

**Death Ritual Practice: An Explanation of Contextual Reality
and Contemporary Trends**

A Thesis

Submitted to the Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology

Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur ,Kathmandu, Nepal

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the

The Degree of Master of Arts

In

Sociology

Submitted by

Abhiyan K.C.

Roll. No.17/066

T.U. Regd. No.: 6-2-519-18-2006

Central Department of Sociology

Tribhuvan University

Kirtipur, Kathmandu,

2013

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
CENTRAL DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY/ANTHROPOLOGY
KIRTIPUR, KATHMANDU

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

This is to certify that **Mr. Abhiyan K.C.** has completed the dissertation entitled **Death Ritual Practice: An Explanation of Contextual Reality and Contemporary Trends** under my guidance and supervision. I am satisfied with his dissertation, therefore I recommend the dissertation committee for the evaluation and approval.

Prof. Dr. Chaitanya Mishra

Supervisor

Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology
Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Kathmandu

Date:

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
CENTRAL DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY/ANTHROPOLOGY
KIRTIPUR, KATHMANDU

APPROVAL LETTER

The dissertation entitled **Death Ritual Practice: An Explanation of Contextual Reality and Contemporary Trends** by **Mr. Abhiyan K.C.** has been evaluated or accepted for partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Master in Sociology/Anthropology.

Evaluation Committee

Prof. Dr. Om Gurung
Head of the Department

Prof. Dr. Chaitanya Mishra
Dissertation Supervisor

.....
External Examiner

Date:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the course of the grounding of this dissertation it would not have been possible without the help of supervisor, friends, respondents of the study area and related institutions. So, first of all, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Chaitanya Mishra, Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology for support, encouragement and constructive comments and suggestions during various stages of this dissertation.

I would like to show my gratitude to my respected teacher Prof. Dr. Om Gurung, head of the Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology for his valuable input to this study, similarly my appreciation goes to my all respected teachers of Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology.

I would like to thank to the respondents of K.C. Gaun, Khadka Gaun and Thapa Gaun of Sainbu, Bhaisepati, Lalitpur for their kind cooperation and help.

Last but not least. I owe to my parents whose contribution made me to achieve master degree from Tribhuvan University, similarly I would like to thank my sister Uma K.C and friend Kailash Koirala and teachers Milly Joshi and Kapil Dahal and typist Ramesh Maharjan and other for their direct and indirect help.

Abhiyan K.C.

Kirtipur

December, 2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page No.
Letter of Recommendation	i
Approval Letter	ii
Acknowledgement	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Tables	vi
 CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	 1-13
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Literature Review	5
1.2.1 Empirical review	5
1.2.2 Perspective: Structuration	7
1.3 Statement of Problem	10
1.4 Objectives of the Study	13
 CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	 14-20
2.1 Nature of Data	14
2.2 Field-site Selection and Justification	14
2.3 Research Design	16
2.4 Respondent's Profile	16
2.5 Data Generative Technique	18
2.5.1 Case study	18
2.5.2 In-Depth Interview	19
2.6 Narrative Analysis	20
2.7 Limitations	20
 CHAPTER THREE: CHANGES IN DEATH RITUAL PRACTICE: FUNERAL, MOURNING AND POLLUTION	 21-75
3.1 Funeral	21
3.1.1 Route and Place Taken for Cremating the Dead Body	27
3.1.2 Involvement and Engagement of the People, Mortician and the Priest in the Time of Cremation	32
3.1.3 Method of Carrying the Dead Body	37

3.2	Mourning	43
3.2.1	Arrangement of Food Practice	51
3.2.2	Arrangement of Setting a Place for Mourning	56
3.2.3	Gift Giving and Taking	59
3.2.4	Dressing Arrangement of Male Mourner and Widow	63
3.3	Strictness and Restriction of Pollution Apply to Close Kin	68
CHAPTER FOUR: INTENTIONALITY BEHIND THE USE OF AGENCY		76-110
4.1	New Deconstructive Thinking	76
4.2	Reflexive Priest	80
4.3	Householdlization	85
4.4	Resource constraint: Environmental and Manual	89
4.5	Market: The Maker of Choice and Practice	92
4.6	Collective Enthusiasm	96

REFERENCES

GLOSSARY

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

LIST OF TABLES

	Page No.
Table 1: Summary of Coverage, Strengths, and Weaknesses of Literature Review	9
Table 2: Background Characteristics of Practitioners	18
Table 3: Differences and Changes in Death Ritual Practice	74
Table 4: Consciousness and Material Conditioning of Internal Socio-Cultural or Socio-Ritual Life	