

**TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY**

***Maghi Naach: A Study of Performance and Tharu Identity***

**A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirement of the Degree of Masters of Arts in English**

**By**

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**Letter of Recommendation**

Mr. Chandra Prasad Koirala has completed his thesis entitled "*Maghi Naach: A Study of Performance and Tharu Identity* " under my supervision. He carried out his research from May, 2008 to April, 2009. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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## **Abstract**

Maaghi Celebration, the greatest carnival observed by Dangura Tharu, reflects their belief, life style, art, and their identity. The social and aesthetic dimensions of their life discloses in Maghi performance. The songs of Maghi Naach further externalize the emotion and the feeling of Tharu people's agrarian life. In this way, Maghi Naach is more than what can be seen: it reflects and asserts the identity and ideology of Dangura Tharu through their costume, setting, bodily movement and the pattern of Naach.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### Tharu Community

Tharu, the third largest ethnic group of Nepal, inhabit in the low land of Terai from east to west, having unique cultural tradition. "They are found even in the bordering country India, especially in Utterpradesh" (Singh, 1). With reference to 2001 census of Nepal, Tharu occupy 6.7% of Nepal's total population, which is 15,53,879 individuals. Tharu are scattered from the eastern end of Nepal comprising Jhapa, Morang, Sunsari, Spatari, through Bara, Parsa, Chitwan in the centre, Rupuandehi, Kapilvastu in the west, Dang Deukhuri, Surkhet, Banke, Bardiya, Kailali and Kahchanpur in the Midwest and Far west respectively. Dor Bahadur Bist specifies the traditional territory of Tharu settlement as Tharuhat or Tharuwan. He writes, "The traditional territory of the Tharu is called Tharuhat or Tharuwan. It consists of the forested land along the southern base of the Shiva-Lekh (siwalik) mountain range and south a few miles into the terai itself" (58).

Tharu have deep affiliation with river, forest and land. They love fishing in the pond or river with the help of Tapi, Helka, Cheudi and Jal by both male and female gives a glimpse of art of fishing. Being non vegetarian, Tharu consume Machhi , Sura , Musuwa , Gangta , Sutahi , Ghoghi, with alcohol. They can't stand eating wild mushrooms like Banti, Phutki, Khitreya which they collect from forest etc. Tharus' main occupation is agriculture. They are the cultivators of the fertile land Terai. In this regard Kurt Meyer and Pamela Deul put forth, ". . . they became the cultivators of the Terai over the last two hundred years; they have turned the region in to prime agricultural land" (3).

Because of their inhibition in the Terai and in Dun, they wear very little and light clothes. The Tharu males wear a Bheguwa and a plain white cotton full shirt called Jhuluwa, where women wear Lehenga and Choliya. Lehenga is made of cotton fabric with peculiar floral design. Bathaniya (unmarried girl) cloths in Choliya or a Blouse, which has strings on the back to tie it up, but married woman, have the same blouse but strings are in the front. Tharu women load themselves with silver or brass ornaments: a silk scarf covers their forehead, on the nostril Phuli or Nathiya, on their arms bangles called Tra, on the neck they hang Pote necklace, real or fake Muga, necklace of rupee coin, silver, brass, bronze, necklace called Sutiya etc.

Although Tharu stands for a specific ethnic community spread from east to west of Nepal, it is important to note that they differ in their skills, aptitudes, habits, cultures, customs and even in languages. Most importantly, the cultural diversity among Tharu may be exemplified by looking at women's style of dress, ornamentation as well as other selected traits. So the socio-cultural panorama of this tribe is complex, varied but distinct. Kurt Meyer and Pamela Deuel write, "The Tharu are commonly described as one people. Closer examination reveals that many subgroups that are quite different from each other exist" (3). The loose division under Tharu groups (castes) can be done on the basis of influence made by their neighboring language, house construction, culture and historic back ground that they have. The five Tharu subgroups are Rana Tharu of Kailali and Kahchanpur, Dangaura of Deukhuri, western Kochila of Rautahat, and the Morang's eastern Kochila. However, they are scattered through out the country. In this regard, we distinguish them according to their origin.

Tharu do not speak a single language known as Tharu language. Rather, their language is seen as transformed from their original language to a mixture of a local

languages and dialects. Highlighting this fact, Dorna Rajaure, in his article "Bardiya ra Dang Deukhurika Tharuharu" puts:

The Tharu dialects significantly differ from one another with respect to the other languages that it is in contact with. The Maithali influenced dialect (spoken from Mechi in the east to Bagmati in the west), Bhojpuri influenced dialect (spoken from Bagmati in the east to Tinau in the west), Awadhi influenced dialect (spoken from Tinau in the east to Karnali in the west), Khadi influenced dialect spoken from Karnali in the east to Mahakali in the west) are some major Tharu dialects. (My Translation, 187)

Like other existing groups, Tharu also have their own characteristics forms of folk art which they take care of it and pass to their children. Aesthetic is cultural universal which includes in itself all sorts of arts and crafts-graphic and plastics arts, festival, dance, drama, and music. Each art acts as a mirror to reflect on the people who produce it and his cultural site. Life and art are inseparable entity, which are interwoven with each other. However, life passes where art remains to speak about the creators. It is an only thing that is permanent, and a source of knowledge of the past civilization that came and vanished. As in the *Tharu: Their Arts and Crafts*, Moti Sameera valorizing art puts, “. . . art is, and has always been an indispensable need of humanity. It is planted in the soul of the child as in that of primitive man. It is as necessary as articulate speech. It is the art each race that gives its civilization its distinct character and rhythms” (2).

Tharu are culturally rich people due to the verities of cultural performances, food items, deities, folk traditions and folk arts. They have their own methods of purifying individual and shaping the way of life. The aestheticism of Tharu culture is

observed in their festivals, rituals de rites, also in construction of their houses. The brilliant architect is noted as we glance at Tharu buildings, which are" simple but environmentally sophisticated and climate responsive structures" (Kurt W. Meyer and Pamela Deuel,20). Similarly, their craftsmanship became vigilant in their handicrafts- Dhakiya, Berri, Machiya, Dhari, Derri, Bhauka etc. Tattooing, an art of imprinting on human skin by punching with needles, is practiced among Dangauru Tharu women who shows their respect and fascination towards beautification of human body. This "art of tattooing beautifies female body; it is like Sindur at Tharu women" (Rajure, 97).

In the same way, Tharu concept of compact settlement pattern further clarifies their belief in humanity, peace, love, cooperation, coexistence and fraternity. Perhaps this is the reason, Tharu love living in joint family, and the proportionate division of works according to their age by the head of the family (Kisan) is well practiced among Tharu, which can be taken as an epitome of democratic practice with in the family.

The practice of worshipping Supreme Being is a universal phenomenon. So Tharu also worship their Bhutuwa (deties and spirits), that task is generally done by the village head (Mahaton) and a Guruwa. Guruwa, a male authorized person for religious work, conducts rites and rituals of Tharu. During the communal ceremony of Tharu people, the Mahato's house becomes a stage for all performances and ritual activities.

Although there is a dispute among scholars, about what religion actually they practice, S.K. Sing, in his book *The Great Sons of the Tharus: Sakyamuni Buddha and Asoka the Great* argues, ". . .the rites and rituals of the Tharus are the remnants of the

Buddhist culture" (68). Nevertheless, whatever religion they practiced, they practice it to control and direct their lives in order to live a perfect life.

Dangura Tharu, to which this research is concerned, are originally from Dang valley. Dangura Tharus are supposed to be the descendants of King Dangi Saran. He was the last king of Dang valley kingdom. Dangura Tharu live in joint family and they believe in community effort. The proportionate division of works according to their age by their family head (Kisan) is well practiced among them. Each Dangura community has a head called Badghar or Mahoton to whom each family head follows.

In Dangura community, there exists certain way of sanctifying individuals for the preparation of better life in this as well as in the other world. It is the process through which an individual passes and gets his cultural identity. Therefore, Tharu also observe lifecycle rites- Ghatuwa Karaina, Murbhawaj, Bhoj Karna and Sat-Gat (death rites) according to Tharu tradition; that make them Tharu. However, Tharu ceremonies seem to have been influenced by Hindu tradition. It is further clarified by Dorna Rajaure in his article *Tharus of Dang: Rites de Passage and Festivals*, ". . . Tharu ceremonies are influenced by Hindu beliefs" (177). Hence, their lifecycle rites are to be done in a mixed manner.

There are a number of festivals that the Dangura Tharu observe throughout the year. Their main concern of celebrating festivals is not to get relaxed from the daily works, rather they believe that their active involvement in celebration ensures good health, a plenty full harvest and good fortune for the village. Like many people, Tharu have different feasts and festivals that occur at intervals during the season when they become free from their field works. Maghi, Dasya, Barka Atwari, Hardawa, Guria, Astimki, Dhurei (Holi) are some of the major festivals that they celebrate.

For Tharu, Maghi is the greatest festival which is the time of eating, drinking and marry making, and of doing no work at all. It is a festival according to the solar calendar. On the first day of Maghi even milking animals are not milked, rather they are set free for celebration. The main day of Maghi festival falls on the first day of Maghi (the second or third week of January). For a week during Maghi festival, Tharu keep visil drinking Jand (made of rice) and dancing. On the occasion, people adorn new cloths and gather at Mahaton's house (the village head) to organize community feast. At the very festival Maghi the family property is divided between brothers and they start living separately. Tharu people also take Holy dips in ponds, receive blessings from seniors and they make donations and offerings to their sisters. During the Maghi week, several amature Tharu dancers dance a lot. Gopal Dahit, in his book *An Introduction to Tharu Culture* puts:

During the Maghi festival, from the day of Jitamarna to the first week of Maghi, all the family members . . . become free from their works . . . they form their own group to dance and sing. The dances like Chokra, Maghuta and Jhumra are performed visiting house to house. . . . They pick up money (Paisa lootna) offered by the landlord. (My Translation, 54)

Dasya, a festival of Tharu tribe, seems exactly what Hindu of Nepal name for Vijya Dashami. It starts with Hindus' Ghatasthapan, to which they call Jyura Dharna. On this day, Tharu sow maize seeds for seedling grow. Tharu celebrate this festival only for nine days. This festival, for Tharu, has not the same significance as Hindus have. They perform it to make offering to their ancestors (Pitter Dena) which is done on the ninth day of Dasya (The final day of Tharu Dashain). On the seventh day of Dasya, different sized of Dhikri cakes are steamed. Moreover, later on, they offer

these Dhikris to their deities in a ritual. On the eighth day Tharu offer Jyura, Sindur, Babri (Basil) to their ancestors and their deities. In the final day of Dasya, they receive Tika and blessing from Mahaton at his house. Tharu do not use color in Tika, rather their Tika is prepared by the rice flour. Throughout the whole days of Dasya, all the Bathaniyas (girls) and Laundas (boys) go to the house of elders and perform a group dance called Sakhya. The songs from the great epic Mahabharat are performed with dance.

Holi, another festival of Tharu, is celebrated from Fagu Purnima until the next Purnima. This is the festival of colors, where male and female both drink alcohol and enjoy with colors. On the day of Purnima Tharu girls make stop people on the road and ask for donations, Faguwa .Especially, Rana Tharu and Kathriya Tharu of Kailali celebrate it in a grand way. Rana Tharu, for a month, dances at the Mahaton's courtyard. In that night dance, both girls and boys are allowed to participate. "The night dance is reported to be for the young 'as every one knows who will be interested in who after the Holi is over. The dances often pair up and hold hands, which would then be interpreted by those around" (Korvald, 243).

Barka Atwari, another festival of Tharu, is so named because it is celebrated on an Atwar, meaning Sunday. This Atwari falls on the month of Bhadra (August-September). The peculiar characteristic of this festival is that the male folks only observed fasting. Those who are going to fast take a heavy meal (Dar) consisting of rice, fish, pork and Jand (Rice Beer) before the midnight of Atwari .From early next morning they are not permitted to take any thing except liquor through out the day. They end their fasting at the evening by separating each item to their sister from their share of food and fruits. The separated food is called, Agrasan, which will be delivered to their sisters next day.

Astimki is similar to Hindu Janmastami or the Krishna Astami. Among the Tharu it is a children's and women's festival in which mostly girls participate.

Astimki Murals are drawn and painted over the surface of Deheri (earthen grain container). Those paintings exhibit the cycle of human life. The painting of Krishna, playing his flute and sitting on a tree is drawn in the centre. The figures of the sun, the moon, two rows of warriors, porters carrying a bride and bridegroom in a Doli, large scales of fish and other animal are also sketched. The colors that they use are black, blue, pink and yellow.

Tharu not only perform ritual activities during festivals, they also perform folk art (literature). Since most of the Tharu people are illiterate, their folk literature has oral medium. The Tharu oral epics like Guru Babak Janmuti, Ram Jalam, Barkimar (the Barkha Naach) glorifies Tharu habit, belief, and their way of life. Tharu epics, though, seem to have similar epics as that of Hindu religious text. However, the reality is some thing different, that is, they have their own version and their interpretation, which exist in orality. In this line, Kurt W. Meyer and Palema Deul put

. . . Bhim, of all Pandavs, is the closest to The Tharu, although the Tharu worship and respect all five brothers. Tharu affection for Bhim explains why in the Tharu Barka Naach it is Bhim, (not Arjun in the classical Mahabharat) who succeeds in hitting the eye of the bird and carrying away princess Droupati to become the wives of Pandavas. (4)

Likewise, the numbers of traditional songs which are performed in different intervals highlight the artistic competence of Tharu people. The songs like Maina ,Sajana and The Ram jalam are sung in the month of Baisakh; Sajani, Raja Chariwaland Ghogur in Jestha and Ashar; Lala, Dafa, Dhamagar in Kartik; Maghauta,

Laguniand, Ban Geet in Push and Magh; and in Falgun and Chitra, they sing Magar and Dhurari Geet. The other song called Barmasa is sung through out a year.

Besides this, Tharu have popular sports of their own, which is another form of entertainment. The worth noticing feature of Tharu game is there is no age bar for the participation, i.e. even an old man can join with his or her grand children to play. The sports played in different occasions are known by different names. Gopal Dahit groups Tharu games in three main categories: “The games of men and children; the games of women and children; the games of women, men and children” (122). To name some of the popular Tharu games are Ghoghorani, Koilididi, Murgalarna, Ghorbaswa, Pokrimarwa, Lochidanda etc.

Cultural performances like dance, song, music, festival have been used in attempt to develop a familial unity among Tharu, and for voicing their ethnic belongings. The traditional songs of Tharu, which are ancient and transmitted properties of society, cannot totally inscribe on pages. The pure aesthetics of performance can be felt at the time of real performance- in appropriate time, situation and condition. Tharu cultural performance, being rooted in local grounds, speaks about their culture, geography and language.

Dance is considered to be the most primitive and most sophisticated art among the arts. Dancing, for Tharu, is a way of expressing their joy and a popular form of entertainment. There are no professional dancers among Tharus; any one interested can part take in dances. Tharu dances are mainly of groups. A person who dances is Nachuya, and the one who plays the music is Mandraiya. In fact Tharu have own traditional style of dancing which is generally monotonous, slow, uniform, common and repetitive in movements. Nevertheless, Tharu dancers (Nachuya) are capable of

keeping their spectator spell-bond with their dazzling multicolored clothes and the heavy jewelry.

Dangura Tharu, the area of study of this thesis, perform different songs and dances which are unique among other societies and within Tharus. The performance among the Dangura Tharu starts right after the main puja, i.e. Hareri. Hareri Pooja marks the end of work in the fields. To name some of Tharu traditional dances, they perform Sakhiya, Maghauta, Disaura, Lathiwa (mugrawa) and Hurdunga, etc. These dances are performed in different intervals by male only or by female only, or by both, for instance, Mughauta (Maghi), is performed by both male and female at Maghi festival, whereas Sakhiya is performed by women during Dashain festival.

In addition to these, Tharu have unique style of singing for their numerous indigenous songs popular amongst themselves. While dancing and singing are complementary, in some of the cases there is no dance in Tharu songs. Therefore, both male and female love to sing when there is no dancing. As a result, people dance only on the special occasions whereas they burst in singing whenever they like or wish to express "A unique feature among the Tharu is that men and women never sing together. Even during mixed dances they sing separately in chorus one after another" (Semera, 248). Tharu sing songs named Maina Geet, Sajana Geet, Holi Geet, Dafak Geet, Mager etc on different occasions. In fact, some dances are performed in group, whereas others are individually playing various musical instruments. As Gautam Rajesh and Thapa Ashok state:

. . . Sakhya Nach, where the Madal and other instruments are played by the men who are kept in the culture and are circled by the Tharu girls who dance wearing the Bearour or Manajara . . . In Mungrawa, where the male and female dance in their own rows. The male have sticks in

their hands, peacock feathers in their waistbands and arms. The row of female holds manjara in their hands which they play and dance.

Another is Kathghori, where the male dances using wooden horse.

(342)

Music is soul for every song and dance. So the Tharu song and dance also remain incomplete until music is fused with lyrics or with the movements of body. Music is assisted in Tharu songs and dances with the help of their own musical instruments. Among percussion instruments, the important ones are Mandra, Daffa, Kasta, Jhali, Basiya, Chiriya Lathi and Manjara etc. The Mandra, the common drum is used in various songs and dances like Sakhya, Maghim and Hardawa etc. Dafa is a simple instrument of leather, is beaten in Daffa Nach.

Maghi Naach as this research is limited to, is performed during Maghi festival. It is also New Year celebration for Tharu. This Maghi dance is performed in order to celebrate New Year in festive and jolly mood. During the Maghi week, there appear several female groups of dancers in their special colorful and charming dress. They sing, dance and ask for money from one house to another.

To perform Maghi Nach, first the dancers from two groups: of males characters and females characters separately facing each other. The main dancer and the musician are kept in the centre facing towards the lines. All the dancers (main and assistant) and the musician dressed in their traditional custom dance and sing wholeheartedly. The main dancer has to dance according to the beats of music, given by the musicians; where as the other participants have to sing the songs. The Maghi songs, that are repetitive and dialogic in form, are of love affair, family relationship and their agricultural life. The most fascinating and majestic part of this dance is Paisa lootna. It is an act of picking money from the floor by bending waist that is the main dancer

has to pick up the money, offered by the landlord, with her tongue or an eye by falling upside down. Commenting on the Maghi, Lamichane, Rudra and Khadka R. remark:

The famed Maghi dance is essayed by group comprising of both men and women. . . . The boys try their best to hurt their counterparts during the occasion. They further assume the girls to kick all bad habits . . . It is just like Deus-Bhailo. . . . A leading lady dancer has to pick up the money offered by landlord, with her tongue falling upside down. The way she (dancer) picks up the money is an integral part of their culture. (1)

But the bitter fact is that the cultural performances as such are deteriorating day by day in the name of modernization. Only a few people have realized its value and started working with it. Such cultural performances are limited to the illiterate people of remote villages, and it is about to vanish, if not preserved immediately.

This research on Maghi Naach is focused on cultural perspectives. Maghi Naach, which is considered to be an ephemeral folk art, will be studied on the light of performance theory. Along with the obstacles created by hilly and Indian cultures, Maghi Naach has existed with its traditional values. Thus the act of singing and performance, which is an expression of Tharu creative skills explore oneself and the community as a whole.

## Chapter II

### Performance

Culture and performance are interdependent phenomenon and are the most important ways of human expressions. Culture is conceived as a mental construction, which is shaped by the beliefs, attitudes and by the values of a particular society. Therefore culture specifies the people who they are and from where they are. In this regard, Clifford Geertz in his book, *The Interpretation of Culture* writes, "culture . . . the accumulated totality of such pattern is not just an ornament of human existence but the principal basis of its specificity and essential condition for it" (46). In this sense, every culture is unique and self-reflexive in itself. Neither Tharu culture says something about how Magar performs Sorethi, nor does it tell meaning of Deuda; it reflects its own Tharu tradition. So culture acts as a potent symbol for belonging, for individual identification with a particular group.

The expressive nature of culture is, broadly speaking, a performance. Performance is an account of reformative nature of human action. In Aristotelian sense, it is mimetic, an imitation of human action. But Levi-Strauss says that it is cooked, meaning that it is action and is transformed through culture into a conventionally understandable symbolic product. Similarly, Richard Schechner in his book, *Performance Theory* says, ". . . making arts in the process of transforming raw experience in to palatable forms. His transformation is a mimetic, a representation" (30). Thus (culture) performance is a theatrical study of human behaviours or the cultural products. However, in reality performance is larger than the theater itself. By theater we mean what performers actually do during the performance, where by performance includes all the activities that take place among the audience and the performer. In other words, performance not only represents a particular culture, rather

it helps understand, interpret and analyze the whole way of life. The traditional belief that the man as a bearer of culture has shifted to the performance as a constitutor of culture. That's why, a person is not defined of himself, and rather his performance tells us to which culture he belongs. In this sense, performance theory has been both a subject and a method of studying culture; which creates identity, reshapes the body and allows the people to play with their behaviors.

Cultural performance, a form of performance, holds the capacity to exhibit social process- a way of life. That is, cultural performances are marked by a defined set of performer and audiences interacting in a finite quantity of time, such performative events have a quality to fulfill the social needs and demands. In this regard, Bhim Bahadur Budha in his M.A. dissertation paper writes, "In Magar community, on the occasion of marriage, in the girls house, hosts and guests are requested to perform folk dance and songs. It is compulsory to perform for them and they do" (15). Cultural performance encompasses such a vast area that includes plays, concerts, lectures, festivals, rituals and even accidents.

Furthermore, cultural performance is a only way through which emotion, feeling, pain and experience of people become visible. It is an act of doing something or displaying internal emotion in front of the spectators with their attractive and effective physical movements or by the vocally produced musical notes. The performing arts-singing, dancing and acting-are the cultural media through which culture moves. Elizabeth Bell in *Theories of Performance*, in this regard writes," cultural media are the modes and forms a communication the performance utilize: singing, dancing, and acting" (130). Sometimes, all these phenomena merge and contribute to create an event for public expression and display.

The performing arts- singing, dancing and drama in different forms as well as other culture performances have been used from the dawn of human civilization. Such arts in illiterate society like Tharu affirm some of the deepest sanction of living. Singing, the oldest but young genre of performing arts, is oral emotional expression of common people. The legacy of traditional songs goes back to our ancestors. And the performance of songs equates to the performance of drama. It is because songs contain all the dramatic elements- music, dance, plot, dialogue, character, action, interaction within it.

Songs are almost all public and their artistic presentation is shown through gestures. The songs are composed of musical notes, and their harmonic representations form a quasi-linguistic vocabularies and grammar of musical composition. Their use of literary devices like symbol, metaphor, simile, alliteration, repetition and image make it artistic, interesting and vivid. The oral expressions of dumb words are given life of the rules of practice, repetition and memory that almost exist in performance. Further, songs like language follow a basic structural form, and then become a medium of freeing their innermost feelings-joys, sorrow, fear and jubilation-whatever touches them in their daily life and what ever changes occurring in their territory are reflected in their songs.

Among the performing arts, dance has been considered the most primitive and sophisticated form. It is self-conscious and spontaneous with the embodiment of culturally constructed norms and values. Since the dance events are choreographed from the beginning to the end, it fascinates audiences' attention and makes them prepare for the heavenly flight. During the dance performance both dancer and singer play the roles of different characters. Dance performances can also be thought as ethnic expression in the sense that choices about presenting dances are rooted in,

reflect and help sustain the norms and expression of the culture to which they belong to. Similarly, the dancer's costume, appearance and movement make them as if they are our ancestors. Considering folk dance as ethnic performance, June A. rail writes: It involves choosing (consciously or not) now to present the dances for an audience. Besides the program's order' pacing and overall length, choreographic responsibilities includes the selection of an appropriate venue, the design of the performer's costumes, and the degree of each dance's complexity. Those who create and perform folk dancer on stages become artists, whether they like it or not. (98)

Thus, dance performance is a kind of language that speaks through different shared movements. It creates a text for the audience to read.

Ritual, being a cultural performance, shares all the formal characteristics of songs and dance. That is, ritual is also performed in front of the audience with certain proposes. However, ritual in most of the cases creates a larger frame than that of the song and dance. To put it differently, song and dance performances may come under the ritual performance. Rituals are characterized upon three basic activities, i.e. ritual actions are communal, traditional and rooted in belief (divine being). Referring to ritual as preter-natural entity, Victoria V. Kneubachi writes, “. . . the term ritual to mean a sequence of activities which involve words and gestures designed to influence preter-natural entities or forces on behalf on the actor's goals. Efficacy is a characteristic of ritual” (166).

Schechner believes that all the performances are marked by two elements: entertainment and efficacy, which in varying properties create the continuum of performance. For entertainment, he suggests the phrases like fun, only for those have, performer knows what s/he is doing, audience activities, etc. On the other hand, for efficacy he suggests the terms: result, link to the absent other, symbolic time,

collective creativity etc. To put it in other words, entertainment is here and now, but efficacy leads us to the transformed position in trance. But, the truth is not a single element that exists in purity. Therefore, there is neither absolute entertainment as such, nor an absolute efficacy. In this regard, Schechener comparing ritual with theater puts:

A performance is called theater or ritual because of where it is performed, by whom and under what circumstances. If the performance's purpose is to effect transformations- to be efficacious then the other qualities listed under the heading efficacy will most probably also be present, and the performance is ritual. And no performance is pure efficacy or pure entertainment. (130)

Of course, there are different genres of cultural performances that demand separate medium of expression. However, anthropologist, Victor Turner, regards all performance activities as social drama. Unlike aesthetic drama, Turner believes that there is a specific pattern for the social drama. By analyzing how human basic plot moves, he purposes four phases of public action- breach, crisis, redressive, reintegration- as a theatrical universal. That is, a breach in social Fabric, caused by the social action, natural disaster, disagreement or other disruptive event; resulting cultural crisis; a redressive action, generates advice; finally a reintegration of the society as either a return to the status quo, or as a new social order. Turner postulates:

. . . Social dramas are units of a harmonic process, arising in conflict situation . . . For main phases of publication action . . . is 1 Breach of regular, non-governed social relations. . . .2 Crisis during which . . . there is a tendency for the breach to widen . . . it takes up its menacing stance in the forum itself and, as it were, dares the representatives of order to grapple with it. . . .3 Redressive action (ranging) from personal

advice and informal mediation or arbitration to formal judicial and legal machinery. . . .4 The final phase... consists either of the reintegration of the disturbed social group or of the social recognition. (qtd. in Schechener 187)

However, Schechener insists that the beginning part of every performance is solidarity, not the conflict as stated by Turner. He argues that conflict is supportable in performance only within a frame built from the agreement. Schechener writes:

The bottom line is solidarity, not conflict. Conflict is supportable (in theater, and perhaps in society too) only inside a nest built from the agreement to gather at a specific time and place to perform to do something agreed on and to disperse once the performance is over. (189)

As a result, Schechener purposes his own basic performance structure. He assumes that the basic performance structure contains three phases: Gathering, performing and dispersing. Gathering is the first step in which audiences are acknowledged that when and where the theater or performance takes place, so they gather at a certain point. The real phase of performance is performing. Performing refers to the state of unfolding the event or story. It includes the special observations, practices and rituals that lead in to the performance and away from it. Schechener puts the concept of Turner's four phases of social drama- breach, crisis, redressive and reintegration - under the umbrella term performing. Finally dispersing is an end of the show or performance. In this phase, audience returns back to their original state, i.e. every day life.

Besides this, Schechener comes up with the new concept of natural theater. According to his proposition, there are two kinds of natural theaters: Eruption and

Procession. Eruption is a type of natural theater that believes an event is put in the center, where spectators come and go creating a cool rim around the event. Such theater occurs either after an accident or during an event. In this concern, Schechner states, "An eruption is like a theatrical performance because it is not the accident itself that gathers and keeps an audience. They are held by the reenactment of the event" (177).

Similarly, processions are another kind of natural theater. These theaters assume that there is a distance goal and a fixed route to perform. The goal of the performance is achieved only at the ending point or place. And along the way to the goal, the performer performs at certain points, where spectators watch the performance and they may join to the goal. In this sense, it is a bipolar model of the performance. On this point, Schechner says, "A procession-which is a kind of pilgrimage to gather along the route, and at appointed places procession halts and performances are played. Parades, funeral corteges are precocious" (178). Even though eruption seems opposite of procession in many respects, still both eruptions and procession can occur together. Schechner says, ". . . eruptions and processions can come simultaneously, especially when large numbers of people are involved" (178).

Indeed, the elements involved in the performance bear equal responsibility for a successful performance. Performance theory assumes that there are some ingredients that help us to analyze any human behaviour or action as performance. An ideal performance fulfills all the aesthetic and social properties of human desire. Properties like thematic relation, harmonic progression, rhythmical structure are not only the subjects to study in performance, rather elements like audience, performance, time sequence, performing stage, value of the used objects, frame, rule and text events should be considered.

Audiences are integral part of performance. They observe and evaluate the events; the skill and the usefulness of performance. Audience's response play a vital role in every performance; lack of receptivity on the part of an audience spoils the whole performance. By this nature, audiences are the indicators that respond approval and disapproval of the performance by clapping, hooting and even throwing clothes. Their response varies as the variation occurs in the performance, for instance, people jeer in whistling, where in the rock concert people throw their clothes. Such practice of responding to the performance occurs during the cultural performance based on their cultural traditions. Schechner has clearly stated that ". . . performance is the domain of the audience" (70). In a conservative sense, audiences are grouped under the passive spectators or a separate part of performance. But performance theory regards it as an active participator. Since the audiences have close relationship with the other elements of performance- events, texts, contexts, their role is divided into four types: inactive, active, interactive, proactive.

First, the inactive audience is passive, they receive only; and under this category the audiences are assumed to be silent and isolated. The audience of traditional musical events falls under this group. The second type of audiences is active participator; they are the audience from playing fields. Their participation can be observed, since they use laughter, cheers and so forth. The third category of audience is interactive. The interactive audiences are seen as interactive co-producers in creating the performance event. Finally, the proactive audiences are the audience of festival, where the boundaries between audience and the performers are blurred and all the participants assume as if they are performers themselves.

Another important element of performance is performer. A Performer is the one who transforms raw experience in palatable forms in order to make work an art.

The value of any work of art lies in the emotional impact on the viewer by the performer. In this sense they are the creator of art. Generally in most of the performance, priest, recite, storyteller, singer, dancer and musician act as performer. It is the task of a performer to exhibit his or her skill, being clothed in a littering costumes, and should expose choreographic responsibilities. Performer also shows how words should be written on a body and how body is likewise visible in words. They are the provider of body on which dance (performance) works on and that creates 'performance consciousnesses. In this regard Elizabeth Bell writes:

. . . a performer is one who manifests performance consciousness. This consciousness, or reflexive awareness of oneself as performing, works on many levels. First, the performer is aware of the frame and pays attention to the relationship among performer, frame, and audience. . . see and level in performance consciousness involves a kind of inner dialogue with in the performer. . . . The third level of performance consciousness involves how a performer pushes emotions, ideas, and attitudes for the sake of audience. (43-44)

The concept of framing is central to the performance theory. Framing is done in order to give an attention to a particular event. It is almost impossible to study all the performative activities at once. Therefore brackets should be drawn focusing on the event. Bracketing is just like framing a picture to ignore the things outside the frame. It further helps to grasp the messages of the framed objects. According to Elizabeth Bell, "The concept of framing . . . attempts to answer what and how questions: what is that going on there? And how do we bracket experience to understand, interpret, and make sense of the interaction?" (36). However, these performance frames can be made, broken and confused-deliberately or accidentally.

Framing is a cognitive contextualization drive whereby all rules for behavior, symbols and their interpretation are bounded by a particular activity with its overall structure. Frames have temporal beginnings and endings and often embody specified physical boundaries.

Frames are the largest units of performance, where keys are the smallest units that constitute a frame. In other words, frame is formed out of several keys. So the keys are the smallest units of action that is already meaningful in primary frame. Schechner would call it event. Erving Goffman says, “. . . keys are specific codes, conventions or language that signal or erect the frame around a communication event” (quoted by Bell 41).

When we come to consider performances, we must remember that no performance takes place out of spatio-temporal frame work. The place where performance occurs is called a stage. Such stage varies depending upon the nature of performance. If it is a religious performance, the stage generally is a river bank or a temple ground. Often cultural performance happens in public hall, community center, in home, or in open place. In Schechner's words, “. . . the spaces are used intensely, attracting large crowd who come for the scheduled events. The spaces are uniquely organized so that the large group can watch a small group, and become aware of itself at the same time” (14). Referring to the temporal aspect, every performance occurs between the given periods. In this sense, performance follows a particular calendar. That is why, no Hindu people celebrates the Dashain performance in the month of Magh and Falgun. To celebrate Dashain festival in a Dashain way, each Hindu waits up to the month of Ashoj and Kartik. Perhaps this will be clearer to understand how time works in performance, if we think that each performance has two time frames: Performance time and calendar time. The calendar time frame refers to clock time

which is linear, whereas performance time refers to the event time that each event takes. Therefore Schechner argues:

. . . Clock time is a mono-directional, linear yet-cyclical uniform measurement adopted from day-night and seasonal rhymes. In performance activities, however time is adapted to the event, and is therefore susceptible to numerous variations and creative distortions.

(8)

Since the performance activities are different from the every day activities, a special world is created. In that world, every participant has to follow the already established rules and regulations. These rules and regulations later give meaning to help normalize the communal discipline. It can be seen in the Tharu Mugrawa Dance. In that dance all the performers are asked to perform according to the rules given by the 'Guruwa'. For the ideal Mugrawa Performance, from the beginning to the end, every performer has to suspend the rules of everyday life. Thus rules are made to guide and direct the activities, especially by designating what is not allowed or acceptable in day to day life.

Schechner puts his idea of non-productivity as a feature of performance. He believes that this quality (non-productivity) separates performance activities from productive work. The ordinary activity i.e. productive activity is generally measured by the materialistic view point, whereas performative activities are scaled on the aesthetic ground. In fact, performative activities create no wealth or goods as such. Another concept that is attributing a special value to the objects used in performance suggests to read performance through the aesthetic eyes. The values of the object-except certain ritual implements and relics-have a market value much less than the value assigned to the object. Keeping this view at heart, Schechner writes, "It is

equally silly to think a costume can make a king out of an actor or even help Lee J Cabb become Willu Loman. And of what material value is a saint's bone or the veil of Turin?" (11).

Text is an essential element of performance. The term text refers not only to the written things but also incorporates non verbal elements, i.e. gesture. Hence, text is created and made out of ideas, words and thoughts weaving together. This is important for every performance because it provides guidance or a set of directions to the performers, for instance, a poem guides a reader; while reciting a poem as in dance, songs guides the dancer in a preferred way.

Performance is the means-perhaps the principal means-through which people come to understand their world, reinforce their view of it and transform both small scale and large scale. It can be applied for conservative and for revolutionary uses. As a conservative force, it reinforces the truth of the world and enacts and verifies social order. It does this by example, as in dramatic presentation or in the songs showing the workings of good and evil. It also awakes the member of the society showing the world as it is through paradox, contradiction, comedy and the confrontation. As a transformational force, performance behavior has the power to restructure social order through the persuasive power of rhetoric and through the power of redefinition of both audience and context.

Entertaining people is one of the most important tasks of performance. Human beings are endowed with a capacity to think, realize and move. As a consequence, performance reflects a rhythm bringing human sensations to make life better. Performance evokes a kind of feeling or the experience that we generally do not get in everyday activities. It allows us to encounter with the aesthetic feeling and leads both

the audience and the performer enter into a new territory of life that is unexploited and uncorrupted.

Performance bears the capacity of healing individual. It is because of the positive effects of the performative arts on patients, sometimes doctors recommend it to people with emotional problems or psychological disabilities. Therapies like music therapy and dance therapy are well developed in the field of medicine to cope with the mental illness. By the same token, performance arts such as dancing and singing are a good means of physical exercise, for both the lungs and the muscles. Cultural performance like dance, ritual, festival and social drama allow us to face up and vicariously resolve life problems. Through the performance people confess their passive surrender and helplessness to the people, and then they get solutions for their problems. This function of performance becomes visible when people ask for blessings from the priest and solutions for their problems, and when the priest gives them the ways to solution.

Performances are not just mirror-reflection of life, but they are active agent of change and progress. Performance educates people, and, to a great extent, it is responsible for the transmission of a society's cultural heritage from generation to generation. Performance has power to make the emotion visible and audible to the audience. Doing so, they move audience part takes or change accordingly. In this connection Graudin Ingemar writes, ". . . that songs and music have for a long time be used for political message in Nepal; used effectively by rulers in on way (banning political songs on the radio during Panchayat) and used in another way by the opposition" (27).

Performance, in anthropological sense, acts as remnants of a glorious past of our ancestors. It definitely relates to the root or ancestor that gives us our cultural

identity. Any one who ignores root culture; loses identity and becomes a person of nowhere. Greetz further says, ". . . to be human is not to be everyman, it is to be a particular kind of man, and of course man differ . . ." (53). It maintains the expression of unity and cultural perseverance. That is why; some performances or dances are not well understood outside of the communities in which they play an important role.

Dance and song performances are bound up in the composition of social memory. At the same time, It is an undeniable fact that the texts of each performance are, for the most part, over loaded with local images habits and costumes that speaks of the local color, flavor, and identity. Clyde Ellis writes, ". . . dances and songs are bound up in the construction of social memory, and so, in relationship that mold and influence ritual . . . songs and dances remain central elements in the construction of identity" (134).

Performance can work as a historical document. Among the various kinds of historical sources, cultural performance occupies a specific place. Since culture shapes the people, it directly or indirectly reflects a historical background of a performed culture. That is, in some traditional songs, we find the serial events of a past time being reported. Hence performance inherently acts as history. In the same way, the appearance of performer, their costume, jewelry, language, way of performing style and manner also signal the history. So, cultural performance carries a perfect history which has not been affected by other issues.

Finally, Victor Turner does not see cultural performance as a separate entity. He notices close interrelationship between culture (social drama) and cultural performance (stage drama). He argues that social drama provides the raw material for aesthetic performances and aesthetic performances also get its idea from social dramas provide the raw material for aesthetic performances. And aesthetic

performance also gets its idea from social dramas. Turner calls his a constant cross-looping between the social drama and aesthetic performance genre. In this regard, Elizabeth Bell writes, “. . . this inter play as a mobius strip: The conflicts and characters in social dramas fund the content of aesthetic performances, and aesthetic performances, in turn, color and inflect the unfolding of social drama” (111).

Thus, aforementioned theory is applicable to the traditional dance, i.e. Maghi Naach. This Maghi Naach is performed in Tharu Community especially in Dang, Kailali, and Bardiya districts. Everywhere and among the Dangura community Maghi Nach-- dance and songs are performed orally in Maghi festival. Since tribal performance like Maghi Nach does not have a lot of media coverage, than that of the mainstream culture, it is always at the risk of extinct. But most importantly, Maghi Naach bearing traditional values of Tharu tribe, speaks and advocates Tharu language, Culture, society and their life as a whole.

## Chapter III

### Poetics of Maghi Performance and Tharu Identity

Maghi Naach, a prominent dance from the southern plain of Nepal, remains as a key to represent Dangura Tharu. The poetics of Maghi Naach is formed out of different performers: Nachuiya, Gowaiya and Mandrawa. All of them participate in equal extent in order to form Maghi Naach alive. The performers usually consist of 15 to 20 members. Each performance group is formed after having discussion among the youngsters before the performance day. Though there are not formal classes for the Naach, every performer knows how to act out the assigned characters. The charm of very Naach gets spoiled in the case of unequal participations among the performers. The Naach begins from the singers, and by following the rhythm of songs, the Mandrawa and Naachuiya perform their charismatic performance together.

Gawaiya, the singers in Maghi performance, get divided in to two groups representing either father and daughter or Sali and Bhatu. As Maghi songs are duet types, the singers take their respective sides, and the duet songs get expressed in panoramic and aesthetic manner. That is to say, the songs go in answer-question pattern. Though the singers are all females, they boldly and confidently act upon the given roles to run the Maghi performance. The singer, at the time of singing, look active and beautiful, like heavenly angels in typical costumes called Gatiya. All of them wear Choliya and Lehenga, as the vary costume gets covered with the alluring Gatiya.

The songs carry various themes with different motives, for example, the songs sung in the part of Sali and Bhatu generally depicts the glorification of ornaments and the crazy wishes of Sali to have them, in order to be cosmetify herself. In the same fashion, the Bhatu answers that he will buy them next time. Bhatu once again

persuades her that the ornaments demanded by Sali have been too much expensive that he couldn't afford them. However, it is Sali, who hopes that Bhatu will be the source of different ornaments, and appeals for those ornaments like Tikuli, sendur, Kajula, Tara etc. As the song goes:

Sali: Sakari Goliya, namki Shahariya re han - 2

Shakhiya ho, Nani deho Bhatu Sindur Bajar - 4<sup>1</sup>.

Bhatu: gainu bajariya, dekhanu senduriya re han -2

Shakhiya ho, salik sindur bhoila mahanga - 4<sup>2</sup>

Sali: Sakari galiya, Namaki sahariya re han - 2<sup>3</sup>

Sakhiya ho, nanideho Bhatu jhobanna Bazar-4

Bhatu: Gainu bazariya, dekhanu Jhobanna re han - 2

Sakhiya ho, salik Jhobanna bhaila mahanga – 4<sup>4</sup>

In the above songs, Sali asks Bhatu, who is going to lamki bazaar, to buy some cosmetic and ornaments for her. In response Bhatu says that he went to lamki, and saw them but he could buy it because it was expensive. This song highlights the intimate relation of Sali and Bhatu existing in Tharu tradition.

Similarly the songs between father and daughter also revolve around the themes of ornaments. The passion of daughter towards expensive attire compels her to ask her father to buy them. But her father presents the same reason of inaccessibility up to that position to decorate his idiosyncratic daughter, as put forwarded by her Bhatu. He tries to make assure his daughter that next year he will work hand and manage the demand.

Chai: Sendur, sendur kanu baba sendur nai ledelere - 2

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<sup>1</sup> There are narrow street in Lamki bazaar (oh! my friends) brother- in-law please buy sindur for me.

<sup>2</sup> I went to bazaar, I asked for it (oh! my friends) sister- in- law it was very much expensive.

<sup>3</sup> There are narrow street in Lamki bazaar (oh my friends) brother- in-law please buy a dress for me.

<sup>4</sup> I went to bazaar, I asked for it (oh! my friends) sister- in- law it was very much expensive.

Sakiyaho, sendur ka karan baba chornu duwar - 4<sup>5</sup>

Baba: Aausak sala dhiya sendur mahang bhailarihan - 2

Sakhiya ho, Aago sala dhiya dehabu bisai.4<sup>6</sup>

Daughter: Kajla, kajla kanu baba kajla nai ledere re - 2

Sakhiya ho, kajulaka karan baba chornu duwar - 4<sup>7</sup>

Father: Auska sala dhiya kajula mahang bhaila re han - 2

Sakhiya ho, Aga sala dhiya dehabu besai – 4<sup>8</sup>

In this way, the song depicts the loving relation between father and daughter. Apparently, there is not communication gaps and sense of hierarchy. The daughter feels free and frank enough to put her demands. Therefore, in above song, the daughter says she left the house because he couldn't buy cosmetics for her. In response, father promises that he would buy them next year since the price is high now.

In addition to above mentioned themes, the Maghi songs reveal the hardship of their life, their economic condition. The songs which talk about the performance are known as situational songs. Such songs carry step wise information as the performers go a head during the performance. At the beginning of performance, they inform the house owner about their arrival into their yard through songs collectively. It makes the home owner ready to observe and participate in Maghi singers' performance:

I: Aai gaili ho hamre tuhari duwariya - 4<sup>9</sup>

II: Utho beli phako ojarara - 4<sup>10</sup>

III: Bara mahina pache Magi je atha re han - 2

Dui dina ho hamar hasana khelana - 4<sup>11</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Father! I frequently asked for sindur, but you didn't listen (Oh! my friends) so I have left the hose.

<sup>6</sup> Daughter! sindur is very expensive this year. (Oh! my friends) I assure you to buy next year.

<sup>7</sup> Father! I frequently asked for kajal, but you didn't listen (Oh! my friends) so I have left the hose.

<sup>8</sup> Daughter! kajal is very expensive this year. (Oh! my friends) I assure you to buy next year.

<sup>9</sup> We came at your door to perform.

<sup>10</sup> Wake up land-lady and make a fire.

<sup>11</sup> Maghi comes back after 12 months; we have very short time to enjoy.

All of the performers carry on their divided tasks for the ritual excellence. Most importantly, Tharu songs are also distinctive for its Meta quality. The songs themselves have vital role in instructing the Naach for different actions. For instance, Gawaiya ask Naachuiya for improving dancing skills. Even the audiences are persuaded through the songs in order to impress and make them offer the large amount of money willingly. They even appeal the audience to get the expected fund by making the satiric comments on those who are unwilling to provide them. The songs itself has vital role in instructing the Nachuiya for different actions. For example, it may be of suitable dancing or it may be for persuading the audience in order to impress and make them offer the large amount of money willingly. They collectively sing “Kasari baithi baniya kahe muski maralo, dari daro gojhi ya kahi dama – 4”<sup>12</sup>. They even appeal the audience to get the expected fund by making the irony to those who are unwilling to provide them:

I: Kaili bakasiya kholanehi sekalo, dari daro gojhiya kahi dama. - 4<sup>13</sup>

II. Bharali Bakasiya kholanhi sakalo, dari daro gojhiya kahi dama - 4<sup>14</sup>

On top of that, the songs performed in the evening, depict the high grandeur of nature. As Tharu people have close relation with nature, their songs, to great extent, incline and praise the nature. In such songs, they talk about the plants like Babari, Tulsi, Aamilic and so on. One of the Maghi songs goes:

I: Han hanre han, Aagana bahari ghurara lagainu - 2

Ginha mana Jamire gaili Tulasa, Bebari - 2<sup>15</sup>

I: Han hanre han, Aagana bahari ghurara lagainu - 2

Ginha mana Jamire gaili Belta, Babur- 2<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Why are you delaying to offer sir, hurry up and donate from your pocket.

<sup>13</sup> Though you couldn't offer from your ancient treasury, offered that you have in your pocket.

<sup>14</sup> Though you couldn't offer from the full box, offered that you have in your pocket.

<sup>15</sup> Sweeping the front yard I made a heap of dust, there grew the plants, Tulasi and Babari.

The plants like Tulsā, Bebari, Belata and Babur etc. as mentioned in the songs, have cultural importance among the Tharus. These plants are the plants of frequent use in Tharu ritual celebration. For instance, in Dashain they use Bebari as Jamara. Bebari is considered as a sacred plant. Tharu do not offer other flowers to their deities as Hindu do. Rather they offer Baberi to their Bhutuwa (deities)

Mandrawa, a drummer, is single male performer except all the females. His major function is to play the Mandra (Madel) in accordance to the rhythmic bits of songs. In Maghi dance, he remains a center of attraction among the performers. So far costume is concerned; he wears the typical Tharu dress Kamij and Dhoti. He also puts Pheta around his head. In this ritual occasion, Mandra itself can't escape with the decorative furnishment. The Mandra looks as an attractive instrument with Jhalars (a colorful cloth with different fabrication) and small pieces of mirror on it.

Mandrawa, in typical costume and the Mandra, gets emotional during the action and produce different movements as dancer. He is supposed to be more skillful in playing Mandra and in dancing. It is because, in Maghi Naach, the performers have to sing different songs according to the time: day songs and evening songs. So the Mandrawa has to play in accordance to the schedules of time. Mandrawa makes the beats like Tau-chak-daun-daun, and Chak-dimna-chkaimna in day time, where as Tau-chakdaun-nak, and Chak-dimna-chakdimna in the evening. Generally, the distinction in beats signifies different time of performance, especially the day and evening.

The third element to be dealt with the Maghi Naach is Nachuiya. Nachuiya has also the equal role to that of former one i.e. Gawaiya. With the coordination of Mandrawa and Gawaiya, she performs the skillful and fascinating dance, which gives

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<sup>16</sup> Sweeping the front yard I made a heap of dust, there grew the plants, Belta and Babura.

a complete perfection and panoramic charm to the Tharu cultural ritual, Maghi Naach. As usual to the former elements, costumes for Naachuiya are not an exception. She wears Choliya and Lehenga, Agharan is the typical costume which broods over the choliya, decorates the body quite charmingly. Again, in terms of ornaments, Ghugra in legs, necklace of paisa and Pote in neck, the silver Tra in wrists and arms have vital significance in beautifying the Nachuiya. Moreover, including Nachuiya, the Gawiya have same bunch of lock twisted within it which is called Jhonti in Tharu. The other costume, but very important, is Fariya which is tied on the Lehenga on the waist. Phariya has a supportive role to make the dance fascinating. The Naachuiwa twists and forwards the Fariya left and right, backward and forward, and up and down while dancing.

Among the different steps of dances, the special action called Paisalootna, an act of picking up offered money, is the central aesthetics of this cultural performance. The same step 'Paisalootna' includes various actions, with the active involvement of her bodily part. The step allows the body fall upside down, then either eyes or the mouth perform the great effort to catch the placed note or coin on Gatiya (a kind of cloth handkerchief). The dancer has to struggle hard to pick up the money in the case of problems, i.e. sometimes the audiences drop the notes which are shank into chilly powder or the oily coins on plate so that it causes pain while doing the act of holding money. Generally, this act is said to be the part of Maghi culture, which has not a special significance. It, however, is done for the sake of public entertainment.

Audiences in Maghi Naach have the integral role as evaluators, participants to support in bringing aesthetic. Simply, the audiences of Maghi Naach consist of home owners, their relatives, and other neighboring people can join in the performance. On the basis of involvement in the Naach, audiences are categorized and given different

roles. For example, active audiences participate in the Naach by clapping, cheering etc. The Interactive audiences, being an indispensable part of the over all function, do the act of clapping, hooting in order to encourage all the performers, and they offer money to the band of Maghi performers. In addition to these actions, the audiences get emotional and participate in singing, even they inspire the Nachuiya and Mondrawa by saying *Lahiya Lahiya*, that is to say, Mandrawa should marry Naachiya. Similarly, they utter *lahiya lage mani baje* (Mandrawa made Naachaiya elope), if they get full satisfaction from the Naach. The next type of participants, the inactive audiences remain passive. So they are passive listeners, they only listen and see the dance. They enjoy however, they do not display any bodily signs as the active and interactive audiences. The proactive audiences, where boundary between audience and performers get blurred, are not found in Maghi Naach since it is replaced by the dominant audience called interactive audience.

Audiences generally consist of homeowners and their relatives have important roles as evaluators and participants, to make Maghi Naach a Naach. As evaluators, the audiences have many deeds to do during and after the Maghi Naach. They observe different steps of Nachuiya: bodily movements, gestures, act of holding money etc. They carefully listen to the songs performed during the Naach. The songs, performed there, even motivate them to sing together, and praise the activities of those performers.

In the course of dance evaluation, they put several challenges, either for entertainment or as a part of cultural rite, to the dancer while picking the money. They put notes mixed in chilly powder and oily coins in order to create difficulty or hindrance in the part of Nachuiya. They keep on offering money for a long time, if they enjoy the dance performance.

In terms of setting, the time is specially divided into two categories: event time and clock time. The event time signifies the time that the performance takes place in each arena: it takes generally twenty five minutes per performance to be completed. Another, clock time, refers to calendar, i.e. the ritual function occurs in the month of Magh for three days, at day and evening time. The performance is set in the courtyard of homeowners, which is called *Agana* in Tharu. The Maghi festival makes every one keep their house neat and clean. They have made their house surroundings very healthy and attractive. The performative arena called *Agana* is swept and well decorated. It is decorated with beautiful flowers in the carry. *Charpais*, the Tharu cots, are set there for the convenience of the other audiences, while viewing the Maghi Naach. No doubt, in terms of vitality of setting, Maghi Naach demands unique setting, which has a lot of significance as backbone of the very Tharu dance. The occasion brings an enormous change in Tharu community. However, Tharu people are busy almost round the year, it bestows them the opportunity to keep their house clean, have preparation regarding the annual plan; carry preparation for Maghi dishes, costumes and other expense and income transactions. Not only this, this time is also suitable time for dancing since the days are very cool and lazy; it is the dance that makes them active and also they get relief from the shivering chill.

The Maghi Naach, regarding movement, follows Schechnerian model of performance that is the gathering, performing and dispersal. The umbrella term for all these activities, as Schechner states, is performance. Schechner again puts forward his argument about the way of performance pattern. He believes each performance moves a head through a certain pattern. According to him, the performance takes place in two natural theaters--Procession and Eruption.

The Procession pattern of performance, as stated by Schechner, has a distinctive goal and a fixed route to perform. It begins at a certain point following a fixed route and ends at already desired point or place. In this sense, each performance starts with gathering of performers at some place, their performance along the route and finally their dispersal at end. Further, Schechner believes that there can be short stops in performance route, where the audiences as well as performers can join.

To see Maghi Naach in light of procession pattern, it begins with performers gathering at Mahato's or Bargher's house and involve in costuming, eating and drinking. They all become ready for performance and hence the Mahato's house becomes the origin point of their designated performance. The performers, after eating and costuming, start performing their Naach. There, singers sing the songs and Nachuiya and Mandrawa play their respective roles. After completing the Naach, they go to another house, which is the other stop in Schechner's model. In the course of procession, the performers may join them at different stops (house) since all of the performers may not be present at the origin point due to their business. In addition, that the audience may join them to perceive the beauty of the Naach. However, audiences are not forced to join up to their destination since they have joined the Naach only for pleasure and not for the sake of any goal, as the performers have possessed. The performers carry on their performance from one house to another, until their final destination. As soon as they arrived at their desired destination, that is the terminal house to be performed, and then dispersal occurs. In this phase, the performers put off their costumes, leave their assigned jobs for the performance and return to their normal life. The performers return to their own homes promising to meet at Badghar's house for the celebration feast, Chuki in Tharu, next day.

Maghi Naach can also be analyzed through the other model as Schechner calls it Eruption. Eruption is another kind of natural theater. According to this theatrical pattern an event or the performance is put at the center, where a cool rim (circle) is created by the audiences. It is the performance activity that engages the audience. Under this model there is not a prescribed route to perform as assumed in procession model. The audiences are not forced to stick with the performance, rather they are free to come in the rim and go out of the rim. Therefore Maghi Naach also follows Eruptive model of performance.

To view it Eruptive performance, an event of a Maghi performance should be chosen. That means a particular house performance should be framed. This model moves a head at fixed place by following the basic pattern of performances-- gathering, performing and dispersal. Thus, to analyze Maghi Naach in this model, the yard of a house owner becomes the center for the event. Here, the event implies singing and dancing activities of the performers. Performers sing and dance to exchange their emotions, creations and their skill in front of the audience.

As a house's courtyard becomes a place for the eruptive performance, the audiences come and form a cool rim around the courtyard of house owner. The hot event (performance) attracts the audience either for a serious look or a short glance. They are not forced to watch the full events. In addition, that the audience can comment on the performance negatively or positively. They praise the dancer and the singers comparing the former performance (last year), and put the images of good performance freshly in their mind. Then, the last phase of performance, i.e. dispersal, occurs. The performers stop performing their performance, where as audience also leave the place. The performers, at this point, eat Dhikries and drink Jand provided by the homeowner, and then they move for another performance at other house.

### **Functions of Maghi Naach**

Maghi Naach as a mirror of Tharu community has two function, i.e. societal and aesthetic function. The societal function of this dance comprised of several means and resources to achieve different goals. This Naach creates special kinds of bond among the community people. The occasion provides them to share their feelings, emotions by interactions. They talk about their cultural beliefs, ancestral piety on the very major cultural performance. The system of food habit like drinking, having Dhikries, Sura, Machhi invite them in special platform, where they are free to express or perform their needy matters.

Tharus special food item called Dhakri, which is prepared in Maghi festival, carries a lot of cultural significance. That same food is offered to every group of performers by homeowners. Dhakri is made out of rice flour by steaming. While baking it they use hand made utensils called Bhakri, which is unique to Tharu culture. There is a myth in Tharu about how Dhakri came in to existence. This myth associates them with Parbati (wife of lord Shiva). Goddess Parbati, for the first time, had bake it for her son, Ganesh.

Culture shapes the performance and the performance gives identity to the particular community. Tharu culture, in this sense, is no exception to give the special cultural identity to its people. The Maghi performance reflects the life standard of the Tharu people. Moreover, the costumes, the language use, the musical instruments, the unique setting itself identify the specialty and their unique cultural identity. For example, their typical costumes Lehenga, Gatiya, Choliya etc, and ornaments like Sutiya, Nathni, Ghugara, are internally related to the very culture and Tharu identity. Furthermore, the flooding culture itself glorifies the cultural heritage of Tharu

identity. The typical steps of dance called Paisa lotna is highly associated with this Maghi Naach, which is not found in other cultural performances.

The performative action called Naach and its different steps for the perfect action, signifies the importance of discipline maintenances in dance, in community and in life. On the other hand, it teaches them to fulfill their social and personal duties and responsibilities being cooperative, stoic and sympathetic in the case of sorrow to other fellow beings. It stops them who are violent to breach the social laws and orders by making them aware and teaching them the significance of lawful and moral life. In Maghi Naach, the overall performance is observed and the performers are praised for good actions, sometimes, they are rewarded by offering more money and even they are given suggestions for better performance.

As other cultural performance, the Maghi dance has its own history. The history can be reflected through different human deeds. One of the eminent means to reflect the history is cultural performance. No doubt, Maghi dance has the equal level to other means in keeping fresh and transforming or preserving the typical Tharu cultural history to its coming generations. In terms of preservation of history, Maghi Naach talks about the origin and occupation of Tharu people. It is reflected through the costumes, the songs and the performance. As Tharu people put on their traditional costumes during performance that they make themselves, show their cultural history of embroidery skill. Similarly, the songs expressed during performance, disclose about their occupation, their ancestral belief and their active involvement in cultural sites. Moreover, the songs reveal the history of their struggle against hardship, their mutual cooperation and sympathetic feeling to overcome the hardship. For example the below given song illustrates their occupation and cultural pathos.

I: Rai kheta masuri masuri kheta rai, re han,

yeha kheta ho mor sutiya herai – 4<sup>17</sup>

II: Rai kheta masuri masuri kheta rai, re han,

yeha kheta ho mor tra herai - 4<sup>18</sup>

The very paradoxical line from the Maghi songs express something about their agricultural life one the one hand, on the other it reveals the hardship, sorrowful conditions of farmers' life. The term Sutiya is used metaphorically in the song. It signifies pitiful condition of Tharu female life. Since Tharu people live agrarian life, they find themselves lost in the field. That's why they sing, "I have lost my Sutiya in the field of mustard or in the field of lentil". It also displays confusing state of mind. When one is so much oppressed, he loses his or her consciousness.

Every culture is dynamic; therefore Tharu can't be an exception. The dynamism of Tharu culture becomes visible in some songs called Kathaura is a mixed song of Tharu and Nepali languages. Especially, new generation who have command over Nepali language sing it perfectly. Though the Gawaiya modify Nepali language in to their tune, it is easily understood by Nepali speakers. Such types of songs, in Maghi performance, are sung at the middle of performance. The singer bursts as:

I: Tebul kursi chaina bhatu baitho gundari yama.<sup>19</sup>

II: Kati khane supari lai phori khane hoina

Jau jau bhenney soltina lai chori jane hoine.<sup>20</sup>

The above mentioned songs clearly visualize the dynamic aspect of Tharu culture, that is, how new style and activity are added with the pace of time in Tharu culture. Similarly, it also states how two different languages can exist to form beautiful lines of songs. This advocates their belief in coexistence and mutual

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<sup>17</sup> Mustard fields grows lentil and lentil field grows mustard, my bangles lost in this field.

<sup>18</sup> Mustard fields grows lentil and lentil field grows mustard, my earrings lost in this field.

<sup>9</sup>harmony among the different cultural peoples .In other words, the Tharus live in harmonious relation with Brahmins and Chhetryas.

One of the social functions of performance is communication. It provides them the utopia environment, which provides liberation to the enslaved hearts of those performers. There is a kind of feast like carnivals where Tharu people from different socio-economic status share their feelings and enjoy blurring the sense of hierarchy. For instance, the member from Kamaiya family and the Mahato's family can join in same performance as equal performers, without any sense of master and servant. Besides the functions of making equal to all the performers, the Maghi performance, especially songs, have significant roles to play. The songs played during the performance are quite emotional, pathetic, moving and suggestive. The song between Sali and Bhatu consist of the matter of ornaments, and their love affection between them. On the other, the same song reveals the hardship of ladies being deprived of the charming and precious jewels.

Aesthetics as a second function of Maghi Naach, comprised of dance, song, charming costume and drinks as well. The aesthetics, during the period, bestows pleasure, relief from pain and suffering, and ultimately transform them it to the new world. Maghi Naach explores and exhibits how Tharu people grasp the pleasure from the very Naach. Dancing and singing provide pleasure to both performers and audience. The costume, in addition, brings the new and colorful brightening light into the dazzling surrounding of Maghi Naanch. As the performers combinely involve in the aesthetic activity i.e., performance, they get associated with each other, including the audience as well. The songs expressed in the performance are about their life

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<sup>19</sup> Beetle nut that is to be chewed by cutting it properly, not by breaking (here the improper way of making pieces) it. The sister in-law proposing to settle is not to be missed.

<sup>20</sup>Dear brother in-law, there are not table and chair. Be seated on the mat.

style, suffering, hardship, and moreover the glories of their ancestral stance, as being typically expressed, provide them a sort of relief and satisfaction.

The expression and sharing of emotions cultivate and make them imbibe the fellow feelings, equality and the sense of humanity. Those senses and feelings lead them to enter into the world of transcendent, the world which is uncorrupted and un-introduced by the steps of miseries and painful daily activities. As the Maghi performers start performing their charismatic skill, they themselves forget and enter in to the new territory. Even the poor physical condition of performers, if they have, cannot bar them to perform. Similarly, it is the performers who make the audiences prepare for heavenly flight. At one of the steps called Paisa Lootna, audiences get so mesmerized that they forget the value of money, and start offering until the empty pocket.

In the same vein, Schechner claims that every performance is marked by two elements: efficacy and entertainment. Maghi Naach, therefore, cannot be an exception. Maghi performance possesses the element of entertainment when the performer and the audience concern only with fun; here and now. However, the same event becomes efficacious, if it is supposed the activity done by their ancestors.

Maghi Naach also explores the creative aspect of Tharu people. Creativity the other aspect of aestheticity, becomes visible when performers perform the oral songs which have not been rehearsal before the Maghi Naach. They sing the songs spontaneously even despite the musical rehearsal. Their songs produce the melody which embarks the sensation into every one. Furthermore, the creativity lies when they produce the situational songs encouraging the owner for offering more money, making dance move lively and so on.

Jand (Ale) one of the constituent of their food habit in Maghi Naach, also has the role to activate and bring charm ness, creativity, pleasure, and even the sense of kinship. The ale drunk during the performance gives them energy for good performance. It instills the strong and shameless veins into restrained and oppressed hearts, which causes them to blur the boundaries between strong and weak, poor and sophisticated, master and servant, elder and younger. Being intoxicated, they forget every thing and entirely involve, either in singing or in dancing to enhance the charisma of the Naach. Regarding the items of Jand, Buddhi Chaudhary claims, “We have altogether 15 items of liquor. The special one which is made out of Andi (a typical cast of rice that is popular among Tharu) is famous in Maghi celebration”. Moreover, it makes them surrender their self and yield to the sense of unity, as if they have been in the same line of pleasure or pleasure making activity.

Finally, as Turner has stated that culture provides the raw materials for aesthetic performances, Maghi Naach also gets its integrants from Tharu culture itself. For instance, Gawaiya in Naach express their wants, wishes and beliefs through the means of songs. The songs that they sing is not other then their experience of society. In other words, Gawaiya sings the songs taken from their Tharu community. And at the same time, the real experience of Gawaiya becomes a piece of aesthetic contemplation for the society. Hence, culture and performance is complementary. Performance tries to move stepping on the raw materials provided by culture, whereas culture forwards taking help of performance. Thus, Maghi Naach is another loop of Tharu culture in Victorian sense.

## **Conclusion**

Tharu, the largest ethnic group of Terai, inhabit in the lowland Terai-Tharuhat. Dangura Tharu cultivate, raise castles, fish and collect forest products. They have their own language, culture and ethnic and unique food habits, skills and aptitudes. The productivity, creativity and uniqueness of Tharu cultural is observed in Tharu festivals, rites and in other cultural performances. The brilliant architect is noticed as we glance at Tharu buildings. Similarly, their craftsmanship becomes visible in their traditional handicrafts and self made attire. Tharu festivals such as Maghi, Dasya, Dhurari, Astimki, Hardawa, Atwari mark and shape their cultural life arousing the sense of unity, fraternity and love among them. The compulsory involvement of Tharu people in celebration at Badghar's house epitomizes their practice of communal stance. On the top of that, during the great festival Maghi, Tharu people are even free to blame and report their conic behaviours made by their elders, and then, can suggest them for improvement. In particular, a member of community can criticize his community head, i.e. a kisan is free to express his dissatisfaction to the Badghar for his misdeeds.

Tharu have opulent traditions and socio-cultural life having unique personality. Tharu oral epic, song, dance have been used as a tool to voicing their ethnic belongings. The traditional performance of Tharu, which are ancient and transmitted properties of society, can not be totally transcribed on pages. The pure aestheticity of performance can only be realized and felt at the time of real performance. The cultural performance being rooted in local grounds speak of Tharu culture, language and their way of like.

An attempt to view Maghi Naach as a socio-aesthetic reflection of Tharu community has been completed in the light of performance theory. The elements of performance: audience, performer, setting, costume, text (song) and dance movement

have been analyzed and studied minutely under the theories of Bell Hook and Schechner. Maghi Naach is a performative dance of a group, including Nachiya, Gawaiya and Mandrawa. Nachuiya performances dance as per the guidance of Gawaiya and Mandrawa. Gawaiya burst into rhythmic lines along the music given by the Mandrawa. And the Mandrawa plays his Mandrawa as prescribed by the Tharu tradition, i.e. he has to play different beats for the evening and the day time songs.

The songs of Maghi Naach carry different themes and motives of the Tharu culture. They reflect their pathos, pang, love affair, wishes and misery of their difficult agrarian life. The duet songs of Sali and Bhatu, Baba and Chai carry the theme of love affair and hardship of Tharu people respectively. The songs mixed with Nepali language show their respect towards their fellow neighbours, and the sense of coexistence. The traditional songs which are practiced among Tharu people are purely innocent, natural, and spontaneous, show their art of creativity. The close analysis of their involvement in Naach as a performer or as an audience exhibits the Tharu's way of making and taking pleasure, that voices their cultural and aesthetic part of life. The enjoyment of Maghi dance is displayed through the unity of dance, the music and the theme of songs.

To conclude, Maghi Naach performed by Dangaura Tharu is a cultural performance. Undoubtedly, such communal performance belonging to a particular tribe exhibits their cultural pathos, norms, traditions, ethnics and beliefs. It also discloses how a particular performance gives the sense of unity, harmony, co-existence and the aesthetic feeling between and among the people having different culture. Therefore, Maghi Naach truly portrays Tharu people and their socio-aesthetic part of life.

## Appendix

The songs of Maghi are attached herewith:

### Text I

Songs sung at the beginning of performance.

- a. Aaigaili ho hamre tuhare duwariya - 4
- b. Uthahala beli phuko ojarar - 4
- c. Bara mahina pache maghi je yetha re han - 4  
dui dina ho hamar sasana o khelana
- d. Bara mahina pache maghi te yethare han - 4  
dui dina ho hamra sanga satha rahabi – 4

### Text II

- a. Rai kheta masuri masuri kheta rai re han  
yahi kheta ho mor senduar herai - 4
- b. Rai kheta masuri masuri kheta rai re han  
yahi kheta ho mor nathuni herai - 4
- c. Rai kheta masuri, masuri kheta rai re han  
yahi kheta ho mor Jhobanna herai - 4
- d. Rai kheta nasuri masuri kheta rai re han  
yahi kheta ho mor kajula herai-4
- e. Rai kheta masuri masuri kheta rai re han  
yahi kheta ho mor guriya herai - 4

### **Text III**

An extract form the Maghi song between daughter and father.

- CHAI a:       Sendur, sendur kanu baba sendur nai ledelere - 2  
                  sakhiya ho, sendur ke karan baba chornu duwar - 4
- BABA a:       Asunk sal dhiya sendur mahanga baila re han -  
                  sakhiya ho, aaga sala dhiya dehabu besai - 4
- CHAI b:       Tikli, Tikli kanu baba tikli nai ledele re - 2  
                  sakhiya ho, tikulike karan baba chornu duwar - 4
- BABA b:       Asunk sale dhiya tikuli mahanga bhaila re han - 2  
                  sakhiya ho aga sala dhiya dehabu besai - 4
- CHAI c:       Nathni, Nathni kanu baba nathuni nai le delere - 2  
                  sakhiya ho, nathuni ke karan baba chorna duwar - 4
- BABA c :       Asunk sal dhiya nathuni mahanga bhaila re han - 2  
                  sakhiya ho, aaga sal dhiya dehabu desai - 4

### **Text IV**

Songs sung in the middle of performance

- a.       Nacho nachaniya apana surale baitho nachaniya  
          madariyak surale - 4
- b.       Chumak chaila otti tarao, chaiko chaila baita deu - 4
- c.       Bhatuho, photo khichal ba, orati tauliyama  
          jhirghi maral ba - 4
- d.       Kati khane supari lai han, phori khane hoina - 2  
          Jau jau bhanne soltima lai chori jane hain - 4
- e.       Tebal kursi chaina bhatu baitho godariyama - 4

### **Text V**

- a. uri uri bhāura sendur par baitha re han - 2  
sakhiya ho, bhāuraka chuwal more sendur malin - 2
- b. uri uri bhaura tikuli par baitha re han 2  
sakhiyaho, bhauraka chuwal more tikulimalina -2
- c. uri uri bhāura kajula par baitha re hān -2  
sakhiyaho, bhāuraka chuwal more kajula malin-2
- d. uri uri bhāura sutiya par baitha re hān -2  
sakhiya ho, bhauraka chuwal more sutiya malin -2
- e. uri uri bhāura choliya par baithare hān - 2  
sakhiya ho, bhauraka chuwal more choliya malin -2

### **Text VI**

Songs sung to persuade the audience to offer more money

- a. kasari baithi baniya kahe muski maralo; dari daro  
gojhiyakahi dama -4
- b. kaili bakasiya khola nahe sekalo,  
dari daro gojhiya kahi dama -4
- c. Bhari bakasiya kholanahi sekalo, hai hajur  
kholi kholi daro gojhiya kahi dam -4

### **Text VII**

Songs sung at evening time.

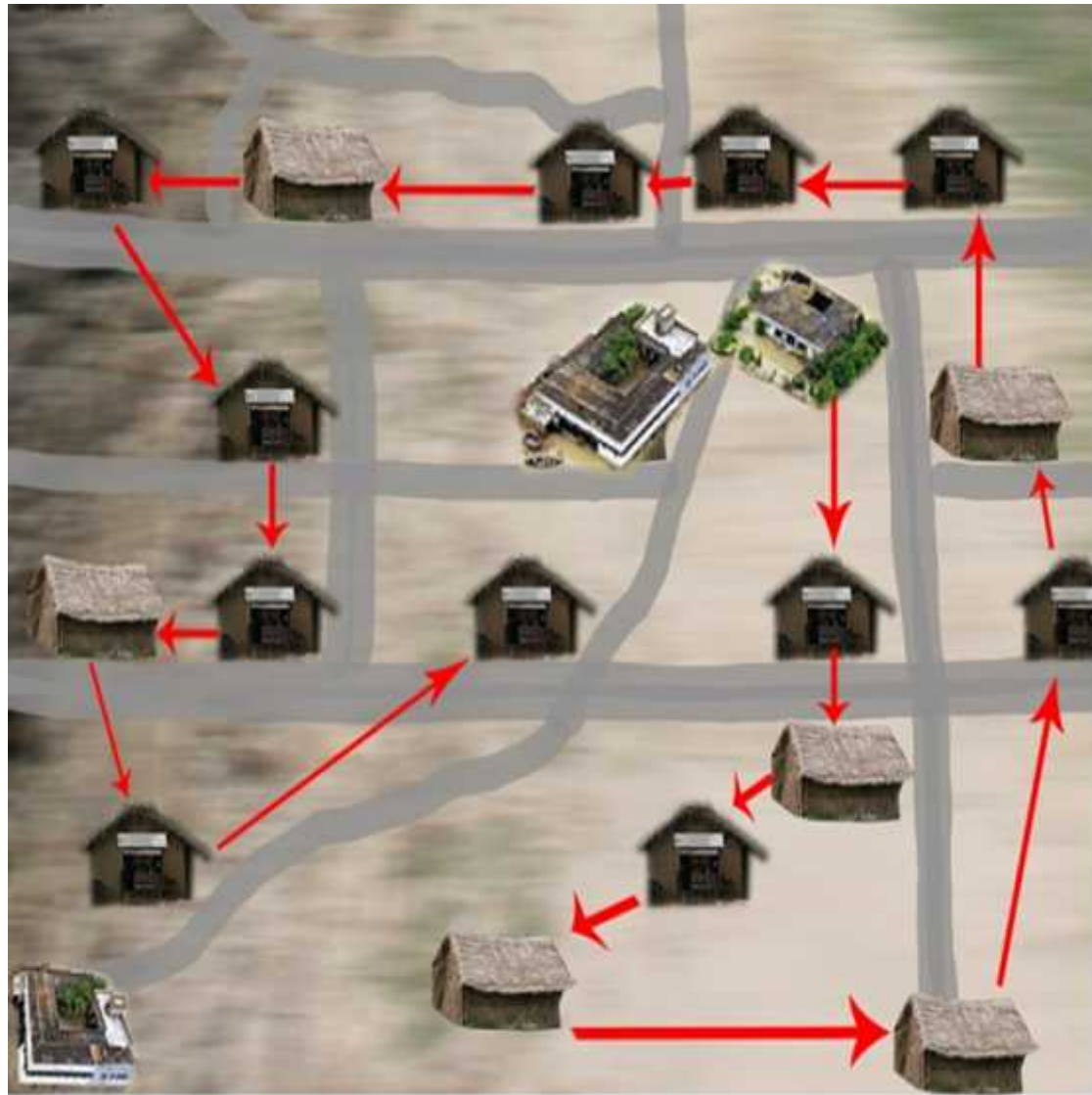
- a. Han han re, agana bahari bahari ghurara lagainu - 2  
Jinhi mana jamiri gaila tulasa bebari - 4
- b. Han han re agana bahari bahari ghurara lagainu - 2  
Jinhi mana samiri gaila belata babar - 4



- c. Han han re 'agana bahari barari ghurara lagainu - 2  
Jin hi mana Jamiri gaila daina, gaduli - 4
- d. Han han re agana bahari bahari ghurara lagainu - 2  
sinhi mana jamiri gaila gendawa chameli - 4

### **Text VII**

An extract from the Maghi song between Sali and Bhatu

- Sali a : Sakari galiya namki sahariya re han - 2  
sakhiya ho, nani deho bhatu sendur bazar - 4
- Bhatu a : Gainu bajariya dekhanu sendur re han -2  
shakiyaho, salik sendur bhaila mahanga - 4
- Salil a : Sakari galiya namaki sahariya re han - 2  
sakhiya ho, nanideho bhatu tikuli bazar - 4
- Bhatu b: Gainu bazariya dekhanu tikuli re han -2  
sakhiya ho, salik tikuli baila mahanga - 4
- Sali c: Sakari galiya namaki shahariya re han - 2  
sakhiya ho, nani deho bhatu tariya bazar - 4
- Bhatu c: Gaina bagaraya dekhana tariya re han -2  
sakhiya ho, salik tariya baila re mahanga - 4



- Symbols
-  = Tharu House
  -  = Processive Movement of Dance

## A Map of a Tharu Village

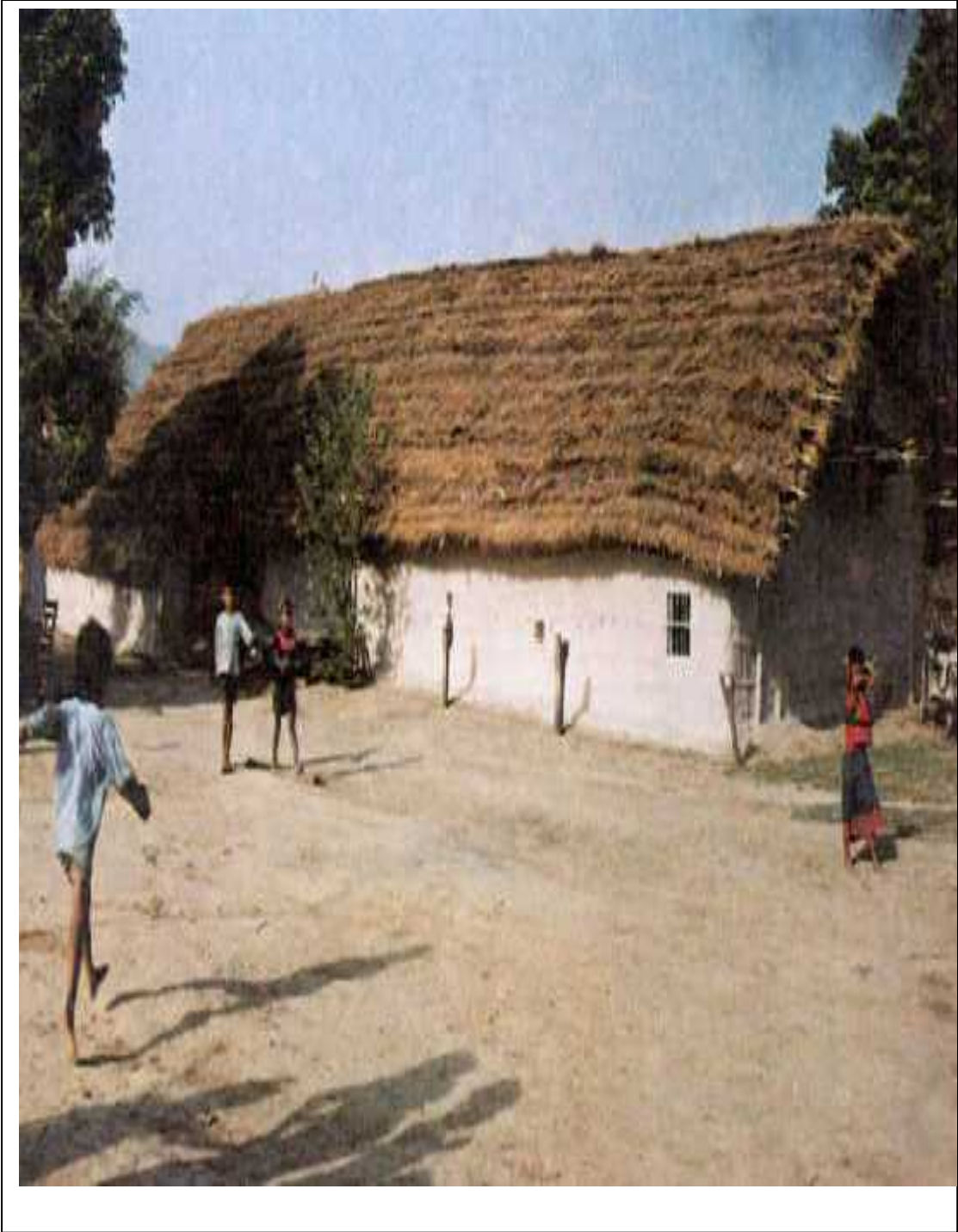












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