

I. The Performance of *Ghatu*

Ghatu is a significant cultural activity and the tribal festival that presents female issues. It depicts the significant role of women in the society employing the various signs and symbols through performance of songs and dances. It is in oral form, however, it has used various signs and symbols that connote cultural, religious, social and communal beliefs. The performance is acted out around the tragic story of the legendary king and his queen. This research work proposes to explore the function of employing female characters in performing the *Ghatu*, a lively and original culture of Magar community that functions as visualizing the meaning of songs through dance. It's not merely the continuation of the traditional rites and rituals but demonstrates the distinct feature throughout the entire cultural enactment and aesthetic taste, communal way of life, cultural integrity, religious belief, agricultural dedication, spiritual faith, political policy and communal peace and harmony.

It is a significant folk opera that has been practicing and performing since the existence of Magar community. The performance is an enactment of the songs binding about the tragic story of a legendary king, Parashuram and an ideal and loyal queen, Ambawati. The different scholars point out the different significant aspects like cultural, religious, communal, spiritual and political aspect of *Ghatu*. The historical aspect of the *Ghatu* dig out the history of king and his bravery and sacrifices towards his land and the virtuous ability, purity, loyalty and highly devotion of the queen toward her husband. This work uplifts the immense and sensitive content about *Ghatu* regarding the role of female as God and local deities in the society. Purnamaya Pulami Magar argues that *Ghatu* is an epitoma of religious and spiritual veneration. It is the performative art through which the fundamental ritual of magar culture and methodology has been depicted. She argues:

Ghatu is the fundamental performative discourse that is inclusively demonstrated with religious norms and values, exorcism, ritualistic method, religious faith, life initiation, lifestyle, purification, annual festival and seasons. Magar are accomplished in exorcism and taking nature as local god and goddess. The nature-worshipper Magar believed in local god and goddess and the myth about *Ghatu* is that it is performed in different stage by stringing the tale of the king and the queen. * (16)

This work explores different signs and symbols related to spiritual and communal significance along with cultural and religious aspect of *Ghatu*. Not only this, the important space and function of female are depicted in the context of spirituality through performance in the society. It is the lively example of shamanism and animism of Magar culture and rituals which consist of the philosophy of Magar ethnicity and ideology about their lifestyle and methodology. It has developed its form while practicing the different rites and rituals in the society. In the present time, it has been practicing as a festival in different community at different times.

Ghatu, a cultural dance has constituted the feminine attributes in the main part, Sati. The research is efforting to analyse the role of female in the society [patriarchal society] through the story of the king and queen in particular and the rites and rituals that people adopt throughout their life since birth to death. On the one hand, it indicates the role and function of female and on the other hand it establishes the space of female among the discussion of 'sex' and 'gender' in the society. Through the medium of *Ghatu*, this research endeavors to fix the social, cultural and religious identification of female.

* It denotes the text I translated

Surfacially, female is treated as puppet in front of the social recognition and destiny. It is supposed they have to be what they are destined for. In *Ghatu*, Ambawati, daughter of Rajput, has become queen of the king of Lamjung, Parashuram. They have better time and complete life when they begot a son, Balkrishna. No longer they live their happy time, Parashuram dies in battlefield. The queen immolates with her husband leaving all royal luxuries and most loving infant son. Here, all these circumstances explicitly show cowardice, passivity and secondary position of women. But it carries a very significant role of woman. The entire courageous and sacred activities are the symbol of loyalty, idealism of the queen on one hand and on the other hand the miraculous ability to cope with any situation depicts that implicitly connote their power of comfortably acceptance of what they are destined for.



Fig. 1: *Bayanis* are playing the role of the king and the queen, Syangja

(Photo taken by Preeti Thapa, Pelakot VDC, 2013)

Here, the picture shows the *Ghatu* has its distinct value and recognition in the society. While performing *Ghatu*, the female plays the role of both the king and the queen. The participation of females in all activities of *Ghatu* like singing, dancing and as assistance of dancer girls are one of the important feature of *Ghatu*. Similarly, the

female becomes priest and sacrifices animals and birds to God as another feature of *Ghatu*. In the different places, *Ghatu* is performed firstly capturing the self by divine spirit by enchanting the songs summoning the local God and Goddesses like *Devchuli*, *Barchuli*, etc. As Purnamaya Pulami Magar says, “performing the *Ghatu* is to pleasing the local deities that’s why the deities confer the blessing to have succeed and pleased life” (23). As female are involved in *Ghatu*, therefore, it is the females who bring delight and pleasure not only in the family but to the whole community. It is the traditional belief *Ghatu* is performed in order to enhance agricultural production, good health and to avoid evil spirit in the society. Therefore the work signifies the necessity and important role of woman in order to maintain peace and harmony avoiding chaotic situation.

Moreover, *Ghatu* is not the normal performance but it has carried a significant message, the role of female in order to expose their strength. Apparently, Bhayanis (*Ghatu* dancers) perform dance after they are divinized. Here, Gurung argues, “They do the dance not only based on a dance and a song, they also do based on the power of the deities” (4). The story in *Ghatu* is same in general but the core meaning can be differently withdrawn according to different writer. It is supposed based on multiple aspects like social, cultural, religious, spiritual and communal. To picturize its socio-cultural significance, Sinjali argues:

The main objective of performing *Ghatu* is to recover from illness, be free from evil spirit. When medical treatment cannot recover the illness or if it is unaffordable to incapable family, *Ghatu* is performed in belief of healing that illness. Similarly, when some evil spirit haunts or when wizard predicts of probability of coming evil, to make god cheerful, *Ghatu* dance is performed. On the one hand it teaches the behavioural

knowledge about cultural rituals, biological affair like birth, marriage, pregnancy stage, childhood, adulthood and death as well as the agricultural deeds. On the other, it also teaches about the society is full of politics, leadership, war, treachery, conspiracy, etc. that determine the living way in the society.* (11)

Ghatu has carried religious faith. The discourse of faith related to Gods and Goddesses is popular. These faiths always lead society in the right direction. It is believed the God is omnipresent, omnipotent and almighty. The *Ghatu* tries to make happy all the Gods and Goddesses for social and communal happiness and betterment. Magar has described about the religious importance of *Ghatu* culture. She claims:

In Magar society, *Ghatu Naach* is performed in order to make happy all god and goddess like *Devchuli*, *Badachuli*, *Himchuli*, *Kumarbarti* deities, three goddesses, five goddesses and seven goddesses and other local deities. They have deep belief that after the gods are being happy, all villagers are blessed and raining happens for the betterment of agricultural productivity, good health of human beings and other living creatures. It also helps to avoid natural calamities and the wish of villagers is accomplished. Another, the *Ghatu* teaches to every girl to remain in discipline, to be proficient wife and mother or capable housewife.* (23)

Similarly, *Ghatu* is performed adopting certain rules and processes in fixed days and occasions. It dignifies knowledge to people about the importance of rule and regulation in the human life. In the same matter, Thapa Magar argues:

Ghatu is performed with certain rules and method. So the other social conducts should be done confining in certain rules otherwise something

evils and crisis happens. It also asserts historical aspect of shamanism and animism. It is religious belief that after the death of people, their spirits enter into heaven and wander in the form of different deities that's why Magar society worships different local deities and hobgoblin. Shamas and normal person gabs after the death spirit capture their body. Based on this tradition *Ghatu* is developed. So that diseases, calamities and crisis are controlled, fulfillment of wishes, betterment of agricultural crops, happened after the *Ghatu* is performed.* (29)

Chhabilal Chidi Magar also focuses on importance of *Ghatu* not only for entertainment but has religious significance. It aims at making to Gods and Goddesses happy who take care of all human beings. He attaches the communal faith of predicating the time of marriage with *Ghatu*. He states:

Ghatu is performed in order to make god happy so that he protects us from daily created calamities and it is performed by adopting methods. If there is little *Ghatu* song, some people shiver and their shivering has been stopped through song itself. The *Bayanis*, who cries earlier than other, there is belief of getting recent marriage.* (32)

Ghatu is considered the dance performed with group of pre-pubertal girls together with songs based on the rhythm of drums. *Gurumas* chant songs and *Bayanis* are danced assisted by their helpers. The spiritual aspect of *Ghatu* is depicted as the beginning is an incantation to summon the God. The initiation into self of the queen, the song creates a very significant trance like atmosphere. The music and songs reverberate which ultimately captures the self of *Bayanis*. The *Ghatu Guruma* sends all the dancers into a trance with the power of chanting and hypnotizes them. They dance with closed eyes gesturing the songs. The unique strength of women are performed in *Ghatu* which signifies the spiritual power of women who have existed in male

dominated society. The *Ghatu* has contributed to blur the demarcation line between male and female in the society. Although, the Nepalese society is victimized by gender discrimination, *Ghatu* tries to extend the message about the importance of women, and their power and dedication in the society.

Gender discrimination is a problem of Nepalese society where woman are considered as passive and irresponsible member comparing to males. The society has shown its cruelty by constructing injustice norms and values between males and females. According to social and cultural norm, males are powerful, primary, active and rational in comparison of females. Amid the narrowest thinking about females, *Ghatu* plays its important role by exposing the feminine strength of having god and spiritual power inside feminine spirit. Females are significantly attended religious services, to regard religious faith as important in shaping daily life, to have made a personal commitment to live for God, to be involved in a religious group, to pray, and to feel close to God. Indeed, it has compelled to think what the role of women is in the society? What should be done to them, respected or hated? These are question to those people who are proud about their masculinity. However, *Ghatu* is the traditional norms that rupture men's false conception. It is a folk dance and it is performed based on gesture provided in songs. The actors enact each and every actions, interaction and relationship existing in the society. The act of performance is constructed as a continuous series of human actions ranging from rituals. It is also the enactment of everyday social life, gender and racial role. Cultures are often expressive in their performance. And various rites and rituals related to humankind expressed in *Ghatu* is enacted through performance. As Turner explains:

Actors are always already on the stage, within the terms of the performance. Just as a script may be enacted in various ways, and just

as the play requires both text and interpretation, so the gendered body acts its parts in a culturally restricted corporeal space and enacts interpretations within the confines of already existing directives. (256)

Similarly, performative act expresses the rituals that people adopt since their birth to death. In the same way, rituals are group of socially constructed norms and values that has been repeated in different occasions. So these rituals can be materialized.

Through the analysis of various signs and symbols from the discourse, *Ghatu*, the social issues has been internalized. In every culture, there is both the evil and divine, virtues and vices. These factors play a vital role in building the social and cultural environment. While maintaining rules and regulations in the society, in Magar community, too, focuses on the right and sacred part of the society avoiding the vices and evil one. It is supposed to harm the whole society due to adopting the ill matters like quarreling, disputing, smoking, addiction of alcoholism and smoking. It provides rations to the people in the society that makes them aware about their right and duties. It also helps them to be conscious about the sound mind and sound health. People have become aware about the sanitation and sound environment. In the society, pre-pubertal girls are taken as sacred and symbol of purity and holiness. So, this is a reason of taking pre-pubertal girls as dancers in *Ghatu*. It is also performed in order to maintain social security thereby establishing peace and harmony. It is only possible by making the Gods happy due to holy deeds. Similarly, both the song and dance depict social norms and values, rites and rituals, customs and social recognition.

There is the religious belief of worshipping the death spirit for their happy and peace rest in heaven. So, like other ethnic community, Magar community has also been practicing the ritual of worshipping the death spirit in one and many ways. After the death of a people, *shraddha or pooja* is observed once a year for peace placement in

the heaven. *Ghatu* is an excellent example of maintaining the ancient religious belief and tradition of making death spirit happy. It has the significant position in the society that is taken as the replica of establishing ancestral spirit of death person. It also describes the clear vision about the dead spirit. As Shirish Magar argues:

In different caste and sub-caste of Magar community, the death spirit has been brought on the body of family member and recalled the important events of his/her lifetime through wizard method, after a year of death. There is the tradition of making these spirits happy. After that, people worship their ancestors every year. The tradition of worshipping ancestor's spirit has been developed and in the same course *Ghatu* has taken as a form of festival in the Magar community.* (26)

Similarly, the Magars community of Syangja district has the same belief that *Ghatu* is one of the way of curing diseases. It is also believed that *Ghatu* is observed for the betterment of agricultural field. So it is known as a way of worshipping Nature God. It is because '*Chandi puja*' is observed where '*Chan*' means 'Thunder God' and '*Di*' means 'water' in *Ghatu* of Magar community. It is the way to offer respect to God of water and nature for enhancing the state of agriculture and cattle in better way.

Ghatu performance starts after the body of dancers is captured by divine spirit moving back and forth. It resembles the queen state of mourning after her husband's death as she mourns by wandering back and forth in shock. The mourning song and moving of the performers create the ritual of performance. The major performance in *Ghatu* is acted out as a funeral procession of the protagonist, Ambawati. Similarly, *Bayanis* put on new dresses as well as ornaments signify the old- fashion of royal family. It is believed that in some religious activities we use to wear new and sacred clothes. So *Bayanis* are prepared with sacred clothes and glittered ornaments as god.

The belief of not combing the hair is that the divine spirit of the king and queen capture the self of dancers.

As a folk opera, *Ghatu* has its own historical and cultural important where the entire history of the king, Parashuram and the queen Ambawati has been picturized properly. It has changed its forms and description of culture of different society according to changes of time. In present time, there is the influence of *Lahuree* culture in Magar society. Not only this, the trend of foreign culture, dresses and its influence in Nepalese society has been described. So piece of *Ghatu* song goes: “To cover the body, sew velvet clothes, To cover whole body, clean the trouser.* (54)

Ghatu is modified with the course of time. Subject of performance are dymanised. The very influential subject of *Lahure* culture is portrayed in *Ghatu* in present modern period. Similarly, the then Aryan society was highly imposed by the culture of *Sati Pratha*. So, the Sati portion of *Ghatu* song was about immolation of Ambawati on the pyre of her husband that represents culture of *Sati system* of the then society. Every society is influenced and affected by the culture and values which are adopted by the people. And those abstract social norms and values are concretized in something to reveal the reality of society as if revelation of sati in *Ghatu*. These things are sewing culture in *Ghatu* folk opera. There was the culture of involving in activities like hunting, gambling, etc. and today, too, which creates social evils. It has described the about the social evils by consisting with the story of Parashuram in this way- “Parashuram has played gambling with jogi putting his *Shreepetch* and the king defeats jogi.”* (10)

The issue is not with social evils but concerned with who is creating in the evils in the society. Men are freed to do anything whether the activity they are involved is appropriate or not. Although the cultural events are performed in *Ghatu*, it employs

typical social norms and values. After her husband's death, she mourns by wandering around in shock. "The mourning songs and moving of the performers create the ritual of performance" (2). The major performance in *Ghatu* is acted out as a funeral procession of the protagonist, Ambawati. Similarly, *Bayanis* put on new dresses as well as ornaments signify the old- fashion of royal family. It is believed that in some religious activities we wear new and sacred clothes. So *Bayanis* are prepared with sacred clothes and glittered ornaments as God. The belief of leaving hair uncombed is that the divine spirit of the king and queen capture the self of dancers.

All the communal events and marks are captured in *Ghatu* folk opera. It is the main feature of *Ghatu* that it is contextual and the content is based on social rites and rituals. In the course of developing, it has embedded different ecological and day to day changes and its influences in society. Moreover, *Ghatu* has provided the place of communal mutual help and harmony and has been expressed through *Ghatu*. While Parashuram set out for war, many people become ready to assist him. The story of involvement of the Royal king in war against different enemy has been portrayed in *Ghatu*.



Fig. 2: female from another community on the same dancing spot
(Photo taken by preeti Thapa, Pelakot, VDC, Syangja, 2013)

Here, the *Ghatu* depicts cooperation and affinity of Magar community. It has uplifted the mutual harmony in the community. It has worked as a medium of connecting one community to another community emotionally. Not only Magars of single village, but the other ethnic group of other villages perform dance in a single yard. There is found a kind of affinity among women. *Ghatu* has not its written form, however, *Gurumas* (*Ghatu* singers), a group of women for singing song, and the *Bayanis* has such type of bond that they perform or gesture a single word of songs. It means that *Gurumas* create environment to *Bayanis* by enchanting songs. They bring dancers on the rhythm of their songs. In this sense, it spreads the fragrance of mutual harmony in the society. It motivates people to remain in mutual bond and together and to strengthen the emotional feeling and to entertain in group. The social norms and values are constructed.

The word 'gender' that prevail the entire society is a social construction. It is artificial. We adopt it as it is natural and a necessary part of society. It is because of our traditional values that has immense influence in the society. The enactment of gender norms 'real' consequences including the creation of our sense of subjectivity but that doesn't make our subjectivity any less constructed. Similarly, *Ghatu* helps to protect the self and real identity of women in society through performance. Our sense of independence, self willed subjectivity is really a retroactive construction that comes about only through the enactment of social conventions.

In this sense, each and every festival is observed for protecting the traditional value in one way and to present the importance of gender equality in another way according to way of observing it. In fact, social norms and values are constructed. And what is required for the hegemony of hetero normative convention is the powerful thought and action. Actually all the religions have their conventions and beliefs of

what should be done to be front in the society. Similarly, Hindu religion is prosperous in its culture and festivals that has made it more different than others. In the patriarchal society, existence of woman is countless and they have been behaved as if they don't have any role in the formation of society. Amongst these general attitude towards female in patriarchal society, the research attempts to visualize how significant the woman's role in the society. How woman are worshipped as they are having spiritual power although male and female are two different gender having equal power and meaning. They both have equal contribution for creating well-managed society. It does not matter whatever the values they have been provided in the society but it matters what the role they have been conducted. Works and their conduct determine the significant of people rather than the so-called traditional norms and values. For instance, the king faces heroic death in the battle, and the queen immolates on the pyre. Here both have sacrificed their life for good deeds in the sense that king's death implies feeling of patriotistic value towards own land and the queen's death magnifies the value of obedience of woman towards their husband or lord. In this way, this research hypothesises the equal role of both male and female in the society.

Having observed the different aspect of *Ghatu* through the eyes of different scholars, one can see the feministic attributes along with spirituality through the performative act of *Ghatu*. The ritual and way of performing *Ghatu* can provide various approaches to explain, there are dynamicity in *Ghatu*. On such context, this thesis tries to explore the place and function of female in the society through the medium of *Ghatu* performance.

In order to prove the above mentioned hypothesis, the present work has been divided into three chapters. The first chapter introduces to the research and its objective. It gives a brief outline of the hypothesis, critical review of literature and it

claims why it is researchable. The second chapter presents textual analysis to prove the hypothesis by exploiting the mentioned theoretical methodology. And the last chapter is the conclusion of this work. It concludes the explanation and arguments that has put forward in preceding chapters.

II. Gender Role in *Ghatu*

The signification of female depicts with the underlying meaning by analyzing the signs and symbols of the *Ghatu* performance. The performance of female in *Ghatu* has provides the main issue of femininity. Similarly, various signs and symbols related to songs, dances, customs, ornaments, and other traditional objects like *Birpatta*, *Shreepech*, etc. enable to connote the femininity issue underlying in the *Ghatu*. The given issue is depicted through performance. Performance is an art in which the actions of an individual or a group at a particular place and in a particular time constitute the work. It can happen anywhere at any time for any length of time. Performance art can be any situation that involves four basic elements; time, space, the performer's body and relationship between performers and audience. The performance may be scripted, unscripted or improvisational. It may incorporate music, dance, song or complete science. The audience may buy tickets for the performance, it may be free or the performer may pay the audience own self, they performed to watch.

In this chapter, the research applies the theory of *Gender performativity* which has been growing as an academic field widely. It was coined by Judith Butler, and has produced wide variety of perspective and become one of a discipline in social sciences and in itself. It has established its own space in postmodern period for expressing gender qualities. *Gender performativity* is constitution of two words that is 'gender' and 'performative'. It is based on the notion of destabilizing gender identities and categories and has concerned with the manner in which usual activities of social world are performed. Judith Butler uses the term '*gender performative*' to depict the integration of gender with performance. According to Butler, identity can be established in society due to performance of discourse. *Ghatu* is a discourse merely females participate for enactment of *Ghatu* songs. Since *Ghatu* is the duet song connected with the primitive age of hunting and the transforming period of hunting to

agricultural era of Nepalese society and the institutionalization of nature worshipped norms in Magar community. For example, Jacques Derrida uses word 'reiteration' and 'repetition' to signify performance. For him, repetition makes anything effective and presupposed to be recognized.

Gender performance is the perspective to study the role of gender in the society. Gender is not the biological factor, rather socially constructed. So Simon De Beauvoir says, "one is not born a woman but rather becomes one" (12). For her, there is distinguish between gender and sex, whereby gender can be seen as a social constructed and sex is biological differences. She has expressed the existential crisis of women in male dominated society. It focuses on the femininity and spirituality of *Ghatu* performance in relation to songs, dances and objects related with the rituals. It is remained as performing folk arts. The songs are lamentations of the queen at the death of her husband, the king. *Ghatu* is one of the important parts of the entire intangible cultural heritage. It is based on the oral form, however it has constituted the religious, political, social and cultural aspects of ancient Magar community. It has established a deep belief and faith about God and Goddess among the Magar community. As people practice the *Ghatu*, they have their own different faith about it according to different places. It is said that no single feeling can remain in different mind. So when I research about *Ghatu*, different mythology about *Ghatu* is found. More or less, *Ghatu* is related to spirituality and femininity. It is believed that the ritual of '*Shamanism*' and '*Animism*' is practiced in *Ghatu* through the enactment of *Ghatu* using the issue of traditional belief of God and Goddess. The *Ghatu* has been practiced since the dawn of Magar ethnicity.

Ghatu art is performed in order to spread the message of divine power through the performance of female characters. These characters (dancers, the *Bayanis*) spread the message of divinity through their performance enacting the gestures of the songs.

Jeffery C. Alexander says that the performativity displays the meaning of anything associated with it but has not been conceived directly. As he argues:

Cultural performance is the social process by which actors, individually or in concert display for others the meaning of their social situation. The social actors consciously or unconsciously wish to have other believe. Their display to be effective, actors must offer a plausible performance one that leads those to whom their actions and gestures are directed to accept their motives and explanations as a reasonable account. (32)

Gender, as the state of the body, can be materialized and actualized through the act of performance. The question of 'gender' is important subject and issue to know all. The word 'gender' is problematically raised issue in the society. It is essential to be able to distinguish the word 'sex' and 'gender'. Most of the people put the two words in same place. These two terms seem alike, in fact, these are identically different. Although sex and gender are relevant in some extent. Sex is identical and specific where as gender is actualized through the activities we do. Beauvoir argues:

Women is a variable cultural accomplishment, a set of meanings that are taken on or taken up with in a cultural field, and that no one is born with a gender- gender is always acquired. Woman is a historical idea and not a natural facts, she clearly underscores the distinction between sex, as biological facility and gender as the cultural interpretation. (522)

In one hand, the biological attachment and natural phenomenon is sex which is identifiable and can be determined and in another hand, gender is culturally constructed phenomenon that is arbitrary described on the basis of social norms and values. It is the cultural interpretation of sex. The gender is constructed through certain determinism of gender meanings inscribed on anatomically different bodies. Most of the feminist theorists claim that the gender is "a relation", a set of relations and not an

individual attribute. Gender is a collection of human attributes, traits and activities that is described based on sex. In fact, gender identity is grounded upon sexuality. It is the socio-cultural phenomenon of the division of people into various categories such as “male” and “female”, with having associated roles, traits, features, stereotypes, etc. If gender is socially and culturally constructed based on different role, behaviors, traits then there is no longer the deep and vast distinguish between male and female. In the same way, Judith Butler argues:

If gender is the cultural meanings that the sexed body assumes, then a gender cannot be said to follow from a sex in any one way. The sex/gender distinction suggests a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed genders. Assuming for the moment the stability of binary sex, it doesn't follow the construction of “men” which accrue exclusively to the bodies of males or that “women” will interpret only female bodies. If sex appears to be unproblematically binary in their morphology and constitution, there is no reason to assume that genders ought also to remain as two. (10)

However, gender distinction problematizes the situation of female. This condition of females creates anxious about the representation of women in that society. The feminine identity is conceived as a troublesome subject and sometimes, this issue becomes unacceptable. The patriarchal society lacks consent to account the role of female for consequential social and cultural achievements.

The postmodern feminist has evolved various ideas and theories that have provided justice for female raised the voice for maintaining the equitable society. In the same way, *Ghatu* is described as the way of conforming the empowerment and the role that the female indulge in the society. What is the function of female in the society

is another question raise while talking about *Ghatu*. Females should not be discarded from conducting the crucial activities. Males have each and every opportunity to perform their talent, courage, and bravery but, in the same time, females should have provided those opportunities to prove their ability and capacity. *Ghatu* is interpreted merely, the cultural dance of Magar that has performative quality, it turns out to signify differently implied meaning then that is on its surface. It has the most important issue to be drawn about the sacred and holiness of the objects and the dancers who participate on it. *Ghatu* is related to the rituals of worshipping ancestors, so that its historicity is signification of evolution of human civilization. It is analyzed interrelating with the development of initial stage of ancient religion.

The rituals of *Ghatu* emerges the innovation on the side of socialism treading upon its tradition and cultural values. According to Jefferey C. Alexander, “rituals are episode of repeated and simplified cultural communication”(12). In fact, identification of female is opened out through the spirituality based on different stage of *Ghatu* performance.



Fig. 3: *Bayanis* are ready to go in trance,

(Photo taken by Preeti Thapa, Pelakot VDC, Syangja, 2013)

The narrative of *Ghatu* begins with certain rules and methods in the first session. It begins when the queen utters *Ram Bolyo* (speak Ram), taking the crown of the king Parashuram on her hands, then her body starts quivering in cross-legged sitting. Then she stands and moves her body in a slow motion with different hand gestures. It is a ballad song, closely associated with different stages of the queen or her varying counterparts in times and places.

This verse displays a certain method of smearing the stage for the enactment of *Ghatu* in order to purify the stage. The following verses are also pronounced while smearing the stage with the cow dung:

Smear with the cowdung of spotted cow,

Smear with the water of Gangachuli, smear

Ha! oh, Ritubarna king. Come here.

Oh! Kailash king. Come here.* (24)

It is the spiritual belief of these gods *Ritubarna*, *Kailash*, who are ancient king and they are worshipped while performing *Ghatu*. These divine spirits take place into the body of *Bayanis* and they enact the songs and symbols it provides. This verse displays a certain method of smearing the stage for the enactment of *Ghatu* in order to purify the stage.

Ghatu is a ballad, tragic story of the king and queen, their love relation, marriage, their activities of planting, watering, furnishing and worshiping of god plucking those flowers by queen, etc. like minute description of every human activity is tied up. The human behavioural activities and the social positive and negative instinct are found in *Ghatu*. It is a typical explanation of the human activities that represent the entire humankind and the society. Joys and sorrows, happiness and sadness, failure and success, respect and contemplate, etc. are the factors that has the

vital role in formation of society. These are the culture attached with the human behaviors that determine the social manner. It is the depiction of social norms and values and social adjustment. For instance, the neighbor king becomes envious in the succeed life of the king so that they started war with him. King's dedication and patriotic feelings towards land and queen's devotion, love and respect toward her lord is significantly presented in *Ghatu*. The death of the king in battlefield, lamentations and agonies of queen and her immolation on the pyre of her husband is performed in *Ghatu*.

Either male or female, people of different gender can be represented as subject. There are the various ways of representing as subject to own self in the society. whether the doctrine or ideological belief don't favor but, all the challenges can be accepted and shown the strength of what the society tagged "inferior" and "other" to female. In this study of *Ghatu*, the presented issue is conceived through different medium like songs, dances, other objects related to the *Ghatu* culture. The gender is culturally constructed and the arbitrary one. The concepts of different gender are picturized in *Ghatu* through the medium of performance. In *Ghatu*, the dancers played the role of king and queen and dance in a couple to signify their activities. With the help of enchanting song of *Gurumas*, the dancers come into trance. This powerful chanting sends *Bayanis* into a trance, where they come up with different poses to signify various states of significations. The *Gurumas* invoke all the air gods, land gods and water gods from all the directions to inform them that the place for the performance is smeared with the cow dung and the water from the seven sources. So the verses go: "Wake up Queen Ambawati, wake up/ Wake up King Parashuram, wake up." * (10)

In *Ghatu*, the role of female is inclusively managed where the nexus between

spiritual and cultural aspect is properly demonstrated. On one hand the faith on Gods, Goddesses is presented and on the other hand, process of life, way of living, life style, daily activities, etc. are characterized in *Ghatu*. The traditional costumes, ornaments, make ups amalgamate with spiritual ideas. *Gurumas* invoke to local gods and goddess as in the following verses:

Firstly, come Saraswoti by imparting the head of the girl

Then priest come by imparting the head of the girl

Guruma Guruba come by imparting the head of girl

Local deities come by imparting the head of girl

Chandimai, Chamundamai come by imparting the head of girl.* (111)

The *Ghatu* is a platform where the girls (females) perform the efficient role with their vigorous power. It is the place from where they can prove the power and ability which are underestimated on the eye of society. It is the best way of presenting and depicting the feminine power for specially [Magar] women. The 'female' and 'male' discrimination can be discarded through the *Ghatu*. As Butler argues:

Gender is something that one becomes- but can never be-then gender is itself a kind of becoming or activity, and that gender is ought not to be conceived as a noun or a substantial thing or a static cultural marker, but rather as an incessant and repeated actions of some sort. If gender is not tied as sex, either casually or expressively, then gender is a kind of action that can potentially proliferate beyond the binary limits imposed by the apparent binary of sex. (15)



Fig. 4: *Bayanis* of 7 or 8 age in the first row and post pubertal *Bayanis* in the second row

(Photo taken by Preeti Thapa, Pelakot VDC, Syangja, 2013)

The *Gurumas* clarify that all girls are sacred and holy who are selected for the performances. The pre-pubertal girls are taken as *Bayanis* and unmarried one for the first time of dancing *Ghatu*. It does not have certainty of in how number and in what role the *Bayanis* performed. The *Bayanis* are selected on the basis of on how much girls the spirit possess. They dance in couple as the king and queen after the divine spirit posses on their body. They are vibrated and shivered when their self is captured. The *Bayanis* play the role of king on whose body the divine spirit is possessed first and the second one played as queen. Among the different stage of *Ghatu*, who is played the role of king and queen is determined on war stage. The girls who faintish first, she plays the role of the king and those play as queen who faintished later. At the first time who perform, should be unmarried. They continue to dance as per their promises they do when in trance. And in Syangja district married women also perform *Ghatu*. They should perform the role of the same god whose spirit capture their soul.

Tie the feet by enchanting mantra with squirting water

Tie the waist enchanting mantra with holy rice

Tie the head enchanting the mantra with birabal

In the name of guru, tie of birabal.* (112)

It is the way of purifying the soul and body because it is believed the human body is full with faithless and impious. So the girls are reified into the form of god by following certain rules. But the same rules are made in the same society. There is the contradiction among the rules they made in the society and the behaviors the people depicts. According to Butler, the notion of a universal patriarchy has been widely criticized in recent years for its failure to account for the workings of gender oppression in the cultural context in which it exists. She argues:

The so-called 'patriarchal' leads the society backward due to traditional views and thought. This traditional thought helps to create distinction between male and female as superior and inferior. For making well-managed and developed society, there should not be partiality between two sexed bodies. Whatever we talk, biasness has remained unavoidably in the concept of gender in society. Society is mechanism can divert anything from one position to another. (6)

For her, gender is constructed. Females are understood as passive and docile, irrational one in the society. But the female bodies are the active process of embodying certain cultural and historical possibilities. *Ghatu* is a platform from where the discrimination between male and female is blurred, from where female can establish their identity. They can reveal their power and strength. In Magar community, there is the chance and freedom to females too to prove their capacity in any sectors. There is less chance of biasness towards females. As the Magar culture is based on nature and we nature

worshipper believe in natural phenomena. Thus the sexed body matters somehow in Magar community rather than gender. Butler argues:

Gender is always relative to the constructed relations in which it is determined. As a contextual phenomenon, gender doesn't denote a substantive being, but a relative point of convergence among culturally and historically specific sets of relations. Gender is the cultural meanings that the sexed body assumes, then a gender cannot be said to follow from a sex in any one way. (15)

In the patriarchal society, a masculinity constructions are presumed to be 'subject' and female are prerogatively defined as 'object'. Male is supposed to be primary to female, superior, active, rational, educate and civilized where as female are positioned inferior and irrational. Simone de Beauvoir states woman is treated as 'other' and 'object' in the society. Butler argues:

In opposition to Beauvoir, Irigaray argues that both the subject and other are masculine mainstays of a closed phallogocentric signifies economy that achieves its totalizing goal through the exclusion of the feminism altogether. For Beauvoir, women are the negative of men, the lack against which masculine identity differentiates itself; for Irigaray, that particular dialectic constitutes a system that excludes an entirely different economy of signification. Women are not only represented falsely within the Sartrian frame of signifying-subject and signified-other, but the falsity of the signification points out the entire structure of representations as adequate. (14)

By considering this debate between Beauvoir and Irigaray, Butler have drawn conclusion that there is not the problem in the word 'male' or 'female' rather the

problem is created due to the lack of medium of showing the attribute differently.

Performance is an inclusive term, meaning the activities of actors, dancers, musicians and their spectators and audiences. Performance say actors and dancers are must for any sort of performance. They display some sort of dance or bodily movement on the rhythm of some music. So, musicians are also indispensable for any performance.

Spectators or audiences are another important body. This term 'performance' has become widely popular in present era in different range of activities in arts, literature and social sciences. Performance, in fact, is a kind of 'human activity'. However the activity is done not by ordinary unskilled people but by skilled and trained ones. As Richard Schechner argues that "What makes performing arts performative, I imagine the answer would somehow suggest that these arts require the physical presence of trained or skilled human beings whose demonstration of their skill is the performance."

(77)

For Richard Schechner, performance is related with their physical presence of trained people with their particular gestures. Performance is always performed for someone else. The performers represent to be someone other than oneself. So, Schechner claims "it is a restored behavior in which the groups consciously separate them from the other" (51). This very activity of othering the self is performance. It has occurred among the entire world's people from the dawn of human cultures. The earliest human societies were hunting and gathering bands.

Dancing, singing, wearing masks and costumes impersonally other people, animals or supernatural, outing stories, retelling the hunt, rehearsing and preparing; these are all co-existent with the human condition to concrete archaeological evidence of performances date at least from Paleolithic times. Whether categorize this first performance as ritual or entertainment is an unanswerable problem.

To perform any sort of performance, two or more groups meet on a 'Seasonal Schedule' at a particular 'ceremonial centre'. Every performance follows certain system from rehearsal to dispersal leaving gathered on a particular ceremonial center. Performance begins after rehearsal takes place. Gathering, playing out an action and dispersing occur in a certain pattern. People gather in a certain place or ceremonial centre, perform the performance and again disperse in a system. "People [come] to a special place [do] something [...] and [go] on their way. The pattern of gathering, performing and dispersing is a specifically theatrical pattern" (133). So, performance of any performing art tends to follow some pattern while gathering, performing and dispersing i.e. every movement or gesture is systematic.

After the accomplishment of performance the crowd of performers and audience either disperse abruptly or in a certain process. The abrupt dispersal is said to be eruption whereas a well planned dispersal is processing. The former takes place in stress event and the later is ritual performance. All rituals by nature are performances but all the performances are necessarily not the ritual. Ritual is set of repeated actions of the thought to have symbolic value, the performance, which is usually prescribed by a religion or by the traditions of a community. A ritual may be performed at regular intervals or on specific occasion or at the desertion of individual or communities. It may be performed by a single individual, by a group or by the entire community in arbitrary places before specific people.

Ghatu is the performance where dancers dance in the rhythm of madal in trance state. Othering own self, they perform in slow motion being forth and back with closed eyes. They entirely drowned into the feeling of songs and what they do the gestures interpret the symbols used in the songs through their performances. As performance is the whole constellation of events that take place in and among the audiences. The

Bayanis other their own self and they exist only the mundane body, basic oneself is already changed as divine elements. The body is understood to be an active process of embodying certain cultural and historical possibilities.

When the month of *Chaitra* starts, wind moves
 The leaves fall down from the trees, heart becomes bleak
 Birds cry sitting on the branch, heart becomes bleak
 Spring seasons starts, everywhere green
 Birds and creatures becomes happy
 Summer season come, cloud moves in the sky
 Lightening and thundering and starts rain
 Fast plough the ploughman, plant the paddy fast.* (118)



Fig. 5: *Bayanis* are pretending to plant crops

(Photo taken by Preeti Thapa , Pelakot VDC, Syangja, 2013)

Here, *Ghatu* is the enactment of the daily and seasonal earthly activities of humankind. Planting crops, flowers, bathing, washing, combing, decorating, etc. related to womanhood. Not only this, it consists of the rituals of birth, marriage and death like phenomena. In order to describe the gendered, it is required to study each and every

actions and deeds they perform. *Ghatu* is the expansion of the conventional view of acts through which the meaning of any events is enacted. As Butler argues:

the body is not only an historical ideas, but it has carried a set of possibilities to be continually realized, it bears meaning. The body is the set of possibilities signifies that is appearance in the world, for perception, is not predetermined by some manner of interior essence. The body is not a self-identical or merely factice materiality, it is a materiality that bears meaning if nothing else, and the manner of this bearing is fundamentally dramatic. (521)

There is variability in interpreting the body as if Butler saying, the deeds that they accompany are noticeable. The meaning the body perform matters rather than what and how the body is. The issue of femininity like make-up, household activities are profoundly found in *Ghatu*. It is attached in the lines:

Red powder suits on head
Tika suits on forehead
Eye-shade suits on eyes
Gold ring suits on the ear
The red bangle on the wrist.* (27)

The issues of femininity like make-up, household activities, putting the vermilion, tika, lipsticks like cosmetics make-up enhance the personality of female. Moreover, vermilion is the symbol of longitivity of her husband, so it has power for the protection of the lord. Similarly, tika, bangles, chura, etc. are the symbol of married woman. It is the way of their identity how she is and her role in the family as well as in the society. Similarly, wearing of new and sacred dresses signifies the royal customes. The jewellery, ornaments, crown, etc are the significations that implied how much they

are important in the society as the things are used by woman in society, here, implicit the significant role of both male and female in a similar way. It expresses the gender role in the society. The universal attitude of gender is performative in one and other way. Butler claims that gender reality is performative which means it is real to the extent that it is performed. He further explains that “It seems fair to say that certain kinds of acts are usually interpreted as expressive of a gender identity and these acts either conform to an expected gender identity.” (Butler 531)

It is considered that makeup is a way of enhancing personality of the person whatever he or she is. The word *fariya*, *choliya*, *tikiya*, *tilahari*, *nathiya*, etc. signify the women identification that imparts through costumes and jewellery. These things provide the meaning of women’s identity in the society. How do female extend their identity themselves in the society? The married women use to put on ‘*Tihalari*’ and ‘*sindur*’, ‘*chura*’, ‘*pote*’, etc. in order to magnify themselves. These are the things taken as the symbol of husband’s connection and for their longevity. These are the things which enable female to recognize themselves as dutiful and devoted towards their lord (husband). The *Ghatu* is significant in the sense too it teaches about the usual behavioral activities to perform. Loving the juniors and respecting the elders are the typical norms in the society. And *Ghatu* has taught the issue of very inevitable parts of rituals to the teenage girls that make them habitual and perfect on these activities from their earlier age. The lines that connote the same sense which are drawn from *Ghatu* song are as follow:

While putting on pajamas, by looking the mirror

Seen by brother-in-law, and feel ashamed

While putting on choliya looking mirror

Seen by brother-in-law, and feel ashamed

While putting on tilahari, by looking the mirror

Seen by brother-in-law, and feel ashamed.* (113)

In *Ghatu*, different materials are used to signify the protective item from the evil spirit. For instance, birpatta, symbolize divine spirit. Vermillion, tilahari like objects female put on after marriage, are the symbols of protection of husband. *Ghatu*, as performative act, the *Ghatunis*, too use various items like birpatta, ornaments, unique costumes and different traditional items. Min Sirish Magar explains:

Birpatta, in *Ghatu*, is used which is made up of fried rice and coloured with turmeric colour. He further says fried rice and flowers are used in sacred deeds of worshipping god because of it is taken as the symbol of purity and holiness. Birpatta is coloured with yellow turmeric coloured symbolizes the protection from evil spirit. This signifies the avoidance of affect of bacteria and cancer in our body. (65)

He further says it has carried believe of Shamanism. It is in the sense that in *Ghatu*, the *Ghatunis* who played the role of king, sacrifice cock and the hen by the *Ghatunis* who played the role of queen. The costumes like gunyo, choli, ghalek, tiki, white patuki, golden ornaments, sirphul, sirbandi, chandrama, silver bangles are the typical one that picturize the lively lifestyle of magar community in Gandaki region.

Shepard girl, Pluck the flower of aashuro

Garderner girl, make garland from the flower

Engarland the garland to the queen

Seem decorative to the queen.* (115)

It creates the situation of having significant role of nature in human society. The nature is significant in the sense that no any human activities can be accomplished without the use of natural phenomena. Similarly, by showing the role of nature, it

also connotes the role of female in the society. However, there are equaled significant of both nature and female for the continuation of earthly existence. Without nature, there is no existence of any things, whereas without female, there is the impossibility of existence in human beings. Female is the member in the society who has capacity to give continuation by breeding. It spreads fragrance of different products as if a flower in nature can provide a lot of beauty and solace. Standing female and nature together, *Ghatu* expresses the rituals of worshipping nature and female in a sense. In Magar community, it is traditional rituals of worshipping nature and female. As Magar argues:

How much Magar caste is impressed by Hindu religion, they are much more affiliated with nature and the love towards nature can be found in traditional folk-culture, rites and rituals. Therefore, this *Ghatu* has its different religious importance and features in the sense that it is performed constituting natural, religious norms, Shamanism, religious belief and life customs and rituals, discipline and purity. Palas is essential in this naach. The colour of palas and the colour of velvet choli, ghalek and other traditional ornaments made *Ghatunis* the form of real devi.* (20)

Through the performance, the form of goddesses is depicted as Pulami Magar states in the above lines. Nothing in man-not even his/her body is sufficiently stable to serve as the basis for self recognition or for understanding other man. It is impossible to serve anybody's identity in the society through stable body. For visualizing the importance of female for existence, the performative act is required. Butler argues:

The body is understood to be an active process of embodying certain cultural and historical possibilities, a complicated process of

appropriation which any phenomenological theory of embodiment needs to describe. In order to describe the gendered body, a phenomenological theory of constitution requires an expansion of the conventional view of acts to mean both that which constitutes meaning and that through which meaning is performed or enacted. (522)

The relation between nature and women is understood only by performing their affinity, grasping connection between them. The portrayal of the embodiment of nature and female can be seen through the words “flower and queen”.

The natural phenomenal things are associated in the society. *Ghatu* has depicted the transmission from hunting to agricultural age. It is said that *Ghatu* is performed in the time from *Magh* to *Baisakh purnima*. It clarifies that *Ghatu* is performed in the period of *Spring* season, from *Shree Panchami* to *Baisakh Chandī Purmina*. Spring is the time of phenomenal renewal. The earth reawakens from her slumber and explodes with new life. It is the season for starting new projects and coming forth with new ideas. It is also the time to contemplate health and physical well-being. As if the spring season brings new life and changes in the nature, *Ghatu* is performed in the same time in order to provide a new ideas and feelings to the human life which can be perceived by female. Women have strong power of perceiving the feelings of other creatures too. It is one of the unique features of women that they can mingle them with other creatures’ feelings. They have power to study nature and natural phenomenon. There is close relation between nature and woman since the primitive age. In Hindu religion, the natural construction like mountains, rivers, etc. was taken as the form of Goddess like *Gauri Parbat*, *Ganga*, etc. That’s why *Ghatu* is a discourse where the spiritual form of women is performed which is found after the repetition of discourse. Butler argues that female identity is achieved through the

performative actions rather than theoretically discourse. Butler argues:

The signification of the sexed body will be a set of actions mobilized by the law, the citational accumulation and dissimulation of the laws that produces material effects, the lived necessity of those effects as well as the lived contestation of that necessity. Performativity is not a singular act, for it is always a reiteration of a norm or a set of norms and to the extent that it acquires an act like status in the present. (12)

Performativity is the capacity of speech and communication not to communicate but rather to act and to perform an identity in the society. It enables to define feminine identity with the help of the discourse, *Ghatu*. For Butler, sex is the natural law and it is necessarily be adopted. It is guided by law. But gender is not as an expression of what one as rather as something that one does.



Fig. 6: *Bayanis* are getting assisted by other women

(Photo taken by Preeti Thapa, Pelakot VDC, Syangja, 20)

Here, the given picture shows that *Ghatu* provides the concept of female bonding.

While performing it, a group of women gathered and singing and dancing process start.

The female bond is perfectly found in *Ghatu*. The dancers, singers and helpers unified

all together for the completion of *Ghatu*. The strongest state of bonding is that the *Gurumas* are responsible to the mistake when *Bayanis* are misdirected, because out of the track of the songs. To avoid these conditions, grammas sincerely enchant the song that's why the *Bayanis* enact each and every gestures, signals and symbols.

Listen to me foster mother, look after my Balkrishna well

He is under your charge, if he is hungry, feed him well

If he is thirsty serve him water well

Catching the border of my sari well

At the bank, between two jamuna trees, peepal trees

A golden lion or a horse denoted there.* (32)

The queen as a mother to bid farewell to her relatives, informs the general human concern of life on earth, when a person is going to die. The queen, in spite of her privileged position, presents herself like all other mothers of the world for whom the safety of their children matters above all other things. And also, when one is at such a bereaved situation, the only solace comes in the names of the deities that the queen invokes to *Barchuli*, *Deuchuli*, *Himchuli* and *Gangachuli* while her readiness to embrace death indicates her overwhelming love to her lord. Her invoking to the deities for the well-being of her loved ones is a symptomatic of her love for life on earth. In a single episode of the queen's preparation of life and death, are the sole realities of life's mystery. She leaves her baby son in charge of a foster mother asking her to give him a good care and prepares herself to ascend to the crematorium.

The *Ghatu* shows human concern not only for life, but also for a post-death situation. It offers a scene after death, in which when a person is on the way to heaven, the king of the death asks him or her questions related with his or her success on the earth. The affirmative questions are said to gain for the person a place in heaven,

which means that the reliable fulfillment of one's responsibility on earth does suggest guarantee of a person's entrance into heaven. Similarly, it is believed a person after his or her death can only ascend in heaven when all the process is fulfilled in funeral ritual. So the queen asks to fulfill all the process in her pyre. The verses run:

Breaking the stone make pyre
 I will immolate with husband make pyre
 Make fire cutting the branch of Red Chandan
 Make fire cutting the branch of Shreekhanda
 I will immolate with lord, make fire.* (136)

There are more specific details to be taken notice of for attributing Ambawati's particular activities more general human beings. The queen asks for making pyre of stone, with the sticks of religious important herbs like '*Raktachandan*' and '*Shree khanda*' and putting of fire on the pyre is all cultural artifacts that believe on the cremation of human body. When the death of the queen is over, the dancing girls come out of a trance and invoke the deities with such verses:

Deities of village, go away
 Chandimai Chamundamai, go away
 Eighty four gods of four directions, go away
 Mountains god and goddess, go away.* (128)

The tranced girls are released from the *Ghatu* gods. This release is like a new birth, and so it is associated with rituals after birth, part of which makes the virtuous girls mandatory to open their eyes and mouth only splashing the water on their faces.

Unlike Sati *Ghatu*, in which the tragic lives of the royal couples are portrayed, the Kusunda *Ghatu* amalgamates in its both romance and tragedy. This part of *Ghatu* comes at the end of the Sati *Ghatu* and highlights the tragic-comic aspects of life. The

royal couples leave for the forest life, where they live a life full of primitive romance and savagery. It thus symbolizes how savagery as a primitive impulse has been part of every way of human life.

Apart from this, *Ghatu* ranges up to the Gurungs and Duras. Keshar Jung Baral Magar claims that *Ghatu* is not only observed not only by one ethnic groups but lots of other too. He further clarifies, “*Ghatu* is mentioned in ‘*The Mundhum*’, the scripture of Limbu, but it is no more practice at present” (97-8). The rule and method, time, and action about *Ghatu* are different according to ethnic group. But there is no difference in the theme of *Ghatu*.

Overall, although having the varieties in *Ghatu*, it is the myth constructed, empowering the women in the society amidst the patriarchal society. *Ghatu* reflects the past structure of society, and it is the present responsibility to promote as well as to restructure the society through it. *Ghatu* has a harmonic relation to many other ethnic and non ethnic groups as well as a long range from local to global impact. It has depicted the issue of gender and its role on the basis of society, religion, community.

III. Depiction of Femininity through Signs and Symbols in *Ghatu*

The present research explores the importance of females in the Magar society.

Ghatu is an unwritten epic, a duet of the Magars which ensemble the feminine attributes through spiritual phenomenal performative actions. It explores the femininity through cultural and spiritual artifacts. In this folk opera, the queen, Ambawati is shown as a dutiful individual, worthy and capable of imparting inspiration to all. The queen represents an ideal woman for sacrificing her life for the sake of her lord. Her sacrifice is the symbol of true spiritual love, which she manages act out before she immolates. Her dedication towards her lord, responsibility towards family, sacrificial deed defines queen's good behaviors and her strength of facing each and every situation in life. The entire activities of queen represent the whole females in the Magar society. *Ghatu* is an epoch-making cultural epitome. So it is mysterious performance and is unique feminine issues in various senses.

Ghatu is popular in *Gurung* and *Duras* along with Magar community of Western development region. It is the enactment of locality with the colour of universality. However, its cultural importance is erasing away due to the influence of Western culture which are reducing its cultural significances. *Ghatu* is the foundation of Magar culture. So such a culturally significant phenomenon needs to be preserved. Such a culture that prioritizes woman should be preserved such that the upcoming generation can learn about the significant and influential role of women in the formation of the ideal society. They can know the importance of gender equality and discrimination will be banned. Moreover the presentation of *Ghatu* is the best way of preserving native culture, rituals and traditions. It also enables to recognize womenfolk and how is their power in the patriarchal society. *Ghatu* is the history of those people who become victorious accepting the epitome that society provides to them. The

concept of female bonding, social harmony, mutual cooperation and sacredness of women in the society is depicted in *Ghatu*.

Ghatu is a derivation from the Magar language 'SatiGhatu' and it is one of the important parts in Magar community, and it has been presenting the fundamental and lively pictures of Nepalese society. It is the representation of social and cultural artifacts not a myth. *Ghatu* is the cultural norms of worshipping ancestors and alleged the divine spirit into man's body. In this process, *Gurumas* enchant the song in rules to allege these spirits of the king and the queen, to avoid evil spirit and to free trance *Bayanis* from trance. It is belief that the spirit of the king and the queen capture the self of *Bayanis* in the form of divine spirit. So we do worship of these dead spirits on the occasion of *Ghatu*. Magars are nature worshipper and there are lot of festivals like *Chandi Pooja, Kul Pooja, Bhimsen Pooja, Jhakri Pooja and Baje Bajai Pooja* to worship these unseen spirits. So this shows a process of "Shamanism" and "Animism" in Magar community. *Ghatu* is accomplished on the occasion of different annual festivals or season based on religious norms and values, religious belief, ritualistic process, life style and way of living, and methods and regulations.

Ghatu is an amalgamation of myth, history and contemporaneity that makes *Ghatu* a complex set of cultural significations. The culturally important *Ghatu* portraits gender issues in the Magar society as well as the whole Nepalese society. It also represents the social, religious, spiritual and natural issues. This work attempts to undercut the stereotypes about women in the Magar society. In doing so, the research work entails introduction of *Ghatu* with its rites and rituals in the First Chapter followed by Gender Performativity and Textual Analysis in the Second Chapter deals with application of Performance Theory in *Ghatu*.

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Appendix

Photo taken by Preeti Thapa, Pelakot VDC, Syangja, 2013



Bayanis are playing the role of the king and the queen, Syangja



Female from another community on the same dancing spot



Bayanis are ready to go in trance,



Bayanis of 7 or 8 age in the first row and post pubertal *Bayanis* in the second row



Bayanis are pretending to plant crops



Bayanis are getting assisted by other women