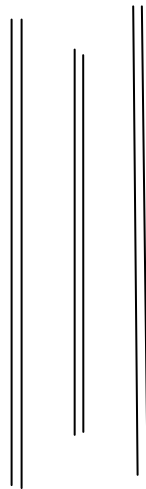


Communication Patterns Among Muslim Community:

An Exploratory Study

A thesis submitted to Central Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Tribhuvan University, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master's of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communication



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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

This is to certify that Mr. **Gani Ansari** has prepared this dissertation entitled “Communication Patterns Among Muslim Community: An Exploratory Study” under my guidance and supervision in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the course of JMC 536 Thesis writing of Master’s of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communication. Therefore, this dissertation report is recommended for its evaluation.

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LETTER OF APPROVAL

This dissertation entitled “Communication Patterns Among Muslim Community: An Exploratory Study” has been submitted by Mr. **Gani Ansari** in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master’s of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communication.

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Abstract

This research explores communication patterns among the Muslim community. Every act as well as communication that a Muslim makes is looked upon from religious point of view. As Islam has shaped living ways of Muslims, it has also influenced the communication behavior of the Muslim community. Communication patterns among Muslims are also shaped by their religion, Islam. Muslims have their own way of greeting each other. They have their own way of celebrating festivals, holding wedding ceremony, welcoming to new born baby and funeral rites, among other activities. At the time of such activities, whatever a Muslim speaks and passes comments are in the line with Islamic tradition. In the five time prayers each day, in some act transpersonal communication occurs while in some acts two-way communication occurs and instant feedback is also found. In the weekly Friday prayer mass communication occurs as the Imam delivers sermon before *Farz* prayer (obligatory ones) begins. Both mass communication and transpersonal communication occur during annual prayers of *Eid-ul-Fitr* and *Eid-ul-Adha*, two major festivals in Islam. Mass communication also occurs when *Ijtima* (religious gathering) is held. Imams and scholars deliver sermons about Islam by relating them with contemporary issues. Sermons are aimed at motivating Muslims to do each and every act in accordance with the teachings of the holy *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*. If we talk about channels used by Muslims to deliver Islamic messages, they use various channels. Transpersonal communication occurs when a Muslims enters to a bathroom, exit from there, when he or she begins to have meal, after having meal, when sneezing, before beginning a journey, when looking into mirror, when seeing a bad dream, when using new cloths, before sleeping and when waking up, when there is thunderclap. Allah, in the holy *Qur'an*, commands to hold consultation before taking crucial decision in family or other affairs.

Abbreviations

AS	Alaihi Salam
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
PBUH	Peace Be Upon Him
VDC	Village Development Committee

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1. Background of the study

Communication is integral part of human life. Being a social animal, human beings cannot live without communicating with each other. Communication is as essential as food, shelter and clothes in human life. Communication comes from Latin word '*communico*' which means sharing and not just sending messages. Therefore, communication is a social process, and countless ways in which human beings keep in touch with one another. The messages in the shared environment could not only be oral, non-verbal, written, visual and olfactory; but these could be laws, customs, practices, ways of dressing, gestures, buildings, gardens, exhibits, flags, etc (Narula, 2003, p. 1). People communicate with each other to express their feelings, attitude and so on in their daily lives. Communication process is influenced by geo-political, social and cultural context.

According to Narula, languages which are culture specific are essential components of messages. People in communication define various types of society, sub-society, and group. Their characteristics depend upon the modes of communication they possess, media usage, rituals and signs of personal relationships. We communicate and act together to create, recreate community relationships. Relationships exist and are managed within a culture. From the communication perspective human actions are seen as the process by which persons collectively maintain social reality. Communication of ideas through the spoken word is described by various terms- face to face communication, interpersonal communication, person to person contact or word of mouth communication (Narula, 2003, p. 2).

Message has a content or theme. It has a style which is reflective of culture, sub-culture, geographic area and the context involved.

Communication occurs in many forms at different levels. These are categories expressed into three forms: Broad forms, functional forms and geographic forms. The three forms overlap and are convenient and addressed into practical categories. Broad forms of communication are intrapersonal, transpersonal, interpersonal, group communication, mass communication and folk communication. Transpersonal is communication with divine through prayers, meditation etc. Folk communication is also called traditional or popular media that can be both interpersonal, group or mediated (Narula, 2003, p. 5).

Muslims give high value towards the religious guidance, because according to Islamic faith, only those are termed as the true followers of this religion who have complete faith on religion, Allah, his messenger and his sayings. Muslims have their own ways of greeting, dress up and holding religious gathering. Islam prescribes both men and women to dress simply, in modestly and with dignity. A man must always be covered in loose and unrevealing clothing from his navel to knee which is an absolute minimum covering required. Muslim women must at least cover their hair and body in loose and unrevealing clothing, obscuring the details of their body from the public. Muslims argue that the wisdom behind this dress code is to minimize sexual enticement and degradation in the society as much as possible for both men and women. On the other hand, Islam encourages sex appeal and physical attraction for both men and women within privacy between married couples.

Majority of Muslims do not shake hands with the opposite sex. The Islamic dress code for males and females is prescribed to be modest. Islam strictly prohibits males to dress up like females

and females like males. Both the holy *Qur'an* and *Hadith* direct Muslim males and females to dress up in a modest way that does not incite sexual desire to the opposite sex. *Hadith* also teaches functional division between right hand and left hand. The functions of right hand are to eat and drink, to give and take, to shake hands and wave while the functions of left hand are to remove dirt and to wash and wipe private parts after using the toilet. Using right hand for these things is offensive as per Islam. Muslims avoid direct eye contact with an opposite sex out of modesty and respect. Gambling is also prohibited in Islam. It is *Haram* in Islam. *Haram* is something forbidden by Allah in the holy *Qur'an*.

Narula further states that communication events are not governed by the laws of nature nor are they random and chance events. They are characterized by regularities and patterns. These patterns occur due to inherent tendencies, social norms or conventional rules. These patterns are specific to the groups and communities. There are various patterns of interaction. There are verbal, non-verbal, linear, non-linear, group and mass communication among others.

The pattern of communication i.e. how the content is presented is more important than the content of the communication per se. Such patterns of communication will be of interest in setting up co-evolutionary relationship between the forms of communication and in ways of being human. These patterns of communication are not static but dynamic in nature and often repeated. Communication theories account for patterns for communicative behaviour in terms of social norms and conventional rules attributing motives, meanings and purposes to human factors involved in the episodes (Narula, 2003, p. 21).

Nepal is a multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-lingual country. Religious freedom and mutual respect for all religions are the integral parts of the country's shared culture

and are important underlying principles of multiculturalism and democracy. The right to religion in the Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007 has guaranteed freedom of religion and belief.

According to Article 23 (1) of the Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007, every person shall have the right to profess, practice and protect his or her own religion as handed down to him or her from ancient times, having due regard to the existing social and cultural practices. Provided that no person shall be entitled to convert another person from one religion to another; and that no act or action shall be done in such a manner as to jeopardize the religion of each other. Similarly, as per the Article 23 (2) of the Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007, every religious denomination shall have the right to maintain its independent existence, and, for this purpose, to operate and protect its religious sites and religious trusts, in accordance with law (Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007). The country was declared a secular state after long-time demand of indigenous, Muslim, and Christian, among other minority groups. With the declaration of Nepal a secular country, the state has been announcing public holidays on major festivals of all religious groups. Following the change in country, people from other religious groups have started to feel sense of belongingness. Indigenous, Dalits, Muslims and Christians, among other marginalized communities have been realizing that they are also accommodated in the nation and the state belongs to them too.

As the living ways of Muslims and treating others follow the teachings of the holy *Qur'an* and *Hadith* i.e. reports on the deeds and sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the study explores the patterns of communication among Muslim community. The study will find out how religion influences communicative behaviour of Muslims. In-depth interview, participatory observation, content analysis of the holy *Qur'an* and *Hadith* and case study methods will be applied in the study. The study is aimed at gathering an in-depth understanding of communicative behaviour of

Muslim community and the reasons that leads over such behaviour. It will explore how religion and culture influence the way of communication as well as in the way decision making process existing in the Muslim community.

1.1 Muslims in Nepal

Arabs traders came into contact with the Indian subcontinent to trace the spread of Islam throughout the world. Nepal is mentioned in an Arabic book entitled "*Hudood-Al-Alam*" published in 789 A.D. It has been mentioned that Nepalese musk was exported to Arabia (Regmi, 2036, p. 150). According to the Tistung inscriptions of Amshuverma, iron, copper, musk and bronze utensils were exported from Nepal to different countries and musk was the most important item (Bajracharya, 2030, pp.311-313).

1324 A.D. is an important year for contact between the Muslims of India and Nepal. Gyasuddin Tughlaq, the emperor of Delhi, was returning to his capital via Tirhut after crushing rebellions in Bengal. Mithila Kingdom was thriving in the Simra region of the Terai, Nepali at that time and King Hari Singh Dev was ruling the territory. The king misunderstood that the Delhi emperor was intending to seize also his capital Simrongarh. Simrongarh was situated a few miles East of Birgunj. The king attacked the emperor's forces which took toll to him the emperor destroyed the capital through attack. Then the king had to move to the mountains with his family and counties (Sansodhan Mandal, 2019, pp.311-324). There is no unanimous argument about the period regarding the arrival of Muslims in Nepal. According to one view, the entry of Muslims in Nepal might have begun from the seventh century onward. The same view holds that even during the Lichchhavi period there were some Muslim traders in the Kathmandu Valley and they were involved in trade with China and Tibet (Poudyal, 1999, p.22). As Kathmandu was the traditional

commercial center between India and Central Asia, Muslim traders carried their businesses expeditions across the Himalayas via Kathmandu. However, in other regions of Nepal, they came here on different occasions. Some historians and anthropologists believe that the Muslim presence became evident in Kathmandu towards the end of the twelfth century when Muslim rule was established in North India. But the most prevalent view is that of Dor Bahadur Bista and Tahir Ali Ansari who believe that the Muslims first came into Kathmandu Valley during the reign of King Ratna Malla in the late 15th century and early 16th century (Ansari & Bista, 1976, 1988, p. 150, pp.159-66).

Bista states that the first Muslim were Kashmiri traders who traveled between Kashmir and Lhasa, and some of them came to Nepal after they were invited to Kathmandu by the envoy of Ratna Malla in Lhasa (Bista, 1967, p. 150). Soon after that some more Muslims seen to have entered in the Western hills for the purpose of earning their livelihood, they are locally known as Churaute, the bangle sellers. During the 17th or 18th century, other Muslims were brought from India by the Chaubisi kings of Nepal's western hills to train the soldiers in the use of fire arms by the then small hill principalities (Bista, 1967, p. 150).

However, the number of Muslims in Kathmandu Valley increased due to the influx of Muslims that took place in Kathmandu and other parts of Nepal, after the Indian Mutiny of 1857 A.D. A large number of Muslim belonging to the ruling Mughal families of Delhi and Lucknow entered Kathmandu seeking political asylum and shelter (Poudyal, 1999, p. 5). Muslims had their burial ground or graveyard to the south of Trichandra College in Nepali Jame Masjid area. When the graveyard was over crowded with no place available for burial, all the dead bodies of that graveyard were taken for burial to North-East site of Swoyambhu in Kathmandu Valley. In the old graveyard site in Nepali Jame Masjid, only the grave of Begum Hajrat Mahal, wife of Nawab

Wajid Ali Shah, the last Nawab of Abadh kingdom, is located. Begum Hajrat Mahal along with some of their courtiers and followers took refuge in Kathmandu Valley when the British East Indian Company captured the Shah and put Abadh King under its control.

Islam does not allow to the consumption of alcohol. Muslims prefer only *Halal* meat, meat of animals slaughtered according to Muslim tradition. They do not eat or drink during the fasting month of Ramadan from the break of dawn to sunset. There are 126 caste/ethnic groups in the country (CBS, 2011). The Muslim of Nepal comprises 4.4 % (1,164, 255) of the total population (CBS, 2011). This population has mainly concentrated in the outlying areas along the Indian boarder. However, they are found in all other district, i.e. they are settled in 74 out of 75 district of the country (Mollica, 2000, p. 10). The average per capita income of Muslim is Rs. 10,200 even lower than Terai Dalit's which is 13,200. Muslims of Nepal also are guided by their religious and cultural values. Despite diversity in their faiths, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist and Christian, among other religious groups have been living in the same society in peace and tranquility. Hatred speeches against each other are not heard in Nepali society.

1.2 Pillars of Islam

Islam literally means 'surrender' or 'submission'. One who surrenders his or her will to Allah (God) is called a Muslim. There are some tenets one must believe without any doubt in order to be considered a Muslim. The tenets are: belief in Allah, belief in his angels, belief in his books, belief in his prophets and messengers, belief in the Day of Judgment and belief in Allah's divine decree (Seda, 2002, p. 24). Islam covers all aspects of life. Islam has set guidelines for each and every action of Muslim.

In order to be considered a Muslim, every Muslim must conduct five obligatory acts of worship. According to Islamic belief, the structure of Islam rests upon these five pillars of Islam: The Declaration of Faith (*Shahadah*), which is the testimony “I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah (God the Creator), and that Muhammad (PBUH) is His Prophet”; Five daily prayers (*Salah*), which are prescribed as a duty towards God. They are: (i) *Fajr* Prayer (between dawn break and sunrise); (ii) *Zuhur* Prayer (midday or early afternoon); (iii) *Asr* Prayer (late afternoon before sunset); (iv) *Maghrib* Prayer (at sunset before the evening twilight disappears); (v) *Isha* Prayer (after the twilight has disappeared until late at night); *Zakaah* (alms giving), which is an annual payment—for those who are able—of 2.5 percent of one’s net savings, as a sum to be spent on the poor and needy. *Zakaah* is said to purify the wealth of a Muslim and purify their heart from injustice, covetousness and greed; Fasting (*Sawm*), which is observed once each year during the holy month of Ramadan (the ninth month of the Islamic Lunar Calendar). Fasting means abstention from food, drink and sensual pleasures from dawn to sunset, and also from all evil intentions and desires, as a means of developing a higher state of God consciousness, and Pilgrimage (*Hajj*) to Mecca, which is obligatory once in a lifetime for every adult Muslim, provided one has the financial and the physical means to do so (Seda, 2002, p.23).

The *Sunnah* refers to the sayings and deeds of prophet Muhammad (PUBH). The reports and narrations about the *Sunnah* are known as *Hadith* (Seda, 2002, p. 32). It is obligatory for the Muslims to follow *Sunnah* of prophet Muhammad (PUBH).

1.3 Statement of the problem

Religion and culture play a vital role in people's lives across the universe. They influence the way of one's attitude, thought and behaviour. Islam, which is the second largest religion of the earth, is based on guidance from the holy *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*, deeds and sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The religion which evolved from Saudi Arabia has found a deep place in Muslims and remains largely dominant on the community that has spread out since last 1435 years. Many scholars have tried to study the way communication has been influenced by religion. For Muslims, prayers are channel of communication between them and Allah. Muslims are instructed neither to perform prayer aloud nor to perform it in a low tone. A medium tone is preferred.

The study will seek to answer to the following questions:

- What are communication patterns among the Muslim community (intrapersonal, in family and in community)?
- How has religion influenced communication behaviour of Muslims?
- What is Islamic perspective on communication?

1.4 Objectives

1.4.1 General Objectives

The general objective of the study is to explore communication patterns among the Muslim community which is guided by the teaching of the holy *Qur'an* and *Hadith*.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

1. To find out communication patterns among the Muslim community
2. To explore Islamic perspective on communication
3. To explore what type of communication (intrapersonal, interpersonal, verbal, non-verbal) is mostly preferred in the Muslim community

1.5 Relevance of the Study

The study will grant an overview of communication patterns among the Muslim community. It will present how communication occurs in the Muslim community as well as the Muslim perception of communication. Such information might serve as a background material for those who are interested in understanding about communicative behaviour of Muslims. Even being the third largest religious group in the country, no one has conducted research about communication patterns among Nepalese Muslim community. This is why the researcher felt that the study will be helpful to the stakeholders who want to know about communication patterns among Muslim community.

Communication between human beings is an essential requirement for leading a normal and a harmonious society. At every point in one's life a person will be interacting with other people. Generally, the people who come into contact more often are his or her family folks. Also, the researcher makes some assumptions as well. Communication behaviour of Muslims is guided by their religion, Islam. Muslims follow the teachings of the holy *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*, the deeds and sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), in their lives. So, the way they communicate is also guided by their religion, Islam. After being declared Nepal as a federal republic, the country is underway to restructure the state mechanisms. The practices of inclusive democracy to

accommodate the rights of the marginalized, minority, Dalits, indigenous ones are some of the initiatives. This practice has been observed in the field of communication as well. It is where the researcher thinks that this study is relevant.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Culture and Communication

Different societies have understood and defined communication in their own way. The concept of communication differs from one culture to another culture. “Cultural values are a basic part of the communication agenda” (Singh, 2002, p. 23). To understand and describe even a simple communicative act between two persons, we have to “take into account hundreds of social and cultural factors that might make a difference” (DeFleur & Dennis, 1991, p. 22). Robert T. Oliver states, “Mankind is less separated by language barriers ... than it is by cultural differences” (qtd in Kidd, 2002, p. 4). So, philosophical, religious as well as cultural background of the society should be considered while studying communication. Understanding the process of communication is crucial to every society. “No field of study has more important implications for our lives in contemporary society than that which looks systematically at the process of human communication” (DeFleur, Kearney, & Plax, 1993, p. 6-7). Communication is “a process of transmission of a fixed quantity of information-the message as determined by the sender or source” (McQuail, 2001, p. 52). In other word, it “generally is held to involve some kind of transfer of information from one person to another or to a group of other people” (Berger, 1995, p. 10).

The basic act of communication begins when one person decides that he or she wants to use a given language symbol (a word or some object for which there is a standard interpretation) to arouse a specific set of meanings in another person. The act of communication is completed when the internal responses of the receiver (the person to whom the message has been sent) are more or less parallel to those intended by the communicator. (DeFleur & Dennis, 1991, p. 10)

The transmission model is “largely taken over from older institutional contexts- education, religion government” (McQuail, 2001, p. 5), where the purpose of communication is “persuasion, attitude change, behaviour modification, socialization through the transmission of information, influence or conditioning” (Singh, 2002, p. 105).

It assumes that a message source dominates the communication process and that its primary outcome is that some sort of effect on receivers- usually one intended by the source influence moves or flows in a straight line from the source to receivers. The possibility that the message receivers might also influence the source is ignored. Attention is focused on whether a source brings about intended effects or whether unintended negative effects occur. Mutual or reciprocal influence is not considered. (Baran & Davis, 2006, p. 213).

In Aristotelian model, “the objective of communication is to influence or persuade the receiver in a manner that is considered appropriate by the communicator” (Dissanayake, 1998, p. 5)

Historical summaries have placed the beginnings of intercultural research during the 1950s and 1960s (Rogers & Hart, 2002). It was during this period that many important concepts about intercultural communication surfaced. Edward T. Hall’s statement that “Culture is communication” is perhaps the one that brought culture into communication realm. Similarly, Alfred G. Smith (1966) went beyond the cultural comparison to state that living is largely a matter of communicating, and that communication and culture are inseparable. While Hall focused on communication between individuals from different cultures, or interpersonal communication, Oliver presented government representatives and expanded the concept. Smith was more focused on media. These three scholars are the first to influence and debate on communication theory.

According to Hall, each culture has a system for communicating and these systems can fall into two categories: low-contextual communication and high-contextual communication. Cultures that express themselves in a high-context communication system emphasize on how intention or meaning can best be conveyed through the context (e.g., social roles or positions) and nonverbal channels (e.g., pauses, silence, tone of voice) of verbal message. The high-context system is also known as an indirect verbal style, or indirect communication, verbal statements tend to camouflage the speaker's actual intentions and are carried out in a softer tone of the voice. Rules for speaking and behaviour are implicit in the context.

Compare this to a low context communication system, where exchange of facts and information is stressed. Information is given primarily in words and the meaning is best expressed explicitly. The low context system is also known as a direct verbal style, or direct communication, verbal statements tend to reveal the speaker's intentions with clarity and are enunciated with a forthright tone of voice. Generally speaking, low-context communication refers to communication patterns of direct verbal orientation: straight talk, nonverbal immediacy, and sender-oriented values (i.e., the sender assumes the responsibility to communicate clearly).

Communication process is governed by various rules. Symbolic interaction would not be possible without rules. Some communication rules are particularly helpful in facilitating understanding and fostering inclusive, constructive communication practices. Other communication rules contribute to destructive or oppressive patterns. Rule theorists and researchers tend to embrace the proposition that the recognition and evaluation of communication rules significantly enhances our ability to make choices that can lead to more productive and humane interactions (Shimanoff, 2009, p. 835).

The beginning point of social communication theory is the assumption that people interact in patterned, systematic ways; thus, their moment by-moment interactional choices are not random, neither are they due simply to individual preferences. This implies that unstated rules govern interaction and that most people follow these rules, even if they cannot name them explicitly. If behavior can be appropriately described as rule governed, then it also must be relatively predictable and analyzable. If communication behavior were not rule-governed, there would be no consistency to what we observe, and we could not study it. There is substantial overlap with the way interactional theory looks at pattern; the difference is that Bateson was more likely to look at patterns connecting apparently disparate aspects of the world, while Birdwhistell was more likely to look at patterns within a single context (Hurwitz, 2009, p.901).

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Approach

The study is conducted on communication patterns among the Muslim community. For the study, four methodologies--participant observation, in-depth interview, content analysis and case study--were used. The holy *Qur'an* and *Hadith* were taken under the study for content analysis to meet the research objective. However, case study was done to find out how communication occurs between *Maulanas* (religious teachers at *Madrasas*) and students taking their lessons. On the contrary, the researcher also went to study communication patterns reached between the Imams, the scholars who are educated and awarded Islamic degree for being an Imam, and the Muslim devotees, who listen to their sermons at the time of weekly prayer, *Jumma*, every Friday at the mosques. The researcher also believes that such two forms of case study would pave the way for meeting the research objectives.

The research approach that the researcher followed for this study is Qualitative research. Qualitative approach is used for the study as it deals with communication patterns among the Muslim community. The study aims at gathering an in-depth understanding of communicative behaviour of the Muslim community and the reasons that presides over such behaviour. It will explore how religion and culture influence the way of communication as well as decision making process in the Muslim community. This research investigates Muslim patterns of communicating with the individuals and masses.

3.2 Data Collection Techniques

As a qualitative researcher, data collection techniques that the researcher will use are in-depth interviews, case study, observation and analysis of content related to communication in the holy *Qur'an* and *Hadith*. Following are some of the methods that the researcher will use for data collection.

3.2.1 Participant Observation

As the researcher belongs to Muslim community, hence it is easy to participate as a member of the group and observe them in their natural setting. As participant observation is a strategy of reflexive learning and not a single method of observing, the researcher will observe the Muslim community staying within it for time. The researcher will make an effort to gain a closer insight into cultural practices, motivations and emotions by using this observation. Participant observation method will be used in the Muslim community at Bishrampur VDC-6 of Parsa district, Nepali Jame Masjid, Kathmandu, and Madrasa Barkatul-ulum, Birgunj.

3.2.2 Interviews

Some distinctive qualitative methods are the use of focus groups and key informant interviews. In this study, the researcher will interview Muslim scholars, general Muslim, Muslim students and Imams (religious teachers). Muslim scholars, religious teachers and general people from the Muslim community are key informants for the study. The researcher will generate primary data/information from key informants.

The researcher will analyze them descriptively and interpret them theoretically, i.e. Religious Communication Theory. Religious communication theories assume that the meaning and purpose of life derive from a faith tradition grounded in scriptures (holy books), doctrines

(collective teachings and beliefs), and communal religious experiences. In its broadest sense religious communication is a process of reconciling people who have been separated from their spiritual nature with each other and with God. Most Western religious communication theory evolves from the Jewish and Christian traditions and concentrates themselves on persuasive purposes of influencing the minds and hearts of audiences to believe in God, inspiring moral actions based on those beliefs, and inculcating religious consciousness and identity in audiences (Schuetz, 2009, p.847).

The researcher has conducted in-depth interview from four Imams who are under age group of 28 to 40 years old. Similarly, three Muslims, who regularly attend the weekly Friday prayer in Nepali Jame Masjid, Kathmandu, were purposively selected for the interview. They are under age group of 25 to 45 years old. Likewise, the researcher interviewed two Muslim girl students of 13 and 14 years old from Madrasa Barkatul-ulum, Birgunj.

3.3 Data Analysis

3.3.1 Interpretive Techniques

The most common analysis of qualitative data is observer impression. That is, expert or bystander observers examine the data and interpret it via forming an impression and report their impression in a structured and sometimes quantitative form.

3.4 Universe of the Study

This study will be of particular interest to anyone who is involved in the field of communication. The study will also be useful to the Muslim community and others who hold an interest in Islam and its followers besides communication scholar and students.

3.5 Limitation

3.5.1 Methodological Limitation

Since this is the first step towards a more detailed research, the researcher hasn't delved into the minute issues. The methods employed are more generalized hence it may or may not present exact behavioral pattern of the people it studied.

CHAPTER IV

4. Presentation and Analysis

4.1 The holy *Qur'an* and *Hadith* about Communication

Communication has played a vital role in spreading messages of Islam across the universe.

According to Imam Mohammed Sanaullah Nadvi of Nepali Jame Masjid, Kathmandu, and Mufti Abdul Haqim of Madni Masjid, Naya Bazaar, Kathmandu, both the holy *Qur'an* and *Hadith* emphasize importance of communication in Islam.¹ Besides in religious activities, Muslims follow the guidance of both the holy *Qur'an* and *Hadith* in their communicative behaviour. In the holy *Qur'an*, Allah has said that one of the Muslims' most important acts of worship is declaring the truths revealed in the holy *Qur'an* and inviting people to faith. This act of worship includes every area of life including one's words, attitude and behaviour. Islam teaches itself to avoid unnecessary arguments during communication. In the holy *Qur'an*, Allah links avoidance of disputation and shows readiness for communicating together:

If they argue with you, say: "I have submitted myself completely to Allah, and so have all who follow me." Ask those given the Book and those who have no Book:

"Have you become Muslim?" If they become Muslim, they have been guided. If they turn away, you are only responsible for conveying the message. Allah sees His servants.²

Hadith also emphasizes the importance of communication for Muslims. According to *Hadith*, a Muslim must not remain silent to another Muslim for more than three days. Thus Islam

¹ Personal communication with Imam Mohammad Sanaullah Nadvi and Mufti Abdul Haqim, Kathmandu; July 2013

² Surah (verse) al-Imran:81

emphasizes understanding others, having closeness with neighbors as Hinduism stresses on “*basudaiva kutumbakam*” and Buddhism emphasizes the importance of harmony and mutualism rather than promoting competitions and disputes

Narrated Abu Aiyub: The Prophet said, “It is not lawful for a Muslim not to speak to his brother Muslim for more than three days while meeting, one turns his face to one side and the other turns his face to the other side. The better of the two is the one who starts greeting the other.”³

4.2 The holy *Qur’an* and *Hadith* on methods of Communication

The holy *Qur’an* does not just teach Muslims to speak truth all the time but it also teaches Muslims about the methods of communication. Imam Nadvi says that the methods of conveying the messages are equally important as the content of communication as per Islam. The holy *Qur’an* states that those who get involved in spreading Islam should not limit their efforts to reciting verses of the holy *Qur’an* one after another and urging one to have faith. If the person deny to believe what was told him, the believer should consider how long to pursue this effort, when to stop, and what to do next.

According to *Hadith*, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) used to change his methods according to the circumstances and characters of people he met. The Prophet used to talk in the loving and caring way when he used to talk to children while he used to present himself maturely with people of his age group.

Muslims in Nepal also use the methods of communication which are mentioned in the holy *Qur’an* and *Hadith*. Muslims state that they try their best to apply the methods of communication that are suggested by the holy books. We often preach Muslims to follow Islamic communication

³ *Hadith Volume 8, Book 74, Number 254*

pattern in daily life, says Imam Nadvi. As guided by religion, Muslims are found following the teachings of the holy *Qur'an* and *Hadith* regarding the methods of communicating with each other in family and in society.

4.3 Whom to communicate

Imam Nadvi says that communication may go in vain if the communicator does not identify a person to whom he or she is intended to talk to about Islam. The conveyers should not make themselves hurry to talk about Islam with those who are not interested in it. Allah says in the holy *Qur'an*: “You will not make dead people hear and you will not make deaf people hear the call when they turn their backs in flight. You will not guide blind people out of their error. You will not make anyone listen except for those who have faith in our signs and so are Muslims.”⁴

4.4 Communication for evaluation

As per the teaching of the holy *Qur'an*, a Muslim must evaluate reactions of a listener during conversation as the listener's reactions reveal his or her attitude toward religion. As in the case of Prophet Hud who told the following to his people, Muslims should turn their backs to the people who resist faith: [Hud said:] “If you turn your backs, I have transmitted to you what I was sent to you with, and my Lord will replace you with another people, and you will not harm Him at all. My Lord is the Preserver of everything.”⁵

However, Muslims were found applying this only when they communicate about religion with others. They said this is necessary especially for religious conversation as religion is a sensitive issue.

⁴ *Surah an-Naml: 80-81*

⁵ *Surah Hud: 57*

4.5 Listener's attitude

According to the holy *Qur'an*, Muslims must make an evaluation of the unbelievers' reactions to what they are being told. Doing so will be useful for altering the conversation's content and style according to the person's spiritual state and the ability to understand. And, it can provide a degree of flexibility to make the message more appropriate to those being addressed. In the holy *Qur'an* Allah tells Muslims that Prophet Sulayman (AS) used to observe the person's reaction and then present the next topic accordingly. When sending a letter to the Queen of Sheba via Hudhud, a member of his army, he gave this command: "Take this letter of mine, deliver it to them, and then withdraw for a little and see how they respond."⁶

Muslims who were interviewed in this study said when they do change topic of conversation about religion after reviewing attitude of a listener. They further argued that it is meaningless to proceed with communication without understanding attitude of a listener.

4.6 People's opinion

Muslim scholars said one must ask people's opinion for an effective communication. The messengers of Allah used to know other people's ideas, answer their questions, and provide proof to remove any mental reservations. They used to ask what the hearers were thinking and, if no progress was being made, changed the topic or adopted a new style. As mentioned in the holy *Qur'an*, Prophet Shu'ayb (AS) asked: "O my people, what do you think?"⁷

Prophet Ibrahim (AS) followed this same technique: We gave Ibrahim his right guidance early on, and We had complete knowledge of him. When he asked his father and his people: "What are

⁶ *Surah an-Naml: 28*

⁷ *Surah Hud: 88*

these statues you are clinging to?” they replied: “We found our fathers worshipping them.” He said: “You and your fathers are clearly misguided.” They asked: “Have you brought us the truth, or are you playing games?”

He said: “Far from it! Your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and Earth, He who brought them into being. I am one of those who bear witness to that. By Allah, I will devise some scheme against your idols when your backs are turned.” He broke them in pieces, except for the largest one, so that they would have it to consult! They said: “Who has done this to our gods?

He is definitely one of the wrongdoers!” They said: “We heard a young man mentioning them. They call him Ibrahim.” They ordered: “Bring him before the people’s eyes so they can be witnesses.” They asked: “Did you do this to our deities, Ibrahim?” He said: “No, this one, the largest of them, did it. Ask them, if they are able to speak!” They consulted among themselves and said [to each other]: “It is you yourselves who are wrongdoers.” But then they relapsed back into their unbelief [after having said to each other]: “You know full well these idols cannot talk.” He told them: “Do you then worship, instead of Allah, what cannot help or harm you in any way? Shame on you and what you worship besides Allah! Will you not use your intellect?”⁸

This was found during communication in mosques and *Madrasa*. Abdullah Khan of Bag Bazaar said that he finds the sermons passed by Imams in the mosque as the Imams often ask their opinion⁹.

⁸ *Surah an-Nahl: 125*

⁹ *Personal communication with Abdullah Khan, Kathmandu, July 2013*

4.7 Methods as per a person's character

The holy *Qur'an* states that effective communication depends on the way it is addressed: "Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair admonition..."¹⁰

It further says that since everyone has a different character and different needs, Muslims should adapt their styles and methods to make them effective. Narrated Aisha, Ummul Mu'minin: The Apostle of Allah (PBUH) spoke in a distinct manner so that anyone who listened to him could understand it.¹¹

Narrated Jabir ibn Abdullah: The Apostle of Allah (PBUH) spoke in a distinct and leisurely manner.¹²

4.8 Control over course of conversation

The holy *Qur'an* states that Muslims should have control over the course of the conversation. Imam Nadvi maintains that if the communicator has control over the listeners, the latter cannot be able to divert it to other topics. He further stated that losing control over a conversation means one is not a good communicator. For instance, Prophet Yusuf's (AS) method of talking to other prisoners can be mentioned here:

Two servants entered prison along with him. One said (to Yusuf): "I dreamt I was pressing grapes." The other said: "I dreamt I carried bread upon my head and birds were eating it. Tell us the true meaning of these dreams. We see that you are one of the righteous." He replied: "No meal to feed you will arrive before I have informed you what they (your dreams) mean. That is

¹⁰ *Surah an-Nahl: 125*

¹¹ *Hadith Book 41, Number 4821*

¹² *Hadith Book 41, Number 482*

part of what my Lord taught me. For I have left the religion of a people who clearly have no faith in Allah and who refuse to acknowledge the truth of the world to come. I hold fast to the creed of my forebears Ibrahim, Ishaq, and Ya‘qub. We do not associate anything with Allah. And that is how Allah has favored us and all humanity. But most people do not give thanks. My fellow prisoners, are many lords better or Allah, the only One, the Conqueror? What you serve apart from Him are only names that you and your forefathers have made up. There is no mandate for them from Allah. Allah alone is qualified to judge. His order is to worship none but Him. That is, in truth, the straight and upright religion, but most people simply do not know. My fellow captives, one of you will serve his lord with wine, the other of you will be crucified and birds will eat his head. The thing you asked about is foreordained.”¹³

Thus, Yusuf (AS) first presented religion and then answered their questions. If he had interpreted their dreams first, perhaps they would not have been interested in listening to what he said about religion. Musa (AS) used a similar style when speaking to Pharaoh:

(Pharaoh) asked: “What about the previous generations?” He (Musa) replied: “Knowledge of them is with my Lord in a Book. My Lord does not misplace, nor does He forget.” It is He who made Earth a cradle for you and threaded pathways for you through it, and sent down water from the sky by which we have brought forth different types of plants.¹⁴

4.9 Listener’s first reaction

The holy *Qur’an* describes how Prophet Musa (AS) used the technique to know what the listeners believe:

¹³ *Surah Yusuf: 36-41*

¹⁴ *Surah Ta Ha: 51-53*

The ruling circle of Pharaoh's people said: "This is certainly a skilled magician who desires to expel you from your land, so what do you recommend?" They replied: "Detain him and his brother, and send out marshals to the cities to bring you all of the skilled magicians." The magicians came to Pharaoh and asked: "Will we receive a reward if we are the winners?" He said: "Yes, and you will be among those brought near." They asked: "Musa, will you throw first or shall we be the ones to throw?" He said: "You throw." And when they threw, they cast a spell on the people's eyes and caused them to feel great fear of them. They produced an extremely powerful magic. We revealed to Musa: "Throw down your staff." And it immediately swallowed up what they had forged. So the Truth took place, and what they did was shown to be false. They were defeated then and there, transformed into humbled men.¹⁵

Musa (AS) applied this efficient technique by telling Pharaoh's magicians to throw first. By asking the other party's views first, making him lay down what he believes and thinks and then devising the most suitable approach and style will be more efficient in destroying the false views s/he entertains.

Mufti Abdul Haqim says he does the same when someone converts to Islam from other religion. "We wait for a person reaction over the messaged conveyed to him or her," he added.

4.10 People's conscience

Islam states that the purpose of communication should not be only to disseminate information. The communicator should create an impression in the listeners' conscience and lead them to start a sincere analysis of their inner self. For example, after Ibrahim (AS) talked with his people, the prominent unbelievers were forced to examine their conscience:

¹⁵ *Surah al-A'raf: 109-119*

He broke them in pieces, except for the largest one, so that they would have it to consult! They said: “Who has done this to our deities? He is definitely one of the wrongdoers!” They said: “We heard a young man mentioning them. They call him Ibrahim.” They ordered them:

“Bring him before the people’s eyes so they can be witnesses.” They asked: “Did you do this to our gods, Ibrahim?” He said: “No, this one, the largest of them, did it. Ask them, if they are able to speak!” They consulted among themselves and said: “It is you yourselves who are wrongdoers.”¹⁶ Muslims believe that this is very respectful and participatory way of communication where both sides can use their conscience.

4.11 No use of force

The holy *Qur’an* says Muslims must not force listeners to believe or to make them hold their views. Their only responsibility is to present Allah’s religion; Allah will give faith and lead unbelievers to the true path. Allah narrates in the holy *Qur’an* thus:

“So remind them! You are only a reminder. You are not in control of them.”¹⁷

“If your lord had willed, all people on Earth would have had faith. Do you think you can force people to believe?”¹⁸

Abstaining from the use of pressure and allowing listeners to believe what they want will show that the preachers are trustworthy and are not pursuing their own advantage. One cannot make

¹⁶ *Surah al-Anbiya’: 58-64*

¹⁷ *Surah al-Ghashiyya: 21-22*

¹⁸ *Surah Yunus: 99*

anyone understand a message by using force and even if one tries to do so it cannot be an effective communication, said Umar Faisal of Baghbazaar¹⁹.

4.12 Proper treatment to all

Imam Nadvi says that in the communication of Allah's message to different communities, His messengers employed styles conforming to the attitudes their people had towards them.

Sometimes they spoke gently; other times they were relatively severe and threatened their people with Allah's punishment. Allah commands believers to treat people differently depending on their attitude to the religion and believers. For example, it is necessary to be severe with hypocrites, unbelievers, and those who oppose the holy *Qur'an*.²⁰ On the other hand, protection should be offered to an idolater who asks for mercy and safety²¹ accordingly, a believer who communicates Allah's message may employ a style and attitude that addresses the non-Muslims' approach towards the religion and believers.

Educated Muslims and those who are religiously conscious were found applying communication methods in accordance with the listeners' characters. They argued that doing so can influence the listeners and communication can be succeeded. They stated that polite words work to some people while others need strong words.

¹⁹ Personal communication with Umar Faisal, Kathmandu; August 2013

²⁰ *Surah at-Tawba: 73*

²¹ *Surah at-Tawba: 6*

4.13 Death in Mind

According to Hafiz Zakir Hussein, one should relate the issue of death while communication about religion to others as it can make the listeners to accept the reality.²² Though people witness other people's death, they rarely think about their inevitable end.

Say: "Death, from which you are fleeing, will certainly catch up with you. Then you will be returned to the Knower of the Unseen and the Visible, and He will inform you about what you did."²³

On the other hand, believers often think about death and, knowing that they will give an account of their deeds, act in a way that pleases Allah. For those who are starting to learn about religious morality and coming to know Allah, the knowledge that they may die at any time and place raise their awareness and cause them to live a pure and religiously moral life. Thus, it is essential to make people think about death as it will make them understand the transitory nature of life and embrace religion.

4.14 Methods of communicating religion

4.14.1 Combined oral and written presentations

Prophet Suleiman (AS) wrote a letter introducing religion to the Queen of Sheba.²⁴ Mufti Abdul Haqim argues that written communication is a must in order to inform people about Allah's religion in the present time. Muslim scholars maintain that letters can be sent and books,

²² Personal communication with Hafiz Zakir Hussein, Birgunj; June 2013

²³ *Surah al-Jumu'a*: 8

²⁴ *Surah an-Naml*: 28

newspaper and articles can be written individually or as a series to serve the purpose. This method is effective, since being permanent; books and articles can be read and reread.

4.14.2 Mass Communication

Musa (AS) brought all the people together to tell them about Allah's religion as well as presenting religion to the leaders of society.²⁵ Imams Navdi and Haqim maintain that Muslims must use all methods of mass communication to reach all segments of society in the present time. They stated that different kinds of people can be addressed at the same time through mass communication. According to them, it is also important as a large mass of people can get message at the same time.

4.15 Introducing religion to society's leaders

Allah's prophets and messengers are especially concerned to present religion to the society's leaders and the ruling circle as such people have power and authority. The holy *Qur'an* states that those who desire to further the Way of Allah must first prepare themselves:

“If they had really desired to go out (to fight) they would have made proper preparations for it. But Allah was averse to their setting out, so He held them back and they were told: “Stay behind with those who stay behind.”²⁶

Imam Nadvi states that the believers' most important work is disseminating information about religion.

²⁵ Surah Ta Ha: 59 and Surat ash-Shu'ara': 39

²⁶ *Surah at-Tawba: 46*

4.16 Before presenting religion

Mufti Abdul Haqim says that one must develop expertise before presenting religion to others.

Muslims must also divide the work into suitable portions:

“It is not necessary for the believers to go out all together. If a party from each group of them were to go out so that they could increase their knowledge of the religion, they would be able to notify their people when they returned to them so that, hopefully, they would take heed.”²⁷

To be a skilled communicator of religion, believers must be well educated, have a thorough knowledge of the holy *Qur'an*, and have developed speaking and writing skills, all of which will result in better communication of religion. Imams and Muslims scholars were found applying this while teaching others about the religion of Islam.

4.17 Qualities of communicator

4.17.1 Faith is Allah's gift

The holy *Qur'an* states that Muslims who present religion to others must realize that only Allah puts a person on the right path and brings him or her to faith, that only He decides who will believe and who will not. As He told the Prophet (PBUH): “You cannot guide those you would like to, but Allah guides those He wills. He has best knowledge of the guided.”²⁸

Religion conscious and literate Muslims were found preparing themselves to communicate Islamic messages only after developing expertise with the belief that guidance becomes possible only by the will of Allah who holds control over a person's heart.

²⁷ *Surah at-Tawba: 122*

²⁸ *Surah al-Qasas: 56*

4.17.2 Patience

In the holy *Qur'an* Allah stresses the importance of patience in many places, among them:

So be steadfast. Allah's promise is true. Do not let those who have no certainty make you impatient and shake your firmness.²⁹

Spreading Islam is one of the major areas in which believers show their patience. As long as Muslims see the light of faith in another person, they must be understanding and allow the other party to improve his or her views of Islam and the moral values of the holy *Qur'an*. They must be patient with that person's wrong actions and ideas and fatuous conversations, as well as with his or her lack of understanding of the good that is being offered. Believers may experience a reaction from unbelievers, both as individuals or as a group.

But they must continue spreading religion despite all the difficulties and lack of results. For instant, Prophet Nuh (AS) lived for 950 years³⁰ and spent centuries telling his people about religion. He is one of the greatest examples of patience. According to the holy *Qur'an*, Nuh (AS) told his people:

He said: "My Lord, I have called my people night and day, but my calling has only made them more evasive. Indeed, every time I called them to Your forgiveness, they put their fingers in their ears, wrapped themselves up in their clothes, and were over weeningly arrogant. Then I called them openly. Then I addressed them publicly and addressed them privately. I said: 'Ask forgiveness of your Lord. Truly, He is endlessly forgiving.'³¹

²⁹ *Surah ar-Rum: 60*

³⁰ *Surah al-'Ankabut: 14*

³¹ *Surah Nuh: 5-10*

Muslims exercise patience while talking about religion to others to make communication fruitful and result-oriented.

4.17.3 Speaking wisely

As per Islamic belief, Allah has given a special ability to His beloved servants to speak to the point. He says of David (as): We made his kingdom strong and gave him wisdom and decisive speech.³²

In another verse, Allah explains this art in the following words:

He gives wisdom to whoever He wills, and he who has been given wisdom has been given great good. But no one pays heed but people of intelligence.³³ Those who call people to religion must be able to speak well: Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair admonition...³⁴

Allah tells Muslims that the holy *Qur'an* has an answer for every distortion put forward by the unbelievers: They bring you no similitude, but We bring you the truth and the best of explanations (as against it).³⁵

Narrated Anas: Whenever the Prophet spoke a sentence (said a thing), he used to repeat it thrice so that the people could understand it properly from him and whenever he asked permission to enter, (he knocked the door) thrice with greeting.³⁶

³² *Surah Sad:20*

³³ *Surat al-Baqara:269*

³⁴ *Surah an-Nahl:125*

³⁵ *Surah al-Furqan:33*

³⁶ *Hadith Volume 1, Book 3, Number 9*

4.17.4 Modesty

“Do not give up and do not be downhearted. You shall be topmost if you are believers.”³⁷

According to the holy *Qur'an*, if a believer continuously feels this superiority, he reflects it in his attitudes, which also naturally impresses others. Modesty of the communicator leaves a positive impression over those who want to learn about religious morality. Muslims were found using impressive communication method to make others convinced and attracted toward what they were said.

4.18 The holy *Qur'an* and *Hadith* on the manner of conversation

Mohammad Mohsin, another Imam of Nepali Jame Masjid, Kathmandu, says that it is very important for Muslims to mention the name of Allah when talking among them, for this is an act of worship³⁸. In an environment of mutual love and respect, as well as when reciting and studying the holy *Qur'an* together, they speak of matters of faith in an elevated style. It is important that such an environment prevails and that an elevated style of conversation be maintained:

“Say to My servants that they should only say the best. Satan wants to stir up trouble between them...”³⁹

“Those to whom Allah has taught the right path are defined as those who “listen well to what is said and follow the best of it.”⁴⁰

³⁷ *Surah Al 'Imran:139*

³⁸ Personal communication with Mohammad Mohsin, Kathmandu; June 2013

³⁹ *Surah al-Isra':53*

⁴⁰ *Surah az-Zumar:18*

Allah says the following about the believers' houses: "...houses that Allah has permitted to be built and in which His name is remembered" and in which believers "proclaim His glory morning and evening."⁴¹ In these houses, believers converse among themselves and remember Allah. In addition, "The believers are those whose hearts tremble when Allah is mentioned."⁴²

The holy *Qur'an* describes the conversations held in Paradise as taking place from facing thrones, where Allah is mentioned and all nonsense is banished. According to the holy *Qur'an*, a believer's greatest act of worship is to praise Allah. As there is no special time or place to do this, Allah may be remembered in any place in a believer's conversation:

"(People with intelligence are) those who remember Allah, standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and Earth: "Our Lord, You have not created this for nothing. Glory be to You! So safeguard us from the punishment of the Fire."⁴³

They may talk about very different things, but every conversation is related to Allah. For this reason, their conversations do not descend to the level of nonsense (conversations that do not mention Allah and reach conclusions that are not related to Him are vain and irritating to the human spirit). For this reason, such as, when believers see a nice, aesthetically pleasing home, they talk about it, because such homes are blessings of Paradise.

Speaking about such a topic increases their desire for Paradise. They do not forget that a beautiful house is a transitory thing doomed to decay and that Allah created it to test them.

Unbelievers can talk about such a house for hours on end, but the difference between them and

⁴¹ *Surah an-Nur: 36*

⁴² *Surah al-Anfal:2*

⁴³ *Surah Al 'Imran:191*

believers is that the latter remember Allah in all of their conversations for their “hearts find peace in the remembrance of Allah.”⁴⁴

Allah says that the believers are “... not distracted by trade or commerce from the remembrance of Allah.”⁴⁵ People can praise Allah individually or in a group. Praising Him privately is very important because this spiritual state will be reflected in all of a person’s daily activities. In this way, he or she will pass every test without losing his or her attachment to Allah, and will do everything with the intention of earning His reward.

4.18.1 Moderate tone of voice

Muslim scholar, in the light of the holy *Qur’an* and *Hadith*, said Muslims must use a moderate tone of voice during conversation. “Be moderate in your walk and lower your voice. The most hateful of voices is the donkey’s bray.”⁴⁶ However, this is found mostly in educated and religion conscious Muslims. Their communication is found thought-oriented.

4.18.2 Respectful manner

Islam teaches Muslims to speak in polite, measured and a respectful manner. According to Islamic traditions, social status of people should not be taken into consideration while communicating with others. It means one should not talk rudely just because someone is poor while politely just because someone is wealthy. “Over everyone with knowledge is a Knower.”⁴⁷

Narrated Aisha, Ummul Mu'minin: A man asked permission to see the Prophet (PBUH), and the Prophet (PBUH) said: He is a bad member of the tribe. When he entered, the Apostle of Allah

⁴⁴ *Surah ar-Ra’d:28*

⁴⁵ *Surah an-Nur:37*

⁴⁶ *Surah Luqman:19*

⁴⁷ *Surah Yusuf:76*

(PBUH) treated in a frank and friendly way and spoke to him. When he departed, I said: Apostle of Allah! When he asked permission, you said: He is a bad member of the tribe, but when he entered, you treated him in a frank and friendly way. The Apostle of Allah replied: Aisha! Allah does not like the one who is unseemly and rude in his language.⁴⁸

4.18.3 Response

Muslims live according to the holy *Qur'an*'s and *Sunnah*'s moral teachings in order to please Allah. Allah describes this morality:

“When you are greeted with a greeting, return the greeting or improve on it. Allah takes account of everything.”⁴⁹

This manner of speaking, which the Almighty Lord revealed in the holy *Qur'an* and through the Prophet (PBUH), will bring countless good things to people in both worlds, for:

“Do you not see how Allah makes a metaphor of a good word: a good tree whose roots are firm and whose branches are in heaven? It bears fruit regularly by its Lord's permission. Allah makes metaphors for people so that, hopefully, they will pay heed.”⁵⁰

In the holy *Qur'an*, Allah tells Muslims that talking with others about religion is one of the most important acts of worship that Muslims can perform. This worship covers every aspect of life. In their words and attitudes, believers are responsible every moment for telling others about the good moral life and for representing Islam.

⁴⁸ *Hadith Book 41, Number 4774*

⁴⁹ *Surah an-Nisa:86*

⁵⁰ *Surah Ibrahim:24-25*

Narrated Ibn Abu Mulaika: Whenever Aisha (the wife of the Prophet) heard anything which she did not understand, she used to ask again till she understood it completely. Aisha said: "Once the Prophet said, "Whoever will be called to account (about his deeds on the Day of Resurrection) will surely be punished." I said, "Doesn't Allah say: "He surely will receive an easy reckoning." The Prophet replied, "This means only the presentation of the accounts but whoever will be argued about his account, will certainly be ruined." ⁵¹

Muslims said that an effectiveness of dissemination of messages cannot be understood until the listeners respond to the communicator in a communication process. In conversations about religion, Muslim scholars including Imams were often found asking for feedback from the listeners.

4.19 Transpersonal communication among Muslim community

Transpersonal is communication with Divine through prayers, meditation etc (Narula, 2003, p.). Such communication occurs many times each day to Muslims. According to Islam, Muslims communicate with Allah in all five prayers every day. There are many supplications (*Dua*) which are recited by Muslims before and after doing various daily acts as well as prayers. Such communication falls under transpersonal communication.

Muslims recite following supplication (*Dua*) when they look into mirror

Allahumma anta Hassanta khalqi fa-hassin khuluqi, waharrim wajhi 'al-an-naar Alhamdulilahil-lathi sawwa khalqi fa'adalah, wakarrama suurata wajhi fa'ahsanaha, waja'alna minal-Muslimeen

⁵¹ *Hadith Volume 1, Book 3, Number 103*

(O Allah! You made my physical constitution good so make my disposition good too and keep my face safe from the hellfire. Praise be to Allah Who fashioned and made me proportionate, and honoured my face and made me of the Muslims)

Supplication before beginning to have food

Allahumma barik lana fima razaqtana, waqina adhab-an naar. Bismillah

(O Allah! Bless (the food) you provided us and save us from the punishment of the fire. In the Name of Allah

Supplication after having food

Alhamdulillahil la dhi a'tamana, wa saqana, waja'alana muslimeen

(Praise be to Allah Who has fed us, and given us drink, and made us Muslims)

Alhamdulillahil la dhi a'tamana hadha warazaq-aanihi, min ghairi hawlin minni, wa la quwwattin

(Praise be to Allah, who has fed us this food, and sustained me with it when I was unable to do it Powerless.)

Before entering restroom

Allahumma inni a'udhu bika minal-khubuthi wal-khaba-ith

(Oh Allah! I seek refuge in you from male and female devils)

Before existing restroom

Ghufranaka

(I seek your forgiveness)

After wudhu (Ablution)

Ash-hadu ana-la ilaha illAllah, wahdahu la shareeka lahu, wa-anna Muammadan abduhu wa-rasuuluhu

(I testify that there is No God but Allah, alone without partners, and that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger)

Allahumma ij'alni min at-tawwabiin, wa'ajalni minal mutat-tahhiriin

(O Allah! Make me among those who are Repentant and of those who purify themselves)

After call to prayer (Adhaan)

Allahumma rabba haahid-dawatit-tamma, was-salaatil-qaa-ima, aati Muammadan al-waseelata wal-faDeela, wa-bathhu maqaamam mahmuudan-il-lae waattah

(O Allah! Lord of this perfect call and the established prayer! Grant Muhammad the privilege of intercession (on the Day of Judgment) and superiority, and take him to the exalted place you have promised him)

When going to mosque

Allahumma-jal fee qalbee nuura, wa-fee baSaree nuura(w), wa-fee samee nuura, wa-ay-ameenee nuura, wa-ay-yasaari nuura, wa-fawqee nuura, wa-tahtee nuura, wa-amaamee nuura, wakhalfee nuura, wajal lee nuuraa

(O Allah! Let there be light in my heart, light in my eye-sight, light in my hearing, light on my right, light on my left, light above me, light under me, light in front of me and light behind me, and provide me with light)

When entering a mosque

Bismillahi was-salaatu was-salaamu ala rasuulillah. Allahumma-ftah li abwaba ramatik

(In the Name of Allah; may his prayers and peace be upon Allah's Messenger. Oh Allah! Open for me the gates of your mercy.)

When leaving a mosque

Bismil-lahi(i) was-salatu was-salaamu alaa rasuulil-laahi. Allahumma inni as-aluka mi fadlik

(In the name of Allah, and may His blessings and peace be upon Allah's Messenger. O Allah! I am asking you to give me from Your Bounty)

When putting on clothe

Bismillahi, al-ladhi, La illaha illa huwa

(In the Name of Allah, There is no God but he.)

Allahumma inni as'aluka min khairihi wa khairi ma huwa lah. Wa a'udhu bika min sharri wa sharri ma huwa lah

(O Allah! I ask you (for) the good in it and the good for which it is made. And I seek your Protection from the evil in it and the evil for which it is made.)

When entering home

Bismillahi walajnaa, wa bismillahi kharajnaa, wa 'ala Rabbinaa Tawakkalna

(In the name of Allah we enter and in the name of Allah we leave, and upon our Lord we place our trust.)

When exiting home

Bismillah, Tawwakaltu ala-Allah, wa la hawla wa la quwwata illa billah

(In the name of Allah, I place my trust in Allah, and there is no might or power except with Allah.)

Allahumma inni a'udhubika an adh-dhilla, aw udhalla, aw azzilla, aw uzzalla, aw adhlima, aw udhlama, aw ajhala aw yujhala 'alayya

(O Allah, I take refuge with you lest I should stray or be led astray, or slip or be tripped, or oppress or be oppressed, or behave foolishly or be treated foolishly.)

When waking up

Alhamdulillahil-ladhi ahyana ba'da ma amaanana, wa ilayhin nushuur

(All praise is for Allah who gave us life after having taken it from us and unto Him is the return.)

Before sleeping

Bismika Rabbi wad'atu janbi wa bika arfa'a'hu. Fa'in amsakta nafsi faghfir laha Wa'in arsaltaha fahfadha bima tahfadhu bihi 'iibadakas-salihiin

(In Your Name, O Lord, I lay my side (to sleep). And by (Your leave) I raise it up. So if You take away my soul (during sleep) forgive it, and if You send it back (after sleep) protect it even as You Protect Your pious servants.)

Saying Good-bye

Fi-Iman-nillah

(In the protection of Allah)

After completing ablution

Ashadu an laa ilaaha illallah wa ashhadu an na muhammadan 'abduhu wa rasooluhu

(I testify that there is no god except Allah, the One Who has no partner, and that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger)

Greeting another Muslim

As salamu alaykum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu.

(May the peace of Allah descend upon you and his mercy and blessings!)

Narrated Abu Huraira: Allah's Apostle said, "The riding one should greet the walking one, and the walking one should greet the sitting one, and the small number of persons should greet the large number of persons."⁵²

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet said, "The young should greet the old, the passerby should greet the sitting one, and the small group of persons should greet the large group of persons."⁵³

Narrated 'Abdullah bin' Amr: A man asked the Prophet, "What Islamic traits are the best?" The Prophet said, "Feed the people, and greet those whom you know and those whom you do not know."⁵⁴

Responding to greeting

Wa alaykum wa salam wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh.

⁵² *Hadith* Volume 8, Book 74, Number 251

⁵³ *Hadith* Volume 8, Book 74, Number 250

⁵⁴ *Hadith* Volume 8, Book 74, Number 25

(And may the peace of Allah descend upon you and his mercy and blessings!)

Before wudhu (ablution)

Allahumma-gh fir-lee dhan-bee wawass si'lee fi dari wa bariklee fi rizq.

(O Allah Forgive my sins, make my home accommodating and grant me abundance in my livelihood.)

After wudhu

Allahummaj 'al-ni minat-tow-wa beena waj-alni minal muta-tah-hireen.

(I testify that there is no deity except Allah; He is One and has no partner. And I testify that Muhammad (PBUH) is His servant and apostle.)

After sneezing

Alhamdulillah!

(Thanks and all praise be to Allah.)

When undertaking journey

Subhanalla-thee sakh-khara-lana haatha wa-ma kun-na lahoo muqrineena wa inna ila Rabbina la-mun-qali-boon.

(Glory be to Him (Allah) who has brought this (vehicle) under our control though we were unable to control it. Sure, we are to return to our Lord.)

When a non-Muslim sneezes

Yahdee Kumullahu wa Yaslih Ba Lakoo.

(May Allah give you guidance and make your children pious.)

Supplication for fasting

O Allah! I shall fast tomorrow for your sake, so forgive my future and past sins.

When breaking the fast

O Allah, I fasted for you. In you do I believe, and with your provision (food) do I break my fast.

Supplication in *janazah* (funeral prayer) for an adult

O Allah, forgive amongst us those who are alive and those who are dead, those who present and those who are absent, those who are young and those who are old, those who are males and those who are females.

O Allah, whom you keep alive amongst us, keep him alive upon Islam and whom you caused to die, let him die upon Islam.

Supplication in funeral for a boy

O Allah, make him our fore-runner, a source of reward and treasure and make him a pleader for us and (make him) one whose plea has been accepted.

Supplication in funeral for girl

O Allah, make her our fore-runner, a source of reward and treasure and make her a pleader for us and (make her) one whose plea has been accepted.

When leaving a gathering

Glory be to Allah, with his praises. Glory be to you, O Allah, with Your praises. I bear witness that there is no God besides you. I beg your forgiveness and repent to you.

When welcoming someone

(May you enter and) be as one of us, be at ease and comfortable, and welcome (to you).

Morning and evening supplications

O Allah with your help do I start this day/night and with your help do I live and with your help do I die and to you is our rising.

When seeing a Muslim laughs

May Allah, grant you lifelong happiness.

At a time of thunderclap

O Allah, do not kill us through your anger and do not destroy us with your punishment. Do forgive us before this (happens).

That is how Muslims are involved in transpersonal communication. They said that they establish communication with Allah in this way while being involved in daily activities. During participant observation, Muslims were found that they do everything including communicating with each other in the light of Islam as they should be accountable to Allah.

4.20 Communication in the five times daily prayers

Both transpersonal and two-way communication occurs during daily prayers. When an Imam recites some verses of the holy *Qur'an* and provides supplications during prayer, the participants reply to him. Participants of the prayers say *Amen* (so be it) when an Imam wishes for well being of all. Thus, two-way communication also occurs in the prayer. Also, there is instant feedback in the communication process during the prayers. On the other hand, participants of the prayers individually recite some verses and supplications on their own. This falls under transpersonal communication.

When the Imam concludes *Surah Fatiha*, which is recited in the beginning of each prayer, the participants say *Amen* (so be it). Similarly, when the imam asks well being of all human beings, among others with the end of prayer, the participants respond to it by saying *Amen*. At the same time, transpersonal/intrapersonal communication occurs as both the imam and participants of the prayers recite verse and supplications on their own. When the Imam bows participants also bows down during the prayer.

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet said, “The Imam is to be followed. Say the Takbir when he says it; bow if he bows; if he says ‘Sami a-l-lahu Liman hamida’, say, ‘Rabbana wa-laka-l-hamd’, prostrate if he prostrates and pray sitting altogether if he prays sitting.”⁵⁵

Narrated Anas bin Malik: Allah’s Apostle fell from a horse and got injured so he led the prayer sitting and we also prayed sitting. When he completed the prayer he said, “The Imam is to be followed; if he says Takbir then say Takbir, bow if he bows; raise your heads when he raises his

⁵⁵ *Hadith* Volume 1, Book 12, Number 701

head, when he says, ‘Sami’ a-l-lahu Liman hamida say, ‘Rabbana laka-l-hamd’, and prostrate when he prostrates.”⁵⁶

4.21 Communication during calls to five prayers everyday

There are five times calls i.e. *Adhaan* from mosques in order to invite Muslims for prayer at the mosques every day. When a *Mu’adhdhin* (one who makes call), the listeners reply to him. Thus, there is instant feedback at the time of *Adhaan*.

Narrated Abu Umama bin Sahl bin Hunaif: I heard Muawiya bin Abi Sufyan (repeating the statements of the *Adhaan*) while he was sitting on the pulpit. When the *Muadh-dhin* pronounced the *Adhaan* saying, “Allahu-Akbar, Allahu Akbar (Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest.)”, Muawiya said: “Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar.” And when the *Muadh-dhin* said, “Ash-hadu an la ilaha illal-lah (I testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah)”, Muawiya said, “And (so do) I”. When he said, “Ash-hadu anna Muhammadan Rasulullah” (I testify that Muhammad is Allah’s Apostle), Muawiya said, “And (so do) I”. When the *Adhaan* was finished, Muawiya said, “O people, when the *Muadh-dhin* pronounced the *Adhaan* I heard Allah’s Apostle on this very pulpit saying what you have just heard me saying.”⁵⁷

4.22 Communication in decision making process in family

Islam suggests holding consultation with family members before taking any important decision. The holy *Qur’an* states that it is good to hold consultations before taking any crucial decision. Muslims say that they often apply the teaching of holy *Qur’an* in respective areas. They were found to encourage family members to express their opinion regarding the issue before taking

⁵⁶ *Hadith* Volume 1, Book 12, Number 700

⁵⁷ *Hadith* Volume 2, Book 13, Number 37

final decision in that regard. Two-way communication occurs during this process of decision making. Muslims argue that opinion of each family member is entertained where communication occurs in democratic way. However, this is practiced mainly in a family where members are conscious and literate about the teachings of the holy *Qur'an* and *Hadith*.

The holy *Qur'an* says:

“And make *Mashwara* (Consult) with them in affairs (of importance). Then when you have firmly decided, have trust on Allah. Verily Allah loves those who have trust (in Him).”⁵⁸

4.23 Communication in the weekly Friday prayer

Friday prayer is slightly different from daily five prayers. *Adhaan* is called twice before the prayer begins. And the participants respond to the *Adhaan* as they do at the time of five prayers every day. Imam delivered the Sermon before Friday prayer. It is mandatory to keep silence when the Imam delivers sermons. The weekly Friday prayer, which is obligatorily collective, with its sermon, the holy *Qur'an* recitation presents a regular sphere of communication for every individual Muslim, every Muslim community as well as the entire Muslim world.

When the Imam recites the following verse:

(‘O Allah, distance me from my sins just as You have distanced The East from The West, O Allah, purify me of my sins as a white robe is purified of filth, O Allah, cleanse me of my sins with snow, water, and ice.’) Participants say amen (so be it).

Narrated Abu Said Al-Khudri: Allah's Apostle said, “Whenever you hear the *Adhaan*, say what the *Mu'adhdhin* is saying.”⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Sura Al- Imran:159

4.24 Ramadan and communication

Muslims get more engaged with religious activities in Ramadan as compared with other months. Recitation of the holy *Qur'an* and alms giving, among activities are intensified in Ramadan. They avoid unnecessary talks, arguments and backbiting during Ramadan. And, if someone comes to them for unnecessary arguments and allegations they try to stay apart saying that they are observing the fast. Patience is more exercised during the holy month of Ramadan keeping in a view that unnecessary argument may lead to quarrel in status of hunger during the fast.

4.25 Communication at religious gathering (*Ijtima*)

At *Ijtimas*, senior Islamic scholars address the gathering by encouraging the people towards self-reformation and adherence to an Islamic way of life as espoused by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). When people join such gathering they greet the gathering. Those who join the gathering do not greet each people individually rather a collective greeting is done while those who already sat should reply to the greeting individually. It is a linear communication with the Imam offerings his teachings to the participants and the latter listening to it without any interference. The participants ask queries only after the speech ends. Anwar Ali of Patan, Lalitpur said the contents of sermons play vital role in shaping his thought and behaviour in line with Islam. “The contents of sermons incorporate current socio-economic and other issues relating them to Islam. So, I find them every effective in order to move ahead in Islamic way,” Ali added⁶⁰.

⁵⁹ *Hadith* Volume 1, Book 11, Number 585

⁶⁰ Personal communication with Anwar Ali, Patan; July 2013

4.26 Communication on the occasion of *Eid*

Eid-ul-Fitr and *Eid-ul-Adha* come after fulfilling two of the main pillars of Islam: after fasting in the month of Ramadan and after performing annual pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia. As per Islamic belief, *Eid* strengthens the relationship that exists between Muslims and eliminates selfishness. Paying *Zakat ul-fitr* strengthens this bond because it feeds the needy and at the same time erases any bad deeds done during fasting. Also, the gathering of Muslims in this place to perform *Eid* prayer and listening to the *Eid* speech strengthens this community bond. Prayers of both *Eid* are performed at Eidghah (open place) with large mass of people. People forget their long-time enmity and talk to each other by hugging on the *Eid* day.

Narrated Al-Bara: I heard the Prophet (PBUH) delivering a *Khutbat* saying, “The first thing to be done on this day (first day of *Eid-ul-Adha*) is to pray; and after returning from the prayer we slaughter our sacrifices (in the name of Allah) and whoever does so, he acted according to our *Sunnah*.”⁶¹

4.27 Muslim marriage and communication

Marriage proposal is either sent by the bride side or groom side in Muslim community.

Nikâh(Wedding) is performed after both sides agree for doing so. Both interpersonal and group communications occur during *Nikâh*.

A marriage is executed by just two words, e.g. a person says the following words in the presence of witnesses: “I give my daughter to you in marriage.” The person who is addressed replies: “I accept her in marriage.” In so doing, the marriage is valid and both of them are lawful husband

⁶¹ *Hadith* Volume 2, Book 15, Number 71

and wife. However, if the person has several daughters, the *Nikâh* will not be executed by his uttering the words mentioned above. He will have to mention the daughter by name, e.g. he says:

“I give my daughter to you in marriage” and the person replies: “I accept her in marriage.”

A person says: “Give so-and-so daughter of yours to me in marriage. “The father replies: “I give her to you in marriage.”

If the daughter is present and the father says: “I give this daughter of mine in marriage to you”, and the person replies: “I accept her”, the *Nikâh* will be valid. It will not be necessary to mention her name. If the girl is not present, it is necessary to mention her name and the name of her father in such a loud tone that all the witnesses are able to hear. If the people do not know the father and there is a strong possibility that by mentioning his name they will still not know whose *Nikâh* is being performed, then it will be necessary to mention the name of the grand-father as well. In other words, such identification is necessary whereby those present immediately know whose *Nikâh* is being performed.

In order for a *Nikâh* to be valid, it is also essential for at least two males or one male and two females to be present, to hear that *Nikâh* being performed, and to hear the two words (i.e. the offer and the acceptance) being uttered. Only then will the *Nikâh* be valid. If two persons sit together in privacy and one says to the other: “I give my daughter to you in marriage” and the other person replies: “I accept your daughter”, the *Nikâh* will not be valid. Similarly, if the *Nikâh* was performed in the presence of one person only, even then the *Nikâh* will not be valid. If there are no males present, but only females, the *Nikâh* will not be valid even if there are ten females present. Together with two females, one male has to be present.

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet said, “A matron should not be given in marriage except after consulting her; and a virgin should not be given in marriage except after her permission. “The people asked, “O Allah's Apostle! How can we know her permission?” He said, “Her silence (indicates her permission).”⁶²

The above said wedding procedures are strictly followed in communication behaviour of Muslims in both urban and rural areas.

4.28 Birth rites and communication

Muslims welcome to a new born child in an Islamic manner. With the birth of a child, *Adhaan* is called into right ear of the new born baby. The Muslim call to prayer or *Adhaan* (God is great; there is no God but Allah. Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. Come to prayer.”) are the first words a newborn Muslim baby should hear. They are whispered into the right ear of the child by his or her father. Also, the message about a new born baby is conveyed to the kith and kin in order to share the happiness.

4.29 Communication during funeral rites

As per *Sunnah*, the dying person is asked to pronounce, “Laa ilaaha illal Lah” (There is no God but Allah.) before death. The prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: “Ask your dying fellows to pronounce, “Laa ilaaha illal Lah.” The Prophet has said that the one whose last words are “Laa Ilaaha Illal Lah.” will enter the heaven. After the death of a person, Muslims supplicate and say “Inna Lillahi Wa inna ilaihi Raje'oon. “(To Allah we belong, and to Him we will all head back.)

⁶² *Hadith* Volume 7, Book 62, Number 67

Allah says: 'To Allah we belong and to him is our return.' They are those on whom (descend) blessings from their Lord, and mercy. And they are the ones who receive guidance."⁶³

The body of the deceased is placed in front of the congregation and the Imam. The Imam (the one who is leading the *Janazah* (funeral) prayer stands beside the head of the male-deceased and towards the middle part of the female-deceased. The body is laid in the grave on its right side facing the "*Qiblah*" (towards Mecca). The person laying the body say: "In the name of Allah, and by the way of the messenger of Allah - or by the tradition of the messenger of Allah", while laying the body. He then must un-tie all the ties of the shroud when the prophet (PBUH) laid a dead body in the grave, he said: "In the name of Allah, and by the way of the messenger of Allah or by the tradition of the messenger of Allah." Another thing that is highly recommended to do is to ask Allah forgiveness for the dead person upon finishing the burial and to take advantage of the gathering to advise and preach to people about the Hereafter. The prophet (PBUH) used to say when he is done with the burial: "Ask Allah forgiveness for your brother and ask Him to confirm his heart because he is being questioned now." It is recommended to comfort the family of the dead person with consoling words that would calm the grieving relatives and reduce their sadness. when the prophet's daughter called upon him to come because a son of hers had died, he sent his greeting (Salam) followed by: "It is His What He has taken, and it is His what He has given, and everything in His possession has a prescribed lifetime, so let her be patient and content (with Allah's will and reward."⁶⁴

⁶³ *Surah Al-Baqara: 156, 157*

⁶⁴ *Hadith of Imam Bukhari*

4.30 Communication during *Khutbat* (sermon)

Khutbat (sermon) is delivered during weekly Friday prayer and prayers of *Eid-ul-Fitr* and *Eid-ul-Adha*. Imam Mohsin says that it is prohibited to even whisper during *Khutbat*. Also, it is forbidden to worship while the Imam delivering sermon. Imam Nadvi states that the issues of sermon are selected as per context. For example, Imams deliver sermon about importance of fast during Ramadan while they give sermon about sacrificing goat, sheep, among other animals during the month of *Dhul Hijja*, 12th month of Arabic calendar. Similarly, the sermons which are delivered on the occasion of *Eid-ul-Fitr* and *Eid-ul-Adha* are related to an auspicious occasion of the respective festival.

Just before the beginning of *khutbat*, the *khateeb* (the person who delivers *khutbat*) stands up and gives Salam to the people and sits down. The *mu'adheen* (caller to prayer) stands up and gives the *Adhaan* (call for prayer) to pronounce the beginning of the *khutbat*. *Khateeb* stands up again and begins with *Khutbat-ul-Haajjah*. This bit is always done in Arabic.

The Imam invokes people to be God conscious by reciting the verses of the holy *Qur'an* which has the words *Taqwa* (God consciousness) in it. The Imam relates the contents of the *Khutbat*, choosing topical issues that address some of the issues of the Muslims, and addressing them from a viewpoint of advice. According to Islam, the prophet (PBUH) and the companions always used to choose the most important issues of their time. Topics can be dealt to do with *ibadat* (ritual) or *mu'amalat* (societal). If there is any query about the issues raised in the *Khutbat*, the participants ask the Imam after the prayer.

4.31 Communication in *Madrasa* education

Madrasas are the most trusted place for disseminating cultural education to Muslims since their emergence along with the emergence of Islam in the 7th century of AD. Religious education is highly valued in Islamic society for the achievement of the aim called as “*Farze Ain* (Compulsory duty)”. According to this aim, it is a compulsory duty of every follower of Islam to have the knowledge of their two main sources of religious guidance i.e. the holy *Quran* and *Hadith*. It is obligatory to every Muslim to have the knowledge of these sources of guidance. A large number of children of Muslim community are going to *Madrasas* to achieve this sort of knowledge (Parwez, 2008, p. 11).

The curriculums of *Madrasas* are generally focused on religious aspect. The way of teaching is also guided by Islamic tradition. Girls and boys are taught separately in *Madrasas* as co-education is not entertained there. Teenage girls, who have to sit in separate classrooms, wear *hijab* (niqab) as they are taught by the male teachers, Maulana. Girl students do not make eye contact with *Maulana*, religious teacher, out of modesty and respect⁶⁵. Mainly verbal communication occurs in the classrooms. Body language, gestures, touch, signs and eye contact, among other types of non-verbal communication are not entertained in *Madrasas*. Men and women wear dresses in a modest way.

They cover the entire body apart from their face and hands that are kept uncovered. They should not wear such clothes that can incite sexual desires to member of the opposite sex, say Imam Mohsin. There are immediate feedbacks in the classrooms. If students do not understand anything in the classrooms, they ask twice or thrice. These are done in accordance with *Hadith* as

⁶⁵ Personal communication with Guncha Rabbani, a student of Madrasa Barkatul-uloom, Birgunj; June 2013

it states that one should say something twice or thrice if the listeners do not understand the conveyed messages at one time. This proves that the communication occurs between the two sides is non-linear form of communication as the receiver equally participate in the communication process. The sender is not dominant there which rules out the possibility of Aristotle's linear model of communication.

On the other Imam Nadvi says that linear model of communication during Friday prayer. The devotees keep silence when the Imam delivers sermons. Even offering prayer is not entertained when the Imam delivers sermon. However, if one does not get meaning of sermon, he asks the Imams after completion of Friday prayer.

4.32 Use of social media in communication process among Muslims

Social media are the websites where people share their ideas, thoughts, views, news and opinions in two-way and multimedia platforms. Nepal has been ranked in the 148th position among 192 countries in terms of the percentage of population having access to internet service. The report entitled *The State of Broadband 2013* published by the UNESCO Broadband Commission states that 11.1 percent of Nepalese use internet (Broadband Commission, 2013, p.99).

Social media are playing a vital role for two-way communication and giving instant feedback. We can find some of the popular social sites offering various features where the users feel free to chat, post their views, and write down their opinions and disseminate creativity on blogs. To name some of the popular social sites practiced in the world are *facebook*, *twitter*, *orkut* and *bloggers*, among others are used effectively. There are 1,890,820 *facebbok* users in Nepal, which

makes it 66 in global ranking. Similarly, there are estimated 100,000 twitter users and 10,000 bloggers are active in blogging.⁶⁶

Talking about Muslims communicating over social media, we find the most of literate and also common people opening their page on these sites. In the period of the holy month of Ramadan, Muslims were found urging each other to offer daily five prayers, recite the verses of the holy *Qur'an*, participate in giving alms to the needy and abstain from drinking water and taking food from dawn to dusk. In *facebook*, some of Muslims were found sharing the videos of Muslim scholars reciting the verses of the holy *Qur'an*. On the contrary Muslims, who were observing the fast, were found sharing the links of news and views regarding religious texts during Ramadan on the *twitter*.

While talking about blogs, there are many blogs written by common individuals to share their views on the religion, Islam. So, from such experiences it is clear that the Muslim community is not in the Stone Age. Rather their life style and way of living are being globalized. It can be also argued that there is impact of globalization over communication of the Muslim community, like other communities. Muslim students during the fast in Ramadan were exchanging their wishes through mobile texts (SMSs). So, the researcher here endeavors to find out communication patterns among Muslim community over social media. It is apparent that the Muslim community is also using social media platforms. They are thus in the process of being modernized.

⁶⁶ <http://www.slideshare.net/indradhoj/new-and-social-media-in-nepal-an-overview>

Chapter V

5. Conclusion and recommendation

Islam covers every aspect of a person's life. It, through the words of God in the holy *Qur'an*, and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), offers advice and guidance from dawn till dusk, from birth until death. Islam even teaches Muslims the best way to greet each other. Every act that a Muslim performs is looked upon from religious point of view. From birth to death, every act of Muslim should be guided by the teaching of the holy *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*, deeds and sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), says Islam. As Islam has shaped living ways of Muslims, it has also influenced the communicative behaviour of the Muslim community. Communication patterns among Muslim community are also shaped by Islam. Muslims have their own way of greeting to each other. They have their own way of celebrating festivals, holding wedding ceremony, welcoming a new born baby and funeral rites, among others. Each day in five time prayers, in some act transpersonal communication occurs while in some acts two-way communication occurs. In Friday prayer mass communication occurs as the Imam delivers sermon before *Farz* prayer (obligatory ones) begins. When we talk about communication pattern of Madrasa education, two way communication occurs between religious teachers and students. Students participate actively in the communication process. And, there are immediate feedbacks from students in the classrooms.

Similarly, both mass communication and transpersonal communication occur during annual prayers of *Eid-ul-Fitr* and *Eid-ul-Adha*, two major festivals in Islam. Mass communication also occurs when *Ijtima* (religious gathering) is held. Religious teachers and scholars deliver sermons about Islam by relating them with contemporary issues. Such sermons are aimed to motivate

Muslims to do each and every act in accordance with the teaching of the holy *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*. Channels used by Muslims to deliver Islamic messages are various in natures. For instant, pamphlets are distributed before organizing *Ijtima*. Muslims are also requested individually to spread the message about such gatherings to their kith and kin orally.

Transpersonal communication occurs when a Muslims enters to a bathroom, exit from there, when he or she begins to have meal, after having meal, when sneezing, before beginning a journey, when looking into mirror, when seeing a bad dream, when using new cloths, before sleeping and when waking up, when there is thunderclap. Muslim community for which religion is their ultimate guide in life shares the same beliefs towards communication as their counterparts in other places. Most of communication is verbal in Muslim community. Islam has not only emphasized on speaking politely and speaking on the true but it has also taught methods of communication as well as feedback. As per *Sunnah*, one should convey a message time and again if it is not understood by a listener. On the other hand, a listener should also ask without any hesitation in order to get meaning of the conveyed message. These are practiced in communicative behaviour of Muslims. The holy *Qur'an* and *Hadith* have emphasized talking in a respectful and a polite manner.

However, the communication patters of urban dwellers and those living in villages differ to some extent. Only educated Muslims recite all supplications when they do various activities while as most of Muslims in the urban area are found literate they recite all necessary supplications. They were also found adopting methods of communication suggested by the holy *Qur'an* and *Hadith*. Muslims believe that making others convinced and understood the messages must be kept in mind while communicating with others. As explained by religious communication theory, the

messages and processes used by communicators in Islam are intended to influence audiences in a bid to adopt beliefs and actions in line with the holy *Qur'an* and *Hadith*.

Muslim scholars claim that despite good teachings of the holy *Qur'an* and *Hadith* Muslims are misunderstood due to lack of education about Islam among other communities. They acknowledge that Muslims are also responsible for not making other communities understand the true meaning of Islam. Imams and other Muslim scholars said if all Muslims truly and completely follow the teachings of the holy *Qur'an* and *Hadith* misunderstand about Islam and Muslims can vanish itself. Muslims argue that some groups including politicians have been using religion to serve their vested interests and such an act defames Islam.

5.1 Recommendations

As Muslims are the third largest religious groups in the country, it is essential to carry out study about various aspects of their culture and religion. Doing so can help non-Muslims to know about various aspects of Islam and Muslims in a true sense and that can also strengthen social harmony and co-habitation in our multi-cultural and multi-lingual society. Communication studies on Islamic belief, way of life and traditions, among others can be also supportive in mainstreaming Muslim community. Similarly, study can be carried out about new means of communication being used by Muslims.

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