

1. Modernization in the Performance of Wedding Ceremony in Rajbanshi Community

1. Wedding Conventions in Rajbanshi Culture of Jhapa

In matters of marriage the Rajbanshi are in a state of tradition. The background and illiterate section of the Rajbanshi caste still maintain practices inconsistent with the orthodox Hindu customs (Sanyal 1965). In the marriage custom of the Rajbanshis of Jhapa, there are some of the customs as found in Hindu tradition where as their own caste wise originality is being found at some places (Gautam 2005).

In this community while marrying, they marry the persons next to their blood relation. No marriage can be done between maternal uncle's children and fathers sisters children. There is rule to be followed while marrying i.e. seven generations from the side of father five generation in preceptors family and making next to the 3rd generation in the family of a formal friend relationship. They must marry each other although these rules are not completely followed by themselves. They don't marry with in their blood relationship.

There are various techniques of marriage in Rajbanshi caste. Among them arranged marriage, Danguwa marriage, Ghanjiya marriage, Damedume marriage, Chhatradanti marriage and kiya or Suki marriage are the main traditionally. From the point of view of social value the most usual and the best marriage custom is arranged marriage. Traditionally, in the wedding ceremony of Rajbanshi caste, they used to take different things from seven caste people for example: Flower from the gardener, Binu (fan) made by Dum, Basket made by Handi, curd from a Gwal (Milkman),

beaten rice from Gangai, razar of a Barbar and kahars are being used to life and carry the palquin (cart in which bride and bridegroom seated)

The following method and things are done and followed by Rajbanshi from initiation to the end of the wedding ceremony.

- i) Suva Dekha- First stage of arranged marriage in a traditional process in which the guardians of boy starts searching a girl with the help of mediator known as karuwa (match maker). The boy along with the karuwa gets warm welcome offering them beaten rice and curd, tea from the sides of girls guardians.
- ii) Pan katani- After agreement of the portents of both side suberpan takes place. Only after that other activities of the marriage takes place respectively.
- iii) Dulha Tilkhibar- The 3rd stage of arranged marriage. On the day fixed for this purpose. The father and some of relatives of girl reach the house of the boy taking some sandos (gift) for boy including some food items like sweets, milk and curd. The father or the guardians of the girl giving a present in the hands of the boy with putting chandan tika on forehead use to ask some of the questions to him in order to find out his character, manner and abilities. If they like the boy, his standard of living, character, and behaviour, the father or the guardian of the girl gives betelnut to the father of the boy as a symbol of acceptance for marriage.
- iv) Dali Khara (Daiguwa)- After Dulha Tilkhibar programme Dalikhara comes. In the marriage custom of Rajbanshi community it is not assumed as guarranted about the marriage until the Dalikhara being completed on the day fixed. The ritual is performed on the day convenient for the both sides. On the fixed day of Dalikhara the man of the both sides go to the house of girl's parents. They are welcomed and seated in the compound. The neighbours and village elders of the girl side also gather.

Already, a fixed number of persons from the side of bridegroom go to the house of the bride as guests. All the Paiches (assembly) used to assemble there. On this occasion karhuwa uses to prepare the betelnut they have some food and edible varieties. Then they sit in the courtyard and the persons from the side of bridegroom sit in front of the guests. After that, from the bridegroom, the father of the bridegroom or his guardian gives the dresses, ornaments etc of the bride as much as possible. At the same time, the relations of the bridegroom gone to the girls home also gives present to the girl if they decide the date of marriage immediately, they decide the auspicious time for the performance of the wedding ceremony on the day of Daiguwa if not Karalivars and Sandos etc customs remain to be completed.

e) Sandos:- The gift or the present of edible things, used to be given to the mother or other guardians of the bride in return to the care taken and support given by them from the side of the bridegroom is called Sandos. On the day of Daiguwa people assembled from the side of the girl talk with persons from the boy's side about feeding or not feeding Sandos. If the person of the boys side want to be feeded, they used to come to girls house one day as guest with fish, meat, sweets, milk, curd etc showing great fashion of them. In Rajbanshi community, feeding Sandos is being conceptualized as respect to the relatives.

f) Karali bhar- Karali bhar means the act of sending the message about fixed day for the auspicious moment of the house of the girl. Now-a-days this tradition is being followed on the same day of Daiguwa. There is the tradition of assuming that half of the marriage between the boy and the girl has already been completed after the end of Dalikhara in their community. If the girl dies in this gaping period between Dalikhara and the wedding ceremony, the boy should be involved in mourning. Similarly, vice versa of it is being found in case of the boy too and the girl be assumed as widow.

The girl who is involved in Dali Khara can't be married to others is the social rules of Rajbanshi traditionally.

g) Adibas- The previous day of wedding ceremony is called Adibas. This day is assumed as the first day of marriage. In the marriage of the Rajbanshi caste, after the completion of the karalibhar, Adibas, Bairati Gama and Bharabht are the mentionable days in their tradition.

On Adibas, all the gods and goddesses are worshipped in the house of the girls and boy. The elder sister of the girl uses to apply the paste made of kasa mixing some oil, on the girls body same in the case of bridegroom side also. Kasa is made with turmeric powder and kasa (marsh-growing plant) beating and mixing some oil in it. In this particular day they worship Satya Narayan and their clan gods (Kul Thakur). The worship of God is done by the Gosai Thakurs in Thakur badi together with other gods. Kirtiniya's presence is valuable on the occasion of the worship because they play music singing song on this occasion of Adibas.

At night all elders rub the mixture of kasa (a kind of ginger) adding some oil all over the body of bridegroom. There is concept that kasa is for purity of mind and body in their community.

Elder and younger brother-in-laws of the boy wearing new loincloth round their waist (dhoti) are called Maruwa Khuda to young and old, respectively. Maruwa Khuda means to dig a pit where there is planted a banana plant in the courtyard. At this time they enjoy splashing paste of kasa to others including colour, curd and water. They entertain each other at that time.

After this, Nawa or Thakur (barber) makes the hair and cuts the nails of the bridegroom. Elders rub paste of kasa to him. Aam-Mahalaune, in Rajanbashi

community, is the special tradition of worshipping the mango tree wrapping 5 times to it with crude thread. The bride also does the same in her house after the arrival of the marriage procession. At night, bridegroom exchanges dhoti.

h) Bairati- The day on which the marriage procession takes place is called Bairati. On this day, in the morning, Gosai Thakur takes the bridegroom to their family god and makes him sacred by speaking some vedic text in his ear.

After having food, the bridegroom wear kurta (a kind of long shirt) and dhoti but kurta and dhoti should be made red. After beautifying the bridegroom, he is given a knife in which there is kept a nut on its tip. It denotes winner of the game which remains in the hand of the bridegroom until the completion of the marriage.

The bridegroom is taken in plaquin (a king of chhariat carried by four men). Marriage procession goes by well decorated and beautiful bull carts, by elephants and horses with group of instrument players. They have their own kind of instrument. On the way, when they pass-through the temple, the bridegroom gets off and worships them all. In the house of both side young ladies use to sing song but there may be the reflection of striking satires on social disorders where as in some songs there may be the flow of pathos. When the procession reaches the main gate of the bride's house, a group of young girl and women stop the plaquin singing different kinds of satiric songs, where the younger sister or mother of the bride worship the feet of the bridegroom and make love and respect offering betel nut. Then brother in law of the bridegroom lifts him and carries towards the place meant to make the guests and the persons involved in the marriage procession sit. From the side of the bride, persons come to Bairati and respect them cleaning their feet then offering delicious breakfast.

At the same in time Maruwa Khuda of both side make a pavilion (Jagge) for ceremonial purpose planting four banana trees on four side. The relatives of the bride pull her towards the pavilion and make her sit. After making the bride and bridegroom sit in the Jagge (pavilion) the main materials for the marriage ceremony like betel nut, Kiya, Kori (cowry) vermillion ,dali,a small earthen lamp,kalash(a metallic vessel with narrow neck) leaves of mango, banana, rice and paddy etc are carried there.

First of all, the bridegroom and bride cover a dozen of bananas with their Veils in front of them separately. The elder of bridegroom puts Phul (crown) on their head which seems like a crown because there are different decorative ornaments sticked all around it. The barber cuts the nails of the bride and priest read while parents and gradians of the bride after as a virgin gift then the bridegroom also presents vermillion three times in the parting of the hair at the bride. After these activities the bride and bridegroom are given different present worshiping them with paddy by the relatives of the bride's side. Such tradition of presenting gifts is called chumuwa in Rajbanshi society. At the end of this programme grandmother or other relatives women make bride and bridegroom play cowry to make the environment interesting.

Next day is called Bharvat or Bidagir din (Good bye day). The bridegroom is fed rice pudding in the house of bride including 'Maruwa Khuda' which is called Khir-khilan. After this bride and bridegroom use to be seated in the same palquin.

i) Athuwari- Assuming the 1st day to Adibas the eighth day is being called 'Athuwari'. In the marriage system of Rajbanshi caste, Athuwari is also special custom. There is tradition of 'Dani' (who went bridegrooms house of the day of marriage procession returning back). Those Danises use to live together with the

bride up to the Athuwari day. Kamkaris, Tahaluwas and other near relatives often live in the place of the house where marriage-ceremony had been celebrated up to that day. Particularly, on the day of Athuwari Rajbanshis use to throw the chhat or coronet already made wear by the bride and bridegroom on the marriage night. Kasa roasted stove, the banana tree or things remained going to be wasted brought for the marriage like banana, curd, milk and food are offered to an idol etc in the river. Bride and bridegroom also go to the river with them. Both of them use to take a dip in the river together and carry a palmful of sand, if there are many pebbles seen in sand he/she will get fame according to their traditional concept.

j) Sagani Mangana - After the completion of Athuwari, some of the guerts called Mehman come to carry the bride form her maternal house. Danies who had come together with the persons involved in the marriage procession also return back with them. On the eighth day from the next to the Athuwari day, the bridegroom and some women relations of his, go to bring the bride back. In Rajbanshi community, it is called 'sagani margana'.

k) Vadar katani:- In Rajbanshi community in the month of Bhadra (August-september) of the marriage year, the bide must live in her maternal house. This tradition is called vadar katani. The relatives of the bride from her maternal home use to come and carry her at the end of the month of shrawan.

l) Shesh Bidagi- Shesh Bidagi is the last farewell form the maternal side of the bride. On that day, the dowries left to be given to the daughter and son in law form the side of father-in-laws house in the wedding ceremony are given likewise the relatives of the bride who could not come to the wedding ceremony or being present but had not given present, give at that moment. Shesh Bidagi, in Rajbanshi community, is being usually seen just after the vadar katani.

It is the common phenomenon that the world has been experiencing changes every day. The change has extremely influenced the human life as well. Since the advent of science and modern technology, it has been changed in the life style of people. However, the benefits of change occurred to the people is not same in every community and all parts of the world. Charu Chandra Sanyal in his book: *The Rajbanshi of North Bengal* views that: "Some communities have brought wonderful progress and some are lagging far behind in several aspect of life:"

Statement of Problem:

Performance of wedding ceremony in Rajbanshi community is undergoing a lot of transformations because of the influence of modernization. Traditionally, Rajbanshi wedding ceremony used to be preceded by Tilak system and they used to perform not only Phul Baha (arranged marriage) but also another secondary type of marriage like Dangawa, Ghangiya, Damedume, Chhatradanti, Kiya or Suki, Jang and Samade marriage which now has been avoided. Similarly, in wedding ceremony, the Rajbanshi community used typically cultural foods like gajimuri, tea and the ceremony used to be performed by Karan Dhari Gasain (Kul Guru) but at present food items like Pulau, Puri and Coca-cola are also heavily used and can be performed by the Bastam Gasain (Dicile of Kul Guru).

Hypothesis:

The influence of modernization in Rajbanshi culture, especially wedding ceremony, brought by the western and national influence through education, media and migration has brought transformation which has, on the one hand, carried improvements in some aspects, while on the other hand has caused the cultural diversity and identity crisis.

Literature Review:

Different writers of both indigenous scholars and foreigners have carried out various ethnographic study in Nepal. Among them very few of them were found interested to study about Rajbanshi people of eastern Terai of Nepal. Dol Bahadur Bista in his work *The People of Nepal* views that:

Some studies have focused on demographic, behavioural, socio-economic and cultural changes in Nepalese people. The major causes of change among Rajbanshi is excessive influence of different factors of modernity, religion and transition in the performative activities. (IV)

Similarly, another scholar Charu Chandra Sanyal in his book *The Rajbanshi of North Bengal and Calcutta* (1965) has expressed his views towards the origin, culture, traditional performance of the Rajbanshi people and further views:

At present the dress, customs, the religious rites and even their features have undergone revolutionary changes so much so that amongst the educated class there is hardly difference between a Brahminist Hindu and A Rajbanshi. Recently several cases of intermarriage between the caste Hindus and the Rajbanshi are making change more rapid (4)

Likewise, another scholar John Berlie talks about koch group and influence on them carried out by another culture. As he mentions "the koch group who took the name of Rajbanshi after their conversation with the people of other culture, are a complex ethnic group influenced by Indian culture." (36)

In the same way, Devendra Kishor Dhungana has expressed his views about the Rajbanshi People, their cultural performance and influence of domination, education and Modernization in Rajbanshi culture and says that:

The cultural and traditional performance especially the marriage ceremony, death rites, religion and economic activities of today's Rajbanshi had been completely influenced by transition, education, domination and modernization. (6)

There are so many secondary materials giving different interpretations about the Rajbanshi community non of them has highlighted exact issue of modernization in the performance of wedding and funeral ceremonies in Rajbanshi community which exists in this particular community if we survey pensively. My thesis seeks to plug this gap.

Methodology

The research will be a field work of this particular community and will incorporate comparative study on cultural and ritual activities from past to present as well as performance theory focusing on how modernization has affected on performative activities more in the case of wedding ceremony Rajbanshi community. The data will be collected through questionnaires, interviews, observation, group discussions, video records and interactions with people of the Rajbanshi community.

Delimitation:-

The survey is marked by following limitations.

1. The survey has based on some related text as well as research in southern part of Jhapa district.
2. Limited member of speakers from the care area and peripheral area were chosen for interview and witten questionnaires.
3. It has focused more in comparative study and less on socio-cultural performance.

4. It has mainly focused on effects of modernization in the performance of wedding ceremony.

Chapter division and time period of my research are outlined below:

Chapter I : Wedding conventions in Ranjbanshi Culture of Jhapa- Approximately one month

Chapter II : Traditional Cultural Performance and Modern Rituals-Approximately Ten days

Chapter III : Present Situation of Wedding - Approximately Ten days

Chapter IV : Conclusion - Approximately Ten days

2. Traditional and Modern Rituals

1) Traditional Rituals

The ceremony retains the very primitive form of marriage. The marriage tie is not very strict. Any time the wife may come away with out any ceremony and marry any other man.

These forms of marriage still exist among the poor classes in the far of the village. There is no especial marriage dress and ornaments are few. A new 'gamchha' (mill made cloth) and one or two silver bangles, ear rings and finger rings are enough.

The marriage is generally settled by the parents or by the elders of the family. A go-between (karuwa) who may not be a professional match-maker generally transmits the information about a suitable boy or girl. The weekly market (hat) is usually the place where people from the neighboring villages meet and gossip of all description go about.

Previously, mother of the boy or the elder women of the family use to go to the girls house to talk about the marriage where as at present father of the boy or an elderly male relative goes to the girls house. Only after this they go systematically forwarding the process like Suva Dekha, Pan Katani, Dulha Tilkhibar, Dali Khara, Sandos, Karali Bhar, Adhibas and Bairati.

a) Suva Dekha

It is first stage of arranged marriage in a traditional process when a boy crosses the age of 20/22 or became mature; the guardian starts searching a girl with the help of known as karuwa (match-maker) goes girls house to arrange the matter. The boy after then goes to the house of the girl to see her. The boy alone with karuwa

get warm welcome, offering them beaten rice and some cigarettes, tea etc from the side of girls guardians .They sit on the jute mat in the yard of the house and the girl comes with the plate containing some beaten rice, fruits with some sweets and is placed in front of the assembly .Then the girl offer Dhog (showing gesture of respect to elders) to all who are present there. She is placed in front of the party and asked some question about her name, education etc. to be noticed about the sound and good as well as proper behavioral manners .Boys father and others from the side of boy give some rupees in the hand of the girl and she again offer Dhog as before and goes back to room. If they like girl with all living standard and the manners they sent the karuwa with positive message to girls parents and guardians to inform the acceptance of this relation. The karuwa comes taking the message of weather the parents or the guardians of the girl agree with the proposal for marriage or not to the father of the boy.

In this way, the simple formality of seeing the girl or the first process is over. The karuwa is sent to girl's house that they are satisfied with girl and would be too glad to have her hand with their son.

b) Pan Katani

After agreement between the parents of the boy and the girl, the ceremony called suber pan takes place respectively. After the end of the suber pan, the person from the side of the bridegroom send message through karuwa to the bride about the date to perform 'pan katani'. On the day, the person from the side of the girl stay in the house being pre pared for this purpose .On the day fixed, there is tradition of giving 300 to 900 betels and nuts in accordance with their capacity by the person from the side of the boy when coming to the house of the girl with karuwa to the person of the girl's side. These betels and nuts are given to the person on the side of the girl for

the purpose of the functions like agna khechani (entry in yard). If the process from the girls side refuse to take these betels and nuts there is no any compulsion from the boy's side to give.

c) Dulha Tilkhibar

It is third stage of arranged marriage. In this process if the guardians of the girl agree with the engagement, they sent message through the karuwa for coming to the house of the boy to guardians of the boy to see their house and other socio-economics conditions on a particular day. The karuwa conveys information to the guardians of the boy and girl about the fixed day. Traditionally, it is also called Dulha Dekhi. They take interview of the boy about his education, lent and other house-hold matter and they send a message whether they agree to the engagement or not. If they agree, they give something to the guardians in affirmative. They give some cloths and a gold ring to boy and dhoti (Loin Cloth) to the boy's father which custom is called Dulha Tilkibar. They also fixed chumna (Bride-price) if the girl's father demands. The custom of chumna was essential and compulsory in those days, when there was scarcity of girls population but now-a days, it is not compulsory and gradually changing in another form that is, the boys party doesn't pay incase to the parents of the girl but in the form of ornaments and cloth to the girl indirect way. But in many cases the custom of chumna has been changed in to custom of Tilak (Dowry) where girl's father have to pay much money to the boy in the form of present due to the interaction with the hill people and other Terai people.

d) Dali Khara (Daiguwa)

Dalikhara is another custom in the marriage of the Rajbhanshi people unless the ritual is completed, the marriage is not considered as fixed. Some of the persons

from the side of bride groom determine the date of the Dalikhara and inform the girl's side. But some of them send the message about the day fixed for daiguwa to the girl's side after discussing themselves by the medium of karuwa. In the marriage custom, of Rajbhanshi community it is not assumed as guaranteed about the marriage until the Dalikhara being completed on the day fixed. Already a fixed number of persons from the side of bridegroom go to the house of the bride as guest. All the paiches (assembly) used to assemble there. On this occasion karuwa uses to prepare the assemble there. On this occasion karuwa uses to prepare betel nut of Dalikhara. After the preparation of betel nut they have some food and edible varieties. Then they make sit in the courtyard the persons from the side of bridegroom and they make the bride sit in front of the guests. After that from the side of bridegroom, the father of bridegroom or his guardian gives the dresses, ornaments etc to the bride as much possible. The persons, as the guest gone to the house of the girl from the side of bridegroom also give presents to the bride at the same time. Persons from both sides take and account of the dresses and ornaments given to the bride as presents in detail. The father of the bride and other guardians of her should keep these different things safely as pledge because all these things should be carried back towards the house of the bridegroom after marriage. After the completion of these formalities to be done the persons of bridegroom's side return back to the houses. If they decide the date of marriage immediately, they decide the auspicious time for the performance, of the wedding ceremony on the day of Dalikhara. If not karalibhar and sandos etc custom remain to the completed.

e) Sandos

The gift or present of edible things used to be given to the mother or guardian's of the bride in return to the care taken and support given by them from the side of the bridegroom is called sandos.

On the day of Daiguwa, people assembled from the side of girl talk with the person from the boy's side about feeding or not feeding sandos. If the persons of the boy's side want to be fed, they use to come to the girl's house. One day as guests with fish, meat, sweets, milk, curd etc. showing a great fashion to them. In Rajbanshi community, feeding sandos is being conceptualized as respect to the near relatives.

In the past time, and now a days too, after completing Dhalikhara they remain silent for long time and later on they establish the marital relation with each other .Mostly, in such a case only, they feel the need of karuwa from the boy's side for the purpose of sending the message to the girl's side about karalibhar. There is of assuming that half of the marriage between the boy and the girl has already been completed after the end of Dalikhara in their community. There is also tradition and provision of marrying after two or three years of Dalikharai. If the girl dies in this gaping period between Dalikhara and the main wedding ceremony, the boy sould be involved in mourning. Similarly, vise versa of it is being found in case of the boy too and the girl be assumed as widow "The girl who is involved in Dalikhara can't be married to others" is a social rule of Rajbanshis.

F) Adibas

Adibas takes place in the former day of wedding ceremony. On this day, the tutelary deities of the girl's house are worshipped singing hymn of god and goddesses for the betterment of the bride and bridegroom by the group of people called

kirtiniyas. Beside this, they also worship satyanarayan and the girl is allowed to make her best friend typically in Rajbhanshi is called shanhan. All the relatives and guests arrived on this day. This day is also assumed as the first day of marriage. In this community, after the completion karalibhar, Adhibas, Bairati Gaman and Bharbhat are mentionable days in their tradition.

During this day, All the activities to be performed and the environment on the side of the bridegroom are also the same. On this day, they use to worship matsya and satyanarayan and their clan gods (Kul Thakur, Satguruwa, Ramaut, Thunthunia etc). The worship of family god is done by the Goshai (person who recites vedic) in thakurbadi (the separated area of god and goddesses near the house), together with other gods making sacred the bridegroom also being done by the Goshai. On the occasion of worship there used to be the presence of kiritiniyas. At night, the grandmother of the house or the elder sister of the mother roast kasa (looks like ginger but smells different) and the married elder sisters or elder sisters in law rub the mixture of kasa and oil all around the body of the bride and vice versa of it is being found in case of the boy too.

There is a concept that paste of kasa and oil is for the purity of mind and body in their community.

On this occasion, the elder and younger brothers-in-law of the boy wearing loin cloth round their waist then use to make a pit where they plant banana tree. At the time of digging pit the elders and younger brothers-in-law especially by their elder and younger sisters-in-law splash and spatter turmeric powder, colored water, curd etc and also rubbing black-soot to them which is very interesting. After this, occasionally they entertain each other. After the preparation of making pit and planting banana tree by maruwakhuda (bridegroom's brothers –in-law) bridegroom sit in front of it, the

Nawa (barber) who cuts nails of the bridegroom as his purification. In this way, for making sacred the bridegroom's married elder sisters and the elder sisters-in-law rub kasa all over the body. If they are supposed to be in a marriage procession at distance, the next days of worshipping called Aamamahalwa (is especial tradition of worshipping mango tree wrapping 5 times to it with crude thread) be completed in the same day by the bridegroom. The bride also does the same in her house after the arrival of the marriage procession. During the night of adibas, the bridegroom exchanges loin cloth (dhoti) and betel nut as well as making the different god and goddesses witness, he establishes the relation of making close friendship called mister to a same caste boy.

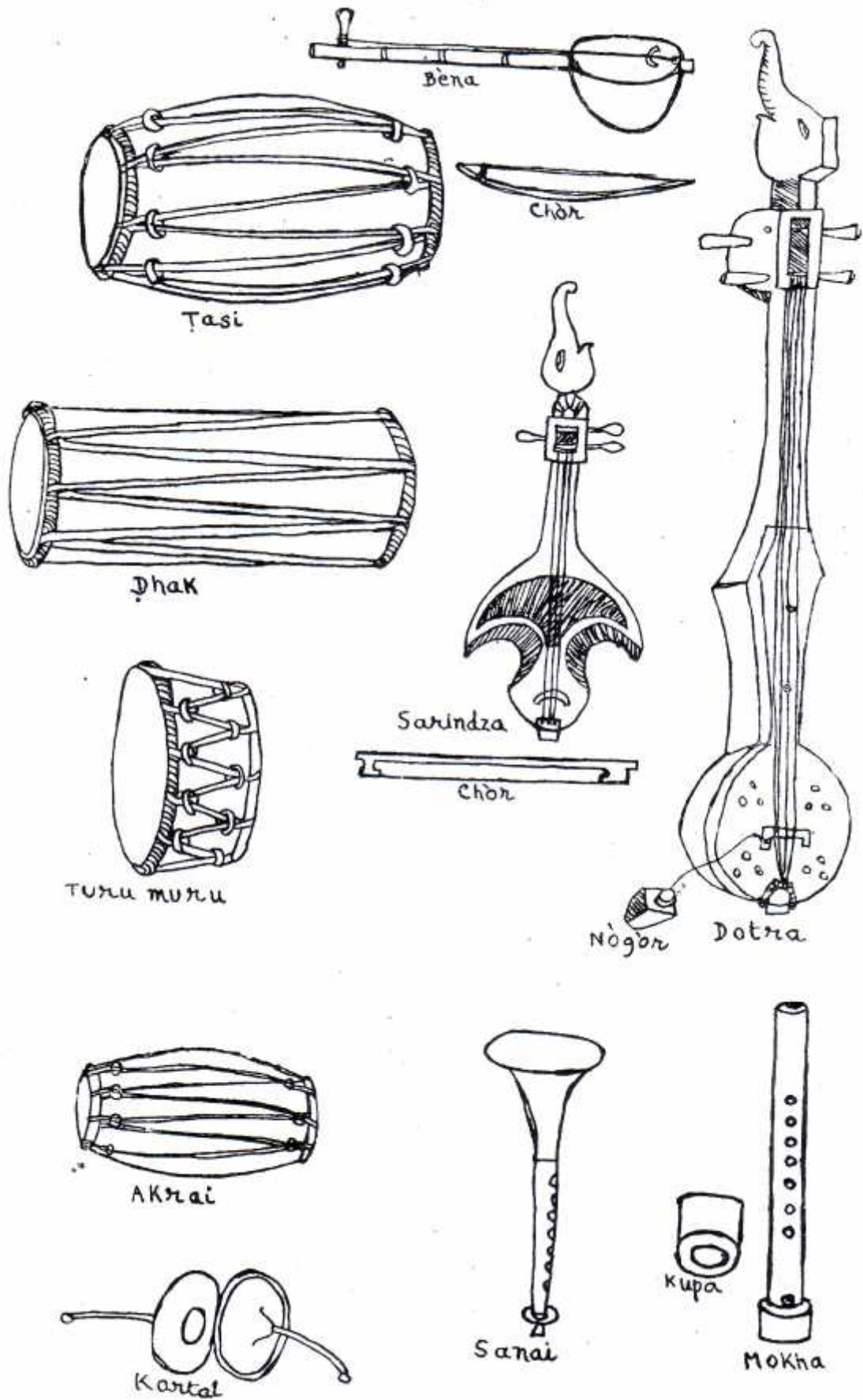
g) Bairati

The next day to adibas and the day on which the marriage procession takes places, is called the day of Bairati. Traditionally, it is also called chapahari. On this day, in the morning, Goshai takes the bridegroom to their family god and makes him sacred by speaking some Vedic text in his ear. If the work of worshipping the mango tree is left to be completed, they perform it first. Then the bridegroom is made sacred after rubbing kasa all around his body.

Just after the completion of activities mentioned above the bridegroom have food sitting together with the persons who are ready to go in the marriage procession. Because of the task of presenting vermilion on that night time, the bridegroom uses to have other varieties of food except corn salt and oil. After having food, the bridegroom is wears kurta (A kind of shirt) or vest and dhoti together with wrapping a red colored 7,9 or 16 hands lengthened turban round his head according to his choice. The kurta and dhoti should also be made red. After beautifying the bridegroom, he is given a knife in which there is kept a nut on its tip. It is called a life knife by the

Rajbhanshi's which remains in the hand of the bridegroom until the completion of the marriage is symbol of victory. After the end of the activities mentioned above persons involved in the marriage procession go to the house of the bride. The bridegroom is taken in a palquin marriage procession goes by well decorated and beautified bull and buffalo-carts together with a group pf instruments player. They have their own kind of instruments. Among them, special one are Tansi, sehnai, Thenthaini etc. Some of them and given below.

Rajbanshi's Musical Instrument



On the way, when they pass through the places of Hindu gods and goddesses the bridegroom gets off and worships them all. Towards the side of the girl all the persons who are required to clean the feet or be involved in presenting the girl to the bridegroom, have their food except corn, salt and oil. From the time to time, the friends of the girl, who is going to be the bride or other young girl's use to sing different songs in their group.

A sample of that song is as follows:

Chhata sena pusnu beti	I nurtured you daughter, from your small age.
Dudha bhata diya,	Feeding rice and milk to you.
aaji sena jachhan beti,	But from today, you are going.
Darun sogha diya.	Making us sad.
Maere chhilan aarun darun	You are so lovely of your mother
Baper chhilan bhari	but burden of your father.
Thalite limu dudha bhata	I used to take rice and milk in a dish
Jharit limu jala	and take water in a mug
Beti beti daka parimu	daughter, oh! daughter I use to be calling
Beti na mor ghare	but today, daughter isn't with us.

Rajbanshi are seen rich in their cultural aspect from the points of view of folk songs too. The use of the folk songs is found every where in the feast, festivals and different kinds of other cultural programmes which use to take place in their life. For this Dr. Rajesh Gautam in his *Rajbanshis of Nepal* mentions that: "it is found that the traditional concept of their life used to stated in most of the folk songs and tunes of them".(124)

In the folk songs of Rajbanshis the entire expression is found about love, pain, sufferings and pangs of separation. In some of folk songs there are found sacred feelings about the nature where as some of the folk songs do contain the suffering of love and the pangs of separation, that sound touches the heart of the listeners. It is also found that there use to be presence of jokes and satires regarding the social disorders and socially unaccepted behaviors in their folk songs. Some of the folk songs are use for strike peoples' mind having pathos in them. At the time of farewell of the daughter every one is in great sorrow. This very influentially to a high degree uses to be included every one in the songs being sung on the occasion of marriage ceremony by the people from the side of bride in Rajbanshi society. In the house of the bridegroom too, it is found that young girls of Rajbhanshi caste sing some of the group –songs occasionally from the night of Adibas. In both kinds of songs there may be the reflection of striking satires on social disorders where as in some songs there may be the flow of pathos. Most of the songs, being sung by Rajbanshi young ladies, especially in the wedding ceremony, which reflect insult and abuses to each other in their own way, particularly, from the side of the bridegroom's side person and vice versa. The most important part of doing so is the restriction of criticizing and abusing behaviors between the relatives to each other after being joined in marital relationship. Therefore, they use to insult abuse and criticize each other before the end of marriage by the medium of songs and civilized words as they can express. A sample of the criticizing song is given below from the side of bridegroom when bairati come back taking bride.

(etar kui mor' til til pani)²

Seithina batheche, `

sako hati go dada,yetay rati

In mid-night market of

bangles take place near by

my brick well in which water

kaina maira sako lalati	is very clean. Bride is fund
ghuri ghurie paw dechhe	of bangle so much that in
sako hati go dada, yetay rati	mid-night too she uses to go
(thuk go dada sathar bari)2	there to bye it. So bit her, bit
Parijak parijak chaikher pani go dada, yetay rati	her using rope made by jute-
Etar kui mor.....	so that, tear from her eyes
Seithina.....	will fall down.
Baniya hati go dada, yetay rati	In mid-night market of
Kaina maira gahana lalati	jewelry takes place nearby
Ghurie ghurie paw dechhe	my brick well. Frequently,
Baniya hati go dada yetay rati	she uses to go to the market
Thuk go dada.....2	of jewelry. Bit her, bit her....
Parijak	So that.....

In Rajbanshi folk songs there are not only love, sorrow, pathos and the feeling of entertainment are included but all the activities of their society are represented. The people of eastern and western hillside of Nepal while at the marriage procession, used to be devoted in Sanskrit and Nepali couplet or stanza between the people from bride's side and the person involved in the marriage from the side of the bridegroom in which they use to insult and brag about their prestige, greatness, ability and richness etc to each other. They try to justify their boastful telling in poetic language. Similarly, there is traditional concept of using songs at marriage ceremony in Rajbanshi caste. Dr. Rajesh Gautam views that: "At the time of marriage ceremony

people from the side of bridegroom sing songs insulting the people of bride's side using different hitches in their songs both in house of bride and bride-groom". (128)

All the songs used in this occasion are the folk songs based on their public tradition and custom. They have to give betel and nut to stop insulting and satirical songs to them. It adds more fun to all. When the marriage procession reaches in the village of the bride, the children of her side hinder their way just before their arrival which is called ghat tekwa (to stop the marriage procession with their palanquin stopping them to go ahead) the group of children ask for betel nut some money. Person from the side of the bridegroom use to satisfy that group of children and go ahead. When the procession reaches at the main gate of the bride's house, a group of young women stop the bridegroom singing different kinds of songs. The bridegroom also gets off there where the younger sisters of the bride worship the feet of the bridegroom and also clean them with water. Then the elder brothers-in law of the bridegroom lifts him and carries towards the place meant to make for the guests and the person involved in the marriage procession sit, when the bridegroom accompanies them to be seated, person from the side of the bride and clean the feet of the person in the marriage procession including the bridegroom. After having dinner by the guests, making the bride sit in the palanquin, they carry her towards their family clan (god) and other gods and goddesses for the purpose of worshipping together with the playing bands.

On the other side the maruwakhuda of both sides make maruwa (pavilion) for ceremonial purpose planting the banana trees on the four side of the maruwa. At first they make the bridegroom sit in that pavilion. Then the relatives of the bride being inside the house pull the bride towards the pavilion and make her sit. At that moment bride uses to weep, it is being seen as usual tradition among them. There uses to be

use of veil on the brides head. After making the bride and bridegroom sit in the pavilion, the main material for the marriage ceremony like betelnut, kiya(to play pasa) vermillion, kory (cowry),mirror, comb, a small earthen lamp, kalash (a metallic vessel with a narrow neck) leaves of mango, banana and paddy etc are carried there. Then the marriage ceremonial activities begin.

First of al, the bride and bridegroom cover a dozen of banana with their veils in front of them separately. The elder or younger brother of bridegroom's father use to make bride and bridegroom were phul (coronet) on their head. It really seems like a crown because there are different decorative ornaments stitched all around it. Such a crown uses to be big for the bride-groom and vice versa of it for the bride. After wearing the phool a barber cuts and cleans the nails of the bride and making the Terai priest read avowal the parents or the guardians of the bride offer as a virgin gift while the bridegroom also presents vermillion. There is no any sacrifice or brunt offering in the marriage of Rajbanshis. Only at the time of offering different gifts, particular lines of avowal are pronounced by the Terai priest. While presenting the vermillion as gift by bridegroom to the bride, the bridegroom stands in front of the bride and picks up khuchi (a small stick-stand of cane) which is full of vermillion and puts it on the parting of the hair of the bride. He doesn't touch the vermillion with his hands. After this, both are given different presents worshipping them with paddy and water drop with the help of mango leaves from the vessel by the relatives of the bride's side. Such a tradition is called chumuwa in Rajbanshi society. On this occasion the grandmother or younger sister-in-law feed betel and they also make the environment interesting, making the new couple play cowry.

While performing different activities mentioned above there use to be in the rise of morning. In such a way a marriage comes to end. This day is being called the

day of Bharbhat (feast of love) on the side of bridegroom and 'good bye day' on the side of bride.

On this morning, the bridegroom is feed rice pudding in the house of the bride including maruwakhuda. They use to say 'khir-khilan' to it. At the time of khirkhilan, the bridegroom doesn't touch the rice pudding served for him immediately. He demands his favorite thing or object and he doesn't have the rice pudding until his demand becomes fulfilled from the side of father-in-law's side. On this occasion, the sisters-in-law of the bride including grandmother and elder sister entertain rubbing the kasa and flowing the colors to the maruwakhuda of the side of bridegroom while eating the rice pudding. After feeding all the persons involved in the marriage procession the bride is sent with them. Both the bride and bridegroom use to be seated in the same palanquin. Both of them must have to worship gods temple found on the way to the bridegroom's house while returning back from the house of bride's father.

Bharbhat

On this day, in the house of the bridegroom, persons for chumuwa (presenters and blissers) come continuously from early in the morning. All the guests come use to be seated, cleaning their feet with water in the respectful manner. There is a tradition of feeding the persons who involve there. In the house where feast feeding takes place many guests use to be seated and feeded together. Kamkaris (food distributor women)use to put dal (pulse),rice, curry, pickle as well as meat on those banana leaves(use as plate). They do not chat while having their food which has becomes their tradition. After the completion of having their food, the same person who had greeted earlier to start, comes over there and greets them again for furnishing that feast. After having the food, the guests are respected by offering out nut, cigarettes etc.

Providing warm hospitality in Rajbanshi community is a great formality. On the day of bharbhat, the act of having food takes place all the day. On the other side, when the marriage procession use to return to their house they stopped at the main gate of the house after arrival. At the same time, being stopped over there, bands use to be played. In the palanquin (cart to carry bride and bridegroom) the bride and bridegroom use to sit. The mother and sisters of the bridegroom come over there with metallic vessel with a narrow neck for chalni-bati (winnowing fan in which paddy, oil lamp, comb and betel nut are kept in. The younger sister of the bridegroom cleans the feet of the bride and bridegroom with water putting the chalni-bati in front of them. The mother of bridegroom uses to chumuwa them at that time as her blessing. After a moments rest the bride and the bridegroom use to be seated in the courtyard where maruwa had been buried, heading towards east. All the guests come over there and give there presents and blessing while sprinkling water with paddy and leaf of mango.

At the end of the bharbhat, there is tradition of feeding the painch (the gentleman of the village) tahaluwas (young boys who help in the wedding) and all the neighbors of the village. The bride deals out little lal-bhat (rice putting turmeric). Likewise the bridegroom deals out the curd. Only after that other varieties of the food are dealt out. There is also the tradition of avoiding leftouts (remainings) of the food by bridegroom at the end. In the evening of bharbhat, all the gosain, kirtinias, barbers and band players depart to their house.

Basya Baha

On the day next to bharbhat, there is tradition of making bride and bridegroom seated in the courtyard and rubbing oil on their head as well as rubbing the kasa on their bodies. Just after this, the bridegroom by his elder brother-in-law and bride by elder sister-in-law of the bridegroom are carried for having bath which is called basya

snan. Then both the bride and bridegroom are made to sit in the courtyard again and activities already done on the night of marriage day in the house of bride like making the cowry dice played as well as the game named kiya opening and closing are repeated. Because of being the act of repeating the already performed activities in the house of the bridegroom, it has been called Basya Baha.

Aathuwari

Assuming the first day to adibas the eight day is being called athuwari. In the marriage system of Rajbanshi caste, aathuwari is also called a special custom. There is a tradition of accompanying the bride by her four or five women relatives and children while returning back. They are called 'dani' and lokante in Nepali. Those danies use to live together with bride up to aathuwari day. Kamkaries, tahaluwas and other near relatives often live in the place of the house where marriage ceremony had been celebrated up to that day. Particularly, on the day of aathuwari, Rajbanshi's use to throw the chhat (cornet) already made by mali (maker) for bride and bridegroom to wear on the marriage night. Kasa roasted stove, the banana tree or buried maruwa, things remained and going to be wasted brought for marriage like bananas, curd, milk and food are offered to an idol etc in the river. The bride and bridegroom too go to the river with them. Both of them use to take a dip in the river together and carry a palmful of sand in the hand. If there are many pebbles seen in one's hand, he/she will get fame and if there is more sand than pebbles he/she will not get fame according to their traditional concept. They keep the sand in their palm and bring it their house and have a bathe. Soap is not allowed to be used while having bathe. After the completion of having bath and washing the cloths being sacred at the bank of the river, they use to worship simply and return back to their house having some beaten rice, curd and the food offered to the idol.

Sagani Magana

After the completion of aathuwari, some of the guest called mehman come to carry the bride from her maternal house and they carry her including danies who had come with bride on the day of marriage. On the eight day from the next to aathuwari day, the bridegroom and some women relatives of his, go to bring the bride back. In Rajbanshi Community, it is called sagani Magana.

Bhadar Katani

In Rajbanshi Community, in the month of bhadra (August-September) of the marriage year, the bride must live in her maternal house. This tradition is called Bhardar Katani. The relatives of the bride from her maternal home use to come bring her at the end of the month of shrawan.

Shesh Bidagi

After completion of shesh bidagi, the process of marriage in Rajbanshi community comes to end. Shesh bidagi is the last farewell from the maternal side of the bride. On the day, the dowries left to be given to the daughter and son-in-law wedding ceremony are given. Likewise, the relatives of the bride who couldn't come to the wedding ceremony or being present but hadn't given present moment. Shesh bidagi, in Rajjbanshi community is being mostly seen just offer the bhadar katani. Where as some people the do it also after two-three months.

In this way, arrange marriage of the Rajbanshis end undergoing various stages followed by exchanging different goods between the bride and bridegroom side. This help to strengthen their social relationship. But due to the high expenses, it has created a problem for them to continue their cultural practices.

Even though there are other various marriage system found in Rajbanshi community, arrange marriage system is highly practiced, accepted, common and popular.

Other various kind of marriage

There are also other miscellaneous customs of marriage in Rajbanshi Community. They are: Damedume, Ghanjiya, Danguwa, Chhatradati, Kiya or Suki, and jang marriage. Some of them are described below:

Damedume: (living together without formal marriage)

This is another type of marriage system prevailing in the Rajbanshi society. It is not common and found in present situation. This type of marriage is for those who are financially weak. The boy takes the girl to his home and they are considered as married, though they are not ritually married. The couple can get ritually married when they are economically sound. This is considered absolutely practical and socially normal procedure.

Jang Baha (marriage with own thigh)

In Rajbanshi Community, marriage is very important. The child born before marriage is not socially regarded as the child of married couple. So, before the marriage of son and daughter they should marry in the presence of society. But in the case of death of one, difficulties appears. In this condition, girl should marry with kiya and suki and boy should marry with jang(thigh). So, this kind of marriage is marriage with his own thigh. This marriage is performed in the case of danguwa too, so that, danguwa can marries his son and daughter born by widow

Samade Baha (widow marriage)

This type of marriage is little bit like Danguwa marriage because in this type of marriage too, widow is getting married again. The difference between Danguwa and Samade marriage is only in the context of taking widow in the house of man who marries with widow. Where as, in Danguwa marriage man himself settled in the house of widow.

Ghangiya marriage (House in-law keeping)

Such type of marriage is occurred due to some reasons. The first one is, when a boy can't afford the bride price, the parents of the girl keep the boy in their own house for their daughter and make him work as a helper for some period. If the parents of the girl like the boy. They perform regular forms of marriage and they become husband and wife. Such type type bridegroom is called Ghangiya and the bridegroom lives in the house of father-in-law. In terms of residential pattern, it is a matriarchal residence. From this matriarchal type of accepted marriage, it is clearly visible that, this society is not completely patriarchal but merged form of both patriarchal and matriarchal.

Danguwa marriage (widow marriage)

In this type of marriage, a widow adopts a man as her husband and he lives with the widow in her house. There is no need of any rites and rituals on such marriage. It is an accepted form of marriage by the society and it is neither criticized nor encouraged.

Widow re-marriage is allowed in Rajbanshi society. When a man wants to get married with widiw there is no necessary of any special ceremony, but there should be anegotiation with her guardian or parents and date is fixed. The man goes to her house

with some of his friends and they are fed there respectively. Then his friends are return back to their home leaving Danguwa there in the widow's house. They both are allowed to live as husband and wife per married couple. Such form of marriage is also called . Siman bibah. From this we can say that, Rajbanshis are both matriarchal as well as patriarchal.

Modern Rituals

From the above discussion of different forms of marriage practiced by Rajbanshis, we found that the Rajbanshi people generally prefer arranged marriage system. But however, due to their changing social-cultural as well as economic condition, they are bound to bring changes associated with expenditure for the marriage ceremony. Previously, they used to invite all the villagers and other people to attend the marriage ceremony. A significant change can also be observed in their wedding party. These days, the size of the party is relatively small and items for lunch and dinner are ordinary. Besides this, these people have left so many rituals and process followed in their wedding ceremony. H.S. Paudel in his *Theory for beginners* has written that 'modernism is the name given to the movement which dominated the arts and culture of the first half of the twentieth century' (101).

Though some of the Rajbanshis' marriage system is found to be existing in traditional form, still some significant changes are occurring side by side due to the change of time, acculturation, economic and influence of enlightenment, as they think previous culture and rituals are conservatives. Lyotard in his *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge* From every direction they are being urged to put an end to experimentation

The society called enlightenment 'project' is the fostering of this belief that a break with tradition, blind habit and slavish obedience to religious precepts and prohibition, coupled with the application of reason and logic by the disinterested individual can bring about a solution to the problems. Habermas mentions that:

I have read a thinker of repute who defends modernity against those he calls the neo-conservatives. Under the banner of post modernism, the

latter would like, he believes, to get rid of the uncompleted project of modernism, that of the enlightenment. (Brooker, Modernism/Post Modernism)

We can't compare present in isolation of past. Because present is related to past. No culture no civilization has complete meaning unless we link it with past. Importance and value of any culture and civilization can't be judged in isolation. So, there must be tradition to compare one with another. Pro. Sanjiv Upreti in Kantipur Daily views that:

In one hand, we are living in mixed civilization and subject matter of eastern and western and in another hand, there is pre-modern and post-modern civilization, subject matter and world vision in contemporary Nepali modernization. (June 14, 2008)

There is deep influence of modernization and acculturation in every caste. These are not totally untouched by pre-modern civilization but some of these are mix-up and some of these are new either in culture or in arts. In all the arts and culture touched by modernism what had been the most fundamental elements of practice were challenged and rejected. Thus, performative rules and regulations are put aside in marriage perspective and some of performative representations were abandoned. Traditional forms were rejected in favour of plain and simple forms. In marriage system, finally, there was rejection of traditional realism in support of experimental forms of various kinds. Devendra Kisor Dungana in his article *Rajbanshi Jatiko Jivan Ra Baibahik Parampara* : has expressed his views towards the origin, culture and traditional performance of Rajbanshi people and further views:

The culture and tradition especially the marriage ceremony, religion and economic activities of today's Rajbanshis' have been completely influenced by education domination and modernization. (54)

It is due to the domination of other castes mainly especially hilly people. Before, Rajbanshis' were land lords of the said V.D.C. but as soon as they were dominated, the rajbanshi people had to lead a very hard life. Their way of life is changing slowly with the changes in their socio- cultural life. Thus, stability and change can be judged side by side today in the marriage as well as in other ritual processes followed by Rajbanshis.

3. Present Situation

The traditional social organization of Rajbanshis particularly marriage, family, kinship, religion, economy etc are gradually changing in accordance with the time, place and situation. However, still the Rajbanshi people have presented some of their traditional custom and at the same time adopted parts of the western too. Influence of the high caste; education and modernization as well as shifting to other modern activities like trade, services in different organization and other modern activities are the main process of social change observed in the Rajbanshi society.

In the context of marriage, present situation is little bit flexible than traditional rituals. Because traditionally, marriage procession used to take long time to complete. They should perform various forms in the marriage procession for example, suva dekha, pan katani, dulha tilkhibar, dalikhara, bairati, adibas, kasakuta, bharbhat, bidagi, basya beha, aathuwari, Sagani magana, balahat, bhadar katani and sesh bidagi. And each one used to take gapping fifteen days so that, they could know about girl and her family properly and vice versa to the side of bridegroom. Where as, some of these procession are can be finished in one day in present situation. For example; Suva dekha, pan katani, dali khara can be done in one day. Similarly, bairati, adibas, kasakuta, bharbhat and bidagi can be completed with in one day. And there is no necessary to perform basya baha, sagani magana, balahat, bhadar katani and sesh bidagi now a days.

Other various kinds of marriage like ghanjiya, danguwa, damedume, samade, kiya or suki and jang or chhatradanti marriage procession are completely avoided in present situation adding another new form of marriage called mankhushi beha (love marriage). This form of marriage system prevailing in the Rajbanshi society. It isn't a common and not found before but only at present, the young girl and a boy are

practicing love marriage. Such type of marriage takes place when the girl and the boy like each- other. It is mostly found among the Rajbanshi who can't afford formal marriage. A feast to the community is offered in this type of marriage. This type of marriage is not considered as a good one, although it is accepted by the society and children can afford inherit their father's property.

Traditional aspects of Vedic, hymns to worship God and Goddesses are carrying nowadays too. To make god and goddesses they used to sing hymn while worshipping. They used to offer many things like nut, betel, banana, coconut, rice pudding and milk on a small piece of banana leaf separately. Especially, in the day of odibas, they worship gods and goddesses like Ganesh, Krishna, Ram, Bishnu, Shiva, Bisahari(Naga) singing different songs related to them. When they start udobas they start to worship singing hymn related to Lord Krishna like;

Nava nava nagari go ray,	In the new city, we are cleaning the house of
Shree chaitaner ghare muchhan kari jachhe	Cheitan Guru playing khamakkhajari and
Yeka rari haldi go ray,	temki(a kind of musical instrument).
Khamak khajari, temkire tale	By listening this music, cheitan Guru wakes
Shree.....	up spreading holy water from the
Aahar antare chheitan jage,	vessel to all parts of the body of goddesses
Kalasi kalasi jal chhite Rhadere ange	Radha, in this new city.
Daine Daine Koushila mata kare udobas,I	The great mother Kousila is celebrating -
Shree Ramere kapale dechhe chandanere phata.-Udobas	Putting tika on the forehead of
Aaha marire Kaikai mata tumar kare udobasi,	Rama.The great Kousila celebrating
Janakire kapale dechhe sindurer phata.	Udobas. The great queen Sumitra

Aaha Sumitra rani tumar kare udobasi, celebrating udobas, putting tika on the
 Laikhanere Kapale dechhe tilakere phata. Forehead of Laxman.The great queen,
 Aaha Daine daine tumar kare udobasi. Celebrating your udobas.

Then the guardian of the family worship God Krishna and Radha. They make a group of people (called kirtiniya in Rajbanshi) to sing hymn related to them. One of them is given below;

Aashi ghanta bajan baje, pravure We are playing musical instrument since 80
 mandire majhe. Aaiso aaiso maha hours in front of you. Come come and be
 pravu, baisesa ratha sinhasane. Radikare seated on this marvelous chair. Come
 hasta dariye pravure mandire majhe. handling Radhika with you. It will be
 Dekhiye pravuk aanandite man amar. pleasure for us, looking you satisfaction.
 Aanare ganga jalare bhai, suddha kari bhumisthale. Bring oh! Brothers bring holly water
 Aanare kuser kheri suddha kari gawn. from Ganga river and purify this land with
 holy straw, sanitize this village.

During marriage procession, there is also the tradition of calling another group of singer called Gain in Rajbanshi. They sing seven days during marriage ceremony and their songs are nothing other than hymn because most of the songs are related to different God and Goddesses. In present situation, Gain are not called compulsorily but if they wish for this they call them from remote area because they are not found easily now a days. Some Examples are given below;

Guru guru bandhu aami debikare nandan I am the guru, son of Debika
 Chorus..... chorus.....

Bhagyabati Jasoda(Yasoda) milal narayan	fortunate Jasuda made us to meet
Pahilkar guru bandhu aanad gurur paw	you. I am feet of the guru who taught
dekha gurur bandu aami sikha gurur paw	me and friend of the guru whom I
gurur nam laite nilage karipati	met. Free of cost, we pray him.
sarbane sunile nam dehar mukati	physically, we become holy after
purube badhiya lainu Dharma Nirajan	listening Vedic. I pray east to
tahar ssaina bandhu Bhanu basangar(sun)	Dharma Nirajan, whose foremost is
utare bandhiya lainu Baraji Chhatar.	sun. I pray north to Barah, whose
Tahar saina bandhu Kalimai charan.	major is Goddesses Kali. I call upon
Dekhine bandhiya lainuGangaji sagar.	south to Ganga river whose chief is
Tahar saina bandhu mach magar.	fish called magar. Then I pray God
Gawar maidhe bandhu aami gawar Gram	gram of village. Similarly, to all
Seba maidhe bandhu aami chhatabarar paw	youngers and elders. Oh! mother it
Yetek bandhana mago bandhalani jay	is difficult to pray one by one. So
Bramha, Bishnu, Mahesh bandhechu	I pray three brothers Bramha,
yekethay.	Bisnu, Mahesh together.

Nepal is multi ethnic, multi racial, multi linguistic as well as multi cultural country. Each and every ethnic group has its' own culture, economic, social and religious beliefs and their culture has significant role in the national culture and nation building activities. Rajbanshi has unique culture of their own. It will be incomplete in explaining the Nepali culture if Rajbanshi culture is neglected. But at present, those culture and traditions of Rajbanshi people is found to have been disappearing due to

dominance of high caste people. Though the Rajbanshis may have been the earliest settlers, as present they are treated as alien and the whole traditional way of life of Rajbanshis is changing day-by-day. Taking this fact into consideration, this study attempts to document ethnography of the Rajbanshi in order to provide more information, particularly, about major social institutions such as marriage, dress patterns and food habits. Beside this, the study tries to focus the change as a result of excessive acculturation. As change the law of nature, what is today may not be tomorrow. Of course it is very difficult to define the modernization any society but however, this study tries to prove the effect of modernization in the performance of cultural procession particularly in marriage ceremony. Malinowski in one of his work views that:

“Cultural change is a process by which existing order to society is transformed from one type to another. Cultural change thus covers the more or less rapid process of modernization in the political construction of a society in its domestic institution and its mode of territorial settlement, in its belief and tools and the consumption of goods on which its’, socio-economic is based. In the widest sense of the term, cultural change is predominant factor of human civilization, it goes on every where and all time”. (Malinowski, 1980).

Traditionally, there is another ritual of making casual friend during marriage either in the context of bride or in the context of bridegroom. On the day of udobas, bride and bridegroom should make casual friend. It is said that they become purified after the sprinkle of the water brought by causal friend from the river in the vessel. But in present circumstances, it is given less importance to make casual friend.

There are varieties in the performance of making casual friend in different caste. Tamangs make casual friend putting rice, paddy, vessel, wine in the plate and exchanging it to each other. They called it 'Rosya'. Like wise, Gurungs make casual friend calling their relatives and priest to bless them and to offer tika in their forehead. Similarly, Dimals make exchanging money and wine to each other.

In Rajbanshi community, there is tradition of making casual friend in the request of guardians. If two families agree with this relation of casual friend-ship between their sons and daughter they use to call each other as their causal friend but they wait to act upon formally up to marriage of one of them. To perform it there must be mediator.

To perform formally, mediator goes to invite to the friend. In the day of udobas, they make particular place in the courtyard for the procession of making causal friend. Both would be friend stand on wooden mat against each other. They exchange plate to each other in which betel, nut, paddy, money, oil lamp, vessel and cloths are kept. To express pleasure, others splash colorful water to them and themselves too. There is tradition of asking funny question by elders especially by grandfather and grand mother. Some questions are given below;

Q. Why are you standing here?

A. To be friend.

Q. For son days or for whole life?

A. For whole life.

Q. If one of you have to lend money from you, do you take heavy interest?

A. No, never. We help one another when we need

In this way, exchanging some gifts in the plate and embracing to each other they become casual friend. There should be respect in this relation not only between friends but also in the family members. Other wise it would be so called relation.

Process of selecting casual friend:

As other community, in Rajbanshi community too there is tradition of exchange casual friend between same sex and same age. After investigation, it is come to know that there are no criteria of age but it should be out be out of blood relation or relatives.

In some caste, there is tradition of making causal friend within caste. But in Rajbanshi community; there is no boundary of caste rather they choose causal friend from remote areas. It is said that, it will be more respective if causal friend is from remote area. When they meet another bride and bridegroom while returning back on the way to home they should be causal friend ritually.

Obligations and Responsibility

There is especial rite and rituals in this relation. So, there is obligation of not to sleep in same bed and to make fun to each other. When one needs help another should help him, so that there relation could be closer. Just as, there is coldness between brothers in the matter of forefather's wealth. So as, to make evergreen relationship between them it is said that, it is better to be far from the financial matter between causal friends.

Causal friend plays vital role in the occasion of marriage. It is said that, causal friend (bridegroom) and his bride become purest after spreading water drops brought by causal friends from river or well in the vessel (Sanyal-1967). This water is taken as a holy water from Ganga River. So, this relationship is taken as a holy relation.

It is obliged that, there should not be marriage relationship within third generation with the causal friend's family. They should call each other respectively, not by name. They are obliged to see each other wife's face but if one of them dies unfortunately, there is first priority to marry again his friend's wife traditionally.

Marriage Limitation

Marriage is not allowed between own brothers and sisters and cross-cousin marriage is never allowed by the society. Marriage between the sons and daughters of regularly married parents or step sons(dhakar beta) with daughters of mother, father, brother, sister, mother's brother, father's brother doesn't take place. Marrying a grand-father or a grand-mother isn't allowed. Younger brother's wife or widow(bhausani) can never be married to the elder brother. Marriage between sons and daughters of aag-kal(children of regular(phul baha) marriage) and pach-kal(children given birth by widow) can't be taken place. So, between aag-kal and dhakars sons(when a widow remarries the children by the former husband are become dhakar sons and daughters of new husband). Marriage restrictions and procession are already been described. Formally marriage was allowed between a Rajbanshi and Mech, Garo, Dhimal, but such marriages are now few and far between; in fact a Rajbanshi was liable to be out-cast if such marriage happened. Marriage with cast-Hindus are taking place. The sister of the mister(nearest friend) can't be married.

Traditional Prohibition:

A Hindu woman is not barred by custom from mentioning the name of her husband's superior relatives such as his father and elder brother. A male as a male doesn't mention the name of the wife of his younger brother (bhausani).

One should not speak to the sister's daughter-in-law (bhaginbahu) eat any food cooked by her She should draw a veil(ghonger) over the face in his presence. He should not touch her even death body neither they should sit on the same bed or desk. If perchance he touches her or if the elder brother touches his younger brother's wife, both will not take food for the whole day as atonement and will have a 'seva' performed in the evening near the Tulsi plant and then they are allowed to take food. But in the present context these prohibition are not followed as rigid as in past because of the influence of different factors especially of modernization.

Divorce in Rajbanshi Community in the Past

Amongst the Rajbanshis divorce is a simple affair because there is no question of maintains allowance after divorce; in a cultivators' family a women is also an earning member and economically independent.

Except arrange marriage other varieties of marriage and divorce both were very easy. The society used to go on smoothly and is not over burdened with complications as in the caste-Hindu or in some other modern societies. Amongst the educated Rajbanshi's divorce is rarely occurrence where as now in Rajbanshi community too there must be reasons to take divorce to each other and have to follow the formal rules and regulations as in other casts.

Chumna System in the Past

The Rajbanshi marriage was quite interesting in the past than in present situation. The groom should pay some amount to the bride family for marriage, the amount is called Chumna in Rajbanshi. The amount varies according to the family status and the nature and the beauty of the bride. Any one who fails to deposit 'Chumna' should stay and work at the bride's residence until the amount is paid off.

But in present situation this system has undergone revolutionary change so much so that amongst the educated class there is hardly any difference between a Brahministic Hindu and a Rajbanshi. They are in the situation of mixed culture. So Chumna system has gone up side down because instead of chumna from the side of groom, Dowry (either money or as a heavy gift from the side of bride) system is increasing day by day.

4. CONCLUSION

I have incorporated the major findings of the research in the conclusion.

Main findings:

The main aim of this thesis is to find effect of modernization in the performance of marriage in Rajbanshi community and to distinguish between traditional and modern rituals and present situation. Major findings are given below:

A) Traditional Aspects of Culture

The Rajbanshis have their unique rite and rituals and household composition. They have their own festivals, food habit and life style. It makes them distinct from other ethnic groups. The recorded text on folk song proves this very fact. It was also supported by the opinion expressed by the respondents of this survey.

B) Dress, Ornaments and Food Habit

The Rajbanshi people dress up in a very simple way. The Rajbanshi men generally wear Kamij (full shirt) and Dhoti (loin cloth). At present, they have started wearing modern dresses like shirt, pant, coat and other desirable dresses. Likewise, the women also have started wearing sari and young girls wear kurta and other modern dresses. Likewise, the women also have started wearing sari and young girls were kurta and other modern dresses. Actually, the traditional dress of women is called petani, a cloth of two three meter long tie around the chest which hangs down to the knees and they do not usually use any other cloth to cover the body. These are the traditional dress of Rajbanshi people and are suitable to their physical features and geographical environment. As the Rajbanshi people live in the comparatively warmer place, their traditional dressing pattern helps them adopt with the environment exposing most part of the body to maintain body temperature (Regmi, 1991:53). Since

their contact with outer world, through education and social contact, their traditional patterns of dressing are gradually disappearing. Generally, young Rajbanshi people prefer to wear modern dresses such as pant, shirts and coat according to their economic status and interest. Like wise, Rajbanshi women also started wearing sari, blouse and choubandivholo as a result of interacting with hill people. In addition to this, young and educated Rajbanshi prefers to wear modern dresses like salwar kurta, skirt, shirts and pants etc.

Likewise, change also has come to some extent in the ornaments.

Traditionally, the Rajbanshi people don't use ornaments so much. If they used that were made up of silver which are usually thick and heavy. Now-a-days gold ornaments are being used by some well to do family, but the poor people use silver ornaments which are smaller and thinner in size. These people are not so much fond of ornaments but due to the influence by other ethnic groups of the vicinity they began to adopt their tradition gradually. The Rajbanshi women are very simple. On the occasion of feast, festivals and ceremonies they use ornaments and do simple make-up like the other women. Previously, the married Rajbanshi women were a wide ornamented, silver banal 'mata-kharu' and 'Shankha- kharu', a conch shell bangles, were on the left hand. Such bangles are broken off if the husband died unfortunately. But today the Rajbanshi women of the study area wear small conch- shell bangals as a sign of married and only few of them put sindur (vermilion). Even today most of the Rajbanshi men and women were found oanting their arms and neck with various design as a symbol of beauty and good luck.

As paddy as the main cereal crop of Terai area, rice is the staple food for the Rajbanshi. Dal, Bhat and curry are the daily diet of the Rajbanshi people what ever may be economic condition. They use salt, chilly and other kinds species in preparing

their foods. In the morning they usually take puffed rice(muri) or patabhat (cooked rice soaked in water one night) and kharkhara (fried rice). As soon as they come back from the morning work they take jalkhai (breakfast), at noon they take freshly cooked rice and at night take freshly food cooked at night. Previously Rajbanshi people didn't serve the food to the guests with out fish and meat. But at present due to their low economic condition such system has found to be changed. Before, they believed that selling of varieties of vegetables at the market. Previously, they never drink wine and chicken, if they happened to touch, they had to take bathe before entering the house. But the Rajbanshi of today have started drinking wine and eating chicken. Such habit of drinking wine eating chicken is found among the educated and high leveled people. Besides this, their favorite dish is curry, chheka sag, which is prepared from the green leaves and shoots of jute. In some cases a few dried fishes are added. This curry is enjoyed by almost all the rajbanshi people which forms an item of their daily diet.

C) Dances and Songs:

Dance and songs are most important part of Rajbanshi's socio-cultural life. The different varieties of songs and dances of Rajbanshi people are not only their religious and recreational aspect but these activities also indicates their ancient modes of life. Rajbanshi people are very much found of songs and dances during their leisure time. Such songs and dances have passed on from one generation to another. Usually women don't take part in songs and dances and the role of girls in dancing is fulfilled by the boys becoming a false lady. Most of their dances and songs are based on their traditional custom.

The dances of Rajbanshi people are not only the source of recreation and entertainment but also represent the religious life of the communities. The dances of Rajbanshi can be classified into two parts:

First dance, they reflect their socio-cultural life and the second dance, that high lights the traditional customs. Socio-cultural dances include sastriya and religious dances are based on Ramayan and Mahabharat. On Ramayan, they show the scene of Ram-Sita marriage, fight between ram and Ravan, Sita kidnapped by Ravan etc. They also perform the play (Krishna lila) of Mahabharata and true speaker king Harischandra. Dances and materials needed in the programme are arranged by the local people.

The song of Rajbanshi peple unlike the dances shows the religious as well as social life of people. They usually sing folk song. Their song represent their traditional way of life and unhappiness. Likewise, a young girl sings a symbolic song representing her love. They also sing sons of natural love and affection between Dewar(Husband's younger brother) and bhauji(wife of elder brother) and sister-in-law(Sali) and brother-in-law.

According to the informants, the dance and songs of Rajbanshi society are changing day-by-day due to the change of socio-cultural way of life. As each and every socio-cultural aspect of human society is dynamic in nature hence, the so-called Rajbanshi socio-cultural aspect is also not static; it is found changing slowly and silently. Due to the low economic condition, usually they seldom arrange religious dancing programme as it is very expensive to arrange a dance programme. Also due to their contact with other Hindus and nearby ethnic groups, they are not so rigid in their social norms and values. Therefore, due to low economic condition as well as their contact with other ethnic group, they are not in favor of spending much in dancing programme. Before girls were not allowed to dance instead boys used to become a false lady and preformed dance based on their traditional custom but now-a-days even the girls are freely taking part in dancing programme. At present, though

they arrange a dancing programme by introducing new instrument. They also started performing modern dance and songs in their community. Previously, they were found of arranging dance and song programme during each and every feast and festivals but at present, they don't arrange such programme frequently due to the change on social-economic life. By this observation, The Rajbanshis original culture and tradition are gradually changing day-by-day and if such condition prevailed for at least 7/8 years then it will be very difficult to find their traditional culture, norms and values.

C) Kin Group:

The term kinship system is part of social structure. It includes definite social groups of which the most important is the family. According to Winick (1992:154), "kinship system may include socially recognized relationship based on supposed as well as actual genealogical ties". In defining kinship, Majumdar had said,

In all societies, people are bound together in groups by various kinds of bonds. The most universal and the most basic of these bonds is that which is based on reproduction, an inherent human live, which is called kinship in sociology and social anthropology."

The two types of kin group consanguinial and affinal are found in every human societies. These two kin groups are found to be the most popular among the Rajbanshi people. The consanguinial kinship is known as gutiyari and affinal kin group is known as kutumba in their local term. They trace their kinship from parents side.

Works Cited

- Berlie, John. *The Rajbanshi: A Complete Ethnic Group of South East Nepal and Bengal*. Kathmandu: Regmi Research Center, 1985.
- Bhattarai, H. P. *Cultural Strategies of the Rajbanshi for Adaptation: A Cultural-Ecological case Study of Rajgadh Village in Jhapa District*. Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology. Kathmandu: T.U.Kirtipur, 1994.
- Bista, Dor Bahadur. *Sabai Jaatko Phulbari*. Kathmandu: Sajha Prakashan, 2030.
- Bista, Dor Bahadur. *The people of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 1972.
- Caplon, Lionel. *Land and Social change in East Nepal: A Study of Hindu- Tribal Relation*. Berkely: University of California Press, 1970.
- Dahal, Dilli Ram. *Indian Ethnic Group in the Nepal Terai*. Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology T.U. Kathmandu: 1978.
- Department of Information, HMG. *Mechi Dekhi Mahakali*. Vol.1. Nepal: 2031.
- Dhugana, Devendra Kishor. *Rajbanshi Jatiko Jiban ra Baibahik Parampara*. *Himalayan Times*. Kathmandu, 2052.
- . . . *Pashupati Saptahik*. Biratnagar: Purbanchal Sahitya Prakashan, 2050.
- Dutta, Nipendra Kumar. *Origion and Growth of caste in India*. New Delhi: Manjushri Publishing House, 1969.
- Fransis, Buchanan Hamilton. *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal*. New Delhi: Manjushri Publishing House, 1971.
- Gautam Rajesh and et.al. *Tribal Ethnography of Nepal*. Vol.11. Delhi: 1994.

- Gautam, Rajesh. *Rajbanshis of Nepal*. New Delhi: Adroit Publisher, 2005.
- Haimendorf, Christoph Van Furer. *Caste and Kin of Nepal, India and Ceylon*.
Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1968.
- Hait, Sir. Edward. *A History of Asam*. 1st ed. Asam: LBS Publication, 2062.
- Haviland, W.A. *Cultural Anthropology*. 6th ed. New York: Harcourt Brace Javanovich
College Publishers, 1990.
- Hodgson, H. Brain. *On the Koch, Bodo and Dimal Tribes: Misscellaneous Essays
Relating to Indian Subjects*. Vol. 2. London: London Trubner and Company,
1990.
- Majumdar, D.N and T.N. Madan. *A Introduction to Social Anthropology*. Bombay:
Asian Publishing House, 1986.
- Pokhrel, Santa. *Yek Phul Anek Rang*. 1st ed. Biratnagar: Purbanchal Sahitya
Prakashan, 2044.
- Proffenberger, Mark. *Pattern of change in Nepal and India*. India: The Macmillan
Company of India ltd, 1980.
- Rajbanshi, Bhuban Lal. *A Socio-Lingustic Survey of the Rajbanshi Language of Jhapa
and Morang*. M.A. Thesis Central Department of English. T. U. Kirtipur,
2007.....
- Rajbanshi, Bhumi Lal. *Rajbanshi Jatika Puja Parbaharu*. Haldibari: Niyatra
Prakason, 2059.
- Rajbanshi, Durga Chandra. *The Religion and Culture of Rajbanshi Community*.
Birtamod: Shree Afset Press, 2057.

- Regmi, Rishi Keshab Raj. *The Dimal- Miraculouse Migrants of Himal: An Anthropological study of Nepalese Ethnic Group*. Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology: T.U. Kirtipur, 1991.
- Risely, H.H. *The Tribes and Customs of Bengal*. Vol.2. Calcutta: Calcutta Bengal Secretarial Press, 1982.
- Sanyal, Charu Chand. *The Rajbanshi of North Bengal*. Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1965.
- Shaha, Rishi kesh. *An Introduction of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 1975.
- Sharma, Sarad Chandra. *Nepal Ra Yaska Nibasi*. 2nd ed. Kathmandu: H.M.G. The Ministry of Transport and Communication. Mudran Tatha Prakashan Bibhag, 2045.
- Shrestha, Keshab Kumar. *Social Structure of the Rajbanshi People*. Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology: T.U. Kirtipur, 2064.
- Shrestha, Shambhu Lal. *Hami Nepali*. Lalitpur: Shrestha Prakasan, 2048.
- Steward, J. *Theory of Cultural Change*. Ulbana University of Illinois, 1955.
- Upadhya, Pitamber. *Rajbanshi Samuday ek Parichay*. Bhadrapur: Rajbanshi Bhasha Prachar Prashar Samiti, 1998.
- Yadava, Y.P. *The Documentation of Rajbanshi Language*. Central Department of Lingustics: T.U. Kirtipur, 2005.