

I. Introduction

1.1 The Chepangs: Introduction

The Chepangs are one of the least known, deprived, disadvantaged and marginalized groups among the indigenous people of Nepal. They are short in stature with Mongolian features. They have flat and short noses, round faces, a dark, brown complexion, thin and medium ears, dark eyed and prominent eyebrows and medium height.

They have their own language and in general, all of them can communicate in their own language due to the lack of the influence of outsiders, and out-migration. All of Chepang settlements have been spread along the Mahabharata range of Central Nepal. The Chepang region lies on the hilly and steeper slopes of Chitwan, Makwanpur and Dhading district at elevations between 2500 and 4000 ft above sea level. But most of the Chepang have settled in the plain area of Chitwan district and a small portion of the Chepang population, however, is still found living in some parts of Gorkha district which is said to be ancestral of the Chepangs.

According to National Census 2001, the total population of the Chepangs is 52,237 which is 0.23% of the total population of Nepal. Now-a-days, due to the government's growing interest, the Chepangs are well known by another pseudo-term as 'praja'. Surprisingly enough, they think the original ethnic name 'Chepang' to be derogatory. It is not their fault because Bahun-Chhetris have widely used the term 'Chepang' to tease them. In reality, the term 'Prajā' is not only used the Chepangs but to other ethnic groups like Darais, Kumahals, Majhis, Kusundas etc. Nivak Kumar Rai (1975) writes that 'Prajā' is clearly a term which have been used along with ethnic names since at least the mall period of Nepalese history. However, the term praja has been used to refer to Chepangs since the introduction of 'Prajā' Development Program (PDP) after the visit of her Royal Highness, Princep Shah in 1977. In the process of

assimilation in other society, they discarded the connotation associated with Chepang and used the nomenclature 'Prajā'.

Ganesh Man Gurung in his book '*Report From a Chepang Village*' writes that one of the praja development officers told him that that was an attempt to place them in a better position in the local society. This sychophantic trend is prevalent not only among Chepangs but among various other ethnic groups of Nepal, as Kusundas preferred to be called Thakuri (Reinhard 1976), Bargaunle Bhotas as Gurungs (Haimendorf 1975) and the *Kasain*, the butchers of Kathmandu, as Sahi (Gurung 1989). The term 'praja' according to Bajracharya and Shrestha (1974), has also been used in *Tamrapatras* (copper inscriptions) of Malla kings and royal seals of the Shah kings. The Chepangs having been defeated by the king of Nepal (Kathmandu was said Nepal by the people out of the Kathmandu valley and even now this term is used by old generation), became 'Prajā' or subject. But in practice, the term has assumed political overtones and every citizen of nation, is technically termed as a 'Prajā'.

The Chepangs, the uncivilized ethnic group, have wonderful and impressive behaviours. They are completely natural. They are shy and honest. They are frank and holy, too. They are very helpful and interesting. They speak very politely and sweetly. They love and respect their friends. They are humorous in nature, too. They make romantic and amorous jokes as well. A woman makes an amorous joke with a third person before her husband, but her husband does not mind and doesn't take negatively. He laughs and enjoys the joke. In this regard we can say that the practice of freedom for woman in the Chepang community is much higher than Bahun and Chhetri communities. Actually they are romantic and humorous but not corrupted. They are holy and frank but not having bad intentions.

Chepangs are compelled to live under poverty because they don't have sufficient land and money; even, if they have those lands are less productive.

Chepangs drink much and don't worry though they have no grain. Drunkenness and negligence of their responsibilities towards their heirs are the main causes of their poverty. Eventhough they are poor and moneyless they seem always happy and calm. They don't harm other people. They are fair and unselfish. They don't cause any crime and fraud intentionally. Chepangs are funny, too. If someone asks a Chepang his name, he says "I don't know, please ask my parents". Yes, they don't know their names and their parents don't know too. They forget it. The main cause is: they give name whatever word that comes on their tongue and which has no meaning at the time of giving name to their baby. Later they forget it and that baby becomes nameless. Like this, most of the Chepangs have no name. They aren't afraid of tiger, bear, snake or other beasts and insects. They walk in the forest alone and bare footed. Their children roam everywhere in the forest even on extreme hills easily and freely. Chepangs are unknown about outer world and human civilization. Actually they are wild and are happy in their wildness. They are also innocent.

The Chepang are one of the least known and least studied ethnic groups in Nepal. At present they reside in the southern central part of the country in the district of Dhading, Makawanpur, Chitwan and southern part of the Gorkha district. Chepang were still living in nomadic life even though government and other non-governmental office has been tried to uplift the Chepang community. There has been conducted many researches about this ethnic group, their food habits, culture, festivals and so on.

The following research persons and their researches have been significant to know about Chepang culture and their socio-economic status in their community. The first scholar to study and mention about Chepangs was Brian Hodgson, more than 100 years ago. Grouping them with related group, the Kusundas, Brian states that they were "living entirely upon wild fruits and the produce of the chase...". Later he adds that the "Chepangs are a few degrees above their confreres (Kusundas), and are

beginning to hold some slight interaction with civilized beings and to adopt the most simple of their arts and habits." Hodgson associated Chepangs with the people of Bhutan called Lho. He was led to this belief because of the proximity of their languages. He also states that Chepangs are "broken-tribe" of Nepal.

The second scholar to come across the Chepangs very recently was Dr. Kene Von Nebsky-Wojkowitz who had met them on his one and a half day's journey west to Kathmandu. He thought those few Chepangs he had met "distinctly showed mongolian features, viz. slit eyes and prominent cheek bones many had flat, broad nose with deep saddle and the skin of two or three was of a very dark pigmentation".

Besides them, there are another two Nepalese ethnologists, Ganesh Man Gurung and Prem Swoveet who have been studying about Chepang. While Ganesh Man Gurung's work provides some very helpful information about Chepang community and socio-economic status of Chepang in their community. And Prem Swoveet's work reflects a castal and classist tendency when writing about Chepang, depicting them as 'good savages' honest, innocent, primitive and with very limited intellectual abilities, content in their extreme poverty as they are less sensitive and more ignorant than civilized people. There are also other Nepalese scholars who have studied about ethnic groups of Nepal. Among them Dor Bahadur Bista and Nepalese ethnologist Nivak Rai are among the most important Nepalese scholars. Nivak Rai who has written an excellent doctoral thesis which features the economic activities of the Chepang.

It is a real pity that these scholars of the 19th century did not note any of the religious aspects of Chepangs or any of the other important cultural features. There are only a few articles and essays which were written during and around seventies. Even after that many scholars have attempted studying about Chepang community, their cultural background.

1.2 Myths of Origin of Chepang

The origin of the Chepang is still a controversial issue and a topic of curiosity for the researchers and students of cultural studies.

There are different myths about their origin based on legends and myths. The word 'Chepang' came from the original word 'Chyobang'. In the Chepangi language 'Chyo' means 'top point' and 'bang' means 'rock'. In this way 'Chyobang' means "top of the rock or hill". As they believe, their ancestor originated from rocks and lived on the top of the rock, let's say, on the top of the hill. They began to call 'Chyobang' to themselves meaning the dweller on the top of the hill.

In course of time it has undergone a change and they are now called Chepang. So, the ancestor's of today's Chepangs were Chyobang. Thus they explain that their ancestors originated from the rocks of Mahabharat range and didn't migrate from other places.

There are various legends among them about their origin. One of them is: they are the descendants of *Ramchandra*, hero of the famous epic, *Ramayana*. According to the legend, Ramchandra had two sons named Lava and Kusha from *Sita* (the heroine of the Ramayana). They were perfect in the art of archery. Chepangs says that the Kusundas shoot their arrows and kill the Chepangs on sight. After then they became natural enemies to each other. The Chepangs of today are the descendants of Lava and Kusundas are the descendants of Kusha.

There are different views about Chepang origin by different scholars in their research. Among them Byaju (1977) mentions that the Chepangs are the progeny of a holy man called *Chewan*, and later the word *chewan* was pronounced as *Chewang* and ultimately, Chepang. According to Adhikari (1977), a virgin woman in ancient times gave birth to a child, she took the infant into the jungle and left it there, pressing it with a stone to show her innocence. But the child luckily grew up by mercy of the

God/ Nature in the forest and he was named Chepang which is the distorted word of 'Chepiyeko' or squeezed between. Rai (1975), says the 'Chepangs' originated from shila or stone.

Nepali ethnologist G.M. Gurung (1994) found out that Chepang origins were uniform. Both the younger and older generation were given same views about their origins. He has chosen the myth, narrated by a member of the younger generation, Kanchha Chepang, in his book *Report from Chepang Village*. According to Kanchha Chepang:

The Chepangs are the offspring of Seeta's son Lohari or Lava who is famous in the Hindu epic, Ramayana. During the exile of Sita, she had to stay in the cottage of hermit named Balmiki, near a river and there she gave birth to a son named Lohari. Seeing the entertainment of the monkeys with their babies, she too, took her baby to the river to show the monkeys without informing the holy man of the cottage. Balmiki became restless because there was no baby in the cradle. Lest he be blamed by Seeta, he created a new baby, resembling the former, out of 'kus' grass. Seeta was surprised to see another baby in the cradle. The hermit explained the occurrence and convinced her to keep both of them as her own sons. The new baby was named 'Kusari'. The Chepangs widely believed that they are the descendants of Lohari, the first son of Seeta and that their rival, the Kusundas, originate from Kusari. (10)

This legend has been quoted by other scholars such as Jest (1966), Bista (1967), Caughley, Dahal and Bandhu (1971), Thapa (1979) and Pant (1979).

We are aware that the Chepangs and Kusundas are supposed to be enemies to each other. The scholar Reinhard has written about origins and cause of enmity

between Chepangs and Kusundas. According to him, a long time ago, when dying, a king left his fields and buffalos to the oldest of his three sons. The oldest son began to plough and sow to no avail; he milked a buffalo but obtained blood instead of milk. When he massaged one of his legs with oil, a sinister black man came out of his leg and disappeared. The younger brother told his oldest brother that because of these ominous omens he would never be able to become king and would have to retreat into forest. The Kusundas were therefore descended from oldest son. The second son then began to plough and sow seed and was successful and the Thakuri are descended from him. The third son as the forefather of the Magar. Reinhard (1969) also says that Chepang and their cause of enmity with Kusunda that:

The Chepang, a group which lives to the south of the Kusunda area, believe to be related to them [. . .] one of them told me that a long time ago a father wanted to see his fortune divided amongst his two sons; but after his death the two sons fought it out for their inheritance, and their descendants, the Chepang and Kusunda have remained enemies ever since. The Chepang are still afraid of Kusunda despite never having met one, they believe that at the latter would shoot at them on sight with their bows and arrows while they would not have any arms with which to defend themselves. The Kusunda are not aware of the fact that they are the enemies of the Chepang and have denied that they are related to them. (99-100)

In this way, we can say that the myth about the origins recounted by the Kusunda has nothing in common with that of the Chepang and would not be wrong to say that they are contrastingly different. Hence, they have various legends and beliefs of their origin.

1.3 Region and Inhabitation

Chepangs are found in the middle hilly region north of Chitwan, south of Dhading and west of Makawanpur. Chepang's original place is the mid-mahabharat hilly region at elevation between 1000 to 2500 meters. These are mostly jungle. They originated from there and they are not scattered far and wide but belong to a rather small group of settlement.

These hill areas where Chepangs live are extremely steep. There is not even a single piece of plain land. They make their hut on the blades of hill. If a pot gets loose from one's hand, it runs two kilometers down and stops. People have to spend half of their day to bring it back.

Nature has created them among the wonderful and artful hills. A peak of a hill is so near by the peak of another hill that it seems one can go there by jumping. But it takes more than two hours to be there. Some huts are built under a dreadful hill or cliff. Therefore we can say that Chepangs live, play and dance harmoniously with nature.

1.4 Language and Religion

Chepangs have their own language called Chepangi which is so interesting and different from Nepali and other languages. Chepangi language is classified in Eastern sub-group of Tibetan- or Burman family. In their language there is deep politeness but they don't want to teach their language to others. This language is original and a separately formed language. It has no other base.

In their area, pronunciation differs from village to village. Most of them know Nepalese language. They speak the Nepalese language differently. They also make folk-songs in Nepalese.

Chepangi language is limited only in Speech. It has no letter and writing system. They learn it from their elders and pass to their new generations. They don't write and symbolize.

Actually Chepangs have their own religion. They don't worship the god and goddess of other religions. They have their own gods named: *Aaitabare* and *Pholo* as common gods and they have their family god, too, which is called *Lahang* or *Tonkolong*.

For *Aaitabare* and *Pholo* they preserve special places saving tall trees and under it they put stones as symbols of these gods. They worship several times a year and perform *jatra* (special ceremony) once a year. Like this, they worship their family god at Tonkolong festival.

Now-a-days they also worship Hindu gods and goddesses but they do by their own performance. So, it is thought that they are Hindus. But they have little gratitude for the Hindu religion, in common. They didn't keep any name of their religion and later it mixed with Hindu religion. And so, they are thought to be Hindus.

1.5 Social Setting of Chepang

The Chepangs like to be called 'praja' by others instead of Chepangs. Praja means 'people' in governmental statement.

The Chepangs of all regions are considered of equal and same social status. They are equal and free in their all sorts of affair. Actually they have no hierarchy system. For marriage they choose out of their kin-group and don't care other things.

However, some say that they have clan system and there are more than twenty two clans. Among them Sun-Chepang is considered superior to others. Lahar-Chepang and Nal-Chepang are considered lower clans.

But everyone supports that there was not a clan-system in their original stage. Later, they created this concept of clan-system. According to that period, the dwellers of higher areas were considered superior and other who dwelt on the besi or Khark (lower areas) were considered lower clans.

Years after, this thought was gradually developed into a new concept of clan system. People began to scatter to different places of their area. Then they began to determine other clans according to their occupation, skill and place, such as Darsirange (who lives near by big trees), Galsarange (who lives in the area of black soil), Baspure (who lives near by bamboo), Sailung mai (Sailung dweller) Kachhare (who lives on higher area), Arbangi (who lives in Arbang), and the like. In this way, they have different clans as Byal, Kumal, Bungrangi, Liptina, and the like.

Nevertheless, they have more clans, indeed they are considered of same and equal social status. They don't differ that superiors higher and rest of all are lower and they do not discriminate their people touchable or untouchable, etc. There is not any difference among them on hierarchy system. So, we can say, they have no clan system.

Now-a-days Chepangs have been accepted by Hindu caste hierarchy in descending order. They are considered touchables and are allowed to enter into the house of higher castes of Hindus.

No one knows much about the Chepangs. Just we know they are poor, shy, ignorant, natural and happiest ethnic group. They take delight in nature and they sing songs to get rid of their tiredness, poverty and suffering.

1.6 Major Cultural Practices

Chepang people are rich in their cultural practices. They have their own unique culture. Chepang's religious beliefs and practices can be explained with respect

to the ecosystem. The Chepangs have no scientific explanation for many natural phenomena but they credit the gods, spirits and ghosts with great spiritual powers to persuade the forces of nature, in their favour. They believe that religious practices are supportive to their power to encounter the natural environment and meet their survival needs.

The *Pande*, plays a unique role in the social system of religious and cultural practices in the Chepang community. His magico-religious practices came into operation for the diagnosis and treatment of illness. They believe that sickness is caused by the displeasure of certain deities or spirits or witchcraft. In this regard, Caughley, Dahal and Bandhu (1971), observed that if anybody is ill the *Pande* is invited to find out which god or ghost caused the sickness. The malevolent spirit is exercised by hitting on a drum. This beating continues throughout the night by the Shaman (Jhankris) and sacrificial offerings. Varya (1972) opines that Chepang Pandes are known as the most advanced exorcist (Jhankris) among all the communities of Nepal.

It is widely believed among the Chepangs that the spirits of ancestors may inflict misfortunes upon the family if displeased. The ancestor worship called *Tonklong* honours the dead and Chepangs look upon their ancestors' spirits with filial love and intimacy. Through ancestral worship, Chepangs believe they can acquire mercy, bliss, luck, longevity, happiness, wealth, sound health and protection. It is also believed that after involving ancestors, there will be no drought, epidemic and difficulties in the village. So, ancestor worship is a strong factor in Chepangs social solidarity and continuity of the family life.

Namrung is the hunting goddess. The pleasure of *Namrung* facilitates hunting pursuits and make the hunting easy. Most of the Chepangs possess bows, arrows and

dogs. They offer Chickens before they enter the forest for hunting. They have sound knowledge of hunting and they are good trekkers, even in steep forests.

The Chepangs worship not only the indigenous deities but also a variety of Hindu deities. Worshipping Earth deity (Bhumi-Puja) has been widely practiced among the Chepangs of Raksirang. It is believed that unless and until the Earth deity is happy, it may bring ruin to crops and cause misfortunes.

Aaitbare and *Gaidu* are supposed to be benevolent gods. *Gaidu Puja* (cattle goddess) is performed by those owing livestock like cows and oxen. A small place near the cowshed under a tree is scrubbed and a stone symbolizing the *Gaidu* is worshipped by pouring milk over it. It is done for the prosperity of their livestock *Chandi-Purnima* (a full moon night) in June. Another goddess worship, *Aaitbare* (sunday goddess) is observed in Mangsir purnima (a full moon night) in December by offering of a male and a female chicken. They believe that the house remains safe from epidemics through this propitiation.

Chepang people celebrate several festivals and many of them are similar to Hindu culture and society. But some of the festivals are unique in their culture which they celebrate with lots of joy and happiness. Some of the festivals they celebrate are: *Dashain*, *Maghe* and *Saune Sankranti*, *Chhonam*. They think that if they fail to perform these annual rites, the spirits will be displeased and will visit them henceforth with calamities.

Nwagi, known as *Chhonam* is one of the most important indigenous festivals among the Chepangs. *Chhonam* is the auspicious day for eating a new crop. Before the celebration of this festival, there are prohibitions for eating certain agricultural products such as *Ghaiya* (dry rice), *pindalu* (cocacasia), and sour fruits like lemon. They don't eat the new crop until and unless the offering is given to their ancestors.

These festivals are widely prevalent and observed during the month of Bhadra. Pande is necessary between the gods and human beings. They consider the festival to be an important occasion for pleasing the ancestors through food offerings.

Saune Sankranti is also celebrated by other ethnic groups, but it has particular importance among the Chepangs. As narrated by Sante, an old Chepang, this festival is observed each year on the happy occasion of surviving from acute shortages of food, famine and distress. Almost all the Chepangs suffer from food shortage each year from Falgun to Ashad and *Saune Sankranti* represents a victory over the food shortage, as it falls on 1st of Shrawan during which they harvest maize and *ghaiya* (dry rice). This is called *didi chand* (eldest festival) also and celebrated with consumption of meat of buffalo, *jand* and *ghaiya* etc.

Maghe Sankranti is just contrary to previous *Saune Sankranti* as it is supposed to be related with approaching food shortages and distress. From the month of Magh, Chepang's food stock begins to empty and they go to the forest for food gathering. This festival falls on the 1st day of Magh. They celebrate by inviting women, kin, ancestors and daughters and have a feast of *jand*, yam, meat and other preparation.

We can see the influence of Hindu culture in the Chepang community regarding the celebration of festivals. The Chepangs also celebrate *Dashain*, *Tihar* and other Hindu festivals as Hindu people celebrate them.

1.7 Significance of Songs in Chepang Community

Folk literature and music occupies a significant role in Chepang community as in other communities. Chepang community is rich in the field of folk literature and music though they are deprived of mainstream development. The role of the folk songs is important in any cultural practices observed by them. They gather in one place and sing songs or tell folk tales when they have leisure time. They sing songs on

many of the occasions for many reasons. Some of the songs they sing are *jhyaure*, *juwari*, *ashare*, *bhailo*, *deusi* etc. They sing different songs in different situations. Prem Swooveet, in his book "Happiness in Wildness" expresses his view regarding Chepang songs in this way:

Whoever else, they sing *jhyaure* whether they are children or young or olds. Both male and female sing it often they sing at the *rantang* (work) and *jatra* (special gathering on the occasion gathering on the occasion of god worship, where young boys and girls meet and make environment pleasure). When more people gather they begin to sing *jhyaure*, expressing their lives, willings, devotions etc. in common voice of male and female.(129-30)

Songs are an inseparable part of the Chepang culture. The Chepangs sing songs in all their cultural performances. That's why there are different variety of songs in this community. One of the major subject of their songs is to respect nature. Since the Chepangs are nature worshipers they sing songs expressing their gratitude to nature. They describe about different hills, mountains, falls, and forests etc. in their songs. They also express their views how their life is dependent on nature. Most of their songs have descriptions of nature while some of their songs are totally devoted to describe natural beauty. Apart from the description of nature we also see the description of supernatural forces in their songs.

Before starting any kind of songs, they pay their respects to different deities and gods. Some of their songs are totally devoted to mention the story of supernatural forces. The traditional songs of their community are more related to nature and supernatural forces.

As folk songs are basically to express love affairs between young boys and girls. Chepang songs are also famous in their community to express inner feelings of young boys or a girls to his/ her beloved/lover. Those love songs are different from common love songs as they express their pure, innocent typical love relationship in their songs. The romantic love songs have a special place in their community which Swooveet mentions in this way:

They sing *juwari* between two groups boys and girls. They feel much risk in its, that they sometimes match their life too. If a group loses in competition, the captain of this group have to go with the captain of another group, means they have to get married. (130)

Even many of the Chepangs get married by means of *Juwari*. A young boy and girl sing *dohori* for a long time and agree to get married if they feel suitable for each other. Even several boys may compete with a beautiful girl to marry her. Whoever is able to win her gets married.

Another major factor they include in their songs is the voice of pain and suffering. The life of the Chepang is full of pain and misery. They have to struggle to survive and labour hard to join hands with mouth. To get relief from those pains and sufferings they sing songs specially during the time of evening gathering at a common place.

Rammani Dhungel sees Chepang songs as means of seeking relief from physical labour, pain and suffering. In his text *Chepang Sumudaya Ra Sanskriti* he points out:

To provide relaxation and entertainment for their tired body caused due to their full day labour, they sing and dance till late night which they often do in group gathering many people. Specially at night after work

they gather around over including old, youngs and children and sing songs along with dancing. On such occasions, they often sing songs like *dohori* or *hajuri* and they are about marriage and love affair, household and daily life activities as well as happiness and sorrows.
(my translation, 91)

Therefore, we can say that the life of Chepangs are full of miseries and pain due to lack of modern devices in their life. They have to struggle hard to survive. To seek comfort and solace from those pains and sufferings they sing songs.

Chepang people are experts in singing and they get satisfaction from it. This community is excessively rich in its cultural practices and songs play a significant role. This is also one of the main ways to forget their poverty and sorrows, which keeps them together in comfort. They live, communicate and feel happy among themselves. Henceforth, we can say that Chepang's songs are true representatives of Chepang tradition, culture and tragic condition of their life.

To sum up, we can say that Chepang community is a distinct ethnic group among several other ethnic communities of our country. The Chepangs have its own culture and ritual practices and their own way of life. They have their own language, religious practices, life style, food habits, clothing and so on. In my field study, I found their painful situation, misery and pathetic condition of the Chepang community mainly caused due to the negligence of the government of Nepal toward such marginalized and indigenous people.

II. Textual Analysis

2.1 Concept of healing and role of song

Generally, healing is a psychologically treating method which helps to increase enduring capacity and energy of the patient to resist pain, suffering and miseries. In this regard, we can say that, healing is a kind of medicine and treatment which helps the patient to increase anti-bodies and resisting power to fight against any disease. Psychological healing means treatment of any disease by using psychological method of healing. It means psychological treatment of patient by using various kinds of healing methods.

There are various kinds of methods of healing. Among them spiritual healing, poetry healing, faith healing, song healing, music healing and writing healing are major forms which are still practiced even in the modern scientific world and traditional communities of non-western country. Literary healing is regarded as king of the medicine or holistic medicine. Literary healing includes several methods of healing. Among them are poetry healing, music healing, song healing, writing healing and so on. These methods of healing is still practiced in the modern scientific world. Even today some of the Allopathic doctors refer to natural method of treatment according to their cultural background. The people of the traditional and ethnic communities are still practicing shamanism to cure patients and in giving psychological relief to them. In this community shaman reads mantras, chants, hymns and poems- all employing powers of the word and the voice-are used as medicine for healing his/her patient. Shaman is still practiced in Chepang community.

We know poems, songs and music have magical power. They create harmony and solidarity among nations, friends and communities who are involved in war and fighting. So, words play a vital role to heal the patient psychologically. Our

subconscious minds are designed to love rhymes and rhythms. So, rap music is very popular in western country. The subconscious minds processes rhymes differently from other words or phrase of any literary creation/genre. Therefore, they have a stronger impact on soul and mind. That's why good poems, songs and music touches our soul and mind. This enables us to heal emotionally. Most of the songs and poems bring up strong emotion on our soul and mind. These emotions and feelings are necessary for healing to occur. Songs, poetry uses figurative and literal language which touches our soul and subconscious mind which helps us to forget our pain, suffering and miseries. At the same moment, psychologically, we feel calm and peaceful. Music and songs have such power from which we get healing power to forget and to heal our wounded soul, caused by social injustice, inequality and suppression.

Society is a composition of different ethnic groups. Different ethnic groups have different social norms and values which teaches how to live properly . There is system, law and order in such a society. This creates harmony and solidarity among members of society. Sometimes social norms and values create great problems for personal desires. There is social and cultural taboos which we should completely follow. Due to the social and cultural taboos we are compelled to hide and suppress our personal desire and fantasies such as: love, sex, and so on. Due to the suppression of personal desire and fantasies, we have to face psychic torture, pain and suffering. Unfulfilled desire, pain, suffering and fantasies are collected on the other side of psyche-known as dark side which gives us torture and pain to the soul and mind.

Nepal is an underdeveloped country. We have to face many problems in our daily life. Most of the people are poverty stricken and only a handful of people enjoy their life. Social injustices, inequality, suppression are prevalent in our country.

Among them the Chepang community have to face a miserable and pathetic situation. Their life is full of miseries, pain and needs. They have to face social injustices, inequality and suppression. They are compelled to live taking more and more wounds on their soul and mind. Therefore, they want to escape from their painful and miserable situation seeking relief from singing songs. They know that music and songs have that magical power which helps to heal their wounded soul and mind. The Chepang community believes in communal activity and sharing their pain and suffering through their songs. Generally, the subject matter of their songs is about pain, suffering, injustices, inequality and social biasness. We know that expression and confession of pain, suffering, injustices, inequality, guilt, fear and horror can help to decrease our pressure of pain, tension and anxiety from which we get solace, relief and peace in mind. So, we can say that songs help to bring such peaceful and calm situation.

At the moment of confession and expression, there takes place two actions. One is the situation of letting out of pain and suffering which helps to decrease pressure, tension, torture and their anxiety. The second is the opportunity to observe those pain, suffering, misery, desire and fantasies from "Critical distance". Critical distance means a state of the person in which he/she feels completely different from his/her past self and his/her present self. In case of confession, the confessor feels that his/her present self is completely different from his/her past self. He/She forgets his/her wrong doings of the past even when they are not excusable. And he/she observes his/her past event by creating a critical distance. We know that, songs are expressions of inner feelings, emotions and desires which cannot be expressed in a single word. By means of songs we can express our pain, suffering, feeling and desire. Even the subject matter like social and cultural taboos of the society can be expressed

through the medium of songs by using figurative language. Personal desire, fantasies, anxiety and pain can also be expressed by means of songs and poetry. It can help to increase immune power and heal wounded soul and mind of the singer and listener. Words, issues of songs, rhymes, rhythms and lyrics of songs touches our soul. These enables us to heal emotionally.

Generally, we can say that literature is a represented form of reality. It means that any literary genre can present a true picture of society. In Chepang community, folk songs occupy a significant position. On every auspicious occasion, they sing songs. Generally, the subject matter of their songs are pain, suffering, desire, injustice and so on. In this regard we can say that their songs are based on reality and acceptance. Their miserable and painful condition is expressed in their songs. They accept their miseries and pain easily. They can't deny it. So, we can say that their songs are generally based on acceptance of miserable condition. If we accept and take anything else whether it is favorable or unfavorable, it can't create problems and torture but if we deny it, it can create several problems. So, acceptance of reality can help to decrease problems. All confessional poetry is based on reality and acceptance of critical situation. Confessional poets accept reality in order to heal their soul and mind. Chepang songs are also based on reality and we can say that their songs are an exposition of reality. So, we can say that their songs can heal and give solace to the mind oppressed and suppressed soul.

It will not be wrong to say that song is one of the significant and necessary factors of Chepang culture. Songs have major role and position in their culture. In most of their cultural performance and ritual practices, the role of the singing comes to be significant. The Chepangs express and exchange their feelings, wishes and emotions through the medium of songs. Not only that, in public gatherings the

Chepangs sing songs and introduce each other with the help of singing. They sing different kinds of songs like dohori, jhyaure, asare etc. in different situation. Most of the Chepang songs present their reality-miserable condition, injustices, inequality-prevalent in their community. Dohori songs create bond of togetherness, solidarity and collectiveness. They believe in communal activities like fishing, hunting and collecting food to get success. Due to the communal activities and singing dohori, it creates a cathartic situation and gained relief by bringing repressed desires, feelings, and emotion to awareness. Songs arouses passion of pity, sympathy, empathy and fear but then, its cathartic effect-brings relief from these passions. We can say that dohori songs create togetherness, solidarity and collectiveness. Therefore, there takes place catharsis and group healing. So, we can clearly say that Chepang songs have played therapeutic functions for the community.

Nepal is a multiethnic country. Various ethnic groups live in this country. Multiethnicity is one of the major characteristics of Nepalese society. Each of the ethnic group has its own distinct cultural identity and uniqueness. Among them, Chepangs are one of the deprived, disadvantaged and marginalized people of Nepal. The Chepangs believe in fatalism. If any disaster falls on them, they believe their gods and goddess are displeased or it is because of the evil forces which wasn't respected properly. They blame themselves for these calamities and repent/confess before different gods, spirits and ancestors. They call the pande, their religious guru, to perform a special ritual for omitting obstacles. The pande chants several mantras to please gods and destroy evil forces. That's why, shamanism is an important practice observed in the Chepang community. They are very much afraid of gods, goddess and their ancestors. It creates fear, anxiety and guilt feeling in their heart. Fear, anxiety and guilt feeling gives birth to pain and torture provided to the soul and mind. That is

why, they want to get rid of this situation. So, they repent and confess their crime through the medium of songs. Due to the confession, their pain, suffering and anxiety are acted out. They feel calm and get relief. Due to the group confession and communal ritual practices they get their wounded soul healed and fear, anxiety and guilt escaped out. According to Andrew Weil, a cultural critic and psychoanalyst, the group healing ceremonies are common in shamanistic societies of African tribes. In this regard, in his book *Health and Healing*, he remarks:

Group healing ceremonies are prevalent in shamanistic societies. In some of the African tribes, masses of people may participate in healings that include day and nights of dancing, singing and drumming. The Navajo of Arizona and New Mexico are famous for their "sings"-healing ceremonies that go on nonstop for a week or more. Patient wanting a sing but for this they must pay some ruppees. After some days they relief pain and suffering. (162)

From the above extract, we can say that, songs are very important to heal and treat the patient. Group healing practice are common in traditional society such as Africa, Nepal, Mexico, and India.

There are various kinds of healing method. Among them words healing is very famous healing methods which is still prevalent in modern scientific world of 21st Century. Words healing method for curing patient is commonly practiced in religious countries. This method is very much famous in Christian countries and the people who believe in Christianity. According to Christian legend, Jesus used a system of powerful spiritual phrases called the 'Paradosis', in order to pass this power on to his disciples. After whispering these words into the ear of the disciples, they were immediately able to raise the dead, heal the sick and repeat all the miracles that Jesus

himself was able to do. Alysa Cummings, a poet and psychologist, has written in her book entitled *Healing Words: Poetry and Medicine*, she remarks:

The old testament and New testaments are filled with passages that point to the use of sacred words and phrases that were used for the purpose of healing mentally sick, casting out unclean spirits, and even raising the dead. A large part of ancient Egyptian literature is founded in the use of divine words and phrases. According to their belief, the God Thoth used these words to speak all creation into existence. For many of the inhabitants of Indian and other countries of the far east, the intonation of special words of power or 'mantras' is an essential part of daily living. A number of ancient Tibetan and Hindu text are filled with special words that are designed to bring success in love, cure disease, and even prevent war.(40)

This extract proves that even words have power of healing, casting out of unclean spirits, cure disease and even prevent war. From the above extract, we can say that even a single word can play a vital role to prevent war, to bring success in love, to heal the sick and contribute to our good marital life.

Poetry and song can play vital roles to change our society. They can bring political and cultural revolution in country. They also help to change our behaviour and mind. While reading the revolutionary poems, it gives birth to powerful emotion and courage to fight against injustice, inequality and biasness prevalent in our society. Poetry not only gives birth to revolutionary power but also gives emotional healing to them, who are facing great torture, fear and pain and want to escape from such problems. In this regard, Robert Carroll, a psychiatrist, write in his article entitled "The Healing power of Poetry". He remarks:

Many people have an intuitive sense that voice in general and poetry in particular can be healing. We have all had the experience of the comfort of soothing words. Finding the words to articulate a traumatic experience can bring relief. A letter between friends who are fighting can heal a relational wound. Poetry can spring from us naturally in times of need. People frequently move to write a poem in times of extremity. [. . .] In the aftermath of the 'world trade center' attacks on September 11, 2001, poetry sprang up everywhere. *A New York Times* articles on October 1, 2001, documented the phenomenon. " In the weeks since the terrorist attacks, people have been consoling themselves- and one another-with poetry in an almost unprecedented way.(52)

Songs are also very powerful means of acting out their inner feelings, emotions, desire and fantasies, pain and suffering and so on. At the moment of singing songs, we express our inner feelings, emotion, suppressed desires, sometimes through the medium of songs, we can confess our crimes and guilt feelings. At that moment we feel calm, tensionfree and at a very well state because expression of pain, suffering and problems to others in lowering the pressure of pain, suffering and tension.

Regarding this issue, Paul Dinsdale, a journalist and psychologist, writes in his book *Healing Power of Song*. He remarks:

Research shows that music therapy can help people living with long term mental health problems. [. . .] A recent study carried out by Nottingham University on the link between arts and health, which gathered evidence from the workshops, found that music and singing songs were beneficial to patient. Singing prompts the release of

endorphins, which relaxes people and reduces anxiety. Singing in a group make us part of a team and that helped to reduce our depression, anxiety, pain and suffering. Singing in a group is also beneficial for group healing. Because we feel that we all are sufferers not only me. Such feelings gives solace and therapeutic relief from our tension and anxiety because we all know that each and every person of the world are sufferers of something not only me. In the groups they are less aware of theirs problems and there is a feeling of sharing an activity.

(107)

Song and music has magical power to heal the wounded soul, mind and heart.

Without music and songs, our life becomes like a statue of dead person- a statue always standing but having not any motion. It can't speak, it hasn't any feelings, emotions and desires. So, our life will become same without music. Music plays therapeutic function for the person who falls in the ditches of problems and mournful period. "National Association for Music and Song Therapy" has defined the term 'song therapy'. 'Song therapy' is the intensional use of the music and singing word to facilitate healing, growth and transformation. In this regard Stanley Jordan, a Jazz artist, has written in his article "*Jazz Artist applies music to heal the body and mind*", he remarks:

Our subconscious minds are designed to love rhymes and rhythms.

That is why rap music is so popular. The subconscious mind processes rhymes differently from other words. Therefore they have a stronger impact. This is why good music and song touches our souls. This enables them to help us therapeutically and heal emotionally. Some of them will bring up strong emotions. This most happen for healing to

occur. [. . .] music could be a healing force traces back to his teen years. he says he was sick with the flu and spent an entire day surrounded by song and recovered nearly instantly.(7)

Poetic healing method is still practiced in this 21st century to cure patient's diseases. Poetic healing embraces both the healing power of poetry and the poetic practice of holistic medicine. All healing is a road back home to our original selves. Poetic healing is not only practice in present world but also employed in ancient Greece. In ancient times poetry was employed for healing by the priests at the sacred site of Delphi. In this regard, Joy Cagil, a poet has written in her book *Grief of loss and Healing through Poetry*, she remarks:

In both Chinese and Ayurvedic medicines, chants, poems, hymns and mantras-all employing the power of the word and the voice-are used as medicine for healing. Tu Fu, perhaps china's greatest poet ever, used to prescribe poems to his patients for malaria. [. . .] Thousands of miles away in ancient Greece poetry was employed for healing by the priests at the sacred side of Delphi. Pilgrims from all over the world come to Delphi for healing. The priest at Delphi would consult Apollo, the god of medicine and poetry, for curative vision. (62)

This extract proves that even in China chants, poems, hymns and mantras are used as medicine for healing. Not only in present China but also in ancient Greece poetry was employed for healing by the priests at the sacred side of Delphi. From the above extract, we can say that psychologically treating method for patient is not only being employed in modern scientific world but it is the continuation of ancient Greece where poetry was being employing for healing patient.

We have already known that treatment of healing is practiced all over the world. It is practiced not only in some religious country, underdeveloped country and traditional societies but also practiced in developed countries like China, India, North America and Australia. That's why , we can say that healing method of curing patients is a very famous form of treating which is dependent on their cultural background. Some of the African tribes – the Navajo - are famous for their "sings"- healing ceremonies that go on nonstop for a week or more. It means they prefer singing for their psychological treatment- healing. The Navajo medicine men treat illness by coordinating the sings but do not diagnose it. In this regard, Andrew Weil, a cultural critic and psychoanalyst has written much in his book *Health and Healing* . He remarks:

Navajo medicine men are symbolic healers rather than true shamans. Some African tribes prefer dancing, some prefer, singing and some prefer drumming and drinking for healing the patient. It is so because it depends on cultural background. Because of this reason, it is different from tribes to tribe, culture to culture and so on. They concern themselves with controlling good and evil and restoring harmony in the mind of patient and in the universe. They rely on ritual, on very lengthy chants, singing and dancing. Most of the persons may attend these complex ceremonies which are the main events of Navajo religion bringing a tremendous power of shared belief to them. (163-64)

From the above extract, we can say that, practice of healing differs from tribes to tribes, culture to culture. Even in the African tribes, there are different methods of healing- - singing, dancing, drumming, chanting, drinking and so on. Therefore, we

can clearly say that, the practice of healing is prevalent all over the world but it differs in forms according to their cultural background.

According to several evidences which I have written from beginning till now, we can say that healing practice is different in tribes to tribes, culture to culture, religion to religion, ethnic group to ethnic group and so on but it is still practiced whatever forms it is applying. In Nepal, there are various ethnic groups. They have their own cultural practices, ritual and ceremonies which are practiced to fulfill their desires, wishes, feelings. In Chepang community, there are significant role of songs on each and every auspicious occasion, the significant role of song comes to be first.

We have already known that Chepang's lives are full of miseries, needs, pains and they are poverty stricken. Therefore, they prefer singing to get rid from their pathetic situation and poverty. They seek relief in their communal singing where they can express their pain, misery, desire and feelings etc, which helps to lessen their pressure of pain and tension caused by their marginal and oppressed position in Nepali society. Therefore, I think the Chepangs practice communal /group singing to treat their wounded soul and mind caused by suppression of their desires, feelings and emotion in their heart due to their marginal and oppressed position and they do not find any alternative as other canonical or literate people do to act out their pain and suffering.

Healing practice is also different from religion to religion. In Christian religion, faith healing is prevalent. Faith healing is noisy and theatrical as Christian science is quiet and reserved. Faith healing is associated with Christianity, specially of the fundamentalist sort, but practiced in many parts of the world as rituals of many religions. Christian faith healers take inspiration from Biblical descriptions of healings. They believe praying in the name of god so that they can act out their pain

and suffering caused by their crimes, mistakes and wrong doings. In this regard, Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian science, was the most persuasive champion of mind cure. She thought that disease, pain, suffering and even death are all illusions or mistaken thoughts which gives pain and torture to human being but it can be acted out by praying in the name of God – Jesus. In her monumental work, *Science and Health with key to the scriptures*, she writes: "By devotion, study, praying and practice, Christian Scientists can develop the ability to heal themselves because mind governs the body, not partially but wholly" (qtd. in *Health and Healing*:165). Therefore, we can say that, if we have problems in mind these problems can affect the body and we are compelled to suffer / face many problems and diseases in the body. But she says it can be cured by acting out, praying and showing devotion to God.

To sum up, we can say that, healing is a very famous method of curing the patients according to their belief and cultural background. It is different from community to community, tribe to tribe, ethnic groups to ethnic groups because of their cultural differences. We have already known that, African tribes prefer singing and dancing and Mexican tribes prefer singing songs to heal their patients. They believe that cultural ceremonies and cultural practices help to act out their pain, sufferings and miseries by expressing in the public and it also helps to heal the mind of the patients to get relaxed and forget their past memories temporarily. Therefore, healing method of curing practice is employed all over the world but it is used and practiced according to the patient's belief and cultural background.

2.2 Healistic Interpretation of Chepang Songs

Chepang community is rich in the field of folk literature and music though they are deprived of main stream development. Folk literature occupies a significant role in Chepang community. Folk literature and folk songs make Chepangs distinct

from other communities. They have their own literature which is still oral and it has transformed from one generation to another. When Chepang people have leisure time, they gather in one place and sing songs about their life, pain, suffering and the nature. Folk songs play an important role in each of the cultural practice observed by the Chepang people. They sing songs on most of the festivals and auspicious occasions. Songs like kanchhi, laulau, mankhan and Tomthyak etc. are popular which are still practiced in the Chepang community. They sing songs to get relief and solace from their pain and suffering which is caused by hard labour and their marginalized position in the society. In this regard, Yaman Chepang, a Chepang singer, expresses his view about their socio-economic condition and position in the society. In my interview with him, he states:

Chepang are very poor and marginalized ethnic group of Nepal. Most of their songs are about pain, suffering and poverty. They expressed their feelings, emotions and desires through their songs. [. . .] Their economic status is very poor and pathetic in comparison with other community. They are all unemployed because they are all illiterate. Social status is not good but nowadays it is changing slowly and gradually. Sometimes so-called higher caste discriminate and oppressed them in the name of caste. (based on interview: my translation).

From this extract, we can say that social and economic status of Chepang is very poor and pathetic. They are compelled to their lives under the trap of poverty. Because of this, the so-called higher cast and literate people of the society discriminate and oppressed them. Their marginal and oppressed position in the society give them torture. They want to free themselves from their torture and anxiety. But they have not

any medium of entertainments like Television, Radio, etc. which can give them some pleasure. Therefore, they take the help of songs to get relief and solace in their life. They want to escape from their difficulties and forget their miserable condition by taking the help of singing songs. To give solace and to heal the traumatic mind they express their feelings and emotions through their songs. Expression of pain, suffering and fear to others can help to heal the wounded soul and mind. During these moments we forget our past self and we feel we are in a completely different situation from which we have faced in our previous selves. So, I think because of this reason, the Chepangs sing songs to forget their pain and to heal the wounded soul. The following song 'Maru Sarara' gives glimpses of painful situation of the Chepang life.

Nai bhari lapnanga sohadonlai waharam
dahsa kheto jirkhe daandahanga
ramse dahjen anga khutrukai ryamjenanga
khimmana khali naljie sakai.

(Maru Sarara: recorded in Radio Nepal)

In this song, the speaker expresses his painful and miserable condition of Chepang community. In the given stanza of the song, he expresses his daily routine of carrying a heavy load with bare feet. He further expresses his pitiable condition of his house. According to the song, his house is empty, nothing remains to eat. When he reaches house, he feels tired because of his hard labour throughout the day. This song represents the pathetic condition of Chepang community, as a whole.

Chepang life is full of miseries, pain and needs because of poverty. Since many years ago, such difficulties are faced by them. Their torture, pain and suffering is repressed in their dark side-other side of psyche-which gives them pain. So, they want to get rid of such pain and then, I think they start singing songs. Through the

medium of songs they are able to act out pain and heal their wounded soul.

Thereafter, they feel happy and forget their pain and suffering. Furthermore, through the medium of songs, there takes place catharsis which helps to heal their soul.

Therefore, there arouses pity, fear and empathy which helps to get healed commonly.

Chepangs sing songs to gather in one place. So, there is a possibility of group healing and at the catharsis situation, there occurs group healing. Regarding this, Rabin

Chepang, a singer, answers the question: do you feel happy and forget your pain after singing songs? he states:

Yes, songs and music have that sorts of power which gives pleasure and solace to forget our pain and suffering which we feel in our daily life. Even in the extreme hunger, if someone sings song, we forget our hunger and tiredness. Therefore, in the Chepang community songs and music play vital role to forget their problems and miseries because they have faced a lot of hardship in their life. So, we can say that songs play therapeutic function for their hardships, pain and miseries. (based on interview: my translation)

Chepang life is very far from the modern technological world. They even do not want to be near the artificial, sophisticated and selfish world. Due to the modern technological development, human life has become more sophisticated, mechanic and artificial. People of this age are more dependent on technology and advancement than on nature. They have less affinity with natural world. They lose the world of luxury and pleasure. And for them to be near to nature means to be savage, undeveloped and uncivilized. But the Chepangs challenge this trend and value nature. They live a happy and natural life. They are not obsessed with physical advancement rather they are happy and satisfied with their own living style. The Chepang people live the life

of simplicity. Modern technological world is misfit for them. Neither it gives solace nor pleasure and happiness. Therefore, they hate modern and technological city. They always respect nature and live with it. Because, nature for them means god, living force, cosmic mother, healer and food provider. Therefore, they want to near nature and live happily. Regarding this issue, the following song shows how much the Chepangs respect nature and reject artificiality:

Boy:

Jhinuwako aahm kanchhi tatariko lo
 musuro ko kyan kanchhi nangkai ko
 tolharit kanchhi saikal banaulyam
 tal hetauda kanchhi mal chitwan

Girl:

Relgadi chyawwaya kanchha saharbajar byahwaya
 jhala ra malata kanchha bijuli chyawwaya
 rodanda baichada kanchha dynhnti kim pahichada
 (Chepang Suskera- I, A :2)

This song is very traditional and popular among Chepang community. In this song the boy offers his beloved that he will give jhinuwa (basmati) rice and dall of musuro keeping on the leaf of tantari if she is ready to go with him to Hetauda and Chitwan. He also tries to persuade her and proposes to visit the lakes of Hetauda and plain lands of Chitwan riding on the bicycle. After they reach the city, according to the proposal of the boy, they see the city environment and artificial modern advancement. But the girl doesn't like such artificiality and complexity of the city. That's why she replies that they have seen the trains and know the selfish city too. They have also seen electricity that could make day and night similar. But the girl proposes to return back

to their own village decorated with flowers which gives them pleasure, entertainment, solace and relief to forget their miserable condition and suffering.

In this song, the girl's desire to return back to their own village and on the lap of nature shows her rejection of modern scientific advanced world. The Chepangs have their own belief that scientific advancement and physical development drags human beings toward individualistic and self centered approach and push them away from their originality. The Chepangs do not want to lose their originality embracing artificial advancement. The girl, in the song, doesn't like trains, motors and electricity of the city. Rather she likes the beauty of flowers available in her own village because which she gets from nature, she can't find in modern city. That means, she cannot find sense of community, help, innocence and simplicity which she gets in village or nature. The reason being that she feels an absolute misfit in the modern advancement from which she has got nothing but anxiety, loneliness, unreality and unnaturality. Due to this, she wants to return back to the lap of nature which gives solace, pleasure and healing power because nature is a cosmic mother from where we get everything just like we can get from our mother. Therefore, nature is taken as mother of everyone.

Sometimes, the Chepangs wish to escape from real world. They wish to flow in their own world of imagination. The world of imagination is very pleasant and beautiful. Because of poverty they want to escape from this miserable world. They think their world of imagination or heaven is very beautiful from where we get what we want. Because of this reason they wish to flow in the world of imagination. They also want to forget their pain, suffering and anxiety, flowing in abundance in their world of imagination. Even they were in the world of imagination/heaven, they

couldn't forget natural beauty of the real world. The following song shows how much they love nature.

Lohar tairanko tairanti
 saman tairanko tairanti
 ratai lhaiti aaljeya
 jhangai lhaiti aljeya
 muwaliko mulada
 dyahnwaliko ryahnlada
 eleng wanghang vyahtohang
 sunhai wanghang mutohang
 krutai klyongti muyakcha
 godai klyaiti muyakcha
 (Chepang Suskera-I: Kongkochyong)

The given song is very imaginative. The speaker in this song offers his female partner to go down to earth from the heaven for eating different things available there because it is going to be night.

The speaker also announces others to go with them if they are interested. He proposes to go to sit on a flat stone and embrace each other.

The given song signifies two things, one is that the Chepangs are worshippers and lovers of nature and another is that the Chepangs highly believe in supernatural powers. Nature for the Chepangs is more important than even heaven. The Chepang life is full of miseries, needs and pains. The speaker of this song is one of them. Therefore, he wishes to go to heaven to get rid of such painful situation. Death is nothing to him but he wants to get rid from such dreadful situation. He doesn't want to

live his life like dead. So, he wants to flow to the world of imagination where he gets pleasure, solace and entertainment.

The world of imagination is very beautiful and pleasant. In the state of imagination, he gets a healed soul because he forgets everything happening in his real world. Because of this reason, his soul and mind gets healed and feels calm and peace in his soul. We have already known that the Chepangs are worshippers and lovers of nature. The speaker of this song wants to return back to the nature even when he has already been in the heaven. So, he wants to return back to nature which he has been since the day of leaving earth. But he wants to come to earth at night because he never wants to see such a dreadful place/world where he had already faced miserable and pathetic condition. So, he wants to come to nature where he gets solace, peace and healing power because nature is taken as a cosmic mother who provides everything we want. Regarding this issue of nature, Rabin Chepang says:

[. . .] Nature is gods and goddesses for us. Because nature provides everything such as food, pleasure, entertainment and even shelter to us. Therefore, without nature, we never imagine to survive. Because of this reason, we worship and respect to the nature. It means the Chepang sees their life in nature. We have set solace and pleasure even in the state of extreme, pain and suffering. Due to this, the Chepangs desire to be near to nature.(based on interview: my translation)

From the given extract, we can say that they wish to spend their whole life in the lap of nature. They believe that life in the lap of nature is more smooth, secure, comfortable than the life of heaven. Therefore even in the songs, they glorify, respect and worship nature and its greatness. The given song proves that even the Chepangs

are a misfit in the environment of heaven and takes the help of nature to get relief, solace from their miseries through the medium of singing songs.

Culture is a way of life. Without culture socialization process is impossible and without socialization we become abnormal in society. Without culture and socialization human being become only being not human. Therefore, the Chepangs expect their children to be equipped with knowledge of their tradition, customs, ceremonies, festivals, belief and practices. The Chepangs respects their culture and cultural practices. Culture is their identity. They perform their cultural ceremonies with dancing, singing and drinking wine. Singing songs play vital role in their cultural ceremonies. Even in the love songs, their tradition and culture are at the center. Through the medium of cultural ceremonies, they not only get an opportunity to share their pain and suffering, but also unite and express their desires and feelings. In this sense, culture is a mediator between two lovers. The following song shows how cultural ceremony becomes a mediator between the two lovers.

Boy:

Wangjenada nwagi ghyunoto belama

Fekara Yunti Bruvkanchhi Baichenangda sari cholani.

Girl:

Mus Bhaijena Braukanchha wanasi masi matigal

jhyanaï khechya kanchha ngama wangananga Ningako nwagi.

Boy:

Nangama wanga braukanchhi ngama wanganangani

braklai muti kanchu kanchhi namko nwagi

Girl:

Kanti munanga nangako lyamlai aamma jemato

Yukranga sailai palcha nukti suimachimato

(Chepang Suskera- III, A: 2)

In the first stanza, the speaker (boy) promises his beloved to bring sari and chhola by selling 'kuchho' and 'Nangalo' because the romantic festival nwagi is nearing. In the second stanza, the speaker (girl) requests her lover to come in the coming nwagi and she herself promises him of coming because nwagi is very romantic and a good chance to sing songs. In the third stanza, the speaker promises to his beloved that he will certainly come and requests his beloved to do the same. And he also promises that they will be seeing nwagi sitting in one place. In the fourth stanza, the speaker then convinces and persuades her lover saying that she will see his way without having any meal. She further says that they would escape without informing her parents.

The festivals and ceremonies of the Chepang are occasions of community participation which help in maintaining their social order and social solidarity. Festivals can do certain functions for the fulfillment of human needs and for the provision of solutions to certain difficulties and problems. The given song shows the miserable condition of Chepang-beloved should also wait to achieve new clothes in the nwagi-and these wishes are fulfilled with the help of cultural ceremony. Culture like nwagi, helps the Chepangs to express their pain, suffering, miseries and they also get chance to share their desires, feelings and wishes in the public gatherings.

By the help of singing songs, they can express their repressed desire freely . Basically, the lover/beloved get chance to express their love to their beloved/lover. Because of this reason, their repressed pains, desires and emotions are acted out through the medium of song. There are opportunities to get healed wounded soul. Therefore, we can say that the cultural practices provides them to heal the oppressed

soul and mind and then provides opportunity to express their suppressed desires. The speakers of this song can get chance to express their love, feeling and suppressed desire through the medium of song, therefore, their pain and suffering acted-out and get healed through the medium of festivals. So, we can say that, they sing songs to get relief from their pain and suffering. Regarding the issue of cultural healing, Melissa Sanfilipo, a cultural critic has written in her book entitled *Hand book of culture, Therapy and Healing*, she remarks:

[. . .] Psychotherapy was born in the 19th century as a result of the western practice of separating the mind, body and spirit into distinct and separate entities.[. . .] Many non-western cultures approach healing completely differently. In the non-western and religious country, culture and cultural practices actively participate in the healing process. (133)

The Chepangs life is life of scarcity and necessity. They are compelled to live taking a wounded soul, marginalized and oppressed position in the society. Due to this, they decide to go to foreign country to earn money. Even in this situation, the culture becomes a healing source to forget their pain and suffering caused by separation from their family members. The son who is compelled to go to foreign country, promises his family member not to worry because he will come at Dashain/Tihar remembering his family and culture. Therefore, in this situation, here culture becomes a soothing element to his family member and himself as well. The given song shows the miserable condition of Chepang community and how culture becomes a milestone for soothing their wounded soul.

Gaun hangamuti cheuwali yajyo kaam
gachyuik jesa sadhaiko nelau aam

salala jerikhe thovan hanga
 jyanti pahinanga laiko kim samjhati
 ramailo dashain tihar hanga
 galkhyama sahuko rinai rin
 gatahaitima sudril dhukhi din
 salala jerkhe thovan hanga
 jyanti pahinanga laiko kin samjnati
 ramailo dashain tihar hanga

(Gaunhangamuti-Recorded in Radio Nepal)

In this song, the speaker describes the pathetic condition of his family. Because of this reason, he is compelled to leave his country to pay off his debt. But he also promises his family that he would come at Dashain remembering his family and village. Further more, he also consoles his family members saying that do not worry it is my compulsion because of poverty stricken.

The given song shows pathetic and marginalized position of Chepang in their society. Cultural festivals play a significant role to forget their pain and suffering caused by separation of family members. Culture becomes a milestone for soothing their wounded soul and mind. They are waiting and seeing the way of their sons and daughter's return who had gone outside from their home. Dashain and Tihar play significant roles to unite people. We can say that festivals also help to heal and soothe their wounded soul. Therefore, the Chepang gives more emphasis and respects their cultural ceremony because culture helps them to forget and heal their wounded soul caused by marginalized position and separation from their family members. The following extract shows how the culture and cultural practices helps to heal and liberate psychologically from the state of wounded and oppressed soul. In this

regards, Eduardo Duran, Judith Firehammer and John Gonzalez, cultural critics, have written in their book entitled *Liberation Psychology as the Path toward Healing Cultural Soul Wounds*, they remark:

[...] Culture and cultural ceremonies functions for the fulfillment and for the provision of solution to certain difficulties and problems.[...]
 Culture is a part of the soul. As human beings, we are all part of a culture and not separate from it. When the soul and culture of some person are oppressed, we are all oppressed and wounded in ways that require healing. That's why, cultural ceremony can help to restore harmony to the individual's life which helps to heal psychologically. Soul healing tradition is also found in ancient Greece which was the central interest of the priest/therapist.(189)

The food habits of the Chepang people is mostly dependent on the natural resources of their areas. Most of the Chepang people don't have enough land to grow crops to make them enough for the whole year. So, for more than six months, many of the Chepangs have to depend on nature for food. Specially, from March to May they have to face food problems and during this time they go to the jungle to collect gittha, bhyakhur, sisnu and yam. The following song shows how much the Chepang are dependent on nature for their food habit. The given song also shows how much they are affected if the condition of the weather is not very good .

Timi bala lakama dungalati telauma turlati
 kalisa turlati dojeti syaksa ta manahang pir manati
 ganga alsati sahuima lyaklati leti jesa daikai
 nalda paisa chayan jesa cheumata wangati mulanga
 Yajyo pakha chhapti khoriya gamjenanga

yoti jesa daisa tarani ranga nangala
 tungati muthima gamnak sangama waro maha
 aayatmama waro mana khoriko aasapai
 nalda bhaliya aalnau ya kolti.

(Recorded song: in the village)

The speaker, in the given song, express his/her pathetic and fearful situation. Because of the bad weather, the foods of the speaker- sisnu, gittha, bhyakur, nyuro-are not available in the jungle. Therefore, s/he confesses his/her pain and fear. She further says that s/he hasn't any stock of food and money. S/he is moving here and there without eating. S/he wants to remember/confess her/his fearful situation of the coming disaster. Without rain land becomes drought, because of this reason, s/he has fear of food crisis.

When the Chepangs have leisure time there is the trend of gathering and singing songs and telling folk tales to their children. The Chepang believe in communal activities to get success. The speaker of the song confesses his/her fear, horror and anxiety to others. Because of this reason, there arouses passion of pity and fear among them. At that moment, there takes place two actions simultaneously. One is the situation of letting out/go out and the second is the development of critical distance.

The first action does help to act out pain and suffering because of expression and that causes to lower the pressure of tension. Then, they feel relieved and healed. And the second is the development of critical distance which helps to forget their past self and they have found that their present self is completely different from their previous self. In this condition, there has developed a cathartic situation. And then, everybody reaches the state of pity, fear, sympathy and empathy. Because of this

reason, there occurs group healing and then they feel to get rid from their fear, pain, horror and anxiety. Therefore, we can say that through the medium of song, the Chepangs act-out their pain, suffering and anxiety.

Generally, there are three stages of life. They are childhood, young and old. Among them young age is very precious and a romantic one. Childhood is like the buds of flowers which is trying to bloom facing many difficulties having hopes to bloom one day. But old age is the age of difficulties. Old age has to face many difficulties. It is like the weathering flowers which is about to fall. It has no any charms and values. As like this, the following song shows the true picture of old Chepang and his/her pathetic condition.

jesa nala ransa ranga nala
 jela jangati jesa kai khaingala
 krapti krapti aalnganga melahanga
 budeshakal hanga dukha cheulonga jhanjhan
 jela jangati jeb muna digisam
 krapti krapti aalnanga melahanga
 dainai sabai dukha chewo jhyani
 krapsa dainanga do do ya tonati
 krapti krapti aalnanga melahanga
 syakti monanga ngaraka goi dyauti
 syaul makai khoriya rangahuti
 krapti krapti aalnanga melahang

[Recorded song: in the field]

The speaker, in this song, expresses her pathetic condition of old age. She says that she has no land, money and energy then how could she live on this earth. Anyway,

she has to eat, so she goes to the field falling tears. She have no energy to do hard work. She is compelled to face many difficulties. Everyone curse/scold her because of old age and her poverty. In this situation, tear is near to fall but she is compelled to hide it because of the fear of being teased. Therefore, even in this age, she is compelled to eat gittha, byakur, sisnu, etc. taking as a gift of nature.

The speaker in the given song confesses her pain, fear, suffering and suppressed desire through the medium of song. She wants to get rid from all the factors of miseries. Her suppressed desires gives pain and torture. In the society, manner of treating the old man, is very bad. Because of this reason, her oppressed soul want to heal and want to get relief from such pain and suffering. Therefore, she chooses best way of acting out pain and suffering by singing songs. Through the medium of singing songs, she able to achieve solace, peace and sooth in mind. By the acting out of pain and suffering, her soul is able to achieve healing powers. The pressure of tension and torture are lowering down and she feels calm. Therefore, we can say that, music and song is the medicine which helps to lessen the pressure of tension and gives solace to the heart by acting out pain and suffering. In my interview with Rabin Chepang, regarding the issues of pain, suffering and miserable condition of Chepang and role of song in Chepangs community, he states:

The man who have to face pain, suffering and needs from their heart and soul song's of pain and suffering comes out. They have compelled to dig-out gittha, bhyakur and Yam, therefore, from their heart such pain and suffering comes through the medium of songs. Therefore, most of the Chepangs songs are based on the subject matter of their pains, lacks and sufferings. They have to face problems, that's why they have expressed. If they expressed their pain, they have achieved

solace. Therefore, they expressed their pain and suffering in songs to get relief. (based on interview : my translation)

Folk literature occupies a significant position in the Chepang community. Folk literature and folk songs make Chepangs distinct from other communities. When Chepang people have leisure time they gather in one place and sing songs or tell folk tales. Folk songs play an important role in each of the cultural practices observed by the Chepang people. Chepangs are experts in singing. Even, they introduce each other by singing songs. The following song shows the role of song in Chepang community.

Boy:

Jabilati gatangadai baini nani
kingahanga aane jangatima chinjani

Girl :

Dhading jilla kimngako daju brumranga
bantanga aalo ghausu tatati syamaranga

Boy:

balla lhiya brumranga ko baini nani
sukha dhukha gata tangato munani

Girl :

nala sukha dhukhalai daju muna
dinka din lai lak boksa parana

Boy :

gangamana ra Chepangkai baini sukha
gangaala tima litalai ye dhukha

Girl :

dhukha jangati jyomana daju dinka din

gatahiti bitausa ye jeevan

Boy :

lagjyar jesa saga nelsa jesa ita

jangati ye jeevan bitausa

Girl :

nato dhukha Cheulai daju pahilema

saga nelauye feulu digima

Boy :

dhukha chyawo langa thakkarni baini chyawo langa

saga nelau jeta ye jeevan bitaunanga

Girl :

itahiti gachuk din daju bitausa

dyapai niko kamjangati chhyanesada

Boy :

saga nelau hangalai ye jeevan bitaa

dyakhe niko pragati chhyanida

(Chepang Suskera-II, A :5)

In the given song, there are two speakers, boy and girl, who are starting their introduction through the medium of song. They introduce each other and start asking questions about their place, life style, socio-economic status etc. to each other. Especially, the girl answers the questions asked by the boy. The girl, tells her pathetic condition, lower economic status, food crisis, painful condition of the past, poverty etc. to the boy. The boy also answers to her. From the beginning till now, the Chepangs have to face many difficulties in their life. Where ever he goes, he has to face the same. The boy says consoling her, do not worry because we all have to face

same problems. We all are sufferers. Therefore, eat what you have. The rich person never give us but nature provides us like githha, bhyakur and sisnu etc. But at last, both agree to progress in their life and shows it to everybody.

The given song shows the significant role of the song in their community. Even, in the way where they met, they start singing songs to introduce to each other. Therefore, we can say that, the Chepangs are experts in singing folk and dohori songs. Like blood, song is infused in each and every vein of the Chepang body. So, song is very important for their life and community. In this song, the girl seems very pessimistic at the first glance, but later on, she seems very hopeful because of the consoling power of the song. Because she achieves healing power from the song and immediately she has changed her pessimistic vision to optimistic vision, due to the healing nature of the song.

Through the medium of song, she is able to act out her pain and suffering. Due to the healed soul, she is able to see the rays of hope. After then, she promises to do something new in her community. she also requests the boy to do something in their community and shows it to everybody.

Music and songs do have magical powers. It can bring sudden change in the society. It can bring drastic change in the world. There are various evidences that music and songs do bring drastic change. Cultural revolution bring sudden change in the world than other revolutions, because cultural revolution can bring sudden change in our mind-like in the speakers of this song - because music and song can heal emotionally and get ready to die for the betterment of nation or community. Therefore, in this song, both speaker are ready to do something new for the betterment of their community. Through the medium of song, they are healed emotionally and get ready to do something new even if they have to face any danger. Through the

medium of song, the pain, suffering and anxiety of their soul are acted-out and they are able to see the rays of hope for their betterment. Therefore, at last we can say that, songs have magical powers which helps to act out pain, and suffering from their wounded soul because of the healing and therapeutic function of songs.

III. Conclusion

Chepang songs are the true representative of Chepang culture, tradition and tragic condition of their life. They bear those pains and pathos searching relief in songs and communal life. Basically, their songs represent their oppressed and marginal position in Nepali society. Therefore, we can say that, Chepang songs are the expression of their pains, lacks and sufferings. They sing songs to get solace and relief from their miserable condition, economic crisis and painful life. We have already known that Chepang life is full of miseries, needs and pains because of poverty. Even in such condition, they sing songs and enjoy. Therefore, we can claim that their songs have a therapeutic function for the community and they also play the role of acting out pain and suffering caused by their oppressed and marginal position in Nepali society.

The Chepangs express and exchange their feelings, wishes, pains, sufferings and emotions through the medium of songs. In most of their cultural practices and performances the role of singing comes to be significant. By the expression of their pains, sufferings and miseries through the medium of songs, they are able to forget their miseries and pains. After then, they feel peace in mind because our subconscious minds are designed to love rhymes and rhythms. That's why good songs, music and poetry touches our soul. They help us heal emotionally. Some of them will bring up strong emotions. This must happen for healing to occur. Therefore, the Chepang sing songs to get relief and solace in their mind because songs have magical powers to heal the wounded soul and mind emotionally caused by poverty stricken. That is why trend of singing songs are very famous and prevalent in each and every village of the Chepang community.

Most of the Chepang songs represent their painful life. Even in the love songs, there are issues of pains, sufferings and needs. These factors always haunt them. Their pain, suffering, torture and anxiety are repressed in their dark side- other side of psyche-which gives them extreme/severe pain. So, they want to get rid of such severe pain, and then they start singing songs. Because they have not found any alternative except songs to erase and act out their pain and suffering. Through the medium of songs, they are able to act out pain and suffering which help to heal their wounded soul. Chepang sing songs to gather in one place. Therefore, through the medium of songs there takes place catharsis which helps to heal the soul. Everybody has found such a miserable condition of self and they also find a pitiable condition of the speaker. Therefore, there arouses pity, fear and empathy which helps to get healed as a whole. So, there is a possibility of group healing. In the case of cathartic situation, there occurs group healing. Therefore, we can clearly say that Chepang songs have a therapeutic function for the community.

In Chepang community folk songs occupy a significant position. On each and every auspicious occasion, they sing songs. Generally, the subject matter of their songs are pain, injustices, inequality, desire and so on. Therefore, we can say that literature is a represented form of reality. It means, any literary genre should present true picture of society. In this regard, we can say that their songs are based on reality and acceptance. Their miserable and painful condition is expressed in their songs. They accept their miseries and pain easily. They can't deny it. So, we can say that their songs are generally based on acceptance of pathetic condition but not denied. If we accept and take anything else whether it is favourable or unfavourable to us, it can't create problems and torture but if we deny it, it can create several problems. So, acceptance of reality can help to decrease the problems and tension. Chepang songs

also based on reality and acceptance. Therefore, we can clearly say that their songs can heal and give solace to the mind while singing. In this way we can say that they can act out of pain and suffering because expression of pain and suffering to others means to let out of pain and suffering-expression of problems means acting out of problems because it goes side by side.

Nature, according to the Chepangs, is a manifestation of god and supra-natural powers that should be worshipped to make human life smooth. This belief of the Chepangs has truly been represented in the Chepang songs. Nature is taken as cosmic mother. Therefore, the Chepangs are very near to nature and get solace from it to heal the broken heart. The Chepangs believe that the more they near are to nature, the more they will be secure, moral, disciplined and happy. Therefore, they believe that natures provide life for them.

The Chepangs express and exchange their feelings, emotions, wishes and desires through the medium of songs. Songs have a major role and position in their culture. In most of their cultural performances and ritual practices the role of singing comes to be first. They sing different kinds of songs like dohori, jhyaure, asare etc. in different situations. In cultural and ritual performances the Chepangs sing traditional songs like laulau, mankham, kongkochyong kanchhi and so on.

Most of the Chepangs have forgotten their original culture and have started to adopt the culture of others communities. Their life has become more complex and artificial than in the past. Due to cultural transformation, significance of songs is gradually decreasing. The original cultural practices of the Chepangs are existing only in some of the original inhabitants. Otherwise they have almost forgotten their originality. Traditional songs like kanchhi, tungnima, laulau etc. are about to

disappear. So, there is a great challenge to preserve and continue their traditional cultural heritage.

All in all, the Chepang songs truly represent Chepang culture and their painful life. Chepang life is full of miseries, pains and needs because of poverty. They live a life of simplicity and innocence and bear those pains and pathos searching relief in songs and communal life. At last we can say that Chepang songs have a therapeutic function for the community as they are the means of acting out pain and suffering caused by their oppressed and marginal position in Nepali society. Therefore we can clearly say that Chepangs songs act-out of pain and suffering of the Chepangs.

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