

**Changes in the Sakela Sili Festival among the Kirant Rai
Community in Kathmandu**

A Thesis

**Submitted to the Central Department of Sociology
Tribhuvan University in Partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts in
Sociology**

By

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DECLARATION LETTER

I, hereby, declare that my thesis entitled, **Changes in the Sakela Sili Festival among the Kirant Rai Community in Kathmandu**, submitted to the Central Department of Sociology, Tribhuvan University an entirely original work prepared under the guidance and supervision of my supervisor. I have made due acknowledgement to all ideas and information borrowed from different in the course of writing this thesis. The result presented or submitted anywhere else for this thesis has ever been published in any form before. I shall be solely responsible if any evidence is found against my declaration.

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

This is to certify that Ms. Yennu Rai has completed her entitled “**Changes in the Sakela Sili Festival among the Kirant Rai Community in Kathmandu**” under my supervision and guidance. I, therefore, recommend this thesis for final approval and acceptance.

Date: February, 2025

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APPROVAL LETTER

We, the undersigned, certify that we have read this thesis entitled “**Changes in the Sakela Sili Festival among the Kirant Rai Community in Kathmandu**” and that, in our opinion, it is satisfactory in scope and quality as a thesis for the master’s degree thesis. The candidate successfully defended her dissertation during the Viva Voce.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my thesis supervisor and Dr. Pasang Sherpa, for his invaluable guidance, rigorous supervision, and continuous encouragement throughout this research journey. His insightful suggestions and unwavering support have been instrumental in shaping the outcome of this thesis.

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Keshab Silwal, who served as an external examiner for my thesis and continuously helped me refine it. And to prepare this thesis, I would like to express my gratitude to the respondents from the Kirant Rai community living in Kathmandu who gave their valuable time to answer the questionnaire related to this study; without them, this thesis would not have been possible.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to my father, Digam Prasad Rai, for his unwavering inspiration and support during the finalization of this dissertation. Without his encouragement and cooperation, this research would not have been possible.

I am also deeply thankful to my mother, Dil Kumari Rai, my sisters, Nuyong Rai and Yongyung Rai, and my brother, Yayokong Rai, for their immense moral support and never-ending encouragement throughout this journey. Additionally, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to my late grandfather Bam Bahadur Rai, whose belief in my academic endeavors was a source of great motivation.

Lastly, but certainly not least, I acknowledge the genuine support and cooperation I have received from numerous individuals and institutions. Their contributions have played an enormous role in materializing this study an endeavor that has been a significant effort for me and a small but meaningful initiative in the field of social research.

Yennu Rai

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Chapter-One

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

The Rai, part of the Kiranti indigenous people, are the main indigenous group residing in the hills. Most of them are located in Nepal's Province No.1. They reside in thirteen districts. Khotang, Bhojpur, Ilam, Dhankuta, Solukhumbu, Udaypur, Panchthar, Sangkhuwasabha, Okhaldhunga, and Morang districts have the highest concentrations of the Rai population. However, the Jhapa, Sunsari, Makwanpur and Kathmandu districts also have Rai residents (Census, 2021).

Historically known for their presence in the Kathmandu Valley, where they once held significant power, ruling for centuries before being conquered by the Gorkha dynasty; today, while their population within the valley is smaller, they maintain distinct cultural practices based on their animistic religion "Mundhum," which centers on worshiping nature spirits and ancestors, often expressed through unique festivals and rituals. The Kirant Rai community has assimilated into Kathmandu's multicultural environment. Many Kirant Rai people have moved to Kathmandu in search of greater economic possibilities, yet many still follow their traditional ways of life. (Wikipedia).

The Rais are a significant Nepalese indigenous group, part of the Kirant people. They are known for their wandering, hunting, traditional knowledge, medicinal herb use, archaeology, and medicine. They are also nature worshipers, animists, and landowners with a deep connection to local culture. They were known as 'Khambu' or 'Jimee or Jimdar', and owed lands and taxes to the jimdar. As their traditional occupation, they began animal farming and agricultural plants. (Rai, 2011).

Sakela is a festival with religious and cultural significance associated with Prakriti in the Rai community. The year is divided into two seasons: Ubhauri Festival and Udhauri Festival. Ubhauri festival is in Baisakh (April/May), while Udhauri festival is in Mangsir (November/December). This month marks the festival's celebration. Sakela Udhauri is the harvest season, and it is a means to express gratitude to nature for producing a good harvest. Sakela Ubhauri is also known as Bhumi puja (land

worship), and it is performed to promote good farming and plantation (Mukarung, 2009). This occasion is essentially a celebration of devotion to the Goddess of Nature for abundant crops and protection against natural disasters. At this ancient celebration, everyone dances to the sounds of various drumbeats and musical rhythms. While this dance is performed, it reflects various forms of nature worship. The dances are normally done twice a year, accompanied by cymbals, drums, and other traditional instruments. The dancers occasionally replicate agricultural activities (Rai, 2007).

Sili is a dance style and step that is performed to please Sakela while also serving as a means of worship. Sakela is the name of the almighty deity Kirant Rai has been worshiping and revering to since their early evolution. The Mudd, which serves as the foundation for all cultural cults, and the ritualistic rituals of the Kirant Rai community are the basis for worship practices and dancing performances. Kirant Rais believes that everything happens in this world because of nature so Kirant Rais worships nature and follows Sakela Sili oriented to nature and they believe that life is possible because of nature.

Over time, the traditional Sakela Festival has evolved to incorporate elements of modernism, location, and community. It has been changing as it is carried out in various locations, areas, and communities both inside and outside the country to the needs. External factors including urban migration and media exposure have significantly changed the Rai Sakela dance, a traditional cultural manifestation of the Rai community in Nepal. These elements influence the dance's cultural relevance and meanings in addition to its form. Kirant Rai's traditional Sakela performance environment has moved from rural villages to urban festivals or staged events as a result of the growing number of people moving to urban regions. This change frequently replaces the dance's communal and participatory elements with a presentation that is more focused on the audience.

This research focuses on the impacts of modernization in negative and positive ways in Kathmandu. For example, the negative effects include the loss of culture, customs, and moral ideals. People are becoming more aware of the importance of preserving Kiranti culture's traditional values, which is one of its positive effects. This study also seeks to investigate the influence of industrialization on Sili in this ancient dance, attempts to capture the dynamic changes in the Sakela Festival's performances, and

explores the changes in traditional culture, rituals, and identity among the Rai indigenous community living in the urban areas of Kathmandu.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The existence of any race is under the guise of its religion, language, and culture (Turner, 1968). Thus, Sakela, an important festival of the Kirant Rai, plays an important role in maintaining the social relations and values of the Rai society. However, Kirant Rai's religion, festivals, and rituals are inconsistent in the ever-changing modern world. Because of this diversity, research into the uniqueness and significance of festivals and rituals has shaped civilization. Sakela is the great festival of Kirant Rai. They celebrate Sakela according to their original cultural tradition ritual, where they do many ancient dancing styles in Sili and worship their god. Sakela Sili worship and dancing have seen various alterations in recent years. The culture that has been celebrated for thousands of years is still being celebrated (Subba, 1992).

Ethnicity is a social construct rather than a cultural attribute, but it pays less attention to how immigrants engage in social interactions and create social environments. Wimmer (2008) assumes that ethnic boundaries are the outcome of the classificatory struggles and negotiations between actors situated in a social field.

Understanding a society's cultural festivals and rituals is necessary for sociological understanding. Recently, there has been a change in the Kirant Rai community from Sakela Sili to the way they worship, the dress they wear, the languages they speak, etc. Changing in any traditional original cultural ritual means the old culture is disappearing, and that change is happening due to modernization. Their language, traditional practices, culture, and customs vary depending on what sub-caste they belong to. A further challenge stems from the fact that some informed individuals about Kirant culture, customs, and difficulties have already left in quest of better prospects, while others have passed away. The impact of modernization is seen in the original culture of the Kirant Rai community.

Any religion has the rules of the culture and follows the culture within that rule. However, in the Kirant Rai community, it is not found that they have celebrated the

festival according to the traditional original culture. The following research concerns are the main focus of this study:

- How is the Sili dance performed by the Kirant Rai community, and what role does it play in fostering social cohesion among Rais in the urban context of Kathmandu?
- What specific changes have occurred in the traditional practices and rituals of the Sakela Sili festival among the Kirant Rai community in Kathmandu?
- What factors have influenced the changes of the Sakela Sili festival/dance in the urban setting?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the present study was to study the changes brought by modernization in Sakela Sili, celebrated by the Kirant Rai community, from a sociological point of view. The objectives are as follows:

- To analyze the performance and significance of the Sili dance among the Kirant Rai community and its role in social cohesion and identity in Kathmandu.
- To examine the specific changes in traditional practices and rituals of the Sakela Sili festival.
- To identify and assess the sociocultural and economic factors influencing the changes of the Sakela Sili festival in an urban setting.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research was focused on the traditional Sakela festival celebrated by the Kirant Rai community. An attempt was made to understand the modernization of Sakela celebrated by the Kirant Rai community. This research was important in itself from the point of view of theoretical and research methodology. This research was intended to obtain detailed information about the changes brought about by modernization in Sakela Sili of general and Kirant Rai. Specifically, in this research, taking Sakela Sili as the focal point of the Sakela festival of Kirant Rai, its various social and cultural aspects, the effects of things like globalization and westernization, and the changes in

the symbolic meaning and roles of the items. This study can be important for those who want to study similar topics.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

Any study and research has its own limitations and shortcomings. Also, this research is limited to Kirant Rai living in Kathmandu because it is for fulfilling the partial requirement of the postgraduate level. Other than that, others are not included.

- This study was conducted as a case study of a small area with the primary objective of the partial fulfillment of the master's degree required in sociology. Therefore, detailed research was not possible.
- The study was limited to the Sakela festival celebrated by the Kirant Rais who lived in Kathmandu. In the same way, the changes in the costumes worn during the Sakela festival, jewelry, and worship methods were also studied in general.
- A study was conducted on the changes brought about by modernization and the effects of Sakela, a festival celebrated by KirantRais in Kathmandu district.
- This study was a case study of an ethnic group or caste named Rai. It did not include other ethnic groups (i.e., Magar, Newar, Tamang, etc.) and other castes.

Chapter-Two

Literature Review

This research study's theoretical section focuses on modernization theory, how contemporary knowledge displaces old knowledge, and how modernization has changed traditional living ways of life.

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Culture Change and Modernization Theories

Modernization theory was applied to the traditional Rai Kiranti dance known as Sili. These theories were critically examined in terms of their effects on Rai's traditional culture, religion, language, and identity. The study also examines the differences and similarities between modernity and tradition, as well as viewpoints on culture and rituals among the Rai Kiranti group. There are numerous ways to measure the impact of modernization in every traditional society. It brings up a confrontation between traditional ideals and modern growth.

Modernization has a significant impact on both individuals and societies. Reason and rationalism, secularism, a high goal and accomplishment oriented, an overall alteration of attitudes, norms, and values, an open society, and mobility are all aspects of modernization. Modernization is the creation of an "open society" in which individual ability, entrepreneurship, and training can find roles in society that are fitting for their accomplishments. The process of modernization requires a suitable change in the social structure to satisfy people's increased expectations. Modernization entails societal transformation, which leads to advancement in many domains. Modernization transforms ancient social and psychological factors while establishing new human conduct values. As social development accelerates, the position of people and families also changes. Recognizing the importance of modernity in society and the role that the younger generation is expected to play in maintaining social order (Hussein, 1972).

According to Østerud, 'At a more abstract level, modernization might be defined as liberation and adaptation' (Østerud, 1993:37). People in developing countries, such as Nepal, freely embrace or feel the effects of modernization in a variety of ways,

including changes to their personality, employment, lifestyle, and cultural values. When examining the effects of modernization on Rai Kiranti's traditional culture, the majority of young generations adopt Western fashion through Western media, technology, and the internet. Western cultural influences are causing younger generations to lose touch with their language. Parents are also interested in enrolling their children in English boarding schools so that they can easily gain access to various professions in their future careers. It is a visible component of Rai Kiranti culture and daily life. How it offers equality to Kiranti society has also been perceived, such as between rich and poor in the Rai community. People who worked in the British army were considered wealthy, which attracted new generations to the British armed forces.

Modernization involves more than just the spread of Western institutions, values, and social interactions; it also involves the interaction of disparate social and cultural structures. Many modernities are the result of the intricate interplay between internal and external factors, economic advancements and social structures, political institutions and cultural attitudes, and a variety of different paths and models for society and political systems (Martenele, 2005).

Cultures have changed or been influenced. This indicates that various factors, such as the media, emerging cultural ideas, and alternative lifestyles, are influencing and preserving folklore. Because folklore's longing for ethnic identity is ingrained in pop culture, Browne focuses on why folklore cannot endure when it is separated from pop culture (Browne, 2004).

'Modernizing' simply means discarding historical habits and traditions in favor of newer or more contemporary ones. Modernization is represented by signs such as the rise of nationalist ideology, democratic organizations, increased literacy, high levels of industrialization, urbanization, and the spread of mass communication channels, as well as social mobility. Modernization encompasses not just economic transformation but also shifts in "conventional attitudes, beliefs, and institutions". Traditional attitudes, beliefs, and institutions are evolving, which harms group identification. Traditional culture includes norms, values, and institutions. Modernization drives cultural transformations such as changes in norms and values, beliefs, attitudes, clothes, and language.

Cultural change is the transformation of a society's social, spiritual, and material civilization. It involves rapid changes in political constitution, domestic institutions, beliefs, education, law, material tools, and consumption of goods. Cultural change is a permanent factor of human civilization, occurring everywhere and at all times. It is induced by factors within a community or through contact with different cultures, taking the form of independent evolution or diffusion. However, culture change has recently taken on a size and speed never seen before in human history in each of its forms. The Western world has accelerated its evolution and gained a comprehensive understanding of the material universe thanks to technological advancements, industrial enterprise developments, and financial and mercantile organization advancements (Bronislaw, 1945).

Modernization theory depicts development as a consistent evolutionary path that all societies take, from agricultural, rural, and traditional cultures to postindustrial, urban, and modern forms. All societies, once modernized, follow a predetermined sequence of development stages: traditional economy, transition to take off, take off itself, maturity, era of high consumption, and post-industrial society. Modernization theory places a premium on internal factors and socioeconomic development drivers such as formal education, a market-based economy, and democratic and secular political frameworks. Although modernization theory does not exclude external forces and sources of social change and economic development, it focuses less on foreign influences.

Modernization is one of the major variables in socio-cultural change. Modernization depends on the association of procedure, new development, quickened modes of generation, and a revived standard of living. Modernizations are the result of mechanical. At present, there are two schools of thought developing in this field. One school emphasizes the overpowering financial and political powers that drive social change. This school believes that traditional values will decline and be replaced by ideals from today. The other school of thought emphasizes the determination of conventional values despite financial and political changes. This school of thought expects that values are generally free of financial conditions (Inglehart and Baker, 2000).

One of the fundamental components of each traditional society that serves as its identity is its traditional culture. Furthermore, modernization's influence on these communities' traditional customs will undoubtedly have an impact on their unique identities. Modernization has made life easier and more efficient for people, but it can also harm traditional cultures, leading to cultural decline. There are many instances where many traditional civilizations suffered from the loss of their traditional culture and, ultimately, their ethnic identity in the name of modernization (Bhattachan, 2008).

The Sakela Sili festival, a primordial art form of Rai culture, has a traditional association with the transcendent energies of agriculture and human wellness. Festive performances, ceremonial presentations, leisure pursuits, political protests or urban, and diasporic discourses are only a few examples of its highly contextualized artistic representations that have undergone numerous variations and transformations (Lungeli, 2024).

For any traditional civilization to grow, it must evolve. Through a variety of variables, including scientific advancement, economic expansion, and contemporary technology, it guided traditional civilization toward the modern development process. It can also make society more equal. To gauge the degree of modernization, we must first examine the kinds of shifts in traditional values and how modernization has replaced them. For instance, let's examine how industrialization altered Kathmandu's Kirant Rai community and how it creates inequalities in society that need to be examined.

Modernization is not just analyzed in terms of its harmful effects, but it also has good effects. Its effects on the Rai Kiranti community measured in a variety of ways. For example, Kiranti youth are influenced by Western dress and lifestyle, particularly through media and technology. Advanced communication, media, television, and the internet are the most significant factors modernizing Kiranti's youth. We can see how youth participate in the Sakela Sili celebration while dressed in a Western manner rather than Rai traditional attire. Impact of the Western culture is exceptionally high in more youthful eras like they were pulled in with Western music like pop, rock, jazz, and hip bounce. If we profoundly analyze celebration time, Western melodic disobedience was as often as possible utilized for sound preparations.

Though modernization makes life less complex for individuals, it incorporates an inconvenient effect on conventional culture and makes a difference in dissolving the heavenly conventions of numerous communities in society. Numerous conventional communities have endured and proceeded to endure the misfortune of their convention, convictions, ceremonies, traditions, and values as a result of modernization, which eventually contributes to the misfortune of ethnic character. As a result, modernization is to fault for the misfortune of heavenly conventions and culture among the world's innate people groups.

Youth are for the most part interested in learning Western languages, Western music, and Western dances compared to conventional Kiranti Sili moves. Not as it were this, but Western culture has influenced conventional Kiranti foods and their day-to-day way of living as well. A society is compared to its past or other social regimes to determine whether social, mental, and advancement advancements are logical or solid and which are not. It is in this way that makes a difference in demonstrating the changes within the society while comparing its conventional values and cutting-edge values. This hypothesis is connected to a wide assortment of areas like economy, innovation, culture, and legislative issues. It in this way makes a difference in showing the changes within the society while comparing its traditional values and modern values. This hypothesis is connected in a wide variety of areas like economy, technology, culture, and legislative issues politics legislative issues. Additionally, through the modernization theory, Kathmandu's Rai Kiranti society has been fundamentally watched by its past and present circumstances.

2.1.2 Migration, Urbanization and Globalization

Globalization is the method of combining governments, societies, and budgetary markets into a single worldwide market using worldwide commerce. Globalization has, as of now, been examined in terms of culture and innovation, as well as stratification and disparity. In this setting, you'll see how it's utilized in connection to the worldwide economy (Yusuf, 2004).

Globalization and urbanization are major factors contributing to the acceleration of social change in society. When rural residents move to large cities, their social and lifestyle patterns alter as a result of urbanization. They are subjected to the impact of

urban lives, which differ from those in rural regions. Globalization also has an impact on communities' social transformation. Technology advancements and social media make it easier to access global culture and knowledge, which shapes rural populations' beliefs and values (Taufik, 2019).

Globalization promotes the exchange of ideas, values, and cultural practices across borders, fostering diversity and understanding of different ways of life. However, it can also lead to the erosion of local cultures and traditions, as global norms can overshadow indigenous customs. The spread of a single dominant culture, especially through the internet, can sometimes result in cultural homogenization.

Migration and its consequences are influenced by the resources available to potential migrants, and the ability to mobilize these resources is primarily influenced by socioeconomic status or class. Migration is frequently influenced by both the availability and ability to mobilize resources. People with a higher socioeconomic standing have greater access to financial resources, knowledge, and networks, allowing them to relocate more easily for economic opportunities, better living conditions, or personal reasons (Van Hear, 2014).

The effects of globalization on culture are extensive. Culture is a term used to describe human habits or ways of living that have been passed down through generations. It includes the ideational, symbolic, and intangible aspects of human culture. Globalization has a significant impact on all of these (Jean, 2002). Simply put, cultural globalization is the extent, intensity, speed, and impact of cultural flows that transmit symbols, ideas, creative products, and consumer goods on a global basis. Technologies for communication and transportation promote cross-cultural exchange and the development of global consciousness. The cultural component is essential to understanding globalization because, as our globalization theorem shows, symbolic exchanges are the ones that can be globalized the easiest.

Urbanization and globalization have had a major influence in accelerating social change in society. These changes have an impact on the values, culture, and social structure. Some of the social changes that have occurred include changes in values, culture, and patterns of behavior in the community. This can be seen from changes in

lifestyle, consumption patterns, mindsets, and patterns of social interaction. This social changes impact on a shift in the social structure of community.

Social changes impact values, culture, and social structure. The values held by communities, such as solidarity, kinship, and mutual assistance, eroded due to urban influences, and globalization. This impacts patterns of social relations between individuals and groups in communities and their social culture. Local cultures and traditions held by communities can also be threatened with extinction due to such sociocultural changes. The social structure of Kirant Rai's community has also changed due to urbanization and globalization. The social structure in Rai communities is largely based on a hierarchy of kinship and, over time, with globalization and urbanization, social structures change to become more individualistic and more open to outside influences.

The world is becoming increasingly small. Every day, we hear this idea voiced and see its manifestation in our lives—through the people we meet, the items we purchase, the foods we consume, and the films we watch. Explores and explodes boundaries—between how we imagine the world and how that imagination influences our self-understanding; between social institutions and their effects on those who participate in them; and between nations and peoples that appear to be increasingly homogeneous while also becoming increasingly diverse. Globalization provides a path beyond conventional oppositions between culture and power, tradition and modernity, global and local, emphasizing the importance of imagination in shaping the world of now and future (Arjun, 1949).

The Rai Kiranti community is also becoming more modernized as a result of urbanization and migration. Due to migration, the Rai people now live in various geographic settlements around the nation. As a result, they are unable to fully practice and adhere to their native cultures as they did in their homeland, and their lifestyles and cultural practices are altering. Due to their forced relocation far from their birthplace, the Rai people have become more conscious of their ethnic identity, customs, culture, etc (Bista, 1976). As the author Bista illustrates about migration, "The Rai's employment in the Indian and British Gurkha regiments contributes significantly to their cash income." Additionally, some people leave their hamlet to look for menial labor in the eastern Terai and Darjeeling for pay. Poverty and the

desire for better prospects are the primary causes of this long-standing habit, which is also a necessity.

Urban migration and media exposure have had a significant impact on the Kirant Rai Sakela dance, causing both a reconfiguration of its customs and a change in its cultural meaning. From a predominantly rural expression to a versatile urban performance art, the dance is absorbing new influences that reflect modern cultural values and tastes as practitioners increasingly move to metropolitan settings. Additionally, the growth of media outlets has greatly increased visibility, allowing for a wider audience to interact with and reinterpret the dance. A dynamic interaction between invention and preservation results from this exposure, which also broadens the dance's performance contexts and questions its traditional connotations (Yadav, 2023).

More space must be provided for this traditional Sakela dance collectively due to the growing number of participants. However, they lack the space to dance and are unable to share their traditional cultural knowledge when they migrate to urban areas like Kathmandu or the diaspora. Traditional cultural knowledge gets trapped as a result. The Sakela Festival experiences the same issues. Kirantis have moved from their primary places of origin to urban areas and capital cities in search of better opportunities and a higher quality of life. Younger generations are inspired by Western fashion and have taken up contemporary electronic instruments and tools like drums, guitars, and pianos, forgetting their traditional instrument varieties. Additionally, they are unable to use the traditional instruments in urban areas. Additionally, while having traditional instruments, they are unable to use them. Traditional instruments like the Tungana, Murchungga, and Binayo that were used by ancestors have been lost by younger generations.

Globalization functions culturally, just like any other similar collection of influences. It should just be a matter of identifying the culture, which is made up of sets of symbols and meanings that direct the behaviors of individuals who share a shared lifestyle, as humans are fundamentally cultural beings. One common method to achieve this is to operationalize culture as a system of laws that either force or encourage individuals to act in a certain way; these laws are found in any area of life, such as the economy, marriage, culture, or religion.

Peter Beyer claims that it's a social shift brought about by the advancement of enhanced communication and technological tools that impact both people and communities. The outcome is a progressive replacement of conventional standards and values. The advancement of modern communications has allowed for the broadcasting of various programs via TV channels and satellites (Beyer, 1994).

These days, some believe that globalization has a greater social influence than an economic one. The effects they have on society are extensive. It has an impact on many facets of society, leading to changes in individuals, organizations, social values, problems, and the nature of social movements, organizations, and politics. The impact of globalization on people's lives, careers, families, and society is the focus of the social aspects of globalization. It is common to hear worries about how globalization would affect jobs, wages, working conditions, and social protection. The social component encompasses identity, culture, and security, as well as social inclusion or exclusion and community cohesion. Globalization is the process by which nations and their populations become more interdependent. It's a complicated and intricate phenomenon. It is the process of international integration that results from the exchange of global viewpoints, goods, ideas, and other cultural characteristics, as well as the global flow of national and cultural resources.

Migration unites disparate cultural groups, frequently resulting in the mingling of languages, customs, and civilizations. This promotes tolerance and multiculturalism, but if integration proves challenging, tensions may arise. Although they frequently contribute to economies by filling labor shortages, migrants can experience discrimination or exploitation. For economic progress in several nations, immigration has been crucial, particularly in industries like technology, healthcare, and agriculture. In addition to creating new social networks, migration also strains family structures and generates social dislocation because families are sometimes split up over great distances.

Urban environments tend to be more diverse and dynamic than rural ones. This creates new social roles, family structure changes, and traditional values shift as people adapt to more complex, fast-paced lifestyles. Cities often provide better access to education, healthcare, and employment. However, urbanization also creates significant disparities between different social groups, such as income inequality,

housing shortages, and high levels of poverty. Rapid urbanization often leads to environmental degradation, overburdened infrastructure, and health issues due to pollution, traffic, and insufficient sanitation, which provoke social change in terms of activism, policy development, and new technologies.

Migration is driven by globalization, as economic opportunities open up across borders, leading to urbanization in certain areas where global industries are concentrated. Urban centers become melting pots of cultural and social influences due to both migration and globalization, reshaping social norms and behaviors. Globalization spurs migration as people seek better opportunities or flee conflict, and urbanization intensifies as cities attract those seeking economic or educational benefits linked to globalization.

The term "culture change" describes changes that occur over time, usually spanning decades or even centuries, in the common way of life of people. These kinds of changes are unavoidable and in some ways educate people on how to adjust to the new situations they encounter. The society of the Rai community is vibrant and ever-evolving. In the name of modernization and change, many traditional behaviors have been abandoned by the populace, and new ones are being accepted (Rai, 2020).

Globalization, urbanization, and migration all accelerate societal change by altering political systems, economies, and cultural norms. Every action both impacts and is influenced by the others, creating a complicated feedback loop that has an impact on the environment and social systems alike. Cities become centers of globalization as a result of migration, and these factors work together to change identities, opportunities, and communities. These intersections raise issues of social fragmentation, inequality, and environmental degradation even as they foster economic development and cross-cultural exchange.

This thesis shows how the Kiranti Rai cultural Sakela Sili festival helps to keep a society's norms and values alive. Additionally, how urbanization and global cultural exchanges affect traditional practices like dance. Sakela Sili culture offers excellent opportunities for flexibility and metamorphosis. In the modern world, we have a plethora of options to establish our own identities and define ourselves. In terms of

figuring out who we are and where we are, we have the best people to help us understand who we are, where we've come from, and where we're going.

2.2 Empirical Review

According to Lerner (1958), modernization is described as "a process with some distinctive quality of its own, which would explain why modernity is felt as a consistent whole among people who live by its rule." Additionally, he illustrates how the many components of modernization have been closely linked since, historically speaking, they have had to cooperate. This definition of modernization makes it clear that it is the process of moving from traditional lifestyle states to modern ones with many components.

According to Bista (1967), Kirant or Kiranti is the religion of the Rai people. The Rai people revere Sumnima and Paruhang as the prototypical female and male archetypes, respectively. Worshipping one's ancestors is important and common among Rais people. The religious text of Rai is Mundhum which is in oral form and is passed from one generation to another. It seems that the Kiranti religion has also been influenced by Buddhism which is practiced throughout the northern part of Nepal as well as Hinduism of the middle hills. The traditional religious practice is to worship a variety of local deities. The Rai people most frequently revere the seven virgins or saat kanya, and Jalpa Devi is one of the principal Gods and Goddesses residing in the Snow Mountains. The three stones, where all religious rites must begin, are the most significant representation of the Gods.

According to writer William (1988), ritual is defined as "behavior marked by prescribed rules". It is always carried out by established regulations that have been in place for a while in all kinds of societies. Though it displays different types of images, behaviors, and mimicking acting, it is done according to the ritual's rules. In Rai's indigenous society, also during the Sakela Sili festival, we can see lots of traditional rituals performed by our priest, Nakchhong. In ritual practices, every type of behavior, image, movement, and position has its ritualistic meaning. The types of rites that the priest performs include purifications, fasting, and prayer. Every kind of ritual has the same general characteristics: expressiveness and exhibition.

Symbols function to maintain cultural norms and social structures. They ensure that cultural legacy is passed down from one generation to the next by acting as a storehouse of collective memory and identity. But as Turner notes, symbols may also be places of contestation and struggle. The same symbols can have different meanings assigned to them by different people and groups, which can result in conflicting interpretations and sometimes disagreements about their meaning (Turner, 1966).

Tara Mani (2015) emphasizes how, when, where, and why the Kirant Rai community celebrates the Sakela Festival and its significance. He discusses the background problems of the Sakela competition in the Rai community during the Sakela Festival.

Gaenzle (2016) has referred to the regional religious and ritual practices of the various Rai communities as "ancestral religions," which are frequently included in Nepal's "shamanic" customs despite not being Hindu or Buddhist.

Wettstein (2019) investigated. Sakela dance has transformed Rai communities, gaining popularity among youth and establishing a new event category, the Sakela dance competition. It has become a key marker of ethnic identity among Rai in the diaspora, uniting the global Rai community. New media platforms enable interaction among members.

According to Dahal (2021), Kirant Rai celebrates Ubhauri and Udhauri festivals in Kathmandu and Diaspora, as they are significant rituals for the Kirant world. Many Kirant Rai have migrated to India, Britain, and America for job opportunities. Marvin Harris suggests that the Kirant people develop structures and infrastructural elements in the Diaspora to maintain these rituals, despite the lack of support and infrastructure.

The study of land and social development in Nepal examines how the relationships between the indigenous tribal people of the Himalayan region and the Hindus who have migrated there over the past 200 years after their kingdom was incorporated are changing (Caplan, 1970).

Another way to evaluate its genesis is through popular myth. Dr. Arun Gupta states in his article on the "Tragic Story of Sumnima" that "Myth is the binding principle of culture, the loss of myth is the loss of culture." Sumnima and Paruhong are the names

that are most strongly associated with Kirant identity in Kiranti culture, and they are considered to be celestial spouses (Yayokka, 2010).

Dancing is more than just a way for the Kirant Rais to show their adoration or delight. They learned how to dance from their forefathers. Both their past and present are portrayed. It remembers their relationship with nature for the simple reason that, out of love and respect, one must emulate the powers of nature. The movements of animals and other natural creatures serve as the inspiration for the Sili, a dance style unique to Kirant Rais. Various agricultural practices, such as tilling the land for cultivation and harvesting, are also the foundation of Sili (Bain, 2018).

According to Asad (1993) also contends that one should comprehend how particular acts are perceived as "religious" in the first place rather than presuming that they are. To classify particular acts as religious, one must comprehend the classifying function of the term "religion." Therefore, it is necessary to look into the entire spectrum of institutional procedures and disciplinary actions that this category uses to carry out its duties.

Indigenous people have various languages, cultures, and histories, but they are all connected to the environment and work to protect and preserve it, according to Mankiller (2009). Indigenous people have always remained close to nature, no matter where they live.

Rahul Ganguly (2024) writes there is no transcendental idea of an external God in Kirant Rais's mind. Their cultural life and customs center on a comprehensive interaction with shamans, ancestors, and the environment—a practice that is too complex to be boiled down to or well described by the term religion. They retain a subtle distinction between "honoring" and "worshipping," which is essential to comprehend why "religion" is neither a category of experience nor an explanation for the Kirant Rais.

Kirant communities have faced numerous difficulties recently, including problems with political representation, cultural preservation, and land rights. According to Sharma (1992), these difficulties have led to the greater importance of programs meant to preserve native languages, record long-standing customs, and claim their unique identities.

Kirant intellectuals have been impacted by several forms of discourse in addition to the Hindu and Buddhist influences on their social milieu. Both in form and content, the British cultural, linguistic, and historical research conducted on Kirant was extensively appropriated and used by indigenous people (Schlemmer, 2004).

Christianity also had an impact, spreading through British schools that educated some of the local nobility. Perhaps because Christianity demonstrated the potential of a respectable religion apart from Buddhism and Hinduism, some intellectuals, even if they were not converted, used it as an example and source of inspiration. Furthermore, from the start of the century, oppositional forces were greatly influenced by Marxist groups (Subba, 1992).

The rich oral tradition known as Mundhum is a fundamental part of Kirant identity. Yonzon (2015) emphasizes that Mundhum includes religious writings and oral tales that pass down knowledge, customs, and traditions throughout the Kirant generations.

The transforming process of liminality is not limited to traditional societies; it can also appear in contemporary settings. According to Turner, modern rites of passage also involve a transitional period, such as military training camps or graduation celebrations. These occasions cause people to be momentarily separated from their typical social surroundings and customs. They go through a period of reorientation and reeducation before being reintegrated into society with a new status, such as soldiers ready to serve their country or graduates ready to enter the workforce (Turner, 1966).

The origins of Sakela are linked to several tales found in the group's Mundhum, which is described as "a sacred narrative of cosmological, spiritual, genealogical, philosophical, and sociological basics of Kirant people" (Mukarung, 2014).

Turner shows how the study of symbols and ritual behavior a useful tool for comprehending social processes and structure. Van Gennep's concept of the "liminal phase" of rites of passage is expanded upon by him, and he uses it to comprehend a variety of social phenomena. Rituals were once considered the "vestigial" organs of social conservatism, but they are now viewed as spaces where social change can occur and be assimilated into social practice (Turner, 1966).

The most significant role in developing any research is the literature review, which offers the researcher with greater information, experience, and other ideas. The literature review plays an important part in this study and has greater implications for the researcher by providing deeper information, experience, and other suggestions. A review of the literature utilized to develop a study concept and obtain research methodological suggestions.

The Kirant Rai Sakela Sili festival, which is mostly observed by the Kirant Rai people of Nepal, particularly in Kathmandu and eastern Nepal, has changed recently in several ways that demonstrate both cultural preservation and adaptation to contemporary settings. With religious ceremonies, music, dances, and social gatherings, the Kirant Rai community has long utilized the celebration as a means of celebrating the harvest, paying respect to the natural world, and signaling the change of seasons. As Kathmandu has become a more urbanized city the festival has grown beyond rural areas to include more urban-dwelling Kirant Rais. The event has expanded in size, attracting a wider and more diversified audience, including people who have relocated to the capital from various regions. The event has become more inclusive, with younger generations increasingly participating, however, ancient rites are frequently adapted to fit the urban setting. The festival, influenced by modern media, is celebrated by young participants on social media, raising awareness about Kirant culture and promoting its significance globally. This digital presence also fosters new cultural expressions.

2.3 Research Gap

A lot of research has been conducted on the Kirant Rai community's Sakela Sili festival. The researchers concentrated solely on Sakela festival traditions, lifestyles, and rituals. Sakela Sili has not conducted any research on how the festival has changed the urban area. However, no research has been conducted on the changes in the urban environment caused by Kirant Rais' Sakela Sili Festival, the circumstances that led to the change of the Sakela Festival in the urban region, or the function of the Sakela Festival in maintaining social harmony in the urban area. This research was conducted to explore and to know about these unexplored topics.

Chapter-Three

Research Methods

3.1 Rational of Site Selection

The Kirant Rais have been living all over the dominion of Nepal. Which has its original rituals and culture as well as festivals according to its own traditions. Protecting and promoting such original traditional festivals and culture is the need of the day. So this study is done. Kathmandu district was selected as the study area. The reasons for making this area a study area were as follows.

- The changes in the Sakela Sili festival celebrated by the Rai community living in this district should not be studied and researched before this.
- The researcher himself belongs to this community,
- The researcher wants to study the changes in the traditional Sakela Sili festival of the Kirant Rais in the urban area of Kathmandu.
- As the researcher resides in this area,
- The researcher should have prior knowledge about the study area,
- The environment of this area should be suitable for gathering the necessary information for the study.

3.2 Research Design

The major emphasis in this study is given to analyzing and exploring the changes in the Sakela Sili festival of Kirant Rais at the study site. It had been set objectives to analyze the factors and reason for the changes in the Sakela Sili festival of Rais. This study attempted to find out about the changes in the traditional Sakela Sili festival of the Kirant Rais living in the urban context of Kathmandu. Considering all these facts, both exploratory and descriptive research design were chosen in this work. Explorative research and descriptive research design were used to describe the overall condition, factors, and reason for the changes in the Sakela Sili festival of the Kirant Rais.

3.3 Nature and Sources of Data

For this study, the necessary data have been collected using both primary and secondary sources. Data from primary sources were collected using interviews, group discussions, and observation methods in the related field. Data from secondary sources have been collected from newspaper articles, online articles, and other necessary materials. Under the nature of the data, using the qualitative and quantitative methods, the situation experienced by the families of the people involved, economic changes, activities of the social situation, use of remittances, etc.

3.3.1 Primary Data

For any research, the research material obtained by the researcher himself using various research methods is considered the primary source of data. Such sources are also called primary and original materials. Primary sources are used in research at the very first stage. Other sources are used only after using primary sources. Primary sources include the researcher's sources from the interaction with the respondents.

For the study, interacting with the respondents and using the necessary questionnaire for data collection, the data were collected by interacting with the members of the Kirant community regarding the change in the Sakela Sili festival of Kirant Rai living in the Kathmandu district.

3.3.2 Secondary Data

For the research of any subject, the data used by the researcher for his purpose, the study done by another researcher, is necessary for his research subject; the source collected is the secondary source. For my study, online articles, newspapers, past theses prepared by various people, study reports, books, digital libraries, online media, etc., have been used. Secondary sources have been used, especially for prior literature reviews.

3.4 Sampling

It systematically explores various aspects of socio-cultural change among the Kirant Rais and the factors driving this change. Since it was not feasible to interview all Rai households in Kathmandu for this study, respondents were selected using a lottery

system with a proportional random sampling technique. The study covered 24 individuals from the Kirant Rai community within the Kathmandu district.

3.5 Data Collection techniques

We know that the successful result of any study depends upon its techniques which are used for data collection. Hence for study, the data collection techniques are the most important tools to obtain reliable information. This study was to study fieldwork methods and techniques, like interview schedules, for data collection.

3.5.1 Interview

Interviews are an important way of data collection for any research report. Interviews are used to assess a person's self-confidence and personal aptitude, particularly how they present to others. An interview is an interaction between the researcher and the source person. It is focused on a certain topic. To achieve the objectives of the research, I reached the target group and met them individually, conducted interviews using a question-and-answer style, and collected the necessary data. By using the interview method in addition to having double interaction with the respondents, it has helped to get the necessary information from them. In this method, a questionnaire is specially created, and the data is collected from the dialogue of the predetermined questionnaire before the respondents.

For the study, by interacting with the respondents and using the necessary questionnaires for data collection, the researcher went to the Kirant Rai community living in Kathmandu and the place where the Sakela festival was held and collected the data through the interview method. Necessary data for the study have been collected by directly talking to people of the Kirant community, members of the Kirant Yayokkha Committee, Nakchongs, and youth who know about this festival.

3.5.2 Key Information Interview

Informants are working together to obtain leniency in their pending cases. Informants can be useful in establishing cases that would otherwise require months of investigation because they usually have insider knowledge. A key informant is someone who is knowledgeable about the issue or has access to more detailed

information than the respondents. Oral questionnaires are used to select key informants based on their expertise and experience. I therefore used key informant interviews to illustrate changes in Sakela Sili, a festival of the Kirant Rais, in the urban setting of Kathmandu.

3.6 Observation

Observation is one of the essential research tools in sociology. The information on the method of different working activities of daily lifestyles is collected using observation, this method of data collection is used by the researcher to supplement more information acquired from the questionnaire method and to observe the settlement pattern, life cultural system, dress, and ornament pattern, and festival. This long interaction with the community provided the researcher with abundant knowledge about the Kirant Rai community.

3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation

The presentation and analysis of information and data collection through interviews, survey questionnaires, and field surveys were done in both descriptive and analytical ways. After completing the field survey, the data collected during the field visit period was edited and tabulated as per the need for a report mirror.

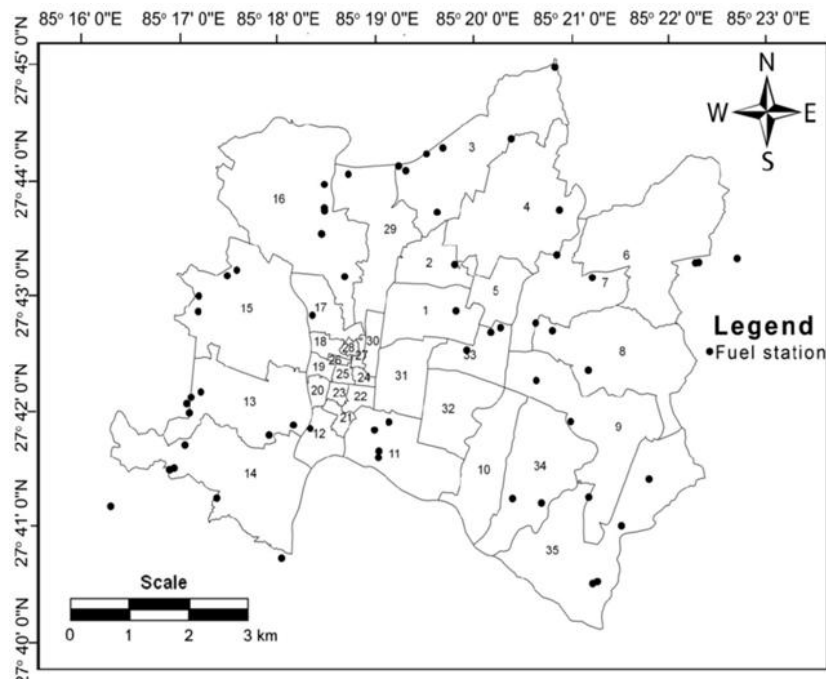
Moreover, to make the report more precise, maps, figures, and charts were enclosed with this dissertation. Similarly, chapters and sub-chapters have also been divided.

Chapter-Four

Study Area and Performance of Sili Dance

4.1 Introduction of the Study Area and Kirant Rai Community

The capital and largest city of Nepal, Kathmandu, is located in the middle region of the country, in the Kathmandu Valley. For ages, Kathmandu has been a significant center of trade, culture, and religion, and it has a rich historical and cultural legacy. According to the 2021 Nepal census, the population of Kathmandu is 845,767 people residing in 105,649 households. Nepal's political, economic, and cultural hub is Kathmandu, which is also home to a varied population. The city's atmosphere is distinctive and lively, combining modern elements with traditional Nepalese culture. Kathmandu is a popular starting place for trekking and adventure tourism because of its historical significance as well as its proximity to the Himalayas, which includes Mount Everest. The busy streets of Kathmandu are lined with eateries, shops, and marketplaces selling a wide range of domestic and foreign goods, while the mountains and scenery around the city provide chances for spiritual and recreational pursuits. Offering a singular window into the core of Nepal's past, present, and future, it is a location where the ancient and the modern cohabit. Kathmandu is inhabited by people of different castes. They have their traditions, customs, values, culture, norms, and beliefs.



Map of Study area: Kathmandu district

Rai Caste is one of those who are living there. Kirant Rai are one of the indigenous groups of Nepal, and they have their languages, religions, customs, rituals, and histories. The majority of Kirant Rais live in the country's eastern region. Even though the Kirant Rais live today in various parts of the nation, they have managed to preserve their culture, customs, festivals, and rituals. One of the best festivals of the Rai community is the Sakela Festival, one of the Kirant Rai celebrations. The main festival celebrated by the Kirant Rai community is the Sakela festival, which is celebrated twice a year, Ubhauri and Udhauri. Ubhauri is celebrated in Baisakh, and Udhauri is celebrated in Mangsir. During this festival, Sakela Sili is danced in this festival to worship the Pitri and nature.

Sakela is a significant festival in the Rai community, associated with Prakriti, and believed to promote food, wealth, and wisdom. It is worshipped for the well-being of people and the protection of natural resources and animals. The festival also honors ancestors and celebrates the return of distant relatives, with traditional dances and meals (Hatuwali, 2008).

Sakela performs by singing and dancing at the same time. Sakela ties the Kirant to their civilization, origin, cultural roots, and initial energy source. In their dance steps of working the land and worshipping the gods, Ethnic Kirant Rai, young and old, raise their hands and legs high and low, embodying their connections to the sacred and the profane, the humanity and the divinity, and the terrestrial and celestial, to maintain the ideal balance between art and life. Through their physical motions, the dancers represent socio-cultural practices and ecological awareness while fusing their aesthetic response to art with their intense passion for their profession (Rai, 2021).

Rai (2067) has no dispute that Kirants are one of the primitive native races of the world. Over time, different types of ethnic communities developed within the same caste. 'Rai' was born as a community within that community. Then started saying Kirant Rai. When did Rais originate in Kirant? Although the history of this thing is not certain, its history is also mentioned that the name Rai came into vogue from the 10th century to the 18th century.

Kirant Rai also refers to themselves as Khambu or Khambas, and they trace their migration from Tibet in the distant past. They consider themselves to be part of the Kiranti group or confederation, which comprises the communities of Limbu, Sunuwar, Yakkha, Dhimal, Koche, Me, and Hayu. One version claims that the Kirants moved from the east via northern Burma and Assam along the mid-hills (lower mountains) with their pigs in the past (Bain, 2018).

4.1.1 Age of the Respondents

This research has been carried out in Kathmandu to investigate the current traditional Sakela Sili festival changes in the Rai community. Similarly, the study examines the average traditional Sakela festival as well as the changing roles of Nakchhong, Nakchhongma, women, and youths, and how the traditional Sakela festival has been practiced in urban areas like Kathmandu. It has also studied the changes made by modernization and globalization in aspects like norms, participation, values, beliefs, etc. of the Sakela festival. This research respondent is a total of 24. The respondents are chosen from knowledgeable persons who know about Kirant culture and traditions.

Table 1: Age of the Respondents

Age Group	Number of Respondents	Percent
Below 29 years	11	45.83
30-39 years	4	16.66
40-49 years	3	12.5
50-59 years	5	20.83
Above 60 years	1	4.16
Total	24	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

According to the age distribution ratio of the research area, 16.66 percent of total respondents were between 30-39 years of age, 12.5 percent of total respondents were between 40-49 years of age, between the ages of 50-59 years, 20.83 percent of the respondents were between these ages, and finally, 4.16 percent of my respondents

were above 60 years old. This table demonstrates that the bulk of the respondents in the sample are under the age of 29, accounting for 45.83 percent of the total.

Regarding Rai traditional culture, young people are eager to embrace Western methods of living. In this globalized world, they have access to television, which piques their interest in Western fashion. They could be exposed to a wide range of Hindi and Western channels, which promotes the adoption of Western fashion and lifestyle. Younger generations desire to imitate contemporary fashions and lives because they think their own is outdated and conventional. Western media has a big impact on how young people think.

4.2. Performance of Sili Dance in different Festivals and Rituals

The Kirant Rai people, an indigenous community of Nepal, perform the Sakela Sili dance, a vivid and vital cultural performance, especially during the Sakela festival, which honors the Kirant religion and its ceremonies. The Sakela festival is a significant event for the Kirant Rai people, with dance serving as a form of reverence, cultural identity, and unity.

4.2.1 Ubhauri and Udhauri Festival

The Sakela festival is considered a symbol of truth and purity of the Kirant Rai community, who worship nature. Ubhauri Sakela Puja is celebrated on the full moon day of Baisakh on the occasion of Lord Gautama Buddha's birthday. The day on which Kirant Rai is celebrated with pomp according to the culture. Likewise, Udhauri Sakela Puja is celebrated on the full moon day of Mangsir. In this festival, Kirant Rai, old people, children, and young people gather together and dance together with drums and Jhamta. Since it is danced collectively, it develops social unity and collective spirit in this community. Which provides vitality to the centuries-long culture in this society.

In this festival, the closeness between each other, family, neighbor, and village is increased. This festival is a meeting between friends, relatives, daughters, and sisters to increase mutual relations, love, harmony, and virtue. During this festival, this community takes jand and alcohol as nectar, and the drummers play the drum and Jhamta, while the Nachanges sing and dance. Which develops social unity and social

harmony in this community. Through this festival, some Rai young women get married. Similarly, young people who are going to the country and province take this festival as an auspicious occasion and dance, sing, eat, and drink well with everyone during this festival and promise to meet again in the next festival. As a result, the social importance of this festival is high, as the culture in this community is continued and preserved while developing social unity, brotherhood, and harmony among the Kirant Rai. During this festival, Rais are more eager to preserve their culture without discrimination. Where rich, poor, women, men, high, low, and in between, there is no class, gender, or social discrimination. It is found that they also have a collective commitment.

Sakela "Sili" means the act of imitating plants, natural environments, animals, birds, etc., in the symbolic gestures of the nose or nose within certain rules. When searching for the meaning of the word Sakela Sililak, the word 'Sililak' is a combination of two words, "Sili" + "Lak," from the Rai Bantawa language. In the Rai Bantawa language, Sili means to note, gesture, or mimic, and lak means to shake or dance. Therefore, the act of performing or dancing regularly is called Sililak.

It was found that the Sakela dance has been traditionally celebrated by Kirant Rai castes since ancient times. The Rai's, divided into different groups, celebrate the Sakela festival according to their original traditions according to the location and environment. Sakela, called by various names, means rock. Worshipping this rock as a symbol of the creator, life-giver, and protector is Sakela. The literal meaning of Sakela in the Bantawa Rai language is Saptan Samaj, Kenwa Palak (Guardian), or the guardian of the society. The drum used in Sakela is made of bull skin, and during Sakela puja, a rooster is slaughtered and worshipped. When worshipping Sakela, the stone is worshiped as a symbol of one's ancestors. The rock itself is worshiped as Sakela. Sakela is the deity of the Kirant caste who has a rock. The stone is considered to symbolize the creator (Paruhang and Sumnima), the giver of life, Henkhama (Dhatin), and Ninamma (Akash), including dead idols. It was found during the study that it was worshiped every year in Baisakh and in November in the name of Udhauli Seva by playing drums and other various weapons.

The concept of two seasons is found in the Kirant civilization. Under this season, which is divided based on the season, the sowing of crops or the beginning of summer

is considered as Ubhauri. Kirant Rais consider and recognize it as Dongwanga (beginning of the year). In the same way, the time of entering Annawali, or the beginning of the winter season, is worshiped as udhauri. This season is considered Dongdawa (the year is over). Considering Ubhauri as Dongwanga (beginning of the year), it was found that Annawali is worshiped so that there will be good harvests, no sorrows and illnesses, and no loss of wealth due to earthquakes. Likewise, Sakela is worshiped as (Sava Saya Dotma) for power and influence. Similarly, there is a tradition of worshiping Udhauri by saying Doddava (the year is over) and thanking nature. At this time, there is a tradition of worshiping the dead ancestors inside the house in both the Udhauri and Ubhauri seasons. In the same way, after the puja inside the house, together with the collective puja of the dead ancestors, Prakriti is also worshiped as Sakela. Therefore, Udhauri Udhauri also indicates the change in the environment in the Kirant Rai. As the Kirant Rais were nature-worshippers, they worshiped nature at the time of farming and threshing of crops, according to the weather and celebrated this festival accordingly.

While worshiping Sakela, different processes are followed. Sakela Puja is performed by Nakchhong or Nakchhongma (priest). While worshiping Sakela, first of all, the dhol is pulled, and the drum is cleaned, stretched, and weighed. After that, the people of all the groups of the village gather in the public place and perform mass worship. In this puja, from the children of the village to the old people, they participate and sing songs and dance together. The event is held over the course of five days throughout a single season. It educates the public about the connection between the natural seasons and social life's beat. The Sakela Sili festival is a seasonal event as well. When the Rai people first planted in April, they did it as offerings to their ancestors, asking for protection for the land and a bountiful harvest. Harvest customs typically signal the celebration of offering the first fruits or grains to the gods or ancestors in November. Sakela has established a relationship of mutual harmony and brotherhood between the Rais in different languages and cultures in a silo of unity. Although they are hostile to each other, Sakela and Sakela forget all their sorrows and pains during Laak and sing and dance together. In this way, Lak provides all kinds of entertainment, forgetting the sorrows, joys, pleasures, etc., of the mind.

4.2.2 Sili dance in Marriage Rituals

The Kirant Rai Sakela Sili dance performance at a marriage ritual is an important cultural show that highlights the Kirant Rai community's traditional practices. The Sakela Sili dance is a type of folk dance that is frequently performed at cultural and religious events, such as weddings. Sili dance is a spiritual and cultural heritage among the Kirant Rai people. It is usually performed to thank deities, commemorate significant life events, and demonstrate communal cooperation. The dance enhances the typical reverence and excitement of a wedding ceremony.

Nowadays, the Sakela Sili dance is mostly performed in urban areas during marriage rituals of the Kirant Rai. Participants in the Sili dance move rhythmically in a circle while playing traditional instruments such as the "Jhyamta" and "Dhol" (drum). The dancers frequently stand in a circle and perform a set of steps that represent unity and harmony, two qualities that are essential to marriage. Dancers wear traditional Kirant Rai attire, which includes vibrant, often hand-woven clothes. The costumes include brightly colored dresses, headpieces, and decorative jewelry, adding to the cultural richness and beauty of the performance and creating a visually appealing spectacle.

Dancing Sakela Sili at a wedding ceremony symbolizes the unity between the bride and groom as well as the union of both families, and it strengthens the sense of community and community participation in the wedding. Sili dancing involves the larger community, in which friends and relatives participate, perform, and strengthen bonds within the extended family and society. The Kirant Rai people's Sili dance, which is done during marriage ceremonies, is more than just a kind of amusement; it is an important cultural custom that highlights the event's community and spiritual elements. It guarantees that the marriage is characterized by blessings and group involvement by adding a deep layer of ritual and celebration.

4.2.3 Sili dance in Social Gatherings and Stage Shows

The Sili dance is also known as the Sakela Dance or the Kirant Rai dance. It is a significant cultural expression among the Kirant Rai group, demonstrating their strong connection to the environment, spirituality, and communal life. The dance is performed at numerous festivals and ceremonies, and its style changes according to

the occasion, purpose, and locality. Sili dances are performed to honor the gods and to celebrate. This dance expresses gratitude to nature, ancestors, and spiritual beings for their protection and blessings. It is celebrated twice a year in the months of Baisakh and Mangsir. The dance is performed in a circle, with participants usually in traditional attire, moving rhythmically to the beat of drums and other local instruments. The movements are symbolic, involving both fast and slow steps, and participants often make intricate patterns on the ground. The dance is usually accompanied by chants or songs that express gratitude and community solidarity.

One of the informants said that, ‘In the present modern times, the Sakela Sili dance has been performed in other cultural programs and ceremonies of the Rai community apart from the Sakela festival. These types of exhibitions preserve traditional culture, promote cultural diversity and awareness, and are presented to a wide audience. In urban centers or during special events, the traditional Kirant Rai Sakela dance is sometimes performed on professional stages, with elaborate costumes and lighting.’ These stage shows are designed to preserve the heritage of the dance while incorporating contemporary aspects of stagecraft. Due to the impact of urbanization on the Kirant Rai community, Sakela Sili performances are held indoors, such as in community halls, cultural centers, or auditoriums that allow the dance to be performed in a more controlled, modern environment while still maintaining its communal feel. In modern cities where open spaces are limited, Sakela festivals and dance performances are held in parks, public squares, or indoor arenas. Dance is often staged in ways that adapt to the spatial boundaries of urban settings.

To further adapt to modern settings, workshops, and educational programs are organized to teach the dance to younger generations and non-community members. These workshops are held in schools, or cultural institutions, helping to preserve and pass down the dance in a contemporary context.

The Sakela Sili dance, an important cultural expression of the Kirant Rai community, is traditionally performed during the Sakela festival, which is a time for celebrating harvest and honoring nature. Historically, the dance has been performed in open spaces, such as fields, as part of communal celebrations. However, as societies evolve and modern spaces become more common, there has been a need to adapt the Sakela Sili dance to fit new environments while preserving its cultural essence.

4.3 Role and Function of Sakela Sili festival in fostering social cohesion among Rais in the urban context of Kathmandu

People that share a culture are more likely to work together and help one another, which fosters ties within the group. Sakela Sili festival is the main festival of Kirant Rai. This festival is celebrated twice a year. In this Sakela festival, Sakela Sili is danced by gathering at a certain place and worshipping nature and ancestors. This festival plays an important role in enhancing social cohesion and maintaining cultural identity. Its relevance in an urban context like Kathmandu is particularly important due to the rapid urbanization and migration of Rais from rural areas to urban areas. The Sakela Sili Festival ensures the continuity of its traditions among the Kirant Rai community living in the urban environment of Kathmandu through cultural preservation and its identity, social unity and gathering, intergenerational relations, cultural expression, and visibility to promote social unity.

The Sakela Sili Festival preserves the cultural traditions of the Kirant Rai. This is a major cultural trend. The members of the Rai community have preserved the traditions and customs passed down from their ancestors. If we look at the urban perspective of Kathmandu, the traditional Sakela Sili festival was celebrated as before, but now in the urban environment, even though it is not as popular as before, it is tried to be practiced in a traditionally. The Sakela Sili festival preserves the cultural traditions of the Kirant Rai. This is a major cultural trend. The members of the Rai community have preserved the traditions and customs passed down from their ancestors. If we look at the urban perspective of Kathmandu, the traditional Sakela Sili festival was celebrated as before, but now in the urban environment, even though it is not as popular as before, it is tried to be practiced in a traditional way.

The Sakela festival creates social bonds. This festival provides gathering opportunities for Kirant Rai scattered in the urban environment. Such gatherings help bridge the gaps created by distance, busy urban lifestyles, and migration. Sakela Sili Festival fosters a sense of unity, togetherness, and connection that allows people to reconnect with family, friends, and the wider community. In the urban context of Kathmandu, Sakela Sili is a festival that identifies the Kirant Rai community.

Strengthening the social networks, through the festival, participants renew old friendships, create new connections, and build networks of support within the urban environment. It is important to provide mutual support in times of operational need, to provide emotional support, and to ensure that people do not feel alone in a big city like Kathmandu. Culture is passed from one generation to another. Culture has intergenerational connections. The Sakela festival facilitates intergenerational interaction where elders teach the younger members of the community about traditional customs, traditions, and the importance of their heritage. It helps preserve the community's collective memory of the importance of the Kirant Rai community. Even though the young generations grow up in urban environments, this age-old Sili festival plays an important role in connecting them with their land.

Sakela is a cultural performance. It represents the history, culture, civilization, identity, and philosophical life of the Kirant indigenous people. It is performed in various steps. These steps are an imitation of the ancestors' tasks. In the urban context of Kathmandu, the Udhauli and Ubhauli have been developed as a prosperous culture to promote ethnic tolerance, unity, and fraternity. The Sakela festival has played a role in minimizing conflict by keeping ethnic, religious, and cultural goodwill and mutual reconciliation.

The modernization forces that affected the societies caused them to become more aware of their customs and cultures. It was also impossible for the Kathmandu's Rai Kirant societies to avoid the influence of modernity. They have thereby acquired fresh experiences and information. They have moved in search of a better quality of life. Through contemporary mass media and personal experiences, they have simultaneously encountered various civilizations and traditions around the world. As a result, they are currently seeking to understand their own identities and cultures. Rai Kiranti communities celebrate the Sakela Festival domestically and abroad in various diasporas. There are various ways in which the Sakela Festival has contributed to the revitalization of the cultures. It serves as a means of identifying one's cultural identity and language in addition to commemorating the holiday. All Rai Kirant participants in the Sakela Festival are brought together by it. The event itself has served as a means of reviving Rai Kirant's customs and culture in contrast to the present era. In addition to the Rai community, the Sakela Festival is widely acknowledged as an Indigenous

identity that could be seen as a source of pride and distinction for the country. Furthermore, the event serves as a gathering spot for all Kirantis to exchange emotions, joys, and life experiences. Promoting the festival is made easier by the participation of a wide range of participants, including singers, musicians, artists, professionals, and people of all ages.

Performing the Sakela Sili Festival in the open square of a multicultural city like Kathmandu provides a platform for the Kirant Rai culture to be seen and appreciated by a wider audience. It promotes the cultural worship of the Rai community and also increases mutual respect and understanding between different castes and cultural groups. The festival is associated with artistic expression that includes dance, music, and costumes. Sili dance performances serve as a means for Kirant people in Kathmandu to affirm their identity and ensure that their cultural expressions are seen and valued. In this festival, the people of the Kirant Rai community from different places gather in one place and perform dances by wearing clothes that reflect their identity.

The Kirant Rais of Kathmandu maintain their traditional identity while living in an urban setting, and they participate in the celebration by dancing to the beat of Dhol Jyhamta. During the Sakela Sili festival, people have been remembering God, their ancestors, their community, and Mother Nature. In Kathmandu's open square, the Kirant Rais perform a Sili dance on the day of the Sakela festival. The Kirant Rai Yaokkha Samiti, an organization affiliated with Kirant Rai, determines the date of the event. In the urban setting of Kathmandu, the Kirant Rai Yayokkha Committee plays a significant role in preserving social cohesion among the Rai community by promoting this festival via letters and social media.

The Sakela Sili festival promotes unity among Kirant Rais by maintaining harmony among themselves, which can instill a sense of belonging and shared identity. This sense of unity encourages cooperation, trust, and unity. Similarly, the Sakela Sili festival maintains social unity among the Rai community. On the Sakela festival, which is celebrated twice a year, all the Rais gather in one place. There is unity and harmony among all the Rais participating in the festival. Culture is a force that binds the people of a community together. Similarly, the Sakela Sili festival is also one that plays an important role in bringing people of the Kirant community together.

Cultural events provide a platform for people from different backgrounds to come together, interact, and share experiences. Sakela Sili festival is also one where many

people participate. There is interaction among the gathered participants; such public interaction helps to break down social barriers and increase mutual understanding and respect. Performing cultural traditions like this in the urban context of Kathmandu highlights the richness of diversity within the Rai community. The Sakela Sili festival promotes a sense of inclusivity and connection among members of the Rai community.

Chapter-Five

Changes in the Rituals of the Sakela Sili Festival

This chapter tries to find the changes on the traditional Sakela Sili dance in terms of its origin, rules, roles, and importance. In addition, the chapter provides importance aspects of the Sili dance in terms of its social, culture, historical and how traditional Sakela Sili festival is changing today.

5.1 Changes in the Rai community's Symbolism, Rituals and Collective Identity

Rituals, symbolism, and collective identity have changed significantly over time for the Rai people. This is an indigenous ethnic group that is mostly found in eastern Nepal and parts of India. External influences, including globalization, modernization, political upheavals, and contacts with other cultural groups, frequently have an impact on these developments.

5.1.1 Changes in Rai Community's Symbolism

In Rai's culture, it is performed through making different shrines as well as the Sakela Sili festival. The meaning of this ritual lies in its performance, which is visible, and whose actions create more meanings than words. For example, when the Sakela dance is performed at once, it brings many meanings, that cannot always be described in words. Its meaning is often found in the way it is conveyed or symbolized. It is done at a particular time or ritualistic period. It could be certain prayers, mantras, and songs. Together, through performing or using symbolic items, it is accomplished.

Regarding Sili dance, an informant Mukesh Rai said, 'A dance style known as "Sili" is executed by following a set of guidelines, performing a series of movements in which the feet, hands, and entire body rest on the beat of a verse accompanied by musical instruments.' However, jazz and popular music from the West, such as pop, rock, and hip-hop, have a greater influence on younger generations than traditional dances from their own culture. They observe the effects of various Hindi, American, and European TV channels and attempt to imitate them in their way of living.

Due to the influence of contemporary trends, participants now dance utilizing contemporary methods that do not align with the intent of the Sili regulations. People

appear to be experimenting with new styles of dancing as they move erratically. Conversely, if the guidelines are adhered to, the new dance moves appear to be a tiny bit quicker than the older ones. For example, when hands, entire body, and feet are involved in movement, it is visual.

The dancer was a professional who trained under our priest Nakchhong before taking part in the festival, which was held in the historical period of 606 BC. Yet this custom is all but gone in the current fad. In addition to this, non-Kiranti individuals were prohibited from attending Kiranti festivals and were not even allowed to handle our traditional instruments. If they want to see the celebrations, they should be somewhere in the distance. These days, though, things have changed. For example, other casts now participate in the Sakela Sili festival, which has a detrimental effect on Rai culture's traditional standards and ideals. The festival is viewed as enjoyable by individuals from different communities. To them, it is difficult to comprehend the true significance of the holiday, and when diverse identities coexist, there are greater opportunities to incorporate other cultures into the celebration.

In terms of Kirant's traditional Rai dress, women's dresses are more changing than men's because women are more conscious towards fashion. Women and Men used to wear traditional dresses made of 'Khadi', which is made from pure cotton by hand, but now these days Rai people are wearing traditional dresses made by a machine while celebrating the Sakela Sili festival. Besides their traditional attire, ladies wear traditional jewelry like Tilhari, Kantha, and Naugedi, which are made of gold, silver, and precious stones that are becoming increasingly hard to locate. Western design also plays a role; the high cost of these decorations necessitates a source of money, and participants do not enjoy wearing them due to a lack of social stability. There is a trend among younger generations, in some way. They have little interest in preserving their customs. Therefore, there are a variety of factors influencing the younger generations' mindset that are contributing to its detrimental impacts. As an illustration, consider migration, Western fashion, cultural apathy, and converting to a different religion.

5.1.2 Changes in the Rituals

A ritual activity provides visible evidence that religion is more than just assenting to beliefs; it includes behaviors, institutions, changing customs, and explanatory systems. Before the Sakela Festival is performed, several rites must be completed. The rites have a stronger religious component. However, due to a scarcity of traditional items required for the Sakela Festival, these rituals cannot be carried out properly in the current era. Its ideas, systems, customs, and values progressively vanished among individuals participating in the festival if these kinds of traditional rites could not be carried out in traditional ways.

Behavior is characterized by the rules; the rituals are performed in front of the shrine of Sakela. The priest, Nakchhong, remembers the Mundhumi language and decides to carry out the ancestor worship rite. During the Sakela Festival, worshiping the Sakela temple is crucial. For the wealth, health, and general well-being of the Rai Kirant community, the Sakela Festival is observed and the Sakela shrine is revered. At that time, a lot of ritualistic actions are performed. Rituals play a significant and integral part in Sakela worship and celebration. Sakela is thought to represent prosperity, power, and the bond between Mother Nature and humans. It begins with the priest, Nakchhong, recalling and performing a specific Mundhum language, incantation, and method of deliberation. Nakchhong provides the Sakela shrine with ginger, food, grains, and handmade wine in addition to spreading yeast water to purify it.

As time has gone on, the Rai Kirant people have been exposed to the trends, cultures, knowledge, information, education, and technologies of the contemporary world, and they have also become more multicultural and globally integrated. An informant Prem Kumari Bayung Rai said that, 'Their lifestyles, places of residence, and occupations have all changed, and they now have different viewpoints on preconceived notions and ideas, among other things.' Reforms and preservation of previous lives, customs, and other things have been felt by them. Too many things have changed about the Sakela Festival as a result of modernization. Depending on the time, location, and circumstance, the Sakela shrine worship ritual, songs, dance, and costumes have evolved. They have access to all of the modern world's amenities and have also been affected by globalization and modernization. They have new ideas, information, and

empirical practice habits as a result of modern technologies, mass media, the internet, education, industrialization, western fashion, and cultures, among other things. The traditional Sakela Festival has been observed to have both positive and negative effects. There are still a few locations in the hilly eastern region where we can observe the traditional Sakela Festival celebrations, but in other locations, there have been significant alterations made to the event.

In the past, the Rai Kirant people worshipped Sakela temple and offered sacrifices of cows, bulls, pigs, cocks, and other animals. In some areas of Nepal's eastern hill country, the practice of sacrifice is still practiced. The sacrifices were intended to fall under the crucial ceremonial actions that needed to be completed before the Sakela Festival commenced. The Rai people moved to various parts of the nation as time went on. They moved away from where they were born and settled in the nation's cities and Terai regions. Even though they have moved, they always remember to celebrate the Sakela Festival. However, there are a lot of changes there, however, not all of them are related to modernizing causes.

In most of the cities, urban and Terai areas, the traditions of animal sacrifices have been almost banned at present. In the same way, alcohol was used in the festival unlimitedly, but such a trend has been cut off nowadays in such festivals. Concerning animal sacrifice, in the Kathmandu district of Nepal there is a Sakela shrine at Kathmandu where animal sacrifice is banned. The Sakela shrine is worshiped without killing animals but offering flowers and fruits. There are now two ways to worship the Sakela shrine in Kathmandu. One of the two Sakela shrines is revered and offered fruits and flowers. The animal is sacrificed to worship another. It is possible to attribute the development of this tradition to the influence of industrialization. They have been sensitive to the negative parts of the culture and the slaughter of animals. As a result, the Sakela Festival ceremonies have undergone some modifications from their earlier, customary forms.

5.2.3 Changes in the Collective Identity

The collective identity of the Kirant Rai community has undergone significant changes over time, influenced by various social, economic, and political factors. An indigenous ethnic community with a unique cultural heritage, language, and religious

customs, the Kirant Rai are mostly located in Nepal, India, and portions of Bhutan. Although these components are fundamental to their collective identity, several reasons have led to changes in how this identity is understood and articulated.

The Sakela Sili dance is a traditional cultural dance of the Rai community. The way people used to celebrate it tangibly changed along with time and space. After the Rais began to spread from their historical area to different parts of the world, there was a significant change in the performance of the Sakela Sili dance. Globalization and modernization have had a great impact on the way the Sakela dance is performed. Dance prevails even in this globalized modern world, thereby making Sakela a marker of the Rai people's identity.

Cultural, political, economic, and social forces interact in a complicated way to define the Kirant Rai community's collective identity. The Kirant Rai community is making a greater effort to maintain and promote their indigenous identity, but contemporary factors like globalization, migration, and political upheaval have presented both opportunities and obstacles in redefining what it means to be a part of the community today.

The collective identity of any community is shaped and transformed in large part by political activism. Political mobilization plays a role in changing the identity of the Kirant Rai community. The Kirant Rais are an indigenous people of Nepal. Historically, they have experienced social and political marginalization. Significant changes in their collective identity have resulted from the Kirant Rai people's political engagement. The Kirant Rai group can affirm their own ethnic and cultural identity in opposition to state-led or prevailing ethnic narratives by engaging in political mobilization. The group has used political activism to try to restore and advance their language, traditions, rituals, and religious practices—all of which have frequently been eclipsed by the prevailing Nepali culture. Political movements such as advocating the recognition of Kirant languages (e.g., Rai or Kiranti languages) and cultural heritage have fostered cultural revival by fostering a sense of pride in their distinct history and cultural practices. Political mobilization awakens cultural and ethnic pride.

The Kirant Rai people have used political mobilization to push for increased acknowledgment in the government, especially about their rights as indigenous people. Initiatives to obtain constitutional recognition of the Kirant community and its right to self-determination have resulted from this. In the framework of indigenous rights, for instance, the Kirant Rai group has fought for recognition, which includes the preservation of their social and cultural rights as well as involvement in national decision-making organizations. Fair political representation, which is frequently demanded by political action, has the power to transform collective identity from that of passive or marginalized people into active participants in governance. Through political mobilization, the Rai community aims to guarantee their inclusion in the political process as well as their recognition as an ethnic minority.

Community solidarity is frequently fostered through political activism. By strengthening similar ideals and objectives, the Kirant Rai community's collective identity is strengthened when its members band together behind common political objectives, such as securing equal rights or obtaining autonomy. This sense of solidarity can aid in bridging caste, linguistic, and regional divides within the group. Building unity is a key function of political organizations and groups established inside the Kirant Rai community, such as the Kirant Rai Yayokkha. In resistance to outside forces that can jeopardize their cultural and political rights, these organizations strive to guarantee that the community's interests are represented.

The Kirant Rai community is now working harder to secure their social and economic rights as a result of political mobilization. Their social standing and sense of community are bolstered by having access to economic resources, healthcare, and education. People in the community can feel more powerful and connected to their larger identity as a result of the improvements made in these areas. Through increasing awareness of the socioeconomic problems of the Kirant Rai people, political engagement strengthens their shared identity, which is based on their desire for justice and equity. As the community becomes more conscious of its own political and social situation, it develops a more distinct and cohesive sense of who it is.

Political mobilization strengthens a person's sense of self, but it also exacerbates conflict between conventional ideals and contemporary political action. The younger generations, who are more politically engaged, rethink customs, sometimes in ways

that go against established conventions. A dynamic collective identity is shaped by this continuous negotiation and changes throughout time. Their fight for further autonomy or federal recognition is a crucial component of Kirant Rai's political movement. The community's cultural, political, and administrative rights are frequently the main goals of this endeavor. As a result, concepts of sovereignty, self-rule, and the defense of indigenous rights become strongly linked to the communal identity.

The Kirant Rai people, who have historically lived in rural or semi-rural regions, frequently have close ties to their ancient customs, such as farming, native ceremonies, and social systems focused on community. Due to the transition to more contemporary urban lives, urban migration disturbs these customs. The group encounters difficulties maintaining its language, traditions, and religious rituals if they relocate to urban areas. Traditional identity weakened as a result of these unique cultural traits gradually eroding due to exposure to popular urban culture.

Urbanization provides economic opportunities, like improved education, employment, and social mobility, that are not available in rural areas. Community prosperity results from this, but social cohesiveness and traditional communal values suffer as a result. Old customs and contemporary urban behaviors are frequently blended as a result of the Kirant Rai community's forced adaptation to new cultural contexts due to migration. A hybrid identity is eventually produced as a result, with some members adopting modern culture and others resisting or making an effort to maintain their old traditions.

The Kirant Rai community's social roles and hierarchy may change as a result of the urban setting. In rural areas, elders have a great deal of power, and responsibilities are frequently determined by age, caste, and kinship. However, the more independent nature of urban life tends to decentralize power and redefine social connections. Intergenerational conflicts over values, cultural customs, and identity result from younger generations' propensity to stray from traditional community practices due to their exposure to contemporary education and metropolitan lifestyles.

The Kirant Rai community develops a unique diaspora identity as more of its members move to cities or overseas. Despite the constraints of assimilation, these

diaspora communities preserve their cultural heritage and establish networks that uphold customs and practices. Despite people's adjustment to urban life, these networks aid in establishing a shared ethnic identity. The Kirant Rai community participates in social action and cultural advocacy in urban regions such as Kathmandu to create cultural organizations, protect their identity, and increase awareness of their uniqueness in the larger society.

Globalization has increased Indigenous culture awareness, allowing the Kirant Rai community to share their traditions through social media platforms, empowering younger generations, and fostering pride in their roots. Social media connects Kirant Rai people, diaspora, and homeland, promoting knowledge exchange, cultural events, and discussing issues. Its global reach promotes language, songs, dance, and cultural practices amidst cultural homogenization. Globalization poses challenges to the Kirant Rai community's traditional identity, with mainstream media, Western culture, and consumerism potentially leading to cultural erosion. Younger generations identify more with national or global identities, potentially losing connection to rural traditions due to urbanization. Social media has enabled the Kirant Rai community to maintain their identity and cultural practices, even in the diaspora. This global network reinforces their sense of belonging and collective identity, even when physically distant from their traditional territories.

Younger members, particularly women and marginalized groups, are challenging traditional gender roles in the Kirant Rai community, advocating for gender equality and social justice. This could either lead to progressive changes or create friction with traditional expectations. Exposure to broader political movements and socioeconomic opportunities can influence younger people's identity, leading to national or global citizenship. Elders resist these influences, emphasizing community solidarity and land rights. This tension can shape the community's political identity and advocacy approach.

5.2 Changes in the Traditional Practices and Rituals

Since the beginning of time, Nepal has held the Sakela Festival. It lacks a clear and established timeline. The traditional Sakela Festival has evolved to incorporate elements of modernism, location, and community. As it is carried out in various

locations, areas, and communities both inside and outside the country in accordance with the needs, it has been embracing new changes.

5.1.2 Changes Practices of Nakchhong and Nakchhongma

Nakchhong is the main priest of the Sakela shrine; nobody can be a Nakchhong or Nakchhongma. Priest Nakchhong is a male, while Priest Nakchhongma is female. There are special rituals, myths, and beliefs that should be fulfilled. There are two ways to be a perfect Nakchhong or Nakchhongma. One, it should be after the death of the old Nakchhong, society decides to make a new Nakchhong. There are certain criteria such as he should be old, must know the Mudumi language, and knowledge about Rai rituals. Second, Chamapa Nakchhong, to define this type of Nakchhong, one of the informant Nakchhong Dilli Rai said, “Chamapa Nakchhong is formed through their dreams, with having a special power that makes them shiver”. Furthermore, people should see themselves as either Nakchhong or Nakchhongma, who are masculine and female respectively.

They are considered to be the representatives of our God and the Godness Sumnima and Paruhang who used to favor their creatures in different ways to their creatures. In the same way, both have their responsibility to favor the Rai people in different aspects. So many rules and regulations should be fulfilled, for example, they should not cross the river, cannot be a hunter, as in a whole their role should be vital to develop the society in positive ways while having moral responsibility. It helps to create sentiments and solidarity in the Kiranti community, which helps to build society in harmonious ways. Through their acts, one generation transmits traditional values and customs to the next. Sentiments like love, hate, and goodwill help to build society through these types of rituals which are done by Nakchhong and Nakchhongma.

In Sakela Sili, the primary initiators are Nakchhong and Nakchhongma; without these ceremonies, no one can begin the Sili dance. The roles and responsibilities of Nakchhong and Nakchhongma are evolving these days, with the latter occurring more frequently in rural areas than in urban ones. They are revered in the Kiranti religion as representatives of our God and Goodness, Paruhang, and Sumnima, who formerly showed various forms of favor to their creatures. Since nobody can remember a

verdict in Mundumi, only they have the authority and responsibility to undertake Sili ceremonies.

Nakchhong has to observe particular rites, laws, customs, and belief systems to carry out their duty. For instance, they must be pure, they cannot be hunters, and they must not cross the river. It is thought that they will be unable to remember or pronounce the Mundumi language in the creatures' favor if these conditions are not met. Only a small number of people in the Kiranti community are Nakchhongs or Nakchhongmas. It's not simple to satisfy certain rites, mythologies, and belief systems either. It has different factors such as financial difficulties, rituals, or values towards the religion. Most important things in the town area cannot be fully practiced. They also prefer to live near nature because it is thought that being in nature helps to keep their souls pure at all times, and it's necessary to be pure as well.

Since the Mundhum is the oral religious text of the Kiranti religion that is primarily contained within the Nakchhong, it makes more sense to correlate it with it while adjusting to the changing values of the Nakchhong. It's known as a Thuturi Veda in Kirant. Rituals performed by Nakchhong use the shamanic language that is based on natural, spiritual, and supernatural power that is only performed by the Nakchhong according to the Mundumi language. Because of its limitation, it is sure that it would disappear one day from the Kiranti culture. It has to be produced as a religious text, similar to the Bible or Gita, or it needs to be created as print materials.

“Nakchhongs are the incarnation of ancient kings.” Nakchhong Dilli Rai expressed that Nakchhong should not shorten the main hair called ‘Tupi,’ the hair left on the crown of the head. It is believed that it is their ornaments that make them extraordinary among ordinary people. It is also believed that they should not cross the rivers because it is considered that their Mundumi knowledge is also swept towards the rivers. In a way of performing the Sakela ritual, mostly used white and yellow colors besides red because red is considered a symbol of blood and brutality in the Kiranti religion. In the accident period in ritual mostly Nakchhong normally used incense that is made from pure herb leaf but in the modern time, it's normally seen that they started to use stick incense which is less impure compared to herbs.

5.2.2 Changes in Traditional Clothes

The Sakela Festival is not only the rituals, gathering together, performing Sili dances, and worshipping the Sakela shrine but also costumes have a very important role and meaning in the Rai Kirant community. Rai community's history and identity are connected to its primitive stage while it is talked about the costumes. What costumes the people used to wear then and what they are wearing now? It shows the Rai peoples' originality as well as their importance, existence, and individual identity in the community. Even though a lot of changes have occurred in the traditional dress, the Rai people still wear the cultural dress at special events and while celebrating festivals. They used to wear handmade costumes and dresses like Daura Surawal, Gunyu-Choli, Phariya, etc, and ornaments. They are using shirts, pants, t-shirts, coats, ties, and jackets made by modern industries. Industrialization is a factor in modernization. The costume has its connection with traditional culture, indigenesness, heritage, and pride for the community as well as for the nation. The organization 'Kirant Rai Yayokkha' has played a key role in the preservation and promotion of traditional Rai Kiranti dress. Ethnic Kiranti dress symbolizes Rai Kirant's identity, culture, language, and religion. It brings togetherness, harmony, and feelings of brotherhood among the different Kiranti clans.

An informant, DP Chamling Rai said, 'As societies have transferred into modernization with development in education, health, industries, technologies, political, economic fields, etc., they have new ideas and knowledge. People have changed their ideologies and settlements for their betterment and secure life. They have been immersed in the empirical and practical views. They believe in fact and truth but not just in belief and traditional conventions.' More to say, they have been more conscious about their identity, tradition, culture, language, norms, and values critically compared to other communities and the world as well. The Rai community has also been conscious of their cultures and festivals. They are using their costumes and other dresses produced by industries. Modernization has revived their cultures in new forms.' From this point of view, the Sakela Festival has helped to create consciousness about traditional Rai dress in the younger generation too. Modern education has given them such consciousness and have become aware of their own cultures.

The younger generation is also aware of our culture and costume. For example, none like to participate without wearing Rai traditional costumes while they celebrate the festivals, ceremonies, and they prepare new costumes as well. This is what can be taken as a positive impact of modernization. Modernization has brought both positive and negative impacts on the traditional Sakela Festival concerning the costume. Yes, of course, the new generations are using traditional costumes and ornaments. They have awareness and consciousness about their culture. But in the name of modernization vulgarity prevails in the festival which is not apt for the society and nation as well. Especially, the girls and boys belonging to the new generation have the experiences of new technologies and world fashions. They are deeply drawn by Western cultures, costumes, and fashions. They have modified their costumes according to the Western style. They wear traditional costumes in a way that they show their body parts. Such trends have increased in the Sakela Festival at present. These types of activities should be stopped in time for the pure and real celebration of the Sakela Festival in the Rai community. Thus, only wearing the Rai traditional costume could give a smell of real ethnic identity and give a sense of pride in being an indigenous people. Still, it is seen all new generations haven't worn the Rai Kirant costumes but the number of users of such costumes is increasing in the Sakela festival every year.

5.2.3 Changes in Traditional Musical Instruments

Modernization and globalization have significantly impacted Rai Kiranti's traditional musical instruments utilized at the Sakela festival. The Sakela Festival featured drums, cymbals, Silimi (an iron-made instrument with rings surrounding it), binayo, and Murchungga. The Sakela Festival features traditional instruments such as drums, cymbals, Silimi, Binayo (made of bamboo), and Murchungga (made of iron), among others. But at present all these instruments can't be seen in the Sakela Festival due to their declination and lack of production. In the Rai Kirant community, the binayo is the most often used traditional folk musical instrument. It is composed of a flat piece of bamboo with threads and holes in it. Binayo is knotted with strong threads on both sides. Binayo vibrates and makes noise when one side thread is pulled repeatedly. It is generally said to be played well by women. A chunk of iron with a vibrator in the center makes up Murchungga. It emits sound when a finger strikes the vibrator. These

days, the instruments are seldom remembered. Binayo and Murchungga are disappearing from the community daily due to inadequate conservation and marketing efforts. All of these instruments were used by Rai Kiranti's predecessors and ancestors, however, none are now in use. As civilization progressed into a more contemporary and developed state, it gained access to modern global amenities such as media, the internet, industrial production, technologies, and more. They have relocated to urban areas in search of better possibilities. Traditional instruments are being replaced by electronic ones in modern and Western cultures, as people leave their homeland and immerse themselves in modern and Western music.

An informant, Anuka Rai told that, 'Younger generations are far more interested in electronic systems when compared to the use of these kinds of traditional instruments. With them, they are more at ease. Regarding traditional instruments, there are numerous rituals and ideals. For instance, the drums used at the Sakela Festival must be crafted from specific wood and deer hide. Drums that are used in the Sakela Festival have to be made from deerskin with special wood. People now make them from cow and buffalo skin because they have new thoughts about the traditional drum festivals.' Similarly, it is completely banned to touch persons from other casts or absent castes; these attitudes are progressively changing as a result of education and the belief that no one is from upper or lower castes. Cymbals are among other musical instruments that should not be used without completing particular ceremonies, however, their rituals and legendary values are increasingly fading. Modernization could be one element influencing the change of earlier values. The knowledge and concepts of the modern educational system have resulted in a rethinking and re-examination of existing beliefs and assumptions.

Traditional musical instruments play an important part in the development of ethnic identity and in the expression of that identity at the Sakela Festival. Using these instruments illustrates how Rai people think about themselves and their place in nature. The most important point is that these traditional instruments be employed in a ritual context. When utilized in a ritual environment, these types of instruments are thought to have a strong connection with the Rai Kiranti. When we look at the ritual and its values through the lens of traditional musical instruments, it appears that they are gradually changing or being replaced based on time, place, and occasion. The

sound of the drum is known as a sacred sound for removing the ill soul which creates problems for the people. The sound has the power to remove the ill soul that causes trouble to people as well.

5.2.4 Changes in Traditional Song and Dance

Rai Kirant people used to sing the Sakela song in their mother tongue in the past days since the Rai people used to live in the same territory together. Sililak is the original tradition of Sakela Sili dance and lyrics. It has its ways of performance and creation. According to traditional belief, it has a deep connection with the Mundhum and Mother Nature. Sililak songs are developed through oral literature. But in present days because of the impacts of modernization, most of Sililak's lyrics are full of love which is popular among younger generations. The Sakela songs and Sili dance had the same meaning and imitation.

With time, Rai Kirant people migrated to different places of Nepal and parts of the outside country, they missed their clan, original place, and community then they started to forget their mother tongue. According to an informant Ashok Rai, 'The Sakela dances were performed separately by Silihangpa and Silihangma in their own group in the past days'. They have mixed with other cultures and communities. However, they could save and celebrate the Sakela Festival in the modern world along with modern cultures, technologies, and lifestyles. The education system has been changed. Thus, the Rai Kirant communities have hardly saved their mother tongue since they do have not any co-partners to have a conversation in their mother tongue. In Urban areas like Kathmandu, it is said that the factors of modernization have made Rai Kirant people forget their languages along with cultures and traditions. The new generation doesn't have any ideas about the mother tongue since they attend the English school mostly. There is a lack of mother tongue experts and the problem in front of the Rai community is how to perform the rituals in their mother tongue in the Sakela Festival and other rituals performances. As a result, the Nepali language has been the dominant language in most of the Rai community as well as in the Sakela Festival.

The Sakela dances were performed separately by Silihangpa and Silihangma in their group in the past days. The Sakela Sili dances performed imitating activities done by

the Rai Kirant god, and goddess, the activities of birds and animals, and agricultural activities done by people. The Sakela Sili dances are started by worshiping the Sakela shrine by Nakchhong performing ritual steps at the beginning. Paruhang and Nayuma (Sumnima) Sili dances are known as the oldest Sili dances which were first performed by them. They are the deities of the Rai Kirant community as well. Paruhang Sili dances were done by using feet mostly and Nayuma Sili dances were performed by using hands mostly. But in urban areas like Kathmandu nowadays days Paruhang Sili and Nayuma Sili dances have been mixed up due to the ignorance of types of Sili dances in the new generation and those Sili dances are not performed these days too'. There are different Sili dances. Among them, some of them used to perform in the past and some of them have been performing since the starting time. Sili is related to warfare and hunting, Sili is related to agriculture and costumes, Sili is related to animal and bird activities, Silis which are related to human activities and lifestyle, Silis is related to merriment, beauty recreation, etc.

Paruhang Sili dance, Nayuma Sili dance, Kirant king's Sili dance, Kirant youth (Khokchilipa) Sili dance, Sili dance that is performed during the worship of ancestors, Tayama and Khiyama Sili dance, Sili dance that is performed during sowing and harvesting crops and grains. Sili dances for better harvests, Sili dance for earth worshiping, Sili dance for farewell and greetings, Sili dance for addressing forefathers, Sili dance for the preservation of whole creatures in the universe, Sili dance for knitting and preparing threads, Sili dance for making and measuring clothes, Sili dance for making beautiful oneself, Sili dance for preparing seeds and baby plants, Sili dance for cutting, keeping, planting rice plants, Sili dances for empowering the Nakchhong (priest) of the Sakela Fest.

But nowadays it is seen that all Sakela Sili dances are not seen in our community since they have been disappearing from generation to generation continuously. It is said that the main cause is the impact of modernization factors. Because of the migration, the experience of the present education system, facilities of technologies, an impression of Western music and song, western cultures and lifestyles, and less cultural practices and awareness, they have lost their cultures and traditions. The impacts are seen in the traditional Sakela Festival as well.

5.3 Changing factors of the Sakela Sili festival in the Urban setting

The Kirant Rai Sakela Sili Festival is a prevalent cultural celebration for the Rai community that takes place largely in eastern Nepal. As the Rai people and their traditions migrate to urban settings such as Kathmandu, several factors such as urbanization, modernization, cultural preservation, transformation, economic factors, migration, and demographic changes influence how the festival is celebrated in cities as opposed to rural areas.

5.3.1 Urbanization and Modernization

The celebration is frequently held in open spaces with greater community involvement in rural areas. But in Kathmandu, the festival's size is impacted by a lack of resources and space. Community halls or hired spaces used for celebrations. Urban settings are used to modify certain rituals that are typically carried out in natural settings, such as using rivers or sacred forests. More regional customs or symbolic representations among them. The usage of social media and technology can help to raise awareness about the festival. Digital platforms are used for live streaming, promoting the festival to a larger audience, and connecting diaspora populations.

The celebration combines aspects of other festivals or is held in conjunction with urban cultural events as the Rai community becomes more integrated into Kathmandu's varied urban cultural fabric. As a result of this hybridization, rituals, music, and clothing are changed to represent a more urban identity. The festival's traditions are reinterpreted by Kathmandu's younger generations, who are frequently less tied to rural customs and more exposed to global cultures.

In rural areas, the Sakela Sili festival is frequently characterized by traditional rituals and communal activities in small settlements. However, in urban locations such as Kathmandu, these habits have shifted due to space limits, modern lifestyles, and urban influences. Some traditional dances, songs, and rituals are adapted or simplified. In urban areas, where time restrictions and hectic lifestyles prevail, the event is celebrated for a shorter period than in rural areas. Some participants prioritize the social and cultural aspects of the event over rigorously adhering to religious and spiritual rituals.

Many young people from rural areas who come to Kathmandu for a job or study have little exposure to the festival's entire range of traditional practices. As newer generations adapt to modern lifestyles and the pressures of urban living, the cultural relevance of the festival diminishes. The urban setting allows individuals from all over Nepal, as well as other ethnic groups, to engage in the festivities. This results in a more diverse festival celebration, but it also creates a shift in the festival's focus and the amalgamation of many cultural customs.

Social media platforms and digital technologies have enabled virtual involvement in the festival. People who are unable to physically attend the festival due to work or travel can now participate via internet videos, live feeds, and virtual rituals. Traditional and digital media coverage increased the festival's visibility. This resulted in growing commercial interest in the festival, with businesses, restaurants, and the entertainment industry utilizing it for promotional purposes. While this helped to keep the celebration visible, it also leads to commercialization and a loss of its original spiritual and cultural importance.

Traditional dances, such as the Sakela Sili dance, are combined with contemporary music or styles in urban festivities, making the event more accessible to younger generations. This fusion, while popular, differs from the original traditional dance traditions.

5.3.2 Migration

The Kirant Rai community's Sakela Sili festival in Kathmandu's urban regions has been greatly impacted by migration, resulting in modifications and continuations in the celebration of the festival. The Kirant Rai people's original identity, customs, and sense of community are closely linked to the Sakela Sili festival, which is customarily a harvest celebration and a significant cultural and religious occasion.

The Kirant Rai community in Kathmandu's urban setting is made up of migrants from different areas, which causes regional customs and Sakela Sili varieties to merge. There is a blending of customs, dances, and songs that represent the diversity of the celebration when people from many regions with distinctive interpretations of it join together. Due to time constraints, a lack of space, or a change in priorities, some traditional rituals are reduced or altered as a result of the community's relocation to

urban regions. Although these modifications may lead to less ornate ceremonies than those held in rural areas, essential cultural components remain.

New generations brought by migration frequently have a weaker bond with their rural heritage. Some of the Rai younger generations in Kathmandu react differently to the Sakela Sili festival because they are less familiar with or interested in traditional practices. On the other hand, this can also result in the development of youth-led projects that update the festival and maintain its appeal over time.

The Kirant Rai community's Sakela Sili festival has changed as a result of migration to Kathmandu, impacting the way it is observed, the social structures involved, and the participation of newer generations. A dynamic and changing form of the festival has been created by adapting some traditional practices to fit modern living while retaining others.

Migration to the urban area leads to both the preservation and transformation of Kirant Rai's cultural practices. On one hand, people worked harder to maintain traditional customs as a way of asserting their identity in the urban context, while on the other hand, the challenges of city life lead to new interpretations or hybrid forms of the festival that combine elements of both Kirant Rai culture and urban influences. As the Kirant Rai community in Kathmandu connects with others from the same ethnic background who have migrated from different regions or countries, the festival becomes a way to strengthen diaspora ties. This results in more organized events and a broader regional or international celebration of the Sakela Sili.

The rural Kirant Rai communities would typically celebrate the festival in open spaces such as fields or community gathering areas. However, in Kathmandu, the lack of such spaces and the density of urban living could constrain the festival's expression. The community shifts the venue to smaller, urban spaces like community halls, temples, or even private homes.

With a growing urban population and changing social dynamics, public participation also changes. The participation of people from different backgrounds and ethnicities in the Sakela Sili festival may increase, bringing attention to the Kirant Rai community's culture, but also possibly diluting some of the traditional aspects as it becomes more open to outsiders.

5.3.3 Economic Factors

As more members of the Kirant Rai community move from rural areas to urban centers like Kathmandu in search of better employment opportunities, they experience changes in their economic status. Urban life often comes with increased exposure to modern lifestyles and influences, which lead to shifts in the traditional ways of celebrating the Sakela Sili festival. Some community members prioritize work over traditional observances, and celebrations become more simplified or even commercialized. The economic conditions of the community members affect how they participate in the festival. Higher-income levels enable more elaborate celebrations with better offerings, decorations, and food. Conversely, economic hardship leads to scaled-back celebrations or limits the participation of poorer community members in larger events or gatherings.

The festival's commercialization is growing as the neighborhood integrates more fully into the urban economy. Business owners see the occasion as a chance to promote or sell festival-related goods including apparel, décor, and food. Due to this commercialization, the festival's emphasis has shifted from solely traditional and spiritual customs to more consumer-driven events that may not appeal to all community members.

Younger generations of the Kirant Rai community have been impacted by modern, worldwide patterns as a result of urbanization. A stronger focus on modernism and individualism as a result of economic development threatens traditional customs. For example, some choose to celebrate the Sakela Sili festival in a more contemporary, less traditional manner that emphasizes social gatherings over religious or cultural traditions. As a result of this change, cultural activities gradually become more hybridized or lose their identity.

As the festival gains more visibility, especially in urban centers, there is a growing trend to commercialize the event. Vendors, businesses, and even entertainment companies capitalize on the festival's popularity, selling products like clothing, food, and accessories, which change the focus from spiritual and cultural observance to economic activities. Economic constraints and urbanization make it difficult for people to fully participate in traditional rituals. For example, some practices that

require a specific location, rural resources, or communal labor are adapted or even skipped in favor of more accessible, cost-effective alternatives. This can lead to the loss or modification of certain elements of the festival.

Access to media and technology increases as economies rise. The Sakela Sili festival has a wider, occasionally worldwide audience as a result of the Kirant Rai community's growing reliance on social media and digital platforms to communicate their festival experiences. The dynamics of the festival itself may change as a result of the modernization of its celebrations, which involve online involvement or the sharing of customs and rituals. In urban areas like Kathmandu, many Kirant Rai people migrate from rural areas for better job opportunities, thereby weakening the sense of community. With less time and resources to devote to the festival, participation is more individualistic, with families celebrating privately rather than as part of a large community gathering.

Social stratification is more noticeable in cities like Kathmandu, and the community's economic differences have an impact on who attends the festival's main activities and customs. Families with greater financial resources are more involved in planning and supporting the festival, whereas those with less money have a harder time taking part in all of the events.

Exposure to other cultural practices, such as those of nearby communities or different ethnic groups in Kathmandu, is also influenced by one's economic standing. The way the Sakela Sili festival is observed has changed as a result of exposure to various festival celebrations and the merging of cultural aspects. Aspects of other metropolitan festivities, such as those associated with mainstream Nepali culture or global trends, have been included in the event.

Economic factors in the Kathmandu urban area, such as migration, income levels, commercialization, and social class dynamics, are reshaping how the Kirant Rai community observes the Sakela Sili festival. While these changes can bring about new forms of celebration, they also pose challenges in maintaining the traditional cultural and religious practices that have long defined the festival. The Sakela Sili festival in urban areas like Kathmandu is adapting to the economic realities of modern life, which include commercialization, time constraints, and a shift in community

dynamics. While these changes bring some benefits in terms of visibility and access, they also pose challenges to preserving the festival's traditional cultural and communal essence.

5.3.4 Education and Political Factors

The Kirant Rai community celebrates the Sakela Sili festival, which has great cultural, religious, and social significance. Like many traditional celebrations, though, it has been impacted by shifting political and educational landscapes, especially in urban areas like Kathmandu.

The younger generation in particular has become more conscious of and interested in maintaining cultural practices as education levels rise. The Sakela Sili festival has seen an increase in the participation of many educated young people who are trying to preserve its customs despite modernization. Traditional customs are blended with modern aspects as a consequence of the influence of formal education. For instance, while maintaining the essential traditional components of the Sakela Sili celebration, the Kirant Rai community in urban areas integrates modern media, technology, and even ritual practices that are more in line with urban living.

In an urban setting, education promotes communication between various cultures and ethnic groups. In addition to fostering intercultural understanding, this exposure to many cultures and customs results in a reinterpretation of Sakela Sili that incorporates aspects of other holidays or traditions. Although increased festival participation has been made possible by Kathmandu's educational development, traditional wisdom has also become less relevant. The festival's customs and practices are not well understood by younger generations, which can lead to simplified or changed festivities.

Particularly with the emergence of ethnic political movements and the reorganization of Nepal as a federal republic, the political landscape in Nepal has experienced substantial changes in recent years. In their support of ethnic rights, the Kirant Rai community has become more well-known, and the Sakela Sili celebration has grown to represent ethnic pride and identity.

National political beliefs influence the festival's religious aspects. The Sakela Sili festival's emphasis moves more toward cultural and communal elements in a more secular political climate, while some spiritual or religious acts are minimized. As a result, the event is viewed and observed differently, particularly in urban areas where governmental control is more pronounced. As rural-to-urban migration increases, the Sakela Sili festival has adapted to the urban environment. The Kirant Rai community now organizes the festival in more accessible public spaces in Kathmandu, which are often influenced by the political and administrative structure of the city. This shift affects how traditional rituals are performed and the extent of local government involvement in the festival.

In the urban setting of Kathmandu, the Kirant Rai community's Sakela Sili celebration has been impacted by both political and educational elements. Cultural practices have been revived and preserved thanks to education, which has also brought in contemporary influences that have changed long-standing traditions. Politically, the festival has grown increasingly linked to concerns about Indigenous rights and ethnic identity, influencing how it is observed and seen. The possible dilution of traditional customs and the necessity of striking a balance between modernization and cultural preservation are two difficulties that these variables also bring.

5.3.5 Open Public Space

Each year, the festival is held in a public area that is open to the public, making it easier for people to wear multiple identities at once. Audiences hail from many backgrounds, and their perspectives on this festival vary from person to person. The Sakela Sili celebration is held in several locations, and many Kiranti Rai organizations take on the responsibility of carrying on the festivals. Through out of the festival, a variety of subjects are presented, such as ethnic identity, the generational divide between older and younger generations, customs, and modernism. It is interpreted as both the difficulties and the effects of modernity, which are influenced by several variables.

All castes, ethnic groupings, and native and non-native peoples participate now. As a result, the festival begins to lose its ethnic identity and encounters difficulties. Only a small percentage of people attend festivals with serious intent; the majority view

festivals as simply places to socialize. It is an issue with the generational divide, inadequate training, or a lack of systematic methods for each group that took part in the festival to perform. Due to several factors in the modern day, the celebration gradually devolved into alcohol use and intoxication in addition to an increase in fights, sexual harassment, and other violent crimes. During celebration times, Rai Kiranti women in particular offer their handcrafted, traditional goods.

Aside from that, they primarily sell locally produced wine, beer, and alcoholic beverages. Non-Indigenous attendees see these events negatively, believing that they are places where people go to drink and get wasted. They also believe that the handmade liqueurs are only available during festival season. Alcohol is turning into a bad thing, and the entire ethnic significance of the traditional Sakela Sili festival is disappearing every day. This could be seriously problematic for the Rai community as well.

Chapter-Six

Summary and Conclusion

6.1 Summary

This study investigated the changes in the traditional Sakela Sili festival among respondents from the Kirant Rai community of Kathmandu district. Using a descriptive research design, data were collected through fieldwork, questionnaires, interviews, and narrative interpretation.

The main objective of this study was to find out how the traditional Sakela Sili festival celebrated by the Kirant Rais living in Kathmandu has been practiced and performed in the urban area and the role played by the Sakela Sili festival in maintaining social unity among the Rai community. The objective was to obtain information about the changes in the customs and practices of the traditional Sakela Sili festival in urban areas.

The Rai Kirant people have migrated to various parts of the country, losing their clan and community, and forgetting their mother tongue. They have mixed with other cultures and communities, but have managed to celebrate the Sakela Festival in the modern world. The education system has changed, and the Rai Kirant have become compelled to speak other languages like Nepali, Hindi, and English. The new generation lacks knowledge about their mother tongue, attending English schools, and there is a lack of mother tongue experts. The Rai Kirant face challenges in performing rituals in their mother tongue, leading to other languages becoming dominant in their culture.

The Sakela Festival, a traditional Kirant festival, has been weakened by modernization, migration, and globalization. However, the festival serves as a tool for revitalization, adjusting traditional values to modern demands. Rai Kirant's organization, 'Kirant Rai Yayokkha,' promotes and develops its culture through programs and cultural events. The festival reactivates valuable assets of Kirant ancestors, including myths, songs, stories, legends, norms, and values. The Sakela Festival is a significant event in modern times, revitalizing Rai Kirant culture. It involves all age groups and participants, providing a profound experience for youth

affected by modernization. The festival showcases the real indigenous ways and culture, promoting a new reality.

6.2 Conclusion

The study highlights the impact of modernization on the Sakela Festival, a significant event in the Rai Kirant community. This periodic ceremony, celebrated twice a year in April and November, brings society together and signifies seasonal changes. The study explores the traditional and new ways of performing the Sakela Festival, highlighting the symbolic meanings in every movement of the body's parts. It emphasizes that the dance's real meanings are reflected in the visual art spectacles that spectators witness and feel.

Modernization has impacted ritual performances, musical instruments, costumes, symbols, songs, dance, migration, and globalization. Young generations are increasingly interested in traditional dress and culture, expressing appreciation and respect. Despite Western fashion becoming common, youth wear traditional costumes during festivals and special events. Modernization has impacted costumes as a form of adaptability and understanding. Despite western music, Rai communities show more interest in their festivals and culture.

Sililak, the original Sakela Sili dance and songs, is deeply connected to Mundhum and Mother Nature. Modern Sililak, popular among young generations, features love songs. The real Sililaak is disappearing, prompting urgent thinking on its lyrics for the conservation and promotion of the Sakela Festival. Similarly, replacing the practice of animal sacrifice in Sakela temple, it was found that instead of offering animal sacrifice in urban areas like Kathmandu, there is a practice of offering flowers and fruits and worshipping. Due to the impact of modernization, people have different views on the traditional belief of sacrifice. The modern world claims that all creatures have a right to life. Therefore, due to the belief that the cruel sacrifice of any animal should be banned, fruits and flowers are offered instead of animals during the traditional Sakela Puja in urban areas.

Similarly, this study has found that the migration has been a chief factor which has directly affected the festival. When Rai people have migrated to new places, they have been influenced by new ways of life, cultures and communities. The Sakela

Festival frequently features one of the notable features. In the Rai Kirant community, the Sakela Festival has lost its ethnic and cultural significance as a result of lacking management, processes, and direction. Despite having a rich traditional culture, religion, and language, the Rai people are unable to manage their properties. The festival has only served as a gathering place for fun and formality due to a lack of appropriate training, information, and knowledge for young participants. As a result, the study recommends expanding knowledge to bridge the divide between the younger and older generations.

Overall, the festival is alive among the Rai community. The majority of Rai people have highly positive feelings and attitudes towards the Sakela Festival as well as to their language, culture, tradition and religion. Significant changes are seen in Sakela Festival, culture, language, tradition and life styles with new adoptions. Mostly this study has revealed the impacts of modernization on rituals performances and values, traditional costumes, ways of Sakela dance, ornaments and musical instruments. Thus, it said that the Sakela Festival is greatly affected by different factors of modernization along with time, place and situation.

The study makes us aware that the old ways and heritages should not be forgotten in the name of modernization. Rather, there should be a mixture of modernity and tradition for novelty, innovation, and newness.

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Appendix I

Interview Schedule

A) Personnel Information

S.N.

Date:

Name of Respondent: ...

Sex:

Age...

Religion....

Education: ...

Occupation: ...

Material Status: ...

Family Size: ...

B) Survey Questionnaire

i. What is Sakela festival? how did Sakela festival originate?

.....

ii. How was the Puja done before? And how is it done now?

.....

iii. Why is Sakela Sili danced? Are the Sili changing?

.....

iv. Who is the leader in Sakela Sili festival? how they choose Nakchhong and Nakchhongma?

.....

- v. What specific changes have occurred in the traditional practices and rituals of the Sakela Sili festival among the Kirant Rai community in urban area?
.....
- vi. What role does the Sakela Sili festival play in fostering social cohesion among Rais in the urban context of Kathmandu?
.....
- vii. What is the perception of young people towards Sakela festival in Kathmandu? How do they understand the Sakela festival?
.....
- viii. What is the impact of modernization and westernization on traditional jewelry, language, accessories, costumes, etc.?
.....
- ix. How important is the Sakela festival to preserve the identity of the Rai community in Kathmandu?
.....
- x. How is Sakela festival practiced in urban areas? Role of Kirant Rai organization and what does it do?
.....
- xi. What factors have influenced the changes of the Sakela Sili festival and Sili dance in the urban setting?
.....
- xii. In the end would you like to say any thoughts on this matter?
.....

Thank you!