case, her family taken her to back. However if she already spent the night in the boy's house and return to her maiti then society and other relatives criticized her as a bad way. Normally girls are already persuaded by the boy's side.

The globalization makes the world narrower and the cultural hybridity started too appeared. In fact, cultural exchange produces the hybrid identities. Although, majority of Mewahang lives in Ilam district, they are widely influence by other culture. Erasing their original identity they become the symbol of hybrid culture. Other caste like limbu, Brahmin, Chetri and other sub group of Rai are also the residence of this very place. Altogether, these different caste and ethnic groups have their separate culture to perform. The impacts of different multi-cultural groups become the main reason to the change of culture. We cannot find the abduction marriage now anywhere either in Ilam or in Sankhuwasava and other Mewahang villages. It is totally disappeared. One of the basic reason is an education. Abduction marriage is itself not appropriate for the society. That's why education changed this

trend within the time. Today the whole world is running after doing fashion. Nepali culture is widely affected by doing fashion.

Dewali puja N, must now be made in marriage parties' village to worship the god of **walemang**. This is called **gausengma** N, **tanglem** M or **dharapuja**. This is only made in abduction marriage. It is believed that walemang might be angry and cause the different diseases in the village and make the child handicapped as well. To protect the village from diseases, the village should be purify (**gau safa garnu** N), therefore, who have done the abduction marriage those party should donate the money to the village elders and it goes to the **jimmawal**(N). This is kind of punishment or the compensation for the "robbed" party.

Similarly, **Raffe** is a part of traditional Mewahang marriage conducted in both arranged and abduction marriage. But this is rarely conducted. Due to the financial problems or due to the geographical obstacles it is often made. Maiti side come to the kutumba's side and speaks the **baagdatta**. Kutumba side must arrange the temporary residence for them to stay. How much gifts of meat and alcohol the kutumba side demand the maiti side paid for it. However, now, this kind of marriage is not popular among the Mewahang communities because people don't look it as good way of marriage.

Chori biha mostly follows the small wedding first. After the **chor ko sor** there is another ritual act follow named **saino fernu** N, the ritual transformation of the kinship relation. On this occasion the near relatives of bride and the bridegroom introduce themselves with exchanging the gift of meet and beer. This is the kind of ritualistic dialogue. The near relatives of the bride and the bridegroom respect each other. From this day the both side tie up in kinship relation. This is in the small wedding. But similar ceremony takes place in the big wedding in **baagdatta** (see

above). Therefore **saino fernu** is the making of promise like in the big wedding. This is the crucial part of the chori biha because the relationship of both maiti and kutumba formally legitimate and their affinal kinship ties them only after this ritualistic practice.

Human being themselves is the “mimic creature” of the community. What they have is less practiced rather than what they see. If they live in multicultural society obviously, they become the mimic men with or without his desire. Sometimes there comes the great impact on the location of their culture. They changed their food habit, dress ups and way of life. The acts of cultural manifestations become tinged with the modern influx of foreign cultures. The local try to mold the pattern of their culture not as the pattern of their origins requires but as the tourist can understand better and give fabulous wealth. Raymond William(1981, 1983) suggests that the word ‘culture’ began as a noun of process connected to growing crops, that is, cultivation. What the people do as the way of life that becomes culture for Williams. For him what the ordinary working class people do that is culture as something ordinary.

In Mewahang culture we can see the cultural hybridization and mixed up cultural pattern. Now Mewahang are the residence of different parts of Nepal. Mewahang, originally are the residence of Sankhuwasava district. Nonetheless, this group has been widely found in the Ilam district. During my research in Ilam, I came to face that large number of Mewahang makes this place their fortune land. However, most amazing fact of these people, they are beyond the recognition of their language and their self-culture. What they do here and how they live now becomes their culture. The large number of people is following the western culture (Christianity). Precisely, they don’t know that they belong to Mewahang Rai. Tinghare and Suntale

are some of the Mewahang villages that I surveyed, where increasing number of people are ignorant about their own culture.

Thus, culture has not its one constant meaning. Within the time the cultures also change. Culture is a process. The concept of hybridity comes with the mixing of culture and emergence of the new forms of identity. Contemporary globalization has undermined the stability of tradition while increasing the range of resources available for identity construction. Thus, proliferation and diversification of particular subjects with a given, fixed identity. Consequently, in the context of the accelerated globalization of late modernity we have begun to talk about hybrid cultural identities rather than a homogeneous national or ethnic cultural identity. Indeed, the prominence given to difference in cultural theory has led many writers to think of culture, identities and identifications as always a place of borders and hybridity rather than of fixed stable entities (Bhabha, 1994). Mewahang people from Ilam have got the impact of globalization. Due to the various culture they are also mixed up, and the culture become hybrid culture. The local culture mixed up with global and becomes 'glocal' or 'hybrid' culture. They neither follow their traditional culture nor do they belong to other culture. For example, beer and the alcohol is the essential thing needed in every ritual act in Mewahang culture. Like in Hindu culture, milk is the holy thing and needed in every ritual act. In the same way Mewahang use beer and alcohol from birth to death. In Ilam people don't use it nowadays. Well, it is the positive impact of education it is rather the result of living with multicultural society and adopting their behavior. The impact of Indian culture widely catch in Nepal, definitely it is the reason for cultural change in Ilam too. Indian movie, Indian soap opera, Indian dresses, Indian food, Indian language, and indian culture which is similar to the Hindu

culture of Nepal directly affect the Nepali culture which is we can see live in Mewahang culture too.

Leitchy highlights the class construction as a global periphery in Kathmandu. According to him class affects the culture. Especially when it comes to marriage and domestic ritual practices caste remains a strongly determining, and self-orienting force. In the last two or three decades class has come to be the framing social paradigm for more and more people in Kathmandu, encompassing (though by no means eliminating) the social valance of caste. Class usefully captures the particular forms of socio-cultural experience associated with capitalist, modernity, and, as I show below, the language of class has entered into the local social consciousness and is widely used in vernacular speech (9,2010). Nepal is the caste based society. Culture is varied here according to the class. In the context of marriage class play huge roles because wedding ceremony is conduct here according to their financial status. In Mewahang community also the marriage ceremony holds according to their class status. For example, if they cannot afford the big wedding then only the small wedding ceremony performed.

Similarly, In middle class, doing fashion or using foreign commodity is more popular. Middle class people prefer to listen western music, they speak mix language both English and Nepali. The youths who are from boarding school read English newspapers and magazine watch English movie and listen english songs. But the youths who come from government based Nepali school rather prefer to watch hindi movie and listen hindi songs. What they saw and listen automatically they followed it. In Leitchy's words "doing fashion" signifies a cultural practice whereby certain people, at certain times and places, enter and embody a range of consumer objects and images identified as socially significant in the local context (51).

While, during my research in Ilam I found many Mewahang has changed their cultural pattern and the religion. The larger numbers are following the Christianity. And rest of other also is unknown about their culture. Similarly, they don't know the Mewahang language, the amazing thing of the place is even the elders are not sure about their languages. The glance of ethnic identity is in the risk of extinction. Language is significant tool to identify the ethnic culture but here in Ilam this ethnic community doesn't know their mother tongue. Marriage performance is totally different here. Here, the love marriage is widely found, many youth prefer to do love marriage because according to youth from ilam distirct this is easiest way of marriage. Almost all the Mewahang follow the Hindu culture to celebrate the marriage ceremony. Some are also follow the Mewahang culture but it is totally modified from the tradition ones.

Here, the people named their sub clan by their **kipat** land. According to them they have no knowledge about their migration. Many people said that one of the causes of the migration is the unification of Nepal in the period of Prithivi Narayan Sha. While some believed that there was a man named 'Pitagote' who came first in Ilam from Shankhuwasava. Since then many people started to migrate here. It's a long time period, so they don't know the history exactly. However, they know something about their original territory. Most of them agreed that their kpat land is different places of Sankhuwasava district. Here, they named their sub clans where their ancestors lied. For instance, people from Bala village called Balali Rai, similarly, people from Tamku village called Tamkule Rai. Another case is they know the Pacha but they don't know this **Pacha** belong to Mewahang Rai. For example, Sambewa is one of the Pacha of Mewahang Rai. They know that they are Sambewa Rai but they don't know about this belongs to Mewahang Rai. Most of they believed that

Christianity is the supreme religion. They believed by changing the religion they got the miracles change in their lives. They believed kirat religion is quite free. According to them they used more alcohol in their every ritual work so that they become alcoholic it creates the dispute among the family and to others as well, so, they leave their kirat religion and accept Christianity. However, some others believed that we should not ignore our cultural norms and values. Although the culture has been changed due to the migrations and the the globalization we should preserve our traditional cultural value.

The transformation of the local culture into global culture demonstrates the cultural modification. And this trend is not from now this trend was started from the Rana period or before then. Cultural transformation started to show in languages, dresses, foods, jwells, as well as in the way of living. Leitchy argued that the trade with foreign country basically Nepal-british trade relations and commercial policies play the vitale role to import the modernity in Nepal. Following jung bahadur's visit to Britain in 1850 "there was a significant change in the dress style of the bhardars (countries)." European civilian and military clothisng became standard attire for the male nepali nobility providing "Ranken and Co.,drapers and outfitters (with) a sizable number of neplese clientele at Calcutta" (rana 1995: 128). Similarly, women's dress also seems to have mixed western and asian style.

In addition, he further talks about Nepali magazine "teens" which is the symbol of modernity according to him.

One of my basic points is that we must see "media consumption" as just that, an act of consumption. Media products are commodities and I am suggesting that the consumption of media cannot be separated from the consumption of other commodities, either in theory or in practice.

While euphemistically known as “communications industries capitalist media enterprises have never been anything but distribution system for commercial products. Because media products are commodities they are natural allies for the promotion of other consumer goods. As commodities media products share with other goods a common interest in a kind of “consumer ethic” or “consumer logic” that attempts to blur the boundary between self and commodity (like the teens articles that equate being with consuming). (48)

He presents the media as consumer goods and the commercial products which is the sources of changing cultural process. “Teens” magazine is youth’s magazine. It mainly embodies the “youth culture”. Media always promotes foreign commodities to fascinate mainly the youths because they are more interested and easily adopted it. The process of cultural globalization begins with the local youths.

The Marriage ceremony is performed in a different way in Ilam which is similar to the Hindu culture more than the traditional Mewahang culture. Migration creates the huge gap between the tradition and hybrid culture. The first impact seems on the language. I did not find anyone there who can speak the Mewahang language. The language has been totally erased from here. Even in the ritual act **khamang**, they don’t use the Mewahang **muddhum** due to lack of language proficiency. Similarly, they don’t conduct the marriage following their **muddhum**. In Mewahang culture every ritual act conduct by their muddhum. According to the Mewahang muddhum, generally there are altogether ten **rit** (see above). Most of the **rit** does not follow by the Mewahang from here. For instance, here in Ilam people do not conduct the **ca: rihenkhuwa** (see above) which is most important ritual act in Mewahang culture. Similarly, here the people don’t dance in **dewan** by killing the pig. Here the people

said they don't know about the **dhitodharan** which is most significant part of marriage to identify their ethnic culture. They know about baagdatta but they never heard about dhito dharan which conducted after speaking the **baagdatta** according to Mewahang muddhum. In some where they do the ca: ri henkhuwa but they used the milk instead of alcohol. They don't kill the chicken but instead of it they used little amount of meat. There is a huge different in marriage procedure between Ilam and Shnkhuwasava. Some values are lost and some are changed and modified. They are the same tribe, they have the same culture, and language but migration makes them different. Multicultural society makes them different from their own tribe.

Every step of marriage ceremony carries the importance of the ethnic identity which has been destroying from here. However, some claims that they know the cultural values but in reality they cannot follow it. According to them, this is not possible to conduct traditional way of ritual act because they lived in multicultural society. In multicultural society we exchange our culture too. They assert that in the previous day of migration they follow the tradition culture but within the time and the society it has been also deleting. In addition to this, there is a little bit debate on **Mewahang** and **Newahang** . In my research I found that they are the same tribe. Only the pronunciation makes them different but they have all similar culture. Many elders think that it is not Mewahang that we are but it is Newahang. Some elder people still do not agree with that they are Mewahang. They have same languages, they have similar culture to follow but only the pronunciation 'N' and 'M' makes them puzzled. However, maximum people believed that they are Mewahang not Newahang.

In conclusion, culture never carries its single meaning because it is the process. In this technology world, the culture is easily transfer and shows its hybrid

meaning. Technology is a major source of social change. For example, media and the television are two essential things through which culture can be easily homogenized. People watched movies, read newspapers and articles and do fashion. In addition, today the world becomes so narrow due to this technology. Internet is another source which again tied up the world close. One culture is influenced by other culture so easily therefore we ethnic cultures are also becoming hybrid ones.

Each and every ethnic group has certain culture to follow which differentiate them from others ethnic group. Now, more and more people are seen to conscious about their culture, in Ilam. They want to preserve their cultural value. They are demanding for their own script to enhance the linguistic volume and to save the culture. The people from Suntale and Karfok show the hybrid culture. To save the culture means to save the identity. Therefore, we should not let to die our culture. Culture glorifying us in and beyond the country.

Works Cited

- Barker, Chris. *Making Sense of Cultural Studies*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2002. Print.
- Bhabha, Homi K. "The Third Space." *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, Ed. Jonathan Rutherford. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990. Print.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London and New York: Routledge, 1994. Print.
- Gaenzsle, Martin. *Origin and Migration Kinship Mythology and Ethnic Identity among the Mewahang Rai of East Nepal*. Kathmandu: Mandala Book Point, 2000. Print.
- Gaire, Bimal. *Magar Performance Culture: A Nexus between Global and Local*. An Unpublished Master's Thesis, Submitted to Central Department of English Kirtipur, Kathmandu. April 2011. Print.
- Liechty, Mark. *Out Here in Kathmandu: Modernity on the Global Periphery*. Kathmandu: Martin Chautari Press, 2010. Print.
- Liechty, mark. *Suitably Modern: Making Middle-Class Culture*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press. Print.
- Rai, Narendra Kumar, Ratna Bahadur Rai, Durgakiran Rai etc. *Mewahang Rai Mundhum*, Kathmandu: Mewahang Rai Yakhomma Kendriya Karya Samiti. 2064. Print.
- Schechner, Richard. *Essay on Performance Theory*, London and New York: Routledge, 2003. Print.
- Toba, Sueyosh. *Rites of Passage: An Aspect of Rai Culture*. Kathmandu: Royal Nepal Academy, 1992. Print.