

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

When a person dies, family, friend, neighbors, and a mourner in all societies respond in patterned ways to the death. Parry (1982) defines "death as the instant at which the *pran* or 'vital breath' leaves the body". And it means death ritual begins when a person stops breathing. Durkheim defines ritual and rites as a code of conduct or manner of acting (cited in Bohannan and Glazer, 1988, 254). Culture is the guidelines of code of conduct that determine the practice, which an individual learns from the society in the process of socialization. Gutschow and Michaels (2006) defines death ritual mostly as the concern with the process of 'embodying the existence of soul'.

Every major regions and societies retain universality of idea of belief in future life or rebirth (Goody, 1959; Parry, 1982) which is objectively associated with embodiment of the existence of soul. Langer (2007) accounted that death ritual practice in Vedic epoch was largely concentrated around the idea of ancestors and immortality without the belief in reincarnation but shift in it was found in *puranic* epoch which holds the concept of 'rebirth'. The concept of 'rebirth' was largely associated with concept 'karma' which was not found in earlier Vedic texts but in *puranic* texts. Oestigaard (2004) writes concept of "karma is the law of ethical recompense that governs existence, or *samsara*; and hence closely related to rebirth". . This ideology largely dominates the land of south Asia, particularly of India and Nepal, and entirety of Hindu philosophy. However, concept karma means 'ethics'. And this ethical recompense of deeds governs the rebirth i.e. next life of deceased.

Durkheim (cited in Goody, 1925, 397) writes mourning is not the spontaneous expression of individual emotions but it is a duty imposed by the group and his dictum entails that 'the ritual can be defined only after defining the belief. In *garuda puran*, it is written that 'just as men wear new clothes casting off old ones, so also the soul obtains another body leaving the old one' (cited in Ostigard, 1998, 10). In the same way, Parry (2002) accounts that when a person dies then soul sets out on its journeying to 'the abode of the ancestors' (*pitr lok*) where it arrives on the anniversary

of its death, having endured many torments on the way and in '*Vaitarney*' - torments which mourners seek to mitigate by the ritual they perform on its behalf. Thus, death ritual is (citation, Gutschow and Michaels, 2006) a process of deifying and pacifying the soul in which chief mourner restitutes the deceased into the new body and transforms the *preta* into the *pitr* during the ritual practices by restricting his socio-physiological aspects.

The chief mourners and community have two different aspects to perform. One is formal aspects of ritual which includes core elements which seldom exchanged and substituted like *pinda*, *dekuro*, *mandal*, hymns- recite, cremation etc. And second aspects is socio-physiological which are reported substituted, altered, shifted, postponed, interpolated, omitted,...re-invented which includes methods and ways of doing, eating, sleeping, dressing, making, restricting, etc and which are institutionalized practices. These are the aspects of impurity and purity that practitioners are accorded as according to concept of '*karma*' which is strictly a practical issues to model body as par with the ritual beliefs. This second aspect is reported by Gutschow and Michaels (2006), Kropf (2002), Galvin (2003) that practitioners are seen using the different methods and ways other than traditions and normative practices to model body and behavior but the changes and the causes of the changing trends are unanswered, unidentified, and unaccounted by researchers.

All societies practice rituals. This tradition is part of social actors who produce and reproduce it within the process of oscillation. And society and its actors change or oscillate when the mode of production is changed. Tuner (1967) and Malinoswoki (citation, Bohannan and Glazer, 1988, 274) say ritual adopts and periodically readopts the bio-psychical and bio-social needs of group and individual by absorbing the new ritual practices reproducing the ritual in new form. It is assumed that chief mourner, widow, kinfolds and *guthi* association are found changing the socio-physiological practices due to change in condition of existence from agriculture dependent socio-cultural life to market dependent socio-cultural or socio-ritual life. These practices are 'moral rules' of community which are structure of legitimation found in the position where practitioners are sanctioning it. This process, on the other hand, means practitioners are sanctioning the '*karma*' i.e. sacred duty which is ethical recompense

on which rules of purity and impurity is formed. And the changes in ritual are largely manifest in liminal phase.

The main classical sociological construction to the study of a death ritual ceremonies was made by Van Gennep in 'Rites de passage' (cited in Goody, 1959) that is the study of liminality. Goody (1959) writes includes "rites of separation, where an individual cast off from his earlier status; this is followed by the intermediary stage and series of rites; finally, the rites of unifying whereby he is inducted to the new status". And this approach viewed the death as final rite de passage which involves major changes in status of individuals' as well public recognition of the separation of the deceased from world and of the bereaved from the dead, and finally unifying of deceased soul to the *pitr lok* and the bereaved to the community of the living. For Turner and Durkheim (cited, Olaveson, 2001) liminality is the state in which *communitas* and effervescence can emerge, can be both creative and destructive. And it is largely observed in the recent report prepared by Gutschow and Michaels (2006), Kropf (2002) and Galvin, (2003). *Communitas* is creative in the sense that ritual practitioners are creating the new elements (for instance, not wearing white dresses by widows because they do not desire) which is reported by Galvin (2003) and it is intensely shared awareness. And *communitas* is destructive in the sense that wearing white dress was reported well respected institutional practice and '*karma*' which is omitted by most widows which justified agency exist which are reflected in options like legal support, single living, jobs etc. And these changes are brought when feudal society oscillates into capitalistic nature. But for the explanation of dynamics in socio-physiological aspects of the practice this approach is not enough.

Another approach to understand the death ritual was textual perspective. It assumes the correlation of practices with the written text. It is the way of observing the formal ritual practice with textual referent in which same symbols (like *pinda*), ways (like making *mandala*) etc are seems more static. And it is not enough to account for the changes.

Contemporary approach to understand the dynamics in practice that most researcher are found to use was structuration approach with its powerful concept like 'agency' and 'practice' to account changes. This approach assumes the duality of agency or structure in which structure is manifest as a enabling by providing multiple choices

like legal right from legal system; income independence from economic structure; liberty from democracy etc which practitioners are found to use. This options and choices are core factors and the only condition in which agency survives. And ‘agency’ means volition to go against the structure or traditional practices if needed to. However, agency becomes nearly sole cause to create the variability in death ritual practice because any structure is the outcome of past agency which is recursively associated but is always the condition for change. For instance, now many *purohits*, chief mourner, widow and *guthi* which are indispensable part of working whole of death ritual are found not only breaking the external criteria of practice like father is giving *dhagbatti* (pyre) when deceased son is socially and ritually legitimate to give pyre (reported by Gutschow and Michaels (2006) ); *katte* Brahmin are ritually assumed as having despised and impure but he is incorporated in community (reported by Kropf (2002); widow wearing red sari (reported Galvin(2003) but are also remaking the structure. these are some of the successfully example of used agency by practitioners which are outcomes. This outcome is not the same because it has new element of agency which is shared awareness and appreciated and thus it can be said structure pre-exist agency and outcome of past agency. And it is recognized that it is necessary to account the cause behind the use of agency and locate the differences in socio-physiological aspects of practice.

In Nepal, there exists a great regional variation in the practice of life-cycle rituals. Even within the urbanized Katmandu valley ritual differences considerably depend on the priest, caste, ethnic groups, class and religion and ‘the Chettris’ is one with all that features. Since 1980s onwards, Nepalese economy was penetrated by neo-liberal strictures and market became dominant force that determines the form of life-cycle rituals like marriage, *pasne* (Acharya, 1957; Rankin, 2004). In the same way, due to the available options and choices, value spheres, professions, ideologies, urbanization and so forth by which people increased their transformative ability (agency) of staging and form of self. All these are used as staging devices that individuals can show themselves to audiences as “they choose”. Despite this fact, the intentionality of using agency or use of agency and role of market that determine the variability of ritual is still left to explain and comprehend. All human societies practice death ritual but they do not practice in ritually prescriptive way. Some societies have virtual disappearances of many of the external evidences of death ritual and some have less.

Some societies have preserved the virtue of this institution as their predecessors did and some societies cannot but there is none of the account of the Chhetris.

## **1.2 Literature Review**

There are plenty of literature on the practices of death rituals in Nepal and elsewhere. However, in Nepal, there are few literatures of the dynamics of death ritual. This chapter reviews available literatures on practice of death rituals and meanings inscribed in it. Here, some important empirical works done by Gutschow and Micheals (2006), Galvin (2003), Kropf (2002), Toffin (1987) and Nepali (1956), Ahmed (1986), and Rankin (2004).

### **1.2.1 Empirical review**

Gutschow and Micheals (2006) are authors of 'handing death'. Their study is based on textual perspective. They report that death ritual is an act of impurity; embodiment of the 'soul' of deceased; its' deification and pacification; and memory and mourning. Their larger objective was to show used texts are not normative texts that restrict action but on the contrary, they leave space to create changes in it. And these creations are means for adopting ritual liturgy to the actual situation depending on the macro-meso-micro level of effects. But what are the means or causes to create changes in ritual is unidentified that is reason behind the use of agency. So, my aim is to identify the above mentioned unidentified means and causes which is largely responsible to bring changes and to account explanation. Another important part of this book was that it outlined the role of agency in creating variation in ritual like practice are observed substituted, omitted, alternated, postponed re -invented etc but how and why agency is able to create these effects is not mentioned. They identified the agency is varied between the practitioners and the priest holds more agency than others. And my aim is to verify these aspect. However, authors are also shown in the position that on the basis of concept agency which they used as tools to test and revise the theories of myth, sacrifice, kinship and ritual.

Kropf (2002), presented her thesis-conclusion of the eleventh-day '*katto-khuvaune*' ritual is a striking example of rational thinking of agents (the priests, the mourner, and the spectators) than thinking as according to the myth and religion which is largely

related to practical issues. Her thesis was an explorative in nature and offered urban development, democratic constitution or variety of alternative world-views might be one of the causes so to happen or all or others as well. She has reported new nature of agent and dynamics but had not account changes with cause. Therefore, my aim is to identify, the how dynamics in ritual is conceived, apprehend and interpreted to understand the agent view point and to find out motive as well why and how its rationalization happened.

Galvin (2003) in her ethnography of widow of urban Nepal is based on life-histories by using 'practice' and 'agency' as a conceptual and theoretical framework. Her main intention is to justify the existence of relationship between choices widow have and the strategies they employed which brought the changes in practices. And she successfully justified the postulate that if structural constraints reduce an individual's options to one then it is fairly clear that agency can no longer survive but in case of multiple options like security (home and food), single living, jobs, having son etc then agency is vibrant. But according to Bourdieu, 'strategies' are internalized structure like prestige of have son, single living, etc. They are 'habitus', a cognitive schema of the institutions or world to act. And what is lacking in this ethnographic analysis is to show why and how 'schema' is formed. And this 'schema' manifests the motive or cause that is solely responsible for why widows are using agency which brings the dynamics in ritual. And this is my objective.

Nepali (1965) and Toffin (1987)

Both authors are oriented with their functional perspective to analyze the Newari society. Nepali (1965) has successfully outlined 'death' is an essential part of structure i.e. Newari society. When death happens, then whole *guthi* association, deceased close-kinfolk, neighbors are bring in relation to each other where exchange of emotion, communal labor, moral ethics, custom, economy, etc are met at one point and crisis of death is reduced with the turnover of collective solidarity and cohesiveness which is the structural motive which death successfully contributes.

Toffin (1987) has successfully outlined that 'death' and tutelary God function to maintain the territory integrity and cohesiveness by grouping people to worship common God and tutelary God. It is observed that these Gods are form of *Newari*

society i.e. they were ancestors and source of origin. And every locality has one temple which symbolizes the territorial unity between group who belong to one particular lineage group and ancestors. And death means the process of making the deceased the ancestors. The ancestors were the form of common God. These common God were regularly worshipped by community in specific period of year. The death brings a period to meet with the ancestors in which whole society participate which then meet the structural motive that is cohesion between people and relation of dead to living and territory.

This functional approach is not enough to understand the dynamics in death ritual. Therefore, my thesis will cover the changes and differences in practice.

Rankin (2004), in her study presents the effects of macro-economic liberalization in Nepalese markets since 1980s onwards up on the level of household. As per her thesis, the effects of neo-liberalization up on the household do not modernize the community in unilateral ways through the deepening and expansion of markets. Further, she says that rather reflect the dialectical process of the agency of local actors and structuring force of wider-scale economic processes in which 'market' values do not merely replace 'traditional values' rather new regimes of value articulate with old ones creating opportunities and constraints for each hierarchical groups on ladder differently. Therefore, I have also intended to account the effects of the market in making the ritual dynamic.

### **1.2.2 Perspective: Structuration**

After the protracted controversy between interpretive and positivism structuration approach resolved the problem of agency-structure linkage. For Giddens (1984), structuration is neither experiences of the individual actor nor the existence of any form of social totality but practices ordered across time and space that constitutes the duality of agency and structure. The core of interaction (linkage) is via practice between agency and structure. And practice is tool to analysis as well as it is never ending 'ongoing human activity'.

To inquire into the structuration of social practices as to seek to explain how structure are constituted through action and reciprocally how action is constituted structurally.

Another important tool is conceptualization of individuals as agents who are recursive and have continuously monitored their own thought and activities as well their physical and the socio-cultural contexts. This assumption is important which imply that actors do not only have power to account about their social surrounding but also imply that the motivation involves the wants and desires that prompt action.

There are three important features of agent (cited in Thompson, 1989) and they are; reflexive monitoring of action which is largely related to discursive consciousness which entails the abilities to describe our actions in words; rationalization of action which largely relate to practical consciousness which entails what agents know about the world (context); and motivation of action which includes both which I will use in analysis to reflect my interpretation and inferences.

Bourdieu's concept of structuration (cited in Parker, 2002) conceived practice as the application of embodied (positional context) understanding to determine the relevance of general principles as rules, recipes, and formal procedures. As Jary and Jary write that habitus is "the durably installed generative principles which produce and reproduce the 'practices'". According to Bourdieu habitus are the mental or cognitive structures through which people deal with social world or a system of durable transposable dispositions. It is internalized schemes that reproduce the practice rather than reproduction of agency and structure. Practice is where structure and agency reside and the duality of structure and agency.

Archer's morphogenesis strutation perspective (cited in Parker, 2002) sees the endless sequences and cycles of structural change, alteration in action and interaction and structural elaboration due to the internal relation of the material condition of social life... and it does not entail reification. This perspective sees structure as a system or institution that requires conformity or complicity, consciously or unconsciously as internalized values that regulates the behaviors of its subjects. Archer's structure includes any things which pre-exists agency, has durability and relative autonomy is causally efficacious and may be elaborated in interaction. Structures are the outcomes of past agency. Thus, concept agency is vital for structuration process as well to understand the 'death ritual'.



Agents are presupposed as aware, powerful, and creative and free as well as structures are flexible. Hayes (1985), emphasized explication of the production and reproduction of society on the accomplished outcome of human agency and Giddens (1976) say society as recognizing it as ‘a skilled accomplishment of active human subjects instead of reality as simply ‘given’. Giddens views agents as perpetrators of activities and agency as the ability to act strategically in one’s self-interest potentially against the aims of structure. Agency is the fundamental concept which is integral to concept ‘choice’. One must have choices otherwise agency can no longer be invoked.

Henceforth, this thesis will focus up on some concepts like agency as a tools and theoretical framework of this perspective to analysis and explain the contextual and contemporary reality of death ritual as well to tally my thesis results to understand whether we need analytical distinction or not to reflect structuration process.

**Table 1: Summary of Coverage, Strengths, and Weaknesses of Literature Review**

Authors, year	Basic idea	Coverage	Strength	weakness
1. Gutschow and Micheals ,2006	Agency and dynamics in death ritual	Testing old theories of sacrifice, ritual, kinship myth...etc as well to show used text are not normative	Identified the effects of agency that changed the form of practice like substituted, omitted, ad hoc invented...etc	This is explorative in nature and do not includes why agency is being used in ritual that is reason behind the use of agency
2. Galvin , 2003	Widowhood status and agency	How widow’s status and disposition implicated; widowhood in relation to extended kinship network, resident, marriage etc	Justified effects of enabling and constraining quality of widow’s status and agency as sources of freedom, opportunities, better life etc	Rather it is about the state of widowhood and their experiences than death ritual practice
3. Kropf , 2002	Rational thinking of people	Ignoring the aged long practice as well supported by majority	Successfully shown one dimension of agent that is rational consciousness which is indispensable to be	It does not show the motivation or why rationalization happened?

			free agent and employ agency	
4.Guneratne,1999	Shift of ritual authority	Shifting of authority in relation with migration, deforestation, malaria eradication project; decline in	Shows the structural man-made environmental changes migration become options used within structuration brought dynamics in ritual practice	The conclusion is deduced rather based on statements
5.Ahmed, 1986 and Goody, 1959	Belief mediate action	Constraining power of belief on custom	Justified	It can not be said in the case of Nepal and it needs verification
6. Nepali, 1965	Death is a part	Contribution of part to sustain whole	Justified	Lack of aspects of dynamics
7. Toffin,1987	Linking death, , god, ancestor to territory	Death is process of making ancestor and ancestor is god and each territory has temple; and occasionally or annually collective worshipping is perform	Justified: collective unity and cohesive	Lack of aspects of dynamics
8. Rankin, 2004	Market and cultural aspects	Effects of neo-liberal ideology and market penetration	Justified: changes in everyday activities-life cycle ritual etc	Do not contained any account of effects of market on death ritual practice

### 1.3 Statement of Problem

Death is an inevitable fact as well as essential life-cycle ritual that all societies observe within their own socio-cultural guidelines. Dynamics in death ritual is reported when all societies are introduced to new socio-cultural arrangement and with shared awareness. In the matter of death ritual, functional-textual perspective has been given major attention which largely focus on the external criteria of ritual element like

status, hymns, *pinda*, *mandala* etc but another aspects of death ritual is still ignored that is agency aspects of socio-physiological behavior of mourners.

Free encyclopedia (website and data accessed) has reported that globally, most popularly practiced religion all have their customary ways of doing and dealing with death. They hold belief in a continuation of soul. In Hinduism, it is believed death is part of the continuing cycle of birth, life, death and rebirth. Buddhism believed on death of the physical body but only a part of ongoing process of re-incarnation until one receives enlightenment. Life, death, rebirth and enlightenment are the central theme of Buddhism. In the same manner, Islam sees death as immutable order and believes that there is another world after death for which they should prepare during their lives on earth. And Christianity, holds death as a passage from which this life to the new, everlasting life promised by the Christ. Those global religious practices are reported and highly subjected to change. It is reported that in 2009, 99.9 percent of Japanese dead bodies were cremated as well in the same way, in 2010, in America 40.62 percent were cremated (Cremation Association of North America) and in Australia, in 2008, 65 percent instead of burying in the customary way.

In Hinduism, death occupied a special place in religion. Some of the hymns from *puranic* text are; 'there is no salvation for man without son. He can never attain heaven without a son'; if the corpse is kept on unsmeared ground, the soul-spirits enter the corpse'; if the funeral are not performed in the prescribed way, the soul of the deceased (in rebirth) deviates from the righteous path and falls in the company of the wicked'; and form the Reg Vedic '*agni* (fire) who carries away the corpse...' (Cited in Langer, Rita, 2007 and Ostigard, Terje 1998).

In Nepal, death rituals no longer appear to be strict rather dynamics in the practice within the communities has been reported. Guneratne (1999) has reported that changes in Tharu's practice of death ritual was largely influence by the cultural practice of Brahmin of hill community, malaria eradication and deforestation programs. Subba (1995) has reported Limbus have started to follow the Brahmin practice such as '*Vaitarney*', *dhana*, and observing mourning period more than three of four days. In the same manner, Kropf (2003) has reported that Nepali mass now no longer believed in '*Katto Gahrney*' practice rather stand strict against this ritual practice. Gutschow and Michaels (2006) has reported in the case study of *Newar*,

priest plays more influencing role in bring the dynamics in practice. Some researchers have outlined the structural influences like Sanskritization, Nepalization, liberal market economy or rational values. And some have outlined the agency aspects to account the dynamics. However, there are no accounts and reports to outline the dynamic of practice of the Chhetris.

The Chhetris are today most numerous and widely settled group of people in Nepal. The 2011 Census of Nepal has enumerated that Chhetris occupy 16.6 percent out of the total 2,64,94,504 population. Historically, Karnali Khasas (means pure Chhetri of khasa kingdom) represented the ancestors of today's Chhetris of Nepal. However, one remarkable fact of the Chhetris is they are also by product of hypergamy marriage in which they inherited their Braminal clan names represent the hybrid Chhetris (cited in Sharma, 2004). They are Hindu and speak Indo-Aryan language. These Chhetris are mostly identified by their socio-hierarchical stand and cultural rules of commensality which is based on the ideology of impurity and purity marked as unique and different to other ethnic groups of Nepal. But the dynamics of death ritual practice of Chhetris has not been studied especially socio-physiological aspects are largely related to practical issues like dressing. As it is observed that (cited in Rankin, 2004 and Acharya, 1957) people are ascent in terms of economic one than cultural and hierarchical largely dependent on the cycle of production and consumption brought by market which not only affects the everyday activities but also reproduced the new form of life cycle ritual.

However, the explanation for the contextual and contemporary practice of death ritual which subsumes the intentionality behind the use of agency and effects of market in the death ritual has been largely overlooked by many researchers. Henceforth, these issues will be substantiated by the cases of Chhetris. This thesis seeks to answer the following questions:

- What are the changes and differences in death ritual practicing among the chhetris?
- Why are the changes and differences in death ritual practicing?
- How the dynamic in death ritual is conceived, apprehended, and interpreted?
- What are the motives behind the use of agency in practice?
- Why does agency result in death ritual practice?

- How does market create variation in death ritual practice?
- What are the effects of market in practicing death ritual?

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

Aim of this thesis is to study the contextual and contemporary socio-physiological practice of death ritual among chhetris of Kathmandu Valley.

Specific objectives:

- To find out the differences and changes in death ritual practice over a generation among chhetris of Kathmandu Valley.
- To find out the intentionality behind use of agency by performer (mourner, priest and close kin), which results in variation in death ritual practice.
- To find out effects of market in creating variations in death ritual practice.
- To provide the theoretical framework for the study of changes in death ritual practice.

## CHAPTER TWO

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 2.1 Nature of Data

I have chosen three dimensions of death ritual practice to explain the contextual and contemporary trends in death ritual. These dimensions are the 'Rite de passage'. And I have intended to collect the information about the socio-physiological aspects of mourner to account the dynamics.

Death Ritual Practice:

- Funeral site:
  - Route and place taken for cremating the dead body.
  - Engagement and involvement of the people, mortician and the priest in time of cremation.
  - Method of carrying the dead body.
- Mourning site:
  - Arrangement of food practice.
  - Arrangement of setting a place for mourning.
  - Gift giving and taking.
  - Dressing arrangement of male mourner and widow
- Pollution site:
  1. Strictness and restriction of pollution apply to close kin.

#### 2.2 Field-site Selection and Justification

For the purpose of study I have chosen death ritual practice as a field to study. It is final life-cycle ritual an individual celebrate as well as his family, kin and community. The death ritual among Hindus is formally determined by the *puranic* concept. Though death ritual looks formal, it is not same now in performances and practices. The changing intention of performer and variation in the form of practice has been observed. I take this dynamics as an effect of oscillation (like effects of market in

changing the beliefs and cultural practices based on impurity) based on impurity) to be compatible within the capitalistic culture (like single living widow and doing jobs as well wearing white *sari* etc). The death ritual is also continuing its formality but also creating variability in it.

The proposed field site for the study I have chosen is Kathmandu in the south-west periphery (K.C-Thapa-Khadka *gaun*) of Bhasiepati. It is assumed that this periphery of Bhasiepati is equidistance and midpoint which carries sum of half of its' characteristics of urban fabric and rural fabric mode of life and ideas like; people are conscious of caste ideology but not strictly rather class; all expose modern amenities like bike, television, internet, concrete house; locality is touched to pitch road; wage as a payment than *parma*; some of women are busy in economic activities and some are housewives; some are cow herders and some are doctors and engineers, and some have business enterprise and some are workers; land are partially rented for cash crops and partially used for farm and agriculture; people largely dependent on market; educated as well uneducated; living individual life etc.

However, disappearances of traditional values and custom substituting it with the economic values as well emerging new class structure as most authors (Acharya, 1957; Ranklin, 2004; Liechty, 2003) labeled it 'middle class' is also becoming persisting features of each locality. In addition, larger number of households and daily life activities of each individual is based on non-farm income than farm and off-farm income. These people are economically active and middle class people. They largely depend up on market for income earning and for living though they are local community. In the same way, population under study and localities are homogeneous in many aspects like they are Hindu-Chhetri; speaks indo-Aryan language; they shared the prestige of being local; they can easily reflect the history of locality and socio-cultural aspects and many more; they reflect the similar life style and changes which they adopt etc and these features they manifest now are cross culturally recurrent more but not less.

The settlement of this periphery has been largely under the influences of market economy like depend on jobs. Traditional values (like impurity and purity, *parma*) are functional only to reflect the nostalgic impression rather modern life (like jobs, practice of restaurants), relationship (class base) and values (like health conscious)

becoming dominant value and everyday experiences. This is the places where new values and practices are enshrined by people within enmesh of value complexities. Because of this fact, it is assume that agency of people are fundamental for the recreation of relations, practices and self. And this periphery is assumed as a point of transition between old and new. Therefore, I hope it will meet my research questions.

### **2.3 Research Design**

The study will carry in three different localities: K.C-Khadka-Thapa. The nature of design is cross-sectional in which my intent for the study is to collect information about motives of performers in practicing the dynamics of death ritual in two steps. The first step is to consist of case studies of 12 participants. These 12 participants are divided in to two strata. One half of strata is belonging to the priest. This stratum is consisting of the 4 priests who are historically belonging to these four localities to their priestly service. The other half of strata is belong to mourner groups who had practiced death ritual of their parents and had successfully transformed to experienced stable authority of ritual practice. This case study on the motives towards the ongoing dynamics in the death ritual will base on in-depth interview. And I will meet each respondent and interview face to face and those who give their consent will be interviewed at any place convenient to them.

### **2.4 Respondent's Profile**

Rishikes Risal is 62 years old. He lives within joint family and does priestly service. He has studied up to B.A and had mourned two times. He is currently applying pollution for one year.

Vaskar Risal is 48 years old and had mourned once. He has studied up to S.L.C and does priestly service. He lives with single family.

Rajendra Gautam is 51 years old and has single family. His occupation was to provide priestly service to community members. He had mourned three times and studied up to S.L.C.



Rajendra Kumar Luitel is 48 years old. He has completed his S.L.C level education and lives within single family. He had mourned two times and gives his priestly service to community members. He is currently applying pollution for one year.

Bimal Kumar K.C is 63 years old and lives as a head of joint family. He had mourned three times. He has studied up to Test and lives retired life. He is currently applying pollution for one year.

Kamal Bhakta K.C is 70 years old. He has studied up to Test and lives retired life. He had mourned once and lives single life.

Dilip Kumar K.C is 49 years old and studied up to eight classes. He is broker by occupation and head of joint family. He had mourned five times.

Kumar Thapa is 53 years old. He had studied up to S.L.C and lives as a head of single family. He has business and mourned two times.

Jay Ram Thapa is 62 years old. He is head of joint family. S.L.C is his achieved educational status and works as a social worker. He had mourned two times and now in between one year of pollution.

Manhari Thapa is 49 years old. S.L.C is his achieved educational status and does business. He lives within single family and mourned two times.

Krishna Raj Khadka is 62 years old and B.com is his achieved educational status. He lives within single family and mourned two times. He is retired.

Purshotam Khadka is 51 years old and B.A is his achieved educational status. He is school principal and lives with his unmarried sons. He had recently mourned and in between one year of pollution.

**Table 2: Background Characteristics of Practitioners**

Name	Age	Education	Family type	Current status of 'doing'	Times 'ego' mourned
1. Rishikes Risal*	62	B.A	Joint	Priestly service	2
2. Vasker Risal	48	S.L.C	Single	Priestly service	1
3. Rajendra Gautam	51	S.L.C	Single	Priestly service	3
4. Rajendra kumar luitel*	48	S.L.C	Single	Priestly service	2
5. Bimal Kumar K.C*	63	Test	Joint	Retired	3
6. Kamal Bhakta K.C	70	Test	Single	Retired	1
7. Dilip Kumar K.C	49	Eight	Joint	Broker	5
8. Kumar Thapa	53	S.L.C	Single	Business	2
9. Jay Ram Thapa*	62	S.L.C	Joint	Social worker	2
10. Manhari Thapa	49	S.L.C	Single	Business	2
11. Krishna Raj Khadka	62	B.com	Single	Retired	2
12. Purshotam Khadka*	51	B.A	Single	School principal	1

This table brings together the basis background characteristics of practitioners in which B.com means bachelor in commerce, B.A mean bachelor in arts, S.L.C means school leaving certificate and Test means those who are eligibility to give S.L.C exam. And this (\*) sign means they recently had mourned and they are in between the one year of pollution.

## **2.5 Data Generative Technique**

### **2.5.1 Case Study**

A case study is a detail description of an event, incident, occasion, groups, institution, or process...and so forth of entire life of social unit or a definite section of that unit. In this research, I have intended to use some key cases which will be selected by information-oriented sampling method to illuminate only a definite section of death ritual practice i.e. the reason for variability of death ritual within its real-life context.

This case is not only case of individual life experiences of the definite section of practicing death ritual rather this case is itself the case of structure of society i.e. the death ritual which entirely will be manifested through the individual experience then it is valid not only as a case of individual practicing and experiencing but of both, a case of death ritual and a case of individual with relation to his society.

Finding the reasons or explaining the practice of death ritual can do in a number of ways. An explanation either by later or earlier events but my cases are largely from the concurrent context of the practice death ritual, the contextual explanation. The performer in death ritual is seen as a part of the surrounding society, and his experiences and values are examined in connection within his social, culture and an economic condition. For instance, we have to understand how and why agency has evolved and whose motives it supports.

This contextual explanation of dynamics of death ritual is complementary entirely with theoretical framework of structuration perspective which is itself design for the explanation of contextual reality or “becoming” of death ritual practice.

For the illumination of this thesis, I have chosen twelve cases. Eight cases are of mourner. And the four cases of the priest. The reasons why I have chose this number of cases is that changes have been experienced by these categories of people who are first generation people and head of their respective household who had/have practiced in past/present. And second reason is that(cited in Perinbanayagam, 1957)as Schutz puts “others” as the alter-ego which implies “the stream of thought which is not mine, shows the same thought through connectedness as mine” and it is sufficient to represent from key cases to entire communities or localities and also to reach the saturation point.

### **2.5.2 In-Depth Interview**

According to Taylor and Bogdan (1984:77), in-depth interviewing is, ‘...face-to-face encounters between the researcher and informants directed towards understanding informants’ perspective on their lives, experiences, or situations as expressed in their own words. The interview is style in conversation form than a question-and-answer session. As Schwandt (1997:74-75) writes in qualitative interview, the interview is constructed more as a discourse between two or more people which is not so fully controlled by the interviewers questions but is in fact constructed by both the

interviewer and the respondent over the course of the discussion (cited in Baker, 1999). This interview tries to develop specificity about the dynamics in socio-physiological aspects of death ritual that have occurred in the respondent's life world and this is the theme. And it is obvious that qualitative interview will bring ambiguity or multiple responses which may be contradictory but I will meet the challenge and filter to preserve only needed information to understand the changes on theme and try to map the sociological significance.

## **2.6 Narrative Analysis**

Narrative analysis is based on the premise that human beings are essentially raconteur who experience the world and interact with other through storied lives which has contextual and temporal dimensions. Narrative is one of the most important schemas human uses to organize to information. It is the method to get the subject to tell 'the story of his/her life' in his or her words about the experience of life, its turning point's etc. 'ego' tells about their lives. How the subject viewed his own life in relation to particular socio-cultural aspects and how society looked up on the subject. Here, for my research study I have intended to use narrative in which narrative/statements of people are based to analyze the subject matter of research (Reed, 1989; Colyar and Holley, 2009). And I have use role-taking method to account and report my analysis. And it is method in which researcher enter in the mind of respondents i.e. response that they provide and stabilize within it then reflect the responses with interpretation.

## **2.7 Limitations**

- My cases mainly represent the cases of practice of natural death ritual of adult members but not the children and accidental death practice.
- I have intended to analyze it form the man's point of view. And I do have included narratives of widows.
- The case study do not entail the information about the changes and differences of the formal ritual practices like making *dekuro*, recite of hymns, *pinda*, ritual *mandala* etc but of socio-physiological behavior like carrying dead body, arrangement of place, dressing etc.
- The study is contextual and location specific. Therefore, findings would not applicable in all places but if exist similar context and socio-ritual life.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **CHANGES IN DEATH RITUAL PRACTICE: FUNERAL, MOURNING AND POLLUTION**

Death ritual practice is regarded as one of the most important life-cycle ritual of human societies. In Nepal, death ritual practice includes practices of funeral, mourning, and pollution applied to close kin. The analysis of death ritual practices to locate the changes in the contemporary time (2070 B.S) is based on the conceptual framework of 'Rite de Passage'. As I have mentioned in above pages that I have regarded funeral and mourning as a liminality in death ritual practice. The concentration of my analysis is much more revolved around the liminality than the post-liminality and pre-liminality to understand and explain the changes in it. In this chapter I have tried to present the changes and differences in death ritual practice.

#### **3.1 Funeral**

Funeral is liminal period in death ritual practice. It includes the preparation of dead body, route and place taken for cremation, engagement and involvement of people in time of cremation and method of carrying the dead body. It defines the whole process from dying to the act of cremation. This section tried to present the experiences of changes in funeral practicing of practitioners (mourner and priest) who had attained and performed the funeral practices two and more times. In response to my investigation about the changes and differences in funeral practicing I have collected their experiences and conceived by comparing the funeral practicing of 2 decades ago and now (2070 B.S). Every practitioner narrated same story of changes and differences that they experienced within their locality between two decades while practicing and participating funeral practicing. When they were asked what changes and differences did they experiences and why? They replied:

### Case of Dilip Kumar K.C.

My father died in 2043 B.S in village and then all village people were assembled and engaged there to share the work of cremation like cutting trees, carrying dead body, preparing *chita*, and sympathy etc. The dead body was shrouded in white cloth and it was tied in bamboo stretcher. We had to lift the bamboo stretcher on the shoulder and carried all the way to local cremation ground. Only close kin were allowed to touch the deceased dead body and people from other community were not allowed to touch. As I remembered we always had cremated the dead body in village cremation ground. It was clean and had open space. All resources were available in locality at that time like tress, hay. We used fixed place and route to do so. It was my memory of my father's and mother's funeral. She died in 2043 B.S. We did it according to customary ways. We did as what local priest said us to do.

But now main thing what we do with dead body is same as before that is we cremate it in the *ghat*. But the processes, ways and method we had in the past days is now is changed. Now a person whether dies in home or hospital people use and prefer ambulances services to carry the dead body. Instead of local cremation ground people prefer other places of *ghat* where facilities and services are available when we pay charge like labor mortician in pashupati *ghat* , *chita*, ritual materials (*dhagbati* and *chita pinda*), which are available in immediate in a minute. Now local *ghat* and river in local *ghat* is polluted.

My brother died in 2066 B.S and the assembly of *guthi* members from village area is low in number in participation in funeral. He was died in bike accident and kept in Teaching hospital. We took from there on road to pashupati in ambulance and he was cremated there by *ghat* employee. I only witnessed him burned in flame. At the time of my son death in 2068 B.S I had took him on ambulance than traditional ways on bamboo. Whenever and wherever if some dies then ambulance service is summoned to pick-up. The reason it that it is 'trouble free', easy and uncomplicated way. People are now busy in their daily activities of office, business etc and those who are present in the time of cremation do not have to involve in funeral activities like cremating, arranging *chita* etc these are done by hired mortician who is *ghat* employee. It becomes very-very easy to all nowadays. It is brought by time. All these facilities which were not available in 2-3 decades ago. It is appreciated by society as well people seek it.

### Case of Jay Ram Thapa

With burning incense people (*malami*) lead the path by carrying the dead body of my father in 2032 B.S tied in bamboo stretcher on shoulder. They took the route and place of local *ghat*. It was clean open space at located at the river side near the temple of the Jalbinayak. Only the senior family members of the deceased like adult sons and uncles who were close in kin (*nata*) or *khalak* were actively involved in the time of cremation. Other people who were not of the same *khalak* or outsider were not allowed to touch the dead body. The local priest was there to perform the ritual services like *chita pinda* giving in the *ghat* and *dhagbati*. Dead body was considered very-very impure. It was my memory of my father funeral practicing in 2032 B.S.

But now people I used the vehicle to carry the dead body of my mother in 2070 B.S and use the *ghat* employee to cremate. I do not have to involve necessarily and personally in the time of cremating. Cremating as well priestly services is provided by *ghat* employee. People have changed the route and place of cremation ground. Now people go other places instead of local cremation ground because same facilities which are available in the *ghat* of pashupati are available in local area. In the *ghat* of pashupati all the arrangement will be made by the *ghat* community like *ghat*, *chita*, mortician, priestly services, sugar and ghee, *dhagbati* and *chita pinda* as well clothes etc. And this is the main reason now I and my *khalak* do not need the *guthi* members to participate in funeral as well people now think that they should not give trouble to other members of the *guthi* associations by calling them to attend in funeral. They think it is bad idea because people are busy in their respective works and have no time either to participate. Only the close kin are participating in funeral. My mother died in this recent year (2070 B.S) and it was my experiences. I did it easily with the help of outsider for services like transportation and *ghat* facilities. Now dead body is considered as a normal and natural thing than sources of misfortune and impure.

### Case of Purshotam Khadka

We did it according to Vedic rules. These practices were from the time of the Narayan (one supreme God of Hindus) and so the tradition were. Members for the *guthi*, relatives and lineage brothers from the community were gathered and involved in the time of funeral. Participation was larger in number. We had to carry dead body on bamboo stretcher which we had made from Bamboo plant. We had cremation in the village area and only elder who were experts of preparation of *chita* knew the cremating ideas were involved in cremating. It was very difficult. All resources were available in local area like trees, hay, bamboo, open and clean space, river to cremate which was environmental and human to carry trees and dead body, to prepare *chita* and to cremate as well priest which was human resource. In past, there were no facilities like today's like road, ambulance etc

But now nobody carry the dead body on bamboo stretcher. This practice is dead in our locality. My father died in 2070 B.S in hospital and I took him in ambulance towards the *ghata* of pashupati instead of local *ghat*. Now people take other places like in the *ghat* of Tekku, Sankhamulla etc where *ghat* facilities are available. In pashupati, the *ghat* community arranged and organized the mortician, *ghat-chita*, ritual experts ...etc which are needed in the time of cremation. These morticians do the dual tasks as a mortician and as a priest. So that now participation and engagement of lineage, *guthi* members are not necessary in the time of funeral because all facilities and services in the time of cremation which in past was manually used to provided by *guthi* and lineage members are available immediately in pashupati *ghat*. Now few lineage group participate in my funeral as well people are busy too and unable to attain in immediate time. It is time relative.



### Case of Rajendra Gautam

In early time when any one from community died then members from community were involved in preparation of cremation. People had to carry dead body on their shoulder. There was no other an alternative or means to carry like ambulance, pitch road etc. People took it to the local *ghat* of chobar which was only place I and my *jajmana* had used to cremate the dead body. It was clean and situated in the bank of Bagmati River which was considered Holy River and opposite of Jalbinayak temple. People desire to cremate there. People believed that those who were cremated in the holy place will reach to heaven. Priest was needed in the time of funeral to ritualize the funeral rite like *chita pinda* and giving *dhagbatti* etc. Only the person from lineage group was involved in the time of cremating the dead body. It was difficult and time consuming. We did all practices as according to traditional ways and Vedic rules. It was guided by elder and it was strictly regulated and respected by lineage.

But now people easily carry dead body in transportation and I did so. All my *jajmana* take to pashupati where mortician services, *chita* and *ghat*...whatever needed to cremate the dead body are easily available in quick time. It is because people are now individual than social and environmental conditions are degraded like pollution in water in local *ghat* area. It is time relative.

As according to compatibility of my questions with the experiences of practitioners of funeral the similarities can be observed in the experiences of all practitioners. We came to know that they have identified the changes and differences in funeral practicing while comparing practices and context of 2 decades ago on the basis of socio-cultural-environmental situations, availability of facilities, thinking and mode of living style.

According to practitioners, two decades ago people considered dead body highly impure and death ritual as a religious act or scared duty (*dharma*) to follow it strictly. They believed on misfortune and ghostly existence of deceased soul (*preta*). They did funeral practicing exactly in traditional ways such as carrying dead body on bamboo

stretcher, used of same place to cremate, only lineage community was allowed to cremate and touch dead body where as other who were not of same caste and community was restricted to touch and participate and presence of hereditary priest of local area...etc

People of village only lived in village area and did agricultural works. They were available immediately when someone died. They provided manual labor to accomplish and prepare the dead body to cremate. People were very religious, supportive and share emotions and grief of tragedy. The local environmental resources like trees to cremate, hay, bamboo, clean water and open space near the river are and other things were easily and freely available.

Now practitioners considered dead body as a normal and natural thing than impure. They do not believed on misfortune concept and belief attached with death ritual. People do not fear of breaking religious manner and changes are attained as according to the consent of the local priest and vice-versa. Now people do not live and work in agricultural fields for subsistence and living. Most of village people whether male or female do have their respective works in city like office works, business and other things. They are economically independent and egoistical. They desire comfort and facilities. Now people depend on outsider to carry and cremate dead body. It becomes simple, quick, easily and effortlessly done with the involvement of few people. They regard all this changes and differences as a time relative.

It means that the contextual reality is turning to be some how different now than 2 decades ago and it is because of market elements-rational thinking that the practitioners are nowadays utilizing the available facilities in market area for easiness and quickness. This utility of modern facilities in funeral practicing not only simply adjust with peoples' new living life style and habits but it breaks and replaced the institutional practices which were the shackles of tradition. Now *ghat* community provides the services of *ghat* employee and other arrangements to cremate the dead body which replaced the collective involvement of cremation action and act of local village people. In the same way transportations services replaced the method of carrying dead body. And the contamination of river water and *ghat* space as well lack tress to cut, hay, bamboo and in other hand lack of manual labor and aptness to arrange and manage the funeral practices between local people become coercive

factors to replace the institutional practices like route and place, method of carrying and involvement of local in time of cremation. Therefore, it can be said that changes and differences in practicing funeral has been conceived by practitioners and it is reflexive in their narration.

### **3.1.1 Route and Place Taken for Cremating the Dead Body**

This sub-section of funeral tried to fully concretize the changes in the process of funeral practicing. In any funeral practicing 'Route and Place' occupied a crucial place in society which defines the nature of community, territory, environment, and people and of death ritual as well established the linkages between them. Any changes in it designate linkage of changes in whole process of practicing. Identifying causes of changes and differences in 'route and place taken to cremating' is an important aspect to locate the concealed contextual reality of death ritual practicing. In this section I have tried to present closer look of particular narratives of cases of 'route and place' to present in better explanation to understand the changes and differences in it. When they were asked to share experiences of changes and differences in it and why? They replied. Let's see some of the cases on their words.

#### **Case of Kumar Thapa**

In two decades ago, the route and place we had used was local cremation ghat of Sainbu which was just opposite of the Jalbinayak temple at the bank to Bagmati River. The reasons were: it was near and located at the periphery of village; it was religious belief that those who were cremated near the holey river and in temple arena will be reached in heaven. It was also textual requirement. And the environmental resources were easily available in village surroundings like clean river water, tress hay, open space and support of village people.

My father died in 2060 B.S but I had not practiced exactly because changes in food and cooking practice had emerged like eating fruits and cooking in liquid stove. And at time people started to take to pashupati as well. But I took him to local *ghat* and my brothers want so to do and use local resources like tree etc. All *guthi* members gathered and involvement in funeral from cutting trees to carrying it to *ghat* and preparing *chita* etc. When my mother died in 2068 B.S it was different in

many ways. I had taken her in sabhbhahan in pashupati. Now people have changed the 'route and place' towards the *ghat* of pashupati. The reasons are: the local *ghat* becomes unmanaged; river is contaminated; space in ghat is dirty a cover with the bushes. The another reasons is that *ghat* community is pashupati arrange and organize the cremation and funeral services like mortician, priestly service, *chita* and *ghat*, clothes, *dhagbati* and *chita pinda* and other all necessary things. When we pay the cost of services they provide the facilities 24 hours. It is safe and secure as well easy and comfort to all in time of necessity. We do not have to worry whether it is raining or night. We can with help of few people can attain it. The third reason is that the unity between *guthi* members and khalak is weak. It is because of busy, disputes and ego problem. And the forth reasons is that people desire and want easiness and comfort so they prefer the facilities which become alternatives to practice funeral easily and I personally do not want to practice it traditional ways because I do not believed on it and to me it is meaningless so why so we not use facilities at least it gives us comfort-ness. And it is developed and modern form of ritual.

#### Case of Krishna Raj Khadka

We used village route and place which was traditional route that our father and grandfather always used to cremate the dead body. My father died in 2048 B.S and I did as according to traditional ways. The cause was that it was nearer to village as well it was easy for the *guthi* members because they had to carry trees, dead body and other things. More the shorter distance more the relief for the *guthi* members. And second cause was that there was holy temple and water of Holy River which was religious-textual requirement to cremate the dad body and people believed on it.

My mother died in 2058 B.S and I took her in local *ghat*. At that time river was contaminated and no facilities were there like water, clean and open route etc. I had *guthi* association and they did funeral preparation like carrying trees, standing until dead body was fully cremated etc. But now time is changed. Most people are busy in their works and have no time in immediate need to prepare the funeral practice. People are now lazy. In the local area there is lack of manpower to do funeral

practice in traditional ways as well people do not desire and interest to do so. Lack of clean space and contamination of river side in *ghat* so that now people seek and take to *ghat* of Tekku and mostly in pashupati. There we can have cremation facilities like mortician, *ghat*...etc. so that people can cremate easily without involvement in cremation. It is effortless. Now pashupati is place to cremate. And most important people are lazy.

#### Case of Kamal Bhakta K.C

Jalbinayak, it was the village route and place we took the dead body to cremate and it was fixed in that time as well people did not have other options. We named it '*murdha laney bato*'. In early days, it was clean, open place, river was clean and we had easily performed the ritual act like bathing, cooking, washing, and making *dekuro* too. My mother died in 2005 B.S and I was 4 year old boy. I do not have good memory of that but it was the way.

But in this recent period I had taken to pashupati, *arya ghat* to cremate my father's dead body. He died in 2065 B.S. All of the members from my community do the same thing. Bagmati river is contaminated and dirty. Local route and place are covered by bushes and is lacking open and clean space. People are disintegrated and do not desire to clean and arrange *ghat* with facilities. People have problems in their home affairs. Sons do not obey father's request and vice-versa. It is the cases between the brother and lineage members. Nobody has respect to each other. People are egoistical. They behave like they do not need anybody such is the mentality of today's people. Now people are not communal rather are individualistic and are independent financially and free. They have money. Now facilities are available in the pashupati like mortician, priest, *Chita*...etc. People used it instead of depending on *guthi* for help and support to cremate. But in past these things like *ghat* services, ambulance, road etc were not in existence. What I remember is that even in 2028 B.S there were no market, road etc.

### Case of Rajendra Kumar Luitel

It was in the *ghat* of Sainbu, just opposite of the Jalbinayak temple. The reasons were *ghat* was near the village area; near the river of Bagmati and temple; clean water of river and open space of *ghat*. It was also because in that time there were no pitch road, vehicle and we had to walk long distance to go to the *ghat* of pashupati. People were religious in their practices. They thought death was ultimate salvation that took them either in hell or heaven. And people believed that those who cremated in the holy places will be taken to '*Vaikuntha*'.

Now many people and all my *jajmana* are taking to the *ghat* of the pashupati. This is because in chobar (local *ghat*) the river is polluted. The *ghat* is covered with bushes and dirty stuffs from the river. Now nobody was interested to clean as well make it from the business point of view like in the pashupati and to do cremation preparation like preparing *chita* from raw tree and carrying it to *ghat* etc. now we have vehicles, road, money etc and so we took to pashupati.

Now people are disintegrated due to jobs, business, and desires and with their thinking. They are busy and educated. They know the world affairs and hold the comparative knowledge of funeral practices of other community and of other countries. There is now no environment aptness to cremate the dead body. People take to other places where they do not have to involve because *ghat* employee will do all funeral activities like making *chita*, cremating... etc. People are lazy and comfort –facilities seekers. My mother died in this year and took her to pashupati as well.

As it is assumed by ritual theory that ritual periodically readopts the bio-psychical needs of individual. This process of periodical re-adaptation of bio-psychical need are observed largely in the causes of the changes of funeral practicing which made the real differences in practicing the funeral while comparing practicing of two decades ago and now. The local environmental conditions which in the past provided resources like clean river, open space, trees, hay...etc which were freely and easily available in local surroundings which satisfied the communal life and their bio-social needs are now become unable to satisfy and sustain the demand of people by same

environmental resources. And this become coercive factors which compelled people to choose the alternative options available in society which meets the same purpose.

Now facilities are available in market like transportation to carry dead body, road and *ghat* services like employee mortician, *ghat-chita* etc to cremate to dead body which were not existed in past. These facilities directly satisfy the bio-social needs of society like anxiety, comfort, jobs constraint, quick and reliable etc. These effects of market elements like vehicle, *ghat* service emerged as options as well destructive to traditional ways. Thus, creations of the options to people which are the only thriving sources to emerge and flourishes agency between people as well communities.

Now people have become individualistic. They do not want the interferences of community member in their household affairs. They are economically independent and busy in office works, business and in other things. This becomes indirectly influencing factor that people choose the facilities available outside in society which satisfies their bio-social needs i.e. their individualistic living style, freedom, comfort...etc. and the other hand, individualistic nature of people reflect the weakening communal hierarchical chain of order and which thrive the real situation to flourish the agency.

In past, one of the most important bio-social needs of individual was comfort. It was found in the narration of practitioners that they had chosen the route and place to cremate dead body was location near to village periphery and this comfort as bio-social desires of individual is constant still today. They desire comfort so they used frailties which are consistent with individualistic living style, options of facilities, lack of environmental resources. Most importantly it seems structural factors like environmental situations, market facilities played coercive factor which causes to change the 'route and place' as well it directly satisfy the bio-social needs like comfort of people which they had desired and maintained in past and still urge for more comfort.

### 3.1.2 Involvement and Engagement of the People, Mortician and the Priest in the Time of Cremation

I have collected the information which entails the current situation of involvement of the people, mortician and the priest who will reveal how current situations of practicing funeral is different to that of two decades ago. The similarities of experiences are found between the practitioners when they were asked the questions like: who were involved in cremating and how they did it? And who are involved now in cremating and how they do it? And why? Every respondent answered that they experiences new practices emerged a decades ago (2060 B.S) and it is continuing in society. Let's see what they have said.

#### Case of Bimal kumar K.C

My father died in 2035 B.S and what I remembered is that people had to cut down the trees and made the pieces of it out of which the *chita* was made. These people were belongs to *guthi*. After we had placed the dead body on the *chita* the local priest was involved in performing the funeral rites like uttering textual hymns in the time of giving the *dhagbatti* and after cremating the *chita pinda*. Mostly elders from close lineage were involved in cremating the dead body and other *malami* had also participated. They did others things like carrying tress, hay; cleaning *ghat* arena etc. only members from the local community were involved in touching, carrying and cremation the dead body.

Now, only my family members and close lineage are seen in funeral site than whole members of the *guthi* association. My mother died in 2070 B.S and only my brothers and sons who are kin (*nata*) are present and rest of the *guthi* is not informed to participate. Only few people are needed because population in *khalak* is increased. In past, only four household was in K.C *khalak* but from the same household it extended to more than twenty five household. Thapa *khalak* were our *guthi* but now we do not need them and they do not participate and from our own *khalak* people were not seen participate because of busy. They deposited the cost of the *ghat* community and then *ghat* employee managed all the facilities and services like mortician employee, *ghat-chita* ... etc. And that mortician wholly and actively



involved cremating and rest of the close kin and participators in funeral site do not have to do any activities but witness cremating. And then why should we need many people in funeral site as well nowadays people are too busy and I think we should not disturb or give trouble to other people simply calling them which disturb their daily activities like business, traveling, office works.

Now traditional ways are time consuming; needs a lot of manpower like to carry trees, dead body, making *chita*, cleaning *ghat* area....etc; lack of resources in immediate need like trees, hay, bamboo, and arrange that because people are busy in their respective works like official things; and it is painful and difficult. Who want difficulty and pain? So now it is irrelevant nowadays due to above causes and so people want facilities so that rest of above mentioned tasks of cremation need not be needed if you used available facilities like transportation and *ghat* services.

#### Case of Manhari Thapa

It was experiences of my father death funeral. He died in 2044 B.S. Actively our *khalak* involved in the time of cremating though k.c *khalak* is our *guthi* association. Among the members of the *khalak* only aged who were experts of cremating like kaka (uncles) in kin and close adult persons of deceased involved in touching and cremating. Local priest was available for performing the ritual and rites like *Chita pinda* and *dhagbatti*. We had dependent on communal from K.C *khalak* who are participated there for carrying trees and cutting it, preparing *chita*, and participating until deceased was cremated...etc.

Now *ghat* employee does all the cremating things like preparing *chita*, cremating, uttering religious hymns (ritual services)...etc we only need to pay charges of that services. Actively our *khalak* involved in the time of cremating though k.c *khalak* is our *guthi* association. Among our *khalak* few close kin and aged of community participate in funeral site. Now we do not involve actively I mean we do not have to work there like preparing *Chita* etc. it is full involvement of employee of *ghat* we just witness the cremating. It was my experiences of my mother funeral practice in 2063 B.S.

I think it is good according to time. I mean people are economically independent, educated, busy, and most importantly we have facilities and services that reduce our effort and they do it easily then why should we not appreciate it and use it for better for all people. And second reason is that pollution increased in *khalak*. I mean three/four decades ago few households were there now extension of members for same few households increased more than twenty four/five households. And even now from the genealogical distancing people participate in funeral. Those who are of three four generations from same grandparent are participating and sharing. They are close kin to each other and those who belong to seven and of above generation may not participate. And this increased population in *khalak* between 3-4 decades may be one cause in disintegrating involvement relation in funeral. If one *khalak* have enough members then why should one need members from other community.

#### Case of Rishikes Risal

Almost people were village people of same lineage. Neighboring village people of another lineage group were also involved in funeral. These groups involved in cremating activities like carrying the dead body, cutting trees and carrying it to *ghat* and in other things. Only the close kin and aged did the main task of cremation i.e. to cremate it. Other did not touch it. It was highly considered impure and people respect and believed on this religious aspects. Only close kin touch the dead body and other people who were not of same lineage and women children were not allowed to see. We priest were always summoned for ritual services like offering *chita pinda* and uttering mantra in time giving of *dhagbatti*. We had to calculate the astrological timing of death of deceased which further decided it need further more ritual act or not which includes *panchak* ritual.

Now involvement of people in cremation are also huge and few in numbers it depends who is died. People came to participate in funeral to express sympathy but not to involve in funeral activities like carrying dead body and preparing *chita* etc. The reasons are that many people died in hospital. And there is situation that people in immediate need do not find the traditional aspects like manpower to carry, making bamboo stretcher etc instead transportation available any time and which

become ultimate option to people.

Now people become modern. I mean people are educated, busy, self-calculative of what is good and bad...etc and they know the affairs of the world through traveling, technology (T.V., internet, radio). People are now expose to outer world than only of village and have comparative knowledge like what Newar do in funeral and what Tamang or Christian. Now religious values and morality is declining. They considered it as just a tradition and nothing more. People's concept and thinking is changed and they redefined the practices and religious issues like impurity of dead body. They considered it as normal and natural thing. They considered religious ideas like impurity is non-sense. And majority of people allow touching and cremating the dead body to outsider like *ghat* employee. The authentication of *ghat* employee who should be priest is doubtful. And it is appreciate because majority of people did it. When someone goes against the will of majority then nobody will listen to you. So have consent with my clients. And we cannot force people to do exactly as according to tradition. Now people do not listen as we want them to listen and do. We, better be quiet. It is like putting water in sand.

From this above information it can be observed that every practitioner and people of society is free to decide what to choose. Practitioners are seen *ghat* services, transportation, road, instead as according to traditional communal ways and involvement to cremate the dead body. Now options and facilities are available easily which on the other side in society flourishes favorable condition that influenced the agency i.e. options of 'now, how to go on'. Agency as according to sociologists is synonymous to 'action', 'practice', 'doing', and 'how to go on'. And one interesting feature of agency is it has potentiality to go against and modify the traditional ways and practices as well it thrives when more options and alternatives to traditional way are available in hand. Otherwise, not.

In the two decades ago, in the narration of the practitioners it was found that involvement of each members of community was compulsory because different manual activities needed to cremate the dead body like cutting trees, carry it to *ghat*, hay, dead body, cleaning *ghat* area, managing *chita*, priestly services...etc were only

achieved when people engaged and involved collectively. And environmental resources were available in locality easily and freely. Local people depend to each other and with environment for necessity (trees), the exchange of sympathy and support collectively. All this was available in village boundaries.

But now this all activities and arrangements is solely provided by the *ghat* community and transportation services which curtail the importance of engagement and involvement of people on local area. And this emerging trend took place when environmental resources like trees, clean river...etc and human resources (manual help to carry) are not available immediately in time of needed. And in this context, *ghat* facilities substituted the traditional engagement and involvement pattern of people because individual is free to choose new options. And what makes one to choose the new practices then?

This freedom to choose is provided by options (choices) brought by market so market elements are sources of freedom as well agency but when using options the institutional ways has been breached. Now facilities in society like road, motorbike, ambulances and *ghat* community becomes the sources and basis for strategic tactics of practitioners which influenced thinking, decision making, and behaviors which determine the agency i.e. 'how to go on'.

When I am analyzing the information, the second thing is revealed that is householdlization which is casually linked. Householdlization refers to freedom of privacy of decision making and acting in society in which community is not supposed to interfere in their private affairs. Now people do not want to interfere in private affairs of other household and expect same in response. It seems people are maintaining neutral behavior to each other whether it is death ritual or marriage. People are independent, educated, and egoistical and expose to facilities.

Now 'trouble free concept' is prevailed among the people. This refers thinking of people that is 'why should we disturb or give unnecessary trouble to community members or *guthi* by calling them to involve and participate in funeral if it can be done by few people easily as well freed from anxiety of making traditional ways like bamboo stretcher etc'. This concept is based on genealogical calculation that those who belong to seven and of above generation think why should we need to participate

in their funeral. They have their own lineage brothers (close kin of three generation). The 'trouble free' concept of people is so stronger among the people of community that determines people strategic tactics and patterning householdlization in society. This consciousness is formed and solidified on the economical capability, options of ways and desire for householdlization which are potential tactical elements of practitioners to go against the traditional ways. And people are using and appreciating it. And from this analysis it is justified that options like road, education, income opportunity, egoistical attitude ...etc are dominant to formed consciousness like 'trouble free concept' prevailed among the people and for changes.

### **3.1.3 Method of Carrying the Dead Body**

Method of carrying the dead body refers to the way how the lineage people take the dead body all the way to cremation ground. To gather the information of this fact the practitioners were asked to narrate their experiences to identify how they did and how they are doing? And why? In response to it practitioners shared their experience. Let's see some of the cases which will reveal and explain contextual and contemporary trends.

#### **Case of Dilip Kumar K.C**

The dead body was shrouded in white plain cloth. Then, people from community brought the bamboo and cut it in to pieces. Out of that lineage members made the bamboo stretcher. Then dead body was lifted and placed on that stretcher and tied with the ropes. And those who had carried incense were allowed to go ahead and those who carried dead body on shoulder walked before them. They were not allowed to wear shoe rather on their bare feet. We close kin had to carry the dead body. It was not allowed to touch by women as well even to see by children. Only the male of lineage community touched and carried it. Other was not allowed. I mean those who were not belong to same lineage community. People die in village and had no trend to take to hospital as well no facilities at that time like transportation etc.

Now at the time of my son death in 2068 B.S I had took him on ambulance instead than traditional ways on bamboo. Whenever and wherever if some dies then

ambulance service is summon to pick-up. The reason it that it is 'trouble free concept', easy and uncomplicated way. Now most people died in hospital and it is unnatural to make bamboo stretcher. If I have alternatives which do the same tasks and fulfills the same purpose that is to carry easily then why should I carry on bamboo? It is far away from reality.

I think it is non-sense in this modern time when I have transportation to carry. In early time there were no facilities like today's (vehicle, road, hospital) so that people had to walk. People were religious too and had norm that deceased should be taken away by carrying on shoulder of close kin which considered as sacred dharma and deceased should not touch by other people. I am doing what society do and I have to follow what is appreciated by society. Now it is time relative. I mean in the past I produced rice in our own agricultural field and consumed but now I do not practice agriculture like seedlings rice etc instead do jobs/work and used to consume packaged rice by buying it from market. In the same way, i had used transportation now which was not available in past if had I certainly had used.

#### Case of Vaskar Risal

When some body died then his body was often kept near the front door of the home in open space near *Tulshiplant* with covering deceased body. Bamboo was available in village side and people brought three or four out of which they made bamboo stretcher. Then people had to lift the dead body and kept on the bamboo stretcher and tied with the rope. The body was shrouded; flower and red powder was placed on it. Then incense was lightened. And people carry it on the shoulder walked towards the *ghat* area without touching to anybody in the route even not wearing the shoe and chapel. This was the way all my *jajmana* in those days did as well I did it when my father died in 2044 B.S. There were not other ways (*sabhbhahan* etc) to and even if they were people will not have done that because it was against the religious norms. People revered tradition and considered sacred duty (dharma).

Now many of my client took in the *sabhbhahan* whether person die in home or in hospital. People appreciate it and preferred. Carrying in the bamboo is forgotten practice. The reason is people seek convenient way instead of complicated way like

making bamboo to carry dead one...etc. Don't you think bamboo is complicated practice? There is no question why people seek convenient way and easiness. People are lazy and want easiness. They just seek it. Don't you think *sabhbhahan* is convenient and handy thing? So that it is widely appreciate way in society because you have *sabhbhahan* and people do not want tension of making bamboo stretcher; it is time consuming; need people to carry...etc and when majorities of people practice then it becomes rule. This is my experiences as well others.

#### Case of Jay Ram Thapa

Lineage member gathered in deceased home. They brought the bamboo from the river side. Out of which they made stretcher. Then my father was lifted in stretcher and tied with rope. His body was shrouded; flowers and red power was put on his body. Lineage who had burning incense leads the route while other who had carried the dead body and rest of the *malami* had followed them. It was case of my father funeral of 2032 B.S. People almost died in home and we did not have *sabhbhahan* services, road, *ghat* service and hospital like today's. If had we might have used them.

My mother died in 2070 B.S. in home and I took ambulance service to take her in the *ghat* of pashupati. In my opinion, it is appropriate practice because if you have option then it is not good to give pain to your own body as well to other. You should use it. I think using option does not mean we are breaking our tradition and religious dharma rather we are making our tradition comfortable and easiness for all practitioners.

The second reason is that now 'trouble free concept' (householdlization) is prevailed in society and between lineage groups. Now I saw weakening ties of kinship and 'we' feeling in *guthi*. So *sabhbhahan* is favorable in community and appreciated. And I can not carry dead body by myself, so that what majority of people seek and appreciate as according to that I have to go on. I do not think dead body is impure and can touch it by other people which was restricted to touch by other people in past. It is normal and natural thing. For the convenient of myself and for community people I have chosen *sabhbhahan*. What is harm in it? And why should we not use it? Anyway nowadays society does not have deep interest to do exactly in

traditional ways and modifications are appreciated.

Now people are scientific. I mean people use facilities, want clean and easiness, health conscious, educated and awareness (dead body is normal thing)...etc. and most importantly people now died in hospital so it become convenient to all.

#### Case of Rajendra Kumar Luitel

Bamboo was the customary means to carry the dead body. From the bamboo we had to make bamboo stretcher. Then, shrouded dead body was lifted and placed on that. And it was tied with rope in head, hip, and legs. Red powder and flowers were put on the deceased body. And a person lighted the incense and walked ahead while rest of the *malami* and carriers of deceased followed him. They walked on bare feet and shoe, chapel were restricted to wear.

Now people become modern and developed. I mean people are busy in official works and businesses, educated, financially independent, individual, health-comfort consciousness, desire clean, simple and convenient way. People have many facilities like road, ambulances-motorbike etc, hospitals, T.V., internet...etc. Therefore, transportation become convenient means for all like those we are busy in official works; who love private life; available anytime and anywhere. And there is nothing mentioned in religious text about method of carrying in bamboo. In my opinion, in past, why dead body was considered impure was that because it is proved now that almost people died with disease which was transferable to other community people so that wise people of early times made tradition to carry on bamboo so that prevention could be possible from transferable disease. For me it could be one possible reason than religious one.

And other reasons why transportation become means of carry dead body is that now most people died in hospital and it is irrelevant to carry from hospital to local *ghat* so they used it. And the local *ghat* is become dirty and unmanaged like no water facility. River is contaminated. Local people are not available immediately because people are busy in their official works and stay out of village site so lack of manpower to clean the *ghat* area, carry dead body, trees...etc. and people started to



take to pashupati and we cannot carry dead body all the way in this traffic full concrete road. So that transportation is become convenient.

Now ‘trouble free’ concept and householdlization prevailed in society. Thinking of people has changed. Now there is no question who can touch and see the dead body and who cannot. Now everyone can touch even women, children and ambulance driver whether he is *dalit* or *sherpa* it matter nothing to anybody but for early people it was impure and dangerous things to touch. Most importantly people are busy, do convenient way, lazy and options are available to meet people’s demand that is *sabhbhahan*.

While comparing the cases of above, it is justified that structure do not entails reification and nor do culture and pre-exist agency. All practitioners had imagined that ‘if we had choices like *sabhbhahan* we might had used it’ but there was not. This narration is so important from which we can infer easily people were lived choices-less but we cannot infer that they had acknowledged reification. But we can infer people desire agency i.e. choices and alternatives or new things.

One of the most important aspects which I observed in people’s social life is oscillation of ritual and social life due to internal relation of the material condition of social life which becomes very important cause. The material conditions means roads, hospital, transportation like motorbike, van..., education, TV, radio, economical independent, office works...etc. This above material condition are transformative experiences of people which not only break down the established the social barriers like illiterate to education, religious definition of act to scientific redefinition like dead body is normal and natural thing, walking to transportation, home dying to treatment in hospital which also justify the potentiality of social change is always at hand and its consequences which was benefited to individual and society as well harmful.

In past days, it is found that people died in home. And lineage and *guthi* assembled to carry. They did as according the exactness of traditional culture i.e. they carry on bamboo. People highly revered and considered as a sacred duty made by god and ticket to heaven. But it is also found there were no choices like road, hospital, public and private vehicle...etc and practice like carrying on *sabhbhahna*, hospital...etc. it is

justified that there were no such option available. But in the narration it can be observed peoples intentionality that is ‘if we had options like *sabhbhahan*, hospital then we might have certainly used it’. this desire is constraints by lacks of options like road, vehicle but agency had exist between people i.e. power to make differences, calculation of means and end, desire to live in choices and in sum ‘how to go on’.

But now there are numerous facilities like hospital, public and private transportation, education, mass media, corporate living (office work) etc which means now society has changed from choice less to choiceness or to a state of facilities abundance. Another is that now people take the sick or dying one to hospital. When someone died in hospital it becomes very-very irrelevant and unnatural to carry on bamboo. Hospital are located at different places and road is crowded with transport traffic and crowded groups of people. So it becomes illogical, irrelevant, and impossible to carry on bamboo.

Now people seems lived in ‘trouble free’ conception and lived in the structure of ‘householdlization’. So people do not expect eagerly help of community and *guthi* members rather their association is dependent solely on transportation but we cannot say it curtail the responsibility of traditional institution. Now people are busy and economically independent. People desire simple and convenient ways. Traditional ways become burden and tension rather than desire. In past, it was desire because people had norm that deceased should only be carried on shoulder of male agnates so that deceased soul easily reached in *pirtrlok* or *vaikuntha* and nobody was allowed to touch but only male agnates like *chora* and *kaka*. It was considered impure equal to malevolent bodies like *preta*, *pichas*. Now people considered dead body as a natural thing. Just a dead body and nothing more than that.

Now transportation becomes convenient refashioned form of cultural tool to carry and agency i.e. strategic tactics (‘now, how to go on’) is responsible to change the existing association of economical, cultural, social relation in one side is reciprocated with transportation and *ghat* employee. This reciprocity is firmed due to the introduction of facilities like road in society and its absorption in internal material conditioning of everyday socio-ritual life. And it is widely appreciated by institution like *guthi* and community members. This appreciation become direct mechanism in oscillation process of ritual and social life through which people’s freedom-interests, time

constraints like busy in office works, environmental problems like lack of clean river, situational problem like hospital death, desire of comfort and safety like transportation and *ghat* employee, householdlization ...etc are balanced.

And from above, we can observed primacy of structural entity like national economy, market elements, rational ideology, community services like *marbhani sabhbhahan seybha samiti*, road, jobs, health consciousness...etc are causes and its conditioning effects came in secondary sequences like householdlization, use of agency within structuration. From above, it can be said now that agency only flourishes when options are available and when community appreciates the refashioned practice

### **3.2 Mourning**

Morning is liminal period in death ritual practice. A mourner in this transitional phase has to denounce his all former status, normal behavior and activities of food intake, dressing, resting, sexual recreation...etc and incline to impure status and obligations. It consists of 12/13 days depends on astrological measure performed by *purohit*. It subsumed two aspects: formal ritual behavior and socio-physiological ritual behavior. The former includes the ritual practices and symbols like *dekuro* making, offering *pinda*, making ritual *mandala*, priestly utterance of textual mantras. The latter includes the mourners' intake of food, arrangement of place, gift giving transaction, and dressing. This latter aspects includes the restrictive norms in behavioral aspects of society that individual mourner should follow on the basis of which we can justify purity is maintain or not i.e. norms is maintain or not. Above four, latter aspects represent the customary behavioral aspects of ritual. And it will be justified if changes are not found then purity or norms or behavioral aspects is maintained and if not then it is changing. In this section I am presenting only analysis of latter one. Let's see what we will find in the cases below.

### Case of Bimal kumar K.C

I am narrating my experiences of my father which I had first performed in 2035 B.S. It was anguishable and very difficult. I had followed everything and aspects of ritual. It begins with '*chetrabas*'. And '*chetrabas*' begins after the first day of cremation. It means we cannot drink water for a day. Second days begin with making of *dekuro* in river side. It was only place to make. I had to cook food by myself only in *dekuro* side by collecting dried sticks. Each day I had walked down to river side and do everyday tasks like bathing, cooking, eating and washing the dishes. And I had to intake only boiled rice and ghee only once a day. *Bhat*, ghee, and *khada pani* was only considered pure food. Other things were highly restricted like salt, oil, alcohol, meat....etc.

It was very-very impure state of mourner. Nobody touched me and vice-versa. It was strange feeling. The place was separated. On hay I had to sleep thirteen days. It was allergic; the separated place was protected from the *kacho dhagho* (belief this raw threads protects from evil spirits) which was tied exactly above the place of mourner in three side of ceiling. Therefore, it was believed that place was protected from the *preta*. Lighten oil (*diyo*) and *saptadhaniya* was kept in pot in ritually protected area. In thirteenth days, I had offered gift to *purohit*. A gift includes a cow, bed, materials need to bed like pillow, blanket, shoe, and set of cloth, utensils and other things. It was believed that those gifts will be taken or used by deceased in the time of transition in to the next world. I had worn white dress for whole year after the purification rite. These practices were much respected practice by community as well only tradition we had. I was also constantly monitored and guided by aged elder like *kaka* and *purohit*.

Now I had practiced it in 2070 B.S repeatedly two times. One was of my own mother and second was of my mother in kin. It was very-very easy. I had made *dekuro* near the home. I did not have to walk long way to river side. I had cooked food in the room in home only boiled rice. Other foods like boiled-fried potato and ginger-chilly was made by my wife. I had consumed fruits, nuts...etc multiple times in a day. These things were highly restricted in early times. I had sleep in mat.

The gift giving process was very easy. I had made money transaction instead.

The reasons, in my opinions, are that in those days (2035 B.S) people did not have anything to consume like fruits, nuts, potato...etc. the boiled rice and ghee was only homemade food at that time. If had I might had consumed. I guess in 2032 B.S, the ring road was made. Before that there were only village. After the ring road slowly Katmandu valley took the shape of *bazzar* area. Now it is available in *bazzar* and I consumed it. We only had *sukul* and it was also expensive so we had used only hay which was available from our own farm and *sukul* was often brought with *Newar* caste. Therefore, in my opinion, *sukul* was not used and mustard oil because both were made by *Newar* of *Khokana* who came to here to barter or sell. Similarly, salt was not consumed in past because it was brought by people of *bhote*, Tibetans. These both castes belong to low caste. Now fruits, vegetable, mat, nuts, real juice...etc are available in *bazzar* and people do not have caste mentality.

In past *purohit* desire gift and gift giving was considered as a *dharma* of *jajmana*. It is their preached and believed that these gifts will be reached to deceased through them so that deceased could have safe journeying to next world. The *purohits* and elders were very strict to code of conduct. The exactness with tradition should be consistent in practice like intake of fruits and water in *chetrabas* was restricted but not now. People never questioned the ritual behavior, rules, manner, belief...etc. Now *purohit* desire money and neglected the sacred *dharma*. Most of *purohit* are belongs to second generation. They are educated not only in Sanskrit but also in science, English. I mean modern education. They are aware of modern thinking, desires, time constraints, health issues...etc. they changed the practiced because without their consent we do not dare to change. These new changes are appreciated by community members. I have to observe how and what community members are doing with practices and on the basis I had made decision as well changes. This change is not exceptional. It is practicing by members.

Now I think some practices are non-sense. For instance, I had done ritual to 12 days and I am purified. Then whatever I need to do I had did in between 12 days then ‘why should I wear white dress for extension of one year’. It is non-sense. There is no meaning in it. It bound my mobility like attaining marriage because it is believed

impure. So this kind of practice is changing. And many people had ceased to wear white because people are busy in office works and white dress become irrelevant because it will be dirty everyday causing washing problems and it does not give good appearance or personality. As well it is not mentioned in textual references. I did practice because I have to protect myself from the public criticism. Personally, I don't like it. I have three son and all of them think traditional practices were in some sense superstitious things. They forced me to eat juice, nuts and use mat as well my wife. They are also conscious of my health. After all those years of practice, I haven't got any perception that in *pitrllok* my ancestors are using my gifts and intake of annual offerings (*sharadha*). This ritual is just a memory and respect to deceased parents and I can't make my dream a source of faith to existence of the next world. Sometime I see my parent in dream.

#### Case of Jay Ram Thapa

In 2032 B.S my father died in home. I had practiced it with the Vedic and *puranic* rules. It was painful and troublesome tasks. It was arranged next day of cremation. I had to go in the river side to purify the body by bathing in the *Bagmati* river. And there I had made *dekuro*. While walking on the way to *dekuro* I was informed not to see and talk with lower caste like *Newar*, *dalits* like *sarki*, *damai* in vicinity. I had to perform *dekuro puja* for 12 days. In that period I had to cook food and eat once a day in *dekuro* side. I only had boiled rice and ghee. Even water was not allowed to drink. The place was separated for me it was arranged in base floor. On hay I had slept for 12 days. That place was ritually protected. The *kacho dhagho* was tied triangularly in ceiling exactly above the place. Oil was lightened and *saptadhainay* pot was kept there. I had given a cow, bed, pillow, other bed's materials, shoe, clothes, utensil and money. It was believed that these given gifts to *purohit* will be reached to *pitrllok*. And I had worn white dress for one year. At early period, we did not have any facilities like proper foods, mat...etc. The priest and elder of the community were so strict and conservative. They did not allow any change in practices. They were unaware about health, comfortness. For instance, when person die in farm then they assumed it was '*ban-haney-ko*' (a stroke from above), now we know it was case of heart attack and so priest.

Now I had practiced in 2070 B.S and it was far different than 2032 B.S. For me, the ritual is the same and similar to that of the early times but practices like food, places, dressing etc are changing. I like changes. What I think is that we should be scientific in practice and it is now prevailing and appreciated in society. Scientific ritual practice means de should redefine the practices on the basis of what is wrong and what is right. For me, eating fruits, potato, vegetables is right because it cease my hunger, fulfill my nutrition. I think ‘why should we give pain to our body and is it right to restrict eating’. For me, it is not right. Scientific practice means ‘do not give pain to your body’ and makes it simple and flexible to fallow by reforming the practices. And it is appreciated by community.

In those days, *purohit* made rules strict. For instances, we had some rules like not eating salt and viewing the lower castes like *newar*, *sarki* etc. It was restricted. In my opinion, it was caste based judgment and practice of *purohit* because salt was brought from Tibetan by *bhote manche* and oil, onion, garlic, nuts, *soybean*, vegetables were abundantly produced by *newar* of *patan* and *khokana* in early times. And what I think now is that eating nuts, fruits, juice...etc twice or thrice a day does not mean that our ancestor or deceased one goes to hell. Our eating habits have nothing to do with hell or heaven. I do believe on *pitrilok* but I do not believed on the acts of restricting and eating habits affects the life of *pitr* in the ancestral world. it is non-sense. Now days it is known that salt available in green vegetables which we had consumed in mourning phase than what’s the different. Anyway raining water and river water is same to me and salt found in vegetables and in packaged is also same. It is also known by *purohit*. And I came to knew all these from mass media, youth thinking , doctor advice...etc

Now those *purohit* of early time were dead and their son generation and son’s son generation are making less restrictive practices. Because these *purohit* are educated not only Sanskrit but also in modern education like about science, commerce etc. They work in hospital laboratory. They are conscious of people’s health, nutrition, and aware of modern thinking of people’s self assessment of behavior like it is good to drink juice, wear colorful dresses, read ritual text available in written *nepali* ...etc. so better than argued with the *jajamana* priest agreed with changes in practice. I had slept on the mat instead of hay because it is allergic and it brings skin

disease as well. In past, we mourned in mud house but now we practice in cemented house so after a mourning ritual many community people faced body swelling problems like in legs, hands, face, and gastric. Still I am wearing a white dress but many who work in office are not interested and they were seen not wearing white dress and women too. It is also good because white dress easily become dirty and it does not make person's appearance good. It is practically not impossible and not necessary. I had given money substituted for traditional kinds of gift and it is appreciated by priest as well they asked us to make money instead. The traditional kinds of gift (TG) become irrelevant to priest Now priest have no places in home to put gifts as well must *jajmana* give low quality gift. I had done what I observed in society and it is widely appreciated not only by the priest but by whole society.

From the above narratives we came to know that behavioral aspects has found changed. And it is justified that practice of purity or norms or behavioral aspects is weakening. One of the interesting characteristics of liminal phase is it comprises anti-structure elements i.e. changes which is re-creative like consuming juice, nuts, vegetables...etc and destructive like abandoning wearing white dresses, traditional gift giving transaction like giving a cow to *purohit*. And another characteristics is that it is intensely appreciated by community member i.e. *cummunitas* or collective effervescence.

From the above and analysis of other cases I found sharing similar contextual experiences. Practitioners had assumed past practices were suffering. They had no freedom but conditioned by strict rules, faith and fear of religion controlled monitored and guided by senior elders of community. And it is assumed practitioners were orthodox in nature. And it was justified. For instance, mourner was allowed to eat only boiled rice and ghee; informed not to see *dalits*, compulsory of white dress for a year...etc. and it was the context more dominated by cultural-tradition-religion.

The second conditioning factor which I observed was lacks of facilities like mat, income, education, road, infrastructure like hospital and education etc i.e. in sum in the words of respondents '*bazzar*'. Before the 2032B.S, there was no ring road. The Katmandu valley was segmented in villages. No modern road and *bazzar*. The conditioning factor was caste structure. The people were observed very caste



conscious and it is assumed that people's ritual practice was largely dominated by caste mentality. And it is justified. For instance, not eating salt because it was carried by *bhote manche* from *bhote*; and oil which was solely made by *manandhar* caste of *Newar* community of *khokana*..etc because those people positioned in lower stratum in caste hierarchy.

Now from their statements, it can be derived that practices are far easy. Now people do not accept the definition that their elder offer them. For instance, concept of '*vaitarney khola*', '*preta dhana*', widow and red sari...etc and these established social barriers is breaking and people conceived it as non-sense, superstitious, exploitation of *purohit*...etc. For instance, they say 'it was rules made by priest and now priest is making i.e. they want money in gift...etc. Even in the statement of *purohit* myth like *vaitarney khola*, *preta dhana* are superstitious and only tradition. And they say 'how could *preta* use the given gift when it was use by me. It was superstitious. In time of observing them their consciousness was tangled in delusion.

The second important cause is development of '*bazzar*' or market elements so the availability of food, dresses, mat, income-opportunities, infrastructural development like education, hospital, mass media, road-transportation, women welfare commission ...etc. this is the prime which not only change the physical structure of segmented village of Katmandu valley in to city life but internal material condition of social life like independent widow and freedom to wear red sari and support of women welfare commission. More the people become dependent and adjusted in *bazzar* facilities more the process of market dependent and secular thinking (like *vaitaray nadhi* is superstitious and made by *purohit*) oscillation incorporated in social life and culture. And it is justified. for instance, socio-physiological aspects are changed. In past, there was no availability of fruits, vegetables, mat...etc. And only consumed boiled rice and ghee. But now people are adjusted to more dietary habits (nutrition consciousness), use mat (heath consciousness), wear tip-top colorful dress (personality consciousness) and money as gift (comfort consciousness) and practically it is assumed that it cannot be isolated even in the normative ritual like mourning because it become daily life style i.e. 'practice'. And it is justified that agency ceased to stop when there is no choices and power to make difference by social actors.

Third cause is new deconstructive thinking which emerged with changes. Now practitioners do not think from the faith perspective but from the perspective of facilities, health, comfort, personality...etc which is more controlled and influenced by householdlization than faith, belief and *purohit*. The argument of the priest is the with mourner which are base on the heath issues, personality, income and jobs, comfort and desire of changes, lack of pure priest...etc. and second generation priest were found more flexible in the narration that they accord and they do jobs, aware, educated not only in Sanskrit but in science, english etc. They understood it simple as a tradition than truth.

From the analysis, it appears that reality is fluid and contextual so the aspects of society like culture, relation...etc. This socio-physiology behavioral aspects are changing and is more dominated with the cultural thing (like what he eats and how, what he wear) which are solidified on the economical base than cultural or traditional. And so the analysis is oriented to manifest it. It is justified culture is fluid and instrumental to satisfy the individual need and groups because cultural practice based on impurity and purity concept was transmuted to practical-economical practice. For instance, culture of not eating 'salt' and 'oil' is instrument to maintain the behavior of community so that the hierarchical domination, inequality, impervious relation and caste ideology and stratum could maintained. It is more structured by faith and fear of religion (myth of misfortune) and caste ideology. Now to fulfill socio-physiology behavioral aspect culture has reforming like mat become instrument to allergic and swelling to prevent; wearing red *tika* by widow is instrument to express her freedom...etc. Now mourner unconsciously consumed the fruits and people do not care whether it is touch by *Medhese* or by *Dalits* or by *Newar*...etc. So it can be said that old structural aspects like myth like *vaiterney khola*, belief like *preta saiya dhana*, and manner like sleeping on hay as well emotion (like we should not do exactly according to tradition) of community are weakening and new manner like sleeping on mat, new deconstructive thinking like heath, appearance consciousness and householdlization become strong. So that it can be said that agency aspects i.e. 'How to go on' or new practices which includes like health and appearance consciousness and householdlization is seen more strong than old structural aspects. And it seen this agency aspects are dominated by structure-*bazzar*.

### 3.2.1 Arrangement of Food Practice

This sub-section is designate to concretize the changes in food habits. This aspect is largely dominated by cultural practice. Similarly I have enquired how and why cultural is becoming and redefinition of purity is emerging which entails the ‘becoming’ of new ritual practice. Let’s see the some cases and statements.

#### Case of Dilip K.C

I only had *kadha-pani*, boiled rice and ghee once a day in *dekuro* side. That was as according to tradition and culture only pure food. For instance, cow is considered holy Goddesses and all products of cow like milk, ghee, urine...etc was pure. I had followed strictly because I had religious thought and belief that this restriction of food habit will bring the welfare to *pitr* and deceased soul in next world. And our ritual has no mercy to practitioners. Now I had consumed boiled-fried potato, vegetables, spices like lemon, ginger, chilly, fruits, nuts...twice and thrice a day. These foods were not allowed as well not available in past days. Now *purohit* allow to eating and I am more self-calculative. Now my son and daughter-in-law are educated. They do not like many restrictive aspects like not eating nuts...etc. they are conscious of my health. Through the radio, TV we all heard that women are giving *dhagbatti*; doing mourning ritual as well some leader like Parchanda, Madhav Nepal and actor Rajesh Hamal did not mourned. These are some reflected cases of society and they may be numerous cases like that. I had mourned but not exactly. Now eating fruits...etc become example to imitate. I had imitated some think like eating potato because people are eating then why I should not?

What I think is that in early times there were no facilities of these things. *Mangal bazaar* was only place to buy things like cloth etc and food was not accepted to consume touched by them because they were *Newar*. If there were *bazaar* like today we might have consumed. *Purohit* and elder like grandparent were extremely caste and religious conscious. Now people have no respect for religion and to elders. And one thing eating pure fruits and vegetables as well nuts does not mean I disrespected the tradition and deceased. I am religious but I have to move with the time. Time means ‘what society follow I had to follow’ as well I had to appreciate the changes

brought by time too. Now foods are available and it is consumed so did I.

I think some practice are non-sense and superstitious. For instance, red color branches vegetables were not allowed to eat but red apple. Traditionally it is considered impure for pollution practice or something like that. I do not know what the meaning behind that is but it is tradition. Now I ate red apple which means I eat, touch, red color. Now *purohit* think fruits, potato, nuts are pure but *purohit* says it is not mention in religious book.

#### Case of Rajendra Gautam

*Kadha-pani*, boiled rice and ghee were types of food. It was because it was tradition and culture. It was believed that culturally prescriptive and enlisted foods were considered pure food. And those which were not listed considered impure. For instance, the food and vegetables which were red in color considered impure. And other things which were made to produce oil as well considered Impure like soybean, mustard, etc. people believed on the practice because they considered it as dharma which will determine their journeying to hell and heaven after life. They simultaneously believed on misfortune and haunt of *preta* if not followed exactly. Such a conception of religious beliefs was strongly existed. Another reason was that somebody was seen consuming the restricted enlisted foods and things than community will not received the water from that family so that it was also fear of outcast from community as a degraded from caste stratum.

Now my *jajmana* can consume different vegetables, nuts, juice, fruits, fried-boiled potato, ginger, lemon...etc. they named it scientific ritual. *Jajmana* are educated and aware. They have traveled to many places and observed the practices of other caste group and religion. They argued with us that certain caste group and religious people can consume such things easily then why should we not. They can read the ritual book written in Neplai and argue 'tell me guru where are it is written fruits are not restricted'. We have no option rather than saying ok and they are not doing the wrong thing i.e. they are eating fruits...etc. but I have restrict then to eat soybean, mustard oil, salt. And they are following it. *Jajmana* are more think about the nutrition, diet, clean place to rest and sleep...etc than tradition practice. These thoughts of *jajmana*

are named as ‘scientific way of doing ritual’. But in past, people were uneducated, unaware about health.

Now in society there are many kinds of priest. Most of the priests are greedy kinds. They are making changes. For them what is important is money than ritual. And other kind of priest is saint. They do not consider the *karma-kanda* as a prime but acknowledgement of soul. And they show consent on changes. And third kind of priest is ‘we’. Now *jajmana* are also different. Rich *jajmana* are comfort seeker and do things as according to their wishes like they drink real juice. They have lots of money and capable to spend money in ritual. And second kind are middle class are can spend money and have no faith and fear of religion. They want changes and do things before I say anything to them. And third class is poor class and who do not have money as well have fear and faith on religion. These groups of people are following exactly but what I think is that ‘why only they should apply all kinds of restriction’ so that I have make loose restriction to them. Now people are copying to each other. People are doing but not as according to faith and belief but as according to comforts, cleanness, easiness, dietary ....etc.

Some other supportive statements

### **Purshotam Khadka**

Now people are materialistic which I means ‘rules are made by human beings than God’. They think of their health and body as a prime than faith and religion. Such feeling is existed in society. I had faith but health is important and I think eating fruits do not make big difference to tradition. Now fruits are easily available in market and people kept bringing these fruits when they came to meet me.

### **Rajendra Kumar Luitel**

‘Tell me what the harm in eating potato and fruits’. It is ok to me. For me, if salt is made in home by household members then it can be consumed because it is considered pure. Even in religious *book Viiray* nun is allowed to consumed because it is believed that it is originate in *Sindha* mountain from where the holy river

*bramaputa* and *ganga* ect came out. In early times there were no fruits, potato etc now it is easily available in market.

### **Vaskar Risal**

We allow these new practices of eating fruits, lemon, potato, etc and it is right according to health situation. For instance, ‘someone with heart problem can not eat ghee and baht then we say ok fruits and juice, lemon to consume’ and as well many Brahmin community are consuming it then how could we stop to our *jajmana*. Situational aspects compel us to modify the practice and it becomes example and copied by the other people.

### **Kumar Thapa**

I personally do not believed on the restriction apply to food habits because it was non-sense to me. What my father had achieved and what I have achieved by doing ritual. Nobody had achieved and nothing going to happen applying this kind of restriction to anybody. I had respect to my dead father and tradition but it is non-sense and negative things. It gives nothing to us. Nothing going to happen to dead parents whether I eat traditionally enlisted food or breaks it or adds new. Nobody had seen the benefit to dead parent and those who did strictly. I did but not strictly but eating fruits, nuts...etc. and now society do not have deep interest to maintain on this things rather appreciated change.

The above information is not only an experience rather it revealed the deep dual conscious of practitioners which is solely effect depend on perceived contextual reality. The perceived reality means whatever that they are experiencing may be a changes or continuing of belief or normative behaviors. The dual consciousness means practitioners are viewed as co-monitoring of its own activities and activities of others. It is at the same time internal consciousness of actors and external reality of social rules like community appreciating the fruits, nuts, eating habits, carrying dead body on vehicle etc. This rule means ‘how to go on’ which is applied by community is cause to influence or imitate fruits eating habits etc. It is validated and justified that practitioners are reflexive agent and always in co-monitoring position which is source of knowledge and power but also cause of changes.

In early days, it is accounted that people were very caste conscious. Fruits, nuts, salt, oil, etc were not consumed because it was touched by lower caste people like *bhote*, *newar*. Foods were also enlisted as according the ladder of caste hierarchy like for Brahmin and *chhetri* similar enlisted cultural foods such as ghee, *bhat*, were pure food and for lower caste like *newar* and *bhote* soybean, alcohol, egg etc were cultural foods. For *chhetri* and Brahmin all culturally enlisted food of lower caste were impure food as well what they touched. Those people (*purohit* and community) were very-religious and their belief about hell and heaven, *preta* journey to next world, *preta* and misfortune etc. They fear to breach the caste behavior because of fear of outcaste. They considered caste a religious dharma and applied largely. And it is infer from the accounts that when they applied religious dharma in ritual like only eating *bhat* and ghee they implicitly applied the caste behavior like not eating salt, oil, fruits, etc touched by other people than by their own lineage or caste group. Caste and religious consciousness is solely cause on which their cultural, socio-physiological behavior had depended and manifested.

Now people are free to make decision individually. People are much more aware about the health, nutrition, jobs, comfort etc than caste and religious restrictive behavior. They are self-calculative about the past, present, and future situations like they considered past practice as caste domination and its manifestation as an inequality, and now they unconsciously consumed fruits which are brought through market which may have touched by *Newar* or *Madhesay* or by others. These things were not easily available in two decades ago. They have added new element in practice and they have created the new consciousness as well. Now, whether rich or poor and priest, greedy or pure all have consent and appreciated and imitated because they took it as a good practice than impurity and tradition. They are aware about the situations and cases which they heard from the gossip or the media like women are giving the *dhagbatti* etc become the transformative experience of people as well of society. The definition of purity and impurity is relative and it is proved that new element of foods are added in list of purity so that we can infer that purity and impurity as well culture is sole dependent and condition to redefinition when and if it is concurred by many individuals when they are free i.e. free to think and decision making, free from expected roles etc.

The perceived contextual reality is dual consciousness which become the transformative knowledge of practice between the decades they have experienced. They have use this transformative knowledge as a means to over the practical problems like hunger, nutrition, heath issue like illness, comfort etc. This dual consciousness is source to societal change because it is agency i.e. agents reflexive power to make world different and sense different within structuration of ritual practice. Thus, it is justified that consciousness, concept, cultural practice is relative and are of effects of societal change like emergence of market elements and rational thinking.

### 3.2.2 Arrangement of Setting a Place for Mourning

So far as the information about the changes in arrangement of setting a place is concerned I have collected the views which will reveal their context and cause which is embraced by society. All practitioners shared the similar experiences and designate the causes. Here are cases and some statements.

#### Case of Rajendra kumar luitel

Mourning ritual and mourner was considered impure for certain period. So that he was separated from the rest of the people and household activities. The place was located on the base floor of house and once the mourner touched the place nobody was allowed to go there. Hay was the prime matter which was available in farm was kept on which *kriya putri* rest and stay. They were given green single piece army blanket. The lighten oil and *suptadhaniya* pot was kept there. The place was protected from the *kacho dhago* which was tied in ceiling above the place.

Now arrangement is same but people use mat instead of hay or both. Now place is often located in cement house than mud house. The place is clean, wide and open, cold than early times. Most important cause is health issue and comfort seeking habits. It is allergic to solely sleep on hay. Now people have swelling and respiratory problems due to cold which is due to cold. So to prevent the problems while doing the ritual and after it, mat was incorporated.

In early period, people were poor. They cannot afford the *sukul* to use in because it



is expensive and once a mourner touches it then it must be abandoned or burned. As well *sukul* were often made by the *Newar* caste people so that it is not use because they were lower caste. Now mat is available as well it is cheap and cold proof. If it was available in past days it might have use.

#### Case of Jay Ram Thapa

The place was separated in base floor of old house. The room was narrow. There, hay was kept in floor as equal to my body size. Above the ceiling *kacho dhago* was tied in three points. It was very-very difficult to sleep and allergic. Lots of insects were present in the hay. I was given to put *saptadhaniya* pot and to light the oil. I had slept and stayed till 12 days. It was considered very impure and very-very difficult to practice.

At that time, there were no facilities like mat, clean room...etc. I never liked it as well I had no other options like mat and community support. Grandparents and community were strict to traditional practices. Everything had to perform exactly. Whether you like it or not you have to practice it.

Now difference is that we set place in new concrete house and use same arrangement like *kacho dhago*, *saptadhaniya* pot but mat was added in the place of hay. The reason is that nowadays people are seen suffered from the swelling and allergic disease. Using mat, clean, wide and open place not only less the probability of suffering from the swelling as well it gives people mental satisfaction. It had experienced. Now community appreciates and embraces this practice widely.

#### Some other Supportive Statements

##### Rishikes Risal

Another reason is that many people are easily suffered and catch by cold disease like swelling and respiration during ritual. So they urge and request to put the mat and I have to say ok. I had used mat in 2070 B.S. of my mother mourning. Now people are using it and it become part of imitation and embraced by community. And it is available in *bazzar* in cheap price.

### **Vaskar Risal**

As I said those arrangement of place varies according to people. Some are using only hay but other are using hay and mat. Now a day's mats become people's choice. It is because of health, clean and tidy. Now I have seen Brahmin community is using it and other as well and become fashion because it is simple, easily available in *bazzar* and to **use it**.

### **Surya Bhaka K.C**

Now whether home is cemented or of mud, a place in base floor of home is separated. I had all traditional things like hay, lighten oil...etc but I had also used mat with hay because it is for cold prevention, available in *bazzar* and cheap. And it is using by people.

### **Rajendra Gautam**

People are aware of health issue like swelling, allergic disease and they say using hay is unscientific. Using mat makes place clean and tidy as well it is cold proof.

It was found that practitioners are experiencing the changes in setting a place for mourner. Some of them were found saying that they had replaced the hay by mat and some of them had added mat but without replacing it completely from practice and other arrangement like separated room, *saptadhaniya* pot etc are same. It was found appreciated for many reasons and as well it is fitted with context.

In past, it was found that people were suffered from allergic and other problems while sleeping on hay. People were poor and cannot afford the material like *sukul*. People were caste-religious consciousness. They live in mud house. They had accounted that they were choices-less and community members did not support for changes because they were conservative. And it can be inferred that lack of facilities like mat and community support were cause to intact the restrictive practices.

Now community people lived in cemented house. One of the defects as according to accounts of respondents of modern house is it has cold floor. Swelling, sensing cold, respiratory problems is some heath issues attach with modern house and to prevent

these problems they used mat which are cold proof as well possibility of suffering is minimized. Now people are suffering from different illness. Mat are easily and anyone can buy it anywhere in market. Practitioners are more aware of health than found going parallel with traditional-religious practices. Now rooms are clean, open and wide using of mat gives comfort as well mental-comfort satisfaction. It is appreciated and embraced by individuals. Therefore, it can be said that structure like physical structure of home (cold floor), market, and collective intentionality (like appreciation) has much bigger influences on the choices that individual make. And it is found that their ability to make choices are guided by structural features of modern house like cold floor, market, appreciation and shared awareness etc to prevent problem like allergic, swelling as well to get mental-comfort satisfaction like clean, open and wide room

### 3.2.3 Gift Giving and Taking

It is relational aspects of material transactions with priest and otherworldly personage. It is the belief of the existence of life after death and thisworldly preparation to reserve the secure and safe place while journeying in the transition to next world or in heaven. And it is justified and linked apparently that gift-giving and taking is largely effects of belief in life after death. And this section is designate to unlock the cause of changes as well to infer and see what I could conclude. Some of the statements and cases are given below.

#### Case of the Rajendra Gautam

According to book named *preta kalpa* when person dies then he becomes *preta*. He has to travel to next world through dangerous forest, trails, river full of wild beasts...etc. He will suffer and get pain. For the welfare of *preta* and safety for his journeying to the next world the *dhana* were needed by the *preta*. And it will be reached to them through Brahmin. So Brahmin started to take gift. Such a belief and account is written in book. The gifts includes a cow, a set of bed, shoe, clothes and utensils etc. the umbrella and mosquito net was later included by priest and it is not mention. For instance, it was belief that in transition if there he has to walk on bushes then he will need shoe and if he needs to rest and sleep then bed is needed

and cow in time of crossing '*vaitarney*'. And it was culture and tradition continuing so my *jajmana* did and doing it.

Now I had received money instead of traditional kinds of gift because it is easy for both the priest and *jajmana*. What I experienced after all is that all this ritual is done only for self-satisfaction because of fear and faith of religious belief in *jajmana* and to manage shame and public criticism to protect the prestige of family. Sometimes, I felt it is superstitious practice and difficult to believe the *dhana* concept because 'what *jajmana* give to priest or us is consumed by priest than how can *preta* received it in the next world. It is superstitiously based tradition and culture.

Now priest are greedy as well *jajmana*. I am greedy as well. *Jajmana* do not give quality gift to me and which become useless in my home. Even if they gave us there are no places to take all that. Rather than to take cheap quality goods I urged money. I had said to my *jajmana* give me money rather than gift. In early times, we lived in big family. We did not have enough material like utensil, beds so that given gift was useful. Now I had no place to keep it.

#### Case of Bimal kumar K.C

A cow, bed, materials need to bed, clothes, shoe, and utensils which I had gave to priest as according to *garuda purana*. It was believed that those given gift will be taken by the deceased one in the time of journeying from this world to the next world (*pitrl lok*). For instance, a cow is needed to deceased one to cross the dangerous *vaitarney* river. And it was tradition continuing from the time of forefathers and we are doing same.

Now money is desired and easy to handle and deal. What I think is that this cow *dhana* etc is non-sense. Because the results are not visible that whatever we had give to priest was received and used by priest. How could deceased soul use it? Nobody had seen and will see. It is false ideas and unnecessary thing.

Another thing is that priest does not desire traditional kinds of gifts. Money is preferred and current practice. Traditional kinds of gift become difficult to handle because people have to go market and bring it to home and again then we have to take it to priest home. Tiring thing. People do not have interest and time to do all these things. As well these gifts will become useless to the family of the priest. Now priest are rich and they have expensive bed, clothes...etc.

### **Some other Supportive Statements**

#### **Rajendra Kumar Luitel**

You have seen my room and other places that there is no space to keep traditional kinds of gift. People (*jajmana*) gave me 'four-leg bed' and what can I do of that bed. It is cheap and low quality gift. Whatever they have given to me I have to sell it again back in market in cheap price. Whatever people say to me 'greedy' or '*dharma bhastra bhako bahun*' I do not care. What can I do of that gift which is no use to me? And I believed on pitr but I do not believed on *preta* taking gift for human though it is written. How can they take this gift? In those days, my father believed on belief like cow *dhana* etc as well people but now people do not believed as well myself.

#### **Kamal Bhaka K.C**

I had given money to priest because they prefer it. Now priest has no space to put gifts in their home and *jajmana* gave them low quality gifts like cheap and light utensils etc. for me money is because priest can use it as he desire. Now 20 thousand is given to priestly service which is equivalent to traditional kinds of gifts. Most importantly it is easy to handle and deal.

#### **Kumar Thapa**

How could deceased one use the gift we gave to the priest? How could I believe on these things? But for me it is superstitious and non-sense. It is mentioned in *dhamasastra* but that I do not think it is written by the god. If even it was written by

the God then God would never writes deceased i.e. soul needs shoe and shocks, umbrella, etc. Do you think soul need shoe..Etc? This is even non-sense to the God.

### **Jay Ram Thapa**

Majority of people give them cheap and useless types of goods. Now priest also become rich and they do not use those things in their home. Money is useful and can deposit in bank. They can use it when they need. Traditional kinds of gift like clothes, cow etc is useless because they do not use it as well have no place to keep in home. In early times, priest did not desire money instead cow was mandatory and they strongly believed in gift concept but now money is easy to handle and preferred. Now priest makes their occupation of ritual service to earn money than to provide ritual.

From the above information it can be justified that agency sometimes plays crucial role to recreate existing structure by transferring it. Here, in the narration we can observe that practitioners are seen as having ‘free will’ in his own world making decision which was against the traditional belief and more closer to resolve the practical problems of practitioners like lack of space in home or trouble to arrange gifts.

In past, it was observed that people strongly gave the traditional kind of gift like a cow, bed, utensils etc. This *dhana* concept was directly related to the belief that in the time of journeying from this world to next world after the death those gifts will be used by deceased. For instance, in the time of crossing the ‘*vaitarney river*’ the gifted cow will be there and by catching the tail of cow we can cross the river without eaten by wild beast. This practice was strongly desired by the priest as well it was considered dharma by the *jajmana*. Both had fear (misfortune and public criticism if breach and faith on belief (existence of *vaitarney* and dharma). But on the objective level, it can be inferred that this transaction of gift solve the practical problems of priest like cow was useful for milk, ghee etc, utensils for kitchen and of *jajmana* like mental satisfaction and control of fear and faith.

Now priest are rich. And they directly asked for money instead of traditional kind of gifts. The practical reason on their saying was that gift given by *jajmana* was of low quality and cheap. Another reason was priest do not have enough space in home to

keep all those things. On the other hand, *jajmana* considered this beliefs like *vaitaney* etc are unnecessary and non-sense. The reason in their saying is that results are not visible to eye like deceased using the cow, bed etc in the time of journeying to next world. And another one is that now community is turning towards the householdlization. Therefore, it is difficult to arrange and manage without the manual support of community. Now both practitioners do not fear of breaching the belief nor have shame of doing rather it is liked. Now money is current transaction. And we observed both priest and *jajmana* are making their won decision from their own practical standpoint. At last, it can be said practitioners are more control by their practical problems than by belief as well it was assumed in past days and observed used agency structuring the dynamics.

### 3.2.4 Dressing Arrangement of Male Mourner and Widow

Dressing is cultural outfit to designate relation, impurity, and social position for the period of pollution applies to practitioners. It was largely appreciated in past but in comparative perspective, to the present time (2070 B.S), changes in outfit is refashioned as well thinking is revealed similar between practitioners. The coverage of this section is only to outline the causes and changes of white outfit of dress become not compulsory for the period of pollution apply for one year but which was one and a half decades ago. The cases and some of the statements are presented below.

#### Case of Rajendra Gautam

It was prescriptive in religious book *shetyo bastra* (white dress) was designated to mourner to wear in pollution period. So that it was regulated. Another thing is that elder people of community considered it as a dharma, obligation to sacred duty. It was lived, respected and compulsory outfit. Most importantly people believed in religion. They had both fear and faith of religion. The fear is that if somebody were not seen applying it then community will stop making relation with that family and receiving water which means they was graded as lower castes. They had also fear of *preta*, misfortune that they will haunt by misfortune (sickness due to *preta*) if not wear outfit. A fear of shame to male mourner and calling witches etc to widow.

And fear of elders who did not give them good inheritance of property like land etc. they had faith that wearing white dress means earning deeds of merits i.e. doing karmic ritual exactly so that he could get good place in heaven. So that they applied to total duration. That is one year for male and for female restriction was not to wear colorful dresses like red black and green for whole life but yellow, blue and white. Now people are aware, educated, state role of secularism, human rights, women welfare commission, single women commission, mass media etc affecting the ritual practice of outfit.

Now there are multiple priests in society. Saint priest are more oriented to preach the acknowledgement of soul than doing *karma kanda* ritual. For them *karma kanda kriya* ritual is secondary. Their preaching has impacts on people thinking like saint are teaching morning is not necessary as well outfit, food restriction etc so that people are arguing with us like *fhallano* saint had said this and why you restricting us. Now mourning is like becoming of royal family. People are eating salt (*biray nun*), fruits, wear colorful dresses...etc.

Now Women Rights Commission as well Human Rights Forum enforced and made aware women that they should not need to wear the white dresses. They considered it is discrimination and domination. Now widow are empowered to re-marriage and it is appreciate then wearing white outfit is far away from reality. These practices are supported by the law of state as well inheritance of his husband property. They questioned me that like 'why widow cannot re-marry but male can after the 45 days of her first wife death? This is very difficult question and I found this restriction is domination to women and her freedom as well women were vital human labor in past to do agriculture and household work and to prevent the elopement this rules might had made. It is my opinion.

Now our country is not Hindu state. Now many Nepali lower Hindu castes are converting to Christian. This converted Hindu people are not following the ritual and so people are aware and question that why these are not following and why we are following. Now people have traveled different places and seen cultural practice like of Christian etc and they have comparative knowledge so that people think why it is compulsory to do exactly. Most importantly now people are busy in office



work than of household work of farming. So due to appearance consciousness they wear colorful dresses. They think white dresses give bad appearance and symbol of impurity. My *jajmana* are not wear specially who are adults and do works in office but those aged and lived in village are wearing it. It depends on people thinking. My sons say it is 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### Case of Rajendra kumar luitel

It was white dress. It was appreciated. The reason was that head of community-family and priest were extremely traditionalist rather than doing as according to ritual book. It was mentioned that white dress needed to wear only for 12 days of mourning but not for a year. But what it becomes was that a mourner should wear to one year. Nobody dared to challenge the elders of that time. For instance, son cannot even dare to talk face to face with the father and look in his eye. Such an environment was of home and widow not wearing white dress was impossible. Avoiding the traditional practices was far from reality.

Now people think that 'those dead one was died then why should we suffer? This is the inner thoughts and concept of people. In past, widow was restricted because if they wear colorful dresses then people may imagine negative thought like arouse sensual sentiment towards her. This was the reason and there were no other reasons behind this. Now widow are empowered by state law, single women commission as well they are supported by community and her household. Widows have thoughts like 'if we are sincere to our behaviors (sexual things) than nobody will point a finger towards us? Such a will power is increasing in the widow. And it is good in my opinion.

What *sastra* has quote that widow should follow her dharma that was she should not marry to the other male person but it has not mention to wear white for a lifelong. And I also think that before her marriage women were allowed to wear red color than why should she be restricted after marriage? In past, it was compulsory because people may identify that women is widow and man as mourner. That's all. Now people have to travel in many places and they do offices so it become uncomfortable because it is frequently dirty and appearance will be bad as well

people do not like it. Only people who live in village and aged are wearing other who do offices do not wear it and young and adults widow totally ignoring it.

Some other Supportive Statements

**Dilip Kumar K.C.**

I had mourned 5 times but I didn't worn in 2055 B.S when grandmother died, as well in son's and brother's times in 2066 B.S and in 2068 B.S. what I think is that 'nothing will happen if I wear black or white dress and it does not matter to anyone and certainly not to dead one'. My son's wife and brother's wife raised question 'why should we wear white cloth not the red? What is our faults' etc? I appreciate this modification because everyone loves their desire and freedom then why should I restrict her. I want they be happy because both had cheated by her fate. It is time matter and both work in offices as well aware by mass-media, peer gossip of freedom of widow etc. Now society does not have interest on these things.

**Jay Ram Thapa**

Now widow are not considered as an impure, bad luck, witches etc rather people have deep sympathy towards them. Now people support widow wearing red sari, work outside of home and attain in marriage. I personally do not like this because it gives bad appearances. Imagine widow not wearing beautiful ornaments and other think. What a miserable life they spent in early days. They were restricted to their emotion and desire and it should be modified. Now it also becomes private affairs. They do jobs, aware of women's right, and have to constantly travel from places to places and white dress become problem. It is dirty easily as well widows are not seen white dress but some aged male. And society does not care on these things.

**Manhari Thapa**

After long illness my mother died. It was very-very difficult for my mother to die. I saw it. I did whatever I have to care and prevent from illness. What I think is that we should love; respect and care argued people while there are living but not wearing the white dresses. It is thought that wearing white dress is dharma but I do not think that it is dharma but superstitious things rather caring and loving old is dharma. Now society

do not think and care it as a compulsory thing but becomes optional to individual thinking. I had not practice it but it does not meaning I am breaking tradition. It is positive thing so people appreciated.

### **Bimal Kumar K.C**

I had dressed white outfit after the 13<sup>th</sup> day of mourning ritual. In my opinion, 'utterances of mantras do not effect whether I wear white dresses or not and whether I go to hell or heaven.' Whatever I have to do I did it between the 13<sup>th</sup> days. So that, why should one should wear white dresses for one year and follow restriction on mobility like going in temple, marriage, eating outside etc which are absolutely non-sense and unnecessary. But I am practicing it now only to protect myself from public criticism (backbiting and gossiping of breaching of not wearing white dress in time of mother death between relatives, neighbors and community) because I am aged and senior of community. Now dressing become men or women's own wishes. Many senior and aged community members are not following. Now even from the Brahman community people are not practicing it then other is no doubt.

From the above information it can be observed that dressing outfit has changed. It is equally justified that social institution (like family, peer group-gossip, community), market elements(like jobs), state structure (like mass media, law), and assimilation (like Hindu converting to Christianity) are enabling influences of structure on the choices that practitioners made and practice as according.

In past, I mean 2 or 3 decades ago wearing white dress was norms of society. *Purohit*, family, community were very strictly considered it as *dharmic* duty, purity and impurity, and religious act and deeds. They fear of breaching this *dharmic* act because of belief of misfortune (like illness will cause by *preta* if not followed, wealth crisis etc.) and possibility of getting less inheritance of property and outcaste.

Now practice is upside-down. It is optional. Now widow are questioning of their 'faults' on their husband death and mourners are thinking it is unnecessary. Household members considered wearing colorful dresses is good practice and former is unnecessary and non-sense. State and women commission or forum has legal support and empowerment program for widow in relation to property and freedom to

wear colorful dress, re-marriage, economic independent etc as well mass media and peer gossip become the source of awareness (like women are giving *dhagbatti* and mourning, re-marrying, wearing colorful sari and lipstick, converted Hindu widow did not wear white dress etc) and this is the contextual facts of society and co-monitoring aspects of all individuals.

The *purohit* and saint of society considered it as non-sense practice but only tradition. Now there is no limitation to widow in relational aspects like they can do jobs and remarry if she wishes, and mourners are attaining to marriage, going to temple which was highly restrictive in past. They are now not in impure position. Now whether mourner or widow they are busy on jobs, economically independent life and lived in private environments. White outfit become practical problem because it is dirty easily and reflect bad appearance mostly to widow. Widows are not seen interested rather blindly ignored. They do not like it and society openly appreciated it. And it is equally justified that practitioners are reflexive-rational in their behavior which were more related with practical problems of everyday activities than faith and event of next world. and it is justified that agency and structure is implicated with structuration to reproduced or transmute the practice.

### **3.3 Strictness and Restriction of Pollution Apply to Close Kin**

The pollution and restriction is not only strictly applied to mourner but in some extent equally apply to whole lineage community. The close kin, here, understood as agnates and their household members but not deceased household members. They are free to touch each other and do normal activities like going office and doing farming but the extend includes eating with lower caste, salt, oil, onion, garlic, meat , alcohol, soybean as well going to temple, worshipping household deities, washing clothes and attaining marriage etc which are culturally determined. This is the manifestation of socio-cultural physiological behavior aspects and objective consciousness. This aspect was equally concerned subjective consciousness of early people and today's. My analysis is focus to understand through the role-taking of practitioners about seriousness and strictness of pollution regarded by lineage members. Let's see what I can infer from the cases and statements.

### Case of Bimal kumar K.C

In early days, death population was strictly applied to all adult members of *khalak* for 10/12 days. Children below 6/7 year old did not need to follow but they were taught to do so. I had restricted myself by not consuming salt, oil, meat, alcohol...etc and worshipping deities and going temple etc. I was guided and monitored by grandparent. Nobody dare to breach it because of fear. For instance, it was believed that if somebody consumes which were not traditionally and culturally enlisted then misfortune to their family health, wealth etc will occur as well they will be punished by god *Yama*. They thought it was sacred duty and me too.

Now I know that salt is made from the sea water and people. In early days, I was taught salt was impure and cannot consume. Now I think that restriction was caste thing than dharma because salt was brought from the Tibetan land (*bhote ko des*) by *bhote manche* but in later time it was shifted and started bring from Indian sea. And slowly, people know salt was made from sea eater. Now people are educated as well my sons say 'salt is just salty water' and it can be heard in TV and radio. In *muluki Ain*, it is written that Tibetans was belongs to *matawali* lower caste. Early people considered lower caste people as a impure and did not maintain sharing of food, playing an touching. Whatever they touch become impure and cannot be touchable to *brahmin* and *chhetris*. So salt was impure because it was touch by *bhote manche* and not included in practice. It was my obligation to be pure, clean and maintain purity. So salt was not consumed. Only pure food like ghee, *bhat*, and water, vegetable were consumed. Now pollution is loose to practice.

Now population of *khalak* increased. In the days of grandfather there were only 3 houses. They all were bothers to each other of same father. From the three grandfather more than 23 household are extended. now concept 'genealogical distancing' is prevailed in community i.e. identifying yourself as according to closeness or farness to deceased family and if it belong within three generation then it is close close kin group and if it belong within five and seven generation then it is far close kin group. For the close close kin group it is 10 or 7 days to restrict the food and dwelling habit depend on who was deceased in relation. For instance, for the grandson in kin it is 7 days and for son in kin 10 days. For those who are far

close kin group then it was 3 days or 1. And second reason is that many people are engage in occupation. They constantly have to travel and stay outside of home and it becomes impossible to practice because we have to depend on restaurant. For instance, if someone died belongs to far close group then I shall restrict perhaps 5 days because I do not have to go outside for work but my son may restrict to 1 or 3 days because it is impossible to practice in city.

And I think not eating salt do not mean we are earning religious deeds and eating mean sin. I think it is just tradition and we should take it in simply way.

#### Man hari Thapa

In early days, only 4/5 houses were of *Thapa Khalak*. They lived the life of lackness i.e no foods, clothes, money, education, radio etc and desires. They were very very hardworking and believed on witches, *preta* etc. They thought everything was made by God like caste, dharma etc. when someone died then it was equally applied to me and all *thapa khalak*. I had restricted eating salt, oil, onion, garlic, etc and going temple because I was allowed to do so. My father mother believed that death pollution was very impure and a act of malevolent spirits. And following it exactly means no harm form malevolent spirits. And it was also taken as dharma. So I had to follow.

Now it is flexible. Now I apply pollution as according to 'genealogical distancing'. Now population increased in *khalak* and extension of *khalak* members are about 22/25 house. Now each household member is busy in office work. They are educated and do not want interference in their family affairs. They are economically independent, have private transportation, TV, land etc. I mean to say that people are individual than social. And society does not have interest on these kinds of practice and people are breaking it. When my mother died far close kin group restrict to 5 days and when death happen in their house then I will apply only to 3 or 5 days. My daughter do not wishes to restrict rather murmur backward villagers.

I have to walk everyday due to work purpose and it is impossible to restrict because I have to eat, drink and city is not my home. It is very difficult to maintain. Now

people saw the changes. They saw varieties of foods, clothes, TV, radio, motorbike, education, hospital etc and they have money. They remembered the past days i.e. pain and difficulties and people do not desire the difficult rather comfort, easy. I think it is our tradition but we should make it simple and easy to practice than being traditionalist

### **Some other Supportive Statements**

#### **Krishan Raj Khadka**

In early days, I did not consumed salt and other things because salt was touched by *bhote manche* and onion, garlic, soybean, oil etc were the cultural food of *Newar* caste. And I had bhat, ghee, vegetables which were pure and food of *brahim* and *chhetris* and applied to 12 days.

Now I do according to the concept of genealogical distancing. Now my son goes to college and how could he apply restriction in college canteen. Now people do jobs and more dwells in city area then village and it becomes obstacles in everyday life restricting salt, oil, etc. I take it as tradition in simple way and apply to 3 days if deceased is far close kin group and 10 days if he was close close kin group. Now people do not regard it seriously.

#### **Purshotam Khadka**

I had to restrict on eating salt, meat, egge, onion, garlic etc which are food of *matwali* caste because it is impure caste.

I did not restrict strictly to those who belongs to seven generation because they do not restrict when death happen to our family. And restrict if it is within three generation because they are belongs to my own family.

Now people are more individual and I am too. I do not like interference of other people whether I restrict to 3 days or my son did not. Now it is private and we don't now who is restricting and who is not. And I do work and have to move from place to

place and we all know that in city '*sarki's* are *bahun*' than expecting pure food and tea from restaurant is doubtful. All practice is impossible because I had drink tea in *Newar* teashop. And I do not believe on this practice because it is superstitious.

### **Kumar Thapa**

What I achieved is my question. I did it for the betterness of the deceased life in the next world but who have saw that? I do not believe on this. Now I largely dependent on restaurant and teashop than home for drinking and eating. So it is incompatible to apply for 12 days. What I think is that now society does not think it deeply. I practice according to concept of genealogical concept which is society's current practice. I had practice to 3 days but it is not belief but my sentiment express to deceased.

### **Rajendra Gautam**

Restriction was on salt and traditionally considered impure food of *matwali* caste like onion, *khodho*, soybean etc.

### **Rajendra Kumar Luitel**

Now *jajmana* considered salt is made from water. And even in the religious *sastra* red salt is allowed to consume in the time of mourning ritual but it does not says about the white salt. It was considered impure in early time because it was carried by *bhote manche* from Tibet land. So it was considered impure because *bhote* was impure caste. For me, if you can make salt in home then you can consume in the mourning ritual because it is untouched by other people and pure. Now people are educated and do jobs as well it is not possible to look after who has breach the rules and who has not. Now people are free and in view most of the adult who work in the office do not apply more than 2/3 days.

### **Riskhes Risal**

If I have to calculate in my own lineage group and as well in the *chhetris* I am 100 percent sure that only the 60 percent will practice it but 40 percent shall not practice it. I will guarantee it.



Now people are individual than social. They have all modern facilities like TV, motor bike etc. they are educated and do jobs. They do not fear of religion and have faith. They have their own house and land. They do not want interference on their private affairs. They desire to live privately. They have concept of genealogical distancing.

Now there is no such mechanism to control the ritual behavior. Pure priest are very few as well And traditionalists aged people in society. Now people are free to the extent like an adult do jobs in city then who control him there if then he was in home parent would control.

Respondents were found replied similar in above narrations. It is found that now applying pollution and restriction on socio-physiological behaviors by lineage members were seen decline in significance. It is found practitioners were reassessing practice of early days was caste thing. For instance, salt was bought by *bhote manche* so that it was not included in the list of pure foods etc because *bhote manche* was *matwalli* caste. Now practitioners lived in private i.e. householdlization and everybody was observed to have genealogical concept when time comes to apply pollution. Another important cause for why restriction and pollution seen loose was that now population growth took place from 4/5 houses to extension of 22/25 houses from same agnates in the interval of 2/3 decades. And it is difficult to control larger numbers of lineage members who are mostly adult people were seen busy in city for office and restaurants eating habit etc become coercive factor to choose 1 or may be 2 or 3 days than applying pollution to 7 or 10 days. In the similar way, now people were more aware of their health, practical difficulties like hunger, scientifically awareness like salt is just water etc than blindly following the traditional norm. It is observed people were more rational in their interpretation. Situational factors like traveling, restaurant dependent life, and structural thing like population growth, employment as well rational thoughts like salts is water etc and other miscellaneous things like disinterest, seeking comfort, freedom and lack of aged group and control etc were influential causes. Thus, it is justified that dynamics had been practiced and it was appreciated.

Here, the tables below help to understand practitioners' background and changes and differences in death ritual practice easily.

**Table 3: Differences and Changes in Death Ritual Practice**

Differences and changes	Last generation ( 2 decades ago)	This generation (2070 B.S)
A. Funeral site	Customary ways	Modified ways and new elements
1. route and place	Local cremation ground	Towards the <i>ghat</i> of pashupati, sakhamula and tekku
2. involvement	<i>Guthi</i> association	<i>Ghat</i> employee
3. method of carrying	On bamboo stretcher	Vehicle or ambulance
B.Mourning site	Customary ways	Modified and new elements
4. food practice	Only a boiled rice, ghee, and <i>khada pani</i> and only once a day	Boiled-fried potato, fruits, nuts like cashew, walnuts etc, spice like fried red chilly, lemon, ginger, and vegetables, real juice and other are same. mourner can consume multiple times
5. setting a place	Separated room, hay, <i>diyo</i> , <i>saptadhaniya</i> pot, blanket	Same arrangement but mat is found added; most use mat and some both
6. gift giving and taking	Cow, bed and materials needed to bed like pillow, shoe and shocks, umbrella, clothes, mosquito net and utensils etc	Only money
7. dressing	Only white dress	Reported; mostly colorful dress and some wear white
C. strictness of pollution and restriction apply to close kin	Compulsory and rigid and apply for 12 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• loose</li> <li>• concept of genealogical distance</li> <li>• close-close kin group apply for 10/12 days</li> <li>• far-close kin group apply for 3 or 5 or 1 day</li> </ul>

This table reflects the picture of differences and changes in death ritual practice while comparing two decades ago with this time (2070 B.S).

**Table 4: Consciousness and Material Conditioning of Internal Socio-Cultural or Socio-Ritual Life**

	Last generation ( 2 decades ago)	This generation (2070 B.S)
Consciousness and material conditioning of internal socio-cultural or socio-ritual life	basically, Framing	diversity of division of labor; business, civil/security officers, workers, technicians, private salary based jobs...etc
	caste and impurity consciousness	decline in significance of caste and impurity concept and inclined rational-deconstructive thinking
	believed in mythical personages, misfortune, and abnormal supernatural power like <i>preta</i> , <i>mashan</i> etc	decline in significance of misfortune etc and health-body-personality consciousness
	communal labor and <i>parma</i> system	decline in significance of communal labor and <i>parma</i> system and emerged wage system
	ecological benefit like clean water	no
	only one school in our time but in times of our father there was none	multiple and every where
	mostly <i>ghorayto bato</i>	multiple pitch road and everywhere
	no hospital	multiple and everywhere
	localized bazaar only located in <i>Mangal bazaar</i> control by <i>Newar</i> of the <i>Patan</i>	everywhere
	no mass media	multiple and everywhere
	no profit motive <i>ghat</i> service	in few places and 24 hours facility
	no transportation services like <i>sabhbahan</i> community	everywhere and 24 hours facility
	no influences of Christianity and western culture like restaurant eating habits	heavy Influences of modernization
	hinduized	secularized
	no state legal provision, role women commission and forum	widely and yes
	etc	etc

This table reflects the oscillated state of socio-cultural life from feudal to market domain.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### INTENTIONALITY BEHIND THE USE OF AGENCY

In this chapter I have tried to present the core issues of death ritual practice i.e. use of agency. In the time of literature review it was found that ‘agency’ was sole cause to bring variation in practice but it do not entails why agency being exist or used i.e. intentionality of using it. However, I have encapsulated six major causes to designate the intentionality behind the use o agency which not only fulfill the academic interest i.e. fulfillment of literature ‘gap’ but also provide the explicate explanation of using agency and variation in practice.

#### 4.1 New Deconstructive Thinking

It refers to freedom of thinking and critical questioning, assessing habits resulted when and by applying new practices (like eating fruits widow wearing red sari) which are associated only with practical and visible aspects (like clean, heath, taste, dress etc) and observed ignoring the some of existing religious belief and practices. And the same time, this thinking practice is resulted from the unobservable quality of belief (like *Vaitarney* River, *dhana* received by deceased) and reassessing of early days practice were as a caste thing than dharma. For them, in their saying early practices were non-sense and unnecessary. And now what they are doing is appropriate because it touch and solve their practical issues like health, bodily pain, tastes, desire of colorful dress, mobility etc. Heath-body-personality consciousness, education-scientific awareness, comparative analysis, critical questioning and reassessing etc are some core subjective aspects of individual which is related to the practical issues than impurity and purity or normative practices in this changing society. The reason why I have emphasized these points as a causes behind the use of agency is that now they becomes justifiable objective consciousness of people which has power to change the traditional practice-concept of purity and impurity and be stable with current rational new practices.

Some statements which will justify the above statement.

### Statement of Jay Ram Thapa

- I think the ways of practice in early days were wrong. Now I think we should not give pain and difficulties to our body. And I am making practice scientific which I mean painless and difficulties less by making it lose, simple and flexible like sleeping on mat, eating fruits etc.
- In early days, *purohit* made rules and it was very strict. Foods were restricted to eat because they were foods produced by *Newar*, a lower caste group like oil, potato etc. it was caste based practice. And I think adding new foods like potato, vegetables fruits does not mean that deceased goes to hell. I do believe on *pitrlok* but I do not believe on the acts of restricting and eating habits affects the life of *pitr* in the *pitrlok*. It is non-sense.
- I do not like sleeping on hay rather mat is my choice because by using it there is less possibility of suffering from the swelling, insect's bite, and it gives mental satisfaction to me because using mat makes room clean. In past, we mourned in mud house but now we practice in cemented house so after a mourning ritual many community people faced body swelling problems like in legs, hands, face, and gastric.
- In early days I was informed not to see lower caste people like *damai* and *sarki* while dwelling and I think it was illogical that 'man should not see and speak to man'. It is just method to dominate the lower caste and superstitious practice.
- There are no such things my mother go in heaven or hell if I carry her in bamboo stretcher but if in early times things like vehicle and professional *ghat* service was available then I might have used that.
- I do not think dead body is impure and can touch it by other people which was restricted to touch by other people in past. It is normal and natural thing. For the convenient of myself and for community people I have chosen *sabhbhahan*. What is harm in it? And why should we not use it? Anyway nowadays society does not have deep interest...

- They were unaware about health, comforts. For instance, when person die in farm then they assumed it was '*ban-haney-ko*' (a stroke from above), now we know it was case of heart attack and so the priest.

#### **Statement of the Kuamr Thapa**

- I think dead body as a normal thing than impure. It is just a cycle of birth and death I society. Nothing else then that.
- I think in those days there were no facilities like fruits, nuts, juice etc so that people might had not consumed. I think that fruits are just a glass of juice and it is good for health. For instance person with heart disease can not consume ghee but he can consume juice. I am health conscious person than tradition.
- I have lived in Belgium and I saw people do nothing like us. So that I think we are just following the tradition but negative things like not eating foods, sleeping on hay, eating in *dekuro* side, etc should make simple by changing it.

#### **Statement of the Purshotam Khadka**

- I think that ambulance easily and quickly does the job of many men by carrying dead body then why should need to carry on shoulder.
- I do not believed that if I eat salt then misfortune or bad luck will come to my home and try to suffer my family in the time of death close kin when pollution applied to me.
- Now people are materialistic which means 'rules are made by man' and I think traditional rules were also made by human beings otherwise why it is changing now?
- It is good to use mat because after the mourning ritual people were suffered from swelling. And I think vegetables, nuts, etc are pure food.

#### **Statement of Bimal Kumar K.C.**

- Because the results are not visible and we cannot see the '*dhana*' we give to the priest were used by the deceased. Nobody had seen it. it is false thing.
- I think those 'dead are dead then why living should suffer?' But it does not mean I do not have deep love and respect towards them.

- In early times no fruits, potato, nuts etc were available if had we certainly had consumed that.
- Now I think that restriction was caste thing than dharma because salt was brought from the Tibetan land (*bhote ko des*) by *bhote manche* but in later time it was shifted and started bring from Indian sea. Now people are educated as well my sons say ‘salt is just salty water’ and it can be heard in TV and radio. In *muluki Ain*, it is written that Tibetans was belongs to *matawali* lower caste.

### **Statement of Rajendra Kumar Luitel**

- Tell me what harm is in eating potato and fruits. Now fruits are good for health and it is juice, potato is floor. In early times, there were fruit, potato were not available.
- Now people asked me to quote on *dharmasatra* that ‘where is written that hay should use and white dress should wear? Because they can read book easily available in Nepali language.
- Why can I use of that traditional kinds of gift like clothe, cow etc which are no use to me rather I asked them to give money. And I do not believe that deceased *pitr* will receive gift in the next world.
- Now people think’ why should we wear white dress? And some thoughts are like this ‘what is the result of wearing white dresses’; ‘what benefits do deceased get from it? And widow and mourner are more conscious of their appearance and most of them reject it. it is ok to me because people do works and busy in offices.
- It is just a tradition as well it is not mention that white dress should wear for one year.
- In my opinion, in past, why dead body was considered impure was that because it is proved now that almost people died with disease which was transferable to other community people so that wise people of early times made tradition to carry on bamboo so that prevention could be possible from transferable disease. For me it could be one possible reason than religious one.

Therefore, it can be said that new consciousness has emerged which is largely related to the practical issues like health, bodily comfort, appearance and personality, jobs etc rather than based on purity and impurity conceptions which now lose its significance which are justified by their statements. This is the new deconstructive thinking which is cause to use agency correspond to current practice with objectivity.

#### **4.2 Reflexive Priest**

It refers to the behavioral, positional and thinking aspects of the priest. The priest has occupied a higher ritual position in caste hierarchy. They were the preserver, guider, controller, and monitors the ritual behavior but now they are seen as ritual maker by allowing to add, substituted, replace etc in ritual. Here, priest I understood as a higher ritual authority which are found more with enabling quality than constraining ritual behavior of practitioners. This enabling quality of priest understood as behavioral and thinking aspects which are in concurred position to modify the ritual. In one way, these reflexive aspects of priest become vibrant source behind the use agency by the practitioners and vice versa. They are or have occupied the crucial part in ritual structure than *jajmana*. This is the reason why I have chosen this point to reflect the vibrant use of agency and variation in death ritual practice. And priest interest, thinking nature, position, and possession of knowledge and category of them are the dimension of the reflexive priest and co-monitoring aspects of mourner and widow.

#### **Bimal Kumar K.C.**

- In those days, Brahmin were pure i.e. they were religious; eat only in home and only chastely prescriptive foods; did ritual practice on daily; they had good knowledge of Sanskrit and religious literature; very strict on ritual rules and time; only performed the priestly service. Now priest do services, jobs. They do not have fix habits of eating. They eat anything and anywhere. They do not have good Sanskrit qualification. They short-cut ritual of three hours to one hours. They do according to their own convenient like they have to go to offices. Now Brahmins loose the restriction because of the different kinds of thinking of Brahmin. Adults Brahmin is of new generation with modern education like science, commerce than of Sanskrit and religious book and



rules. They easily show consent in modification like using mat, eating fruits, making *dikuro* near the home side etc.

- I was taught salt was impure and cannot consume. Now I think that restriction was caste thing than dharma because salt was brought from the Tibetan land (*bhote ko des*) by *bhote manche* but in later time it was shifted and started bring from Indian sea. And slowly, people know salt was made from sea eater.

#### **Statements of Surya Bhakta K.C.**

- The Brahmin should be such that which can guide and give direction to the tradition. Now the priests are lazy, greedy and selfish. Rather than doing the ritual by following the all the ritual procedures they do in fast way. They only care about the money than giving ritual services. These new priests have new mentality and show the consensus on modification of ritual if mourner desires rather than saying 'No'. Some of the priests are following the tradition ways in ritual but other are not.

#### **Statement of Purshotam Khadka**

- On the hand, now state law, women commission support the widow's right for property and freedom to remarriage etc. They are seen wearing red sari. On the other hand priest are seen quiet in this matter and loose the restriction rather than restricting it. Now priest are rich and do not want traditional kinds of gift but money. They asked money in gift transaction so that priest can have any kinds of things they want. It is easy to handle and deal.

#### **Statement of the Kumar Thapa**

- In those days, *pandit* performed the *karma kanda* ritual in exact as according to the *dharmasastra*. The performance took long time with exactly Sanskrit pronunciation. Now *pandit* prefers shot-cut way to perform. Now there is the lack of pure *pandit* in society to do ritual like *puja*, *shardha* etc. This is the situation. Now *pandits* are not pure and excellent in the Sanskrit. They are seen eating in *newar's* shop and in restaurants etc. They do not restrict their

food habits. Now young generation *pandits* do not desire this priestly service. And the product from the *pandit* from the *gurukul* is also low in number.

- Now money is asked and preferred by the priest because he can use it for family purposes and gifts are no more useful because they already have expensive things in their home.

### **Jaya Ram Thapa**

- Some *purohit* are good and consider it as sacred dharma and some do it as a cash earning occupation. Both types of *purohit* prefer money. It is useful and traditional gifts become useless to *purohit*. Now we do not need *purohit* in the time of cremation because *ghat* community provides the priest to do priestly service. And it is considered ok by household *purohit*. the reasons why he say ok is that what *ghat* priest do same is the tasks household *purohit* do as well he do not have to come long in funeral.
- Now those *purohit* of early time were dead and their son generation and son's son generation are making less restrictive practices. Because these *purohit* are educated not only Sanskrit but also in modern education like about science, commerce etc. They work in hospital laboratory. They are conscious of people's health, nutrition, and aware of modern thinking of people's self assessment of behavior like it is good to drink juice, wear colorful dresses, read ritual text available in written *nepali*

### **Statements of the Rajendra Gautam**

- Now my *jajmana* can consume different vegetables, nuts, juice, fruits, fried-boiled potato, ginger, lemon...etc. They named it scientific ritual. *Jajmana* are educated and aware. They have traveled to many places and observed the practices of other caste group and religion. They argued with us that certain caste group and religious people can consume such things easily then why should we not. They can read the ritual book written in *Nepali* and argue 'tell me guru where are it is written fruits are not restricted'. They cannot control their hunger. *Jajmana* are more think about the nutrition, diet, clean place to rest and sleep...etc than tradition and faith. These thoughts of *jajmana* are

named as 'scientific way of doing ritual'. But in past, people were uneducated, unaware about heath.

- Now in society there are many kinds of priest. Most of the priests are greedy kinds. They are making changes. For them what is important is money than ritual. And other kind of priest is saint. They do not consider the *karma-kanda* as a prime but acknowledgement of soul. And they show consent on changes. And third kind of priest is 'we'. Now *jajmana* are also different. Rich *jajmana* are comfort seeker and do things as according to their wishes like they drink real juice. They have lots of money and capable to spend money in ritual. And second kind are middle class are can spend money and have no faith and fear of religion. They want changes and do things before I say anything to them. And third class is poor class and who do not have money as well have fear and faith on religion. These groups of people are following exactly but what I think is that 'why only they should apply all kinds of restriction' so that I have make loose restriction to them.

#### **Statement of Rajendra Kumar Luitel**

- Tell me what the harm in eating potato and fruits'. It is ok to me. For me, if salt is made in home by household members then it can be consumed because it is considered pure. Even in religious book *biray* nun is allowed to consumed because it is believed that it is originate in *Sindha* mountain from where the holy river *Bramaputa* and *Ganga* ect came out. In early times there were no fruits, potato etc now it is easily available in market.
- You have seen my room and other places that there is no space to keep traditional kinds of gift. People (*jajmana*) gave me 'four-leg bed' and what can I do of that bed. It is cheap and low quality gift. Whatever they have given to me I have to sell it again back in market in cheap price. Whatever people say to me 'greedy' or '*dharma bhastra bhako bahun*' I do not care. What can I do of that gift which is no use to me? And I believed on *pitr* but I do not believed on *preta* taking gift for human though it is written. How can they take this gift? In those days, my father believed on belief like cow *dhana* etc as well people but now people do not believed as well myself.

### Statement of Viskar Risal

- In early times, Brahmin did not have rate of their priestly service and they were recognized by their strict and long duration of performing the ritual. They did it according to karmic and Vedic rules. Now Brahmin have rate to do ritual service. Now Brahmin has abandoned their pure sacred duty of the priestly caste. They eat anything and anywhere like meat. Now I have seen *brahmin* community is using it and other as well and become fashion because it is simple, easily available in *bazzar* and to use it.

### Statement of the Rishekes Risal

- The majority of Brahmin who are currently doing ritual of any kinds do not possess the knowledge of Sanskrit religious literature, and its rules etc. On the other hand there are very Brahmin who possess the true knowledge and capacity to arrange and organize the ritual according to Vedic rules. Now Brahmin do not know how the most ritual and rites are arrange and done. They do not have excellent pronunciation rather poor. This is the biggest problem which causes the changes in practices. If Brahmins have not enough knowledge about the practice then how could *jajmane* do in exact way? In hundred percent only five percent are remained pure Brahmin.
- Now priest are not needed in cremation site because what we are needed to provide are provide by the hired priest of *ghat*.
- Now practitioners are suffering from much illness and as well they cannot control hunger. So it is ok and they can have fruits etc.
- Another reason is that many people are easily suffered and catch by cold disease like swelling and respiration during ritual. So they urge and request to put the mat and I have to say ok. I had used mat in 2070 B.S. of my mother mourning. Now people are using it and it become part of imitation and embraced by community. And it is available in *bazzar* in cheap price.

Therefore, it can be said from the above statement 'reflexive priest' is one cause behind the use of agency by the practitioners. Practitioners, most importantly, mourner and widow are in co-monitoring in position of the *purohit* aspects like his interest, nature, thinking, position, possession of knowledge, and category of them which become the knowledge for practitioners. And knowledge is about the 'enabling' quality of *purohit* which reflect the possibility of more changes (like priest habit of saying yes or no etc or be self-calculative in using new thing than asking to priest because of co-monitoring aspects) to use agency in practice. Here, *purohit* were seen more related interpreting practical aspects of own and of *jajmana's* socio-physiological position instead of stressing the ritual elements like purity and impurity and to regulate them rigidly or saying no to changes. Here, practitioners are more interested to redefine the idea of purity on the basis of clean and tidy, health-nutrition etc and related the early idea of impurity was caste thing and had no further explanation to drive at to them. So that we can infer purity and impurity was closer to caste thing in past and now it be assumed that it is closer to clean, tidy, comfort, health, contamination, difficulties etc and this redefinition of purity includes the practical things that faith.

### **4.3 Householdlization**

It is a recognized position of household in community. The recognition is base on his freedom of decision making and acting without interference, egoistical attitude, economical independent-jobs, private life, and affluent. And these qualities of household are partly effects of market economy. This state of household is observed contributing changes in death ritual though they are constraint to practice but how they going to practice are solely dependent on mutual understanding between household members than on elders of community as according to traditional ways. Now each household in community is assumed in this position. Now they are free in some extent and from the age structure or hierarchy.

Some of the statements which will justify above mentioned words are true and correspond to facts.

### **Statements of Dilip Kumar K.C.**

- I had give money as gift because to arrange the gifts it takes people to carry if from market and again to take it to the priest house. Now neighbors are not supportive rather jealous, egoistical and individualistic. And as well they have no time to help to other because they are busy.
- I had mourned 5 times but I didn't worn in 2055 B.S when grandmother died, as well in son's and brother's times in 2066 B.S and in 2068 B.S. what I think is that 'nothing will happen if I wear black or white dress and it does not matter to anyone and certainly not to dead one'. My son's wife and brother's wife raised question 'why should we wear white cloth not the red? What is our faults' etc? I appreciate this modification because everyone loves their desire and freedom then why should I restrict her. I want they be happy because both had cheated by her fate. It is time matter and both work in offices as well aware by mass-media, peer gossip of freedom of widow etc. Now society does not have interest on these things to regulate rather color dress is appreciated.

### **Statements of Kamal Bhakta K.C.**

- I am elder of my community but nobody obey to me. They practice which they considered good but not according to tradition ways. Now people are economically independent, lived private life, no fear of elders etc and I think it is good too.
- Now numerous facilities are available in market like fruits, mat vehicle etc and every household has easy access to these facilities so that why should people dependent to each other. Now how should you practice is your choice.

### **Statements of Bimal Kumar K.C.**

- I have three son and all of them think traditional practices were in some sense superstitious things. They forced me to eat juice, nuts and use mat as well my wife.

### **Statement of Purshotam Khadka**

- I had made *dekuro* near the home side than river side because it is long walk and tiring thing. I consumed fruits, nuts etc. this is my own desires. As well my wife said so to do that.
- I had dress white but I am not force to dress it. It is my choice and my brother and wife said so to do so I did it. But other are seen wearing colorful dress and it is individual choice that compulsion.
- I had drink tea in the *Newar's* shop when pollution of close kin was applied to me. I do not believe on this and it is impossible to take care.

### **Statements of Kumar Thapa**

- Now society does not have deep interest on the aspects of practice you are doing. I had not dressed white for one year and nobody has said anything about it as well nobody will come to advice you. It is my decision not to wear. Now whether you practice strictly or loosely it depends on your choice but in past practice was very strict and nobody had chance to modify it. But now time is different. Now population of *khalak* increased. They are busy working outside in city. People are living private like and everybody is sufficient with modern facilities.

### **Statement of Manhari Thapa**

- I and my brother made a decision that if mother died in home or hospital we will take her in vehicle in pashupati than local *ghat*.
- I considered fruits; vegetables, potato etc are pure things as well my wife forces me to consume it. And I had it.
- Now every household is sufficient in facilities like television, mobile, money, education etc and people do not want to interference in other's household matters and as well people do not desire. Now people are private. They live by their own decision and choice.

## Statements of Krishna Raj Khadka

- We had already decided in family that if mother die in hospital then we will take her to *pashupati* and if she die in home then we shall take to the local *ghat*. And it was my family consensus. My mother die in home and we took her in the local *ghat*.

Therefore, it is justified that they are partly free from the hierarchy in community so that they are observed using agency in the practice. This householdlization is cause of breaking of hierarchy as well source to use agency independently. And this is because traditional authoritative resources in controlling the pattern of interaction as well allocative resources both shifted to and control by the external group of people like vehicle, *ghat* community, fruits seller than in the hand of aged authority of village. And on the other side this resources is partly shifted towards or dependent on the household members because they are independent economically and where and how to accomplish the task is indexical. Thus, factors like hospital death or swelling of body etc become contextual reality and sources to create options to choose i.e. application of agency within structuration rather than waiting the command of aged of community or *guthi*. It is justified that this contextual reality partly shifted and limited the allocative and authoritative authority in the household members and existence of householdlization as options i.e. agency or reason to use agency. And this also means shift of normative practice-thinking or rules which are more subjected to agency and economy. Because rules are transformed and make legitimate when it makes things seems correct and appropriate. And rules of market elements like hospital rules (ambulance) become options (correct) and use of it means strengthening rules i.e. sustaining structure or it is cause for duality of agency and structure. This householdlization, in one hand, to some extent, transmuted the hierarchical constrains towards the neutrality and on the other hand, to some extent it become free and use this 'freeness' as options to choose which are convenient to accomplish the practice thus enjoying the double options one is emerged from market elements like fruits seller and another is freeness etc. They enjoyed the life of options. Therefore, it become cause behind using the agency.



#### 4.4 Resource Constraint: Environmental and Manual

It refers to the ecological condition and shortage and disinterested manual manpower in the time of death to organize and arrange the funeral. The relation of community with this ecological structure in one and half decades ago found remained sound and capable to provide every necessary things like tree, clean and holy water, open *ghat* space, hay, bamboo etc but now this functional aspects of ecology is drastically reduced and become non-functional. On the other hand, jobs condition, comfort-seeking habits, shortage of local mortician, individualized conception, disinterest to arrange and organize like cutting tree, carrying dead body, cleaning *ghat* area and route etc reflected the non-functional aspects of communal manpower of community. In past, communal aspects of labor, local ecology and relationship between them were enabling for the establishment of funeral in the local are but now both entities are reflected as a constraint (non-functional).

This resource constraint is observed of have dual quality i.e. constraining and enabling at the same time. The constraining aspects are like lack of local mortician; manpower to carry dead body-tree; clean/organize *ghat* area and route; preparing *chita*; participation of *guthi* association; clean water, open space, hay etc. And the enabling aspect is the power of awareness about the constraining by inherited non-functional aspects than functional which direct people to change their strategy that is how to go on to accomplish the funeral task consciously and unconsciously. Thus, in past, both entities is observed as enabling but according to their inherent functional quality but now due to awareness of actual situation and alternatives which become options i.e. reflexive shared awareness and market elements like *ghat* service etc for people to use agency or which is actually agency.

While observing the aspects of entities I found interesting intellectual problem. In early days, both entities were reflected as enabling but now it reflects as a 'constraint'. The 'constraint', here, is not only conceived as a 'CONSTRAINT' i.e. no place for choice or for individual creativity etc but constraints within dual quality that is constraint by non-functional quality of resources (like contamination of local *ghat* area and river, disinterested people etc) and constraint as an enabling or options because of reflexive awareness and alternatives of actual situation. But this non-functional quality of resources can be reconstructed by the application of agency

(options) to achieve the ends i.e. funeral/cremation. Thus, agency sometimes displays the quality of structure (working whole) and be source to structured the practice. And it justified agency and structure is implicated. And some time agency become the cause behind the use of agency (like awareness, availability of options) and sometime structure or institution (like lack of manual support in immediate need to arrange or organize funeral/cremation preparation in tradition way). This is why I have chosen this point to reflect cause behind the use of agency.

### **Some of the Statements Related to Resource Constraint**

#### **Statement of Bimal Kumar K.C.**

Now in the village *ghat* we do not have facilities like that of pashupati such as mortician, *chita* etc. in early days, there were lots of tress in own agricultural field, clean river water, hay etc and manpower to do funeral thing. Now we have shortage of manpower to do funeral thing like carrying dead body-tree-hay etc. Now river water is contaminated. The local route and *ghat* is fully covered by thorny bushes and nobody in community raise a voice to clean and make it useful. People are disinterested to do funeral in local *ghat*. Now people do not have time to engage in these things. They are busy in their respective works. People do not have love to each other and all are comfort seeker. For instance, they used ambulance instead of carrying on bamboo stretcher.

#### **Statement of Kamal Bhakta K.C.**

In recent period, I had taken to pashupati, the *arya ghat* to cremate my father's dead body. In our place, *Bagmati* river is contaminated. We cannot make *dekuro* and perform rites like bathing, cooking, washing etc. Now places are covered by bushes and there is lack of space. In early days, it was clean and open but now it is dirty and stinks. There is no water supply as well dried wood or firewood. People are disinterested to clean and make useful of that *ghat*. Now people have private problems in their home like money, feud etc. people are egoistical. They do not have respect for elders. Now many people in village work in city and the do not have time to cut tree and make *chita* etc. Now funeral is forgotten practice in locality.

### **Statements of Manhari Thapa**

Now time has changed. Local *ghat* does not have facilities like that of *Arya ghat*. They have mortician, many *ghat*, 24 hours services, *chita*, water resources etc as well it is situated in the most holiest temple of Hindu, the *pashupati nath*. In local *ghat* now *bagmati* is contaminated. *Ghat* is covered with bushes and unmanaged. It is dirty. Now people do not have interest or even think about to take to local *ghat*. They are busy. Therefore, we don't have people to clean the *ghat* area, carry the dead body etc. most important we do not have well managed local *ghat* and facilities etc otherwise we have not taken to *pashupati*.

### **Statement of Jay Ram Thapa**

The local area becomes dirty and unclean. It is covered by the thick bushes and dirty stuffs form the river. The river in *ghat* is contaminated due to drainage. There are no facilities of water and wood. Now people in *khalak* do not like traditional ways like carrying in bamboo.

### **Statements of Purshotam Khadka**

The local *ghat* becomes unmanaged. There is no clean and open space, water and wood facilities. Nobody is interested towards the management of local *ghat* and it is useless. The *ghat* is cover with bushes and river water is polluted by city drainage. Another thing is that now people are not interest in carrying dead body, making *chita* and cremating by self. Now people are more individual than social.

### **Statement of Vaskar Risal**

Now most people take to the *pashupati* in *arya ghat* to cremate the dead body. Because in local are there is no facilities like *arya ghat* such as mortician who can easily in shot time cremate the dead body. In local *ghat* area, now places are dirty and river is polluted and stinks. Now people seek comfort and effortless practice. They do not desire to take to local *ghat* because they do not desire to cut tree; carry dead body; and cremate it. And they are also not apt to cremate. There is shortage of elder who are trained in cremating dead body.

### **Statement of Rishekes Risal**

I had took my mother pashupati in 2070 B.S and most of my all *jajmana* who have practice taking to the *ghat* of *chobar* are all seen changed the route towards the *pashupati ghat*. Now river in there is polluted from the waste drainage of kathmandu valley. The *ghat* area is covered bushes and dirty stuff form the river. Traditional route is not good to walk. Now resources like clean water, tree, bamboo, hay are not immediately available. Most importantly now community members are not available in the time of death to arrange and organize the funeral. Now people dislike the traditional practices because it is difficult to obtain because people have to walk carrying the dead body etc and who desire such difficult arrangement to perform rather people prefer and used transportation and it is easy for all.

From the above statements it is justified that resource constraint is enabling or options or have structuring qualities by implicating in agency i.e. people are aware and observed that they have changed in their practice by choosing other places and alternatives but both entities reflected their inherited non-functional quality and options like market elements as functional unit to use to be within structuration.

### **4.5 Market: The Maker of Choice and Practice**

Market refers to the producers of facilities (like mat, jobs, gas stove), infrastructure (like transportation, mass media, hospital), institution (like women forum, profit motive *gaht*) and practice (like cremation by professional mortician etc). This producer has successfully creates the multiple choices that not only ease the difficulties of practice but also makes it simple, effortless, easy, and quick. And it is largely appreciated and become everyday aspects of social life. It has its effect not only on overall working structure of community but also at the level of individual and household. Its effect is direct, indirect, and coercive which are almost sole responsible to entire changes in the practices. The direct effects are creation of the multiple choices like *ghat* services, fruits, mat, gas stove, transportation etc on which practitioners are observed intricately dependent. Now people took the dead body on the ambulance as a result it is observed only few close kin were participated and needed in funeral times which change the grouping form of funeral practice. This is one example of indirect effects. Likewise, when person die in hospital then it is

almost impossible to carry on bamboo stretcher even if practitioners desire due to permit problem of hospital, long distance to walk in road which become coercive effect of market or market elements.

The reason why I have chosen this point is that market is creator of multiple choices and practices and practitioners are consumers of it. The effects of this producer become a condition on which agency survive successfully i.e. multiple choices. Therefore, it can be said and justified that market is most important cause and reason behind practitioners using agency.

Let's see some of the statements from the cases.

#### **Statements of Dilip Kumar K.C.**

- Now the route and place taken for cremating the dead body is way towards the *ghat* of pashupati via ring road in vehicle instead of local *ghat*. Now *guthi* members do not participate in funeral process because we have our close kin enough to manage and as well all facilities like vehicle etc are in market and we use it.
- Now *ghat* employee immediately arrange and manage all things mortician, the *chita*, the *ghat*, clothes, *dhagbatti*, everything's. We only have to pay money and witness the cremation.
- I had consumed fried-boiled potato, fruits, lemon; nuts like almond, walnut, cashew etc which were not available in early days but now it is available in market and my entire relative bring these things as well mat and hay to sleep.

#### **Statements of Bimal Kumar K.C.**

- Now route is changed and people take to pashupati via ring road...I took my mother on ambulance.
- Mortician and hired priest organized by the *ghat* community. They fully and actively involved in cremating. We just witness the cremating act.
- Now there are varieties of vegetables, fruits, space like lemon, ginger, chilly and nuts which were not available in early day but it is available in market and

I had consumed. Now mat is available in market but not in early time and it is cheap. And I only used mat to sleep etc.

### **Statements Jay Ram Thapa**

In early days, there were no concrete road, *ghat* service, hospital, vehicle etc...but now it is available and brought by *bazzar*...I used ambulance to carry dead body of my mother and took her to pashupati. The *ghat* community there does all the cremation activities like preparing *chita* easily. And there are multiple *marbhani sabhbhahan samiti* which only carry dead to *ghat* area.

### **Statement of Man hari Thapa**

- Now it is easy way to obtain the funeral. Now we only need few people to lake the dead body and cremate. Now we have facilities like transportation, *ghat* services out there in market and we can use it anytime when needed. It is 24 hours.
- In early times, there were lack of sufficient and varieties of foods. We hardly had fruits. But now everything is available in market and it is brought by market.
- Now money is received as a gift because this is the time of money. Money can buy anything and traditional gifts are become useless to priest home and whatever we gave to priest he will sell it again in market.

### **Statement of Kumar Thapa**

Now few people are needed to cremate because people do not need to carry dead body or arrange *chita* etc. these things are performed by vehicle and *ghat* services.

### **Statement of Riskesh Risal**

- Now people carry the dead body on the vehicle but one and half decade ago there were no vehicle facilities like today that is *sabhbhanhan*. Now there are multiple vehicle facilities and it is quick and easy.

- Now *ghat* community provides the service like mortician, *chita* etc so that we do not need to participate in funeral and close kin are enough to cremate the dead body.
- Many people died in hospital but two decades ago people only died in home. And there in situations so that people in immediate need do not found the traditional aspects like bamboo stretcher and manpower to carry as well it is difficult to carry on pitch road. So people prefer and coercive to use transportation and change the route to pashupati.
- They use mobile, television, to now the affairs of the world. There are women forum to provide legal and other supports for widow and women are empowered to remarriage and dress colorful.

### **Statement of Rajendra Gautam**

Now Women Commission, Women rights as well Human rights etc affect the dressing arrangement of widow. They are empowered and provided with legal right to re-marriage and dress colorful etc

### **Statement of Vasker Risal**

- Many people died in hospital and it is impossible to carry on bamboo (like how can people carry on pitch traffic road) so people took ambulances as well we have *ghat* service.
- Now it is difficult for people to apply pollution when lineage member died to twelve days because people dependent on jobs in city area and depend on restaurant so that it cannot be imagined that restaurant will give pure food to eat.

Therefore, it can be said and justify that market emerged as a creator of choices to the individual (internal structure of material condition of social life) and cause to bring the changes in the working structure of death ritual practice. It is not only emerged as a creator rather controller of authority aspects of the community structure. Market facilities are used by practitioners to get things done. These resources are one aspects of the structure that society depends to use to get things done because resources are equipped with material and organizational ability. But this ability of community is

shifted towards the market elements like hospital, *ghat* community etc which means partial existence of hierarchical resources in the hand of community because it is control by market elements. And on the other hand, people are frequently seen using new arrangement and ways than traditional one which means people are using new rules of society or practice. Therefore, market is not only as creator of agency but also a structure.

Market cause householdization which means people are more dependent on market for income and subsistence than agriculture. This economical power of household gave power to live individually within allocative power of resources to control the material things like *sabhbhahan*, fruits etc but this things as well are largely control by the market elements because they produce and make rules. And it can be said that market is dominant to remake agency and structure. Thus, we can say dynamics in death ritual practice is more dominant by inclusion of economical practice which is emerged and brought by market elements.

One of the most important aspects of structuration is duality of agency and structure only when the rules and resources are incorporated within the practice in regionalized and routinized contexts. And now rules and resources of market elements are widely appreciated and incorporated within practice which means it is within structuration. For instance, rule of *ghat* community is that pay the cost first then all arrangements to cremate is responsibility of *ghat* community which reflects the shift of control of authority from lineage community in the hand of *ghat* community in one side and in other side this facility is options and this practice is appreciated and followed. Thus, we can say, in past, this rules did not existed but it is brought by market elements and incorporated in ritual practice that transmuted the traditional communal way of practicing death ritual. And it can be said market is maker of choices and practice.

#### **4.6 Collective Enthusiasm**

It is a new periodic institution. It is an aggregate of individuals with similar streams of thoughts and behavioral aspects. It refers to the support and appreciation of new arrangements in practice. And this is reflected not as a communal mechanism but the new collective mechanism which is stratified on the basis of individual freedom, economic independent, legal rights etc at different levels from individual to household



and community. This collective enthusiasm remains sound and capable to balance the integral working of the community as a whole by satisfying both new (comfort, desires, householdlization etc) and old needs (cremation, mourning etc). Therefore, it is reflected as a powerful force to legitimate new set of rules, way, practice over the traditional ways, rules, practices which means it is condition from where new thing (options) are incorporated and make that as a part of practice i.e. new rules. This is the reasons why I have chosen this point so important that it has enabling quality i.e. large amount of agency is survive in different aspects of practice because it has made the traditional practices as a optional and brought the alternative choices and thinking to individual as a legitimate way to go. Appreciation, co-monitoring aspects and copying are some important dimensions of collective enthusiasm.

Some of the statements which reflect the collective enthusiasm are written below.

#### **Statements of Dilip Kumar K.C.**

- Now the route and place taken to cremating the dead body is way towards the *ghat* of pashupati via ring road in vehicle. This practice is followed by my community members and me as well. It is ‘trouble free’ practice not only to those whose nearer one had died but to all community members. Now transportation is available and *ghat* services which make practice easier whether it I night or day or raining. It is available 24 hours. And people appreciate it. They do not have to work like making *Chita* and carrying. It is quick and easy. I understood it as a play of time so that ‘how society moves in the same manner I have to move.’
- I had consumed new foods like potato, nuts; fruits etc in time of mourning because it is appreciate by other mourner, *purohit* and my family.
- My feeling is same to other people that ‘why should we trouble and take pain ourselves because dead one is not returning to living condition’. So I used mat and I had seen other members of community mourner used it. And it is appreciated.
- I had mourned 5 times but I didn’t worn in 2055 B.S when grandmother died, as well in son’s and brother’s times in 2066 B.S and in 2068 B.S. what I think is that ‘nothing will happen if I wear black or white dress and it does not matter to anyone and certainly not to dead one’. My son’s wife and brother’s

wife raised question ‘why should we wear white cloth not the red? What is our faults’ etc? I appreciate this modification because everyone loves their desire and freedom then why should I restrict her. I want they be happy because both had cheated by her fate. It is time matter and both work in offices as well aware by mass-media, peer gossip of freedom of widow etc. Now society does not have interest on these thing to regulate rather wearing color dress is appreciated.

#### **Statement of Bimal Kumar K.C.**

- I have consumed different fruits, potato, nuts etc. and it is normal practice community as well other people are doing same. Now people are more concern about the health and comfort. People think ‘dead one is dead then why living should suffer? And I appreciate this opinion. And I sued mat instead of hay as well it is the choice of all other mourner and their family. It is quite good that people are moving with time. Time means now people have transportation, road, *ghat* service.
- Now money is appreciated gift giving and taking transaction.
- The dressing becomes widows and mourner’s won wishes. And society have no deep interest to regulate traditional ways rather desire changes and new arrangements. Widow and mourner are seen not wearing white dresses and it is appreciate and right thing too.

#### **Statements of Kumar Thapa**

- I used ambulance to carry my mother dad body and took her to the *ghat* of pashupati. And this the current trend of funeral practices of my community. This is because you do not have to do any tasks by yourself and it is well appreciated trend.
- I consumed the fruits, juice, potato and use mat and I have seen similar arrangement in others household. It is common practice appreciated rather than ignoring it.
- I did not wear white dress because it depends on me. Now society does not have deep interest to maintain traditional ways. Now it depends on individual thinking and in my opinion wearing dress is appreciated.

### Statements of Rishkes Risal

- Now people carry the dead body on the vehicle. Almost people took to the *ghat* of pashupati. Now people are dependent on outsider to cremate. Now *arya ghat* community provide mortician, the *chita*, priest etc and it is situational thing that people died in hospital instead to carry on bamboo vehicle it preferred. And it is ok practice to me and I had used it.
- Now people are suffering from many disease and illness. They cannot control their hungry as well for such mourner I had allowed to consume the fruits etc but it become factor of imitation. Now it is common practice. And it is ok and even I had consumed and used mat as well hay.
- What I realized is that when majority of people appreciate the anything then that becomes the common rule in society so that now majority of people practice vehicle, eat fruits, dressed color etc and there is no place for minority voices and our voices is on minority category. What to do then?
- Money is current gift giving transaction. It is easy to handle and people prefer and appreciated even if I took traditional gift then I have to sell it back in market in cheap price then why should I take the gifts?

### Statement of Rajendra Gautama

- Now people used mat and eat fruits, potato, nuts, juice, and mat to sleep. They wear colorful dressed after the mourning ritual. These arrangements are made because people are aware of health, personality, superstitious thinking etc and they say traditional ways are unscientific. And it is ok to me because what people desire is clean and tidy place, fruits and nuts to eat and colorful dress.
- Traditional restriction is largely ignored by the saint as by the *jajmane* rather they appreciated current changes in ritual.

Therefore, it can be said and justify that collection enthusiasm is reflected condition to legitimate new practices as a part of ongoing practice. It is also an enabling structure because it compels or attracts practitioners to follow. All the community members are found practicing same and similar to each other in behavioral aspects which are exactly not the aspects to traditional practices but emerged when it was appreciated,

imitated and followed by community members. It becomes mechanism of structural elaboration within new form. Thus, it becomes installer of new rules in practice.

### **Conclusion: Death Ritual Practice**

This is the study conducted to know about the dynamics of death ritual practice. I have intended four objectives to meet. And they are: to know differences and changes; cause behind the use of agency; effects of market in ritual practice; and finally to provide theoretical framework.

And now it can be said that socio-physiological behaviors found changed and concern with economical-rational or practical issues. Before the Nepali society was dominated by market structure the religious-cultural dimension of practice i.e. liturgy (text based ritual practice), traditional norms (prescriptive and proscriptive based practices) and socio-physiological aspects were largely dominated by the structure of impurity and purity as well local eco-system. But now more the society was penetrated in market economy every aspects of traditional practice was oscillated in economical (market) rules and resources. My study reflects the three dimensions that are funeral, mourning and pollution which were largely concerned with economical-rational practice in use in death ritual practice and become condition governing the transmutation of structures and therefore the reproduction of economical-rational system more dominant than cultural-traditional one. And as a results, ritual practice dependent on economical aspects, so the concurrent effects like new deconstructive thinking, reflexive priest, resource constraint, market, and collective enthusiasm are found interlacing causes behind the use of agency and reproduction of ritual practice, and in creating the dynamics in death ritual practice.

While comparing accounts of respondents it was clear that their socio-physiological behaviors of ritual before two decades ago was governed by the cultural practice based on impurity and purity conception of world. Every act of ritual was considered sacred duty i.e. *karma-dharma* which largely reflect the cultural system as dominant in reproduction of ritual practice. This reproduction of system was largely under the control of aged group (like *purohit*, senior-male head of family/community) who were adherent of traditional ways and religious ideas who hold the command over the communal labor-interaction and local ecology. And it was also observed that people

of early time lived choices less life because there were no market facilities or elements, mass media, fruits, mat, road, *ghat* services etc i.e. no condition to flourish agency.

It is observed one decades ago that market elements like *ghat* service and opportunities like jobs slowly changes the internal material relation of socio-ritual life shifted toward the market dependent than community and tradition dependent which was concurrently associated with ecological-manual resource constraint like contamination of river-*ghat* space in local area, lack of manpower to arrange and organize (carrying dead body, cutting trees etc) in instant time etc. Now market provide everything to practitioners and participators like vehicle, *ghat* service, jobs, mat, gas stove, money, fruits, legal rights etc. And these facilities are multiples and are externally produces by market than lineage community or in communal way. This cause the partial shift of resources in Gidden's term that is allocative and authoritative authority of community which was indispensable part to control the traditional institutional practice towards or in the hand of the market elements like *ghat* community, hospital community, fruits seller, vehicle community etc. These market elements have their own rules and these rules are economical-rational (like pay money take service) than cultural-traditional (like applying all proscriptive norms like dead body was impure and only touch by lineage). Now practitioners and participators are moving according to the rules of hospital, ambulance community which means people are following practical rules to suit the situational difficulties, health consciousness other than the cultural or traditional one which is external to lineage community. And it is justified that new ritual practice was laid on the basis of rational-economical rules (like *ghat* service profit motive, vehicle service profit motive).

Early people were religious in their orient to accomplish the ritual practice. They revered and believed on it. Their rules to act was largely designed according to the rules of impurity ad purity which they thought to obey was sacred duty (*karma-dharma*). But now practitioners were rational in their orient to accomplish the ritual practice and the rational does not mean they are not religious or not doing the dharma rather means they are practical in relation the socio-physiological aspects according to contextual difficulties (like problems of swelling in mourning period and using mat instead of hay, hospital death and use of ambulance instead on bamboo etc) than

following the cultural ways. They are seen using correct and appropriate means to choose to achieve the ends than following rules of impurity and purity rather they follow or obey the rules of market elements like *ghat* services, hospital and practical difficulties (like no space in *purohit* home to keep the traditional kinds of gift like cow, bed etc). And it is justified that practitioners reassessed the rules of purity and impurity was caste thing which they considered either non-sense or superstitious or unnecessary etc. Now people are more apt to understand the practice in their practical sense i.e. for instance, dead is normal thing than impurity, salt is made from water than impurity, fruits are pure and juice so it is pure etc.

Now there exist multiple rules and resources outside in society. These rules have status of agency. The term agency that Giddens's used is not an intention, ends, proposes and other states rather agency is what an actor actively does in a situation which are correct and appropriate way which has visible consequences which give life to structure. And for him agency has the same status that the structure has and using agency means using structure and vice versa. In addition, agency means an ability and freedom to choose the rule from the multiple rules i.e. for instance you can carry on dead body on bamboo or in vehicle, sleep on mat or in hay or in both, cook in gas stove or by dried firewood etc and choosing vehicle means transmutation of culture practice in to economical domain and partly shifting the authority resource. And in current time it is widely observed that people are choosing and incorporating new arrangements in their socio-physiological aspects which means new ritual practice is within the structuration but not the reproduction old cultural aspects. These rules and resources are largely brought by market and regulated by economical power that is money so all with that reproduction of practice is also concurrent with the resources constraint and indexical difficulties.

I do not agreed with the Giddens's position that his focus was concentrated on micro entity that is agency. For him, there exist no analytical distinction between the agency and structure. But it is evident from this thesis that there exists analytical distinction. For instance, the indexical difficulties like hospital death was the case of meso level (organizational rules and resources) that is practitioners were constrained to follow the rules of hospital in one hand and on the other had constrained by practical issues like to carry dead body on bamboo stretcher on traffic roads. And resources constraint

(like contamination of river and lack of instant manual labor to arrange the funeral preparation like cutting trees in local area etc) which has influenced the action of practitioners as well people are observed free to choose the market facilities which are brought by market elements. Thus, it is evident that structures are reflected as producers or of enabling whereas agency is reflected as options and adopting qualities but both essential parts within structuration. And above mentioned six points of intentionality behind the use of agency have reflect the both qualities of structure and agency but structure qualities are more dominant.

## **Review**

In this, the concluding chapter, I review earlier section of literature-theoretical review and discuss my findings with tallying with other findings.

Gutschow and Michaels (2006) thesis of ‘handling death’ was that ‘agency’ was exist in shifting, altering, re-inventing, ad hoc invention...etc in ritual practice but not shown the causes behind that as well ritual text leaves space to create the dynamics I ritual practice. And authors had outlined that priest hold more agency than others. And I agreed with them that ritual text leaves space to create the dynamics which is reflected in the narration of the priests and justified. For instance, there is not mention that a mourner should wear white dress for one year; salt can be consumed if it is untouched and made in home; *dekuro* can be made in home or garden but need water resources etc. Thus, It is justified that normative text has inherent quality to create the dynamics than priest and can act as agency to change the traditional rules or cultural form. But I do not agree with them that in their saying priest hold more agency than others. Rather what I found is that agency is subjected to indexical reality like heath, personality, hospital death, rules of ghat community etc than an act of agent solely. Rather, in first, indexical difficulties like hospital death (like cannot prepare bamboo stretcher rather use/obey hospital rules and facilities that is ambulance), manpower constraint (like people are busy in city in their respective works and cannot present immediately in time of death), ecological constraint (like contamination of river-lack of open and clean *ghat* area in local place), health issue (like mourner had heart problem so he cannot eat ghee rather fruits , juice are supplemented etc) were seen responsible to alter the practice rather than directly and freely chosen by agents. Thus, I can say that cause of using agency is indexical first and then agency.

Even in the categories of agents I observed *jajmana* and their household members are seen more rational and aware about the practical issues like health, personality, jobs, comfort seeking, anxiety, genealogical distance, market facilities etc than on faith and priests. *Jajmana* were seen directly choosing the sleeping mat, fruits, wearing colorful dress as well read the *dharmasastra* written in *Nepali* language. They were found in position to argue with the priest because they found dynamics inherent in normative text (like text did not mention anything about dress to wear after 13<sup>th</sup> days of purification rites) than directly chosen or restricted by the priests. And it justified three things that agency is by product of indexical reality, enabling quality of text, and intentionality of *jajmana* to create dynamics than more agency acquired by the priests. These agents were seen redefining cultural norms through their self-calculative perspective of what is right or wrong in relation to practical things or rules but I cannot say, that priest hold more agency rather it can be said dynamics in ritual was as a result of mutual co-monitoring aspects. And I am in position to test the old assumption of myth-beliefs, kinship, and ritual are now not valid in the same way as it was before two decades ago and in this case I agreed with authors.

Kropf (2003) has outlined ideological position of collective agents to hint the dynamics in practice which was reflected as a result when people critic the '*katto-khuvaune*' practice and associated beliefs. She had left unexplained why this practice is undoing. I agreed with her position but my explanation to supplement the reasons was deduced than it is actually a case of it. I have observed several statements of practice like why salt is impure, wearing white dress, cow and gifts *dhana* etc. And these practices were reassessed by the priest and *jajmana* as a non-sense, unobservable, benefit less, superstitious, unnecessary and caste thing than 'ok' practice. And one condition to exist agency was that agent should be free and it is valid. They are free from hierarchy i.e. decision making was concentrated in the hand of mourners and on his household members than on the aged group of community. They had scientific awareness (like salt is made from water), critical reassessing behavior and inferring that restriction on practices was caste things etc. And my explanation are that scientific awareness, freedom to higher extent, critical reassessing behavior of agents on the basis of practical issues are major reasons of rationalization which relegated the mythical concept and thoughts as unnecessary things. And it is emerged from the reflexive power of agents that is vital to gain the



knowledge of current practice to use the agency to create the dynamics. And rational thinking becoming the dominant ideological reality of people than beliefs based on impurity and purity.

Galvin (2003) has presented core aspects of practice theory in terms of the choices available to the widow. And widow's status was best she regarded to exemplify the agency and enabling quality of structure and dynamics in practicing widow in urban Nepal. She outlined the association between the extended kinship structure, residential position, marriage, conversion, and status of widow. For instance, widow who had son got the better protection and security (food and shelter) from extended family; widow who had separation from extended household had better enjoyed the freedom of life, resources, opportunity etc; conversion from Hindu to Christianity enjoyed freedom etc; and these widow who were young and childless were seen observed re-married than those who were not and have not. These all cases reflect the widows' the inherent disposition of status becomes enabling and constraints in relation to the options she had. Here, son become options for widow as well her recognition (status) to allocate the better living than not having it because son reproduced the family. And it is convincing that Galvin definition is largely related to the Giddens' i.e. agency is structure and her thesis is justified with that conception but for me it is partial reality because she ignored the analytical distinction between agency and structure though they exist and implicate inextricably. Here, for me status is representing as producer of options than options itself and my thesis justified it. For instance, mourner health condition or his status of being ill cause the options to adopt new arrangement than mourner itself is an option. I am also disappointed with her that she does not clearly hint which domain of practice and consciousness was dominant for reproduction of practice as well agency and structure. And my findings hint that indexical-practical difficulties, economical aspects (like employment) etc largely determine the practice of widow as well all other practitioners than cultural norms based on tradition.

Goody (1959) and Ahmed (1986) has justified that belief in next life after death consists the constraining power on the behaviors of the practitioners in this world. And I do not convinced with their statements that accounts of respondents in my thesis revealed the decline in the significance of belief system where I observed practitioner modify their practice rather modifications in old practice was based on

rational thinking and desire of comfort which solve the practical issues of practitioner. For instance, *dhana* belief which states that whatever *jajmana* give to the priest as gifts will be received by the deceased in the time of journeying to next world. Such as cow was given which help deceased to cross '*vaitarney river*'; and in the same way shoe was to walk in rough trail and thorny bushes; bed to rest or sleep etc. Now *purohit* did not found receiving traditional kinds of gifts rather money was valid transaction and this is because *purohits* have no space in their home to place the gifts. And on the other side, *jajmana* were observed seeking comfortable way to deal with gift things because to manage and arrange it needs manpower to go *bazzar* and take it to the home of *purohit* etc. *Jajmana* have no time to do such things because lineage community were busy in office as well they all had found practice of living privately in individual way. Now money is observed as valid gift transaction between *purohit* and *jajmana*. And it is justified old belief system now become weaker to control the behaviors of the practitioners. In addition, *purohit* and *jajmana* accounts this belief is unnecessary, superstitious, non-sense or unobservable etc. And I do agree with Gutschow and Michaels (2006) that myth, ritual, belief, kinship are subjected to new definition and it is verified because old belief are now losing its validity.

In the same way, Nepali (1965), has present thesis of death as a essential part of working whole of *Newari* society whose functional role was indispensable to maintain the cohesiveness and solidarity between *Newari* community. And I do not agree with this functional perspective because it wholly ignores the dynamics inside the socio-ritual life of community. And it is justified that working structure of *Newari* society is subjected to change or to bring the changes in practice form the cases of Gutschow and Michaels (2006). In the same way to Nepali, Toffin(2007), presents the unifying linkage between the territory with death and ancestors. He concluded that death is indispensable to link living community with ancestors and vice versa which is manifested in collective worshipping of common God in each community which reflects the authority of each community over the territory. However, in my thesis death was largely related with the ecological-manual resources of local area than territorial unity between deceased and living. It is observed that route and place has changed as well the *ghat*. So I take the position of dynamics to understand the changes than functional perspective. And I have successfully presented that there exist

vast differences in socio-physiological ritual behaviors and practice as well thinking of practitioners.

As elaborated in review section, structuration examines the dual processes in which rules and resources are used to organize interaction across time and in space to reproduce or transform these rules and resources i.e. duality of structure. On the other side, structuration equally examines duality of agency. But to understand both i.e. structuration, it is indispensable to understand the practice. Here, I review how structuration perspective illuminates our understanding of dynamics of death ritual practice in Nepal.

Now practitioners of death ritual practice found themselves between many rules. These rules are not only the cultural rules that they inherited from their early generation rather new rules which emerged when Nepali society was penetrated by market economy. This penetration brought multiple hands to control the resources need to accomplish socio-ritual practice or any other types of practice or interactions. The encapsulated definition of rules for Gidden's is 'how to go on' in contextual position which is also same to reflect agency. Now practitioners were observed in obeying and following the rules of hospital, *ghat* community, vehicle community, rules of women commission etc. On the other side, I observed that the authority dimension to allocate materials need to practice death ritual like fruits, mat, *chita* service, dressing etc as well to control over it and on interaction partly shift in the hand of multiple market elements like *ghat* service.

In the same way in community level, householdlization become dominant to use the rules and resources independently than under the control of aged group. Economical independent of household and ecological-manual resources constraint in local area largely associated to shift the communal practice of death ritual towards the market dependent practice which further lessen the role of aged group i.e. control over the traditional-cultural rules and resources. In addition, nowadays people life was strongly associated with market elements like jobs, subsistence, vehicle, education, legal rights, traveling, comfort, urgency etc. And all this observed conditioning socio-ritual practice of practitioners which become miscellaneous factors to shape and shift the practice, rules and resources from cultural domain of socio-ritual life to economical-rational.

Therefore, it is justified that new rules and resources were found appreciated widely by majority of people and these rules and resources are not only aspects of structure but they are themselves options. And they were found incorporated within practice.

While comparing the practice of two decades ago and now within structuration in past, it was observed that cultural-traditional practice of death ritual was based on ideology of impurity and purity. For instances, dead body was impure thing like malevolent spirit, only lineage members were allowed to touch dead body, communal way of funeral doing, only eating boiled rice and ghee etc. but when market economy became dominant which brought market elements like *ghat* services, fruits sellers, vehicle, media, jobs, classes, hospital etc then cultural-traditional norms were largely affected by it. These aspects of market became dominant because it was largely shared awareness and appreciated due to its application suit to practical-rational sense and it becomes routinized and regionalized reality. Thus, dynamics in practice largely represent the Archer's notion of structuration is that it is endless sequences and cycles of structural change, alternating action and interaction and then structural elaboration. And I agreed with her and it is observed that cultural-conservative practice is shifted toward the economical-rational practice as well alternating the action and groups to interact, resources to use, rules to follow, options to choose etc and then elaboration of structure towards the new direction i.e. in this contemporary context it is economical-rational practice.

For Giddens there do not exist analytical distinction between agency and structure but for Archer there exist though they are implicated in practice but they are both different entities in analytical sense because one is producers of options and another is selectors of options but both have structuring quality that may transform or reproduce practice. For instance, what an actor actually does in a situation is agency and agent with his reflexive quality choose better, correct and appropriate way that will be suitable for the context i.e. agents are found between choosing the options to accomplish the task but these options are largely determined by the structural elements (like market and its elements as a macro: *ghat* rules/options, meso-organizational as a hospital's rules/options, micro-householdization) but not always structure itself than free agent creatively design, made it and applied but they both implicate in the

process within structuration. And I find myself comfortable in the position which Archer occupied.

In this concluding paragraph I have summarized my successful attempt to understand contextual and contemporary trends in death ritual practice and the common viewpoint of others whom I cited. I have used structuration approach to understand the dynamics of death ritual. My study reveals the changes in socio-physiological aspects of death ritual practice; intentionality behind the use of agency; effects of market elements in ritual practice, and new data to those who are curious to understand dynamics in ritual practice.

In past, this study reveals cultural norms-ecological benefit-conservative ideology was dominant within structuration but now market elements become condition governing the continuity and transmutation of ritual practice. These elements brought new opportunities, awareness, facilities, comfort etc that changes the socio-ritual life of people. These are fundamental but most importantly it brought new rules and resources as options to choose which in past did not had existence and now it is within structuration. And to all others whom I have cited and to me that it can be said agency is condition to nature of structure most of the time but not always. It is observed now those economical-rational aspects in death ritual practice become dominant than culture based on culture of impurity. And it is constraint by practical issues which at structural level demand stable practical rules and resources within structuration. These new aspects of ritual were largely appreciated by majority of people and reasons behind the creation of dynamics were: new deconstructive thinking, reflexive priest, householization, resources constraint, role of market elements and collective enthusiasm.

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## Glossary

Agni: fire.

Arya ghat: ghat located at pashupati.

Ban-haney-ko: stroke from the above: stroke usually means power of god or evil.

Barne: applying

Bazzar: market.

Bazzer: market.

Bhaisipati: name of a place

Bhat: cooked rice prepared in boiled water.

Bhote ko des: tibeto-burmane peoples of the high Himalayan region.

Bhote mache: individual belongs to matwali caste.

Bhut: malevolent spirit of the dead which causes sickness and crisis of wealth

Bikram Sambat: Nepali calendar year

Biray nun: red color salt.

Bokshi: witch

Brahmin: priest.

Bramaputra: name of river.

Chetras: first day of mourning in which a mourner ideally does not consume or drink anything.

Chihan: cremation ground.

Chita pinda: it is a rite when done when body is cremated fully; offering of rice ball to the preta of the chihan.

Chita:pyre

Chora: son.

Das karma or kriya: the ten sacraments which mark the phases of a person's physical and moral development.

Dekuro: an ideally elephant head shape mud; in size it is equal to head of new born baby.

Des: territory.

Dhagbatti: pyre.

Dhana: it is gift offer to priest; it is believed that this gift will be received by deceased when and in the time of journeying to next world so that he could not face any trouble even if then it mitigate it.

Dharma: religious action; sacred duty; moral ethics; caste rules; right action.

Dharmic: to be honest with his/her dharma; to model his/her behaviors exactly according to religious norms.

Diyo: oil-light.

Fhalano: other.

Ganga: name of river.

Gaun: village.

Ghat: local cremation ground.

Ghorayto bato: narrow lane.

Gurau: the shaman.

Guthi: an organization especially active when person from lineage community dies to provide communal labor-economic-religious activities and supports.

Jajmana: client; those individuals to whom priest offers his priestly service.

Jalbinayak: name of a temple

Jharra: pure jat group

Jutho barne: it is impure sate apply to close kin after death; restricting eating salts; worshiping and washing clothes and other foods and drinks like meat, alcohol etc.

Jutho: impurity, especially result from death and saliva.

Kacho dhago: raw thread.

Kaka: uncle.

Karma: fate; a moral system in which a person's deeds affect his rebirth and fate.

Katto-khavaune: ideally it is presupposed that the brain of the deceased was mixed in paste or varieties of foods which have to eat by deceased lineage community and his relatives regarding it as a parshad.

Khada pani: boiled water which is only drink when one become a mourner.

Khola/nadhi: river.

Kodho: millet

Kriya putri: mourner

Kriya: mourning; thirteen days of death pollution; son of deceased is ideally the principal performer

Madhyades/mades: tarai; south belt of plain area of the Nepal.

Manche: man.

Mangal bazaar: a local palace of the Patan area.

Mantra: sacred Sanskrit syllables, words or phrases written by God.

Mashan: evil spirit roam in cremation ground.

Matwali: alcohol drinking caste.

Matwalli/matwali: alcohol drinking caste.

Muluki ain: the legal code of Nepal

Murdha laney bato: a path used only to carry dead body.

Nata: relatives

Newar: ethnic group belongs to matwali caste.

Panchak: an astrological measure calculated by purohit with reference to time of death on this basis it is decided death is good or bad; and if needed further rites should organize to obviate bad consequences which is suppose to harm deceased family and deceased in time of journeying to next world.

Pandit: priest.

Parma: system of reciprocal labor exchange between households.

Parshad: it sacred gift of god; it can be eat if it is a foods or it can be wear if it a cloth; when something is put in the feet of deities then it is regarded as pure and sacred.

Pashupati nath; one of the holiest shrines of Hinduism which is located in Katmandu, Nepal.

Pashupatinath: one of the holiest shrine of Hindu loacated in Kathmandu.

pasne: rites and ritual in which new born bady is given to eat boiled rice for the first time after six months.

Patan: one of the city of the Katmandu

Pichas: evil spirit.

Pinda: it is personified rice ball and ritually made the body for the deceased so that he can have his body in next life.

Pitri lok: realm of the ancestors

Pitri: ancestor

Pran: a last breath when it leaves the living being then it is declared as death.

Preta kalpa: sastra which is written about the death; and only related to death related institutional practice.

Preta; malevolent spirit.

Puja: worship.

Purana: it is one of religious literature of Hinduism which deals which with death subject.

Puranic epoch: period when puranic sastra was fully flourished and applied in every activity dated approximately 500-200 B.C.

Purohit: household priest.

Sainbu/Chobar/Pashupati/Samkhamula/Tekku/Jalbinayak: name of places where ghat facilities are available.

Samiti: community.

Samsara: a process and cycle which never end: death, life, and rebirth is three dimension of it; it is cycle of rebirth and death.

Saptadhya pot: a raw mud pot in which seven different grains are kept which are supported to be favorite of God yama.

sari: type dress only wear by women.

Sastra: religious literature.

Shetyo bastra:white dress.

Shraddha: rites involving offerings of foods and water to ancestors in each anniversary of his death.

Shuddha: pure

Sindha: name of place which is situated in the Pakistan.

Tharu: ethnic group largely settled in taria.

Tulshi: a herbal plant which is personified the God bishnu; he is one of the three supreme god.

Vaikuntha: mythical place in which after the death a person goes to reside and from there never return to life again.

Vaitarney: the mythical river which deceased has to cross when he is journeying to the realm of yama full of wild beast and blood.

Veda or vedic: the oldest religious dharmastra of Hinduism.

Vedic epoch: period when vedic sastra was fully flourish and applied in every activities dated approximately 1700-300 B.C.

Yama: god of death, and hell and heaven.

A STUDY OF THE CONTEXTUAL AND CONTEMPORARY TRENDS OF  
DEATH  
RITUAL PRACTICE FROM STRUCTURATION PERSPECTIVE.

T.U. THESIS EXAMINATION, 2013.

Respondent's Name.....Venue of Interview.....Interview

Date.....Sex.....Age.....

Education.....Family Type.....Occupation.....Religion.....Communication

Address.....

How many times you have practiced mourning ritual in your life?

.....

How death ritual performer (the mourner and the priest) is identified and authenticated?

Some of the performers whom I knew from my childhood as well some of them will be know from the snow-ball technique. And to authenticate the performers' position I will present their communication numbers as well one can visit field site.

Site	Core Question	Probing Questions
<b>A.</b> <b>Funeral:</b> <b>Past</b> <b>Accounts.</b>	Please tell us about the funeral practices of last 2 decades ago. <b>1</b>	Would you tell me how was your experiences of past days (2 decades ago) you got involved in funeral practices? <b>2</b>
		Which was the route and place taken for cremating the dead bodies? Why was that? <b>3</b>
		Who were involved in cremating the dead bodies and how they did it? <b>4</b>
		Would you tell me the method of carrying the dead bodies in those days? And how they did it? <b>5</b>

<b>: Present Accounts.</b>	Please tell us about the funeral practices of this time (last death ritual you practiced and attended)? <b>6</b>	Has there been any change in the past 5 years and in recent period (last death ritual you practiced and attended) in the ways funeral practices are performed and accomplished? <b>7</b>
		Would you tell me your experiences of current situation of practicing funeral? <b>8</b>
		Which is the route and place taken for cremating the dead body and why is that? <b>9</b>
		Who are involved in cremating the dead bodies and how they did it and why is that? <b>10</b>
		Would you tell me the method of carrying the dead bodies in these days? And how they did it? And why is that? <b>11</b>
		In your opinion, why people make changes in practicing funeral practices? <b>12</b>
		Would you share how you understand these changes in funeral practices? <b>13</b>
<b>B. Mourning: Past Accounts.</b>	Please tell us about the mourning practices last 2 decades ago? <b>14</b>	Would you tell me how was your experiences of past days (last 2 decades ago) you first got involved in mourning practices? <b>15</b>
		Would you tell me about the arrangement of place to make dekuro and why? <b>16</b>

		Would you describe what were the types of food for mourner to consume and why was that? <b>17</b>
		Would you describe what were the arrangement of place for mourning ritual and why was that? <b>18</b>
		What types of gift were given to the priest in the past? And why? <b>19</b>
		What was the arrangement of dresses for male mourner and female widow during the ritual and after the end of ritual and why was that? <b>20</b>
<b>:Present Accounts.</b>	Would you give me your ideas about the present day ( last death ritual you practiced and attended ) situation of practicing mourning ritual? <b>21</b>	Has there been any change in the past 5 years and in recent period (last death ritual you practiced and attended) in the ways mourning practices are performed and accomplished? <b>22</b>
		Tell me your current experiences? Why is that?
		Would you tell me are there changes in the arrangement of place to make dekuro and why? <b>23</b>
		Would you tell me about the changes and what are arrangement of foods for mourner and why is that? <b>24</b>



		Are there any changes in the arrangement of place for mourner? If yes, why is that? <b>25</b>
		What kinds of gift are given to the priest and why is that?
		What kinds of gift are preferred by a priest and why is that? <b>26</b>
		Are there changes in the arrangement of dresses for male and female mourner after the accomplishment of mourning ritual? If yes, then why is that? And how you explain it? <b>27</b>
		In your opinion, why do people make changes on the aspects of mourning ritual? <b>28</b>
		Would you tell us your understanding of these changes in mourning ritual? Or how you receive, perceive and understand these changes? <b>29</b>
<b>C. Pollution: Past Accounts.</b>	Would you please tell me of the practices of 2 decades ago of the pollution applied to close kin who were descendent of common ancestor? <b>30</b>	In the process of death ritual, how strict was pollution applied to close kin in those days and why was that? <b>31</b>
		What kinds of restriction were there for a close kin and on what aspects and duration and why was that? <b>32</b>
<b>:Present Accounts.</b>	Would you tell me current situation (this time) of strictness of pollution and restriction on the aspects apply to close kin who are descendent of	Has there been any change in regarding to strictness of pollution and restrictions on the aspects apply to close kin and

	common ancestor? <b>33</b>	why is that? <b>34</b>
		Do you practice pollution apply according to traditional way when some one from lineage dies? Why is this? <b>35</b>
		Do you think practicing pollution (jutho) ritual by close kin is same as before or those of the past days? If no, why is that? <b>36</b>
		Do you think each individual of close kin perform the pollution (jutho) apply to them? If no, then why is that? <b>37</b>
		Would you kindly tell us why these variations/changes occur? Or why people bring changes? <b>38</b>
		Would you tell us how you understand the overall practice of death ritual in these days? <b>39</b>