

## Chapter I

### The Tharu Community and Their Identity

This thesis endeavors its best to delve into the *Tharu* cultural dance –*Sakhiya Naach*, a performance mostly practiced in *Dashya* and *Dewari* with the vision of egalitarianism and greater cultural inclusiveness. *Sakhiya Naach* reflects the Tharu cultural identity and it is performed in great festivals *Dashya* (Dashain) and *Dewari* (Tihar). It begins from the Krishna *Janma Ashtami* and wraps up with the surrounding of *Dashya* and *Dewari*.

The *Sakhiya Naach* is performed with the open participation of young girls and boys who are unmarried but it is equally performed by the participation of interested married females and males. Boys play tom-tom and female dance with the leaves of pumpkin in the first phase, in second phase with the fabrics of jute and in final phase with the pair of cymbals. Each phase has its significance however; final phase has more and distinct feature and importance. The final phase begins from the day of the *Dutiya (Ghatasthapana)*, both male and female wear their cultural costume. Boys wear *Dhoti* and *Jhuluwa* (shirt), decorate the tom-tom whereas girls wear *Fariya* and *Choliya (Cholo)* and decorate with the different ornaments and jewelries. It obviously manifests the cultural instinct and the gender equality, and helps strictly to reduce the gap between male and female. It makes the easy access to interact between boys and girls with no hesitation and hierarchy. Having such benign environment of dance, they equally share their feelings and emotions. Through their frequent interaction, they develop their personality, mutual understanding and cooperative environment creating no any sort of demarcation among the boys and girls. The continuation of such cultural performance attempts to save the cultural properties and equally helps to transmit to upcoming generation. Now in this contemporary time

*Sakhiya Naach* is not limited only for cultural significance but it has also become the dominant cultural performance as a show in grand gala to manifest the Tharu unique cultural identity. Thus, *Sakhiya Naach* strongly bears the egalitarian view in the Tharu cultural performance. Before delving into the proposed thesis title *Sakhiya Naach* a researcher attempts to deliver the brief synopsis of Tharu identity.

Nepal is multiethnic, multicultural and secular country. Having such diversities Nepal has become a destination for tourism and research sector. Central Bureau of statistics (CBS) 2001 has acquainted 122 languages and 100 castes among them 59 are ethnics. Among the ethnics, Tharus are the major and main ethnic who are the inhabitants of Terai and inner Terai of Nepal. They are residing in 22 districts of Nepal densely in Dang, Banke, Bardiya, Surkhet, Chitwan, Kanchanpur, etc. Tharus are categorized as an indigenous tribe of Nepal and identified as an official nationality by the government of Nepal.

Tharus, the indigenous group is the main and the largest indigenous ethnic people of Terai and Inner Terai of Nepal. They are the inhabitant of Terai region and the fourth largest ethnic people of Nepal who were marginalized and ostracized from the main stream and the government policy shunned them from every sort of opportunities. Tharu people similar to other ethnic groups have their own culture, costume, rites and language that portray their distinct and unique identity. Regarding ethnic groups, Peter Murdock opines:

It is a social group in which there are many clans, nomadic bands, villages of other subgroups which usually have a definite geographical area, separate language, a singular and distinct culture and either a common political organization or at least a feeling of common determination against strangers. (Quoted in Acharya 31)

As far, Tharu people have their own typical culture, costume, language, geographical territory and communal stance they are undoubtedly ethnic group.

According to Central Bureau of statistics (CBS) 2001, the demographic status of Tharu is 1,533,879, which is 6.75% of total population of Nepal. However, Tharus are interrogating the credibility of the Census Report of 2001 and claiming that they are more than 3.5 million. The Tharus are simple, honest, calm and peaceful in nature and never hanker to indulge in forgery, fraud and feud. The Tharus have their own mother language and speak their language all over Nepal. They belong to Indo-European family. The physical structure of Tharu is wide face, flattened nose, medium height, solid body having fair complexion. However, with the adverse climate of Terai and Inner Terai, the appearance of Tharu is somehow brown black. The main occupation of Tharu is agriculture, they are the actual farmers who engaged in field, pasture, fishing and taming cattle. They retain their income, livelihood from their subsistence farming. Mostly they spend their time in cultivating land, harvesting their crops.

So far, dress is concerned, Tharus women wear *Choliya, Blouse, Lehenga, Goniya* and men wear *Jhuluwa* (shirt), *Bheguwa, Dhoti* which manifest their cultural costume. However, in recent time they have altered in their attire, they wear vogue and common dresses as others do. Tharu women adorn with varieties of ornaments and jewellerys for instance *Tikli, Nathani, Phefi, Phuli, Kanseri, Mangauri, Tauk, Tariya, Guriya, Mala* etc. almost all the ornaments are of silver and very few of them are of gold. As far as their food items are concerned, their main food varieties are rice (*Bhat*), pulse (*Daal*), *Kapuwa* (made from rice flour), gruel, *chatani, tarkari*. Pork is their main meat item, in each festivals and ceremonies they serve pork varieties, besides that they also eat chicken, mutton, fish etc. Crab and Ghonghi (snail like

creature) are also their eating items. They make variety of ghonghi to demonstrate in fair, hot bazaar, and in grand gala. The Tharus are concerned as one of the hardworking people; they depend on their physical work exploiting their physical labor. To get relief from hard working and celebrate their feast, festivals and rituals they make and drink home made ale, *jaad*, *daaru* (homemade liquor). *Jaad* and *daaru* are their main drinking items. Preparation of *jaad* and *daaru* embodies the cultural importance. Without *daaru* no feast, festivals and rituals are celebrated in Tharu community, thus, it bears the cultural significance. *Daaru* is considered as sacred liquor to be offered as *Chhaki* (arghadine) to deities to make them happy hoping that their deities will protect and secure them from all bad omen, plague, disease, evil eye, and fulfill their all wishes and desires. Besides *Daaru*, they also offer and sacrifice other things too.

The Tharus are culturally very prosperous tribe; it can be vividly seen from their cultural performances. Their cultural performance are fore grounded on oral text/verbosity because illiteracy prevails in this ethnic community even today so, there exist lack of access to the written or print culture. In Tharu community, most of them are shunned from bright beam of education. The Tharus celebrate different sorts of feast, festivals, ceremonies and rituals deeply rooted in cultural and traditional foreground, enmeshed with various and typical forms of folk songs, folklores, folk dances such as *Barka Naach*, *Sakhiya Naach*, *Hurdunguwa*, *Jhumra*, *Maghauta*, *Latthahwa*, *Jharra*, *Daffa* etc. For each cultural performances and festivals, they have separate and distinguished forms of dances and songs that whirl around a year. They often have seasonal songs and performances. Within the same category of songs and folksongs they have different forms of lyric and vocal system for instance they have one lyric or vocal pattern in the evening but subsequently varies in the night,

midnight, morning, day, noon respectively. Such performances and activities obviously shows the Tharus are profoundly rich in their cultural assets interconnecting with their unique identity embedded into it. Regarding such cultural traits, the researcher Gopal Dahit, enrolls and opines:

The ethnic Tharus have their own language, literature, culture, tradition, costume, dances, folk songs, folklores, folk dances, residential territory and unique rituals that hails from the individual's birth to death. They worship different gods and goddesses individually and communally for the welfare of community people, village, their assets from evil fortune and evil eye and they attend each celebration exuberantly, which obviously manifests the unique identity of Tharu community. (4)

So far, Tharu people have their own typical culture, language, ritual, geographical, settlement, communal sense and ritual performances undoubtedly, they are prosperous in culture and cultural performances, which gives their typical identity different from others.

Besides, Tharus have further sub tribe, they differ in different aspects for instance; eastern Tharu differ from western Tharu and Dangaura Tharu with Rana Tharu because they vary in language, costume and many more ceremonies that are traditional. Therefore, Kurt Meyer and Pamela Deuel write:

Closer examination reveals that many sub groups that are quite different from each other exist: Kochila in eastern terai, Chitwaniyan and Desauri in centre, Kathariya, Dangaura and Rana in the west. House construction, religion, culture, and historical background vary considerably from group to group but all are called "Tharu". (3)

Therefore, the whole Tharu ethnic groups can be subdivided into five groups: Rana Tharu of Kanchanpur, Kathariya of Kailali, Dangaura of Dang valley, Deukhuri, Bardiya, and Surkhet, Kochila of Rautahat and Eastern Kochila of Morang. The Tharus from Kochila community speak and dress differently than that of Dang and Bardiya. Thus, Tharu tribe differs in different aspects.

The Tharus are adherents of Hinduism but few of them have also adapted Buddhism and Christianity. They celebrate their great festivals according to the Hindu philosophy. Therefore, it must not be misunderstood and misinterpreted that their culture is an autonomous culture having no relation with the mainstream or rest of the cultures. It naturally interacts with other culture too. They worship various gods and goddesses in the form of animals and plants such as horse, dog, snake, ox, cow, peepal-baar etc. Village People have their own deity, commonly known as *Bhuinyaar* (*Badka Guruwa*) and *Kesauka* (Assistant *Guruwa*). Village or community based *Puja* accomplishes on the leadership of *Bhuinyaar* and *Kesauka* at *Devthan* known as *Thanuwa*. Almost all Tharu individual family has their own statue of traditional gods and goddesses. Before celebrating any festivals and rituals, they purify the sacred place of deities smearing with cow dung and spraying *Sun-pani* and then enhance their cultural activities. To plead gods and goddess *Maiya* (known as Durga) family members often sacrifice animal bloods, milk and milk products. They sacrifice animals like piglet, he goat, ram and birds like chicken and pigeon, likewise silk cloth is also offered.

Tharus strictly believe that their gods have capacity to cure and heal the sickness, disease, plague and exorcise the evil force. According to Tharu legend, Tharu bestow *Bhakal* (promise) to convince their deities as a promise if their deities listen and solve their problems. Tharu approach shamans as doctors known as

*Guruwa*. *Guruwa* with his incantation, beating drums and offering sacrifice attempts to appease gods. The Tharus believe that all sorts of problem, predicaments, misfortune, sickness, plague, and drought come when their deities are discontent and at that time devils and demons are at activated phase. As far as Tharu residential place is concerned their house structure and pattern of construction distinctly varies from rest of the tribe. Most of them live in a thatched and elongated form of house. Near by their houses they build a byre for their cattle. They have compact settlement pattern and joint family structure but very few of them have practiced nuclear family system.

Each Tharu family has system of *Kisan*, the head of the house who manipulates rest of the family members and bears all the responsibility. Among the family members, eldest male is considered as a *Kisan* but in rare case, *Kisan* might be next too. The *Kisan* who is the supreme person of the house, formulates rules and regulations to be followed by family members, thus, he monitors and guides the entire members. He has responsibility to provide all kinds of basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, education, treatment and others. He plays the vital role for the guidance of the family and makes important decision for the welfare and betterment of house members. He assigns duties and responsibilities to each individual according to their age and sex. Female especially indulge in domestic indoor work but male involve in outdoor works. Management of house, ritual, traditional performance, feast, and festivals are initiated on the leadership of *Kisan*. He is managerial director of house and family members so he is duly respected person among the rest of the family members.

Similarly, all the *Kisans*, the head of the families swam at a particular venue to select a *Barghar* (head of the village) who is considered as the head of the village. On the leadership of *Barghar* all, the *Kisans* make some rules and regulations to be

followed by each village members. A *Barghar* is the ruler of village; he leads all the villagers and works for the village and villagers. He makes important decision for the village and villagers, reconciles any sort of conflict on the mutual understanding of villagers, and gives his final decision. If anything happens to any individual, he/she goes on the *Brghar's* lap to ask for his/her justice. Any sorts of cultural, ritual performance begin from the courtyard of *Barghar's* house on his leadership. On his leadership, all village people organize community-based worship for the welfare of village and villagers. He takes the responsibility of whole village and villagers. He is duly respected not only by his villagers but equally by the other villagers too.

It is said that the Tharus are culturally very prosperous tribe, they celebrate different feast, festivals such as *Dashya* (Dashain), *Dewari* (Tihar), *Maghi*, *Barka Atwari*, *Astimki* (Krishna Janma Astami), *Hardauhwa*, *Guriya* (Nag Panchmi), *Holi* etc. Each festival has their systematic pattern of celebration. Before celebrating any festivals, the Tharus decorate their houses in their cultural fashion. Among the festivals, *Maghi Sankranti* is the greatest festival of Tharu community, which falls on the first day of *Magh*. *Maghi Parba* strongly embodies the Tharu identity and officially recognized as the national festival. It is attended jubilantly with immense delight and happy on the first day of Magh, which is also known as Maghi Sankranti. On this auspicious day Tharu, people stay vigil and take bath early in the morning and worship god Mahadev. After worshipping, they receive blessings from their elders and have different varieties of food and drinks. In Tharu community, Maghi festival indicates the celebration of New Year but it cannot be merely limited in this point, it is a day of freedom, liberty to those who are scuffled to work day and night. It is also a day of bestowing souvenir to sisters known as *Nisrahur*. It is celebrated with merrymaking, eating, drinking and performing ritual Maghi Naach in exuberant



mood. Regarding the Maghi festival Dorna Prashad Rajaure accounts:

For Tharu community it is a day of freedom, merrymaking and doing no work at all. Even personal serf and employees get leave on this great festival. On this day amateurs and even children dance, their cultural dance Maghi Naach decorating with different jewelries and ornaments and dressing up with colorful and winsome attires. They go each houses singing and dancing. (241)

*Dashain*, the greatest festival of Hindu, is known as *Dashya* in Tharu culture, falls in the month of Ashwin and Kartik. There is disparity in the celebration of *Dashain* between Tharu culture and so-called Brahminic culture. On the auspicious day of *Dutiya* (Ghatasthapana) Tharu people sow the seeds of maize and wheat on the *Dhakiya* or basket inside the dark room called the *Duiwhrar* where family deities are kept for worship.

These seedlings are kept for *Jaura* (*Jamara*) which grow pale yellow and are offered to home *Bhutuwa* (home deities) for the first time on the seventh day (*Phulpati*) of *Dashya*. On the seventh day of *Dashain*, Tharu women purify and wash the *Painas* (a pot) for *Dhikrauhwa* (preparing of cake made of rice) for worshipping all the deities. On the eighth day (*Astamiko din*) of *Dashain*, they prepare varieties of *Dhikri* (cake made of rice flour) and *Khurma* (bread prepared in oil) for offering to gods and goddesses molding the rice flour. On this day both male and female stay fasting but one amazing thing is that male prayer is permitted to drink liquor but he is not allowed to eat rest of the food items but female is not allowed to eat anything. Female prayer prepares *Dhikri* and *Khurma* varieties, for offering *Dhikri*, *Bebri* (a kind of herb), *Jeura* (*Jamara*), *Chhaki* (A sip of Home made liquor), *Jal* (a sip of water) from *Kalas* to all house deities. On the ninth day of *Dashya* early in the

morning, the male prayer sacrifices the sheep like animal made of cucurbit called *Bheduwa* (a sheep like creature made of cucurbit) and chickens to get salvation from all kinds' of profanity and evil fortune. Prayer pays homage to all their homely gods, goddesses and their ancestors. The tenth day of Dashya is the day of *Tika* (*Bijaya Dashmi*), younger receive blessing from their elders. Throughout the entire *Dashain* festival, there is a performance of cultural dance. On this *Tika* day, all the villagers go for *Tika* in the *Barghar's* house accompanying with various cultural dances like Sakhiya Naach, Latthwa Naach, Barka Naach, Hurdungwa Naach in exuberant and jubilant atmosphere. All the performers wear their traditional attire through out the festival.

Similarly, *Dewari* (*Tihar*) is another major festival, celebrated mostly from *Laxmi puja*. It is mainly attended for three days. Atwari or the Barka Atwari is as dubbed as it is observed on the day of *Atwar* (Sunday). This specific Sunday is known as *Barka Atwari* (the great Sunday) falls on the first Sunday of the bright forth night of Bhadra. It is fasting festival observed only by male. Similarly, Tharus celebrate enormous festivals such as *Dhuhreeri* (Holi), *Chaiti Dashain*, Ram Navami, Guriya, Hardauhwa etc.

As the Tharus celebrate jubilantly, various sorts of festivals so they equally perform various kinds of cultural, ritual dances. Tharus perform dances, spinning around year. Tharus are not merely mogul in cultural festival but also in cultural performance too. Among all the dances, the *Barka naach* is the major cultural dance based on Hindu great Epic Mahabharata practice around *Dashya* and *Dewari*. It is part of the *Barkimar* (the Great War) contents the story from the Hindu Epic Mahabharata, mingled with the Tharu identity with their historical background. Tharu people regard Pandava brothers as their protectors and deities of prosperity. It is a devotional

worship and profound reverence to the five Pandava brothers. Only males perform the Barka Naach and more than hundred males participate in this dance. It lingers for more than 2-3 months. *Barka Naach* needs hefty fund and acute knowledge of stories of the Mahabharata. *Lathi Naach*, is also performed by males in the *Dashya* and *Dewari*, in addition to it *Mungrauhwa*, *Hurdungwa* are also performed during this period. They perform these entire cultural dances with their dexterous capability and skill. While dancing in some condition the singing becomes complementary to dance and in some cases there is no dance while singing. Both male and female express their feelings and emotion through their songs but one unique feature in this community is that men and women never sing together even in-group dance, they sing a song separately in chorus one after another. They are very rich in folk songs, which embody their day-to-day life such as *Maina*, *Sajna*, *Daffak*, *Holi*, *Badki Maar* etc. In Tharu ethnic, there are several group dances such as *SakhiyaNaach*, *Badka Nach*, *Lathauhwa Naach*, *Mungrauhwa*, *Hurdungwa*, *Daffa*, *Kathghorik*, *Jhumra*, *Jharra*, *Holi* etc that are performed at different feast and festivals. Regarding to different group cultural dance Gautam, Rajesh and Thapa Magar, Ashok state:

Sakhiya Naach, where the Madal are played by male and circled by female dancers with the pair of Majaira (cymbals) wearing their traditional dresses...In Mungrauhwa, male and female dancers dance in their respective rows. The male use Mungra for the purpose of dancing and decorate with the feathers of peacock on their back fixed at the waist and female use Majaira while dancing and decorate with their cultural costume and ornaments. (342)

Thus, in the Tharu culture several cultural performances move ahead based on feasts, festivals and rituals.

Music, which is considered as the soul of dance and song, also fused in Tharu dances and lyrics with the different musical instruments. Among the percussion instruments, the important and essential music instruments are *Mandra*, *Dhol*, *Daf*, *Jhali*, *Majaira*, *Basiya*, *Latthi* etc. The major musical instrument *Mandra* is used in each type of dance. The typical instrument *Daf* is used only in *Daffak Naach* in Magh and *Dhuhreeri* (Holi). It is very simple but unique in its structure and form made of leather beaten by *Chapni* (very tiny stick).

To perform *Sakhiya Naach*, participants select the *Aguwa Mndariya* (a lad who knows much about the version of *paiya*) and *Pachhuwa Mandariya* (an assistant to *Aguwa Mandariya*) among the boys and a *Guru Mohriyiniya* (a leader among the girls) and two *Pachhgihniya* (assistant girl dancers to *Mohriyiniya*). Generally, *Sakhiya Naach* is performed in the courtyard of *Barghar's* house enmeshed with the cultural perspective. The most fascinating and majestic point of *Sakhiya Naach* is its stepping into different version of *Paiya* (style of tom-tom beat) and aesthetic side of tradition. *Aguwa Mandariya* initiates and leads other *Mandrahwan* (rest player of tom-tom) and *Mohriyiniya* leads her other colleagues. Commenting on the *Sakhiya Naach*, Dahit, Gopal opines:

Young boys and young girls who are unmarried perform *Sakhiya Naach* especially in *Dashya* (*Dashain*) but according to its essence, it lingers until *Dewari* and it is performed in the courtyard of *Barghar's* house. It reaches its climax in full-fledged form in the circumstances of great festival *Dashya*. The performers dance in various steps of *Paiyas* decorating with their traditional costume and ornaments, which obviously mesmerizes the audience and spectators. (124)

But now in the contemporary period the Tharu cultural performance are at

jeopardizing state because some cultural performance are elapsed they are not at all in practice due to the impact of modernization. With the realization of cultural importance, some Tharu people have initiated their effort to preserve cultural dances and transmit to their coming generation.

This thesis *Sakhiya Naach*: a cultural performance focuses on the cultural perspective and will be studied based on performance theory. The *Sakhiya Naach* is performed by male and female whirling around the great festival *Dashya* and *Dewari*, which portrays the gender equality, fraternity, unity, harmony having no any sort of constraints and hierarchy among the community members.

## **Chapter II**

### **Performance Culture**

Performance is the act of performing, of doing something successfully, using knowledge as distinguished from merely possessing it. Culture and performance are both interdependent genre, which are essential factors in human life and such ethos play the most significant role in the formation and reformation of societal ethos, norms and values. Culture is the framework of particular society constructed by norms, behaviors, values, ethos, dogma, creed, belief, attitudes and of the individuals. Thus, cultural aspect gives the true and elaborate identity of individual and community, who they are and where they are from etc. Culture is the mirror and image of society that exhibits through the cultural performance. It is a performance. Cultural performance represents the particular culture of community, people, and society and subsequently enrolls to delineate, and discern their entire life pattern. Cultural performances are related to cultural history and visualize the culture in front of audiences and spectators who hail from the different cultural sectors. If broadly, analyzing culture and rituals are the means of performance, displaying the norms, values, tradition, life style, behaviors of the specialized people of the community. Ritual is a sort of creed and belief enmeshed into natural power. It is prevalent and dominant in each community or ethnic group celebrate and perform their ritual according to their code of conduct. Through their performances, they preserve and transmit to their upcoming generation. Culture and ritual are perfectly approved behaviors and they are performed and acted to get relief from pain, grief and equally to retain the enjoyment. Ritual performances hold the dramatic qualities and characteristics as stated by Gilbret, Hele and Tompkin, Jonne:

Many of the requirements for ritual are similar to those of drama;

actor(s); audience; costume; space; language(s) and a specified amount of time. When ritual takes place in drama, its code accredited additional significations part of both the theatrical and the ritual spectacle. Ritual can however, impose restriction on these performative signifiers or otherwise highlight certain characteristics not normally part of their systems of representation. Actants in a ritual are often distinguishable from actors in a play not only by their functions but also try their approaches to the performance. (61)

Besides, culture is the image of society and cultural performance is the extension of cultural ethos. Cultural performance conveys the messages and it has become the effective medium to reveal the repressed and hidden reality and to alter the reality. Cultural performances are not simple reflectors or expressions of culture or even of changing culture but may themselves be active agencies of change, representing the eye by which culture sees itself and the drawing board on which creative actors sketch out what they believe to be more apt or interesting designs for living. Therefore, culture manifests and modifies the cultural values and drags out the incompatible matters of the society.

Furthermore, cultural performance is performed and accomplished with the participation of female who play the dominant role in ritual and cultural performance. Through cultural performance, females express their hidden reality, feelings, emotion. In performance, they do not feel sense of inferiority complex, domination and exploitation so they do not hesitate to reveal their suppressed desires. Performance is the effective medium through which they expose their reality. Performance encourages establishing their identity and fulfilling their desire through their communication and mass awakening songs. In this regard, Judith Butler says:

We are most aware of the importance of roles today in communication through scholarship featuring the gender roles: The social expectations for appropriate masculinity and femininity. Bonnie Dow and Julia Wood trace early questions about women's status, rights, and "sex roles" as emphasizing communicative differences between man and woman, stereotypic representation in mass media, and work place relations that assure woman's helping roles and men's leadership. (149)

Thus, in cultural performance the superiority and hierarchy of male attitude over female is dismantled because in performance there is no any kind of discrimination between male and female. They frequently interact and coordinate with each other which creates no any boundary between male and female. Rather in performance female play the dominant and major role in cultural performance.

In addition, cultural performance symbol, sign and gesture play the medium to reinforce the meaning of the text. Performers use different means to convey the meaning to the audience. Audience and spectators grasp the meaning through their gestures and symbol. Adorning with different ornaments and clothing with the traditional attire obviously makes the audience easy access to penetrate into particular community and text. Their singing pattern and the beat of music and language enrolls the cultural identity. Cultural performance is the reflexive action for the social transformation. Multiple social dramas exert mutational forces on its forces as a performance genre. Ritual is performance performed in between the audience upholding the formal and informal characteristics of cultural folksongs and dances for the definite purpose. Ritual is often practiced to satisfy all the homely and village deities. Performance of dance and songs come under the cultural ritual circumstances. Rituals are characterized under the three bases: a ritual activity embeds the traditional,



communal and merged into the belief of supernatural power. Discussing to ritual as a preternatural entity Victoria V. Kneubachi writes: “The term ritual to mean a sequence of activities, which involve words and gesture, designed to influence preternatural entities or forces on behalf on the actor’s goals. Efficacy is the characteristics of ritual” (166). Thus, in the performance such gesture and symbols embodies the effective role to bring the performance into the height of efficacy.

Cultural performance portrays the hidden feelings, emotions, grief, and pain and expresses those pangs; and it becomes the effective medium to reveal indirectly such pain in front of community people and audiences. Performance is the sort of acting pattern, which is accomplished with singing, dancing, acting and entertaining in the benign, superb and enthralling movements of the body. Elizabeth Bell in her *Theories of performance* enrolls, “cultural media are the modes and forms a communication, the performance utilize singing, dancing, and acting” (130). Thus, performance is the medium to exchange and convey the dogmas not only to the particular ethnics but to the rest of ethnics too. Cultural performance is related to the ancestors who had common belief and common life pattern. Cultural performances are the historical assets, which gives the identity of particular community. The credit for the development of cultural performance goes back to ancestors and their developed cultures are adapted by the upcoming generation. Performance is connected with different dramatic elements: dance, music, song, plot, characters and interaction within its sphere. The songs comprise of musical notes and their harmonic representations form a quasi-linguistic vocabularies and grammar of musical composition. The dumb words through oral expression are given live with the exercise of refrain and memory. The song is enriched with the literary devices such as simile, metaphor, refrain, stanza, assonance and alliteration. Such devices make the

songs artistic, melodious.

Further, cultural dance fascinates the audience and spectators not only to those who belong to same ethnic but it equally attract the outsiders and become the matter of curiosity. Spectators and audiences are enraptured to see the beauty and decoration of the performers as they decorate with their cultural and traditional costume and ornaments. Cultural performance reflects the behavior, activities and belief of particular ethnics and such performance undoubtedly assists to preserve and sustain the norms, values and cultural properties what their progenitor had adapted and developed from their dawn of civilization.

Schechner argues that cultural performance started from art craft of ancient people. Every architectural construction or modification is the making of a cultural place. The art in the caves and stories of the aborigines about the landmarks in their range are means of transforming natural spaces into cultural space and ways of making theatre. In this regard, Schechner writes:

A theatre is a place whose only or main use is to stage or enact performances. It is my belief that this kind of space, a theatre place did not arrive late in human cultures but was there from the beginning...is itself one of the characteristics of our species. The first theatre were ceremonial centre... part of a system of hunting, following food sources according to seasonal schedule, meeting other human bands, celebrating and making the celebration some kind of writing on a space; an integration of geography, calendar, social interaction and proclivity of people to transform nature into culture. Therefore, people performed any sort of activities and performance to share their behaviors, system of living and to fertilize their culture and transmit to

their young generation. (17)

However, in the performance, the physical movement of the body valorizes on the folk music and folk dances. Folk dances and music embodies the rules and rhythm that bears meanings and those meanings are grasped through the words and rhythm of songs and music. In performance, the movement of body signifies the various meanings, gives information, and assists in the interpretation of the body movement in different perspectives. According to the rhythm of musical instrument and songs demand, the performers move their body parts. In this point, Tadashi, Suzuki writes:

Of course, emphasizing the fact that the construction of the human body and the balance of the forces, which support it, are centered on the pelvic region is not thinking unique to my method; almost all the performing arts variably use such thinking. However, I believe it is specific to my training that first of all the actors are made to feel conscious of this by stomping and beating the ground with their feet.

We must make the body, which usually functions unconscious of such a relationship, aware of this fact by creating a strong sense of impact through the beating of the ground with the feet. (158)

Thus, the performance is the concrete expression where faculty of mind is motivated in the series of experiences and observations and concrete movements and acting are observable and recordable for study. When the ritual and cultural performances and event are initiated, they are obviously marked by joy, fun, happiness and anticipation of benign environment. In cultural performances, dancers shake their body parts in accordance of songs and musical rhythm. Thus, the spirit of any performance holds the singing and dancing events.

So far, the performance is concerned it comprises with three factors

performers, audience and frame. For the performance, performers play the dominant role portraying their actions through their verbosity and movement of the body. A performer is one who transforms raw and experience in palatable forms in order to make the performance an art. The value judgment of any work of art associates within the emotional influence of the audience performers activities are like creator of an art. Generally, in work of the performance priest recite, storyteller, singer, dancer and musician act as performer. It is the objective of performer to portray his /her skill and dexterous, being adorned with glittering costume and jewelries and should expose choreographic responsibilities. Performers portray how words are written on a body and how body is visible likewise to those words. They are the provider of body on which dance works on, and that creates performance consciousness. In this regard, Elizabeth Bell writes:

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

Similarly, audiences are the integral part of performance. They observe and evaluate events, the skill and usefulness of performance. The audience response and judgement play an important role in every sphere of performance; lack of receptivity on the part of an audience spoils the whole performance. By being such nature, audience are the indicators that respond approval and disapproval of the performance

by clapping, hooting, whistling and even throwing caps and clothes. Their response varies as the variation occurs in the performance, for instance, spectators and audience clap their fingers, whistle and hoot at the good performance. The viewers and audiences respond cultural performances, which are rooted and based on tradition. Regarding fanatic emotion of the audience Schechner states: “The drama is the domain of the author, the composer, scenarist, shaman; the script is the domain of the teacher, guru, master; the theater is the domain of the performers; the performance is the domain of the audience” (70).

It is clear that in many situations the author is also both guru and performer, in some situations the performer is also the audience. The boundary between the performance and everyday life is shifting arbitrary, varying greatly from culture to culture and situation to situation.

Moreover, the concept of framing is central to the performance theory coined by Elizabeth Bell. Framing is done in order to give a keen attention to a particular event. It is almost very difficult and impossible to study and understand all the performative activities at once. Therefore, bracket should be drawn focusing on the event. Bracketing is just like framing a picture to ignore the things outside the frame. It further helps to grasp messages and information of framed objects. According to the theory of Elizabeth Bell, “The concept of framing... attempts to answer what and how questions; what is that going on there? And how do we bracket experience to understand, interpret and make sense of the interaction” (36)?

However, this performance frame can be made broken and confused deliberately or accidentally. Framing is a cognitive contextualization drive whereby all rules for behavior, symbols and their interpretations are bounded by a particular activity with its overall structure. Frames have temporal beginnings and endings and

often embody specified physical boundaries. Frames are the largest units of performances, where the keys are the smallest units that constitute the frame. In other words, frame is framed of several keys. Therefore, the keys are the smallest units of action that is already meaningful in primary frame. Schechner strongly calls it an event. Erving Goffman says, “Keys are specific codes, conventions or language that signal or, erect the frame around a communication event” (Quoted by Bell 41).

Similarly, Schechner comments in the tribal performance, the interplay among the space, time, performers, action, and audience. Space is used concretely, as something to be molded, changed, and dealt with. The simplest arrangement is, of course, an open area with a performance in the centre and the audience on all sides. In the performances, the multiple simultaneous performances can cohere into a whole that no one person can see all. The closest point in the performance is an open space for dancing, debating, dueling, trying. On the space or stage, everything goes on in and around it. In the ceremonies the principal architectural elements is people or audience, how many there are, how and where they move, what their interactions are, whether they participate or watch or do both. While the performance is ongoing some audience keenly watch the performance, others lounging disinterestedly and several move through the performance on their way to their business. Regarding this point Schechner says, “Our culture is almost alone in demanding uniform behavior from the audience while clearly segregating audience from performers and audience from others in the area who are neither audience nor performers” (58).

However, Erving Goffman states performance is an extremely difficult concept to define. Performing is the mode of behavior that may characterize any activity. Thus, performance is a ‘quality’ that can occur in any situation than a fenced-off genre. A performance is an activity done by an individual or group in the presence

of and for another individual or group having no any sort of domination and hierarchies among or between sexes, gender, and class. To support the view Schechner says, “There is no hierarchy that permanently or a priori puts any life-process ‘above’ any other” (61). Thus, performance strongly exhibits the equity, inclusiveness in nature among and between the gender, sexes, race and class. Such characteristics strongly bears the Tharu cultural dance Sakhiya Naach where male and female participate to expose their skill, art, feelings, emotion without any sense of domination, biasness, hierarchy.

Furthermore, anthropologist Victor Turner analyses all sorts of performance as a ‘social drama’. Using the theatrical terminology to social drama or performance, he describes how disharmonic or crisis situation are dealt with. Turner argues that there is specific pattern for the social drama. To analyze how human basic plot moves, he purposes four phases of public action-breach, crisis, redressive action and reintegration (or schism) actually as a theatrical universal. Turner shows how the social process conforms this dramatic paradigm. A breach is social fabric, caused by the norm-governed social action, disagreement or other disruptive event; resulting the cultural crisis; a redressive action, generates suggestion and advice; finally a reintegration of the society from the disruptive and disturbed group to return to its status quo forming a new order and legitimization. In the performance someone or some group begins to move to a new place in the new social; this move is acceded to or blocked in either case a crisis occurs because any change in status involves a readjustment affects the performance by norms of ritual and society. Regarding this Turner writes:

Social dramas are units of a harmonic or disharmonic process, arising in conflict situations. Typically, they have four phases of public

action...are 1. Breach of regular, norm-governed social relations...2. Crisis during which...there is a tendency for the breach to widen... Each public crisis has what I now call liminal characteristics, since it is a threshold between more or less stable phase of the social process...hedged around by taboos...it takes up menacing stance in the forum itself and as it were dares the representatives of order to grapple with it...3. Redressive action [ranging] from personal advice and informal meditation...4. The final phase ...consists either of reintegration of the disturbed social group or of the social recognition and legitimization of irreparable schism between contesting parties.

(Quoted in Schechner 187)

On contrary, Schechner purposes his own basic performance structure composed of three phases: Gathering, Performing and Dispersing. Gathering is the first step in the performance where at particular venue all the performers swam and perform their dances and audiences are acknowledged to gather at the that venue. Performance is the real phase of performing. Performing unfolds the activities of story, issue and event to accomplish it performers act accordingly. The performance includes the special observations, practices and rituals. Schechner keeps the Turner's structure of social drama under the umbrella term of performance. The concluding and final phase of performance is dispersing. It is the ending phase of performance, audience get back to their everyday life. Audiences are the integral part of performance that observe and evaluate the usefulness of performance.

Besides, Schechner does not consent with Turner's view in the beginning process of performance, as conflict as the beginning part of the performance rather he claims the beginning part of any performance is solidarity not the conflict. Rather



conflict supports the performance within its circumstances. Schechner opines:

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

Nevertheless, in the performance there are so many steps according to the play of music, songs and rhythm. The steps in the performance are very difficult phase, which is the most sapient feature of any performance. Although, the steps in the performance are very difficult they obviously manifest dexterity of the performers, which enraptures and attracts the attention of audience giving optimum pleasure and entertainment. Performers move their body and dancing instruments in accordance of music, songs rhythm which is very similar to fighting as stated by Schechner, “It is said that dancing s like fighting ...Joining on dancing is the symbolic expression of willingness to join them in fighting” (267).

In addition, Schechner divides the performance with the objective of two elements that is entertainment and efficacy, which create the continuum of performance. For entertainment, he uses the phrases like fun, only for those whom performer knows that he/she is doing and activities of audience. Audience watch at the ridiculous and heinous performance of the performer. Through the comedies and mocking plays, the audience gets fun and entertainment and they eventually appreciate and criticize the performer individually. However, in efficacy the result and collective creativity of performance is over looked with the phrases like link to an absent other, symbolic time, performer possessed, on trance in the believe and participation of audiences. Efficacy and entertainment are the parts of performance

however; efficacy is deeply enmeshed with ritual and entertainment with theatrical performance. Concerning ritual, it is performance-making process, which exists side by side of performance. Therefore, the ritual is analysed the part of performance.

Schechner comparing between rituals with theater says:

The basic polarity between efficacy and entertainment is not between ritual and theatre. Whether one calls, a specific performance ritual or theatre depends mostly on context and function. A performance is called theatre or ritual because of where it is performed, by whom, and under what circumstances. If the performance's purpose is to effect transformations-to be efficacious-then the other qualities listed under the heading efficacy will most probably also be present, and the performance is a ritual. And vice versa with entertainment. (130)

Thus, Schechner argues there is neither absolute truth in any single element. To valorize it he says no performance is pure efficacy or pure entertainment Likewise, Schechner puts his new concept of performance distinguishing two different kinds of natural theatre: Eruption and Procession. An eruption is natural theatre, which is like theatrical performance because it is not the accident itself that gathers and keeps an audience. They are held by the reconstruction or reenactment of the event. During the eruption theatre; there is heated event at the centre of performance whereby spectators come and go and crowd surrounds hot event forming a cool rim around the event where passerby look over the rim and then move on. With this regard, Schechner writes, "An eruption feature heated centre and a cool rim, with spectators coming and going. The eruption occurs either after an accident or during an event whose development is predictable such as an argument, or the construction or demolition of

building” (177).

Similarly, procession is another kind of natural theatre, which is performed for certain goal at certain destination with fixed route. In this performance, there are so many halting points, formal audience and crowd watch the procession who often join and go on to the goal. The goal of performance is achieved when it reaches its planned event and place at the end of procession. A procession has a fixed route and a known goal. At several halts along the way, the procession stops and performances are played, as spectators watch the procession, passerby join and go on to the goal. In this point Schechner puts his view, “In a procession which is kind of pilgrimage- the event moves along a prescribed path, spectators gather along the route and at appointed place the procession halts and performances are played” (178).

Although, eruption and procession theatre differ in different respect, they are complementary to each other. They form a coherent system of bipolar model of the performance in ceremony. Therefore, Schechner says eruptions and processions can occur simultaneously, especially when large numbers of people are involved and the leadership of a group is flexible.

So far, performance is concerned; to make the performance rejoicing and successful for its goal the elements play the vital role. Performance theory assumes performance filled with different element ingredients that eventually manifest the human activities and identity. Performance consequently fulfills the aesthetic and social aspects of human behavior.

Nevertheless, in psychoanalytical terms the world of the performance activities carries the pleasure principle. Freud believed that art was the sublimation of the conflict between the pleasure and reality principles; and he felt that artistic creation was an extension of fantasy life. Through performance performer, satisfy

their desires and feelings expressing their wishes in indirect manner, which the performer cannot express directly in front of society. Performers expose their hidden motives and desires through their performance. Therefore, in psychoanalytical perspective performance strongly bears the pleasure principle. Supporting this point Freud says, “The performance or the play expresses the pleasure principle, the private fantasy world” (Quoted in Schechner, 15).

Similarly, for the performance there must be the particular venue where performance takes place. Performers select the particular venue where they can play their performance called the stage. However, place or the stage depends according to the nature of performance. Performance, which is cultural, is performed on the open area, space, community centre, public hall, in grand gala. Cultural performances are often presented in the grand gala for exhibition where people from different cultural background get opportunity to understand and exchange their culture with other community. Likewise, religious performance is carried out near by the bank of rivers and nearby temple. When show opens, the spaces are used intensely, attracting large crowds who come for the scheduled events. The spaces are uniquely organized so that a large group can watch a small group and become aware of itself at the same time. The arrangements foster celebratory and ceremonial feelings. In this point Goffman writes, “In space there is expressive rejuvenation and reaffirmation of the moral values of the community in those spaces where reality is being performed. Certainly, more than elsewhere, these places promote social solidarity; one ‘has’ a religion ‘roots for’ a team and ‘goes to’ the theatre for essentially the same reasons” (14). Therefore, no performance takes place out of spatio-temporal framework. Every performance, ritual events happen according to its schedule, time at given period. No performance happens without its custody of time. Performance strictly follows its

norms, rules and values. Therefore, performance often follows rules according to the calendar schedule and its regularity of time. For instance, the Tharu cultural dance, Sakhiya Naach is performed only in the duration of Dashain and Tihar but not in the Maghi or Holi festivals. Therefore, each festivals or performances have their definite time and period.

Thus, performances activities have their own rules and regulations, which the performers must follow. In Tharu community, Sakhiya Naach is performed with strict rules formulated by Guruwa, Aguwa Mandariya and Mohriniya but having no any domination. Performance is the effective means to comprehend the world, reinforce their notion and transformation of it to the young generation. Performance can be exploited for orthodox and revolutionary dogmas. Orthodox does not want to see any diversion or change in performance. It reinforces in morality either the performance is running according to current situation or not so, they never need any transformation in performance. However, in revolutionary forces the performance activities always needs to attempt to restructure the social order omitting the incompatible activities, ethos, norms and values through redefinition. Revolutionary forces always try to run according to current fashion and time amending the some change in orthodox dogmas and belief. To give pleasure, entertainment and convey the mass awareness messages is the basic work of performance.

In the performance, performers interact with each other's; develop their mutual relation, understanding each other and it helps in developing skill, capacity. Cultural performance, the mirror of society reflects the cultural heritages, behavior and activities of society. Through the mass awakening songs and music, performance conveys the messages, which inevitably brings change and progress in society not only that performance assists to make the cultural heritages alive forever by adapting

and transmission from generation to generation. Regarding this point Dahit, Gopal writes, “songs and music’s often carry the mass awareness messages which make the public aware not only about education but also about political and social and reformation which ultimately brings change and progress to individual’s life and society”(147). In addition, performance helps in the building of active and robust body of performers.

Culture and performance are development of our ancestor’s behavior and activities, which is the precious gift of ancestors to their young generation. Thus, cultural performance reflects the cultural identity. Cultural performance undoubtedly, helps to create the environment of harmonic relation, affection, unity, among the individual and community members preserving their root culture. Culture and performance gives the identity of particular individual. In this point Greetz says, “To be human is not to be everyman, it is to be a particular kind of man, and of course man differs...” (53). Therefore, culture gives the identity of specific community members who share the same societal values, behaviors because people differ in different cultural background. Therefore, if one neglects his/her root culture, he/she undoubtedly loses identity.

Furthermore, cultural performance is the historical document of our root cultures. Cultural performance digs out the root culture and reforms them according to change of time and demand. It reshapes the individual’s behaviors reforming the society’s norms and values following along the root culture, which clearly reflects the historical background. The songs delineate the different past events; similarly, the appearance of performers in their traditional costume, language, jewelry, musical instruments inherently portrays the historical background of traditional culture, which is always resumed by adaptation and transmission to upcoming generation.

Performance is acted out for the memory of ancestors and society. Clyde Ellis writes, “Dances and songs are bound up in the construction of social memory, and so, in relationship that mold and influence ritual ...songs daces remain central elements in the construction of identity” (134). Therefore, the social habit, costume, color, flavor, language, culture ritual gives the identity and memory of the particular society. Finally Elizabeth Bell writes, “this inter play as a mobius strip: the conflicts and characters in social dramas fund the content of aesthetic performance, in turn, color and inflect the unfolding of social drama” (111).

Therefore, the theory of performance is highly applicable in the cultural dance, Sakhiya Naach of Tharu ethnic. The performance of Sakhiya Naach initiates embedding with cultural norms and values establishing the harmonious relation among the performers with no any sort of hierarchies manifesting the gender equality. In this regard Gopal Dahit writes, “...there is no male domination in Tharu cultural dances and performances”<sup>147</sup>. This particular dance is performed by Dangaura Tharu of Bardiya, Surkhet, Dang, Kailali, Banke. Tharus are culturally very prosperous in cultural assets but their cultural assets or performances are yet not accessed to the print culture as the mainstream culture, so most of the Tharu culture is at risk of extinct. Similarly, Sakhiya Naach, which is the dominant cultural dance in Tharu community, does not have enough written documents so it is highly fore grounded on orality but it is successful to manifest the Tharu cultural heritages. Thus, Tharu cultural dance Sakhiya Naach strongly portrays the traditional values of Tharu ethnic advocating equality, language, culture, identity and their way of life style successfully.

### Chapter III

#### *Sakhiya Naach: A Cultural Dance in Tharu Community*

Sakhiya Naach is dominant cultural dance in Tharu community especially in Dangaura Tharu of southwestern part of Nepal. Sakhiya Naach is performed in Dasya (Dashain) but considering with time and essence it is performed in Dewari (Thar) too. Sakhiya Naach obviously portrays the equality between girls and boys having no any sort of domination, biasness and hierarchy. So far dance is concerned, Tharyan (young boys who are unmarried) and Bathanyan (young girls who are unmarried) perform it, although unmarried boys and girls perform it, married women and men equally involve in it. It is saliently characterized by its openness nature to all. There is no restriction in terms of age, class, race, gender and sex thereby concretizes the vision of egalitarianism and greater cultural inclusiveness challenging logocentricism. According to will and interest, an individual can participate in this dance. Male and female perform the dance dividing into two groups: Mandrahwan and Nachwiyen. Mandrahwan play the Mandra (tom-tom) and Nachwiyen dance according to the version of Mandra. Sakhiya Naach is performed under the guardianship of Barghar of the village. Generally, it begins from the day of Krishna Janma Ashtami. On the initiative day of Sakhiya Naach all, the participants swam at particular venue especially in Barghar's courtyard where Guruwa of village is also summoned to exorcise all the evil spirit from the dance equipments by his incantations. Guruwa incants his Tantra Mantra while offering Daru, Chhaki, Jal to all the Dewtas of village and promises oath to sacrifice the cock on the final day and urges to remain vigil protecting the Skhiya Naach during its course of performance.

In fact, performance has no any sense of hierarchy, domination and communication gap so, all feel sense of equity having no any restriction even by their



parents so participants share their feelings freely and frankly such characteristics of Sakhiya Naach obviously manifests the gender equality and no gap between boys and girls in Tharu community. Thus, the motto of Sakhiya Naach is to preserve the cultural heritage and to promote and manifest the egalitarian practice in cultural performance of Tharu identical community. The most of the Tharu cultural heritages are based on oral text as their documents are not found in printed form due to illiteracy in this community; therefore, *Sakhiya Naach* is mostly based on verbal text. The *Sakhiya Naach* embodies the historical identity of Tharu. The evolutionary history of *Sakhiya Naach* goes back to the origin of water and earth, carrying the songs and glorious activities of lord Krishna and his triumph over tyranny of his maternal uncle *Kansha* and consequently the *Sakhiya Naach* wraps up when the lord *Krishna* kills his tyrant and papist uncle *Kansha*. According to legend when *Sakhiya Naach* is initiated for the first time, it must be performed for three or five years therefore, it must not be halted in the middle. Sakhiya Naach is performed whirling around the pleasing environment of the great festivals *Dashya* and *Dewari*. The most significant and attractive feature of *Sakhiya Naach* is its artistic and aesthetic aspects of dance. There are more than hundred types of *Paiyas* (the different and changed version of tom-tom) in Sakhiya Naach. The dance holds up the particular version and style of *Paiya* for the arrival and departure of Sakhiya Naach from one house to another house for instance. *Fatrak Dau Ghara Na*. The Sakhiya Naach is performed only after the beating of *Trashan*. Trashan is a profound reverence to all the deities of village. The dance is performed for 2/3 months so due to its long duration, performers often organize *Chuki* (a sort of picnic) and on the final day of performance, all the performers on their consent they organize the grand Chuki called Khyara Khaina. Khyara Khaina feast falls on the ending day of Sakhiya Naach. On this particular day, all the performers

prepare different delicious food items such as Daal (pulse), Bhat (rice), Tarkari(curry) meat items such as Surik Sikar (pork), Machhi(fish) and drinking items such as Jaad (home made ale), Daaru (wine) etc. launched on the courtyard of Barghar's house. In the contemporary time with dynamic perspective, Sakhiya Naach has become the cultural representation in exhibition and grand gala.

### **Preparation**

Sakhiya Naach is based on orality; it has specific rules and regulations. It has cultural norms and values and runs according to them. For the initiation and management of dance, all the performers and reputed person in this field swam at the *Barghar's* house on his leadership just after the *Krishna Janma Ashtami*. Barghar who is the supreme person of the village gives his guidelines, advice and suggestion to all the members of the participants and gives his final decision after hearing the views on the perspective of Sakhiya Naach. With the democratic vision, all the performers select the Aguwa Mandariya (leader among the tom-tom beat), Pachhuwa Mandariya (assistant to leader) and Mohriniya (leader among girls who dance), Pachhginiya (second leader of girls who dance) and two Jethgwiya (assistant to both Mohriniya and Pachhginiya) and they are the major characters in Sakhiya Naach. Throughout the entire performance and until its completion all these characters play the major roles and lead the other performers. They organize a Mandra Sajaina (a program launched to exorcise all evil spirit from the equipments used in dance) program. A village Guruwa (shaman) initiates the Mandra Sajaina program by his incantation, tantra mantra, exorcises, and purifies all the materials of Sakhiya Naach. All the participants give accompany to a Guruwa to accomplish it. They worship together to their homely and communal Devi and Devtas offering Daaru, Chhaki, Jal and give Bhakal to sacrifice a cock on the final day of dance. They urge all the Dewtas and Bhutuwas of

Thanwa (the shrine of village Dewtas) such as Jaganaath (an elephant god), five Pandav brothers, Daha Chundi, Pashya Pasheniya (who looks after the pigs) and Barghar's homely Bhutuwas (home deities). Then all the participants among girls sing a song called Samrahauti as profound reverence and respect to all the *Devatas* and Bhutuwas of village. It is their urge and belief that all deities will look after dance and give protection from the evil forces throughout the performance until its benign ending. After the *Guruwa* finishes the *Mandra Sajaina* program, he drinks *Daaru* and gives who drinks it. Girls and boys summon their *Gohi-gocha* (friends of girls) and *Sangharian* (friends of boys) to participate in this culturally rejuvenate dance and make them prepare to initiate the first day dance. The *Mandra Sajaina* program initiates in the dusk and ends within an hour.

### **First phase of *Sakhiya Naach***

On the first day, all the members of *Sakhiya Naach* including the *Guruwa*, *Barghariya* and expert person of *Sakhiya Naach* (who know much about *Sakhiya Naach*) swam at the particular venue especially in the courtyard of *Barghar's* house about 7 to 8 o'clock in the evening. *Guruwa* prepares for *Mandra Sajaina* program offering *Chhaki of Daaru, Jal* praying all the *Dewtas* and he declares the opening of *Sakhiya Naach*. At his immediate declaration, *Mandariyan* beat the *Trashan* (deep reverence to dewtas) to *Dewtas*, which is also accompanied by *Bathanyan* (girls who dance). On this day all the *Nachinyan* (girls who dance) dance holding the leaves of pumpkin along with the rhythm of *Mandra* (tom-tom). After completing the beat of *Trashan* all the performers especially *Nachinyan* make a circle holding a pair of leaves, dancing along with the beat of *Mandra* and singing a song *Samhrauti Geet*. Regarding the *Samhrauti Geet* former Mohriniya Raj Dulari Chaudhary says, "Samhrauti song is sung for the profound reverence to village deities for the

protection of performers, dance and dance equipments such as Mandra, Majaira, and other materials.” The dancers (only female) sing the following Samhrauti song:

Ye ho purub mai sumirau suruj gosain,

Pachhiu mai sumirau ramjham Devi (Niranjan Devi) khartare.

Ye ho uttar mai sumirau Hari kabilase,

Dakhin sumirau Shiva Jagan Naath.

Aakashe mai sumirau Indara o Chandra,

Patal mai sumirau ho Bashuki Naag.

Ye ho pahile mai sumirau gaunki Bhuinyaar,

Hamro merariya Diunta karo re rakchhya paat.

Ye ho dehubu mai sumirau deu deuharin,

Hamro merariya karo re rakchhya paat.

Merariya majhariya sumirau mai tuhi,

Kantha baitho mor, geet dehun sikhai.

Thus, before performance of any cultural dance the female dancer sing above Samhrauti song recalling and taking the names of the entire village *Dewtas* and *Dewtas* of *Barghar's* house where they launch their first performance. *Samhrauti Geet* is presented as the deep respect to entire *Dewtas* of village with the hope that their *Dewtas* will protect and save their performance from evil forces and possible risk. After finishing the *Samhrauti Geet* the first day dance wraps up but in very few villages, dancers dance casual dance exploiting the version of *Paiya*. The first phase is learning phase of participants, they do not wear any formal dresses, and this phase runs only for single day or at least five days. The dancing with *Kablik Patiya* (pumpkin leaves) is compulsory in this phase because dancing with pumpkin leaves bears the cultural significance. The first and second phase is always performed after

the sun set in the evening.

**The second phase of *Sakhiya Naach*:**

The second phase of *Sakhiya Naach* runs from the second day or the fifth day of first phase and it is performed until the day before *Dutiya Herna Din* (Ghatasthapana). From this phase *Nachiniyan* (girls who dance), use the *Chauri* (fabrics of jute) for dancing. It is also a learning phase, aids making a dance superb, and sound. *Bathanyan*, together initiate their song from the origin of water and earth annexing the glorious deeds of lord *Kanaihya* (lord Krishna) mingling the history of *Kanaihya's* parents painful life story. The song related to lord Krishna's life begins from the origin of soil and water and ends with the death of Kansha (uncle of Krishna). When the creation of soil and water completes other creatures and food plants are created which is presented through the songs. Regarding this origin the first hand song goes:

Pahile ta sirijal Jal thal Dahrti,  
 Sirijita gaila ho Kuskai Dabh.  
 Dusare ta sirrijal Annakai Per,  
 Sirijita gaila ho Annakai Birog.  
 Tisare ta sirijal Annakai Daanre,  
 Sirijata gaila ho Annakai Pat.  
 Chauthe ta sirijal Annakai Plul,  
 Sirijita gaila ho Annakai Phal.

Thus, through the song they delineate the origin of water and earth, and along with them latter on other things were originated simultaneously. This song describes the creation of natural things.

This phase enhances ahead with the flourishing the songs related to lord

Krishna and performing dance in circular style using *Paiyas*. However, before the dance they always beat *Trashan* as the profound respect to all *Dewtas*. *Aguwa Mandariya* (leader among the drummer) leads the other *Mandariyan* similarly, *Mohriniya* leads dancing *Bathnya* group. *Mohriniya* starts songs related to *Krishna Lila* and is followed by her group along with her and then *Pachhginiya* sings same lyric along with her group. The songs related to *Krishna Lila* is sung when all the *Bathnyan* dance in *Merry* (circle) dividing into two groups along with the typical beat pattern of *Mandra* for an instance, *Trau-Ghadrau-Ghara- Na. Bathnyan* initiate the song while baptizing Krishna's name in this way:

Lano lano sarmake Cheriya Gaike gobariya,  
 Sakhira nipori Cheriya Rasiya na pot.  
 Lano lano sarmake Cheiya Satranga Gondari,  
 Sakhira Gondari Cheriya daral bichha.  
 Jhonriyase kahral Jaisi apan pothiya,  
 Sakhira apan pothiya ri Jaisi lagal bhaja.  
 Pothiy ta bhajal Jaisi, bhaji sekal,  
 Sakhira parita gaila Rakat kahi chhit,  
 Sakhira parita gaila Haradi kahi chhit.  
 Sakhira parita gaila Kanaihya Bir nau.

Throughout the whole, *Sakhiya Naach* the songs related to *Krishna Lila* is sung in the same beat pattern of *Mandra*. The song depicts the pathetic, painful and glorious life of *Kanaihya* (lord Krishna). The songs is sung or performed only in the amidst of *Shakiya Naach*. Before it, they can dance in the different version of beat of *Mandra* called *Paiya*. There are more than 100 *Paiyas* in *Shakiya Naach*, which is obviously very hard to perform and change the version of *Mandra*. To pose *Paiya* is the most

difficult task in *Sakhiya Naach* for both *Mandrauhan* and *Nachinyan*. With the change pattern of beat of *Mandra*, the dancers change their style of dancing pattern so it is very difficult to memories and dance in accordance to new *Paiya*. The performance of *Paiya* is divided into two phase. Each day *Paiya* is possessed before and after *Merry Ghumna* (circle rotation). Before the initiation and ending of *Sakhiya Naach* *Aguwa Mandariya* and his colleagues beat *Trashan* which is held for the reverence and urge to all the *Dewtas* to become active and watch the *Sakhiya Naach* carefully and stay vigil to protect the dance from the evil eye. In addition, ending *Trashan* portrays the deep respect to all *Dewtas* because the performers believe that their *Dewtas* watched at them and assisted them to run the dance smoothly so in final *Trashan* they heftily thank all *Dewtas* and appease to depart all *Dewtas* to their respective shrine kindly. In the course of first phase and second phase, both *Mandariya* group and *Nachwiya* group wear informal attire. They are not obliged to wear their cultural dresses, ornaments and jewelries. In the first phase however, dancers are obliged to use *Kablik Patya* (pumpkin leaves) which is compulsory but in second phase it is postponed and there must be a management and availability of *Chaudi* (fabrics of jutes). *Chaudi* (the fabrics of jute) is essentially used from the second phase until *Sakhiya Naach* paves to reach to formal form from *Dutiya* of (Ghatasthapan) Dashya festival.

### **The Third Phase of *Sakhiya Naach*:**

The third phase of *Sakhiya Nach* begins from the *Dutiya Herna Din* (Ghatasthapan). Therefore, *Sakhiya Naach* must be viewed according to ritual of great festival Dashya as it is performed around it. In this point Dahit, Gopal writes:

Especially, *Sakhiya Naach* is performed in Dashya (Dashain) singing songs of lord Krishna by female dancers. *Sakhiya Naach* gets its

maturity from the *Panchami Dashya*. From this, day performers wear their traditional and cultural costume. On the eight day of Dashya performers dance whole night collecting the Daaru left in the name of *Bheduwa Jagaina* (animal like creature made of from cucurbit). Thus, Sakhiya Naach ends on the auspicious day of Tika (Bijaya Dashmi) or on Khyara Khaina Din. For the performance of Sakhiya Naach, female dancers play the dominant and crucial role. Performers do not have any sort of discrimination and biasness among and between male and female. (125)

From this day, they initiate dance with a pair of small *Majaira* (cymbals). All the Bathanyan keep the Majaiara Sajaina program by village Guruwa. The process of Majaira Sajaina is similar to the preparation of first day. After finishing the program of Majaira Sajaina, Bathanyan are permitted to appear in the Sakhiya Naach enhancing with the Majaiara's melodious sound along the rhythm of Mandra. The third phase of Sakhiya Naach is the most significant phase in the context of cultural performance because it enrolls and portrays the cultural heritages and clear identity of Tharu community. From this phase, the performers wear formal dresses, which obviously show the traditional splendid cultural costume. The melodious sound of Majaira and Mandra coexist along with the mellifluous tone of dancers. This phase is the most attractive, interesting and rejoicing phase of dance. Due to its beautiful and delightful panorama, the whole village merges into its enthralling phenomenon. Until the fourth night of Dashya, the dace is performed at evening after the sun set. However, from the fifth day of Dashya, Sakhiya Naach is performed during the daytime. The fifth day, which is known as Panchami, falls on the Sahraddhak Din of Dahit community who pay homage to their homely Bhutuwas (deities) and ancestors.



From the *Dutiya* (Ghatasthapana) Sakhiya Naach is exposed and performed during the daytime in the bright light of sun. The fifth day embodies the special features of Sakhiya Naach. Sakhiya Naach in this phase is considered to be in the full-fledged form. On this day, the Bathanyan and Tharyan appear in the traditional costume. Bathnyan wear Katautidar Choliya decorated with Katauti, Sitara, Teni adjoined with Lal, Harer, Kail Funna in the upper part of body and Fariya in lower part, which is white in color and decorated with Sagya, Ribbon attached in the middle portion of Fariya. Bathnyan decorate with the varieties of materials and ornaments for instance Jhobanna, Sagiya, Ribbon on their plaited hair, and ornaments like Tauk, Sutiya, Gataiya, Mala, Guriya around their neck, Chudiya (Bengal), Bala , Lagrahi, Baju, Baka, Bijaith, Tariya in their arms and wrist of hands and Mundri (finger ring) in their fingers. Similarly, in leg they adorn with Kada, Paiju. Likewise, they have varieties of earrings such as Bir, Jhumka, Chetaur, Jhilmiliya, Kanausi etc. they adorn forehead with Mangauri, Tikli, Tika and nose with Nathiya, Nathni, Fuli, Phefi etc. These are the cosmetics of ornaments to show the women cultural dresses. Similarly, Tharyan who play the Mandra also adorn with their cultural dresses: Jhuluwa, Bushat, Kamij, are the upper clothe similarly, Dhoti and Bheguwa as under garment, Kanthi around their wrist and Garela, Daunak Mala (a garland of herb plant) around their neck embroidered with varieties of Funna made of voile. All Mandariyan decorate their Mandra (tom-tom) with Katautidar Jhalar (like fringe) attached with small Mirrors, Sitara and Chaap.

Therefore, such decoration does not only portray the beautiful and attractive cultural heritage of Tharu community but it also enraptures the audiences and spectators with profound gusto. The Sakhiya Naach with such decoration obviously becomes apt in the adornment of Nachwiya Bathanyan with Lal, Kail Katautidar

Choliya holding a pair of Majaira (cymbals) embellished with splendid trashes of Furfurra and Funna and Mandrauhan with attractive cultural costume. The performance of dance from this particular day is obviously flushed with gusto and zeal. Each participant come to the particular venue with keen interest and enthusiasm and audience, spectators come to see and get enthralled with the performance.

Bathanyan, sing different sorts of songs while dancing on the courtyard of Barghar's house in different version of Mandra. The fifth day of Dashya (Panchmi) is the day of Shraddha (Homage) for the Dahit caste who pays their deep homage to their ancestors called Pittar. Among the Tharu community only Dahit caste, give homage on this day. To make their homage elegant and delightful Sakhiya Naach accompanies to each house of Dahit Tharu. During arrival, they sing a particular song:

Aai pugli malik, aai pugli malik,  
Tuhari duwariya ho ki ye ho,  
Ye ho kholi daro, malik, bajara kewar.

Performers through this song, request landlord to accept their performance on his yard.

After the arrival songs, they dance there in different version of Paiya. House owner provides them Dhikri, roti, Bariya, Jaad, Daaru, Sikar who serve it. The performers attend their dance for half an hour to each Dahit's house and receive different items and money according to the house owner's will. While departure they also sing a song of leave wishing the betterment of landlord and his family members.

The song follows:

Yahari aaganwame, Yahari aaganwame,  
Khelalai aur hasali ki ye ho,  
Ye ho, yahari aaganawa, chhutati maiya ba.

Machiya par baithi malik, machiya par baithi malik,  
 Nachan herlo ho ki ye ho,  
 Ye ho, hamare chhabalawama gathi bandhi deu.  
 Yahari aaganawame, yahari aaganawame  
 Khelali aur hasali ki, dhurakhi uraili ho ki ye ho,  
 Ye ho, yahari aahanawa chhutati maiya ba.

Performers through these songs, express that they were very happy to perform their dance on the Agana of landlord's house. However, unhappy to leave the performance and depart from his house because they have to go for other Dahit's house. They revere the Kisan and show their profound love at him and his family. The songs magnanimously praise the house owner, his family members and his home Bhutuwa that will keep them well, safe and protect them from evil forces.

On this auspicious day, all the performers of Sakhiya Naach compulsorily attend the Dahitan's house belonging to their villages. When they complete going around each Dahitan's house they come to their particular venue where they always initiate their dance i.e. Barghar's house. The dance resumes until mid night, until they finish all Dahitans house and they return back to the Barghar's house. They dance for the short time in the Barghar's house and they beat Trashan as a reverence to all the Dewtas. After Panchmi, latter two days on Khasthi and Saptami Sakhiya Naach is performed at night.

### **Dhikrauhwa:**

On the auspicious day of Dhikrauhwa, all the performers swam at the courtyard of Barghar's house just after the sun set. Before initiating the performance, the Aguwa Mandariya leads other subordinate Mandariyan beating the Trashan and then formal dance penetrates into its depth. On the Dhikrauhwa (Astamiko Din) day,

all the Tharu community ethnics prepare Dhikri (cake made from the rice flour), Barela, Roti, Khurma etc. to offer their homely Bhutuwas and Dewtas. A female and male worshippers stay fasting the entire day. A female worshipper prepares Dhikri, Roti, Bariya etc and male worshipper offers those items to their Dewtas along with the Chhaki, Daaru, Jal, Bebri, Dauna, Jaura (Jamara) for the first time, as the homage to their ancestors known as Pitri. Sakhiya Naach is performed whole night on this particular day, all the performers stay vigil dancing, merrymaking, celebrating drinking and singing. All the performers serve varieties of victuals prepared on Dashya. The dance of this day is called the Bheduwa Jagaina (a sheep made of cucurbit). Bathanyan dance in different Paiyas and sing the flirtiest songs. The flirting song goes for instance:

Bhatuk gojhiyame chamke hira moti ho,  
 Oise tarashe jiya more.  
 Sawar bathani pana khawiya,  
 Mukh lal karuwiya ho,  
 Raha chalati boli marlo.  
 Jhirakhi maral bhitta, jhirakhi maral bhitta,  
 Torangan mandal chhapaiya ho ki ya ho,  
 Ye ho daunakak phula, mohani lagai.

It must be noted that in Sakhiya Naach boys do not sing any kind of songs. The girls sing the above songs flattering the decoration of Mandrahwan and they are really fascinated by them.

The dance continues until the cockcrows for the first time in the early morning. Just after the cock's crows, a male worshipper sacrifices a Bheduwa (animal like creature made of cucurbit) to their deities. A worshipper leaves a small pan of

Daaru (homemade wine) in the name of Bheduwa. Then a group of dance performers and spectators come to collect those left pan of Daaru from each house. A worshipper gives them Daaru, Dhikri and other delicious victuals prepared by them. They bring those collected Daaru in their performance arena and celebrate Dashya with chaos, drinking, merrymaking and dancing exuberantly until the morning.

Similarly, The Murgi Pujna day falls on the Navami (the ninth day of Dashain) of Dashya. A male worshipper sacrifices Murgi (chickens) according to the number of their homely Dewtas, in the dawn just after sacrificial of Bheduwa so, it is called Murgi Pujna Din. Then they prepare different delicious varieties of meat items. When all the Kisan complete their rituals, from each house a female worshipper or Kishninya (a female head in house) gather at Barghar's arena for the ceremony of Pittar Puhai (to throw the homage trashes). All the Kishnian gather at one place for Pittar Puhai and they go for that ceremony or ritual near by the stream or river. The performers of Sakhiya Naach with their fullest decoration accompany them making this ceremony more entertaining, gusto, elegant and attractive. The decoration of performers and Kishnianin in their traditional fashion and compulsory involvement in ritual and ceremony not merely epitomizes the communal stance but it also enraptures the audience and spectators to comprehend their identity. Besides, Sakhiya Naach several kinds of cultural dance accompany the Pittar Puhai ceremony. Thus, this ceremony not only gives glimpse of traditional costume but also their cultural dances, communal behavior, gender equality, affection fraternity and unity in Tharu people. Audiences get the complete opportunity to understand about the behavior of Tharu ethnics. Each Kishnian bring different varieties of victuals such as Dhikri, Daaru, Sikar, Jaad, Siddhra etc. When all the Kishnian along with Sakhiya Naach and other cultural dances reach to their particular destination they share the brought victuals,

eating and drinking those items exchanging with each other. The performers show dance in the most attractive pattern, in different steps in various Paiyas. The Pittar Puhai program is accompanied by different sorts of dance including male and female such inclusiveness quality obviously portrays the gender equality, unity, harmony, affection in Tharu community.

### **Tikak Din (Bijaya Dashmi)**

The performance of Sakhiya Naach reaches its climax on this auspicious day. The performers with their vigorous enthusiasm they make their performance more elegant, entertaining, rejoicing and make the auspicious Tika. In Tharu community Dashmi or the day of Tika is final day of Dashya (Dashain). All the Kisans including assistant Barghariya, Guruwa, Chirkya, Chaukidar gather at Barghar's house. Barghariya leads them to follow the communal worship to their village deities at Thanuwa. They offer Tika, Jaura, Dauna, Bebri, Daarua, Jal, Chhaki to all the Dewtas and then receiving of Tika initiates along with Sakhiya Naach beginning from Barghariya's house. On the leadership of Barghariya, Aguwua Mandariya and Mohriniya lead their colleagues to receive Tika from all the Kishan, Guruwas and to those respected person who are not only from their village but also to the neighboring villages wherever Barghariya takes them. The entire environment of village is panoramic and jubilant with various decoration and various cultural dances, having the performers wearing their attractive cultural costumes and ornaments and spectators with vogue attire who often enrapture by such decorative, enthusiastic, and energetic performance of Sakhiya Nach. The Sakhiya Naach on this day is performed entire day and night. When receiving of Tika program is over the entire performers' come back to their Dera Ghar (Barghar's house) where they dance regularly. Entire night they dance by singing, dancing, and merrymaking in the chaos environment.

Finally, they end their dance in the early morning of next day by beating Trashan. The Sakhiya Naach from the fifth day of Dashya to Tika is considered as the most significant for the cultural performance because it portrays the cultural costume, life style and identity of Tharu carrying their ethos, norms, and values. Sakhiya Naach is deeply rooted with cultural identity in Tharu community so; it is especially performed in Dashya. After the day of Tika, all the performers decide to launch to settle their village Dewats and finalize their dancing but before that they keep a program of Khyara Khaina (a hefty picnic).

### **Khyara Khaina Din (Dewta Baithaina Din/Final Day)**

Khyara khaina din is the day of happiness and it is the final day of Sakhiya Naach. Regarding Khyara Khaina Din former dancer Rupa Chaudhary says, “It is a special day for the performers because they make and celebrate special kind of feast called Chuki Khaina program preparing different kinds of delicious food varieties and victuals for the performers, Badghar, Guruwa and respected persons of village with entertainment.”

On the organizing day of Khyara/Chuki, all the performers make a meeting and gather at Barghar’s house where they dance. In meeting, they make a crucial decision and divide a group. All the Bathanyan (young ladies) go for the fishing near by the river Tharyan (Mandrahwan) themselves divide their group, some of them go for fishing and some of them go for collecting rice, vegetables, Jaad, Daaru and money from each participants house. With accumulated money they buy pork, chicken etc and the money, which is remained, they invest in mass awakening fields especially in clubs, which work for the welfare of people and society.

They make a different food varieties and meat items and also they bring drinking items. On this, occasion performers invite Barghariya, Guruwa and respected persons

and guests to attend their Chuki (grand picnic) with happiness. Before the dusk, they complete entire preparation of food items and rest of other items. Bathayan are the organizer of Chuki program. After completing the preparation all the performers gather at one place and initiate dancing for few minutes and launch a program of Dewta Baithaina (the settlement of gods and goddesses), performers take the assistance of Guruwa for the settlement of Dewatas. Guruwa enchants the tantra mantra, which is helped by both the Barghar and dance participants. Guruwa offers Chhaki, Daaru, Jal and sacrifices a cock in the name of Dewtas, during that moment performers assist him by singing a Samhrauti song. Dewta Baithaina is the deep and profound reverence to all the Dewtas because there is a belief that all the Dewtas stay awake, save the Sakhiya Naach from all kinds of evil forces, and make the Sakhiya Naach run smoothly and soundly. When the program of Dewta Baithaina is completed, a Guruwa announces the ending of Sakhiya Naach from that particular day; they close the dance Sakhiya Naach. Then after immediately, all the performers manage the program serving those items, which are already prepared. On this day, Aguwa Mandariya (leader among the mandrauhwa) is duly respected and given more priority than other. Among the performers, Aguwa Mandariya gets something more. All the performers and invited person celebrate the feast Chuki eating, drinking, merrymaking, entertaining flushes in excitement and happiness. They use Tappari, Dona, Doniya made of leaves of Sakhuwa (Saal). Thus, the Khyara khaina ceremony goes until midnight.

The nature of Sakhiya Naach bears the quality of Schecherian model of natural theatre comprising of gathering, performing and dispersal. Schechner believes the performance takes place in two modes of natural theatres: Eruption and Procession. Eruption is a kind of natural theatre where heated performance is performed at the



centre of a circle created by audiences. This model of performance does not have any fixed destination and certain route as the procession model. There is no obligatory force to audiences and spectators to stay along the performance rather they are free to come in the rim and go out of the rim. Similarly, procession is another kind of natural theatre where performance has fixed route, halts and desired known destination where audience can join according to their desire and will and go along with performers to its destination but there is no compulsion to audience whether to join the dance or not. Therefore, these two modes performance can be perceived in the Tharu cultural dance: Sakhiya Naach.

Sakhiya Naach follows the Schchnerian pattern of performance: gathering, performing and dispersal as eruption theatre. For the performance of Sakhiya Naach a group of young boys and young girls swam at particular venue especially in the Agana (yard) of Badghar's house where they initiate their dance. Badghar's Agana becomes the centre of performance. Performers present their performance with their great vigor, and immense emotion and feeling in the Agana (yard) to entertain the audiences and spectators making the great festival Dashya (Dashain) delightful. Similarly, audiences gather at Badghar's house where the performance takes place. They form cool rim (circle) around the heated performance. They watch the attractive traditional attire of Tharu and splendid performance which gives them pleasure and entertainment. As the eruption performance audience are not bound to watch the dance compulsorily until its completion. Spectators are free to come in the rim and go out of the rim. In addition, audiences are the integral part of performance so; they obviously evaluate the dance criticizing its weaker side and negative aspects and appreciate its positive aspects. The final phase dispersal occurs when the performance wraps up. When the performance is over, all the performers, audiences leave the

place, and go their respective houses returning to their usual life. The eruptive model of Sakhiya Naach can be visualized only on the Agana (yard) of Badghar's house where all the performers gather after their supper until Panchami of Dashya (Dashain). Therefore, the Agana of Badghar's house becomes a place for the eruptive performance for Sakhiya Naach.

Similarly, Sakhiya Naach also strongly embodies the procession model of performance. The procession model of performance is performed and portrayed from the Panchami of Dsashya. As the procession has fixed route, halts and known destination so; does have Sakhiya Naach. The imposition of procession model of performance can be easily seen in Sakhiya Naach. From the Panchami of Dashya (Dashain), the performance of Sakhiya Naach begins from the daytime. All the performers swam on the Agana of Badghar's house wearing their formal traditional costume and ornaments. Sakhiya Naach, a cultural dance performed in Dashya must be over looked jointly based on Dashya festival because its maturity and full-fledged form goes on according to the ritualistic behavior of Dashya festival. They enhance their performance from Badghar's house, thus, the Badghar's Agana becomes the origin place of their designated performance. After few moments of performance, the performers march ahead to their fixed destination with many halts. While marching ahead many audiences come and join them. The destination of Sakhiya Naach becomes the houses of Dahit Tharu as they celebrate the Shraddha (homage) to their progenitors on the Panchami and each Dahit house becomes the halting points where most of the audiences join them until they reach to their fixed destination. The performances reach its final stage or fixed destination when it reaches to the final house of Dahit. Audiences join the performance to observe the beauty of dance, traditional costume and the varieties of Tharu traditional victuals prepared by Dahit

community. After Dance each Kishan or Dahit bestow them Prasad and delicious cultural food items. Such as Dhikri, Bariya, Roti, Daaru, Jaad, Sikar etc. Such delightful and rejuvenating moments, enraptures the audience. Performers attempt to give fullest form of entertainment to spectators.

Similarly, audiences are not compulsorily bound to join the performance until its destination since they join the performance to get pleasure and entertainment but not for the sake of any goal that the performers possess. Performers resume their dance moving from one house of Dahit to another Dahit's house. The performers reach to their desired destination almost at night at the final house of Dahit where they perform and end their performance and then dispersal occurs. The Sakhiya Naach is performed in the circumstances of Dashya festival so; they perform their dance by eating, drinking, merrymaking, entertaining, wearing their beautiful traditional costume, and glittering ornaments that obviously portrays the Tharu cultural identity. At dispersal all the performers, end their performance and go their respective house promising to gather at Badghar's Agana next day.

### **Features of Sakhiya Naach**

Sakhiya Naach, a cultural dance has socio-cultural and aesthetic functions. The socio-cultural aspect exhibits the social and cultural values, norms, belief, behavior and way of life. Sakhiya Naach, a dominant cultural dance in Tharu ethnics is specially performed spinning around the great festival Dashya. The performance develops the harmonious relation between the individuals creating the mutual bond between and among the male and female participants and community members. The performance of culture manifests the cultural heritages. Likewise, Sakhiya Naach, a cultural performance portrays the Tharu cultural norms and values. All performance goes with their performance to each Kisan's house for the profound fete to his

Dewatas and family members. With the enjoyment and gusto performers, audiences and community people celebrate their festivals sharing their feelings, emotions and together pay the homage to their progenitors through their cultural performance and rituals. Thus, the cultural performance that is related and enmeshed with cultural activities vividly portrays the Tharu identity.

Among the different cultural food varieties, Dhikri is the dominant item, which is prepared almost in all the feast and festivals of Tharu community and it strongly bears the cultural significance. In great festival Dashya, without the preparation of Dhikri no ritual activities are attended. Different varieties of Dhikri are prepared on the auspicious occasion of Dashya and they are offered to all homely Dewatas. Dhikri is made out of rice flour by steaming in Painas (a kind of handicraft pot made by Tharu women). The existence of Dhikri in Tharu community has its myth, the preparation of Dhikri associates with Parvati, wife of lord Shiva, she baked it for her son Ganesh. Similarly, home made Daaru has cultural essence, in every ritual Daaru is offered to their deities.

Culture is the mirror of society, it reflects the identity of individuals, it is the background of performance, and it gives the identity of particular community. The performance Sakhiya Naach reflects the ritualistic behavior and life standard of Tharu people. Furthermore, Sakhiya Naach portrays the egalitarian practice in performance. Male and female have equal right, liberty, freedom of choice to express their feelings. There is no male chauvinism, domination and hierarchy over female participants not only from the male participants but also from their parents. Females are not deprived from any cultural practice and to share their anguish, feeling. In Sakhiya Naach female performers play the major and dominant role than male performers because they make crucial decision in every steps of performance and organizing program of

having different forms of picnic for instance; Chuki Khaina, Machhi Marna, Khyara Khaina. In addition, the traditional costume Choliya, Lehenga, Dhoti, Jhuluwa and ornaments like Sutiya, Tauk, Nathiya, Gataiya, Kanseri, Sagiya etc give the attractive and splendid glimpse of Tharu cultural attire and identity.

Like other performance and dance, Sakhiya Naach has its own historical background. The origin or the history of Sakhiya Naach goes back to the emergence of soil and water that relates with the agrarian life of Tharu people. Therefore, Sakhiya Naach advocates the origin and occupation of Tharu community, which is clearly manifested from their day-to-day activities. The cultural garments, which Tharu people often wear in their feast and festivals are almost made by themselves, decorated with different sorts of Katauti (embroidery) that shows the cultural history of embroidery skill.

The most of the Tharu cultural performance and dance are at the verge of extinct and some of them have disappeared, they are no more in practice. Therefore, Sakhiya Naach tries its best to preserve the cultural heritages through different mass awareness songs and to bring change in incompatible thought, belief and norms according to the demand of time and situation in contemporary period in front of audiences and community members and transforming the cultural assets to their upcoming generation. The performance of Sakhiya Naach not only helps to make the festivals rejoicing but also helps in the development of music, robust body with frequent movement, and it also creates social harmony and more strikingly, it reduces the gap between male and female.

One of the sapient features of performance is communication. As the dance reduces the gap between male and female, they interact and share their feelings with no hesitation and embarrassment and that develops their personality and

communicative capability having no any sense of hierarchy. Similarly, Tharu people attend different cultural feast and rituals with communal stance who hail from the different socio- economic background and status and gender share their emotions, feelings, and enjoyment having no any sense of biasness and hierarchy between rich and poor, male and female, which shows the egalitarian system in Tharu ethnics.

Aesthetic function is another feature of Sakhiya Naach, comprised of magnificent embroidered traditional costume, dance, songs and victuals relating with the rituals of Dashya festival. The aesthetic aspect of Sakhiya Naach endows the real glimpse of Tharu traditional costume and ornaments that gives happiness, pleasure in the sense that at least they have still successful to preserve their precious traditional assets and capable to exhibit in front of young generation. That gives identity of Tharu culture, which eventually fascinates the audiences and the people from other caste and class. In the recent context, Sakhiya Naach has become the major cultural performance for the exhibition in the grand festival and grand gala because it endows both socio-cultural and aesthetic identity of Tharu community that ultimately entices others. Because in dance both male and female deserve the performance wearing their traditional costume and ornaments, thus, individual from next class and caste can easily perceive their cultural habit and so on. Dancing and singing gives pleasure and entertainment to both audience and performers. Besides it also gives mass awareness messages which helps to alter the thought, belief to rectify the errors of society and individual.

Moreover, Sakhiya Naach endorses and explores the creative and artistic aspects of performers and Tharu people. Through frequent interactions performers develop their personality and capable of presenting their performance in different pattern of music. The dance with Paiya and songs sung spontaneously without

rehearsal is the most difficult, artistic and attractive steps in Sakhiya Naach. Most often the songs related to lord Krishna's life and hardship are very rare and difficult to recite in accordance to version of Mandra, yet Guru Mohriniya endeavors her best to sing the songs with her colleagues without her adequate rehearsal. As the Tharu cultural assets are not accessed to print culture, the songs of Sakhiya Naach are not found in documented and printed form; therefore, Guru Mohriniya just memorizes the songs and sings with chorus. In addition, Mandrahwan incredibly portray their artistic and creative feature by playing the tom-tom and moving legs according to music. More over, the tattooing, an art of imprinting on human skin by punching with thorns and needle is long been practiced among Tharu women which show the artistic and aesthetic aspects for the beautification of body.

Further more, the victuals prepared by Tharu people customarily represents the food habit of Tharu people. So far, drinking and meat items are concerned, Jaad (home made ale), Daaru (home made wine), Jhor, Pork, Chicken, Machhi (fish), Ghonghi, Chatani (pickle) consequently, bear the cultural role to make the feasts, festivals and rituals and communal stance charismatic, rejoicing, pleasure which endorse the sense of unity, fraternity, equality and healthy relation among the community members of Tharu ethnics. The Jaad and Jaadak Jhor (variety of ale) made from Aandi Rice and Daaru prepared from fruit of Mauhwa (a tree having sweet fruits) are considered as the best drinking items in Tharu community. Tharu believe these drinking items bear cultural importance and came into practice from their ancestors which ultimately gives energy to bring the fruitful deeds and performance. Such, drinking items eventually instigate to expose the suppressed hearts to subvert the demarcation between destitute and sophisticated, male and female, master and servant. The intoxicated person often involves in dance performance by hooting,

whistling, singing, dancing and playing Mandra, which brings charisma and entertainment in Naach. Therefore, in Tharu cultural feast, festival, rituals and performance there is communal behavior and stance having no any sense of hierarchy, domination, discrimination between or among the sex, gender, class and race because it also equally welcomes the individual from other class. Thus, the cultural practice in this ethnic group strongly manifests the equity among the male and female having egalitarian ground.



## **Chapter IV**

### **Conclusion**

Tharus, are the largest and oldest ethnic group of Terai belt of Nepal who inhabited from long decades, have their own distinct identity and culture. Tharu are the son of soil who works in field so; undoubtedly, they are the real farmers. Due to illiteracy, their cultural assets lack the access to the print culture so; most of their major cultural performances are foregrounded on orality. Their culture has communal spirit that shows the unity, affection, fraternity and harmonious relation among the Tharu ethnic. The compulsory gathering of Tharu Kisan at the Badghar's house in the celebration of any feast and festivals and decision-making obviously epitomizes the communal stance in this ethnic. Their cultural activities are simple, unique, performative, spontaneous and repetitive very close to their life style. The cultural performance disseminates culture, tradition, artistry, skill and knowledge from generation to generation to make them sustainable and alive. Sakhiya Naach, which is the dominant cultural dance in Tharu community advocates for the preservation of culture, establishment of harmonious relation in society and community, strictly, reducing the gap between male and female having the sense of equality.

The cultural dance Sakhiya Naach is a performative dance in-group by young boys and young girls especially who is unmarried whirling around the great festival Dashya (Dashain) but in some cases it extends to Dewari (Thar). Sakhiya Naach reflects the Tharu cultural heritages and performances that are based on equity among the races and gender. The Tharu cultural performance advocates and portrays the gender equality. Sakhiya Naach is performed on the guidance of Badghar, Guruwa, Aguwa Mandariya and Mohriniya. Aguwa Mandariya and Mohriniya are dominant figure in dance, they guide to their colleagues. A group of Mandrahwan plays the

Mandra (tom-tom) in different version and according to the beat and rhythm of song a group of Nachwiyan (dancers) dance in row or in circle.

The songs of Sakhiya Naach glorify lord Krishna's youth life and his glorious deeds. While singing songs related to Krishna's life, a particular version of tom-tom beat is exploited and dance is performed forming a circle with melodious sound of Majiara. Besides that the songs and performance of Sakhiya Naach reflects the feelings, emotion, anguish and it equally works to convey the mass awareness messages through the songs for the betterment and reformation of community member and society. The traditional dress, which they wear in performance and festival ceremony, is their own handicraft product, the songs, which are prevalent, are natural, spontaneous and innocent, and those dress and songs strongly represents their cultural as well as their artistic creativity.

To sum up, the performance of Sakhiya Naach, which is performed around the great festival Dashya by the group of young boys and young girls manifests the Tharu culture, belief, ethos, norms, values, and sense of unity, harmony and cooperation among the people of community. Moreover, Sakhiya Naach strictly reduces the gap between and among the male and female and advocates for equity based on egalitarianism. Thus, the motto of Sakhiya Naach is to preserve the cultural dance and transmit to their upcoming generation based on egalitarianism, manifesting the true identity of socio-cultural and aesthetic aspects of Tharu life style.

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