

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

I was only 10 when I ran away from home to become Aani. It would take me some weeks to reach my destination. I was alone, penniless and having no idea of the route to follow. Wearing rags, I was walking bare feet on the rough mountains. – Aani Karma.

The childish and hasty decision of Karma to run away from home was ‘do or die’ attempt. She left home because her father and brother left home for Kathmandu the same day. The brother was going to Kathmandu to become Lama. She also wanted to become Aani. But the parents did not care what little Karma was dreaming about. Karma, then, realized that her parents would never consult her for her education. So she commenced that risky adventure. For her, education was to become Aani. It was a whimsical decision. Not a single soul to accompany, no idea of the route to head, no food, no shelter for the nights, no money; she started her awesome journey through the rough majestic mountains, high stormy hills and sparse jungles of Karnali, the road less zone of Nepal. Her entire journey would be life-threatening, insecure and unprotected. But luckily she met her father and brother on the way on the second day. Still there was nothing to be happy for her since she had another risk to be interfered. Luckily she got victory as she was able to convince her father to let her start Aani life.

It should be very hard time for her to reach the decision to leave home and go to the unknown city Kathmandu, to start Aani life. Her idea showed maturity beyond her years. Her observation of the village life, the existing hardship and the low level of awareness of the villagers made her dream to pursue high education. Karma was not a single soul to have such thrilling life story. During my chat with other young Aanis, some of the innocent school age children from remote Himalayan area of Nepal also told their stories similar to the story of Karma.

Aani Karma dreamt to leave home to become educated and she thought it would be only possible by becoming an Aani. It was a terrible adventure to run away from a remote village of Mugu to Kathmandu, for a young girl like Karma, at that tender age of 10. She had never left home before. It would take more than 20 days to reach the road from her village of Mugu, one of the most remote and the least developed districts of Nepal. It was not hard to read the deep hidden sentiment in the face of innocent little Aani, whose eyes were dazzling with tears, as she was telling me her real story of her childhood and the story of the time she left home. Earlier she was not willing to disclose it. This might be a representative story of Aanis from remote hills and Himalayas of Nepal. There must be many more such thrilling but untold stories.

She may not have run away from home if there was education facility in her village. Majority of the children from the remote Himalayan districts were found deprived of education facility. Ignorance, unawareness and lack of basic needs ultimately forced people to take things for granted and religion influenced it strongly. Few children had chances of school education but it was limited and of low quality. Many people were still ignorant. Some of the Buddhist children, however, had an option to become Aanis/ Lamas and started religious education. Some, even, had chances of school education supported by religious institutions.

Being a non-Buddhist, I was not familiar with Aanis (Buddhist nuns) and Aani system. I had no idea about 'who they were and why they were such'. The fact-based story of Aani Karma boiled my mind with several questions. I decided to find more about the Aani system, their identity, their future and the education they would probably get. However, I was quite sure that if there was school facility for the children of remote area the innocent children, like Karma wouldn't venture the risky and unimaginative journey to Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal. The Aani system may prevail but in a different way and with different feeling of religion. They would not take Aani life as ultimate option to obtain education of any type.

Like in many developing countries, school education had become a great challenge in Nepal. There were various problems to offer education to children in the nation. This had become a great challenge for the children, parents and the nation. In the Nepalese context, the challenges were caused by; poverty, inappropriate planning, inadequate budget, family problem, religious practice and belief of people, sparse and

low density of population in remote areas. Most of the hilly areas and Himalayan regions had the small and scattered populations. Establishment of school was expensive and very difficult in such places. Even the schools served a small number of people. Because of low density of population, development was very expensive there. As a result, the people were deprived of basic needs and many other facilities, including education. Poverty was another hindrance for the children to get enrolment in school and continue their education. Many of the poor families had involved their children to work and earn for the family support. For the family of remote and poor economic background, the children were also the subordinate workers. In that case, the school children had to give up their study to become part of the man-powers for their family. The attitude and dependency of the parents to their children involved them in the income generation activities put them aside of the school education. Girls were more victimized than boys because of the gender based discrimination. Bista (1992: 128) describes village situation as:

Children in such situations collect all the cattle of the village, take them to a common grazing area and look after them while adult members of the village are busy with agricultural work during the peak seasons. There is also the practice of requisitioning female children's labor from the schoolroom, so that boys remain in school longer than the girls throughout rural Nepal. Even in the suburban areas of Kathmandu and among the poorer sections in urban areas, girls drop out of school much earlier than boys though both sexes are sent to school at the same age. Children are part of a continuous extension of the economic and social life of society and circumstances still greatly restrict their opportunities for education.

It clearly reflects the situation of the village life and the condition of the children there, especially of the school aged girls. It is an irony that the parents expect and involve their innocent children for their economic contribution. They take children as their assets, not because they would be very useful members in the future but because they were already part of their income generation activities. The girls are even better because their role is more in the household work as well as outside of the houses. As a

result, they rarely get chance of education. From this point, Aani system can be viewed as important chance to girls. There might be many critical issues in this case. However, they had their own ground to discuss and deal. Religions had helped to promote children's education.

Buddhism had supported it by providing religious education to some young boys and girls, who were enrolled in monasteries and nunneries. They began religious education and practised it throughout their lives. Most of the time, it was a barrier for them to obtain formal/ modern education. But some of such institutions supported them for modern education too. Education is essential to everyone for easy adjustment and comfortable life. For the present time, modern education is more important to each and every individual. 'To be literate' has become universal right to everyone, though not implemented practically in many countries. As a result, this right is limited in paper as an 'Ivory Tower' in many countries, including Nepal. The contemporary education system of Nepal can be classified and studied as; Religious education (in case of Nepal – Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, Kirant education etc.) and formal/modern education.

Nunnery/ monastery education system: It provides education of 'Buddha's Teachings'. It is provided in the nunneries for the Aanis (nuns) and in the monasteries for the Lamas (monks). Both the Lamas and Aanis have the same education system. This education system is prevailing commonly. It is said that the girls/ boys voluntarily choose to live celibacy life in monasteries/ nunneries throughout their lives. Existing religious and cultural system, along with the dogmatic beliefs, influence girls to choose Aanis' (nuns') life and boys to become Lamas (monks). They sacrifice their entire lives for religious study and practice through preaching/ teaching, praying and participating ritual rites. The parents and Aanis/ Lamas believe that; it is the best part of life which enriches their Dharma. 'Salvation', 'Nirvana' and 'Enlightenment' are possible for a person through this way. For these all, they have to leave their home, family and family life. They live celibacy life in the particular nunneries/ monasteries in their group, which they call 'Sangha'.

The nunneries/ monasteries are established on the basis of their lineage and cult. They contain senior people (Aanis/ Lamas) to train and teach the newly enrolled ones. It is not exactly the apprenticeship system of teaching but it is closely similar. Their

learning materials are religious books and philosophy. They involve mostly for meditation. In her writing, Bangsbo (2000, Oct.) has opined that the people of northern belt have the problem of food. To encourage the children of each family to join monasteries could have two reasons according to her: to lighten the financial burden of the family and to provide religious manpower for their 'Dharma'. By sending the children to monasteries, the parents could get two kinds of securities: i) Religious security and ii) The life security of the Aanis and Lamas for the future.

Formal/modern education system: It is in the contrary to nunnery education formal/modern education system is in existence to provide education in national level. This model of education system is managed by; i) government, ii) local community and iii) private sectors, in Nepal. Similar to other countries, this education system generally starts from the age of six years. Math, science, computer, languages and social studies are the common subjects of modern education. But there are also some other subjects to choose from different areas.

At present, the formal/modern education system has school level and university level of studies. The school education has primary (1 – 5 classes), lower secondary (6 – 8 classes), secondary (9 & 10), and higher secondary (11 & 12 classes). The university education has Bachelor, Masters and Research levels. Such type of education is prevailing to meet the need of and time. After the industrial revolution, the needs and importance of modern education grew. It is based on science and technology.

Monastic education was religious one. It highly gave importance to the preservation and the promotion of its own religious value and belief. Somehow it provides an opportunity to become literate to the learners. Neither it had any modern trend of education system, nor any interest to bridge its course with the recent trends of education. However, such institutions had some kind of interest to introduce its disciples/learners about the formal/modern education. It could not negate the need and importance of formal/modern education. The interest of being enrolled in religious education seemed to be due to family problems, discrimination and the insecure married life. It might be a case of pessimism and reluctance to the family life for females. In this context, I became interested to undertake this study and find out whether there is a place of happily blend of those two systems of education.

The planners and educationists of the nation seemed less concerned to bridge these two school systems and make education more useful and practical. Recently the government of Nepal had decided to adjust the religious education and provide equivalent level to the formal education. This provision would help to mount higher literacy in a hand and justice and value to religious education system. The direct beneficiaries of it would be under privileged children of the remote areas.

1.2. Research Questions

As stated above, I wanted to study about Aani schooling system. For my study purpose I had decided to focus my study on the following research questions:

- a) Main question - Who are Aanis and what is the provision of schooling for them?
- b) Subsidiary questions-
 1. What are the determining factors for a Buddhist girl to become an Aani?
 2. Why do the Aanis need modern/ formal education?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The purpose of my study was to view the life style of Aanis; their surrounding, the family structure, the relatives and the religious beliefs. In addition to them I wanted to know how and why the Aanis wanted to obtain the modern education. Their feelings on modern education and the educational scenario were the matters of concern to me. The provision of schooling to Aanis was also a part of my study. How the religious people felt the need and the importance of it, was another area of study. In this context, I had undertaken this study to examine the possible interconnections between Aanis' religious school called nunnery and school for formal/ modern education.

Prior to set the objectives, I observed an English boarding school, where Aanis studied along with Lamas and other general students. The facilities provided to the Aanis for modern education are not adequate. This situation helped to raise number of questions within me. Is modern education essential for Aanis? Why do they attend school for the modern education? On this background, I had the following objectives:

- i. To study Aanis' education system;
- ii. To explore the reason behind the attraction of Aanis to modern education.

1.4. Rationale of the Study

The village children of the remote mountainous region were getting religious education. In addition to their monastic education, they also wanted the modern education to adjust to modern environment. So the question was whether it would be possible to synergize monastic and modern education for mass education, which the study wanted to explore.

The role of any religion is high in education. Almost all types of religions have some kind of teaching and learning process. Each religion has some sorts of education provision and system within itself. Most of them have the monastic education. However, some others do not have monastic education. But it does not mean that they do not have education process at all. All the religions have one of their main aims to teach the underlying religious value, which is to make people aware and understand the ways and reasons of life from the religious view point. The religious education has its own curriculum, texts and evaluation for the promotion of the level. The religious scholars act as the teachers. They all have religious reading materials, sermon and the preaching to educate them. For a simple reason, i.e. to read their religious books, which they even preferred to say holy books, they had to be literate. Therefore, directly or indirectly religions are helping to make people literate or educate them.

The extreme or blind support of a religion is not always reasonable and useful in an individual's life. One must be able to analyze the right and wrong points of the religious beliefs. The progresses in the field of science and technology have made this process easier and different. The important thing of one time period might not be so in the succeeding years. The beliefs on the religions do not remain the same these days. The influence of modern education has a great role to think and rethink about the religious practices. Many religious, pro-religious and anti-religious movements have been observed in the religious horizon.

Religious education is much traditional than the modern one. Both are equally important to many people in these days, as well. Because of it, even educated city dwellers also have preferred to send their children to live monastic life and get religious education. The religious education has different aims to individual's life. It aims to impart education for the purity of the mind and for the knowledge of the eternal peace. On the contrary, modern education focuses on the study of science, technology, society,

universe and the nature. Modern education has introduced many visible changes going on in the day-to-day life. But religious education has left a long lasting effect on us. In addition, I was interested to know more about the Aanis and their schooling, since I saw them going to school for other than traditional education. Though they were religious people, they also accepted and understood the need and importance of school education.

CHAPTER 2

DISCUSSION OF METHODOLOGY AND TOOLS

In the end, the task of the integrative methodological approach is to facilitate empirical inquiry into social reality in a way that takes into account that the reality is shot though with a mosaic of different realities and that our research is part of the processes forming this social mosaic or a “patchwork quilt”.

– Deleuze and Guattari

Methodology is a process of collecting available data and interprets them from different lens as a whole. It’s just like “patchwork quilt”. Different methodologies can be used for research purpose. This research is based on case study since it has taken a single person to reflect and reflex the life style of Aanis and their education. For the successful use of case study, I employed two main methodologies namely: observation and interview. The research methodologies and tools are used to explore information, underlying knowledge and the facts of the research work. My research study is qualitative one. I have based my research on Aani Norlha’s education and her life style. She was the main respondent of my research (11 other Aanis, 1 ex-Aani, 15 non-Aani students, who were studying with Aanis, 1 Buddhist lady teacher, 1 non-Buddhist teacher, 1 junior Lama, 4 senior Lamas, 1 parent and 1 educationist, Department coordinator of Pokhara University were consulted and/ or interviewed for the purpose of it, but Norlha had major part). Altogether there were 36 people, including Norlha, as my

informants. For the purpose of confidentiality and ethical consideration, pseudo names are used.

2.1 Case Study

Case study is the study process of a single subject in depth. It is related to social aspect as well as medical, psychological, physical and others. But most of the time it is used for the vertical study of a person and subject matter. It helps to identify about any subject matter in depth with reference to the associated aspects or elements/ components. It is a descriptive process of study. Citing from Runyan (1982) Khatri (2006:16) mentions, “Case study approach is the presentation and interpretation of detailed information about a single subject, whether an event, culture or ... an individual life.”

I thought to pick one young Aani as my principal informant (some few others would also be additional informants). I thought to take one of such who was born and grown in Kathmandu, completed school level education, the family was modern in other respects of life, and the family is financially well off. To fulfil my interest I inquired about some of the nuns (Aanis) who passed S. L. C. and were born in Kathmandu. I found seven such nuns in a nunnery in Kathmandu. One of them, Ani Palsang Lhamo, became nun after she passed class XII. For me, she could not be much informative person since she got her higher level of formal/modern education first and entered the nunnery. It could not give me the opportunity to learn about the schooling system after entering in the nunnery. However, she would be a good source of information for me for some other purpose. The second one was Norlha Dolma, who became a nun when she was studying in class seven. She had completed her S. L. C. in the year 2004. The third one was Karma Yangu, who was my student and she had passed S. L. C. in the year 2006; the others are Samten Lhamo, Karma Dolma, Laxmi Gurung and Dolma Tsering. Samten Lhamo and Karma Dolma entered nunnery after they passed S. L. C. All the four Samten Lhamo, Karma Dolma, Laxmi Gurung and Dolma Tsering were in India for ‘Seda’ course, when I was involved in this research work. Hence, Aani Norlha was the single option left for me.

For educational study and for the behavioural studies, case study is found more realistic and useful. It can be used for a single person or a small group of people. This

helps to identify the current situation and problems lie in the area of the setting or the background of the research work. However, it has some limitations or shortcomings. The collected information may be more confidential and difficult to analyze. The verification and evaluation process of the information is hard. Because of it, it lacks some particularities. Nevertheless, the methodology is very useful for the minute study of a person or a group of people as required. Ibid. (p 17) states, “Whatever may be the weaknesses of this method one thing that is certain is that it can be a fertile source for the creation of hypotheses or formulation of questions which can later be tested.”

For my study purpose, I studied in detail about the selected Aani, Norlha. This study has incorporated some part of ethnographic method as well, because the monastic life system is not common to all Nepalese Buddhists. But it is found that ethnic groups of people of northern belt of Nepal, especially Tibetan, Manangi/ Gurung, Sherpa and Tamang have this tradition as a part of their religion. My concern was ‘how she became a nun’? What were the influencing factors for her to join the nunnery? What kind of family environment was there before she joined nunnery and what did she find there after she joined it? How did she observe the nunnery life in her early days and how was she feeling to be there? What facilities were there for the young schooling nuns to get formal education? What were the barriers for the modern education to them? Identification of the different areas between monastic or religious education and modern education from the Aani’s perspective would be my part of study.

Keeping the above mentioned questions in mind I had observed her and remained in close contact with her for a considerable length of time. This would help me to build rapport with her and know further more in detail. The regular talks and interactions between the specified Aani and me made a room for the easy way of information gathering. Eventually it gave considerable information to me about Aani schooling and their feeling on the need of formal education to them. She co-operated me to identify more about the cases of Aani schooling and their perspectives towards modern education. Observation and in – depth and open ended interview were employed for the perfect and complete use of the case study.

I got necessary information and instructions from my supervisor. For this purpose, I consulted him before I started my case study. I tried to remain in his contact regularly before, during and after the research work process. As per his instruction and guidance,

I carried over my research through case study. This process helped me to collect some required knowledge.

Use of Case Study

The case study was the main tool for my research work. I used the case study as the combination of 'observation' and 'interviews'. These two parts of study supported case study and they brought me the expected information and further helped to generate information.

Therefore, I studied about two major parts; i) the Buddhist trend, attitude and the system of formal and religious education to the young individuals and ii) the locality, and the available facility in their community. The regular talks with different people of the related community gave me one kind of information about the Buddhist trend and tradition. The study of available literature provided me the other source of knowledge. The designated two other tools observation and interviews helped me to swell the information.

2.2 Observation

Observation is a useful tool to collect primary information. This can be used at a site by the researcher personally. It is a long and continuous part of study. It gives much minute and general information about the desired subject areas. The expected source of knowledge or information can be obtained through observation. It is found more in the natural setting. The process of observation could be continued until the researcher believes that no more relevant information is left behind to be observed. This process will be associated with the logical termination to the event. This seems a simple process for information gathering but it is not what it is thought. Khati opines as follows:

This method of data collection may be seen to be simple, but it is evidently not. There are lots of conflicting opinions about the methods of observation and about the word observation itself. Some opine that observation of the behaviour must be controlled rigorously, but the critics of it underlie the fact that observation must be naturalistic, since the behaviour that is to be observed must have naturalistic and realistic touch in it. - (2006: 58/ 59)

The use of observation method helps the researcher to know and identify a lot more about the expected research area. It is complex since it requires the observation and study of the behaviour of an individual and of a group. To be able to observe the behaviour in its natural setting is very difficult. It might bring the feeling of biasness as well. In that case the facts or the study of behaviour might interpret in a false way. That gives contradictory result.

I was engaged in the observation for the collection and generation of the required data. I observed a school where Aanis and Lamas studied together with the other general students. They all were obviously from the Buddhist background. I was an outsider but I did the observation regularly for a long time (about 6 months). That helped me for the rapport building. Also, I was able to observe my own research co-worker, Norlha and some other Aanis frequently and closely. It gave me some knowledge about the feeling and participation of the nuns and monks to get modern and formal education. Further more; I was quite familiar with the perception, behaviour and attitude of them and the other senior Aanis and Lamas.

Personal talk was another useful tool for the information generation for my research purpose. Since it is related to a case study of a person, I need to know a lot more about the informant. Whenever it is possible for me to have a comfortable time with the concerned individual or people I tried to talk and know more things about the Aanis and their schooling system. I remained in direct contact with the target person for a considerable length of time, until I could obtain the required data. I collected the information I needed and analyzed and interpreted the available information.

I tried my best to maintain the ethical consideration during my work. Such type of personal talk helped me to find more, real and fact-based information about the informant. So it also has a danger to misuse the information. But I worked seriously with how I could manage the ethical questions about the informant. Further more I could generate more valuable information, I was expecting for the purpose of my research work.

Use of Observation

For the collection and generation of primary data or information, I applied the tools observation and personal talks. My observation was based on the list of the questions I had prepared for the purpose of check list. I used the check list for more than 15 days. In the beginning I observed them almost regularly. Later, I observed them once a week for a few weeks. My concern was about their regularity and punctuality to the school and class room. The participation of them in the off hour of the school and lunch time was another time for me to observe them to find how they showed their friendship to the other people.

I was eager to know what kind of sitting arrangements they had inside the classroom, their active participation in the curricular and extra curricular activities, their behaviours to the Aanis and others. Some of the Aani students were asked about their feelings in and out of the classroom. Concerned class teachers and subject teachers were requested to tell about some certain questions; e. g. their involvement in classroom activities, participation and cooperation with the other students. I asked class teachers and consulted their class register to know about their regularity in the class.

2.3 Interviews

Interview can be a very useful tool to generate information for the research case. It can be used in various ways. The formal interview and informal interview are the basic two types of interviews. Formal interviews are less effective to bring the real data of information. It limits the participation of the concerned person to the certain extent. His/her further intention and knowledge about the subject matters can not be considered useful, so it is ignored and thus the importance of the subject matter can be minimized. Most of the time, such type of interviews provide artificial information, which cannot fulfil the real needs of the data. The respondents will write the answers from their knowledge on the subject matter asked. Interview questions can be of limit to answer or open-ended. The latter types of questions for the interview are more useful, though, they are difficult to analyze and interpret. However, priority is given to the open ended type of interview questions for the purpose of qualitative research. Therefore, I also used the open ended type of interview questions to generate the information that was expected for my thesis.

Interview seems to be similar to the conversation. Interview and conversation have a lot of superficial similarities, but interviews are actually something more than just a conversation. The process of interview itself is different; the motive and specification of the questions make the interview more goal(s) oriented. It involves a set of assumptions and understandings. Interview deals about the situation, which is not normally, associated with a general chat or conversation. Interviews are based on the informed consent and the agenda for the discussion.

Normal talks and conversations do not bear the quality of interview. Research interview does not happen by chance; it is pre-planned and as per the required arrangement. The discussion is not arbitrary or at the whim of one of the parties; it is dedicated to investigating a given topic. The flow of the discussion is rarely in a free form; it is normally monitored by the researcher.

Use of Interviews

To achieve the answers for the questions of “Objectives” of the thesis I tried to interpret the research questions into several questions. The questions were expected to generate information for the purpose of my thesis. For it, I consulted my supervisor to provide an outline of the questionnaires. He instructed me the guidelines and then corrected the prepared questionnaires. Eventually, they were used for the interview purpose.

The questionnaires were prepared to pursue the open ended responses of the informants. The questions were divided into four parts (except the fact based questions and points to observe, given in Question No. 2). The questions were designed and developed for the information generation of the expected areas. Questions were of four different areas which were expected to be responded by the people of different fields. All the questions were not for all informants to reply. They all were put together, though the natures of questions were not uniform. As a result, the informants did not provide the answers or their response to each question. The particular questions were for the particular persons; e. g. the educationist and teachers were expected to respond the 1st and the 5th questions. School teachers were expected to answer the reason for the Aanis to join the nunnery and later to the formal education in addition to respond question 1st and 5th. The main questions were given below:

1. General perception of education: (education in general, modern and religious education)
2. Existing system for nuns to get modern education: (fact based questions for information which were to find the facts about their school access and observation)
3. Modern education to young nuns: (questions to obtain the perception of informants for the need of modern education to young Aanis)
4. Why do girls become Aanis? (Religious cause and perception of people about Aanis.)

To obtain the response of different people; i. e. religious people and general people, which included some of the Aanis themselves and Buddhist young and aged people along with non Buddhist teachers and educationists were selected randomly. The selection was made on the basis of the access and approach to the people. During the selection of the informants I had a very bitter experience to get chance to meet and interview the Manangi Buddhist parents. I tried my best to be in contact with them, I waited for a long time and also I was given words to manage the meeting with the parents of the Manangi students. However, it was not an easy task for me to visit them for the interview. Actually I wanted to meet particularly to those parents who sent most or all of the daughters in the nunnery. There were some, like that, who have two or more than that number of sons and daughters but most of them are in monastery and nunnery. But they all were inaccessible to me for the purpose of interview and information generation. In the early days I wanted to visit Norlha Dolma's parents. But I was told about their busy time schedule. That made them difficult to spare me time. My second target was a couple who I wanted to meet because their all sons and daughters were in the monastery and nunnery. I couldn't get anybody of them. Later I decided to meet another Manangi couple who had 5 daughters and no son and the 4 daughters were already in the nunnery and the last one was also in a pressure to be a nun as soon as possible. The last couple had 2 sons and 2 daughters. All the children were in the monastery and nunnery except one son. But all I wanted was useless. Finally, I met a widow woman whose 2 sons out of the three had entered the monastery. She was cooperative to provide information for my research work.

Altogether seven people were interviewed, based on the questionnaires prepared. Some new and young Aanis and the school Principal were interviewed on the focus questions of their feeling of being Aanis and Lamas. The school principal, a Lama, was interrogated about the reason for offering formal/modern education to the monastic people and the role of monasteries to provide education to the children of remote Himalayan region. He talked about the view of different heads of the monasteries and their feelings and roles for the support to achieve education to people of remote Himalayas.

2.4 Delimitation of the Thesis

This thesis has limited areas for study. The areas are limited in the following points:

1. Kathmandu valley as the research area;
2. It only covered the Aanis' involvement in school/ college for formal education;
3. Aanis of Tibetan Buddhism to be observed and made the basis of research;
4. Only the Aanis, of a particular nunnery, are the informants; (name of the nunnery is not mentioned for the sake of confidentiality)
5. All the Aani students (38) were observed and 11 Aanis were interviewed;
6. One of the highly educated Aanis to be taken as the main informant (co-researcher).
7. For confidentiality purpose, names of the nunnery, school and monastery are not given.

2.5. Ethical Consideration

During my research work, unknowingly, I might have caused some kind of unkind remarks to the informants or their community/ society. I was seriously concerned to avoid it. I tried my best to manage the ethical questions. So there would be no more tension between myself and the researched ones in the distant future as well.

My area of study was related to religion, religious people and the provision of education. It might create more areas of misunderstanding or misguidance due to the

communication gap. I had tried my best to avoid or minimize such areas for the welfare of both the researcher and the researched group of people. All the words and the terms that would harm or insult the group of people were not included in the thesis. Before I had reached to the final stage of my research work, I consulted to both my supervisor and the informants to get approved for the work to finalize. After their satisfaction and acceptance of the work and its tolerable aspects I had come to the final stage.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL CLOSURE

If you can help others, help. If you cannot help, leave it but do not harm.

– Dalai Lama

3.1 Review of the related literatures

During my study I tried to find some related literatures to the Aani schooling and education system. I had hoped that the related literature would help me to provide some basic knowledge and guidelines which would help to enrich my study. I could not find any worthy document of its type. I went to the “Buddhist Study Center of Tribhuvan University” with a great hope to get something valuable for the purpose of my study. But the concerned authority, there, told me that they had no document related to the education or schooling of Aani and Bhikshuni. I had a similar attempt at “Tribhuvan University Central Library”. However, the attempt did not give me any fruitful result. I tried to fish it in the website of “Naropa University” but all in vain. The library of CERID, Tribhuvan University, however, had at least one study report. It was about traditional education system through Vihars and Gumbas. It was a kind of survey report. Ms Renu Thapa accomplished it in 1999.

In her study, she covered Kathmandu valley, and with the help of some volunteers, she was able to gather some information about the monasteries of Himalayan region, Solukhumbu district. The report is a brief account but worthy; as there is a popular saying ‘smaller the better’. It is useful for anybody, who has interest to know and learn something about the education system in monasteries. The report contains bitter scenario of Buddhism, before the establishment of democracy in Nepal (before 1950 A. D.). Thapa (1999: 1) states, “There was time during the Rana regime when many monks were driven out of the country on the suspicion that they would exploit the sentiments of people and urge them to rise against the regime. Monasteries

were forced to close down.” Due to it, the monasteries and nunneries neither could exist nor they had important roles in religious and educational fields.

The establishment of democracy in Nepal (in 1950 A. D.) brought the dawn of hope to flourish Buddhism in the country. *Akhil Nepal Vikshu Mahasangh* was established immediately after it. Under the umbrella of it, different vihars (word used by Newari Buddhists for monasteries and nunneries) and gumbas (word used for monasteries and nunneries by the Tibeto-Burman people for monasteries and nunneries) were established. They initiated religious education and trainings. In course of time Buddhist people began to realize the need and importance of modern education to the monastic people of monasteries and nunneries. It is found that from 1997 some of the monasteries started to offer modern education to the monks. Ibid (1) further states:

The monasteries started to provide formal education side by side with Buddhist teaching. The *Vishwa Shanti Vihar* started to provide lower secondary level formal education to its monks and nuns in 2053 B. S. through its school *Vishwa Shanti Bauddha Shikshalaya*. People having faith in Buddhism started to concentrate themselves in the development of Buddhist religion, culture, language, literature, custom etc.

In case of Tibetan Nepalese Buddhists, the Kopan Gumba is found to provide modern/ formal education to a large number of monks and nuns. About 300 monks and nuns are getting Buddhist education along with formal education (Ibid). The exact number of monasteries and nunneries are not listed, however, it is estimated that there are more than 600 monasteries and nunneries in Kathmandu valley only. The Abbots are trying to include school education to the young Aanis and Lamas. In an interaction, with Thapa (1999: 7), during the study, a Buddhist guru clarified the reason to include school education as:

The course of Buddhist education covers only the philosophy, morals and life-history of Buddha, which are not enough for today. In the present society even monk needs knowledge of mathematics, language, health-science, geography etc. Knowledge of English, for instance, is essential for participation in

international conferences and for communicating with the monks in other countries. Moreover, formal education is important also for attracting people to enrol in the monasteries.

Although they had realized the importance of formal education even to monastic people, there are very few monasteries and nunneries which had managed such education to the young people. In the major findings section, she had mentioned that only a few monasteries and nunneries were providing formal education. The gender discrimination existing in the Buddhist system has brought another barrier for the equal access of the people of both the sexes. She suggested the government and the religious institutions to plan for the integration of both education systems.

3.2 Related Theories

Aani system and *Bikshuni* system, prevailing in Buddhism, had its own unique nature. There was no such identical system in other religions to compare and contrast with it. The system of nuns was prevailing in Christianity as well. However, it was not a matter to compare and contrast, since each religion had its own uniqueness. It existed in the Roman Catholic Christianity. The Hindus had the system of monastic life for both males and females; known as *Sadhus* and *Sadhunis* (sages). The religious system of education was also prevailing in Hinduism. They studied the religious books, including Hindu philosophy. But currently it was declining. The influence of modern education and the competitive market drive people to think for the fulfilment of basic needs and struggle for the survival. (The comment on the education of Saudi Arabia is an example of it (it is stated later). The concept of individual progress and feeling of ‘self importance’ diverted people to think and work for the personal benefit. Contrary to Buddhism, religious education in Hinduism was not open and free to all. The castes system and gender biased practice limited the access to religious education.

The scholars of Hindu religion started the monastic life as sages on their own accord. Due to their deep philosophical knowledge on the religion and metaphysics they were respected well. Some of such people had earned both name and fame as scholars and philosophers, in the past. They even supported to improve the life style of general people. Aani system was also organized for the others’ benefit. As Buddhism was for

the favor of peace and welfare of the world and for the entire sentient beings, nunneries, which were the residential organizations of Aanis were also in the same line. They were under the structure of "Sanghas". This system could be observed from different theoretical lenses. But I chose the following two theories for this case.

3.2.1. Religious Theory: Buddhism

The case of Aani system could be analyzed through various theories. Since, it was related to religion, religious theory could be more contextual and practical to study and analyze Aani system. Aani system is part of Buddhism and was supporting to develop and spread a particular Buddhism. Religious attachment of a person was the choice of both person and communal choice. Education of an individual was strongly influenced by religion, family and community. Buddhist people also have the same trend. But Buddhism was more liberal and it tried to treat people of either sex equally. As Koirala (2003) has stated the views of different writers, travelers to Buddhist countries (it includes Thailand, Burma, Tibet etc) the condition of girls and women was not different to their male counterparts. They had a complete freedom to choose their own spouse or remain unmarried life. It indicated that Buddhism had the equality to both males and females for education and various other choices they had.

In common, each religion tried to protect people of its community from any possible danger. The focus of each religion was to tie people of its group to unification by commanding and conducting rules and regulation. Sometimes it created problems and pushed people of its own group by prescribing harsh and strict rules. Therefore, religion strengthened and weakened the people. It helped to regulate people on their daily activities. According to Rao:

Religion regulates the activities of people in its own way. It regulates human conduct, through religious code. The conceptions of spirits, ghosts, taboos, souls, divine commandments, sermons, etc. control human actions and enforce discipline... Religion demands total surrender to the divine force or power. Man, by surrendering himself to the divine force, tries to suppress his own impulses and selfish desires. - (1997: 490)

But Fortune does not agree with Rao. For her, it is the man made creation to promote discrimination on the females and helpless people. It could be the reality of personal life. The knowledge that is imparted by the family members to a child, during the childhood, remains for long and it leaves permanent impression on them. When it is exposed, we see it as the favor of religion of that person. In her article Fortune has stated it as:

Religion is a personal and institutional reality in the lives of the majority of the population. Whether one's experience came only in childhood or extends into adulthood, religious training and affiliation provide a significant context for many women as they address experiences of personal violence and victimization. This context is often dramatically shaped by the institutional presence of church, synagogue, temple, or mosque. Expressed in doctrine, teaching, scripture, or polemics, values and belief systems are communicated by religious communities and institutions to their members. – Fortune (2001: 372)

As stated above, there is no such religion where women are left to think and act freely, without any pressure of religion. It is true that most of the religious people believe their luck and fate governed by the supernatural power and they must be serious and sincere to act things as per their religious doctrine. Only the questions arise from the discrimination point of view. Either it is only to women or is it to both genders? Earlier it is to the single or particular person and later to the group of people of that gender. Otherwise it is less practical to blame the religion for the backwardness of a particular group. Therefore, I slightly deny the statement of Fortune from Nepalese Buddhists' lens. Nonetheless, I am aware to that point where the religious belief and faith push people to the unwanted and unnecessary mental pressure.

Psychologists and psychotherapists have different views about the people's involvement on religion. Some of them think the people are involved in religions simply to avoid the problem of materialistic assets and their greed. According to Harris, "The neo-Freudian may yet seek to avoid the materialist option: he may attribute the origin of childhood disciplines to the whim and fancy of some adult generation." (1968: pp 457/458)

For the religious people, the purpose of religious involvement is to obtain salvation and Enlightenment (if possible). The word Enlightenment is said and understood differently in different religions. For the materialistic and other general people Enlightenment is simply a hypothetical concept. They understand it differently. Those who believe on spiritual power believe on Enlightenment in one or another name. They think the world is dominated and directed as per the wish of the Super Power. Doshi (2003: 59) collectively puts people's views, "The enlightenment thinkers, for the first time, raised the question: who controls the physical world. Their answer was certain: no the religious dogma but the science and mathematics." It is very frequently raised question. Many people favor one or another side. But the question is not clearly solved until now. The religious people have their own feelings and understanding. They believe the existence of the Super Power. The God is there and there are certain ways to meet him. Religious practice and meditation are the media to meet God. Ascetic life style, religious exposure and meditation are the ways to obtain Enlightenment. For others it is not a real thing.

The perception about God and divine power depend on the illusion of those who believe on the existence of the divine power. There is nothing to see and believe about religion. For those, who believe on religion, it is ok. But for many others it is not like that. People take it as baseless saying and illusion. Freud thinks religion as illusion. Adams and Sydie point out the feeling of Freud as, "Religion, according to Freud, meets human beings' need for comfort and their need to avoid feelings of helplessness. However, he considered it an illusory solution that would be discovered to be a fraud. Human beings' memory of the origins of society lay in a mythic past." - (2001: 332). The claim of Freud indicates how different people perceive religion. For some, it is the only one part of life to trust and believe whereas, the others feel it baseless and hypothetical matter to empower and strengthen themselves as powerful beings.

To understand about the religious thoughts and beliefs, regarding the Aani system, we can take help of the following descriptions. Aani system bases its foundation on the Buddhist religion. The Nepalese Buddhists believe on salvation and the other various points of life, dominated by the person's conducts in her/ his life time. The study of religion (Buddha's Teachings) and the practice of the Dharma are important for them. The religion has developed guidelines for both males and females.

Buddhism is regarded as reality based religion which talks about the worldly suffering. It is based on the teachings of Buddha for universal peace, friendliness and coexistence. To avoid the greed or temptation is the way to free oneself from suffering. Therefore, Buddhism believes on sacrifice of the pleasure as the way to achieve satisfaction and happiness. For it, nobody is more or less capable on the basis of gender. Both men and women seem to be treated equally. The people of both genders are found to understand and respect each other equally. The involvement in religion and education are free for the concerned person. Property ownership or running a business, holding an important post of any type is very common to the people of both genders. From my personal experience, as I have worked with them for some years, no discriminatory role is observed prevailing to dominate any gender or prioritize the other. Bhattarai says, “Buddhism does not consider women as being inferior to men. Buddhism, while accepting the biological and physical differences between the two sexes, does consider men and women to equally useful to the society.” - (2004: 126).

Though, it is said and believed about equality to both males and females in Buddhism, there are some cases observed differently. The feeling and attitude of a person is not solely guided by the religion but there might be various other factors to develop the feeling of equality between both genders. Unless the feeling of people is developed equally, the concept of discrimination between two genders does not get vanished. Thapa (1999: 11) expresses her observation on gender bias as:

The gumbas and vihars provide Buddhist education and philosophy. People of different ethnic groups, races and ages having interest in the Buddhist morals and philosophy receive education from them. But the education is not accessible to all. Many vihars and gumbas give opportunity for acquiring the knowledge of Buddhism only to men. There is no facility for staying as a nun in those places.”

There are few gumbas for the females. The number of females in the nunneries is less comparing to the males in the monasteries. Many reasons might have influenced to limit the access and enrolment of females in the nunneries. Therefore, there is less number of females in the monastic life. During the time of Buddha also, the chances to

women for the enrolment in the monastic life was very much challenging. Buddha was not in favor of the women's enrolment in the gumbas.

To some extent, the educational or the religious rights of Nepalese Buddhists are not different to any gender. Both can obtain them according to their interest and their capacity. The important thing is how a person wants to build up the inherent capacity of the self. It is solely the choice of the person. They do not limit or restrict the access to any of their family member to achieve any good quality due to gender. They try to focus their children's involvement on religious activities. But they are not always the final person to judge and decide about somebody's interest and intention. The girls are perceived as the equally capable people.

Buddhism does not restrict either the educational opportunities of women or their religious freedom. The Buddha unhesitatingly accepted that women are capable of realizing the Truth, just as men are. This is why he permitted the admission of women into the Order, though he was not in favor of it at the beginning because he thought their admission would create problems. Once women proved their capability of managing their affairs in the Order, the Buddha recognized their abilities and talents, and gave them responsible positions in the Bhikkhuni (nun) Sangha. – Bhattarai (2004: 127)

Buddha's view of equality, between the males and females, helped to establish 'Sanghas'. The main target of it is to educate both the males and females. The benefit reached to the people of Buddhism. As a result, many females got the chances to be in the nunneries for the sake of religious education and practice. It enriches their capacity and they get chances to prove that they could also contribute equally to men. The existing nunnery system is an example of it. During their religious activities the involvement of the Aanis and Lamas remain the same. They both are given equal chances and they have the equal status and position in the religious ground. The level of them is considered important thing and their capacity is highly appreciated. There is no role of gender to determine any role. Religious education has also its unique nature in the field of education. It is believed that it has power to solve many of the mysterious

and unsolved problems. Even the people of West rely on its power. A journal has stated about the religious education thus:

They point out that RE's (religious education's) focus on "unanswerable questions and unsolvable problems, make it a natural thinking centre of the curriculum". Religious education, they say, encourages children of all ages to question, speculate, analyze, compare, discern or evaluate. – Sharon (2001: 6)

3.2.2. Personality Theory

Personality theory deals about the mental and social development of a person. For the mental, emotional and social development family environment, culture and education are basic factors. The combination of all these factors determines personality of a person. Basically personality theory is related to the environment, quality, personal choice, interest and capacity of a person. This theory deals about the psychological traits of an individual and her life. It talks about personal character and behaviour. The life style of a person depends on 'how and where she is brought up'. Parents play key role to shape behaviour of individuals. Therefore the environment, created in the family determines what kind of personality an individual possesses.

Each individual has her own choice of life and way of thinking. The way of life and choice of the person are the reflections of the environment, where and how she is grown and it determines the personality. The family role, surrounding and the local environment are the crucial parts for her to develop certain kind of personality in her. Personal interest and the perception differentiate individuals. Because of it, children in the same family and environment show different quality and capacity. Their ways of doing activities and choice vary. Personality Theory studies all these characteristics of people. According to <http://en.wikipedia.org>:

Personality psychology is a branch of psychology which studies personality and individual differences. One emphasis in this area is to construct a coherent picture of a person and his or her major psychological processes. Another

emphasis views personality as the study of individual differences, in other words, how people differ from each other. A third area of emphasis examines human nature and how all people are similar to one other. These three viewpoints merge together in the study.

As most of the things of a person depend on the environment and it develops choice; the personality of the person is not an easy task to predict. One reason, according to Feist and Feist (2002), for being unpredictable character of a person may be hidden unconscious forces control people's behaviour. Mental disturbance as well as heredity and environment are the other factors of personality development.

Every individual has her own unique character. As stated above, heredity, environment, personal relation and many other things help to shape the idea, feeling and personality. Education, friendship and interaction of the person are the other areas of personality development. Therefore the family environment is the foundation of the personality development, which has its roots to heredity. Available resources, knowledge to utilize the available things and the interest of the person are the other determining factors for the personality development. The exposure of any environment may create likes and dislikes of the concerned person. Personal progress and achievement are the other areas to be analyzed for the study of the person and her personality.

Rao (1997: 265/ 266) has included the findings of Margaret Mead. She has found three different characters in the women of Papua New Guinea. They are; Arapesh (mountain dwellers), Mundugumor (tribes) and Tchambuli (tribes). According to Mead the first category of women are mild, gentle, maternal and affectionate. The second category of women is violent, competitive, aggressively sexed, jealous and rough. The third category of women have dominant role. These women have the major responsibility of the family. Their husbands are responsible to deal with minor house works. Mead concludes by giving these examples that the culture, tradition and society determine the personality. The different personalities are not inborn but they are acquired in the course of time. Social settings and the surroundings influence and develop the personality. So, personality is embodied with culture and society.

The debate of how personality is developed in a person is still a matter for discussion in psychology. It may remain unanswered in future too, since each individual has her/his own unique character. But either it is a product of heredity or environment, it guides the life style of a person throughout her life. Some changes may take place but the person is always in her own way of life.

Contrary to the above mentioned point, Harry Stack Sullivan views personality development differently. He opines that people have similarity in many points of characters. The commonalities are even observable to the people of lowest grade (if not lay man) to the highest grade personality. There is no possibility of exactly the same character between two persons. However, the common features, way of thinking and activities are more or less similar. He believed the causes of personality development in a person, is determined through their interpersonal relationships. Tensions and energy transformations are two aspects of experience. Citing from Sullivan, Feist and Feist (2002: 228) state, “In other words, the differences between any two instances of human personality from the lowest-grade imbecile to the highest-grade genius are much less striking than the difference between the least-gifted human being and a member of the nearest other biological genus.”

Adler believes on the innate striving force and physical deficiencies as the causes of personality development. The combination of the two things causes feelings of inferiority. Inferior feelings give a way out to decide and determine the future plan and activities, which eventually leads to personality development. Every individual is self determined and plans accordingly. Ibid (90) further concludes, “Adler believed that people are basically self-determined and that they shape their personalities from the meaning they give to their experiences. The building material of personality is provided by heredity and environment, but the creative power shapes this material and puts it to use.”

The claim of Adler is; each one has developed the perception on the basis of the parental relationship. The children develop their feeling according to their heredity and the interaction with the parents for the beginning days up to 5 years. After that, the children begin to explore more as she begins to be in different community in the school and with playmates. The previous concept of the child helps to lead and live the life as

she has learnt and acculturated in the family. The children broaden feeling and generalize things on their previous knowledge and practice.

Another prominent psychologist Sigmund Freud talks about the role of past to determine the human activities. He thinks past experiences are the striking factors to decide the things for present and past. There is less role of present experience to plan for the future activities. The past habits and experiences lead a person to decide what is right and necessary to employ for the future. Ibid (58) concluded, “Freud believed that most of people’s behaviour is determined by past events rather than molded by present goals and that people have little control over their present actions because most of their behaviours have root in unconscious strivings that lie beyond their present awareness.”

As stated by Jha, Kardiner is also in the same line to accept the role of past habit, experience and the environment as the key factors to develop personality of a person. He thinks family and the culture are the roots of personality development. Jha (2000: 134) further states:

Kardiner, a neo-Freudian scholar emphasized upon both the formative influence of childhood experience and the importance of the cultural determinants. He claimed that primary institutions were a key influence on the formation of basic personality. Once formed, basic personality was then influential in moulding the secondary institutions like mythology, beliefs-systems, folklore etc.

On the other hands, Carl Rogers has developed some ideas of humanistic psychology to study the human nature and human behaviour in the form of propositions. He developed 19 propositions to discuss about the human nature and human behaviour. In his 8th proposition he has talked about human nature as goal directed. Organism (here, human being) attempts to obtain satisfaction based on its goals. His words are, “Behaviour is basically the goal directed attempt of the organism to satisfy its needs as experienced, in the field as perceived.” - <http://en.wikipedia.org>. Every individual has her own goal of future and life. The surroundings and environment influence the individual to dream and plan for the most suitable goal. To achieve the targeted goal is the main part of life. In the 12th propositions he (Carl Rogers) has talked about the consistency of a person to think and act accordingly. “Most of the ways of behaving that are adopted by the organism are those that are consistent with the concept of self.” As the person begins to

work, there comes interest and the previous experience. They cause development of personal opinion and wishes.

CHAPTER 4

AANI SYSTEM AND AANI SCHOOLING

Buddham sharanam gachchhami;

Dharmam sharanam gachchhami;

Shangham sharanam gachchhami.

These are the three main religious principles of Buddhism. They are also known as “Triple Gems”. They mean ‘I take in the Buddha’, ‘I refuge in the Dharma’ (religion) and ‘I refuge in the religious association’ respectively. As the “Triple Gems” suggest Nepalese Buddhists try to obey and practise them. For it, some to the followers live normal life and follow Buddhism and some others live celibate life to stick strictly on Buddhism. Those celibate males are Lamas (monks) and females are Aanis (nuns) in the contest of Nepalese Buddhists (of hills and Himalayas origins).

Prior to find out the answer of, “Who are Aanis and what the provision of schooling for them is?” it is contextual to discuss briefly on some of the facts about Buddhism first. The first reason to discuss about Buddhism is; Aanis are the Nepalese Buddhists (of Tibetan origin) and the second reason is; they enter the nunneries to protect and promote the religion founded by Buddha. Buddhism has provision of Aani/ Lama System in the Nepalese Buddhists (of Tibetan origin). Therefore, Buddhism is the root of Aani system. The Aani system entirely depends on the Buddhist religion and tradition.

The word ‘Aani’ is used for the Buddhist nuns. But Bhikshuni Thubten Chorden clarifies the general nuns with low level of education are known as Aanis and those, who got Buddhist Ordination with higher level of education are known as Bhikshunis. Both the words ‘Aanis’ and ‘Bhikshunis’ represent the Buddhist nuns. ‘Aani’ means sister or the senior lady in Tamang language whereas it means a learned and respected female scholar of Buddhism according to the Tibetan language (it is described below). The speakers of Tibeto-Burman language family and the people of Tibetan origin use this word ‘Aani’ to Buddhist nuns. The word ‘Bhikshunis’ (Bhikkhunis) is used even in

many other countries for the Buddhist nuns. According to a foreign Buddhist nun, 'Bhikshuni is title given to senior Buddhist nun after she obtains higher level of religious education and practice.' (see appendix)

In general sense, Aanis are devoted, strict and true followers of Buddhism. So they are regarded as the respected people and addressed as 'Aanis'. It influences both the Buddhist girls and their parents. In case of girls they wanted to be Aanis because they thought they would be respected by all the people of their surroundings and they further thought their future would be free from burden and tension. For the parents they think their daughters are in nunnery and they will have obtained the Dharma.

Buddhism: At A Glance

The religion, which is based on the Teachings of Buddha, is Buddhism. Through meditation, he became Buddha, the 'Enlightened One'. After he got the answers of the causes of suffering, he began his Teachings to enable people to understand the ways to get rid of the sufferings. The Nepalese Buddhists follow the Teachings of Buddha, who gave up luxurious and sophisticated life to find out the reason(s) of human sufferings. 'Temptation' and 'greed' are the causes of sufferings. Ascetic celibate living, meditation and adoption of "Eight Fold Paths", are his major answers to get freedom from sufferings. For it, he had prescribed three important things: "Buddha", "Dharma" and "Sangha".

From the intrinsic nature of Buddhism, a disciple proceeds to the goal of the Buddha's teachings. This goal is to break through delusion and achieve enlightenment. The Buddha pointed out to us why we are leading lives of suffering and reincarnation. It is so, because the wisdom and virtuous abilities in our original nature have yet to be uncovered. Thus, all our viewpoints and ways of interacting with life and the universe are incorrect. The erroneous acts committed due to these incorrect viewpoints and ways have resulted in the suffering of reincarnation. Buddha's Teachings are to get ultimate happiness and salvation from this life, which is full of suffering. He introduced some of his notions for the way to obtain salvation and enlightenment. On this point, Kung (1998) states view of Buddha as:

The goal of the Buddha's teachings is to help and to guide us break through our delusion, to be awakened and to escape this suffering and obtain happiness. What do we seek in Buddhism? We seek *Anuttara- Samyak- Sambodhi*, the Perfect Complete Enlightenment. The Buddha teaches and hopes that all of us will attain this ultimate enlightenment, in other words, will become a Buddha. – (PP., 9 &10)

Buddha was against the hard and painful meditation. He even thought it meaningless. Such meditation may not be useful for the salvation from the chain of rebirth. He pointed out that the freedom from the suffering is possible but one should follow a set of rules for the freedom. He forwarded 'Four Noble Truths' and the 'Noble Eightfold Path' for salvation and enlightenment. His 'Four Noble Truths', according to Breuilly and Palmer, are:

1. That human life is full of suffering ;
2. That people themselves create this suffering because they are afraid to let go of their feelings; they try to hold on to the pleasures of life and they worry about being unhappy;
3. That if people do not try to hold on to the things they like or avoid the things that cause them pain, suffering will cease;
4. That the Noble Eightfold Path is a guide, which helps people to let, go and eventually leads to and end of suffering. - (1999: 5)

The Buddhists believe that the 'Four Noble Truths' have to be realized and they are to be adopted in the humans' lives. It purifies people's manner and behaviour. Unless a person realizes those points, there is no possibilities of acting properly and achieve the success in the field of spiritual life and the good manners. These points are the basic guidelines for the Nepalese Buddhists to start monastic life. The Aani system is its outcome. To avoid sufferings and to start the 'Triple Gems' and 'Noble Eightfold Path', monastic life is prescribed. Aani system is a part of it. By adopting Aani life the Buddhist females expect salvation.

The Aanis and Lamas first learn the basic rules to obtain knowledge of Buddhist education and they further practice to make sound knowledge on the religious belief and education. As stated above, they learn the Four Noble Truths first and then begin to study, realize and meditate on what is life and universe. The Four Noble Truths lead the disciples to the way to Noble Eightfold Path. These are what Buddha had taught as the main points of his religion. The Noble Eightfold Path, *ibid* (8), are stated below:

1. Right
views,
2. Right
thoughts,
3. Right
speech,
4. Right
action,
5. Right
livelihood,
6. Right
effort,
7. Right
mindfulness and
8. Right
concentration.

Sanghas were set up for the continuity of his teaching and for the Dharma. Sanghas are the religious institutions, where people live together in group and practice the Dharma (the true beliefs). The Sanghas include both Aanis and Lamas but separately. In the beginning, only monks were entitled to be in the Sanghas. But it was opened for both males and females.

4.1. Aani System

Aani is known as 'Tshunma' in Tibetan language. The meaning of 'Tshunma' is a female who has corrected her character; become well-disciplined, possessed good knowledge and good behaviour. Such ideal characteristics are also called 'Shila' (according to Pukar Rinpoche, during a conversation). They live in group i.e. 'Sangha'; which is an institution or association for them to learn about religion, meditate and reside together. They call Vihara or Gompa (nunnery in English) to such institutions. Such religious institutions were set up for holy life (Upadhyaya: 1996).

The beginning of the Sanghas was only for the monks (Bhikshus and Lamas). The females were not given a chance until the step mother of Buddha forced Buddha for it. However, Buddha was not willing to set up nunnery. Later, with his cousin brother Ananda's persisting request and the moral pressure of his stepmother, Mahaprajapati Gautami (later, Kegudharmo), who had nursed Buddha by feeding her own breast; he formed Sanghas for females also (Narada: 1988). This implies that Buddha himself was not liberal and optimistic to let the females to adopt nuns' lives in the beginning.

Buddhadhas (1999: 7/20) states, "Ananda, the religion cannot last longer where there are nuns. As the house with more females cannot be safer from the thieves, the religion having more females also cannot exist longer." In line with this saying Buddha codified eight harsh rules. His intention to codify the harsh rules might be related to discourage females to join and adopt the life of nuns. Aanis in this sense are the late comers of the Sangha. According to Chodron: The Bhikshuni Order was begun when the Buddha ordained his step-mother Mahaprajapati. The lineage spread to Sri Lanka and from there to China, Korea, and Vietnam. To give bhikshuni ordination, at least five bhikshunis and five

bhikshus are necessary, and it was very difficult for women to travel over the Himalayas to India to receive the ordination. (see appendix)

To find about ‘the determining factors for a Buddhist girl to become an Aani’ I study some of the literatures of Buddhism and also consulted some of the concerned people. According to the literatures on Buddhism, human life is full of suffering and there is a way to be free from suffering. For it, the “Triple Gems”, ‘Buddha, Dharma and Sangha’ are essential to achieve (Sumangalo -1958, Kung, -1998). Adaptation of this system is to put strides to achieve “Triple Gems”. Aani system is a way of it. To become an Aani means to refuge in the ‘Buddha, Dharma and Sangha’.

There are various rules and tradition of Aani system in different Buddhist cultures and tradition. However, the people of Tibetan origin generally suppose Aanis not to marry and have a family life. If someone wants to marry or start a general (married) life, she has to give up Aani life beforehand she marries and start common life; in broader sense: leave the ‘Shila’: the ‘Sangha’. The same is the case of Lamas. But this is a general rule only.

In my study time, I have met (one of them) and heard about some of the Rinpoches (Abbots), who have practiced it. Purkar Rinpoche, Rinpoche of Kopan Gumba and Rinpoche of Seto Gumba are found to have married and continuously practicing the Dharma in the same way as the other celibate Rinpoches do. It seems inequality between the two sexes: males and females. Bhikshuni Thubten Chodron further adds her view about gender discrimination, “Furthermore, gender discrimination discourages Buddhist women from practicing the Dharma, especially when they are told that women are inferior and should pray to be reborn as men in their future lives.” - http://www.thubtenchodron.org/BuddhistNunsMonasticLife/regardingthebhikshuniorderintibetan_buddhism.html

The Aanis are not supposed to marry and live a family life. However, if someone changes the mind and wants to marry or start a general (household) life, she is free to do it. But, first of all, she has to give up the monastic life; in broader sense, leave the ‘Shila’ or the ‘Sangha’. They are not allowed to stay in the nunnery, once they desert it and get married. However, there are cases of initiating Aani life after having marriage

and bearing children. Bhikshuni Tsultrim Palmo who remained in Gampo Abbey had it. Furthermore the same website (i. e., stated above) contains:

Bhikshuni Tsultrim Palmo was born in Poland and received a degree in psychology before doing further study in Gestalt Therapy. She raised two children, who are now grown, before she received the sramanerika vows in 1982 and the bhikshuni vows in 1984 in Hong Kong. Beginning in 1986, she did the traditional three-year, three-month retreat at Kalu Rinpoche's center on Saltspring Island, Canada. She served as director of Gampo Abbey in Canada for some years and is now retreat master for the present three-year retreat there.

It indicates that it is not necessary for the prospective Aanis to be unmarried though; it seems such in eastern and Asian countries. Otherwise it can be viewed as the Western domination even in Buddhism. Or it is an example of modern and democratic practice in Buddhism. As it is believed there is practice of equality and no gender discrimination in Buddhism, such examples give proof of equal and democratic norms developed in religion. Actually, religion should have no barriers for the followers to practice it. Married life and family situation are not the major causes for obtaining Dharma and salvation.

According to Buddhadasa (1999), the history of Buddhism traces eight tough rules to prevent the female disciples from any misconduct and make them aware of their possible weaknesses or shortcomings. When Buddha let Kegū Dhakmo (Mahaprajapati Gautami, his step mother) as the first nun, Buddha himself taught her. Ibid further claimed that she was highly trained and taught well, as a result, she could achieve 'Arahato'. Utpali was the second important nun in the history of Buddhism. She, too, achieved 'Arahato'. A very secret saying about Buddhism has mentioned that, "According to Nyingma lineage, as one of its branch Longchaen Nyingthik describes, Sakshep Jechun Kusho was a high leveled Buddhist practitioner. She was even superior to the previous nuns. She is regarded as Khandro, which means 'angel'. She was supposed to live during ninetieth century. – Lama Thinley Singay (a Buddhist scholar and an advisor member of World Buddhist Federation). There used to be simple Viharas in past. The monks and the nuns used to shelter, study and meditate in such Viharas.

Later, they began to obtain their high education in university. Nalanda Vishwavidhyalaya, which was in Patna of India, was a university for the Buddhist studies.

Enrolment of Aanis

There are some determining factors for Buddhist girls to become Aanis. The parents and guardians think to send at least one of the daughters in the nunnery to become an Aani. They believe that by doing so they can obtain 'Dharma' and the Aanis also lead and live a better life. There is not any hard and fast rule to choose which girl to send to the nunnery, however, generally the second daughter is supposed to become an Aani. But it does not limit the other interested girls of the same family to join nunnery. Sometimes, the girls have already decided voluntarily to become Aani(s). In that case the parents may not have decisive role to choose who to join the nunnery. Sometimes more than one girls of a family are enrolled in the nunnery. It is not bad or strange if all daughters and sons of the family have been enrolled in nunnery and monastery. Another determining factor is; beautiful and the talented daughter is supposed to become an Aani. The obvious reason, according to Lama Karma Topchu, is 'the best is of the God and for the God.'

The important reason for sending a daughter or more daughters to nunnery is to obtain 'Dharma' to the concerned person as well as to the family members. The Aani system is a part of Buddhism. So the parents have some sorts of psychological incentives to enrol their daughters as Aanis. Similarly they enrol their son(s) as Lama(s). There is no definite rule for the parents to send their daughters to nunnery for being Aanis; however, they prefer to have at least one of the daughters to join the nunnery. Many of the school aged girls of Buddhist families are found to be Aanis. Enrolment of Aanis is perceived as a prestigious matter of the parents and families.

In a nutshell the girls of Nepalese Buddhists (of Tibetan origin) become Aanis for the protection and promotion of religion in one hand and to obtain true happiness and salvation on the other hand. So, protection, promotion and salvation are the determining factors for the Buddhist girls to become Aanis.

Aani enrolment is based on different tradition and rules of each nunnery. Generally the parents seek place in their related nunnery. To enrol their daughters to the

nunnery, the parents have to request the Abbot (Rinpoche) to let their daughters be in nunnery. The abbot has the full authority to accept or reject the request of the parents. When everything is ok and fit, an auspicious day is fixed for the new comers to enter the nunnery. As far as possible, the parent(s), other family members and relatives prefer to be present there. In some nunneries, the parents have to pay certain amount of money to the nunnery if the girl is very small and unable to take care of herself. The amount of the money thus obtained is to be spent in the nunnery for the workers who cleans the clothes, washes the dishes and support the child Aani for her everyday activities. As she grows up, she is supposed to work for her and no money is to be paid. But it depends on the rules and tradition of the concerned nunneries.

There is no particular rule for any certain group of people to enrol their daughters as Aanis. Interested people of any caste and religion can enrol their daughters in the nunnery. Discrimination is not observed. Right now also, there are Aanis of different caste and ethnic groups in ‘Thrangu Tara Abbey’. These groups of the people include: Gurungs, Tamangs, Sherpas, Tibetans, and Magars. In case of monastery, even a boy from Koirala family is enroled (in 2006) as a Lama.

The Nepalese Buddhists have the religious tradition to enrol the monks and nuns. The Tibetans have greater influence in it. The exiled Tibetans take it as the only way to preserve their tradition. Bangsbo (2000:5), in her research-based article, has mentioned the following version as the common saying of exiled Tibetans of Nepal, “The only identity left with us is our religion – it is our culture. We have a unique culture, and if we throw away the monastic culture or if we think negatively about it, then we don’t have much.”

Current Trend of Monastic Education

As the tempo of time is gathering its speed on its own track, different perception, of different individuals, is found on the monastic education. Though, people think monastic education is out-dated, some others take it as essential for the young generation. The opinion of Bangsbo (2000), about the Tibetan people are; they are in favor of monastic system for two reasons: i) free from economic burden and ii) religious security. It depicts that they are strongly willing to continue this tradition. On the other hands the disadvantaged Buddhist people of remote areas are encouraging their children

to be enrolled in nunneries and monasteries. In this context monastic education system is not limited as the continuity of tradition but also as a good opportunity for education and fulfilment of other basic needs.

As reported on the Kantipur Daily on December 7, 2007 by its local reporter, Thapa (page 5), the parents of Rasuwa have sent their children to become Lamas to the monasteries of Kathmandu and India. There are schools in the locality but the children are sent to the monasteries instead of sending them to schools. One of the parents (Tarkel) opines, “Here we have to afford for dress and stationery, which is free in the monasteries. So we have sent our children of 7 - 15 years there in the monasteries.” The parents claimed that monasteries offer their children all the facilities they require but if they send the children to schools they have to manage food, cloths and stationery items for the children.

4.2. Aani Schooling

Culturally Aanis are schooled to obtain salvation. Nunneries offer religious education for it. There are two types of schooling facilities in some nunneries. The first one is religious education and the second one is formal/ modern education. The senior Aanis and Lamas in the nunneries provide religious education to them. The religious education includes study of religious books and meditation. Teaching and preaching are its parts. So far the formal education is concerned; some of the nunneries have managed it for letting the young Aanis to be familiar with the modern education. Further more, it is offered to make the young Aanis familiar with the international language, i. e. English, basic knowledge of science and technology, society, environment and the use of computers. Both the religious education and formal education provision for them are mentioned below.

Religious Education in Buddhism

As the root of Buddhism goes to ‘Triple Gems’ (which means; Buddha, Dharma and Sangha), their teaching bases on these three principles. The religious teaching starts in “Sanghas”, which are the religious institutions. The Sanghas are both educational institutions as well as residential places. The nunneries, monasteries and Viharas are the examples of Sanghas. Studies in Sanghas help to obtain Buddha's message of peace and

salvation. Gradually nunnery introduces many religious scriptures under the definite levels. To know the existing system of monastic education, I have consulted a senior Lama (Lama Karma Sangpo) and an Aani (Aani Karma Yangu). According to them, most of the nunneries have the following levels and estimated time for the successful completion of each level is:

- i) Ka kha: 6 months (study of Pali alphabets and now days English Nepali alphabets as well)
- ii) Dudhe: 6 to 12 months (study of spelling and simple words)
- iii) Chathik: 2 to 6 months (complementary to “Dudhe” additional parts)
- iv) Jorlok: 6 to 24 months (study of complex words)
- v) Choka Chaklen: 12 months (study of the process of *Puja*, learn to play musical instrument and ritual rites)
- vi) Torsokargyen: 6 months (additional study of *Puja*, learning to make *Torma*, and other necessary *Puja* items)
- vii) Ngondo: 12 months (study of Buddhist Philosophy and religion)
- viii) Seda: 5 to 9 years (study of Buddhist religion and philosophy in depth)
- ix) Meditation: 3 years (retreat course with meditation and Yoga practice)
- x) Lama: unlimited (it is the end of scheduled course, after the end of it, the scholars are regarded as the learned people having deep knowledge on Buddhism).

The entire course does not include any part of the present modern education. Study of different languages, maths, agriculture, business, science and technology etc are completely excluded. They might have their own subjects which they might think adequate for them to learn. Both the Aanis and Lamas can join the above mentioned education structure. There is no discrimination. Each one is given equal chance. Thrangu Rinpoche (one of the abbots) believes, ‘there is no role of gender in education.’ However, the interest and the involvement of each individual are very important for the achievement, success and progress of the Aanis and Lamas. This system ensures the religious education to the young Aanis. The education system has different levels to pass. Each level is to be passed successfully before a student is promoted to the upper

level. This hierarchical level of study seems to be similar to the formal education system.

It is believed that there is equality for both Aanis and Lamas to obtain religious education. However, Bhikshuni Chordon has claimed that some 25 years ago there were no equal chances for the Aanis (Bhikshunis) to get higher level of education. In the present, it has been made equally accessible to all. She further states:

Tibetan monks can study for many years and receive a Geshe degree, comparable to a Ph.D. in Buddhist Philosophy. Until about 20 or 25 years ago, the Tibetan nuns did not have access to the same education. Due to His Holiness' encouragement some Tibetan nunneries now offer the same education program as the monks receive. - (see appendix)

Formal/ Modern Education

The time after the Industrial Revolution is marked as the modern time and the education based on the economy and modern trend is accepted as modern education. Modern education basically includes science, technology, language, skill training and economy. Faure et al (1973: 11) explains modern education as:

Since the industrial revolution and even more so after modern day scientific and technological transformations-the very content of the ways of life and means of production, of man's hopes and fears, his cares and joys, has profoundly changed. The prospects for education have also changed and become greater, for a variety of reasons.

The technological development and the market economy grip control on most of the resources and means of production. It was the need of the time and the demand. Many leaders view it as important so they plan and show their interest. Bill Clinton, the then president of U. S. A., emphasized the importance of modern education for the productivity and the market oriented education. During his speech he stated the following lines, as cited by Halsey (1998: 8), "In the 1990s and beyond, the universal

spread of education, computers and high-speed communications means that what we earn will depend on what we can learn and how well we can apply what we learn to the workplaces of America.” So, no one could remain free from the influence of modernity. Religious people, including Aanis are also encircled in the same circumference. That is why each and every individual dreams to obtain some kind of modern education and technological knowledge. Like other general people, Aanis also have attraction to modern/ formal education. The growing influence of modern education and the use of materials for the comfortable living encouraged people to send their children in modern school. Buddhist religious institutions also have managed modern education to the Aanis and Lamas differently.

“Why do the Aanis go to English boarding school?” In order to get the answer of this question I met some concerned people. As they told me, ‘a senior Lama, Rinpoche, realized the importance of modern education when he faced communication problem in the beginning of his refugee life in India. Even his immense knowledge of Buddhism could not help him because he could communicate only in Tibetan language at that time. So he realized the value of modern education and decided to offer it to the young Aanis and Lamas of new generation. His visits to many other countries of the world also encouraged him to introduce modern education in nunnery. Therefore, he established an English boarding school in Bouddha, Kathmandu to ensure the chances of modern education to Aanis, Lamas and other general Nepalese Buddhists.

At present different nunneries and monasteries provide modern education to Aanis and Lamas. Initially, Thrangu Rinpoche established English boarding school to educate the relatives of both the Aanis’ and Lamas’. The school was established in the year 1987 and it was opened to the Aanis in 2000. Until the beginning of 2006, both the Aanis and Lamas were allowed to complete S. L. C. level. But from the beginning of 2006 it is limited to grade 6. Nowadays, the Aanis have chances to complete the education of the primary level only. For their further education, they go to different nunneries in Nepal and India. There, they are offered selected courses of English and computer education in the beginning days and the religious education eventually.

The discussion above gives knowledge that nunnery introduced English, though; it ignored the other subjects of modern education. The main reason to give priority to English education is for the purpose to communicate with the people outside of their

religious world. My consultation with some of the Lamas and Aanis also reiterated the above reason. A Buddhist scholar and the school principal of the Aanis said ‘even the religious people need to be in relation and contact with the other general people.’ As they believe ‘modern education helps them to learn more about what the other people have learnt about the physical world.’

The current education frame of modern education has been based on school education of 12 years and indefinite or life long university education. The education system covers various areas of study. (Its ingredients are religious education, general education and science and technology which include medical science, astrology, physical world, information technology etc.) It does not cover the pre-primary level of education. The recent structure of formal/ modern education system of Nepal (it is almost identical to the Western education system) is stated below:

1. Primary School Level – 1- 5 classes;
2. Lower Secondary School Level – 6 -8;
3. Secondary School Level – 9 and 10;
4. Higher Secondary Level – 11 and 12;
5. Bachelors Level – 3 years diploma course;
6. Masters Level – 2 years degree course;
7. M. Phil. Level – 1 and ½ years research course and
8. Ph. D. / Post Ph. D. Level – research level.

The formal education and religious education of Buddhism have some common characters. Level wise education system is one and completion of low level to get promotion for higher level education is another commonness of these two education system. Modern education to Aanis and Lamas was started by different nunneries and monasteries in different times. Thrangu Tashi Choeling and Thrangu Tara Abbey have their own common school, since both these monastery and nunnery are the religious institutions of the same Abbot, Thrangu Rinpoche. It was established in the year 1987 and it was opened to the Aanis in 2000. Until the beginning of 2006, both the Aanis and Lamas were allowed to complete S. L. C. level. But from the beginning of 2006, the education to the Aanis and Lamas is limited to grade six only. Nowadays, the Aanis

have chances to complete the education of the primary level only. For their further education, they are provided modern education facility in their respective nunneries. But they have selected course: English and computer education only.

The comparative study of the Buddhist's education system and the modern education system show some similarities. The similarities are listed below:

1. There is the hierarchy in the level of study.
2. Education is continuous and never ending process in both systems.
3. Both of them start with the literacy, i. e. alphabet learning at first.
4. They both have text materials prescribed for the study purpose.
5. The aim of education, in both the systems, is to ease life style for the future.

But the contrasting area is the traditional education is based on the study to cultivate ascetic value in one's own life style and be merciful and cooperative to the betterment of the world and the people of the world. Unlike it, the modern education focuses on the modern changes, immediate need, contemporary trends and the cultivation of the modernity in each individual's life. It has given high priority in the field of invention to make things better. Because of all these reasons the Aanis are also found curious and interested to pursue the modern education.

The source of education based on religion is immense, like Summer Ocean. The religious educators can teach and train the new comers any of the various disciplines existing in the religious field to acculturate the disciples. But they do not ignore the need of the present world which makes the young Aanis to be quite familiar with the modern trend and the advancement of technology.

Education System in Other Countries

For the comparative study of some other developed and under-developed countries, I have studied some countries' education system. The studies show that even the developed countries like Canada, America have their interest to provide and continue religious education. Muslim country, e.g. Saudi Arab, had given high priority for the religious education but the students were found to be unfit to tackle the challenging world. The students are indifferent to the religious education and the

government is planning to improve education system to make the students more productive.

Saudi Arab had religious education system for many years. But later it was found to be less practical for the economic development. The religious scholars are not accepted by the market oriented economy. Therefore, they need to change their education system and they prioritized the modern education. The new curriculum has both the religious and modern education. The influence of multinational companies, concept of globalization and the growing influence of market based economy in the country need man-powers with modern education. - <http://www.saudi-us-relations.org/articles/2007/ioi/070123-turki-remarks.html>

Canada has its province based autonomous education system. They have religious and modern education both. The children have the option to be enrolled in any private or government educational institutions. Government is responsible to offer education to its children.- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Canada. United Kingdom has managed education based on age of the children. They are offered many subjects to study according to their level and suitability. Child psychology is considered highly in educating children.- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/index.shtml>

United States has market based education for the possible productivity of the children. However, there is demand of religious education for the development of morality in the young generation. The growing criminal problems have made the scholars and policy makers think to incorporate religious education in modern course. <http://en.wikipedia.org>. Rwanda is planning for the development of science and technology for the national development. It has realized the need of modern education for the development and empowerment of the citizens of it. It has developed a project for the science development, eradication of illiteracy and trying its best to offer equitable literacy education. <http://www.aare.edu.au/02pap/ear02400.htm>

Uganda has the problem of civil war. The education plan of Uganda is to bring social restructure and reconciliation. The colonial education provided by European countries has not become fruitful for the nation. The poverty is a terrible problem for Uganda. Due to it, many people are beyond education. <http://www.ugandatourguide.com/cultural-transformation.html>

The above stated brief situation of different countries' education shows that there is no best education anywhere neither is any education system the solution for all countries. The country, its demand and the existing values determine what kind of education is the suitable for that country. We can not favor or negate any particular education.

Need of Modern Education to Aanis

Because of time factor, there is a big gap between tradition and modernity. People began to take side of anyone suitable for them. But the modernity influence people more as it has more suitable and practical areas of knowledge. It is more market oriented and close to the needs of people and their everyday life. This reason reflects the Aanis' interest for obtaining modern education. Based on the research question 'why do the Aanis need modern/ formal education', I have obtained some information. Following the methodologies and tools stated in the previous chapter, some information is being gathered and generated. The information gives light to the need of modern education to the Aanis. It is put here in a descriptive form. The people of the Himalayan region have really a hard life to survive in the dry-cold climate and high altitude, where there is no good agricultural production to support the inhabitants to rely on what they grow and produce. Education seems a matter of luxury. They do not have enough opportunity for the education. Traditional education, that comes from their parents' and the religious education that is offered to the Aanis and Lamas in the local nunneries and monasteries are other options of systematic education they can obtain. The latter one is for the purpose of religion and ritual rites.

The religious centers began to recognize the need and importance of the modern education even to the Aanis and Lamas. They have realized that modern education is not a matter to ignore but to use it in their religious progress. They have observed the areas of its usefulness in the promotion the religion. They even noticed that the influence of language and hi-tech is not to be ignored even to understand the needs and attitude of their target people. Therefore, the religious institutions and their leaders initiated to introduce modern education to the Aanis and Lamas. In her study report about traditional education system in Nepal, Thapa (1999:1) has mentioned:

People having come from Tibet for settlement in Nepal as refugees also established monasteries. There is a large number of monasteries established by Tibetan refugees in Nepal. One of such monasteries is Nepal Baudha Mahayana Kendra Gumba, Kopan. It is providing Buddhist studies along with formal education to a total of 300 monks and nuns.

Thapa's study report shows that the present Buddhist leaders are in favor of modern education. They have realized that the religious mission will not be complete until the Anis and Lamas get modern education. The perception is that religious people should know the religion and modern trend well to deliver their better religious service. But the underlying problem of the Nepalese Buddhists of northern part of Nepal is not sound for the education. The Anis and Lamas go to the Himalayan regions for their religious services where they can even serve the local people in their religious and modern education. So they might be more empowered if they have modern education.

Most of the school age children of Himalayan region, where these Buddhist people dwell, have inadequate education facility. I consulted the data of the schools in Nepal. The "Flash Report I 2004 of School Level Educational Statistics of Nepal" has the clear picture of the number of schools established and run in those particular places. Most of the Anis (nuns) of "Thrangu Tara Abbey" have come from Manang. Gorkha and Sindhupalchok are other important districts (these are 3 districts out of 75 districts of Nepal). Altogether there are 26,277 schools in Nepal. Out of which 30 schools are in Manang, 477 in Gorkha and 49 in Sindhupalchok which is 0.11%, 1.8% and 0.18% of the country respectively. This figure reflects the number of schools and education opportunity to the children of Himalayan region of Nepal. The physical facility and infrastructures of the schools are poor.

There is not any publicly and privately run better school. Neither is there any interest and future plan of the educational entrepreneurs to establish and run any well equipped schools with qualified and trained teachers in such areas. They are investing their property and knowledge in the densely populated area of the country. Unfortunately, those remote villages of this Himalayan region do not have any option for the entrepreneurs' attraction. However, they pay 1.5% of their institutions' income

to the government as tax for the education development fund that is supposed to be spent for the needy people of remote areas.

Other Aanis' Perception

I met some of the Aanis (nuns) and inquired them why and how they came to become so. Each one has her own story and history. But everyone has one thing common that is they have a deep interest to become an Aani. The reasons are different, though. The story of an Aani from a remote village depicts the situation of their village, the economic condition of them and the availability of education facility to them in their own home land. These are some of the basic causes of the girls of remote areas to enroll in nunnery. It gives a kind of reflection for me to understand the simple reason underlying for the young girls to choose to become an Aani. The respect to the Dharma, influence of religious people like; Aanis, Lamas, and the hardship of the life in those particular areas are the main cause for the people to convince their daughters to start Aani life.

How Karma Began Monastic Life?

My name is Karma Yangchen. I am 12 years old now. I am an Aani, as well as a student of an English boarding school in Bouddha Kathmandu. I was born in a small and remote village of Mugu (Karnali zone). There was no school nearby. I knew nothing about the modern education and its importance. I had known something about education, i.e. 'education is very important for every individual'. I saw a few educated but religious people coming to my village. They were Lamas and Aanis. The entire villagers respected the Lamas and Aanis, who were in maroon robes and hair shaved.

My parents and most of my relatives are illiterate. Only my aunt is educated. She is an Aani. She rarely goes home. Sometimes she came home. She was loved and respected a lot in the family. The entire villagers used to come to see her, expecting her blessings. Her way of living was simple and she used to read bulky books most of the time. Praying, doing *puja* and reciting holy books became part of her life. She is the one who inspired me to become Aani. I wanted to request her to let me be like her. However, I could never do so.

From the age of 5, I began to help my family by grazing cattle. There in the

pasture, we used to talk a lot about Aanis/Lamas. One of my senior friends used to tell

us miraculous stories of *Milerapa* (a great and enlightened monk). I was always crazy to know more about the way of life of Aanis and Lamas and the power of knowledge they had. I began to dream to be one of them but I could not express it to any one. One day, I heard my parents talking about my brother to send him to a monastery. He was getting a chance to become a Lama. But they were neither aware about my dream nor about myself. I thought they would not think about me in the future as well. So, I decided to run away from home.

I fled away from home on the same day my father and brother set off to Kathmandu. On the second day we met each other. They were shocked to see me following them cowardly. They tried to convince me to return back home. But, I had a dream to be educated. It was only possible by being an Aani. When I told it my father was so delighted to know my dream and plan. One of the wishes of our parents is to make at least one of their son and a daughter a monk and a nun. The more the number, the better it is.

Now I am an 'Aani'. I live in a nunnery, which is in Kathmandu. There, I learn to read religious books, do *puja*, practice Dharma, recite holy books and do meditation. I even have a chance to study in a school, where I learn modern education. In my school; Aanis, Lamas and other general teachers teach us. I have many friends like me. Most of them are from remote villages of different Himalayan districts of Nepal and from other countries.

The above story reflects me the situation of the Himalayan children in Nepal. I knew that there is very great problem for those children to join the school. They have dream of the school education but the dream remains as it is. In such cases the Aani system is also a risky alternate. Some of the girls become Aani first and join the school for the modern education later. The above case study is an example of it. Though it is ridiculous idea to become an Aani to obtain a chance to join school, it could be a minor solution.

I cannot underestimate the idea because it is the idea of children. Further more, as claimed by Adler, the family environment develops the personality of the person. As stated by the theoreticians of personality theory, the feeling of a person is the product of parents' relation and their treatment to their children. The young girls prefer to be Aani

for another reasons as well, that is, there is no another reliable alternative. But still there is risk of not having guarantee for them to obtain school education being an Aani because most of the nunneries do not have formal/ modern education system for their Aanis.

Aani Karma's attempt to go to Kathmandu was really a dangerous plan. But she did it since there was no other alternative. According to Karma, the starvation and epidemic are the major problems in her village. Many children die of hunger and a very minor health problem like diarrhea. Life is full of commotion there. People have less option. As a result, they have a feeling of inferior. The inferiority feeling forces people to react and resist, according to Sullivan (in Feist and Feist: 2002). He claims that personality in an individual develops in that way. The adventurous journey of Karma to fulfil her dream is supported by Personality Theory from Sullivan's point. Therefore the environment made her tough and behaved in the same way. Her belief to reach to any nunnery and obtain shelter there in the unknown nunnery is a cause of her religious knowledge. She was aware that there was no discrimination between boys and girls and rich and poor. It would not be possible for a common girl of non Buddhist community. The Buddhism has empowered people of all levels and genders. The concept of equality developed in Buddhism caused it so.

The nunnery, where Aani Karma resided, had the provision of school education for its young and new Aanis. The school, stated above, was an English medium secondary boarding school; it was associated to the nunnery and monastery. There were about five hundred students. They were 38 Aanis, 48 Lamas and the other general students. It had about 40 teachers, including four Lamas and three Aanis. The principal used to be a Lama. There used to be more Lamas and Aanis until 2006. But the monastery and nunnery both decided to limit school education at 6 grade to the Lamas and Aanis.

I inquired them for the reason to limit their access in modern education. In my inquiry to it, a high-level authority of the monastery, the discipline in-charge of Lama Students, Lama Acharya Karma Topchu tried to satisfy me with possible reason. He did not underestimate the need of modern education but mentioned the problem the organization is facing due to the influence of the formal (modern) education. According to him:

It, actually, is the high level decision. Therefore, I cannot say anything about it confidently. However, some of the reasons are; Lamas and Aanis do not have enough time to concentrate on the religious study, which is their main area. It is due to their involvement in school education. Another reason, to stop them, is some of the monks and nuns give up their religious lives after they get certificate of higher education, i.e. S. L. C. They are not using the knowledge of modern education for religion but they use it for their personal benefit.

While interacting with different young Aanis, I got various answers from them as the reasons for them to become Aanis. Nevertheless, most of them have their answers based on their religious value they have possessed so far. The most common reply was they could be free from the physical world and the worldly suffering. They perceive the marital life as a burden and full of trouble, greed, and suffering. I have put down some of their feeling and saying they shared with me during my chat.

Rithar Yangchen Lama, 17, hailed from a very remote village named Chum (it lies in the border point of Nepal and China) in Gorkha district. She said the reason for being a nun as:

I was born in a family of agriculture background. I was the first child of my parents. I have my three brothers and two sisters. Being the eldest daughter of the family, I had to help my parents to look after my younger siblings and help the parents for farming and grazing yaks and sheep. There was no system of school education since there was no school in my village. I lived in the village without education any type till I reached the age of 13. I did not hear anything about school until I became Aani and then came to Kathmandu. When my uncle, a Lama, came back to village from Dharmashala, India; he established a monastery in village to teach Buddhism to the new Lamas. Still we were neglected for sometimes. He asked me to be a nun and I did. (The nunnery is in Chum, in Gorkha and its branch is in Godawari, Lalitpur. He sent me and another nun, Sangye Dolma, 14, to study in an English medium school in Kathmandu, for the modern education.

Chhokyi Lhamo, 15, hailed from a remote village of Manang. She had become a nun for four years. She was studying in class 5 in the same school where Karma and

Norlha studied, when I met. She was a well-disciplined and hard working student of the school. According to her, she was very keen to become a nun. Her parents' wish was the same. So, it was not difficult to become a nun to her. She had come to Kathmandu four years ago with the father. After the ritual process to enter the nunnery, she began to stay and learn the basic rules and regulations regarding the nunnery. Then she got a chance to join the school for modern education. She is happy and satisfied with the opportunity she got from both the nunnery and the school. The modern education helps her for the outer world activities as well as for the administrative work inside nunnery in future.

Almost all the little and young Aanis, who were hailed from the remote villages, replied in the same way. They mentioned that they had a great interest to become Aanis. They had observed the respect offered to the senior Aanis. That influenced them to deserve the same. The family influence to their daughters (to become Aanis) plays a great role to motivate the young mind to be nuns. Instead of it, the family members were willing to send their daughters to nunnery with the belief that, 'being a nun is good since they learn many religious things and they practice for the 'Nirvana', enlightenment.' The belief is, Aanis always involve in good religious practice. The religious belief and equal chances offered to both boys and girls encourage the children of Nepalese Buddhist (of Tibetan origin) community to start monastic life. On the other hand the existing situation and the family role also encouraged them to choose Aani life. Both the Buddhist notion and Personality theory seemed to match the condition here.

The replies of the Aanis clearly revealed how personality theory is directly connected to every individual. The parents' interest and the family influence have the main reasons for them to think and dream to start Aani life. Buddhism is another supplementary reason to feel the young girls to dare to start monastic life. The chances and equal treatment to all the people, regardless of their gender, family background and the so on support them.

I asked some other girls (who were not nuns at present) of the same school, about their future aims. Interestingly, 5 of them replied that they wanted to be Aanis. The reasons they told me to choose it were to practice 'Dharma' and to remain away from

worldly troubles. They added me that if they became Aanis they do not need to worry about their future. Aani life was a kind of insurance for them, according to them.

The Aanis, who were from Kathmandu, had a bit different feelings and answer to become Aanis. Most of them replied that they respected and accepted their parents' wishes. As their parents wished them to be Aanis (nuns), they had gone to nunnery. They added that, 'life of an Aani (nun) is better than others.' Being Aani, we obtain 'Dharma' and it gives long lasting satisfaction and eternal peace. Their answers varied slightly from that of rural Aanis for one reason, i.e. the young children from remote rural areas had less exposure of the materialistic facilities to motivate them to use and consume the physical facilities. Some of them were in dilemma to be an Aani or not. Ultimately, they seemed happy to become Aanis. Here again, the respondents referred their parents as the final authority to decide or influence them. It was a strong example of family role to develop personality of each child. Adler's opinion of parental relationship with the kids is true to this point.

I had come across to identify that two of such Aanis had left nunneries and they were living general life after it. The two were; Lhamo Dolma and Yeshi Tsomo. Both of them are from Swayambhu Kathmandu. In my curiosity to know the reasons for 'what made them leave nunnery and prefer general life'. I met the former one and asked the question to her. Lhamo Dolma, now Tiya Gurung, left the Nunnery last year. I had a chance to ask Lhamo Dolma (16), who was studying in class 10 in an English school that time, the reason for leaving the nunnery. She said to me:

For some years I was suffering from T. B. Because of it, the nunnery granted me a long vacation to stay at home. I continued my formal study in that period of time. During my stay at home, I have experienced and learnt my personal life and way of living, differently. I began to think that modern life is important and more challenging. I prefer it. When I got well, I became ambitious on modern education and modernity. I began to think that modern education is more important than religious education for the present world. So, if someone wants to be more potential and dynamic in the distant future s/he should join the modern (formal) education."

I met four girls, who were studying in class -10, named Chhungda Gurung, Tsering Dolma Sherpa, Karma Yangchen and Dolma Sherpa. They all had at least one sibling as a nun or monk. None of them had deep interest to be a nun in future; neither had they negative feeling. Nevertheless, they were undecided about to be or not to be Aani in future. According to them, they would listen to their parents' recommendations first. Then only they would decide for being a nun or not, in future. One of them, Chungda Gurung, who's all four other elder sisters already became nuns, was in dilemma. She could not opine clearly about her near future. She needed to decide as soon as possible. It was because; she should enter the nunnery in a year if she liked it. She was good in her study but she liked the life of nun as well. The three other girls also had the same opinion. However, they were ready to live challenging life (not the Aani life). Though many girls of lower classes preferred to be Aanis, their interest gradually declined as they entered the higher level.

I had even observed one interesting case. That was, I had asked 14 students of class four about their aim of life (in the year 2004). Most of them stated their keen interest to become monks and nuns. After two years (in the year 2006), when most of them were in class six, I asked them the same question again to find if they had any changes in their opinion. The answer was surprisingly different. Some of those who were dreaming to live a religious life changed their aim to become teachers, nurses, doctors and so on, whereas some others were still determined to be the monks and nuns. In my opinion, the younger children are more influenced by the parents. As they grow up and obtain higher education, their feeling also gets changed. As Mead has stated the community causes changes in the personality of a person, we can observe the change in the growing children.

I got a chance to know about some more other Aanis of the same nunnery, where all the above stated Aanis resided. For the further inquiry I had consulted some of the nuns from two different castes and socio-cultural groups about them, their family background and how they feel being nuns. Same questions were asked to know about them. Most of their opinions were similar. They had opined to obtain salvation and freedom from the present life.

4.3. Aanis' Access to Modern Education

The Aanis had access to private and boarding schools for the modern/school education too. There they went to obtain modern education. It included the learning of the subjects to fulfil the need of modern world and modernity. The question was raised in my mind: “why do they need modern education?” For the easy adjustment in the local society and to be familiar with the modern trend in the world the monastic people opted modern/ school education. As there was growing influence and concern of modernity and modernization, the people of modern era were in the need of modern education that they could obtain from school. Citing from Eisenstadt, Sharma (2004: 397) states, “Perhaps the best starting point for the analysis of the characteristics in the pattern of demands for and the supply of educational services that tended to develop with modernization.” I had collected some information, regarding this concern. I consulted some of the Aani students of the associate school and interrogated them about the existing system for the school to the Aanis. Using the questionnaires and some open questions to the concerned people I had gathered some information, which depicted some comforts and complexities for the Aanis to obtain modern education. Both the Aanis and Lamas have pointed out three major areas of difficulties for the obtaining modern education. They are: (i) The Aanis and Lamas have to study three languages, Tibetan, Nepali and English simultaneously. It caused them feel more complex because of the unique features of each language. Some similar features of the languages lead them towards confusion, whereas some distinct features have made them unable to link and generalize what they have known already. (ii) The sophisticated environment of private English boarding school in Kathmandu does not match with the poorly managed rural school, from where majority of them have come. The maladjustment raises mental tension and feeling of inferiority in the earlier days. (iii) The Aanis did not have access to study high level of modern education. It was up to S. L. C. level until the early 2006; later it was limited to class 6. This level of education enabled young Aanis to be literate only. Aanis of 15 years and above did not have chance to enrol in school for modern education.

Therefore, the Aanis still had challenges to get modern education. Only a few Aanis had chances for modern education. As I found the study option of modern education, up to class 6, neither satisfied the students nor did they have adequate knowledge on the relevant subject matters. They had interest to study different subjects of modern

education; including English, science, math, and computer. The concerned nunnery had managed modern education facility to the young ones after they left the school. This facility was provided in the nunnery. The teachers may be the nuns themselves so far possible. But it was not quite sure how would they continue it and to what levels did they study. The offered subjects were; English, mathematics, and computer only. Sometimes they had some more selected subjects.

The distance between school and their residence, Nunnery, was about 9 kilometers. They had the nunnery bus to carry the Aanis to and fro the school. So they did not have any problem to reach the school on time. They were always in the school on or before the school time. They remained in the school from the beginning of the school time, i. e. 8.45 to 3.00 or 3.20. The school ended at 4.30. But the last hour after 3.00/ 3.20 was not regular school hour for the formal classes. It was allocated for the students to do their homework and private study time under the teachers' supervision. The students got extra help from the teachers as the tuition time. The Aanis did not stay and take this chance. They return back to the nunnery and have time for the private study if there is no *Puja* or other religious activities.

I observed them for the findings of friendship case. They definitely had close friendship with the nuns but in the school hours and inside the school they were equally working and playing with the others as well. However, they did not come in the play ground much to play. When they had their play period, some of them participated well and actively. There was no feeling of gender discrimination between males and females. They never felt any hesitation to play, work and cooperate with male classmates, school friends, teachers and anybody else.

The religious tradition influenced even the young people to become Aanis and Lamas. Deeply rooted religious faith had encouraged them even to accept the importance of religious education. People from such community had the system of sending their daughters to nunneries. When I asked Norlha and the other nuns, the reason and influencing factors for them to become Aanis, their answer was almost identical. They all said that their family members, seniors, neighbors and relatives were the influencing causes for them to become Aanis. Their parents encouraged them to be Aanis because the parents believed that the Aanis would live and lead a happy life. However, they could decide on their own. It was a way of their Dharma. For the

parents, it's a kind of psychological trend to send a daughter to the nunnery to become an Aani. They were heavily influenced by the senior family members, who have already become Aanis/ Lamas. The local community was in favor of Aanis. They respected Aanis and valued them highly. The young girls were, then, lured to become Aanis rather than lived a married, difficult and challenging life. As Bourdieu (Harker, 1990) had coined the word 'habitus', which he meant, "an acquired system of generative schemes objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it was constituted", the case of nunnery was similar to the Buddhist people. Religion and culture were identical to "habitus".

Formal/ modern education was highly valued by the religious institutions (like nunneries) in these days. The growing influence of modern technology and the invention in the field of science had attracted the attention of religious people. They could not ignore the surrounding world. The uses of transport, electronic media, computer, telephone were not in the position to be neglected. Even the religious people could make better uses of those things for the benefit of personal and religious life. I asked senior Lamas/ Aanis for the reasons behind their interest to study modern education and to send the young Aanis/ Lamas to the school for formal education. The gist of their answers was; (i) to understand and realize the life of the general people, (ii) to be familiar with the modern trend of education, (iii) to be able to use the means of science and technology, (iv) to understand and use English language for the communication purpose.

I used a set of questionnaires to observe and find facts of Aanis schooling and education system. The findings are interpreted here in the following chapter. Only the Aanis below fifteen years could join the school for formal/ modern education. Anyone who entered the nunnery at the age of 15 and above were not allowed enrolling the school. After the new Aanis entered the nunnery they were provided preparatory classes to go to school. There they learnt English, Nepali, Tibetan math and science with the senior Aanis. It supported them to enter school. On the other hands the general rule of nunnery to enroll Aanis of 15 and above restricted most of the Aanis to obtain school education. Only the younger (who were few in number) ones got chance to enroll in school for school education.

CHAPTER 5

AANI NORLHA AND HER EDUCATION

5.1. Aani Norlha and Her Education: Field and Habitus

To find the role of religious belief, its impacts and schooling of Aanis; I had consulted the senior Lamas and other concerned people (The information and discussion are mentioned in the previous chapter). In addition to that I had collected the case stories of Aani Norlha. The case story of Karma would also support it. Aani Norlha, who was being introduced in this thesis as the main informant had provided her own real story of entrance to nunnery, Aani life, and school education before and during her Aani life. I think her case stories and information will be valuable materials for this thesis.

Norlha Dolma was an Aani (Buddhist nun) of mid twenties. She was a confident and laborious Aani. I found her frank, straight forward, thorough gentle and cooperative to the people of both sexes. Having bold character, she was ambitious and she wished to achieve something useful and important. Facing challenges was her important and positive character, which was less common with most of the other Aanis. She seemed a bit talkative and she possessed the quality to mix up easily with others in a short time. Sometimes, it drove her to expect visible achievement. Failure of it caused confusion and mental tension. Because of all these reasons it was easy for me to work for my study purpose. Without her, it would not be possible for me to find the facts and essential information on Aani education system; as most of the others did not entertain to interact.

During my contact with her, I had found her mostly in cheerful mood and sometimes with a bit confusion and uncertainty. She did not seem satisfied with her present achievement. However, she tried to prove she was ok with what she had. She wanted more progress than what she had. Her situation could be generalized from Bourdieu's perspectives of 'Habitus' and 'Field'.

Bourdieu had talked about the socialization process and education opportunity. Individual has his or her own situation for getting or not getting a particular type of education and other different opportunities. Progress of a person and the achievements depended on the environment the person is surrounded with. The education of a person depends on the social settings around her/ him. Bourdieu further describes such situations as Habitus and Field. 'Habitus' is the environment, culture and experiences of a person and his society and 'field' is the challenges he or she has to face and undergo during the life time for the progress or no progress. Citing from Bourdieu, Scahill states the definition of his notion and terms as, "The habitus...the generative principle of responses more or less well adapted to the demands of a certain field, is the product of individual history, but also, through the formative experiences of earliest infancy, of the whole collective history of family and class...." Whereas the meaning of field is clarified as, "A field is by definition, 'a field of struggles' in which agents' strategies are concerned with the preservation or improvement of their positions with respect to the defining capital of the field." – Jenkins (2003: 85). Bourdieu opined field as the social arena where there is continuous struggle between different people for their existence and power accumulation. The available resources are the target of them to obtain and achieve for the personal benefits. While thinking about the case of Norlha, Bourdieu is right. His habitus and field represent the feeling and expectations of Norlha. Her family environment, counseling of the elders and the interest of her all fell together to the habitus and field.

The concept of Bourdieu matches the case of Norlha. She was born in a Buddhist family and the family wanted her to be Aani. The suitable environment was made there in the family and her surrounding. She was sent to Aani friendly schools and ever encouraged to learn Tibetan language well. She was put in school hostel from her early childhood. Because of those reasons she was gradually attracted to the monastic life. She realized the importance of Aani life. For her, it was the best part of life if she would start Aani life. If she was given chances for higher studies of modern education after she got enrolment in nunnery, she might be quite satisfied with what she had. But the new knowledge, chances of schooling and S. L. C. result made her feel differently. It was newly developed environment and her success in the work. These situations could be analyzed as habitus and field. Habitus and field are interrelated. In case of their

combination form of meaning citing from Lee (1997) Parajuli has stated the view of Bourdieu as:

For Bourdieu, individuals' thoughts and activities that produce social actions or practices or subjective world is their habitus and their objective world is their field. Habitus exists as a system of acquired dispositions functioning on the practical level of categories of perception and assessment... Fields are the dynamic and autonomous network of a complex system of social relations and struggles for power and positions where various forces interact with habitus in order to produce, preserve, change and improve a sense of legitimate value. Fields which structure the habitus, are thus the base-ground for a continuous struggle for positions by actors. - Parajuli (2002: 29)

The explanations of habitus and field seems to be the concept of what a person has learnt from his society and family is habitus and the difficulties and challenges he has to undergo during his life time is field. The habitus seems subjective notion and the notion of field is objective. However, the case of Norlha was a bit different since she was now in the position to think her situation differently. She wanted to challenge the existing system from within the structure. She was not in favor to continue only the religious education. As she had already passed S. L. C. she was in favor of modern education. As a result of it, she showed her interest to be a medical practitioner to serve the nuns. She did not want to limit her knowledge to tradition.

Mauss (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Habitus>) defines the concept of habitus a bit differently to the rest others. From his point of view habitus is, "The concept of habit or habitus refers to 'those aspects of culture that are anchored in the body; or, daily practices of individuals, groups, societies and nations. It includes the totality of learned habits, bodily skills, styles, tastes, and other non-discursive knowledges that might be said to "go without saying for a specific group." From all the different definitions and explanations of different scholars I came to understand that habitus is the social settings of a person. The family relation and the home environment are directly related to the interest and capacity of a person's learning and interest. A person can learn better or can have interest in modern education, traditional education or religious education

according to the culture, surrounding and family environment. The interest and ambition of an individual is shaped by various factors as stated by different scholars, as mentioned above. The case of religious education to Norlha is also influenced by the habitus and field of her own.

The family of Norlha was a well off Buddhist. The origin of her family was Manang, a remote Himalayan district of Nepal. They had the Manangi tradition and culture. Her family had good financial condition to invest for the education of the young generation, including her. The parents wanted the children to educate in good school and they preferred to see their children being educated and having good habit and culture in them. Therefore, they invested enough money for the young ones. However, like the other Manangi people, the parents were very interested to send at least one of the three daughters to nunnery to start a religious and monastic life. So, they would also have a family member in religious circle.

Norlha's Childhood And Schooling

Norlha was born in a family of business background. Her father was involved in a business of import and export. Most of the time he used to be off home. So she spent most of her childhood with mother, brother and sisters. Since their migration to Kathmandu, they have been living in her maternal house; together with other natal relatives of the mother. She spent most of her childhood time with grand mother, who influenced Norlha to be Aani. She was encouraged by the others as well. Her observation of the hardship of the family life convinced more to become an Aani.

She was admitted and sent to the nearest school with her elder sister. As she completed pre-primary level there, she was admitted as a hostel student in the same school where the above stated Aanis studied. The hostel life limited her family relation. She often had home sick and felt lonely in the hostel. They had routine life. To minimize mental tension, they were encouraged to pray many times and do meditation.

Senior Lamas used to come and preach in the hostel frequently. She was impressed very much by the environment of the class room, shrine room, prayer, and meditation and preaching of senior Lamas. The child biography of Dalai Lama, Karmapa, Thrangu Rinpoche and other religious people inspired her. Gradually, she began to feel normal with hostel life.

In 1995, I was admitted to Namgyal Middle School Swayambhu again as a hostel student. The school was established by the organization of Dalai Lama for the preservation of Tibetan language and culture. Some Aanis also studied there. It was as per the interest of my family to make me good in Tibetan language and familiarize more closely with Aanis.

Beginning Of The Aani Life

Some Aani students studied in Namgyal School, along with Norlha. She was influenced with them in the beginning. But in course of time, she lost the charm of Aani life. As her study was progressing, her feeling and attraction to become Aani was declining. When she was in class 7, in the year 1999, her father asked for her interest and wishes to join or not to join the nunnery. She was in dilemma for a while. Eventually, she accepted to become Aani.

In the year 1999, Norlha's family and relatives were preparing to celebrate her paternal grandpa's 84th Birthday. Her readiness to enter the nunnery added a great happiness and value. The relatives gathered at home on the previous day of her entry to nunnery. They were there to celebrate the grand father's 84th Birthday and to bid goodbye to Norlha.

It was uneasy for Norlha to go to the nunnery. With heavy heart she left home and beloved family members. The whole family accompanied her to go to the nunnery. The hair was shaved as she reached the nunnery. She felt odd to have her hair shaved. However, she was excited to start a new, secure and happy life. The blessing from Thrangu Rinpoche consoled her. It was a very important day in her life which remained as fresh memory and the amalgam of happiness and odd feeling.

A most interesting thing was they were sixteen friends from Namgyal School to join the nunnery the same day. It comforted her a lot. They felt homely environment there. Further more, as she spent years in hostel, the nunnery life was normal to her.

The above case shows the childhood time and situation of a Nepalese Buddhist (of Tibetn origin) girl, Norlha. Her parents wanted to enroll her in a nunnery. The influence of the elder people and model role of someone kept the girl close to their ambition. In case of Norlha the grandmother was the focus person who often played role model in her life. She had mentioned that she preferred to be with grandmother more. Because of

it, she became obedient child of the old lady. She was influenced with the person to become a nun in the days to come. The hidden role of family to send her in different schools was also to influence her to start Aani life. Directly or indirectly she was guided towards the monastic life. As the personality theory states the surrounding influences the child's future. The roles of grandmother and family influence have the key role in her life to be attracted to become an Aani. The parents' role is the foundation of the future life of the children.

Feist and Feist (2000: 152) concludes Klein's opinion as, "The interaction between mother and infant lays the foundation for future personality development because that early interpersonal experience serves as a prototype for subsequent interpersonal relations." The claim of Klein is very contextual to this case. As Norlha stated that she used to live with her mother and grandmother most of the time her dream was also guided by their influence. The consequence is, she became an Aani. Freud and Kardiner (Jha, 2000) believe that childhood experience is determining point for the moulding of personal behaviour. Culture, religion, folklore and various other traditional factors influence a person. The saying of Freud, and Kardiner are very identical to the behaviour of Aani. In my observation Aani Norlha had plenty of past influence. So present is the outcomes of past.

The case reflects the underlying deep rooted interest of Buddhist parents (who are originally from hills and Himalyas of Nepal) to enrol their daughters to nunnery. As Bourdieu (Harker, 1990) discussed the role of the society and the surrounding environment influenced the education of a person, it seems closely related to his notion of "habitus" with the condition of Norlha. The parents thought for the Dharma and the secure future of their own and their daughters. For it sending the girl into a nunnery was the only way. This showed the religious and family trend for educating children according to the set beliefs of the parents. The concept of "field" (Ibid); gives us the notion of projection to Norlha to start Aani life. The creation of a suitable environment within the family and relations to shape child's mind is an example of it. The school and hostel environment influenced her. Putting the little child in school hostel helped her to be adjusted in group life and feel less importance of family for both present and future. Giving priority to Tibetan study reflected the parents' cleverness to influence their daughter to prepare mentally and academically to start Aani life. The education helped

the girl to dream about being an Aani in the future. It developed the traits of personality theory.

From theoretical bases it can be analyzed from religious lens (Bhattarai, 2004) as: enrolling daughters into nunnery were a way to include them in “Sangha”. It could be the best way for both the parents and Aani to obtain “Dharma”. Buddha’s teachings helps to lead a happier and satisfied life of each individual. On the other hands, personality theory (Feist and Feist, 2002) perceives it as; family interaction and environment shape the personality of a person. The interpersonal relationship between mother and the child during the childhood is a major part for individual to determine the future and future career.

The personal feeling of a young mind before, during and after she enters the nunnery is easily attracted to the surrounding. It reveals that the growing age, maturity and the increasing level of education divert the feeling of a person. The coincidence of celebration in the family and the Norlha’s enrolment in the nunnery bring another story of a young Aani at the time of her entry in the nunnery. Projection and adjustment of life is the ultimate alternatives for each of us. But there is a question of why only Norlha was attracted towards the monastic life, why not her sister? Both of them were together until Norlha joined the nunnery. In this case the claim of psychologists is more obvious. Personality and way of thinking differ to each individual. Feist and Feist (2002) claim that no two people, regardless of the same environment and heredity, have the same personalities; it is the same case even in twins with identical appearance. It rejects the idea of heredity and the family environment to shape the personality. The twins have the same heredity and the family environment still the way of thinking, their interest, desire and the achievement are remarkably different. The study of an Aani, Norlha Dolma, seems to support it. Norlha lived almost all her childhood and school time with her sister. However, the sister didn’t become Aani. Only Norlha became Aani. Therefore, the perception of a person and her personal interests determine what kind of personality a person develops within herself. It depends on how a person perceives the surroundings of her.

After the regular and systematic attempt of the family, the education and the environment she was exposed to, she wished to become an Aani on her own wish. The happiness was observed in the family because of her spontaneous interest to become

what the family was expecting for a long time. A girl of her early teens can be sentimental to keep the others attracted towards hers, prefers to see happiness in the family if the family offers good care and special attention to the children. The result is obtained as the family and the person herself expecting the day to come with their result fulfilled. Eventually she went to nunnery discontinuing her school education. Following are the points which reflect my perception on the above case:

1. The family counseling is powerful. Norlha was convinced to become Aani until she was at home with the family but it was almost changed later. The situation changed her way of thinking and generalizing things on the basis of one's own knowledge.
2. The influence and importance of modern education is close to struggle against the challenges of survival first then only the others.
3. Regular and prolonged detachments with family make people different.
4. Human beings learn to be adjusted in the exposed environment as per the need.

She practised and learned the basic rules of Dharma for one year there and went back to the associate school of her nunnery in the year 2000 to continue her school education. She said she was very delighted to become a nun because she realized all the family members and the relatives of her were so happy with her interest and readiness to be a nun. She was confident to live and lead a holy life, which they believed was free from worldly tension and trouble. The beginning days, for her in the nunnery, were also very interesting because some of her aunts and relatives were already there in the same nunnery. She always found them loving, caring and kind hearted towards her. I have had prolonged conversation to her about her life in the past and her future plan. The following box will reveal the past days and a slight plan or her aim for the days to come. In the year 2004, she completed her S.L.C. with the 1st division score. Her feeling is as follows:

Schooling After Being An Aani

Norlha was happy to be an Aani. Everything was fine since there were few Aanis in the nunnery (less than 90 altogether). More friends, more holidays and frequent visit of relatives and family members made her feel wonderful to live in the nunnery. She had a problem to continue school education as there was no other option provided

Until that year (1999), there was no opportunity for the Aanis to go and study in school; though it was there in Namgyal school. For a year they were taught and trained about the basic rules and prayers. In the following year (2000), the nunnery decided to send the young Aanis (below 15 years), for school education. Norlha was already 16 years. However, she was given a chance to join the school since a senior Aani was needed to lead the young ones to the school.

She continued school education and got chance to appear in the S. L. C. examination in 2004 and passed it the same year, securing the 1st division. It was a very great achievement in her life. Because of her educational qualification, she was given better chances even in nunnery to serve and face challenges.

Opportunities, Challenges And Future Plan

After S. L. C., Norlha was given a chance to work as a teacher to teach the new Aanis in the nunnery and to run the medical clinic. She had a great and deep interest to study and work as a medical person, especially as a nurse. Earlier, the nunnery was planning for her medical studies. The nunnery planned to send her for the medical study. But the plan did not heat any real ground.

It was a great problem for her to get enrolled for nursing course. As per the wish of nunnery and her relatives, she was admitted to Kathmandu Model Nursing College. The nunnery assured to pay all the expense of her study. But, eventually, she did not get any money from there. As the classes started, the college forced all the students to wear the college uniform. It was a great challenge for her because she was not allowed. Finally, she managed to wear the college dress in the college and the Aani dress everywhere outside the college. After ten days she was ordered, from the nunnery, to stop studying the nursing course. She obeyed it with heavy heart. It was a great financial and academic loss for her.

Though she did not get chance to continue her nursing course, she is happy to be respected for the religious status from the people of her relation and contact. The parents want her to remain as Aani; however they let her think and decide on her own about her future. Her interest to be a nurse is not rippled away. She still has a deep interest to study nursing and serve people with the medical knowledge. She has a little experience of the medical field too. If she was given a chance to study nursing, she could serve the Aanis better than any other doctors or medical personnel from outside

Even the Aanis feel more comfortable to talk to Aani Norlha; about any of their health problem. This scenario confused her for not getting chance to study medicine. But she reserves every right to decide for her future. She believes it as her personal right.

From the above stories, I have derived the following points:

1. The expectation of a person is fulfilled if there is systematic plan and attempt. As the parents were intending to send their daughters to nunnery, they sent them to the suitable school and the consequence is 16 girls from the same school were enrolled in the nunnery as Aanis.
2. The surrounding environment influences people to be adjusted themselves. As Aani Norlha entered the nunnery she found her friends and the senior Aanis to comfort and console her. It shows the trait of Darwinian Theory 'adaptation to the unsuitable environment'. For the adaptation the young Aani found way to adjust in the given environment.
3. The embodied knowledge and beliefs shape the mental map of each individual. The revised decision of the nunnery is an example of it. The administrators of the nunnery did not let Aani Norlha to continue her education though it was positive in the earlier days to send her for the nursing course.
4. The personality of a person is another valuable trait of the person which directs her to choose options on her own choice. After working with a medical doctor and having some experience of medicine Norlha wanted to have more knowledge to develop skill.

The family members were pleased to have Norlha in the nunnery. Norlha was enjoying the Aani life in the nunnery. Her educational achievement added extra power and flavor in her life. However, the brother was not much satisfied and happy with Norlha's Aani life. Since he was a resident of the U. K., he was more in favor of modernity and modern education. His surrounding caused him to think differently. Norlha herself was also deeply interested in the study of medical science. After S. L. C. she tried her best to attend some kind of education in the field of medical science. In the beginning days, the nunnery was prepared to invest for her medical education. The proposed plan was related to homeopathy. Later, the plan was changed as the institution, which was proposed to be established the same year, did not come into

existence. She was permitted for it, as a medical manpower was always in need to the nunnery. But it was quite different later.

As we observe it from personality theory the prominent of it, Freud said the past experience determines the present activities, Norlha is also very much influenced by the past opportunities she obtained. She was hopeful to get higher education in the field of medicine. The words promised to her to send for the further medical study made her more ambitious in the beginning. Later when she was disturbed and obstructed, she felt it bitterly. She was thinking even her religious participation to end to fulfill her ambition of medical education and service to the humanity. If we consider Aani Karma, her past experience was that Aanis are highly respected in the society and they had better opportunity for education. For these reasons she joined the monastic life and she obtained it. As a result, she was quite happy and satisfied with what she had obtained.

I found that there was hard time and time for conflict but the appropriate reasoning and ability to solve the problems took people forward. Education makes people think more critically. Educated people had developed the power to decide right and wrong. It often had brought conflict between the two facets of life: the traditional way of living and the modern world. The level of study of any disciplinary area influences people to take one side. Norlha had the same situation. She was not orthodoxy Aani, who has a strong feeling of religious value as the entire thing. The surrounding, the friends and people around her/ him, the chances and duties being offered also affected a person to enjoy the particular setting of life. Such situation brought the feeling of identification and the personal identity.

From Sullivan's (Feist and Feist, 2002) point, I analyzed the life and the growing tension of Aani Norlha. As I knew she lived in nunnery in a large group of females having different levels and attitudes. To many extents their aims were common. But different people perceive life differently. Their way of feeling, thinking capacity and other things differed as they had different mental chemistry. They were influenced differently to become Aanis. Their qualification, experience, ability, perception and world view differed. Therefore, they could have commonalities to some points and differences to many points.

Norlha was working as a teacher in the nunnery these days. Her main responsibility is to prepare the young and new Aanis to go to school. She helped others

to learn English, math and other subjects of modern education. Still she didn't lose her hope to become a nurse or a health worker. She wished to join medical college to get medical education/ training and wanted to practice it to serve the Aanis in the nunnery.

Norlha got a good chance to obtain high level of formal education in a well established English medium school. It was due to the policy of the nunnery to educate the young Aanis, at least to the school level. But the thirst of modern education was not satisfied to many Aanis and Lamas after they obtain school education. Some of the good nun/ monk students had become reluctant to the monastic life after the certain level of school education and their good achievement. But their reluctance was not to the Dharma or the religion, neither to the entire system but their ambition to obtain extra caliber in modern education.

A Lama named 'Tsering Dorje', who was a classmate of Norlha, was laborious and talent student. He passed S. L. C. in the same year along with Norlha in 2004, securing good marks in the first division. He wanted to study medical science but was not allowed to do so from the monastery. He appealed to the high level of the monastery administration to turn his dream in reality: to be a doctor and serve according to the wish of the monastery head. But his appeal was rejected saying monks were not supposed to practice medical knowledge where there was the need of piercing, cutting of human body parts, operation and so on. Eventually he was able to obtain scholarship for the higher education in Canada. He gave up monastic life, left the monastery and went to Canada for his mission to accomplish. It influenced other young monks and nuns. Some other young monks and nuns also decided to give up monastic life and continue modern education.

Until then, some of the Aanis had given up their religious lives and had left their nunnery. Some of them are Lhamo Dolma (now Tiya Gurung), her younger sister Karma Rinchen and Yeshe Tsomo. All of them started to study in English medium school. (I have mentioned the opinion of Lhamo Dolma to give up the monastic life in the previous chapter). The distant effect of Tsering Dorje's ambition and the success he achieved had brought a new effect to the other new nuns and monks of the related monastery and nunnery. The result was; both the monastery and nunnery had limited the modern education to Aanis and Lamas to the level of class six only. The schooling opportunity to the monks and nuns in the modern age seemed to support new generation

monks and nuns to be assimilated in the modern society. It was the acceptance of emerging influence of the modernity in different forms.

5.2. Nunnery to Modern School

As directed by religion and family guidance, the young girls of Buddhist family (who were originally from hills and Himalayas of Nepal), like Norlha, happily got enrolled them in the nunneries to become Aanis. They had plenty of influencing factors to join the monastic lives. The regular encouragement of the senior family members and relatives, the exposure of the senior Aanis and Lamas in the family, the comparative study and analysis of the life of monastic people and normal people etc encouraged the young minds to choose monastic life. In the case of Norlha the senior Aanis and Lamas were invited in the house of the Buddhist people for any religious purpose. There were a lot of religious occasions in their homes and families. They were highly respected and valued in the family. For most of the important time the Aanis and Lamas were to be invited in every Buddhist family. The Aanis and Lamas were served better food, offered handsome amount of money and paid due respect and regards. The arrival of Aanis and Lamas in a house of anybody was taken as holy and prestigious chances by the concerned family. Observation of such things attracted every child's mind to adopt the same type of life. For it, enrolment in nunnery and start to learn religious creeds were essential. After being enrolled in the nunnery, they began to obtain religious education and get chance to study Buddhist philosophy. Since some of the religious institutions, themselves, had managed modern education to the young Aanis, they began to realize the importance of the modern education. Growing age, educational exposure and mix up with the society influenced the Aanis to achieve higher level of modern education. The Aanis thought that modern education made them more efficient. The hidden interest in them to be competent, led them to think for the modern education. They perceived it as essential thing for the everyday life. They even thought modern education enabled them to build up their capacity.

To find the answers of my research questions, "Why do Aanis need modern education?" I studied the case of Norlha, her habitus and field. Further more I used the set of questionnaires and sometimes different other free questions. I gathered the some information. I talked to some concerned and related people. I was able to take interview

to seven people altogether, based on the questionnaires, prepared. In addition to the seven informants some newly enrolled Aanis in one hand and a Buddhist scholar the school principal were interviewed on the focus questions of their feeling of being Aanis and Lamas; the role of monastic education and the need of modern education to them. The school principal, who was a highly educated Lama, had been interrogated about the role of monasteries to provide modern education to the Aanis and Lamas.

The school principal, who was Khenpo, was asked three questions in connection with Norlha and Norlha like people. He responded me in liberal way. As there were some liberal and some other fundamentalists from their religious orientation. He favored the formal/ modern education but he did not seem to undermine religious education. In my question to the need of modern education to the Aanis and Lamas he responded me as follows:

I view the answer of it from my Guru's point. According to the philosophy of my Guru, "Thrangu Rinpoche" modern education is essential for people to develop understanding and capacity building. When China captured Tibet in 1959, Guru Rinpoche fled away from Tibet to India. He didn't have any modern education that time. So he had a very hard time. Problem of communication, due to language, lack of modern education and some other problems created a lot of tension to him. The people, he met there, were all of a different environment. Due to that, he realized the importance of modern education. So he established educational institutions for the modern education to religious and general people. I am influenced with the story of my respected Guru and I think everybody needs modern education. It covers computer education, science and technology. These things are necessary for religious people, as well, for various reasons. We need to document our religious teachings and publications. 'Hi – tech' makes life easier and better. The need of English language is another important thing for the contemporary people. It enables them to communicate internationally. The Aanis and Lamas also need it since they also have to travel widely and meet people of different parts of the world.

The response clearly states modern education is essential to all the people. But it is not in the religious education. Religious education is not for the study of different languages neither is it for the study of modern technology. Religious education has its own area though it does not cover all the areas related to everyday life of people. Therefore, religious education is for the extension of faith, beliefs of the religious leaders and their philosophy and ideology whereas modern education is for the adjustment for the people in their everyday life. The religious people, including Aanis and Lamas, are to serve the others for the benefit of all sentient beings. For it, they have to teach and preach about the knowledge and beliefs they have. Languages play great role for the communication. The modern technology could be useful to accomplish their job in a better way. Therefore, the modern education is needed to everyone including the Aanis and Lamas. Religious education is to continue faiths and beliefs. Modern education is for adjustment.

In order to know the perception of different people about the need of modern education I have interviewed some people. With the help of the interviews, I gathered some information. The essence of the interview responses are tabulated as:

Table 1: Perception of Modern and Religious Education:

Informants	Modern education		Religious education	
	What is it?	Why is it needed?	What is it?	Why is it needed?
1. Aani Norlha	Knowledge of life, soul and world	For comfortable and easy life and to offer opportunities	Study of Dharma	Sustain and support existing religions.
2. Norlha's friend (Aani)	Develop awareness to cultivate ideas and promote life	Source of livelihood for better life	Study of Dharma to purify mind	Obtain freedom from sufferings
3. Norlha's friend (Nursing student)	Key to understand world and religion	To be creative and development oriented	Practice of Dharma for future life	For freedom of worldly suffering
4. Buddhist teacher	Tools for day to day life	Consciousness and positive change	Purity of mind, body and soul	Develop morality for humankind
5. Non	Capacity building	Enable to face the	Study of	Develop inner

Buddhist teacher	by studying technology	rapid change	religion and culture	purity
6. Educationist	To understand human behaviour and surrounding	To empower individuals	Spiritual knowledge	Right thought and action
7. Buddhist parent	Education provided in school/ college	To secure job as teachers, doctors, nurses, officers,	Learning of Dharma	For salvation

The information presented above shows modern education as a means of physical development and more concerned with present life of a person whereas religious education is a way to obtain knowledge about spiritual world and it was more concerned about the future, especially the fate after death. From the present world view, each person thinks to be competent and independent person. A physically healthy and mentally fit person wishes to have them, to face the present world challenges. The influence of religion might lead people to think another way. Religious people may perceive it in a different way. However, majority of the people are not in the position to ignore the present world scenario. The growing pressure of market economy has pushed people to participate in throat cut competition for their survival. Modern education had become a means to enable and empower individuals to achieve the capacity to live as self reliant person. For people like Norlha life was prior to religion and at the same time she wants to secure and satisfy the present life rather than opting for the nice life after death. In this sense modern education for Norlha was a means to:

- a. Understand about the individual herself and her surroundings, which helped to make her life more competent and comfortable. The religious education on the other hand helped to understand and strengthen the religion and culture of the individual.
- b. Empower and promote individual's life. Religious education was for her help to release individual's tension and
- c. Be means and ends of life, respectively, for an individual.

At the same time modern education had brought conflict to the monastic people, like Norlha. The provision of modern education did not seem to be fruitful to the

monastic people. After the achievement of some certain level of modern education, those religious people seemed to be attracted towards the modern education and modernity. Due to it, the Aanis and Lamas had preferred to desert the monastic life. Some of the Lamas had given up the monastic life with the influence of modern education, so is the case of some Aanis. It reflected that the contradiction between the religious and modern life and education was rising because of the growing influence of modernity.

Reflecting upon the above table, I understood the importance of both modern and religious education. The religious education had its value to make people think and work in a systematic way for the world. The present changing scenario of the world, its people, and the environment had forced people to think from different perspectives. To face the present challenges modern education helps people. It had the field of study about human civilization, sociology, languages, science and technology. The religious education, on the other hand, had humanitarian aspects and spiritual way to perceive things and analyze the role of each individual for the wellbeing of all living beings. The religious leaders claimed that it was sustainable education and it was for the eternal peace of all the sentient beings of the globe. For them, purity of mental aspects was possible with knowledge of religious education. The appropriate thinking was part of it.

Modern education, according to the informants, was very essential to solve the recent problems, make life better, seek and enjoy the advanced life. It was useful for the capacity building and to understand the reality of the present time. The growing thirst on new invention and exploitation of the science and technology came under its area. For them, the area for the study was expanding day and night. Investment in modern education was increasing interestingly and the attitude was growing towards the regular promotion of the modernity. In this way, modern education was dominating the old belief and trust. It means, the modern invention and exploration had made things perceive, learn and use differently. Religious faiths were challenged in many ways.

From the response from different people and my personal observation, I see the expansion of modern education and its result creating more gaps and inequality. The gap between haves and have not was expanding. The successful people were enjoying better lives. Those who had the better knowledge and capacity obtained more and made the resources to use by him more. It caused the unequal distribution of the available

resources to a few people only. The rest others were losing what they have. The inequality had brought depression, aggression, dissatisfaction and so on. To heal the injury, religious education helped people to understand the reality differently. It gave people patience, courage and the level of understanding. So peaceful life was possible for all the living beings with the help of religious education and the knowledge it imparted. In order to furtherance the above discussion, I consulted my informants. They stated the great importance of modern education to the people for the livelihood and adjustment. Their views are tabulated as:

Table 2: Modern Education to Young People

Informants	Why is it needed?	How is it useful?	Why general people need it?	Why Aanis need it?
1. Norlha	To face world challenges	Learn about science, computer, languages and community	To face every day challenges and secure bright future	To deal with modern world, other than religious
2. Norlha's friend (Aani)	Spread religion through modern education	By developing analytical capacity	To improve quality of life	Know/ understand general people and the world
3. Norlha's friend (Nursing student)	To know the world before to teaching	Being more competent and creative	Personality development	For practicality, independence and to become multi lingual.
4. Aanis' Teacher (Buddhist)	Use religious knowledge in any area	Learning makes independent	Basic education to start advanced education	development and growth of individual and organization's
5. Teacher (non-Buddhist)	For the building of capabilities	School education assists to get it	To make independent	To understand the modern development

The table above gave intuition that people had different views and attitudes towards the need of modern education. During my study, I asked both religious and non religious people about their views on the importance and need of modern education. They all had positive attitude towards the modern education. They thought it was essential since it empowered people; make them able to think more critically. Some of them give emphasis on the need of it for the spreading of religious education that could play complementary role to support religious education. Modern education was useful to build capacity and the area of service to empower individuals, develop potentiality and make people more productive. In this sense, modern education had both productive and reproductive role in the society and elsewhere.

The need and importance of modern education for the religious people, like Aanis, was clearly opined as they needed it for the awareness development about themselves, about the surrounding and the present time. The habitus and field were part of the interconnection of the use of modern education to the people of modern world. As the additional advantage to use modern education for the spreading of religion and religious education to the general for the welfare of the worldly benefit. The growing use of technology and language had influenced the people of all walks of life, including Aanis.

5.3. Aani Norlha in Historical Ground

The nunnery, where Aani Norlha resided, had begun to send its Aanis to its associate school. The Aanis below 15 years of age went there for formal/modern education. The school had co-education, where Aanis, Lamas and other general boys and girls studied together. The school going Aanis continued both religious and modern education simultaneously. Still their performance was good in the school activities and academic result. Aani Norlha was one of them. She joined nunnery after she completed her grade 7, in 1999. She had no hope to resume her school education after she became Aani. However, she got a chance to continue her school education and passed S. L. C. with 1st division score, in the year 2004. The influence of modern education and the opportunity, she got at the nunnery after S. L. C., enabled her think differently. She became more ambitious and hopeful. Relatively, she was more in favor of modern

education for the solution of real human needs. Like her, there were some other Aanis, who did the same and the new ones were in the same line.

The Nepalese Buddhist parents (who were originally from hills and Himalayas) wanted to send their children to start monastic life thinking it was the insurance of better life for both the parents and the Aanis. The family environment and the surrounding were influencing factors for the young minds to start monastic life. So they were inspired to become Aanis. In some families, all the children began monastic life.

The dilemma was incepted in the religious people due to what they had been practicing; they had studied, experienced and understood in the modern time. They could not reject the idea of modernity, scientific invention and importance of modern education. The teaching learning process and text materials differed to religious and modern education system. In case of religious education recitation was very important, whereas developing practical quality in a person and make her more capable was the focus of modern education. Modern education develops critical power in a person. The religious people could develop the criticality and reasoning capacity when they obtained higher level of religious education. Therefore, the dilemma occurred as (i) the text materials and teaching learning techniques and (ii) capacity of the learners in two different areas of education.

I asked some of the Aanis for their feeling about the recitation process of all the texts, their reply was: they needed to do it as the different religious books were needed to recite in different ritual rites. Contrary to it, modern education had different perspectives and nature. It put them in dilemma. There was no system of providing modern education to the monastic people like Aanis and Lamas. However, it had been changed. The deviation was found in the senior people of the monastery and the nunnery. The Aanis and the Lamas had interest to obtain modern education for the easy adjustment in the present world. They had realized that the religious education alone could not fulfill every need of a monastic person. The knowledge of modern education supported them to use their religious practice and teaching to the general people. They needed to know about the surroundings, the community, science and technology, use of information technology and language. The globalization and the influence of the information technology had made the globe a narrow village.

Aani Norlha: in My Analysis

To know the influencing factors to an individual for the enrolment in the nunnery and the perception of individuals, I had studied some cases of two Aanis. The case of Karma was studied partly and Norlha's case in a bit detail. Karma had showed the influencing reason for her to choose Aani life as what she had observed in her village in her innocent childhood. Whereas, Norlha Became Aani to satisfy the parents, and relatives. She had a deep interest to be Aani when she was a little child. She had the environment of the same type to influence her to begin it. The family influence was the major cause for her to start the Aani life. However, it did not influence her sister.

If we observed the Aani life of a particular person, we found the obvious points. In the same family some of the children preferred to become Aani and Lama whereas it was not a matter of interest for the siblings. The siblings had different interest and their way of life differed to the others. The environment and the care a person obtained in the family determined what was there underlying in somebody. Even the mental chemical was different in different individual. The mental chemistry did not let each and everybody to perceive things in the same way. The observation, perception, understanding, interest and choice of a person were the major things for the person to develop a particular type of personality.

Both the Aanis, stated in the case stories, were happy to some extent. They both had obtained formal/modern education. Karma was studying in school in the primary level and Norlha had already passed S. L. C. in the year 2004 securing 1st division. In case of Karma, there was no problem until she obtained higher education. After the completion of her school education, Norlha got some better and challenging opportunities. She was even made more ambitious by the surrounding environment as well as the nunnery. Therefore, it was obvious for Norlha to be highly ambitious. Unluckily, her ambition remained unfulfilled as the days passed. The consequence of it was the ground of Norlha's monastic life was shaky. It was due to the personality also. As Freud has stated the past experiences determine the present and the future plan of an individual. But in our last meeting she declared me that she was going to give up her monastic life soon to open her way forward to study nursing, her great dream. Her claim was; she could serve more needy people practically after being a nurse. It was not against Buddhism since the main aim of Buddhism was to help, not to harm, others.

5.4. Dilemma of Aani Norlha

Modernization and Westernization had growing dominant roles on every aspects of human life. The education system was not an exception of it. Modernity had not left any area untouched and virgin. The Western influences affected the knowledge and development of the East. It had its strong influence on traditional education system of East. We, the people of East, had blindly accepted most of the things of West. The development process and the flow of modernization had done a great deal to bring changes in the world. Religious education, as a result of it, was also influenced a lot expecting some reformation in the field of established knowledge. This dilemma had raised a question about the sustainability and essence of two distinct education systems. Since both of them had their value and importance, the existence was challenging. To maintain the balance between the two was a great problem. The mixture of them both might be possible and useful. But the rigidity and fundamentalism may reject the idea of hybridization in education. However, it seemed necessary since the American educationists favor religious education along with modern education. -

<http://en.wikipedia.org>. On the other hand the practice of religious education in Arabian countries had failed to meet the need of skilled man powers. (http://www.saudirelations.Org/news_letter2004/saudi-relations-interest-01-12.html). Religious education accommodated here.

The influences of science and technology, which were parts of modernity and modern education, had attracted the religious people of Buddhism. The Buddhist nuns and monks are even provided opportunity for modern education. They had deep interest and good performance in this field. They wanted more to do and higher level to study. But the concerned authority was not feeling comfortable to let the Aanis and Lamas to study up to higher level of modern education. Even the people with S. L. C. level of modern education did not seem willing to stay and continue their religious life. Because of this restriction many of the young, ambitious and S. L. C. passed Aanis and Lamas had given up the monastic life. Their growing interest on modern education and their affiliated institutions restrictions contradicted.

Buddhism has freedom to choose own way of life. It encourages the ambitious Aanis to think either to continue or to give up monastic life. They decide as per their

wish. In addition to it, as Freud (2002) says, past experiences of an individual plays key role to determine their choice for the future life. The claim of Mead (in Adams and Sydie, 2001) is also closely connected. She believes that environment and social set up shape the personality of a person. The claims of Freud and Mead seemed to be applied here in the case of Aanis to grow dilemmas.

The religious people, who once used to think religious education as the single source of knowledge and education, also began to perceive things differently and they began to accept modern education as the need of modern age. Religious leaders, Abbots and others allowed their new and young disciples to obtain modern education. For it, some of the religious institutions had established their own schools for modern education just to offer a chance for the young disciples, like Aanis, to be familiar with modern education. Some others had managed to send the young ones to the selected schools. However, there was limitation to the Aanis and Lamas to obtain more than literacy education on the modern trend of education. The religious people like Aanis and Lamas were provided opportunity to take modern education but only up to the basic level. It had presented the dilemma on the vision of the senior religious people. Actually the dilemma occurred to view the intention of the senior religious people sending the young ones for modern education but limit it to the basic level only. What did they want their young disciples by opening the door of modern education to them? The dilemmas were identified in the following points:

- 1) Theoretical dilemma: Buddhism claimed of having equality between both Aanis and Lamas for the education access. But Buddha formulated discriminatory rule for the enrolment of Aanis in Sanghas. Absence of female on the top level of leading positions was the example. According to Bhikshudi Thupten Chodron, the Aanis had no access for higher education like the Lamas had and hence there remained dilemma to the Aanis. <http://www.thubtenchodron.org>
- 2) Conceptual dilemma: The religious leaders accepted the importance of modern education for all the people including Aanis and Lamas. But they limited the chances for the young ones to obtain it. Their feelings were to the just but the

limitation to modern education didn't seem justifiable. This had created dilemma among Aanis.

- 3) Practical dilemma: Modern education was regarded important even for the religious people however, they had re-limited the opportunity for the young disciples to study only up to class six in it. Earlier it was up to S. L. C. level. If there was any problem of Aanis leaving the monastic life after they got modern education, they could revise the religious course and form new one with some important parts of modern education. This provision had also yielded dilemma.
- 4) Pedagogical dilemma: Teaching methods should be according to the interest of the children. In the religious education the teachers' role was to enable the students recite the books, perform ritual rites and explain the meaning of the texts to orient them towards the religious values. However, the learners of modern time were more critical and they were always curious to know what they were learning and why did they need to learn it? Since modern education had provided this opportunity to the learners that they could raise questions. This opportunity raise question in modern school and no question in Aani School created tension and then dilemma to Aanis.
- 5) Textual dilemma: The appropriate design of the course and the educational materials determined the interest and attraction of the learners of different levels. The texts of modern education were more child-centered. The books had both linear and spiral type of contents. It enabled the learners to continue their study. But Aanis did not get such variations in the religious texts and it produced dilemma in them.
- 6) Substantial dilemma: Modern education had covered various substantial areas; including science, math, language and so on. The variation helped the learners to study different subject matters at the same time. It could be more interesting. But religious education had none of these options. So the Aanis were caught in dilemma.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

I have derived some findings out of my observation, experience, case analysis and the available literature. Right after the findings, discussions are given where I tried to bring field, theory, reflections and literature to understand it. They are presented below:

1. As per the principle of “Triple Gems” monastic system was emerged and is in existence. Aani system is one of the monastic systems. It exists as the continuation of Buddhist tradition. To keep it going on, some of the Buddhist girls become Aanis.

Aani system has been prevailing as part of Buddhism since the time of Buddha. The females, who are from Buddhist family or who believe on Buddhism start monastic life. They believe that renouncement of worldly pleasure lead them to obtain salvation. The founder of Buddhism, Shakyamuni Buddha, lived a monk life. His followers, mostly, were monks and (later) nuns were added. The system of living ascetic celibate life is highly expected and respected too. Buddhism has three main principles called ‘Triple Gems’. They are “Buddham Sharanam Gachchhami”, “Dharmam Sharanam

Gachchhami” and “Sangham Sharanam Gachchhami”. They mean to follow the Buddha’s teachings by learning and practicing them. For it living in the religious institutions is essential. The religious practice is fully possible only when the “Triple Gems” are accepted and followed. Buddha was regarded and respected as a father and religious leader in his life time. So, to live a religious life as prescribed by Buddha is the desired aim of many Nepalese Buddhists. Therefore, they encourage their daughters to become Aanis. It helps to continue Aani system and this tradition. Ikeda further clarifies:

To his disciples, Shakyamuni was a teacher of the way of life, one who bestowed on them the deep compassion and love of a father, while at the same time he was the leader of their religious organization. The large majority of his disciples regarded him with awe and respect, but there most have been others who could not live up to the severe discipline demanded of them, the ordinances that made their lives so different from those of ordinary laymen, and who were still prey to the temptations and delusions of the mundane world. It was only natural for such persons to feel, however mistakenly, that they had been liberated from an oppressive spiritual burden. - (1987: 15)

By religion the young and the others take it more seriously to become followers of Buddha and his teachings. They think it as the way to purify their life and obtain permanent happiness. Young girls also take it the same way and prefer to be Aanis. The family environment and the social setting fueled them even more. In addition to it the communal concept of Buddhist people to preserve their culture and tradition is another reason to continue what has been in practice for ages. In her wonder about the monastic life of Buddhist people Bangsbo (2000:5) has found and stated the common saying of exiled Tibetans of Nepal, “The only identity left with us is our religion – it is our culture. We have a unique culture, and if we throw away the monastic culture or if we think negatively about it, then we don’t have much.” The statement of those Tibetans shows how strongly they are connected to their religion and tradition. They take monastic system as their identity. So the continuation of this system is possible and long lasting.

Like all other religious institutions nunneries are also established to support Aani system. Although modernity has derailed many of the religious beliefs and values, the religious impression has not been omitted yet. Religious institutions are established to continue and promote religion. Khanal (2003: 23) states, "... religious institutions like churches rely on education to support ethical and moral systems. Finally, professional societies benefit from the expansion of their membership and knowledge base." It reflects that the religious institutions are offering religious education to train the young people of their community. The purpose is to spread their religion.

During my visit to the Buddhist Aanis and some guardians, I inquired the reason for the young girls to be enrolled in the nunnery. They replied me the common answer that they wanted to live peaceful and tension free life. Even the parents believe that they can earn 'Dharma' in case their daughters become Aanis. The parents perceive 'Aani system' as having two benefits: their daughters won't have troublesome married life but they can enjoy peaceful life in the nunnery as Aanis and on the other hands the Aani daughters pray for the parents' salvation. So the parents would secure 'Dharma'. They feel and believe that the general (family) life is full of suffering. But there is nothing like that in monastic life. That is why the girls prefer to join nunnery in the early stage. The influence of family, peer group, society, culture, religious beliefs and the inspiration of their senior Aani relatives are strong determining factors for the girls of young generation to be Aanis. Citing the views of Benedict, Jha (2000: 121) states culture and personality as, "Culture is personality writ large." It is more convincing that everyone carries cultural traits in them. Their feeling, wish, expectation and ideology are reflections of the culture.

Sharma (2004: 170) points out, "The aim of education, according to Buddhist system, was to influence the younger section of society according to Buddhist thought. To fulfil this primary aim, its secondary aim was to train monks and nuns for the purpose. Therefore, the system has a missionary aim." As stated by Bangsbo and as it exists the Aani system seems to preserve their religious identity and conservation of religious beliefs and values. Hence, the Aani system is traditional system prevailing at

present. It was established for Buddhist education and its practice. This helps for the continuation of Buddhism as it was initiated.

From these points and views I think that Aani system exists as the continuation of the tradition as well as the writ large. The religious beliefs of people are strong and they think Aani system as a suitable way of religious component. It nurtures the tradition and the tradition has remained as the guidelines of each individuals.

2. Aani system exists between the threshold of tradition and modernity. In the traditionalism it has preserved Buddhist value of educating girls. It even lets them to join modern education. This means nunnery has been evolved as jumping ground for the Buddhist girls to join private school for modern education. Nunneries, on the other hand, have incorporated non-secular controls in their secular education system.

Aani system is a part of Buddhism to protect and promote the religion. Therefore, it is obvious and worthy for the Buddhist people to continue the religious education. However, the influence of modernity is also very powerful and strong to affect Buddhist education. The religious people themselves are convinced to incorporate modern education in religious education. In one hand their aim is to protect and promote Buddhism, on the other hands they have viewed and experienced the need and importance of modern education. Modernity has its influences in each and every walk of individual's life. It has encompassed all sorts of educational processes. It even claims for the insurance of civilization. Faure (1973: 9) states, "From the reformation to the Renaissance and until the early days of the modern era, post mediaeval Europe exerted a powerful influence on the development of civilization, opening up vast horizons for knowledge, unleashing new social forces and redefining humanism."

Being Nepalese Buddhists the Aanis accept all the codes and religious values. They equally value the contemporary society. So from spiritual sense they give importance to religion and from reality based sense they accept and value modernity. To put them together they have to harness both the religious values and the modernity. The teaching is important to understand and sustain religious value. Therefore, the traditional education and Aani system are in the middle of modernity and tradition. Buddhadasa (1999) agrees Aani system as the evolvment and developed form to

nurture Buddhist education, tradition and religious notion during the time of Buddha. But it is now getting some kind of reformation for its existence.

The growing influence of modernity puts pressure on the religious institutions to accept the need of modern education. Their positive action to incorporate modern education made them liberal to start it. As a result, the nunneries have become a platform for the Aanis to enter the modern education. In my question about 'why does Aanis need modern education', Pukar Rinpoche replies:

In the time of its inception, religious education may be fit and practical for the then Lamas and Aanis, as the human civilization was evolving. Due to low level of advancement, human needs and desires were limited. The field of knowledge was narrow and was mostly related to secular field. The people did not have to compete globally. But gradually the world got more advanced and complex. Scientific invention and technological progress challenge the existing knowledge. Even the people of religious beliefs are now convinced on the need of modern education since they are using technological things in their everyday life. As a result of it, Aanis have stepped into schools for the modern education. However, they have been studying the religious education as the major area of their education.

Buddha himself was not in favor of constancy and rigid education. He wanted equality and practical education for the people. So it is more convincing to have changes in the education system. Sharma (2004: 169) has stated the vision of Buddha as, "Gautama the Buddha revolted against the prevalent Brahmanical religion. He was against the rigid classification according to Varnas. He established equality among people. He particularly pleaded for simplification of life. It is hence that he ignored meta-physical questions and concentrated upon practical ethics." The statement shows that Buddha was not in any rigid and prescriptive education system. He views education as a practical subject matter for the people to improve their life style. The concept of absolute religious education seems incomplete for the contemporary followers of religion for their social adjustment. They have to be assimilated with the non secular groups of people in their everyday life. The transformation of the immense world into a global village forced religious people into the modern world. It causes transition in the

religious field. Therefore, the religious institutions have begun to rethink and revise their traditional norms of education. Currently the Aanis have additional chance for modern education. They are now having both religious education and modern education. So the entire Aani system seems to exist in the threshold of tradition and modernity. Actually the Aanis are the religious disciples to be educated for protection and promotion of Buddhism. As a result they get traditional Buddhist education in one hand and modern education for the easy social adjustment on the other hand.

Many of the schooling Aanis opined that modern education helped them for conversation with Aanis and Lamas from foreign land. With the help of computer and internet system they can study the modern situation of Buddhism throughout the world. Modern education has helped them to broaden their knowledge and competence in the field of religion. The need of international language, knowledge of computer, background of their society, social structure and the demand of contemporary people are the triggers to motivate them for the modern education. Unless they are familiar with the modern society, social trend and technology they can not protect their religious value and religious education. Religion is for the people and the people have changing trend to perceive and use education. So the traditional education needs to be modified. For it, the incorporation of modern education and the involvement of Aanis in private school for the modern education is a positive vision of the religious leaders and their religious institutions, including nunneries. They are not in the position to ignore modern education. To consider modern education either they have to provide opportunity to enrol the Aanis in the schools or they have to include essential parts of modern education in their traditional curriculum. Their practices have enough alternatives and they have choices. Currently they seem to be in both lines.

The role of nunnery seems to be positive to offer chances for modern education to the Aanis. Nunnery seems to harness these two types of education systems. It has become a harbor for the Aanis to board on the land of modern education from the sea of traditional education. Some of the nunneries (e.g. Kopan Gumba) have initiated modern education in the premises of their own nunneries. Some of the nunneries have sponsored and permitted their Aanis to go to private schools for modern education. Some others have established associated schools for their Aanis and Lamas including the other

general students. These examples show that nunneries have incorporated non-secular controls in secular education.

3. Aani system of education is both secular and non-secular in a sense that it is open to both religious education and modern education. They are in the nunnery for the pursuit of religious education and they join the private schools to obtain the modern education. Nunnery is also a boarding type of schooling system with free accommodation and more other life long residential facility. The concept of Sangha has to offer theoretical education as well as to promote the concept of religious knowledge and value.

Though Aani system represents religious group of people for the secular education, it has been evolved to the combination of both secular and non-secular (religious and modern) education. Its history and purpose is to preserve secular education. But the growing influences of modernity and modern trend in everyday life have attracted their attention to re-think positively for the incorporation of modern education in their religious education. As a result, the entire education system of Aani is combination of secular and non-secular education. Sharma (2004: 171) states:

In concurrence with the above mentioned aim of education the Buddhist system developed a curriculum around Buddhist religion. However, gradually it also included comparative study of Hinduism and Jainism. The curriculum which initially included theology, philosophy and logic was gradually extended to Sanskrit literature, astronomy, astrology, medicine, law, polity, administration, music, art and technical education concerning so many trades, thus, the curriculum of the Buddhist universities was almost as much versatile and varied as any of the modern university.

The nunneries are also a kind of schools. They have the facilities of residence and education. The Aanis study and practice the education throughout their lives. Mostly they have the education for the ritual rites and *Puja*. But now they have realized the missing components in their education system. To bridge the gap they have begun to send the young Aanis to modern schools. It helps them to be updated with the time and

proves their flexibility in education. Since they are in the nunnery they spend most of their time to study religious education, they spare some time for the modern education. Ibid (170) further states, "... most of the Buddhist educational institutions were large units including thousands of students and a number of teachers. Thus, Vihar or the Buddhist monastery was a federated educational institution on the patterns of a modern university."

Nunneries exist on the concept of "Sanghas", where females of the same interest and devotion reside for their entire lives. Their purpose is to form religious group to meet Buddhist goals. The Sanghas are set up to provide theoretical education to promote religious knowledge and value. They are expected to be non-materialistic and not having greed and temptation. So, spiritually, they can think and contribute for the world peace. But the influence of school education changes the human personality. Jha (2000: 134) further puts the argument of Kardiner as:

Kardiner argued that once formed, the basic personality structure of a society would mould the contents and meaning of projected fantasies, such as beliefs about the supernatural. Thus a strong authoritarian basic personality type, correlated with the projected beliefs, may bring changes in the society or may mould some of the elements of secondary institutions.

4. Though called religious education, it is competitive too. The competition starts right from the entrance test. The newly enrolled Aanis have to appear in the entrance test to secure their seat and placement for their admission at the boarding school for their modern education. Beforehand, they require meeting the selection procedure for the entry in the nunnery. Their physical fitness, age and the approach of the family are considered as the main parts of their enrolment in the nunnery. It is not the same in the school for them. There they have to appear in the entrance test to show their capacity and quality to decide the suitable class for the modern education.

Sharma (2004: 171) states the example of India to reflect Buddhist education as competitive education system. He states, "The Vihars admitted students from all castes, classes and races. Merit was the basis of admission." The basic requirements were

designed to insure the quality of education. Unless capable and competitive students get enrolled the output cannot be better. Therefore, competition and merit base are incorporated. Only the interest of young girls is not sufficient bases for them to be Aanis. They have certain rules and requirements to enrol the girls in the nunnery. Verification and recommendation of the Abbot, physical fitness of the candidate and availability of space in the nunnery are the major factors for a girl to be enrolled or not in the nunnery. The religious education starts soon after enrolment. They can get promotion on the higher level on the basis of their performance. The better they do the easier and faster they secure their promotion on the upper level. However, they are not expelled from the nunnery due to their weakness in the study. If they are not very good in the education field they can be involved in the other vocational areas (that includes wall painting, Thanka painting and the internal jobs in the nunnery).

The second competition takes place when they want to get enrolled in school for modern education. There they have to appear in the entrance test for appropriate placement. They must be below 15 years of age and they have the limitation to study only up to class six. As they have to study with non-Aanis (general students and Lamas) in their classes there is high competition for the position and better result. So they practice for hard for the good result. The school awards the position holders. In case of Aanis the nunnery itself also awards the position holders and best students. These situations create high competition between the Aanis in their groups and in their classes as well. It enables them to think for the personal benefit, which the traditional or the religious education discourages. That means the Aanis are subconsciously involved in competition for their better performance.

The inception of the concept of competition in the school indirectly influences the Aanis and their seniors to practice and work hard for the competition. Though they are against greed and temptation, they are unknowingly willing to appear in the top level and obtain better result in their religious performance and career.

5. Aanis have less opportunity than their male counterparts (Lamas). The Lamas have vertical access to ascend higher level of religious education. It differs to the Aanis; they have fewer chances for the access of high level religious education. But the modern education is the same and having the equal access to both males and

females. Ironically it is limited to the basic level only that is only up to class six. In case of religious education, they have different option to males and females. More males have obtained the title 'Khenpo' that is rare to females. Further more there is no female on the leading figures, like *Rinpoche, Karmapa, Dalai Lama* etc.

Buddhism claims of having equality between both males and females. But the reality is found different. The Aanis do not have access of higher level of studies, such as '*Geshe*'. There is no barrier for the Lamas to obtain higher level of Buddhist studies. But the Aanis need to take the ordinance of Bhiksunis beforehand they commence their '*Geshe*' study. There is no Bhiksuni ordinance in the Aani system and they eventually have no access for the study of higher level.

Bhiksuni Choden points out the difficulty and the obstacles and the reluctance of the authority for the Aanis to obtain ordinance. It caused the inequality on religious education between males and females. She emphasizes the need of it for the Aanis to have access on the higher level of education. - http://www.thubtenchodron.org/BuddhistNunsMonasticLife/regardingthebhikshuniorderintibetan_buddhism.html

In addition to the above mentioned points Aanis are rarely offered the title of 'Khenpo'. They do not have achieved any highest position until now. The top figures including *Rinpoche, Karmapa, Dalai Lama, Panchen Lama* etc. are males. So the females experience gender role as glass ceiling for the access of higher study and better achievement.

6. The initiation of monastic life itself is a sacrifice of common life. But Aanis have opened modern life as well because they see plenty of options and challenges for their survival and personality development. And yet a large number of Nepalese Buddhists are still practicing it simply for the religious beliefs. The Aanis and Lamas of new generation are in dilemma. The new trends of freedom and right of decision influence them to abandon monastic life at present. It might be the result of modern education and modernity.

The Aanis are the whole time disciples of Buddha Dharma and Buddhist philosophy. They get enrolled in nunneries and spend their time to learn and practice the Teachings of Buddha and his philosophy. For it they have to sacrifice their personal life and think for the world peace. Their entire life is spent for the study and practice of

Buddhism. It is solely for the protection and promotion of Buddhism. However, the system has to face challenges these days as the Aanis and Lamas are fed up of the monastic life and abandon it to start general and independent life. The system might have some lacking point as it does not consider the natural traits and biological needs of individuals. All people may not go beyond the natural instinct. Obscure (2003: 107) concludes the opinions of Freud as, “Freud argues that too much repression of any kind leads to neurosis and unhappiness. This central fact determines much of modern civilization.” On the one hand there is influence of modern trend on the other hands there is rigorous religious confinement. The young learners might re-act the system and give up the religious education.

‘Religious Theory: Buddhism’ reflects the prevailing system and the available opportunity to the Aanis. It depicts the equality, freedom and liberation to the women to choose or ignore monastic life. It stresses the high value of women and their independency on the personal choice. Because of this many girls of Buddhist families enter nunnery for religious practice expecting salvation. According to Buddhism, both males and females are equal and capable people. They both have equal access for religious practice and education. There is no gender discrimination. Therefore the Buddhist girls have chances to start Aani life on their wish, which let them to obtain religious education. However, the absence of Aanis in the top level of Buddhism gives space even to suspect about equal chances of education. The codes formulated by Buddha to initiate Aani system convince the same thing.

I met a family of Buddhist background. Originally the family was from Mugu, a remote Himalayan district of north-west Nepal. During the talk with me the head of the family explained how two of her sons entered the monastery though she was not in favor of it. It indicates that some of the children are deeply interested to enter the monasteries and nunneries. In my experience they start monastic life due to three reasons:

- (i) environment of the family and local community;
- (ii) influence of Aani and Lama relatives and
- (iii) influence friends and the lack of another alternatives for education.

My observation, interaction, case study and other studies help me to experience some of the basic things. This system is purely religious and cultural. As I was

interested to know about the reason of Buddhist girls to start Aani life, I saw the reasons of it as the tradition, culture and religion. The three things influence the parents to encourage their daughter(s) to be Aani(s). From their childhood they begin to dream to be Aani and get the salvation for the future births. Attain Dharma to obtain enlightenment and salvations are their main focus to start Aani life. After they adopt Aani life, their seniors and they themselves think modern education essential to struggle for the survival. It leads them to think and manage the modern education for the monastic people like Aanis. The senior Buddhist people realized the importance of modern education to Aanis and Lamas. According to them Aanis and Lamas need modern education for the following reasons:

- a. To develop efficiency;
- b. To be assimilated and become more familiar with the other people of the society;
- c. To learn and use science and technology for the preservation of religion;
- d. To struggle more successfully for the existence.

To provide modern education to the young Aanis and Lamas, some of the monasteries and nunneries have established their own schools and some of them send them to any particular schools. For example: some Aanis used to study in Namgyal School, Vishwo Shanti Vihar has its own school for the young monastic people (Bikkhus and Bikkhunis) and Thrangu Tara Abbey and Thrangu Tashi Choeling have their own school, “Mangal Dvip” to provide modern education to their young generation Aanis and Lamas.

7. Aanis feel frustration because of the monotonous religious education and its practice.

It is more so with the people of young generation. Now they have begun to seek way out to be modernized. Until there was no alternative they continued the religious practice without questioning it. But the available options as the new trend in education and influence of modernity give them another way to education and life.

The new options attract them due to its utility and newness. On the other hand the rigorous imposition religious education presented a new world-view to them. Presenting the idea of Freud, Obscure (2003: 107) states, “Freud argues that too much repression of

any kind leads to neurosis and unhappiness. This central fact determines much of modern civilization.”

The search of newness drives people to bring change within them. No one is detached from the influence of science and technology. The mass media and other influencing modern means play a role of catalyst on people to think more critically. They begin to analyze things critically from their personal perspectives. For them existence of self is more important than the group they belong to. It diverts their way of thinking and way of life. As a result they support modern trend and modern education.

In general sense, the biological need of a person is not a thing to undermine and suppress. The instinct of each person is the same, as Russell (2002) claims, the instinct of a person and any other organism is identical; in both structure and behaviour. In his writing he claims that either it is unicellular organism ‘protozoa’ or a developed human being the traits are similar. There is not such wide gap between them on their characters and behaviour. So he raised a question on the way of life to be natural or controlled by a person himself or herself. On the contrary, we have the long religious history to reject the idea of Russell. The monastic people of Buddhism have spent their celibate life for the wellbeing of all.

Personality theory, on the other hands, talks about different influencing factors for personal development. According to it, the past experience and the family environment influence to shape individual behaviour of each person. Personality of a person is the product of the environment where the person was born and brought up. Family relation and the available chances enable people to develop their personality. The heredity is not the major factor for the shaping of personality.

During the childhood, the parental care and training are the source of each child to develop various kind of behaviour. The mother’s role is very influencing for the shaping of personal behaviour. However, the growing child begins to be influenced by the community and the education they possibly obtain. The influence of modern education change their way of thinking and impress them to abandon the Aani life. They develop reasoning and begin to analyze their possible future. The comparison between the monastic life and modern life encourage them to take side of modern life which causes them to start general and married life. As claimed by the personality theory the personality of a person is developed by the past experience and the surrounding, the

Aanis and Lamas, who have enrolled for school education have more interest to leave monastic life.

From the reflections over the earlier chapters, I observed that the life style of a person is guided mostly by the structure and the family principle. So is the case of education of a person. The religious and cultural environment of the concerned person also helps to guide the future. The habitus of an individual counts in such changes. Field plays another key role for a person to decide and develop particular frame of the future, like Aani, here in this case. Society influences, determines and supports to shape the social environment. Freud (in Fiest and Fiest 2002) claims that interest of a person is developed on the basis of how s/he is a-cultured and brought up. The influencing environment may guide a person and have mental shaping for the future plan. This set of situation, according to Bourdieu, is “cultural capital”. The cultural capital is the belief and tradition of the society and family which has its roots on the past history and the norms of the family and clan. In short, the approved and accepted cultural asset of a society is cultural capital. Religion plays great role to determine such things in the community. The accepted norms and values play dominant role to the people of that environment for the development of personal life. The future roles of an individual are determined with those all.

Modern education is another important thing for people of all walks of life. Nobody can ignore the need and importance of it. It is useful to promote and ensure the living standard of a person. Even the senior religious people of Buddhism have realized it. Therefore, some of the Buddhist religious institutions have established educational institutions for modern education. The Aanis are the examples of beneficiaries. They are provided opportunities for modern education in English medium boarding school. Norlha has passed S. L. C. after she became an Aani. Some others are still studying in the same schools. It shows their willingness to study modern education. It is because of the value of modern education to everyday life. However, their interest on religious way of life is also not declining.

As stated by Harker (1990), Bourdieu further clarifies, as the fish does not realize the weight and existence of water around it, people also do not realize the influence of the religious and social values to shape one’s own life style. The cases of Aanis are quite identical with what Bourdieu has claimed. The Aani system is very peculiar to

many other religious and non religious communities. Since it does not seem to have any productive role in the society, it can also be generalized as the ‘cultural reproduction’, according to Bourdieu. It does not have creative things. Recitation of the scripture, meditation and involvement in the study of religious philosophy are the basic things for the Aanis and Lamas both. For others it might be baseless and conservative idea to spend the life as ascetic and celibate. However, it might be from the lens of modern education and its influence in them. They might think it because they have very less knowledge of the religion and its importance in the everyday life.

For religious people religion is their capital. They base their knowledge and idea on their belief and religion. As the religion is their capital, it is obvious for them to support religion. But is it always practical to follow religion and accept religious capital as both means and ends? The answer is; it depends. There is nothing absolute answer. Bourdieu (1994: 46) further points out:

Capital, which, in its objectified or embodied forms, takes time to accumulate and which, as a potential capacity to produce profits and to reproduce itself in identical or expanded form, contains a tendency to persist in its being, is a force inscribed in the objective of things so that everything is not equally possible or impossible.

The history exists as a proof. The system traces its long history, where it has been observed and proved. Many Lamas and Aanis have spent their lives as ascetic celibate. They have obtained and earned both name and fame. Their achievement is not a thing to undermine, unless it is proved the other way. The knowledge they derived through speculation and meditation are the hard proof of their success to remain in celibacy life. It is found in other religion as well. So it can be accepted as a matter to believe as universal. The celibate people have fewer social burdens and more freedom to work according to their impulse and interest. They bear less tension and they can remain engaged for the constructive way of life. Contrary to it, the interest of the Aanis and Lamas to continue their religious lives is declining. It is further proved by the less interest of the people of high education. As I have stated above about the interaction of the students of class ten, out of the four girls three rejected the idea to become Aanis.

One of them remained in pressure of the family as all her siblings have already joined nunnery. Nevertheless, I asked her recently to know her new situation. She cheerfully replied me that she, eventually, was approved from her family to live a general life, instead of monastic life. In addition to her there are some more others to give up monastic life.

The feeling of a person is also a matter to be considered when we are engaged about a person and her activities in her life. The perception of her, during childhood, is the reflection of the home and family environment. Nevertheless, it does not remain the same in the days to come. The school environment, friends' relation, and the education bring substantial changes in a person. These things and situation develop the analysis and perception of the person. The first and fundamental thing for us to understand is 'personality is unpredictable'.

In conclusion, there is nothing absolute. We perceive things from our own lens and try to analyze accordingly. In Bourdieu's words, the habitus leads us to think and view the others from our own world view, perspectives and lens. Religious people have their own mission, history and achievement. But we try to ignore what they have obtained. Instead, we think only from our sides. Religious chauvinism has devalued and ignored others' beliefs. It is a point to rethink. On the other hand, the Nepalese Buddhists are liberal by religion and tradition, since they let the young Aanis and Lamas to study both religious and modern education. We, general people, do not have that patience and contribution to study and grasp the valuable knowledge from the available religious books. We think we are more learned and civilized. Buddhist philosophy, knowledge of herbs, medication, meditation etc are the valid and useful things to everyone for everyday life.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

7.1. Conclusion

The above stated findings and discussion led me to draw the following conclusions:

1. Buddhist people prefer to conserve and promote their culture and religious beliefs along with values. But the young generation wants to play with two boats: religion and modernity. There is no choice for religious leaders other than the incorporation of modern education with Buddhist education. This is one way to save their culture.

Culture is the identity of community and the people. It offers opportunity for the practice of different activities, including modernization and civilization. On the point of interlink between culture and civilization Rao opines:

Culture is the breeding ground of civilization. Civilization gives strength and stamina for the wheels of society to march on. According to Ogburn, civilization represents “material culture” and culture implies “non-material culture”. If civilization is like a body, culture is its soul. – (1994: 239)

2. Aanis are switching from religious education to modern education and vice versa. This daily switch demands for built-in modernity with religious education. In one hand the young people of present era are less interested on religion. On the other hands people of western civilization are attracted to Buddhism. In short, modernism results materialism, frustration and pessimism, whereas Buddhism results spiritual knowledge, that is, source of inner peace, eternity and salvation.

The instances of spreading Buddhism and its popularity in the western world shows that Buddhism has the power more than what the general people think and believe. The people of developed countries have involvement on the religious education. A foreign Bhikshunis, Thupten Chorden, opines:

Both men and women in the West and in many Asian countries wish to study with Dharma teachers who are Bhikshunis. A strong Bhikshuni Order is in accord with the Buddha’s intentions, spreads the Buddhadharma, and creates healthier societies. In these times when materialism and consumerism challenge

the Buddha's teachings on generosity, ethical conduct, and contentment, a strong Bhikshuni Order will work together with the Bhikshu Order to preserve and spread the precious teachings of Lord Buddha.

- <http://www.thubtenchodron.org/BuddhistNunsMonasticLife/regardingthebhikshuniorderintibetanbuddhism.html>

3. Monastic education has made access to education for the children of remote Himalayan region of Nepal. This access providing part of the religious education should be credited and supported by the national treasury under elite school.
4. Aani schooling system, as it is progressing now, reflects that rigidity can't sustain any more. The growing influence of modernity, modern trend in science and technology attracts monastic people, like Aanis. Therefore, incorporation of traditional and modern education occurs as the essence at present.

Some scholars view traditionalism and modernism quite opposite to each other. For them the incorporation of the two is not possible. Their definition and the understanding indicate it so. Koirala (1994: 1) defines modernization as, "Modernization is the opposite end of the traditionalization and the development is the process involved in it." It is right to some extent. But there is another line of people who view modernization as the improvement of the old tradition and the traditional system. For some modernization is the out product of tradition. It simply is the tie up of two ends of the same rope. Traditionalism is to nurture culture and culture is the base of education and knowledge. Regmi is one of them who rejects the idea as 'modernization is to oppose tradition'. For him modernization is continuous improvement of tradition. He states:

Studies of traditional societies clearly underline that traditionality is state of mind, and habit of conduct and a level of expertise predominantly geared to the conservation of the past in the present. It is nourished and sustained by the folklore of antiquity, sacred norms and a little differentiated structure of relationships inherited from generation gone by. – (1999: 33)

5. The root of Aani system goes to Buddhism, which is the heart of Eastern Philosophy. Preservation and continuation of it is the identity of both Buddhist and pro Buddhist of eastern world. So it is to be preserved. However the growing influence of modernity and the positive attitude of them to modernity show that the prevailing system can not survive as they are. For it, incorporation of modern education and religious education is needed. Therefore, the concerned authorities and other stakeholders need to work together for formulating plans and strategies to make it more practical and compatible.
6. Since Buddhism is liberal, the monastic people like Aanis and Lamas are free to choose and decide their future. It supports freedom and personal choice. However, access and opportunity are not on the same ground. Lamas can study 'Ghese' but Aanis cannot because of Vinaya and Bhikshuni Order. Therefore, assurance of equality and equity can further strengthen the system and make it more practical.

7.2. Implications

After studying and analyzing Aani schooling system, I have come to conclusion with the some possible implications. They are classified and presented below:

Curricular implications:

The present curricula do not have Buddhist education per se in the school level. In this consideration the implication of this study would be the introduction of Buddhism in school curricula. The curricula will incorporate (a) the principles and traits of Buddhism. These principles will help students develop mental peace and mutual understanding. In the long run it can help minimize the current problems of juvenile vandalism (b) Buddhist ways of doing meditation. This will help students increase their mental power and ability to do concentration. It can also help to gain inner peace and eternity (c) peace education as it is the need of the contemporary society. Buddhist education has such contents and it can be employed in modern education for the prevalence of peace.

The second implication is that both Buddhist tradition and modernity can be blend together and develop more practical and compatible education system. This blended

education system can enhance the Buddhist education system and narrow down the reluctance of Aanis on monastic education.

The third implication is that Buddhist education system can be made more accessible to general people if the texts are simplified. For the children, if the text materials are child-centered, the learners will be attentive on this study. It makes Buddhist education accessible to all the interested and general people.

Pedagogical implications:

The existing pedagogy may be suitable in the nunnery and monastery. But they do not seem child friendly. They have some difficulty to use in the classes as that is not child-centered. The recitation method and grammar translation method cannot be productive for the students to widen their knowledge. Also this does not help the students to understand what they study. The learners keep on learning the texts only for the sake of knowledge. This implies that Buddhist monks and nuns require modern approaches to teaching their texts.

The second pedagogical implication is, most of the texts are about religious philosophy, which seems complex, less interesting and less practical. They need to be student-centered and the class room environment should be students friendly. This reality demands for re-reading and re-writing the religious texts from student centered point of view.

Religious implications:

Buddhism has been accepted as the heart of Eastern philosophy and is rapidly flourishing. However, it is not realized in the native land of its founder, Buddha. His precious teachings and principles of 'Peace' and 'Non-violence' are dimmed within his own native land. Therefore, restoration and strengthen of it is needed. Equal respect to all the religions in the nation can fulfil this demand. This implies that incorporation of Buddhist studies in the school level and higher level will ensure it. To support it simplification and flexibility in the Buddhist studies are needed. The flavor of modernism in Buddhist education, as per the demand of time, can make it more popular.

Appendices

Appendix - 1: Other Religious Education

Sanskrit education system was also known as ‘Gurukul’ education system in the past. It is similar to the monastery system of education as it is also done/ practiced in religious places or institutions. The senior religious people teach the new comers about the religious beliefs, trends and practices. After the completion of certain level of teaching – learning process, the learned one can perform religious rites, conduct *puja* (pray) and so on. But the interest of the young generation is in the decreasing due to the limitation of modern education. This facility was only limited to the high caste Brahmin people of the Hindu religion in the earlier time. Now it is open to the others as well however; the approach of the other groups (especially the middle and low caste) of people is almost not visible and remarkable in the number. The attraction to this education is found declining. It seems to bring problems in the entire religion as well.

Madarsha education system has come from Muslim group of people. The Muslims send their children in the religious education center, Madarsha, first to learn the basic religious rules and values. They learn to read and write Urdu and Koran in the Madarasha. The target is to make the new generation dedicated to the Muslim religion and culture. The education starts at schooling age. This education is compulsory for the Muslims since each and every body is supposed to read Koran and do pray everyday. There are Madarshas established by their own community in Nepal. Muslim residing places have such educational-cum-religious institutions. The senior persons to run Madarshas are called Mullaahs. They are the religious teachers and are determined to provide religious education to the Muslim children. As their aims; the children first become aware of their religions and the others after it.

Appendix – 2: Education System In Some Other Countries

Saudi Arab

As stated above the students of Saudi Arab are reluctant to the prevailing education system, which emphasized religious education. They found it less productive and less creative. Therefore, the government has planned to improve the existing education system. As stated in the internet the feeling of Arabian people is as follows:

"Since 1999, Saudi Arabia started realizing that more young people coming into the market cannot meet the market needs," says Abdulrahman al-Zamil, a businessman who serves on the finance committee of the king's Majlis Ash Shura (consultative counsel). "They are specializing in language or religion.... It's a problem for the private sector."

<http://www.saudi-us-relations.org/newsletter2004/saudi-relations-interest-01-12.html>

The available school facility of Saudi Arabia is not satisfactory to the people and the nation. Learning of language and religion can not be always useful in the job markets. They need to obtain that kind of education which can meet the need of the job markets. The students are in the need of productive and useful professional education so the government is also prepared to offer the modern education to the young generation of the country. The improved curriculum and teaching learning activities are expected as the change agents of the nation and the national building. The new education system might make the young ones creative and hardworking.

Canada

Canada has different types of education system. It includes religious education and modern education both. Each Province has its own type of education system, however it is more identical to each other. They have government schools as well as private schools. Most of the people of Canada prefer to educate their children in private schools. The government supports for it. Their education system is as follows:

Pre-School or Nursery School (age 5 and under)

Elementary school: refers to kindergarten or grades 1 through grades 6, 7 or 8. Also called "public school" in some places.

Junior high school: also called "middle school" or "intermediate school". In many places, junior high school and high school are merged into one consisting of a high school with grades 8-12. In other areas, the junior high grades are merged into elementary schools consisting of grades K-8. **High school** (in some areas, usually areas with no junior high schools, grade 8 to 12)

College or University

College: Two to three years leading to a diploma. In some cases, an **Associate's degree** (not common in Canada) or a **Bachelor's degree** may be possible at the institution

University: Three years leading to a **Bachelor's degree**; four years leading to an advanced major degree or an Honours Bachelor's degree (the latter is usually required for **Graduate school**). Some undergraduate universities offer four-year, single-degree programs and five-year, double-degree programs. - (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Canada.)

United Kingdom

In the UK the school education system is based on the age of the students. There are different subjects to be taught in those levels. As stated on <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/index.shtml> they are as follow:

1. Primary level starts from the age of 4 years and it is continued until the age of 11. They study different subjects. They are: Art, Geography, History, Languages, Literacy, Music, Numeracy, PSHE, Science and other subjects.
2. Secondary level starts from the age of 11 years and it continues up to the age of 16 years. They are taught several subjects including: Art, Business Studies, Citizenship, Design & Technology, English, Geography, History, IT, Languages, Maths, Music, PE, PSHE, RE, Science Study Skills and other subjects.

3. For the people of 16 years and above there is provision of higher education. It is offered in the colleges and universities. Different subjects are offered for the choice of students according to their interest and capacity.

United States of America

USA has similar education system to the UK and Canada. It has its fame in the field of education. Education has become a very good resource of income there. It is in the top five source of income there in the USA. The education is of various types. However, some of the scholars are in favor of religious education along with modern education. They think religious education and its practice help the students to maintain their good manner and discipline. - <http://en.wikipedia.org>.

Rwanda

The current government in Rwanda regards science as a national project for the achievement of national development. The Ministry of Education is focusing on the expansion of equitable access to education, the improvement of the relevance and the quality of education and the development of capacities for the effective delivery of education. It is within this context that education is expected to play an important role in social reconciliation, reconstruction and economic development. Rwanda has now adopted the following national goals - eradication of illiteracy, universal primary education, teacher training, national capacity building in science and technology and reinforcing the teaching of mathematics and sciences. <http://www.aare.edu.au/02pap/ear02400.htm>, retrieve on 22nd July, 2007.

Uganda: Education and cultural transformation

Although their cultures differed greatly in most aspects, the pre-colonial Uganda societies shared a common education system. Prior to the coming of Christian missionaries, there existed no schools of the type that we have today. Nonetheless, people were educated and trained. There existed what the Europeans described as informal education. There were no defined institutions of learning, no particular teachers, no blackboards or pencils and books, but children could be taught all the same. In all the societies, the system of instruction tended to be similar; only the subject

matter or syllabus differed according to the particular needs and social values of the given society. -[http:// www.ugandatourguide.com/cultural-transformation.html](http://www.ugandatourguide.com/cultural-transformation.html), Retrieved on 22nd July, 2007.

Appendix 3: Regarding the Bhiksuni Order in Tibetan Buddhism

An interview with Bhikshuni Thubten Chodron, founder and abbess of [Sravasti Abbey](#), a monastery in the USA, and former resident teacher at Amitabha Buddhist Centre in Singapore.

In this interview, Bhikshuni Thubten Chodron, a member of the [Committee of Western Bhikshunis](#) that is researching how the bhikshuni ordination can be established in Tibetan Buddhism, describes the benefits of having bhikshunis in all Buddhist traditions and her enthusiasm for this to come about.

Can you brief us on its history?

The Bhikshuni Order was begun when the Buddha ordained his step-mother Mahaprajapati. The lineage spread to Sri Lanka and from there to China, Korea, and Vietnam. To give bhikshuni ordination, at least five bhikshunis and five bhikshus are necessary, and it was very difficult for women to travel over the Himalayas to India to receive the ordination. So unfortunately, the bhikshuni ordination lineage never spread to Tibet.

Vinaya is the monastic code, and a lineage is a line of ordination masters that goes back to the Buddha. There are at present three bhikshu (monk) lineages—the Theravada found in South and Southeast Asia, the Dharmaguptaka in East Asia, and the Mulasarvastivadin in Tibet. However, for nuns only the Dharmaguptaka lineage has existed continuously. In recent years, the Theravada bhikshuni lineage is being reestablished in Sri Lanka. The Tibetans are considering how the bhikshuni lineage can be restored in their Mulasarvastivadin Vinaya tradition.

What is the current situation of the Bhiksuni Order in Tibet and outside Tibet?

At the moment there is not a Bhikshuni Order in Tibet itself or in the Tibetan community in exile in India. A handful of Tibetan novice nuns have gone abroad to receive bhikshuni ordination, but since it has not been sanctioned in Tibetan Buddhism, they do not function as a Bhikshuni Sangha. Some of us Western women who practice

Tibetan Buddhism have received bhikshuni ordination by participating in ordinations offered by Chinese, Korean, or Vietnamese masters.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama is very much in favor of instituting the bhikshuni ordination in Tibetan Buddhism and has made several statements in support of this. But he has also said that this is a decision that must be made by the Sangha; as one individual, he alone cannot make it. The Department of Religion and Culture has been researching the issue for over twenty years, and His Holiness would like them to reach a conclusion soon. He also encouraged the formation of a Committee of Western Bhikshunis, which has been doing research on how the bhikshuni ordination could be given to Tibetan novice nuns. The results of Tibetan and Western research will be presented at the [Congress on Buddhist Women's Role in the Sangha](#) in Hamburg, Germany, in July, 2007. His Holiness will be present the last day, and we are eager to hear his conclusions.

What is the legal status of Bhiksunis compared to that of the bhikkhus? What does the lack of legal recognition imply for the Bhikshunis?

Bhikshuni ordination in Tibetan Buddhism is currently not recognized and this strongly affects the situation of the nuns in that society. Tibetan monks can study for many years and receive a Geshe degree, comparable to a Ph.D. in Buddhist Philosophy. Until about 20 or 25 years ago, the Tibetan nuns did not have access to the same education. Due to His Holiness' encouragement some Tibetan nunneries now offer the same education program as the monks receive. However, to receive the Geshe degree, one needs to complete Vinaya studies and one can only do that if one is fully ordained. Thus, as novices, the Tibetan nuns are not permitted to do the full Vinaya studies that would enable them to take the Geshe exams and become Geshes. Becoming bhikshunis would enable them to do this.

Is the restoration of the Bhikshuni Order necessary?

Yes, it is very important to support the Bhikshuni Order in countries where it presently exists and to arrange for its restoration in Buddhist traditions where it does not presently exist. Having the fourfold community—bhikshus, bhikshunis, upasakas, and

upasikas (fully ordained monks and nuns, and male and female lay followers)—establishes an area as a "central land," a place where the Buddhadharma flourishes. Without bhikshunis, one quarter of the Buddhist community is missing from society.

Looking at all Buddhist countries, we clearly see that the level of education nuns receive and the ability they have to serve their societies correlates with their level of ordination. In countries where women are permitted to receive only eight precepts or ten non-monastic precepts, their education and ability to serve society is hampered. In countries where women can become novices, their potential is improved. And in countries where full ordination as bhikshunis is available, women have better Buddhist education, are able to practice more freely, and have more skills to benefit society. The nuns in those countries also receive greater support and respect by society.

The foundation of all Dharma practice is the Higher Training in Ethical Conduct, and the Buddha said that the best way to cultivate that is by living in the precepts of full ordination. On the basis of full ordination, women will more easily be able to accomplish the practices of the Higher Trainings in Concentration and Wisdom as well as the practices of bodhicitta and the six perfections. Thus being able to become bhikshunis is important for women as individuals because it enables them to actualize their spiritual potential. In the long term, the presence of more enlightened beings benefits us all.

Furthermore, bhikshunis will naturally benefit the societies they live in. For example, in Taiwan and Korea, bhikshunis teach Dharma to the lay people; they operate Buddhist radio stations and publish Dharma books; they teach Dharma to children. Bhikshunis offer counseling to lay women, who are more at ease discussing personal issues with nuns than with monks.

Bhikshunis are especially instrumental in teaching the Dharma to lay women. Mothers then teach the Dharma to their children. Children who grow up with Buddhist values of non-violence, kindness, forgiveness, and compassion become good citizens who respect others' rights and resolve conflict in peaceful ways. Bhikshunis are also skilled in reaching out to youth-at-risk, helping them to avoid substance abuse and encouraging them to get a good education. Bhikshunis with peaceful minds and excellent comportment set a wonderful example for women and girls, who will be

inspired to practice. Bhikshunis who are teachers and leaders will inspire women and men to actualize their potential to benefit others.

The presence of bhikshunis is crucial to the spread of the Dharma in a world that values gender equality and equal opportunity for both men and women to exercise their fullest potentials. In societies that value gender equality and human rights, people will see Buddhism as irrelevant to modern society if men can be fully ordained but women cannot. For example, some people turn away from Buddhism saying, “The Buddha taught equality and equanimity for all beings, yet Buddhist institutions do not provide equal opportunities for women to ordain and practice.”

Furthermore, gender discrimination discourages Buddhist women from practicing the Dharma, especially when they are told that women are inferior and should pray to be reborn as men in their future lives. Discouraging women in this way does not accord with the Buddha’s wish for all sentient beings to practice the Dharma and become enlightened. The Buddha himself affirmed women’s ability to attain enlightenment and established the Bhikshuni Order. It is important for the Buddha’s followers in the 21st century to act in accord with the Buddha’s intentions.

Granted the importance of a well established Bhikshuni Order, what can be done to lift the status of the Bhikshuni Order?

The first step is to restore bhikshuni ordination in countries where it is not present. The second is to educate the newly ordained bhikshunis in the Vinaya (monastic discipline) and in the Dharma. The third step is to support bhikshunis’ efforts in scholarship, meditation, and social service. Support from the general Buddhist community is essential. This support may come in terms of donations to establish nunneries and to educate nuns. It is also expressed by respecting nuns and offering service to nuns’ communities.

Lay Nepalese Buddhists should tell monks that they wish to see the Bhikshuni Order restored. They should ask questions when they witness gender discrimination or a lack of opportunity for women and nuns. For example, the improvement of the Tibetan nuns’ education in recent years was due in part to non-Tibetans asking their monk-teachers, “Why we don’t see any nun-lamas? Why don’t the nuns study and debate like

the monks?” Their questions brought these issues to the attention of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and others who then set about remedying the situation.

Are you optimistic about the development of a strong Bhikshuni Order?

Yes, I am. Both men and women in the West and in many Asian countries wish to study with Dharma teachers who are bhikshunis. A strong Bhikshuni Order is in accord with the Buddha’s intentions, spreads the Buddha dharma, and creates healthier societies. In these times when materialism and consumerism challenge the Buddha’s teachings on generosity, ethical conduct, and contentment, a strong Bhikshuni Order will work together with the Bhikshu Order to preserve and spread the precious teachings of Lord Buddha. http://www.thubtenchodron.org/BuddhistNunsMonasticLife/regarding_the_bhikshuni_order_in_tibetan_buddhism.html retrieved on 10 Sep. 2007

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