

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Nepal is a country rich in diverse cultures, religions and languages. Geographically as diverse, Nepal's total land area is 147,181 square kilometers with a vast stretch of low-lying jungles and plains of the Tarai in the south bordered by India and gradually rising to the Himalayas in the north bordered by China. According to the 2001 Population Census, Nepal has a total population of 23,151,423. Historically, a number of the caste and ethnic groups living in the country today have been verified as migrants from the north and south, thus creating Nepal's multi-ethnic society. The numerous castes and ethnic groups found in Nepal belong to both Tibeto-Burman and Indo-Aryan linguistic families. The Indo-Aryan speaking communities are said to have migrated into the fertile lower hills, river valleys and the Tarai plains, which today, include the caste groups of Brahmans, Chhetris and Thakuris. The Tibeto-Burman speaking group comprise of communities of Tibeto-Mongol origins, mainly Buddhist farmers, migrating into the northern higher hills from the west to the east. The ethnic groups belonging to this group today are Limbus, Rais, Tamangs, Magars, Newars, Thamis, Chepangs, Rautes, Lepchas etc. (Joshi and Rose, 1966). Although these groups have intermingled over the centuries, they still differ largely in terms of culture and adaptation.

The Newars currently constitute 5.48 percent of the total population of Nepal (see Table 1.1). They have the longest standing history with Nepal, dating back to perhaps the eighth or seventh century B.C. Believed to be the first thriving culture of the Kathmandu Valley, a massive amount of literature has been produced on the Newars and their extensive culture and social structure. By far one of the most complex groups in Nepal, the Newar culture and way of life is influenced deeply by Hindu caste hierarchy and ancient religious rituals

characterized by a blending of Hindu, Buddhist and tantric features. Caste hierarchy which is based on the Hindu caste system is an integral part of Newar identity. Another important characteristic of the Newars is that they are a highly organized society, more so than any other ethnic group in Nepal. This organized way of life is most reflected in an association called the *guthi*.

Table 1.1: Population by Major Ten Caste/Ethnic Groups (in percent), 2001

Ethnic Group	Population	Ethnic Group	Population
Chhetri	15.8	Newar	5.48
Brahmin	12.74	Muslim	4.27
Magar	7.14	Kami	3.94
Tharu	6.75	Yadav	3.94
Tamang	5.64	Rai	2.79

Source: Population Census 2001, Government of Nepal, National Planning Commission, Central Bureau of Statistics.

Guthis are formed on the basis of lineage or territory the members of which bear the responsibility of performing a certain kind of task or duty pertaining to all those connected to it. The Newars have many *guthis* each concerning the management of a certain part of their religious or social life where great attention is paid to the proper and correct undertaking of meticulously planned activities. The Newars are also a highly endogamous group and believe in ritual and caste purity, but the principal of endogamy is not as strict as that of the Hindus in India (Fürer-Haimendorf, 1956). The nature of the Newar marriage has also been analyzed by many anthropologists as not sacred and not indissoluble. The traditional custom of the mock marriage of Newar girls with a divine god is also considered to reduce the sanctity of a marriage with a human, thus making divorce and remarriage less complicated. While all Newar castes are endogamous, inter-caste unions depend on the social status of the two castes concerned (Fürer-Haimendorf, 1957).

Adherence to traditional values and customs are key to the survival of any culture. While many traditions of the Newars have certainly withstood the test of time, there are bound to be changes occurring, at least through every generation, both in customs and rituals. The younger generation seems to be taking more liberties in changing strict rules in most aspects of Newar social and religious life. The struggle between the old and the new is ever present.

The current study is about the changes that are occurring in the marriage practices of one caste within the Newar society, the Manandhars.

Part of the artisan community of the Newars are the Manandhars, also called *Sämi* in Newari. The *Sämi* were originally a caste of oil pressers. In the Newar caste hierarchy, they are ranked as a lower clean caste below the farmer caste known as the Jyapus. The highest caste consists of the priestly caste (Hindu and Buddhist Brahmins, *Gubhajus* and *Bares*), ranked below them are the high castes (*Sheshyos* and *Urays*). Other castes ranked alongside the *Sämis* are the barbers (*Nau*), quarries of lime (*Duhin*), dyers of cloth (*Chhipa* or *Ranjitkar*), blacksmiths (*Kou*) and painters (*Pun*) (also see Table 5.1). Although these castes have been ranked together, they do not consider each other of equal status and do not accept ritually relevant food, i.e., boiled rice from each other's hands.

Like the Jyapus, a distinctive characteristic of the Manandhars which sets them apart from other Newar groups is their structural organization based on locality. Manandhars or *Sämis* were grouped among the families of each *tol* or neighbourhood who commonly owned one *sal* (*sah* in Newar) or oil press of that locality. The locality of each oil-press or *sah* was given a name, and the social units formed by the households which owned them were also named after the locality. Therefore, the Manandhars are known to each other by the *tol* to which they belong to, in other words, this is an integral part of the identity of a Manandhar and a matter of social status.

In Kathmandu, there were originally seven oil-presses, called Daisa, Phukdhyan, Tanlachi, Laksa, Nhusa, Wotu and Chosandho. Some of these later split up to create new offshoots named Thaiti, Dhalasikwo, Phalchasa and Marudhwakha. It is said that there were seven hundred Manandhars living in Kathmandu divided among nine social units. The saying among the Manandhars *Gungu twalay nhay sa Sämi* or 'Seven hundred *Sämis* in nine quarters or *tols*' is still remembered to this day (Toffin, 2005). This saying is said to have originated after three hundred out of the original one thousand *Sämis* of Kathmandu left the Valley to settle in Banepa (Manandhar, 1999). Today, only three of these localities still retain the original oil-press, and most members of these places no longer live in their ancestral *tols* (Fürer-Haimendorf, 1956).

The eldest man in each *tol* is called a *thakali* and is revered and respected by all. The leader of the *tol* in practical matters is called the *kaji* and is generally elected by the members of the *tol*. In practice, however, the position of *kaji* is passed on to the senior most man of the lineage from which the *kajis* have traditionally come from. In matters of dispute or discussions, it is the *kaji* who is consulted first.

The marriage practices of the Manandhars is like any other typical Newar marriage of other castes, but presently the practices have changed slightly in terms of rituals and customs, some of which have been eliminated due to social and economic reasons. These differences are seen even within the divisions among the Manandhars themselves. Each *guthi* or *tol* mentioned above may have their own customs or traditions when it comes to marriage. While the most basic rules are the same for all *tols*, some have created or changed these rules according to situations unique to them. The *guthi* systems are the most important and influential of all groups in matters of marriage, death or other social or religious activity of the Manandhars, or any other Newar for that matter. While it is evident that such rules regarding marriage practices have changed since the old days, it is also interesting to see how and why they have changed.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Marriage practices and rules on exogamy and endogamy have always played a major role in shaping the culture and identity of a people. It reflects their attitude towards change in not only their own lives but also in their place in society. Maintaining a culture or cultural value system gets more difficult with every passing generation, and there are bound to be changes in every aspect of life, especially one in an institution such as marriage. According to the Dictionary of Sociology by William P. Scott, marriage is defined as “an institution or complex social norms that sanctions the relationship of a man and a woman and binds them in a system of mutual obligations and rights essential to the functioning of family life” (Dictionary of Sociology, 1999). In the context of the Newars, it is more of a union between two families rather than two individuals. Presently, a pattern of change where the emphasis

shifting from the families to the individuals is being observed more and more in the marriage practices of the Newars. Newar marriages lay much emphasis on caste endogamy and ritualistic and customary significance. Today, many Newars have modified parts of the traditional marriage customs. It can be assumed that these changes have occurred from financial or economic reasons, legal conditions, adaptation to modernity or simply from disagreements between the new and the older generations. The Manandhars are also considered to be intensely adhering to traditional beliefs and customs and are yet coping with a changing world. Their persistence to maintain their culture and change only when forced to is the core subject matter of this study (see also Chhetri, 1990 for a similar study on Tibetan refugees).

The basic research questions of the study can further clarify the objectives:

-) What are the differences between the traditional marriage practices and current marriage practices of the Manandhar community living in Kathmandu? Specifically, are endogamous marriages still predominant than exogamous marriages? Does the practice of exogamous marriages result in outcasting of members from the group?
-) What changes have occurred in the attitudes of the older generation towards exogamous marriages today? To what extent is the younger generation adhering towards traditional customs of marriage like arranged marriages, astrological consultations before arrangement of marriage and age of marriage?
-) What changes have occurred in the divorce rates of the married population of the study area? What are the views of the population towards divorce and remarriage?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to find out the changes in the marriage practices of the Manandhar community living in two of the eleven *tols* of Kathmandu, namely, Dhalasikwo and Phalchasa.

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

-) to find out the frequency of exogamous marriages in relation to endogamous marriages among the Manandhar households of the two *tols*;
-) to find out the attitude of the Manandhars towards exogamous and endogamous marriages;
-) to analyze the change in attitude of the *guthiyars* in relation to exogamous marriages;
-) to find out attitude of the Manandhars towards divorce and remarriage.

1.4 Rationale

The Manandhar community contributes widely and richly to the Newar traditional and cultural world. While contributions have been made to the study of the cultural status of the Manandhars and other Newar castes, a lack of the study of socio-cultural change and continuity among the Manandhars is observed. Like most other communities in Nepal, the Newars are also known to maintain boundaries of caste, culture and religion. Economically, the boundaries of caste and status seem to disappear, but it is not the same in matters of ritual and cultural values. Therefore, the study of how to what extent these boundaries have disappeared in the socio-cultural context, or not, will help in understanding the attitude of these people towards change.

This kind of study on continuity and change in the Manandhar community will have much relevance to the rest of the Newar community as well. It has already been discovered that almost all Newar castes are highly endogamous in nature and also bear very similar basic traditions and customs in their marriage practices. Therefore, it can be assumed that changes occurring in one part of the Newar community may also be occurring among other castes as well or can also be of reference to comparing similar changes and continuities occurring within other castes. The study will also be useful to further analyze inter-caste relations not only among the Newars but also among other caste groups of Nepal. Issues of caste hierarchy and inter-marriage practices can also be further scrutinized. The study will also contribute to those interested in the subject and serve as reference for further in-depth research on the subject.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review includes studies with general information on the Newars, the Manandhars and marriage customs of the Newars. Although there have been a wide range of research done on the Newars, there is a very small body of work done on the Manandhars specifically.

The Newars have been a major source of interest among researchers of South Asian culture and people. Anthropologists from all over the world have shown great interest in this group and a huge amount of study has already been produced on them. A major part of the studies on the Newars are also focused on their cultural heritage, traditions, religion and their complex social structure and caste system.

With regard to their caste structure and caste relations among other groups of the country, Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf and Declan Quigley have made interesting arguments in their works. Fürer-Haimendorf's articles written during the 1950s titled "Inter-Relations of Castes and Ethnic Groups in Nepal" and "Elements of Newar Social Structure" show the flexibility of caste relations among the Newars. Although they are said to be highly endogamous, Newars are also said to be more flexible in their caste relations compared to the Hindu groups in India (Fürer-Haimendorf, 1957). While inter-caste marriages are not uncommon or not completely condemned, their implications tend to depend on the level of disparity between the two castes concerned. The author has written about the mobility allowed in caste hierarchy, a sort of likeness to the concept of social climbing called *sidi chadhnu* in Nepali. This indicates that a person could change the level of his caste through the means of marriage, a concept which does not exist among any Hindu group in India. He also argues that there are horizontal links between not only people of the same ethnic groups

but other groups as well based on language, religion and tradition, which allow for inter-group marriages to take place.

Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf's second article written a year earlier in 1956 describes in considerable detail, the Newar social structure based on caste stratification and *guthis* (Fürer-Haimendorf, 1957). His analysis revealed several aspects of the *guthi* system of the Newars which were responsible for upholding the Newar caste structure. These were named as principles regarding the importance of locality among Newars, the importance of seniority and allocation of duties among *guthi* members according to a system of rotation. While all these principles not only increase the complexity of the entire social structure, but also help retain conformity to Newar ideals. The existence of social mobility however, contradicts any form of conformity to these ideals. His discussion on caste mobility relating to inter-caste and inter-ethnic marriages reveals the comparative laxity on endogamous rules while also finding that Newars are equally concerned about maintaining caste purity. He does not believe however, that this elasticity seen in the marriage system suggests a weakening in the caste system. The in-depth study of caste relations, ethnic identity and *guthi* associations have proved to be closely related to the issues of marriage practices for the research.

Declan Quigley's article written in 1987 "Ethnicity Without Nationalism: The Newars of Nepal" explores the identity of the Newars as perceived by others as well as themselves (Quigley, 1987). The arguments made here are based on historical and political ideas and episodes before and after the Gorkhali conquests. He asserts that Newars not only lack the sense of nationalism but also ethnic solidarity. The reasons for this given by him are:

'...the divisive nature of caste and the particular way in which caste operates in Newar society – encouraging the formation of strong local groups and militating against the formation of wider groupings whether these might be based on territory, religion, caste, language or some other cultural carrier of ethnicity' (Quigley, 1987, p.152).

Among other reasons, he has described the supposed rift created between the Hindu and Buddhist sections of the Newars by the ruling Gorkhas whose agenda of Hinduisation led them to make political alliances with only Hindu Newars. Quigley has also rejected the

notion of social mobility being an accepted part of Newar caste structure. He says it is virtually impossible because of the strong residential character of the Newars, which he calls 'territorial introversion' (Quigley, 1987, p. 166) and their adherence to the ideal of isogamy. He culminates by saying that ethnicity was never an issue for the Newars until they were labeled as one after the Gorkhali invasion. Again, Quigley's work proved useful in understanding the basis of the Newar's outlook on their culture and tradition. This article has given some light to explaining the source of a strong ethnic bond among this people and their influence on maintaining caste purity through isogamy.

While ideas and arguments on caste and social structures influencing each other and having huge impacts on marriage practices are constantly being tossed around, more detailed studies on these have been done as well. Gerard Toffin's research on the *guthi* institution has led to many a detailed description of their complex structure and mechanisms in his 'From Kin to Caste: The Role of *Guthis* in Newar Society and Culture' a chapter from his book "Newar Society: City, Village and Periphery". He has said that *guthis* have played a vital role in the development of the religious, cultural and other charitable institutions of Newar social life, starting as early as the Lichhavi period. While these are common to all Newars, their internal workings and structures are further complicated by the uniqueness of each caste based on their occupational and economical backgrounds. Since this work is fairly recent, Toffin has given his take on current situations of the *guthi* associations in the country. His findings reveal an undeniable decline of this institution, especially in the cities. The reasons for this change are a combination of several factors, mostly relating to modernism. According to his analysis, those factors have been cited as increase in mobility and movement of the population to other parts of the city or the outskirts, a decline in religious importance and interest among the people, a lack of and problems of financing to run the *guthis* including loss of support from the state with land endowments as financial support, and simply due to internal quarrels and disagreements. All these factors are responsible for the closing of more and more *guthis* every year. A breakdown in the *guthi* systems of Kathmandu and Patan was also documented by Quigley (Quigley, 1987). The study of *guthis* was important for this research because of its strong influence on the marriage practices of the Newars. Toffin's

work however, does not cover the issues of marriage, and therefore can only be related in terms of the changing conditions of the *guthis* themselves.

Toffin's books also delves into many social and cultural aspects of Newar groups like the Maharjans or Jyapus (farmer caste), Paharis (a peripheral group living on the outskirts of Kahtmandu), Chitrakars (painter caste), Balami (wood-cutter caste), Rajopadhyaya Brahmans and briefly on the Manandhars. Intricate details on their social organizations have been discussed with comparative evaluations made with other Newar and non-Newar groups. Brief descriptions on marriage practices and inter-caste relations of some of these groups have also proved useful for the current study.

Gopal Singh Nepali's "The Newars: An Ethno-sociological Study of a Himalayan Community" is a groundbreaking empirical study on caste structure, religious life, social structure and customs and economic conditions of the Newars. The book contains detailed descriptions on the society and culture of the Newars in general. The chapters on marriage, kinship and family have been found to be most useful for the current study. With detailed descriptions of rituals, ceremonies and customs, the book contributes for a greater understanding of the cultural identity of the people. The historical beginnings and analysis are more speculative, but is successful in creating a clear picture of origin of the Newars (Nepali, 1965).

Robert Levy's ethnographic study of the city of Bhaktapur entitled "Mesocosm: Hinduism and the Organization of a Traditional Newar City in Nepal" is a monumental work produced on the Newars. This book is mainly concerned with the symbolic order of the city, and how each caste contributes to create that symbolic world of Bhaktapur. The author's detailed analysis into the religious world of rituals and festivals and how these help create the feeling of sacredness to its people is explored. The internal organization of the community itself is also dealt with briefly like the family and marriage systems.

Studies about the cultural traditions of the Manandhars focusing on details of their religious customs and rituals, *guthi* organizations, marriage practices and initiation rites have been

documented by many authors. While these works also focus on socio-cultural aspects of the Manandhars, detailed research on their historical beginnings have also been carried out by writer Jit Bahadur Manandhar. His research has uncovered many early versions of the name 'Manandhar' believed to have a historical link to the caste. Names such as 'Mandhari', 'Mandhar', 'Manodhar', 'Manadhar' have been found in ancient documents and carvings stored in temples dating back to the Lichhavi era. All these suggest engineering, building of thatched roofs of houses, roads etc as occupations of the possible ancestors of the Manandhars.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

The nature of the research is exploratory as well as explanatory. While the study has disclosed demographic information on the subjects such as settlement, education, occupation and marital status, it has also explored the frequencies in exogamous and endogamous marriages among the Manandhars, their attitudes towards traditional values and changing beliefs amongst their community, the changes that are occurring in the marriage practices and their views on divorce and remarriage. The research is explanatory in the sense that it has tried to analyze the reasons behind the changes as well as the continuities observed in cultural and social norms regarding marriage practices. The intent of the study is to find out why some sections of the sample have been found to adapt to such changes, hence giving rise to new trends in marriage, for example, the combined form of arranged and love marriages and exogamous marriages, while other sections have shown no such compliance to these kinds of changes.

Sociological tools like the household census (HHC) and marriage survey (MS) were used to collect the data. As the nature of data is both qualitative and quantitative, it was found that these methods were most suitable in collecting needed information for the research.

4.1 Sampling Method and Sample Size

The universe sample consists of the total number of households of the two *tols* selected from the eleven *tols*, namely Dhalashikwo and Phalchasa. Dhalashikwo consists of a total of 54 households, whereas, Phalchasa consists of 24 households. A household census (HHC) was collected from every household of each of these two *tols*. Based on the data derived from the

HHC, random selection was done amongst all ever married individuals of the universe sample based on sex and age. The sample thus derived through random selection here, were chosen for the marriage survey (MS). The total sample population for the MS is 80, among which 50 percent are male and the other 50 percent are female. The age groups chosen for this sample are 21-50 and 51-80 years of age for both male and female respondents. The sample was again divided equally based on age for both male and female. Therefore, amongst the total sample of 80 ever married individuals chosen for the MS, 40 are male and 40 are female. Among the total 40 male respondents, half are between the ages of 21-50 and half are between the ages of 51-80. The same method is applied for the female sample as well.

Table 3.1: Distribution of Respondents for Sample Survey by Age and Sex

Age group	Sex				Total
	Male	%	Female	%	
21-50	20	25	20	25	40
51-80	20	25	20	25	40
Total	40	50	40	50	80

Source: Field Research, 2008.

4.2 Tools Used for Data Collection

Both primary and secondary data were collected for the study. The secondary data was collected through consultation of related documents, books, thesis, previous research studies, journals, articles and government reports. These kinds of extensive literature on the subject matter were collected from various sources: libraries, the internet, and the Kendriya Manandhar Sangh (KMS).

As mentioned earlier, primary data was collected through household census (HHC) and marriage survey (MS) methods. The HHC covered the total number of households from the two *tols* selected for the research, Dhalashikwo and Phalchasa. The number of total households is 54 in Dhalashikwo and 24 in Phalchasa. An HHC form was prepared in which basic demographic information of all household members was collected, namely information

on number of household members, age, sex, marital status, education, occupation, age at marriage and residential status. The MS was conducted through face-to-face interviews.

The various tools used in the collection of primary data is as follows.

a) **Interview**

In-depth face-to-face interviews were carried out with respondents chosen for the MS. These respondents were asked to provide answers on semi-structured questionnaires.

b) **Key informant interviews**

Key informant interviews were also carried out to obtain more qualitative data on past marriage practices. Key informants were chosen based mainly on their age, all of whom were aged above 50. Elderly informants were chosen for their firsthand knowledge of traditional customs and practices which they were able to recount through recollection of past events and memories. Other aspects considered in the selection of the key informants were their knowledge and academic experiences in the cultural studies of the Manandhars. In total, 1 female and 9 male key informants were interviewed. The information derived from these interviews comprised of recollections of the past through their own personal experiences as well as those of others recounted through observation. The interviewees also recounted their knowledge on changes that have occurred in the marriage practices of the Manandhars. This tool proved useful in collecting qualitative data relating to traditional marriage practices dating as far back as 50 years.

4.3 Data Analysis

Information from each individual MS respondent was collected forming a general image of the Manandhar community of Kathmandu. Primary data was entered into the SPSS programme and analyzed. Frequency distribution and cross-tabulation methods were used to obtain output of the data. By making cross-tabulations in terms sex, age groups, educational backgrounds, occupation and marriage types, a comparison for differences among the two *tols* was also made. Qualitative data analysis was done by comparing information on current marriage practices to information on past marriage practices collected from the key informant

interviews and other reference materials and literature to analyze the change in these areas. It was also done by comparing the output of the data to sociological and anthropological theories on social change and continuity. Review of literature on social theories and previously carried out research studies on similar subject matters were consulted and analyzed in order to construct answers to the research questions formulated for the study.

4.4 Limitations of the Study

Since the study is limited to the Manandhar population of only two out of the eleven *tols* of Kathmandu, it will not give a general conclusive picture or output of the Manandhars in general or those living in other parts of the country. Due to the limited sample size, the data collected may not represent the whole population in general.

CHAPTER IV

STUDY AREA

The Manandhars are traditionally a caste of oil-pressers originating from the Kathmandu Valley. Although their numbers are now also concentrated in other parts like Kirtipur, Thimi, Bhaktapur and Banepa, their historical beginnings are found to be in Kathmandu, particularly in areas surrounding the palaces of former Newar rulers of the Valley (Nepali, 1965). Most of these areas are currently located in the vicinity surrounding New Road. Some of the names of these *tols* refer to the localities in which they are situated. The eleven *tols* currently existing in the social structure of the Manandhars are Daisa, Pukhudhyan, Tanlachi, Laksa, Nhusa, Wotu, Chosandhwo, Thaiti, Dhalashikwo, Phalchasa and Marudhwakha. Among them, the name Laksa is formed from the words *laku* and *sah*, *laku* meaning palace in Newari indicated its historic link with royalty. It is said to have been established by a Malla King near the palace for gifts of oil to be presented regularly to the Kumari Devi (Füerer-Haimendorf, 1956). Laksa is located in a neighbourhood heading south from the courtyard of Basantapur. Phalchasa and Nhusa are in Jhochhe, Daisa is located in Basantapur, Pukhudhyan in Pako. Marudhwakha is an offshoot of Chosandhwo *tol* and both are located in the Maru area. Dhalashikwo is in Jyatha, similarly, Wotu, Thaiti and Talachi (which is in Jyatha) are located in areas of their own name. Daisa and Chosandhwo are also said to have been involved in royal alliances in the past. It is said that King Pratap Malla married a girl from Daisa and presented her with many pieces of land which passed on to her descendants. Similarly, a member of the Chosandhwo also married a Malla princess whose kinsmen still have the right to attend an annual feast given by the Thakurjuju family, who are now ranked as Sheshyos or Shresthas (Füerer-Haimendorf, 1956). Although the *tol* originally used to designate the area around which the members lived, many families have now moved to other parts of the city, while still remaining a member of their ancestral *tol*.

Two of the existing eleven *tols* have been selected for study for this research. They are Dhalashikwo and Phalchasa. The units of analysis are the households belonging to each of the two *tols*.

Dhalashikwo *tol* is situated in the street adjoining Ason and Jyatha. Originally, all households that were part of Dhalashikwo *tol* lived in this particular area, whereas presently, only a small part still live there. Some of the old names of the streets like Talachi, Khachanani and Sanani are still in use among the local community of Jyatha, but are no longer familiar to the broader population of Kathmandu. Ten households have families in Jyatha while other households have moved to parts of Kathmandu and a few are in Patan and Bhaktapur.

Table 3.1: Distribution of Households of the Study Area in Kathmandu

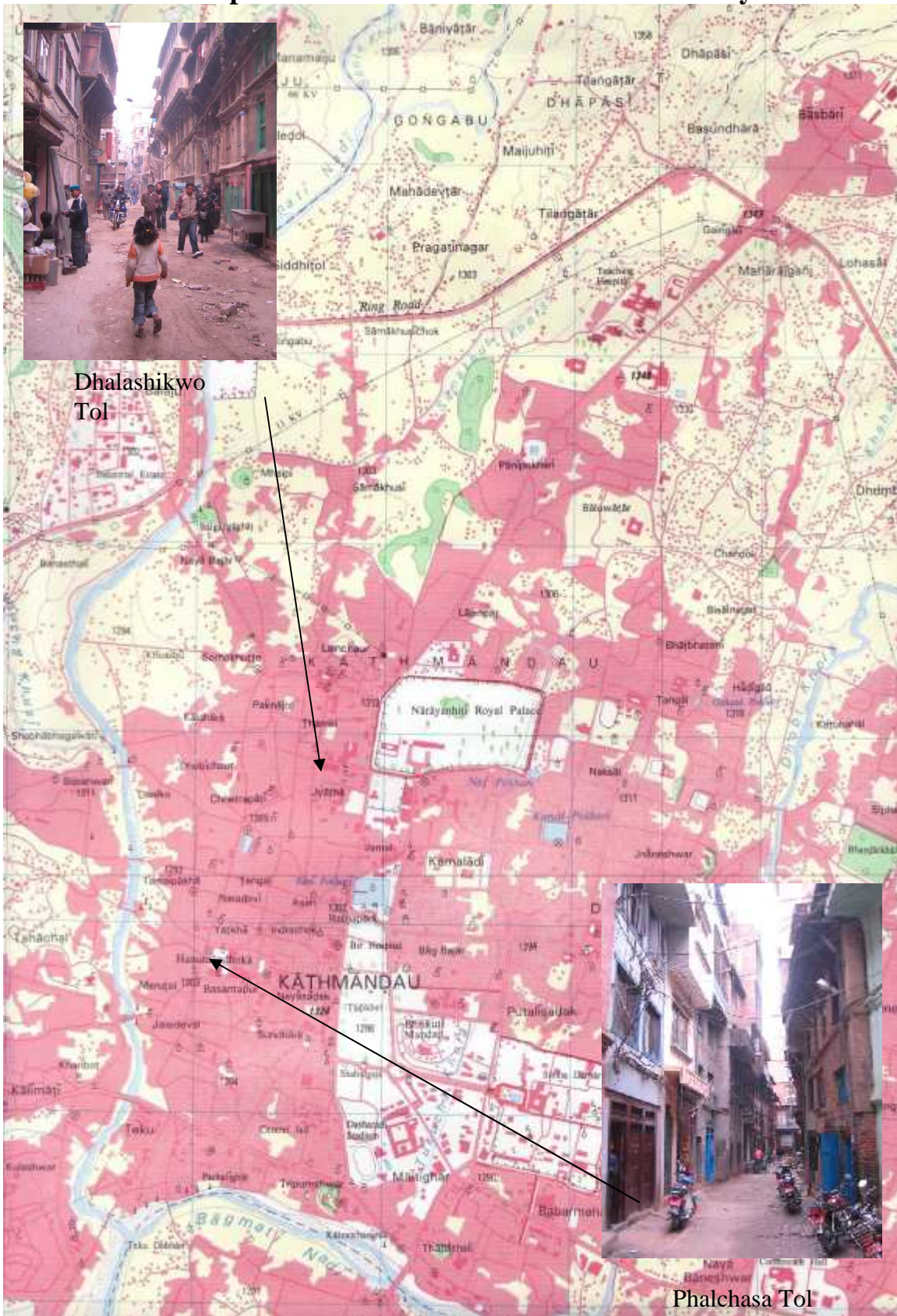
Dhalashikwo Tol		Phalchasa Tol	
Permanent Residence	No. of Households	Permanent Residence	No. of Households
Kathmandu District		Kathmandu District	
Baneshwor	1	Bansbari	3
Maharajgunj	2	Basundhara	1
Bhotahiti	1	Galkopakha	1
Bijeshwori	1	Jhonchhe	10
Gairidhara	1	Kamalpokhari	1
Mhaipi	3	Kuleshwor	1
Gyaneshwor	1	Maharajgunj	1
Hattigauda	2	Maitighar	1
Jyatha	10	Ombahal	1
Kalimati	1	Samakhusi	1
Kamal Pokhari	1	Sorukhutte	2
Khushibu	2	Lalitpur District	
Lagan	2	Sanepa	1
Naxal	1		
Naya Bazaar	3		
Samakhusi	2		
Sorukhutte	1		
Swayambhu	1		
Tukucha	4		
Tyauda	6		
Wotu	1		
Lalitpur District			
Lalitpur	2		
Patan	1		

Gwarko	2		
Sanepa	1		
Bhaktapur District	1		
TOTAL	54		24

Source: Field Research, 2008

Phalchasa is an offshoot of Daisa *tol* and is located in Jhochhe on the lane turning south towards Chikamugal. The oil mill of this *tol* still exists and is being run by the owner's family although it has fallen to disrepair. According to the proprietor, the machine used to make oil in the mill is of traditional type and has been in use since the last 50 years. Like the other *tols*, Phalchasa also houses only a few of the families of the *tol* currently living in its original location in Jhonchhe. There are 10 households in Jhonchhe currently and the rest of the 14 households have settled in different parts of Kathmandu.

Map: Location of Two Tols selected for Study



CHAPTER V

NEWAR SOCIETY AND THE MANANDHARS

In order to understand continuity and change in the socio-cultural context of a society, it is essential to explore the social and cultural background of the society first. While social change is a continuous process taking place in every culture and society, study of the traditional aspects is as important as that of the present conditions in order to fully identify the nature and pattern of the changes that are taking place. This chapter will include a brief description of the Newars and the Newar culture in general, followed by a description of the Manandhars of Kathmandu Valley. It can be assumed that the basic customs and traditions of the Manandhars are more or less the same as the basic Newar customs which will be described below, while distinct characteristics of the Manandhars will also be mentioned. The content of customs and traditions in this chapter is derived from in-depth interviews from key informants and ethnographic data collected from published texts regarding the culture, history and society of the Newars, bearing deeper significance to the subject matter of the study.

5.1 History of Newar Origin

Although many of the studies done on the prehistoric beginnings of the Newars have been inconclusive, there are still various theories and arguments put forth by researchers and anthropologists on the matter. Robert Levy (1990) has sketched out a rough history of the Newars in his ethnographic work called *Mesocosm: Hinduism and the Organization of a Traditional Newar City in Nepal*. It is his belief that the migration of a Mongoloid, Tibeto-Burman speaking people into the ancient valley, now Kathmandu, came in close contact and interacted with an aboriginal population already living there, forming a society called the Kiratas and henceforth, laying the foundation of the Newari culture of the Kathmandu Valley. This society was again infiltrated during the first or second century A.D. by an Aryan race from Northern India, the Licchavis, thus replacing predominantly Himalayan customs

with Sanskrit models. The synthesis of these two races and their customs gave birth to the Newari culture and language. He has quoted Prayag Raj Sharma, citing that the Newars are “an intermixture of Aryan and Mongoloid strains resulting between the unions of the Kiratas and the Aryans migrating from the plains of India” (Levy, 1990, p.36). After much political dispute and confusion within the Valley, the Licchavi dynasty came to an end in the ninth century, creating further confusion to produce the emergence of the Malla dynasty. It was during this time that the Newars and the Newari culture flourished, giving rise to the three medieval towns of Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur, each evolving into a centre of a small Newar kingdom. Levy writes:

“During these centuries, the Newars created architecture; sculpture in wood, stone, and metal; music; drama; a multitude of beautiful crafts; and domestic goods—and above all they created a complex public religious and social drama, for which the cities became the great stages” (Levy, 1990, p.14).

The three Newar kingdoms failed to remain united and continued on as separate states ruled by their own kings and maintaining their own customs. By the end of the eighteenth century, they fell to the conquests of the Gorkha leader, Prithvi Narayan Shah, who eventually conquered other neighbouring territories and created modern day Nepal.

This new conquest of the Valley was to bring the biggest change for its people. As put by Levy, this time the conquerors did not integrate into the Newari way of life as was the case of the Licchavi invasion. Instead, the Gorkhals declared Kathmandu as its capital, ‘Nepali’ as the new national language and the Newars became ‘just one “ethnic group” among others’ (Levy, 1990, p.15) of an expanded territory. They were allowed to continue with their customary and religious lives without much imposition of change or restrictions by the Gorkhali rulers, apparently for fear of revolution. Nevertheless, since then, the Newars have adapted to change and yet been able to maintain their unique culture to this day.

5.2 Caste Hierarchy and Caste Structure

As mentioned earlier, caste hierarchy is an integral part of the Newar social structure. The original assignment of caste to the Valley people has been widely accepted today to have taken place in the fourteenth century by the Newar King Jayasthiti Malla, with the help of five Brahmin priests from India (Nepali, 1965). He designated the people in four *varnas*, dividing them into sixty-four constituent castes based on their occupations. It is said that the Buddhist society at the time, who did not possess caste characters underwent a major change and were slowly influenced to adopt the rigid caste system of the Hindus which affected a large part of the common people and not just the aristocracy (Fürer-Haimendorf, 1956). This also explains the classification of Newars being made on the basis of the two religions. However, Quigley has pointed out that this division based on religion does not hold much value amongst the Newars themselves today, as both Hindu and Buddhist Newars worship deities of both pantheons and share common rituals (Quigley, 1987). Fürer-Haimendorf also writes:

“Most of the important Hindu deities are recognized as ‘protectors’ of Buddha and his doctrine, and their cult forms part of the ritual performed at the great Buddhist shrines. Similarly Hindu temples are open to Buddhist worshippers, and at the great annual feasts Buddhist and Hindu Newars co-operate in the same ritual activities” (Fürer-Haimendorf, 1956, p.18).

He points out that the basic division between Buddhist and Hindu must have only begun at the time when the Hindus from India settled in the Valley and some Newar sections started taking services from Brahman priests.

Today, the existing hierarchic order of both Hindu and Buddhist Newars resembles that of the Indian castes. Each hierarchic group considers themselves as a ‘social entity’. Castes belonging to the same rank employ priests of the same rank, take part in similar ritual activities and enjoy the same social and ritual privileges (Fürer-Haimendorf, 1956). All the castes are endogamous, although not to the extent of the Indian castes. Exogamy among some groups is permitted but only with castes of the same or sometimes higher rank. All the

castes are extremely pollution conscious in this regard and strictly follow rules on inter-dining only with same rank castes.

Table 5.1: The Newar Caste Hierarchy

	Caste Hierarchy	Hindu	Buddhist
I	Priestly castes	Deo Brahmin	Gubh ju/Bare
II	High castes	Chathari Shrestha (4) Pācthari Shrestha Other Shrestha	Uray
III	Farmer caste		Jyapu
IV	Service castes	Painters, Potters, Oil Pressers, Barbers, Dyers, etc.	
V	Castes from whom water many not be taken	Butchers, Tailors	
VI	Untouchable castes	Sweepers	

Source: Declan Quigley, 1987.

Table 5.1 shows the caste hierarchy of the Newars based on occupation and religion. It shows the priests forming the highest echelon, traders occupying the upper caste ranks, the farmers occupying the upper and middle caste ranks, the artisans, entertainers and musicians in the lower clean caste and lower caste ranks and lastly the butchers, sweepers and leather workers as untouchable castes.

Fürer-Haimendorf has also expressed surprise over the extent to which the entire Newar community has accepted the principle of caste hierarchy, including the Buddhist section. The other Buddhist communities of Nepal like the Sherpas have no such preoccupations with pollution or inter-dining or even inter-caste marriages. All Newars on the other hand are very conscious of maintenance of caste status. While social controls and authority to maintain status is probably said to have existed during the time of the Newar rulers, it has now been abolished with the abolition of caste discrimination by law.

Table 5.2: Newar Population by Caste and Religion

S.NO.	Classification of Newar Caste	Percentage	Total Population	Religion
1	Jyapu (Maharjan)	40.9	469,532	Baudha
2	Shyeshyo (Shrestha)	19.4	222,793	Shaiva, Baudha
3	Gubhaju, Bare (Bajracharya)	9.1	104,109	Baudha
4	Uray (Udas)	4.5	52,055	Baudha
5	Sayami (Manandhar)	3.3	37,479	Baudha
6	Naya (Khadgi)	2.5	29,151	Baudha, Shaiva
7	Jogi, Kapali (Kushle)	1.4	15,616	Kaplik
8	Gathu (Mali)	1.2	13,534	Baudha
9	Pwo(n) (Pode)	1.2	13,534	Baudha, Shaakta
10	Chhipa (Ranjitkar)	1.1	12,493	Baudha
11	Nau (Napit)	1.0	11,452	Baudha
12	Khusa (Tandukar)	0.7	8,329	Baudha
13	Kau (Nakarmi)	0.7	8,329	Baudha
14	Chyamkhala (Chyame)	0.6	7,288	Baudha, Shaakta
15	Pu (Chitrakar)	0.5	5,206	Baudha
16	Dha Brahm (Rajopadhya)	0.5	5,206	Shaakta, Baidik
17	Tyapaya (Byanjankar)	0.4	4,164	Baudha
18	Duee (Rajbahak)	0.4	4,164	Baudha
19	Saapu (Gopali)	1.6	18,000	Baudha, Shaiva
20	Deshar	0.6	7,000	Baudha
21	Prajapati	3.5	40,000	Baudha
22	Shivabhakti	0.1	600	Baudha
23	Rajthala	0.9	10,000	Baudha
24	Karanjit (Bha)	0.4	4,164	Baidik Tantra
25	Halagulu	0.0	100	Prakritik
26	Gamaal	0.2	2,000	Baidik Tantra
27	Christian Newar	0.9	10,000	Christian
28	Kulu	0.0	100	Baidik Tantra
29	Muslim Newar	0.4	5,000	Muslim
30	Rajkarnikar	0.1	780	Baudha
31	Balami	0.3	4,000	Baudha
32	Dhobi	1.3	15,000	Baudha
33	Pae	0.5	6,000	Prakritik
			1,147,178	

Source: Padam Shrestha, 2062 B.S.

Table 5.2 presents the Newar population of Nepal according to caste and religion although this table is not presented in hierarchic order of caste. The largest group among the Newars are the Jyapus, comprising 40.9 percent of the total population of Newars. All other castes comprise of relatively smaller groups. The Sheshyos or Shresthas come in second with 19.4 percent, the Bajracharyas third with 9.1 percent, the Uray or Tuladhars in fourth with 4.5 percent and the *Sāmis* come in fifth with 3.3 percent. The rest of the groups are smaller in comparison. Majority of the castes follow the Buddhist religion or Baudha.

5.3 Guthi Organizations

The Newar *guthis* are social institutions or “associations devoted to religious or philanthropic activities” (Toffin, 2005, p.1). Toffin has divided *guthis* in three categories, he writes:

“...first, *guthis* set up for the worship of a particular deity or the celebration of a festival; second, funeral associations; and third, territorial segments or ward groups, mainly linked with music, but also in some cases (among craftsmen) with workshops” (Toffin, 2005, p.3).

The first type is called *digu dyah guthi* or *deo puja guthi* (in Newari) or *dewali guthi* (in Nepali) and the second *si guthi*, whereas the third will have names according the type of association. *Guthis* hold a very important place in Newar social and cultural life and is an essential feature of all Newars, Hindu and Buddhist, of all hierarchic orders (Toffin, 2005). They are responsible in regulating several aspects of the social and religious and even economic lives of the Newars. While some of them are based on kin membership but most are not. They denote status to an individual in traditional Newar society, especially the *digu dyah guthi* and are a way of strengthening social relations as well. In the face of disagreements, they also promote cooperation in social life through dialogue and discussion. Most of the *guthis* based on kin membership are compulsory while others are optional. One Newar can become a member of several *guthis* simultaneously and form an extensive network of such associations. All in all, *guthis* are indicative of the complex social structure and urban character of the Newars. Sometimes, disagreements between *guthiars* can lead to the breakdown of the association.

The *guthi* association which has a direct link with the marriage practice is the *digu dyah guthi* also called *deo puja guthi*. The *deo puja guthi* is “a grouping of agnatic kin whose main function is to worship a lineage deity called *digu dyah* or *kul devata* in Nepali, and it comprises of all the households of a local lineage” (Quigley, 1987, p.160). The only criterion for membership into this *guthi* is being part of a lineage by birth. There are no alternatives for joining another *deo puja guthi*, the only exception being for women, who are ritually admitted into the *guthi* of her husband after marriage, and thus automatically leaving that of her father. There are many rules pertaining to the membership of married women into the *deo puja guthi* also, mainly that of caste purity and kinship. The only criteria is that she must not already belong to the same *deo puja guthi* as of her husband and she must belong to the Manandhar caste. Nowadays, women of other castes, both Newars and non-Newars are also accepted into the *deo puja guthi*, which is a fairly recent trend that did not exist in the old days. Not all *deo puja guthis* have adopted this change. It is said that there are still some *tols* which have not allowed any woman of inter-caste or inter-ethnic marriage to be ritually accepted into the *digu dyah guthi* (interview with key informant). All informants have said that every *guthi* still stand by the rule that women of ‘untouchable’ status will not be accepted.

The *digu dyah* is represented by stone and metal statues of the Buddhist deities. It is a group of crude stones called the *lwon digu dyah* which are situated in a field owned by the *guthi* or can be found scattered in various public parts of the city and temples. Some are even said to be located in government court-yards and the grounds of the royal palace (Fürer-Haimendorf, 1956). As the main annual *puja* of the *digu dyah* is always performed at the site of the *lwon digu dyah*, members of the respective *guthi* are given special privilege to enter the royal grounds to perform the annual *puja*. Because the *lwon digu dyah* usually does not show forming any image, the *guthi* also possesses a gold or gilded idol of the *digu dyah* called the *lun digu dyah* and this is placed alongside the *lwon digu dyah* during the annual *puja*. During other times, the *lun digu dyah* is placed at the home of the *thakali*. Several *guthis* or *tols* may share or worship the same *lwon digu dyah* but each one has their own *lun digu dyah*.

The 'grouping of agnatic kin' (Quigley, 1987) of the *deo puja guthi* refer to the *phukis* or the extended family members of the patrilineal group, and as a social and ritual unit, they are responsible for the cult of the *digu dyah*. Normally, there is no general rule to the size of a *deo puja guthi* and it might consist of ten joint families or more (Fürer-Haimendorf, 1956). But among the Manandhars and other castes, a fission in the *guthi* occurs periodically. The rule of the split is applied when the limit of descendents of each ancestor upto four generations is exceeded. These naturally occurring splits usually take place when young men separate from their father's households and achieve the right to have full membership in the *guthi* (Fürer-Haimendorf, 1956).

All the members of the *guthi* come together during important rituals and *pujas*. The responsibilities of aiding each other during marriage ceremonies, funerals and observing birth and death pollution are important norms of every *deo puja guthi*. The annual *puja* takes place during the month of Baishakh (April-May) and other smaller *pujas* during Phagun or Chaitra (February-March or March-April) and Bhadra (August-September). During the annual *deo puja*, all the *phuki* members perform rituals with the *lun digu dyah* placed alongside the *lwon digu dyah* and prepare a feast which is consumed jointly by all members. These feasts are a way of giving 'ritual expression to the solidarity to the group' (Fürer-Haimendorf, 1956, p.29) and arrangements of the feasts falls in turn to each *guthi* member according to his position in the *guthi* roll, i.e., his age.

The rituals of admitting a newly married bride or a new born child into the *guthi* are also performed during the first annual feast and *puja*. An admission fee and a month's prior notice are required for both bride and child. During the old days, the fee for a woman's admission was one goat, one pot of curd and one silver coin. Today, the fee differs according to each *guthi* rule and is paid in cash for both bride and child. Should either one die before the ritual admission takes place, the *phuki* members will not observe mourning, and as long as a woman has not been admitted into her husband's *guthi*, the *phuki* are also not under any obligation to pay a ceremonial visit upon the birth of her child (Fürer-Haimendorf, 1956).

While the decline of the *guthi* system has been on the rise for some time now, owing to modernism, recession in religious concerns and new egalitarian ideas of the younger generations, newer forms of associations are forming which are different from *guthis* (Toffin, 2005). These associations are collective caste associations (Toffin, 2005). According to Toffin, they “claim recognition from the government, are formed to preserve the caste’s own customs, to pursue programmes of community uplift for their poorer members, and to defend their specific interests”. Some examples are the *Jyapu Samaj* established by the Maharjans of Lalitpur, the *Citrakar Samaj* comprising of all Citrakars of Kathmandu and Nepal, and the Kendriya Manandhar Sangh, including all Manandhars of Kathmandu and other parts of Nepal.

5.4 Marriage

The general marriage practice of the Newars is very much distinct from other orthodox Hindus of Kathmandu even though the religious ceremonies involved are mostly based on the Hindu marriage ceremonies. The Newar marriage practice is both ritually and socially elaborate. For Newar women, the significance of marriage is much deeper because of the custom of the ‘mock marriage’ performed as a rite of passage during their pre-pubescent years. The mock marriage and the proceeding ‘real marriage’ to a man have considerable effects on their social status. The marriage practices and marriage types of the Newars will be discussed below.

5.4.1 The *Ihi* (Bel Bibaha)

A discussion on Newar marriage practices would not be complete without first examining the Newar rite of passage for girls called *Ihi* or Bel Bibaha in Nepali. *Ihi* is a ‘mock marriage’ wherein a pre-menstruating girl is ritually ‘married’ to the god Narayana. ‘*Ihi*’ is the old Newari word for marriage and is currently used only to denote the *Ihi* ceremony itself. This marriage must be done before a girl’s menstruation begins, usually anytime between the ages of five and eleven. Some Newars have the belief that *Ihi* must be done only during ages with

odd numbers (Manandhar, 2057). Not all Newars follow this custom. The Brahman Rajopadhyayas and some lower caste Newars do not perform *Ihi* for their girls.

The legend behind the *Ihi* ceremony helps explain its significance. It is said that Parvati, daughter of Himavan (the deity of the Himalayas) received Nepal (Kathmandu Valley) as dowry when she was married to Shiva. One day, she was walking through the valley and came upon a woman weeping over a man's dead body. Parvati asked why she was crying and the woman replied that the man was her husband and her life had no meaning now that her husband was dead. Parvati, feeling pity for the woman, asked Shiva to find a way to save the women of her natal land from the sorrows of widowhood. Shiva then arranged for all the women of the Valley to be married to Narayana, with himself as the witness, so that they would never have to be widows as long as they lived (Levy, 1999).

“The legend not only emphasizes a maneuver for avoiding the ritual disabilities of widowhood but places the scene in the setting of Parvati's natal home, her *tha: che(n)*, the setting where a woman is relatively indulged child and daughter, rather than being in the greatly contrasting condition of wife and mother in the home of her husband's family and in the circle of his phuki. The women of “Nepal”, that is, the Newar women of the Kathmandu Valley, are Parvati's sisters, not her sisters-in-law” (Levy, 1990, p.666).

Levy's research in Bhaktapur has revealed that the *Ihi* ceremony entails the marriage of pre-menstrual girls with Vishnu/Narayana. The main images used during the ceremony are the *bya* or the bel fruit (in Nepali) and a small gold plate with an engraved image on it, each of them held in each hand of every girl partaking in the ceremony. The bel fruit represents Shiva and the image on the gold plate represents Narayana. The marriage of the girls here, is done with the image on the gold plate and not with the bel fruit itself. The ceremony is astrologically planned by the priest and the girl is given as a gift to the god Narayana (by the girl's father or another male member of her family) at the exact astrological time, signifying the ritual of *kanya dan*. Shiva or the bel fruit is the witness to the marriage.

However, among some castes of Kathmandu, the representation of the bel fruit, the gold plate and ‘groom’ to whom the girls are married to is different than that in Bhaktapur as described

by Levy. According to their beliefs, the girls are said to be married to Suwarna Kumar who is represented by the bel fruit (Gellner, 2001). Suwarna Kumar is said to be immortal, and the bel fruit symbolizes lasting life as it does not shrivel or rot (Manandhar, 2057 B.S.). The presence of Shiva as a witness is not part of their beliefs.

Whatever the ritual representations or beliefs of the people, the symbolic significance of the *Ihi* is the same for all, i.e. it avoids the Hindu custom of marriage of pre-menstrual girls and it lessens, to some extent, the stigmatization and disabling effects of widowhood. This custom has no doubt, brought some liberty and freedom to Newar women and their status in a patriarchal Hindu society in comparison to other orthodox Hindu castes of Nepal and India. This custom also has implications of the 'real' or actual marriage ceremony of women in later life (after menstruation) with a mortal. The traditional Hindu marriage act called the *kanya dan*, wherein a virgin girl is given as a gift or offering, is omitted from the marriage ceremony with a man. The girl is thus not 'given' to the man, as she has already been given away to a god. This also has implications after her marriage to a human, where she is given relative freedom to divorce her husband whenever she pleases (Nepali, 1965). Nepali writes,

“Marriage is, however, not regarded as a sacrament, though it involves worship of several Hindu deities. They refuse to give such a recognition on the ground that the real marriage of a Newar girls is always with God Narain through the ceremony of 'Yihee'. A Newar woman can, therefore, in theory, leave her husband as many times as she likes. In the event of her husband's death she does not become a widow, since her real husband, God Narain is immortal” (Nepali, 1965, p.198).

Pradhan also reiterates this notion by arguing that “the relationship created by the exchange of areca [betel] nuts [in human marriage] is not indissoluble. The relationship almost seems contractual” (Pradhan, 1986, p.167).

Wealthy families perform *Ihi* of girls in their own houses, while those who can not afford a ceremony at home have their children take part in public or group ceremonies organized and financed by the whole community.

Another important rite performed for Newar girls is the *barah tegu* or *barah chwonegu*. Levy has called it a 'menarche ceremony', as it is performed either during the first menstruation of a girl, wherein it is termed as *barah chwonegu* or before that, which is termed as *barah tegu*. Like the *Ihi*, it can be performed in a group or separately. Literally it means 'placing a barrier' (Gellner, 2001, p.261) as it involves the confinement of the girl for twelve days in a room where all windows are boarded so that no sunlight may enter. She is barred from looking upon any male during this time, as it is believed that she is a source of danger to them (Levy, 1990). At the end of twelve days, she is shown ritually to the sun and only after this, other males are safe to look upon her. While some Newars believe that this rite is also a marriage of young girls to the sun god Surya, thus making her human husband is her third, others have differed to this and claim that it has only to do with menstruation. In the orthodox Hindu ritual of *gufa rakhne*, girls are confined in the same way on the onset of their first menstruation, after which they can consummate their marriage, if they are already married. The Newar ritual is thus modeled on this pattern, in which Surya takes the place of the human husband (Gellner, 2001). Gellner also argues that the confinement may also represent the girls being freed from the state of being impure during their menstrual periods or simply to 'defuse the danger of menstruation' (Gellner, 2001, p.264). He has quoted Michael Allen, saying that both *Ihi* and *barah* rites "seem as much concerned with controlling a potentially dangerous, perhaps even destructive, force as with rendering the girls pure" (Gellner, 2001, p.264). Gellner's own research also revealed that menstruating girls could then carry out their normal everyday tasks, only refraining from certain things like entering the god room or giving money and uncooked rice to anyone from her hands. He has also said that this may not be true for all castes because among Hindu Newars, more strict restrictions are still imposed on menstruating women.

5.4.2 Nature of the Newar Marriage

A basic characteristic of the marriage practice of the Newars is that it is strictly endogamous, even among the sub-castes. There are a number of rules and restrictions on who one can marry which are based on kinship. First and foremost, one may not marry any member of the lineages of one's parents and grandparents. Marriage is also forbidden among members of

the same *deo puja guthi*, who usually comprise of *phukis*. While the general rule for permissible marriages is upto seven generations, in practice consent is given to upto the fifth generation. Nepali has written that many Newars started marrying a woman from the third or fourth generation, if the relation was traced through the female side only. This was due to a scarcity of brides experienced by the communities (Nepali, 1965). Similar conditions were also experienced by Newars of Bhaktapur, according to Levy, who also waived the rule of observing a seven generation gap to some extent (Levy, 1990). In most cases, claims are made that kinships are no longer carried in living memory as far back as seven generations and if conditions allow for a good marriage, it can be made possible.

Quigley is of the view that the Newar ideal of isogamy prevailed due to the historic political events before and after the Gorkha invasion in the Kathmandu Valley. His hypothesis is that

“...because of the constant flow of outsiders into the Kathmandu Valley, due to its strategic position for trade, marriage was sought locally so that accusations could not be levied that alliances were being made with strangers of unknown status. This became even more important after the Gorkhali invasion when the Newars were obliged to demonstrate the purity of their own sub-castes in the face of their orthodox conquerors” (Quigley, 1987, p.164).

Hence, the custom of marrying into one's own group where purity of caste and lineage is guaranteed was intensified. The *guthi* system also enforces the preservation of isogamy (as has been mentioned earlier in this chapter), a mark of status in the eyes of the public. The Newar social setting is one where anonymity can be harmful, as the public knowledge of one's genuineness of caste is one way to ensure the future prospect of a favourable marital alliance (Quigley, 1987).

The role of the *guthis* in marriage is always present. The rules of isogamy do not allow marriages between two different hierarchical groups, let alone two different ethnic groups. While these were never uncommon in the past, they were rare among Newars, and the situation has been fast changing as more and more inter-caste marriages are taking place. However, by ignoring the rules of isogamy, the consequences are as severe as excommunication from the caste or *guthi* in the case of some castes. Generally, if a man

marries a woman of lower caste, the new bride is barred from entering into the husband's *deo puja guthi* and taking part in deity rituals. Sometimes the children born from such a union are also barred, and in some cases, only the mother is said to have been denied these rights. These rules are said to defer among the various Newar castes. Toffin (2003) has said of the Chitrakars that more and more exogamous marriage have been taking place in recent times. In fact, almost half of the Chitrakars living in Kathmandu are involved in marriages with a different caste, namely castes like Ranjitkar, Manandhar, Pradhan, Tuladhar and Shakya. Some were even involved with non-Newar castes like Brahmans and Chhetris (Toffin, 2003). The same conditions did not however apply to the Maharjans, who, he said, are highly endogamous and marrying outside the caste results in loss of reputation or *ijjat*. For the Maharjans of Kathmandu, even hypergamous marriages or marrying a higher caste like Shresthas is incomprehensible.

Among the Manandhars in recent times, these rules are seen to be challenged and some *guthis* have been known to allow brides of other castes into the *deo puja guthi*. These are also signs of change in marriage practices.

5.4.3 Types of Marriage

In the past, almost all marriages were arranged. The process for an arranged marriage begins when either a family member or a friend puts forward a recommendation of a prospective spouse and an informal discussion is held regarding the qualities of the concerned bride or groom. While the usually considered qualities of the individual such as being good natured, educated, physically attractive are thus contemplated, other criterion regarding the family are far more important to make a marriage possible. For example, the reputations of the family members and extended kin or *phuki* are taken into account. Issues such as immorality, crime, family illnesses, especially mental illnesses and insanity can affect the desirability for marriage (Levy, 1990). Once an informal decision is made, a person representing the boy's side of the family is selected from among his kin or friends as the 'go-between' or *lami*, who will begin formal talks of with the girl's family. Additionally, a kind of investigation is also carried out regarding the potential bride or groom and their family background. But this is

usually the case only if the family's social reputation is in question or in the case of an exogamous marriage. The issue of anonymity of a family in this case will also induce the act of investigation of lineage roots, the person's *guthi* associations and caste purity.

When all is believed to be satisfactory, the *lami* approaches the girl's family with a formal proposal. Once both the sides have come to a mutual decision, a series of symbolic events are staged proceeding to the final marriage ceremony. These events begin with the *lakha tegu* ceremony, where the boy's household will send betel nuts and other gifts of traditional sweets called *lakhamari*, to the girl's house signifying the finalization of the betrothal. Only the *lami* and one other person from the groom's side take part in the ceremony. The amount and variety of gifts sent to the future bride for this ceremony varies with caste and economic means of the household. Among the Manandhars, the variations in this have changed through different times causing much debate and controversy. Traditionally, the *lakha* that was sent was very simple, where only twelve big pieces of the *lakhamari* were sent. Eventually, wealthier households started to increase the amount and variety of gifts sent as *lakha*, probably by emulating other higher and wealthier castes. The assortments were endless, including betel nuts, vermilion powder, varieties of fruits, nuts and sweets, bridal garments and accessories, curd, cakes and ritual items for *puja*. The size of the *lakhamari* itself has increased than what it was before. This trend posed financial strain on the poorer households, causing widespread criticism and dispute over the matter. Presently, the Kendriya Manandhar Sangh has made specific rules on how much *lakha* should be included for the ceremony. These days, only specific amounts of only the most essential items are permitted to be included as *lakha* and in many cases, members of the *guthi* are usually present for inspection at the time when the *lakha* is sent.

On the day of the wedding ceremony, the bridegroom's family will lead a marriage procession to the bride's house. Here, the groom is not part of the procession as it is his parents who are the ones who will fetch the bride and not him. These days, the groom is sent to receive the bride himself while his mother remains at home in order to prepare to receive the bride. Among some castes in the past, there was a tradition of having a man dress up as a Tibetan who would lead the procession (among others who carried worshipping articles) to

the bride's house. This was said to have been done to impress the bride's party by implying that the groom's family were involved in business and trade in Tibet, thus suggesting their wealthy status (Nepali, 1965). This practice was prevalent among the Manandhars as well. During the fifties, they had risen to importance in commerce and many had acquired wealth through businesses in Tibet, which was previously monopolized by the *Urays* (von Furer-Haimendorf, 1956). Nowadays, this custom has ceased to exist.

At the bride's house, the members of the procession are welcomed and served food and drinks. A ceremony of presenting the bride with gifts by family members will begin, culminating in a ceremony called the *gwe kyagu* in which the bride presents betel nuts to her kin, signifying that her time to leave has arrived. The *gwe* or betel nuts for this ceremony are provided by the groom's family. The betel nuts presented to the parents are specially sewn inside a decorative cloth and is called *putu gwe*. After this ceremony, the bride leaves her home with the marriage procession to be taken to the groom's house. Sometimes, the bride is not taken directly to the groom's house and must make a stop at another house first. This is called *sisi tegu*. In the case of the Manandhars, the *sisi tegu* ceremony is only carried out if three brides are being married into the same household, in which case one of the brides will be taken to another location or house while the other two are taken to the grooms' house directly. The third bride will only be taken to the groom's house the next day. This custom stems from the superstition that odd numbers bring bad luck.

The bride is then ritually entered into the house for the first time by the women of the household, which is called *bhamcha dukaygu*. It is only after this that the actual marriage ceremonies of ritually uniting the bride and groom will begin. The first ceremony is called the *hwongkegu* meaning 'causing to be joined together' (Levy, 1990). These days, some families have also adopted the custom of *swayambar*, which was previously not followed by Newars. The *swayambar* is performed at the bride's house before the *hwonkegu* ceremony is to take place at the groom's house. The *hwonkegu* ceremony features a series of rituals. The details of the rituals may vary according to caste, as descriptions from various writers like Nepali and Levy suggest. One important feature of the ceremony mentioned by both is the bride presenting the groom with betel nuts. While this is carried out in the case of the

Manandhars as well, the central part for them has been described as the ritual of joining the heads of the bride and groom by the *thakali*. The ceremony following the *hwonkegu* is the sharing of food from the same plate by bride and groom called *sabja nakegu*. The bride is also introduced to the groom's family members wherein she presents each one with betel nuts and in turn is presented with tokens of money.

The next day, the bride's family and kin visit her in the groom's house bringing her gifts, sweets and money. This ceremony is called the *khwa swegu* which signifies the parents and kin of the bride coming to 'see her face' or see how she is doing in her new home. Here too, she presents each member with betel nuts, receiving money and gifts in exchange. This custom has now been eliminated from the marriage system of marriage of the Manandhars by the Kendriya Manandhar Sangh in order to curtail the heavy expenses needed during this ceremony.

After this ceremony, the bride is taken back to her natal home by her family and she remains there until the groom is invited, along with the *lami*, to fetch her. Ritualistically for the Manandhars, this is as important in the marriage process as any other because it is the groom's turn to exchange betel nuts. The ceremony is called *jilaja dukagu*, the groom is introduced to the bride's side of the family, and he receives money in exchange of betel nuts from the bride's kin. He presents *putu gwe* to the bride's parents. Informants have said that without completing this last ceremony, a marriage is not considered solemnized.

While most marriages arranged and carried out in these ways were common, some marriages were carried out in very simplified manners where minimal rituals were involved. Since both parties spend equal amounts of money in the marriage, they could agree upon a simple ceremony, in which no relatives are informed and no feasts are given. Such marriages cost much less and were common among families of low economic status.

In the past, even after a marriage is arranged, the soon-to-be bride and groom would not see each other before the marriage at all. At the most, they would hear about each other from

friends or family. Much later, a customary meeting of the bride or groom would be arranged where they would glance at each other, if not exchange a few words.

Love marriages were very rare. While it was always the parents who decided for their children's marriage, these were in direct violation of their wishes, especially if the match was outside acceptable boundaries of caste. Some fifty years back, these kinds of marriages were basically non-existent among the Manandhar caste. Most love marriages were the results of elopement because the families would refuse to give consent for an arranged marriage. Once resorting to this, the couple would be considered married upon their discovery and in most cases, elaborate ceremonies were avoided. Nepali has stated that some poor men would elope simply to avoid the heavy costs of a marriage ceremony (Nepali, 1965).

Another important aspect of Newar marriages are the feasts. Newars have always been known to give elaborate and expensive wedding feasts. Many poorer families have been known to even mortgage their houses in order to pay for such events. Traditionally, wedding feasts were limited to family members and *phuki* only and the families themselves would help in the preparation of the feasts. These days, modern trends of catered parties have taken over the traditional feasts. Traditional Newari cuisine and alcohol has been replaced by other kinds of food at catered events. Nowadays, friends are invited to the same wedding parties as the families, which was not the case in the past. Many of the respondents were also critical about the present practices of the wedding feasts. They said too much money is being spent on such events, again causing a sense of competitiveness among the Manandhar communities. Well-off families who are able to afford it, have tendencies to indulge more lavishly on weddings, while those who can not afford to end up feeling belittled. Due to these attitudes, some families are known to have fallen into huge debts by planning expensive weddings. Such incidents brought up many debates among the members of the Kendriya Manandhar Sangh, who have officially put out rules on the kinds of expenses allowed in such events for the Manandhars. The Sangh has reduced some of the ritual events of the marriage in order to check expenses in marriage. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the *lakha tegu* ceremony has come under strict observation from the Sangh and only stipulated amounts of sweets and gifts are to be sent to the bride during that ceremony. The *khwa swegu* ceremony

in which the bride's family goes to visit her after the marriage has been discontinued by Sangh as well, due to huge expenses needed for this particular ceremony. However, no such rule has been sanctioned on wedding feasts. From these changes, the marriage practices of the Manandhars has become much simpler in comparison to other Newar castes at present.

5.4.4 Age of Marriage

Women are married much younger than men in the Newar community. The marriage age for girls and boys have changed since the old days when child marriages were quite frequent. Although it is considered that *Ihi* was a way to avoid this trend, child marriages did occur in significant numbers. Once married, the child bride would be allowed to live with her affinal kin until she was of age, or able to bear children. She would be summoned by husband's family to take part in religious and customary rituals and activities after which she would return to her home. Her duties of wife and daughter-in-law would only begin after she joined her husband's family upon her first menstrual period (which would be marked by the *Barah tegu* and *Barah chwonegu* rituals in which she is locked in a room for 12 days) and be a part of the family then on.

The early marriage of a girl was also based on the tradition of marriage proposals being initiated by the male's family and not the other way round. If it so happened that a girl's family were to approach another for a man's hand in marriage, the presumption was immediately made that the girl was either desperate because she has not had any proposals made to her or she was unworthy. Recently it has been seen that educated girls would initially reject marriage proposals to wait for a better match, but would end up remaining unmarried because they would not receive proposals after a certain age, usually 30 years.

A trend of marrying more than one son or daughter at once was also a common feature in the old days and even now. The main reason for this was that the economic burden was reduced to some extent for the families. The custom of hosting a large wedding feast, among several other customary functions preceding the marriage has been a major feature of Newar marriages. While food and alcohol is a major part of the Newari culture, both ritually and

socially, the elaborate wedding feasts have proved to be a financial burden for poor families. In the case of the Manandhars, it was once customary to serve as many as fifteen meat dishes alone during a wedding feast. Therefore, if one person's marriage was arranged, their younger siblings' marriages would also be fixed to be carried out simultaneously if conditions allowed. This kind of trend also resulted in many cases of child marriages.

5.4.5 Divorce and Remarriage

Divorce is said to have been common among the Newars in comparison to other ethnic groups of the country. The phrase used for divorce in Newari is *par pachuke*, in which *par* or *pa* used in other phrases means the completion of a transaction by making a final payment (Levy, 1990). It has been documented that women were permitted to divorce their husbands at will and this process is thus completed once she returned the betel nuts given during rituals of her marriage and she was allowed to take back her dowry. The representation of the betel nuts is seen to be very important in a Newar marriage. As described earlier, they are a central element in most of the rituals. They are constantly exchanged to and fro between the bride's side and the groom's side. According to Gellner,

“...crutially, the groom's family sends betel nuts as a mark of engagement, the bride gives them to her relatives as a sign that she is leaving them, and she presents them to her husband's relatives (and they accept them) as a sign that she is now a member of their patrilineage (with all the rights and duties this entails)” (Gellner, 2001, p.262).

There were several ways of contracting a divorce in Newar society in the past. Firstly, a bride could leave her husband by visiting her natal home and not returning or by eloping with another man (Nepali, 1965). A divorce could also be effective if the husband's household did not send for the daughter-in-law from her visit to her natal home. According to Newari custom, a woman who visited her natal home could not return to her husband's house unless she was called back or sent to be fetched (Gellner, 2001). Some accounts of a woman being given the right to divorce her dying husband by placing betel nuts on his body have also been reported (Nepali, 1965). A formal divorce was also possible where both parties by mutual

agreement could sign divorce papers called *par pachuke patra* (Nepali, 1965). While these practices all belong to the past, divorces today are mostly carried out legally in a court.

Newar women are also entitled to keep their dowry following divorce. In fact, upon the bride's first arrival in her husband's home, the groom's father or a representative of his household is made to sign a document which lists all the items that are brought by the bride as her dowry. This is done to ensure that she takes back everything that she brought with her in the case of a separation or divorce, thereby ensuring economic security (interview with key informant). This practice is also not followed these days.

Remarriage after a divorce or widowhood is permitted to women theoretically, but practically not many of the women find the chance for remarriage that easily. Even though the custom of *Ihi* is said to decrease the difficulties of widowhood on women, Gellner has argued that most castes, especially the high castes still impose Hindu rules of widowhood on their women (Gellner, 2001). There are many examples of the acceptance of the ritual status of a widow by Newar women, for instance, they do not participate in auspicious rituals and events like *bhamcha dukagu* (ritually entering the bride into the home for the first time), *barah pikagu* (releasing from confinement during the *barah* ceremony), the Swasthani *puja*, among others. All these rituals usually require women to be dressed in red attire, which is also denied to widows according to Hindu customs.

While the issue of divorces being very common among the Newars in the past have been widely discussed by many, the fact of its widespread practice especially among the Newars also becomes clear from a review of the Muluki Ain. Gellner's interpretation of the Muluki Ain reveals that "The Muluki Ain (law code) of 1854 presents clear evidence of an attempt by the government to regulate Newar marriage and make divorce less easy" (Gellner, 2001, p. 259). This shows that divorce back then was stipulated almost as a Newar phenomenon. Gellner also revealed that the rules of law stated were more severe and cash penalties were higher for Newars than for other ethnic groups. The Ain stated that a woman had no right to divorce her husband if he married another wife and placed her in another home but continued to support her. She could also not divorce him if he was abroad, but could do so only if he

did not return after three years having left her with no means of support. The divorce was not granted if he was away on government business. She could divorce him if he was branded as a thief, became a fakir or became diseased or handicapped (leprosy, loss of a limb or speech, became impotent or napumsak), but not if he was simply ill. A man could not leave his wife on the grounds that her stars (graha dasa) were unfavourable (Gellner, 2001).

In the context of more recent times, a study carried out on the reasons and consequences of divorce among the Newars of Kathmandu revealed that 35.2 percent of all registered divorce cases in the Valley belonged to the Newar community, higher than any other caste of the country. Following the Newars were Brahmins with 23.8 percent and then Chhetris with 19 percent divorcees (Karki, 2058 B.S.). This shows that divorce among Newars still outnumbers those among other castes.

5.5 The Manandhars

Many researchers have tried to find out the origin of the Manandhar caste and their historical lineages, but a lack of accurate evidence in historical records have led them to only speculate on their true origins. Different versions believed to be the foundations of the name Manandhar have appeared in historical documents and landmarks as early as 1294 B.S. The Changunarayan Temple in the Bhaktapur district encloses a *suvarna patra* (a gold plate in which deeds of a person are engraved) dated Nepal Sambat 357 (1294 B.S.) mentions the name of a woman named Mandhari Udayshri (Manandhar, 2057). Similarly, a *tad patra* (copper plate) dated Nepal Sambat 485 was discovered with the name Amar Singh Mandhur. The Gopalraj Bamshabali written in Nepal Sambat 490 also mentions that a person named Jagat Mandhur had constructed a *sattal* or *dharmashala* (small resting places or houses built near temples) in the South. Information on the location of this *dharmashala* and who Jagat Mandhur was or where he came from are however still unknown (Manandhar, 2057).

Some of these findings have therefore led historians to assume that the name Manandhar is derived from the name Mandhur and that these people were skilled in construction of buildings and roads (Manandhar, 2060 B.S.). Research on the Lichhavi period and the caste

hierarchy created by King Jayasthiti Malla also reveals that Manandhars were then known to do two kinds of work: i) construction of houses, buildings, *sattals* and *patis* (also resting houses but much simpler than *sattals*); and ii) oil pressing. Some historians are also of the view that the Manandhars were named after being bestowed the duties and responsibilities of preserving the Lichhavi king Raja Mandev's life's legacies, namely at the Changunarayan temple, which he had built during his reign (Manandhar, 2057). Among all these assumed occupations, oil-pressing seems to be the most recently adopted as it is the only one still remaining in some traditional settlements in Kathmandu.

A recent discovery was made supporting the fact that Manandhars were originally oil-pressers. A publication on the Newars presents a speculation that the Manandhars are descendents of a people named 'Milandhar' in Greece (Shrestha, 2062 B.S.). This was apparently discovered by a person named Gautam Manandhar, who on a trip to Greece, came across a people named Milandhar who were also originally oil-pressers by occupation. There he learnt of a legend suggesting that Alexander the Great had taken the Milandhars from Greece as flag bearers for his army to India. Before he left India, Alexander apparently had the Milandhars remain there working as his spies. Shrestha is of the view that some of these Milandhars remaining in India eventually travelled to Nepal and settled there, and thus became known as the Manandhars, returning to their original Greek profession of oil-pressing. This information has also been published by the Kendriya Manandhar Sangh in their newsletter entitled *Smarika*. However, there is no historical evidence to this theory and whether it is true or not can only be based on further research (Shrestha, 2062 B.S.).

The name *Sämi* or now more popularly written as Sayami (the Newar version of the name Manandhar) is said to have been originated from the occupation of oil pressing. The word *sa* (*sal* in Nepali) indicates an oil mill, whereas, *mi* indicates owner. The name *Sämi* thus means owner of an oil mill (Nepali, 1965). *Sämi* have also been known by the name *Salmi* in the past. Similarly the word Manandhar is believed to be a combination of *man* which means measurement and *dhar* which means thought, indicating that these people were skilled in measurements and were involved in the occupation of engineering (Manandhar, 2060 B.S.). Therefore, Manandhars were said to be involved in engineering, in battles during wartime in

which they were flag bearers, oil-pressing and skills in building machines out of wood. However, in the present context, there is no evidence to indicate that only the ancestors of oil pressers use the name Sayami and those of engineers use Manandhar. It is found that both the surnames Manandhar and Sayami represent the same group or caste, regardless of historical occupations.

In Kathmandu, the Manandhars are known according to the eleven *tols* as mentioned earlier. Apart from these, they are also known from the names of lineage groups, (*khala* in Newari) and *guthis*. These are groups which are separate from the *tols* and some are formed from fission of the *tols* themselves. The distribution of the Manandhar population of the eleven *tols* living in Kathmandu is presented below.

Table 5.3: Distribution of the Manandhars of Kathmandu by Settlement and Sex

<i>Tol</i>	Male	Female	Total	Percentage out of Total
Thaiti	579 (47.3%)	644 (52.7%)	1,223	17.3%
Dhalashikwo	138 (50.6%)	135 (49.5%)	273	3.9%
Phalchasa	76 (47.2%)	85 (52.8%)	161	2.3%
Chosandhwo	293 (46.1%)	342 (53.9%)	635	9.0%
Nhusa	547 (47.5%)	604 (52.5%)	1,151	16.3%
Marudhwokha	270 (48.6%)	286 (51.4%)	556	7.9%
Wotu	273 (52.0%)	252 (48.0%)	525	7.4%
Tanlachi	85 (54.8%)	70 (45.2%)	155	2.2%
Layakusa	367 (50.9%)	354 (49.1%)	721	10.2%
Daisa	325 (49.5%)	331 (50.5%)	656	9.3%
Pukhudhyan	485 (48.0%)	525 (52.0%)	1,010	14.3%
Total	3,438(48.6%)	3,628(51.4%)	7,066	100.0%

Source: Raj Devi Manandhar, 2057 B.S.

According the Table 5.3, Thaiti, Nhusa and Pukhudhyan are among the largest *tols* with over one thousand individuals. Phalchasa and Dhalashikwo are among the smallest ones, comprising of 2.3 and 3.9 percent respectively out of the total Manandhar population of the eleven *tols* of Kathmandu. It should be noted that the total numbers presented here are not the total Manandhar population of Kathmandu, but only the original eleven *tols*. The Manandhar communities based on lineage groups and *guthis* are not included in this table.

The total Manandhar population of the country, as collected by the Kendriya Manandhar Sangh in 2055 B.S. is presented in Table 5.4. While maximum attempt was made to gather the most accurate and complete data as far as possible, the final results may not represent the entire Manandhar population in its most accurate form. The Sangh claims that some households or individuals may have failed to send them information despite regular and firm requests on their part.

In Kathmandu itself, there are many more than just eleven groups of Manandhars including all the *tols*, *guthis* and *khalas*. The Manandhars have a caste council known as the *shingu guthi*, which has ultimate authority over all the Manandhars of Kathmandu. This *guthi* meets whenever caste matters have to be discussed or decisions made. Every year, the Manandhars of Kathmandu express solidarity by organizing a communal feast as a public function open to all the Manandhars of the Valley. The *shingu guthi* and members outside the council come together in common worship and organize this feast at Swayambhu, the Buddhist temple of Kathmandu. This feast has come to be known as the Swayambhu *bhwe*. The preparation of the feast is divided among the various *tols*, *khalas* and *guthis* of Kathmandu, each having a specific responsibility. For example, each group is given the task of arranging for one particular element of the feast, like arranging the drink, purchasing of vegetables or meat, cutting the food, cooking the food, arranging for yogurt and sweets, providing beaten rice, serving the food, accounting and financing and so on. The Swayambhu *bhwe* is a social event unique to the Manandhars among the Newar community.

CHAPTER VI

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF STUDY AREA

This chapter deals with the demographic profile of the Manandhars of Phalchasa and Dhalashikwo *tols*. Details on current household size, education, occupation and marital status is discussed. While past information of these issues may be limited, a comparative analysis with current data has also been made wherever possible.

6.1 Demography

Phalchasa is the smallest *tol* in terms of number of households among the eleven *tols* of Kathmandu with only 24 households whereas Dhalashikwo has 54 households in total, also comparatively smaller than the other *tols*.

Table 6.1: Household Size by Settlement

Household Size	Phalchasa		Dhalashikwo	
	No. of Households	Percent	No. of Households	Percent
2	1	4.2	2	3.7
3	3	12.5	8	14.8
4	3	12.5	14	25.9
5	4	16.7	6	11.1
6	4	16.7	9	16.7
7	1	4.2	2	3.7
8	3	12.5	1	1.9
10	2	8.3	3	5.6
11	-	-	2	3.7
12	-	-	2	3.7
13	-	-	1	1.9
14	-	-	1	1.9
15	3	12.5	-	-
16	-	-	1	1.9
17	-	-	1	1.9
20	-	-	1	1.9
Total	24	100	54	100
Average Household Size	6.8		6.4	

Source: Field Research, 2008.

It can be seen that both Phalchasa and Dhalashikwo have relatively fewer households with a large household size with an average household size of 6.8 and 6.4 respectively. Households with more than 6 members are joint families while those with 6 and less are mostly nuclear families. The household size ranges from 2 to 20. The larger sized families are housed in the traditional Newar style houses situated in the original locations of both the *tols*, namely in Jhochhe and Jyatha. Nine households in Phalchasa have female household heads (HH), all of whom are widows and 15 have male HH, none of whom are widowed. Dhalashikwo has 20 widowed female HH and 34 male HH, two of whom are widowed.

Table 6.2: Age and Sex Distribution of Population in the Settlements under Study

Age group	Phalchasa				Dhalashikwo			
	Male	Female	Total	Percent (Total)	Male	Female	Total	Percent (Total)
0-4	7	5	12	7.4	11	8	19	5.5
5-9	5	6	11	6.7	10	10	20	5.8
10-14	6	11	17	10.4	14	17	31	9.0
15-19	4	6	10	6.1	17	20	37	10.7
20-24	1	2	3	1.8	16	11	27	7.8
25-29	5	13	18	11.0	18	13	31	9.0
30-34	7	6	13	8.0	15	12	27	7.8
35-39	10	15	25	15.3	15	20	35	10.1
40-44	14	5	19	11.7	15	13	28	8.1
45-49	4	3	7	4.3	10	17	27	7.8
50-54	1	2	3	1.8	12	8	20	5.8
55-59	-	2	2	1.2	13	8	21	6.1
60-64	4	3	7	4.3	4	5	9	2.6
65-69	2	7	9	5.5	1	4	5	1.4
70+	3	4	7	4.3	1	8	9	2.6
Total	73 (44.8%)	90 (55.2%)	163	100	172 (49.7%)	174 (50.3%)	346	100

Source: Field Research, 2008.

According to data collected by the Kendriya Manandhar Sangh (see Table 5.4, Chapter V) the total population of Phalchasa was 161 in 2055 B.S. The population of Phalchasa currently is 163, showing no growth in population in this *tol*. The reason for this is that several individuals relinquished their membership from the *tol* to join other existing *guthis/tols* or created new groups (interview with key informant). This usually occurs when a joint family

splits into several nuclear families. The household heads of the newly formed nuclear families attain full active membership of the *tol* and may no longer wish to remain a member of the *tol* upon which he/she is free to give up membership. In other cases, members can also leave due to dissatisfaction with specific *tol* rules or due to quarrels and disagreements with other members. Phalchasa currently has 44.7 percent (73 out of 163) of males and 55.3 percent of females. Dhalashikwo, in comparison to Phalchasa, has shown some growth in population. The population in 2056 B.S. was 273 and currently it is 346. The population has, therefore, grown by 26.74 percent. Dhalashikwo has 49.7 percent male and 50.3 percent female population.

6.2 Education

The educational status of Phalchasa is presented in the table below. Children and infants below the age of 4 years have been excluded from the sample. Only those above 4 years who have begun schooling are included. The illiterate population includes only females who are below 60 years of age. Women also seem to be lagging behind the men especially in terms of higher education. There are no women of Phalchasa above 50 years having a degree above SLC level with only one woman who has passed SLC.

Table 6.3: Educational Status of Phalchasa by Age and Sex

Age Group	Level of Education								
	Illiterate	Literate	KG	1-10 Class	SLC Pass	Intermediate Pass	Bachelors Pass	Masters Pass	Total
MALE									
4-9	-	-	5.9	4.4	-	-	-	-	10.3
10-19	-	-	-	14.7	-	-	-	-	14.7
20-29	-	-	-	1.5	1.5	2.9	2.9	-	8.8
30-39	-	-	-	7.4	2.9	4.4	7.4	2.9	25.0
40-49	-	-	-	2.9	4.4	5.9	8.8	4.4	26.5
50-59	-	-	-	-	-	1.5	-	-	1.5
60-69	-	1.5	-	1.5	2.9	1.5	1.5	-	8.8
70+	-	1.5	-	1.5	-	-	1.5	-	4.4
Total	-	2.9	5.9	33.8	11.8	16.2	22.1	7.4	100.0
FEMALE									
4-9	-	-	4.6	5.7	-	-	-	-	10.2
10-19	-	-	-	14.8	4.6	-	-	-	19.3
20-29	-	-	-	5.7	1.1	1.1	8.0	1.1	17.1
30-39	-	-	-	8.0	3.4	4.6	5.7	2.3	23.9
40-49	-	-	-	2.3	3.4	2.3	1.1	-	9.1
50-59	-	1.1	-	2.3	1.1	-	-	-	4.6
60-69	4.6	5.7	-	1.1	-	-	-	-	11.4
70+	3.4	1.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.6
Total	8.0	8.0	4.6	39.8	13.7	8.0	14.8	3.4	100.0

Source: Field Research, 2008.

In Dhalashikwo also, the number of educated women in higher age groups is negligible (see table 6.4). Even the men, although higher than the women, are a small percentage. This suggests that education was not given much importance in the past and most men quit their studies in the primary level and attended to the family business. The women, probably as young brides, never got the opportunity to continue with their education after marriage. Many of the women among the Marriage and Family Survey (MS) respondents also said that they had to give up their education after marriage. Not only were they not encouraged to pursue their studies but also found themselves immersed in the roles of housewife and motherhood. Surprisingly, Phalchasa being the smaller *tol* than Dhalashikwo, has more men with education above the SLC level than Dhalashikwo and none who are illiterate. The women of Dhalashikwo are more educated than those of Phalchasa (the one male of age below 19 and illiterate is mentally challenged).

Table 6.4: Educational Status of Dhalashikwo by Age and Sex

Age Group	Level of Education								Total
	Illiterate	Literate	KG	1-10 Class	SLC Pass	Intermediate Pass	Bachelors Pass	Masters Pass	
MALE									
4-9	-	-	2.5	4.3	-	-	-	-	6.8
10-19	0.6	-	-	11.1	4.9	2.5	-	-	19.1
20-29	-	-	-	1.9	7.4	9.3	1.9	0.6	21.0
30-39	-	-	-	1.9	4.3	4.3	6.2	1.9	18.5
40-49	-	-	-	0.6	7.4	4.3	3.1	-	15.4
50-59	-	0.6	-	3.7	2.5	1.9	3.7	2.5	14.8
60-69	0.6	0.6	-	0.6	0.6	-	1.2	-	3.7
70+	0.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.6
Total	1.9	1.2	2.5	24.1	27.2	22.2	16.0	4.9	100.0
FEMALE									
4-9	-	-	1.2	5.4	-	-	-	-	6.6
10-19	-	-	-	15.0	4.2	3.0	-	-	22.2
20-29	-	-	-	0.6	4.8	1.8	6.6	0.6	14.4
30-39	-	1.2	-	3.0	4.2	7.8	2.4	0.6	19.2
40-49	1.2	1.8	-	1.8	4.2	6.6	1.2	0.6	17.4
50-59	2.4	1.8	-	2.4	0.6	0.6	1.8	0.6	10.2
60-69	2.4	1.8	-	0.6	0.6	-	-	-	5.4
70+	3.0	1.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.8
Total	9.0	8.4	1.2	28.8	18.6	19.8	12.0	2.4	100.0

Source: Field Research, 2008.

6.3 Occupation

Occupationally, most Manandhars of the two *tols* seem to be either in business or service oriented occupations. Those categorized as dependents include small children (between ages 0 to 4) who have not started schooling and elderly men and women (most of whom are above age 60 and some in their 40s and 50s) who are either retired from work or staying at home. There are a few exceptions, men who are in their 40s and 50s, are dependent because of illness. The unemployed section denotes those individuals who are of productive age and not generating income. Since service requires some higher education, more men in Phalchasa are seen to be in service, owing to the fact that more men of Phalchasa have higher education than their counterparts in Dhalashikwo. Most of the men and women in business of both *tols*

are running shops. Approximately, more than 60 percent of productive women in Phalchasa are housewives whereas the percentage is 55 percent in Dhalashikwo.

Table 6.5: Occupational Status of Phalchasa by Age and Sex

Age Group	Occupation								
	Agriculture	Industry	Business	Service	Student	Housewife	Unemployed	Dependent	Total
MALE									
4-9	-	-	-	-	8.2	-	-	8.2	16.4
10-19	-	-	-	-	13.7	-	-	-	13.7
20-29	-	-	1.4	4.1	2.7	-	-	-	8.2
30-39	-	-	12.3	11.0	-	-	-	-	23.3
40-49	-	-	11.0	13.7	-	-	-	-	24.7
50-59	-	-	1.4	-	-	-	-	-	1.4
60-69	-	-	4.1	1.4	-	-	-	2.7	8.2
70+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.1	4.1
Total	-	-	30.1	30.1	24.7	-	-	15.1	100.0
FEMALE									
4-9	-	-	-	-	10.0	-	-	2.2	12.2
10-19	-	-	-	-	18.9	-	-	-	18.9
20-29	-	-	1.1	3.3	3.3	7.8	1.1	-	16.7
30-39	-	-	6.7	4.4	-	12.2	-	-	23.3
40-49	-	-	-	1.1	-	6.7	1.1	-	8.9
50-59	-	-	-	-	-	4.4	-	-	4.4
60-69	-	-	-	-	-	2.2	-	8.9	11.1
70+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.4	4.4
Total	-	-	7.8	8.9	32.2	33.3	2.2	15.6	100.0

Source: Field Research, 2008.

Table 6.6: Occupational Status of Dhalashikwo by Age and Sex

Age Group	Occupation								
	Agriculture	Industry	Business	Service	Student	Housewife	Unemployed	Dependent	Total
MALE									
4-9	-	-	-	-	6.4	-	-	5.8	12.2
10-19	-	-	-	0.6	16.9	-	-	0.6	18.0
20-29	-	-	2.3	6.4	10.5	-	0.6	-	19.8
30-39	-	0.6	9.9	7.0	-	-	-	-	17.4
40-49	-	-	8.1	5.8	-	-	-	0.6	14.5
50-59	0.6	-	7.0	4.7	-	-	-	1.7	14.0
60-69	-	-	1.7	-	-	-	-	1.7	3.5
70+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.6	0.6
Total	0.6	0.6	29.1	24.4	33.7	-	0.6	11.0	100.0
FEMALE									
4-9	-	-	-	-	6.3	-	-	4.0	10.3
10-19	-	-	-	0.6	20.7	-	-	-	21.3
20-29	-	-	1.7	4.6	5.2	2.3	-	-	13.8
30-39	-	-	2.3	0.6	-	13.8	1.7	-	18.4
40-49	-	-	4.0	2.3	-	10.3	-	-	16.7
50-59	-	-	2.3	1.7	-	5.2	-	0.6	9.8
60-69	-	-	0.6	-	-	0.6	-	4.0	5.2
70+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.6	4.6
Total	-	-	10.9	9.8	32.2	32.2	1.7	13.2	100.0

Source: Field Research, 2008.

6.4 Marital Status

The data in Table 6.7 shows the current marital status of the Manandhars in both *toIs*. The male population presented in the table are aged 20 years and above while the female are aged 18 years and above, according to the stipulated legal age of marriage for men and women in Nepal. The data shows that no individual currently under the age of 20 is listed as ever married in both the *toIs*, suggesting the trend of early marriage (before 20 years) is not prevalent today.

Table 6.7: Marital Status of Manandhars by Age, Sex and Settlement
PHALCHASA

Current Age	MALE						Current Age	FEMALE					
	NM	CM	Wid	Sep	Div	Total		NM	CM	Wid	Sep	Div	Total
20-24	2.0	-	-	-	-	2.0	20-24	1.6	1.6	-	-	-	3.2
25-29	7.8	2.0	-	-	-	9.8	25-29	6.5	14.5	-	-	-	21.0
30-34	-	13.7	-	-	-	13.7	30-34	1.6	8.1	-	-	-	9.7
35-39	-	19.6	-	-	-	19.6	35-39	1.6	21.0	-	1.6	-	24.2
40-44	-	23.5	-	2.0	2.0	27.5	40-44	1.6	6.5	-	-	-	8.1
45-49	-	7.8	-	-	-	7.8	45-49	-	4.8	-	-	-	4.8
50-54	-	2.0	-	-	-	2.0	50-54	-	3.2	-	-	-	3.2
55-59	-	-	-	-	-	-	55-59	-	3.2	-	-	-	3.2
60-64	-	7.8	-	-	-	7.8	60-64	-	3.2	1.6	-	-	4.8
65-69	-	3.9	-	-	-	3.9	65-69	-	4.8	6.5	-	-	11.3
70+	-	5.9	-	-	-	5.9	70+	-	-	6.5	-	-	6.5
Total	9.8	86.3	-	2.0	2.0	100.0	Total	12.9	71.0	14.5	1.6	-	100.0

DHALASHIKWO

Current Age	MALE						Current Age	FEMALE					
	NM	CM	Wid	Sep	Div	Total		NM	CM	Wid	Sep	Div	Total
20-24	13.3		-	-	-	13.3	20-24	8.4	0.8	-	-	-	9.2
25-29	13.3	1.7	-	-	-	15.0	25-29	2.5	8.4	-	-	-	10.9
30-34	5.0	7.5	-	-	-	12.5	30-34	1.7	8.4	-	-	-	10.1
35-39	0.8	11.7	-	-	-	12.5	35-39	0.8	15.1	-	-	0.8	16.8
40-44	-	12.5	-	-	-	12.5	40-44	-	10.1	0.8	-	-	10.9
45-49	-	8.3	-	-	-	8.3	45-49	1.7	10.1	2.5	-	-	14.3
50-54	-	10.0	-	-	-	10.0	50-54	-	5.9	0.8	-	-	6.7
55-59	-	10.8	-	-	-	10.8	55-59	0.8	5.0	0.8	-	-	6.7
60-64	-	2.5	0.8	-	-	3.3	60-64	-	1.7	2.5	-	-	4.2
65-69	-	-	0.8	-	-	0.8	65-69	-		3.4	-	-	3.4
70+	-	0.8	-	-	-	0.8	70+	-	0.8	5.0	-	0.8	6.7
Total	32.5	65.8	1.7	-	-	100.0	Total	16.0	66.4	16.0	-	1.7	100.0

Source: Field Research, 2008.

The marriage age of women being lower than that of men is obviously apparent from the data presented in Table 6.7, which is a continuing trend among the Newars. This becomes clear from the higher percentage of never married men than that of married men and the reverse pattern among the female population. There is, however, the presence of never married women below the ages of 39 in both the *toIs*, while there are no males never married below this age. Phalchasa shows no men never married over the age of 29. This is probably due to

the trend of the desire for younger brides, wherein women once reaching a certain age are not approached for marriage in the Newar society and thus remain unmarried, while the men eventually all get married. As mentioned before, only a proposal sent from the man's side is thought of as 'proper' and not vice versa. A marriage proposal sent to a man from the woman's home is looked upon as 'begging' and it is assumed that it was done so because the woman received no other offers of marriage.

The divorce and separated rates are also negligible in both the *tols*, also suggesting that divorce is no longer as prevalent among the Manandhars as has been suggested by many (from key informants interviews and published materials on the Newars). Despite this information of frequent divorces among the Manandhars in the past, only one such case is seen in the age group of 70+. The other divorce and separation cases are among the younger age group of 35-45 years.

CHAPTER VII

MARRIAGE PRACTICES: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

This chapter will contain the main findings on the changes and continuity of marriage practices among the Manandhar community of the two *tols* selected for the study, namely Phalchasa and Dhalashikwo. The data collected from both the *tols* have been combined and presented as single outputs in all the Tables in this chapter. The two *tols* will henceforth be referred to as the study area. The findings are based on primary data collected from the HHC and interviews taken from the MS respondents.

The distribution of the MS respondents compared to the total ever married population of the two *tols* is presented in Table 7.1. As mentioned in Chapter IV the ratio of the male and female respondents is equal based on their age group (see Table 4.1).

Table 7.1: Distribution of MS Respondents as Percentage of Ever Married Population

Name of <i>Tol</i>	Ever Married		MS Respondents			
	Male	Female	Male	%	Female	%
Phalchasa	46	54	15	32.6	15	27.7
Dhalashikwo	81	100	25	30.8	25	25.0
Total	127	154	40	31.4	40	25.9

Source: Field Research, 2008.

The age and sex distribution of the MS respondents are presented in Table 7.2. The respondents selected for the MS do not fall below the age of 25 years. There are no males below the current age of 25 as ever married and only one female below the age of 25 is currently married. Attempt was also made to include the men between the ages of 25-29 in the MS (there are only 3 in this age group from both *tols*) but could not be included due to various reasons. All the men in the survey are therefore 30 years and above. Because the maximum number of ever married persons in both the *tols* fall within the age group of 35-39, the maximum number of respondents of the MS also are of this age group.

Table 7.2: Age and Sex Distribution of MS Respondents

Age group	Sex				Total
	Male	%	Female	%	
25-29	-	-	5	6.3	5
30-34	1	1.3	1	1.3	2
35-39	8	10.0	5	6.3	13
40-44	8	10.0	3	3.8	11
45-49	3	3.8	6	7.5	9
50-54	4	5.0	4	5.0	8
55-59	8	10.0	3	3.8	11
60-64	5	6.3	3	3.8	8
65-69	1	1.3	6	7.5	7
70+	2	2.5	4	5.0	6
Total	40	50	40	50	80

Source: Field Research, 2008.

While discussing the continuity and change in the marriage practices of the Manandhars, it is important to first understand the major factors involved in the marriages of the Manandhars, which are that it is endogamous and is influenced heavily by lineage and kinship ties and the *guthi* system, namely the *deo puja guthi* or *dewali guthi* (in Nepali; also see Chapter V for details). The other factors taken into account for this study are age of marriage, spouse selection, kinds of marriage, exogamy and endogamy, acceptance of exogamous marriages by *guthis*, divorce and remarriage.

7.1 Age at Marriage

Data presented in Table 7.3 shows the age of first marriage of the ever married population of the area under study. The data from this table clearly shows that women were married much younger than the men. A maximum percentage of women are seen married in their early twenties while maximum men are seen married in their late twenties. The major difference is that none of the men were married below the age of 15, whereas a small percentage of women are seen married at this age. A small percentage of women are also seen married below the age of 10. All of the women married under the age of 15 years are currently above 60 years of age. Among those married between the ages of 15-19, a much higher percentage is seen in women than that of the men. In fact, the percentage of men in this group is

insignificant compared to that of the women: 2.4 percent of men to 27.9 percent of women respectively.

The female population married between the ages of 20-24 is double that of the men married at this age. Likewise, the men married between the ages of 25-29 are double that of the women married at this age. All these facts indicate that women marry earlier than the men.

Table 7.3: Age at First Marriage by Current Age of Total Ever Married Population of Settlements under Study

Age at Marriage	Current Age						
	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	Total
	MALE						
Below 10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10-14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15-19	-	-	1.6	0.8	-	-	2.4
20-24	1.57	3.9	9.5	5.5	4.7	-	25.2
25-29	0.79	16.5	18.1	6.3	3.9	2.4	48.0
30-34	-	9.5	3.2	7.1	0.8	-	20.5
35-39	-	1.6	1.6	-	-	-	3.2
40-44	-	-	-	-	-	0.8	0.8
Total	2.36	31.5	33.9	19.69	9.45	3.15	100.0
	FEMALE						
Below 10	-	-	-	-	-	0.7	0.7
10-14	-	-	-	-	2.0	2.0	3.9
15-19	1.95	5.8	7.8	5.2	3.9	3.3	27.9
20-24	7.79	14.9	6.5	4.6	5.2	2.0	40.9
25-29	3.90	9.7	5.8	2.6	1.3	-	23.4
30-34	-	0.7	2.0	0.7	-	-	3.3
35-39	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
40-44	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	13.64	31.17	22.07	12.99	12.3	7.15	100.0

Source: Field Research, 2008.

Most of the youngest groups of women currently below 30 years have married in their early to mid 20s while others married before turning 30. Only 1.9 percent of the women have married below the age of 20 years. Only 3.3 percent of women have married after the age of 30, and no woman has married after the age of 35. This suggests that most women nowadays

are getting married before the age of 30. The fact that there are very few women marrying after the age of 30 and practically no women marrying after 35 could indicate the difficulty for women to find spouses after they have crossed a certain 'marriageable age'. It has been mentioned earlier in Chapter V that women stop receiving marriage proposals once they start getting older. This is due to the preference of younger brides.

The younger men on the other hand, although small in number, have also married in the same age group as the women, i.e. 20-29 years. This could suggest that the age difference between men and women getting married is also decreasing. The fact that men are married much later than the women also becomes clear after examining that no men have married before 15 and no women have married after 35 years of age, while a significant number of men have married after the age of 30.

The changes in the trend of marriage age can be seen amongst the women, where the older women currently above 70 years were married below the age of 25 (the youngest was married at the age of 7 years). Similarly, all of the younger women currently in their 20s have married only after their 20s, with the exception of three women who married before reaching 20. Surprisingly, the men above 70 years in both *toIs* have married considerably late between the ages of 25-29 and 40-44. Likewise, none of the men in their 60s have married below the age of 20 years, whereas there are several women of this age married below 20 years, again suggestive of the early marriage of women than that of men.

7.2 Spouse Selection and Kinds of Marriage

As stated in Chapter V, spouse selection in Newar society is traditionally done by parents and relatives for young men and women. Before a marriage is arranged, informal discussions are made regarding the prospective bride or groom by the families. When a young boy is approaching marriageable age, parents and relatives will start looking for a match for him. As soon as they hear of a suitable match, the prospect is put forth and discussed and if the rules of kinship and *guthi* associations allow, a proposal will be sent to the girl's family via the *lami*. Generally among the Manandhars, the person who first arranged the match

automatically becomes the *lami*, regardless of being a relative or friend. If for some reason, that person is not able to or does not want to take the responsibility of acting as the *lami*, another person will be asked to fulfill the role. He or she must act as the mediator between the two families and oversee all preceding rituals of the marriage. In the case of the Manandhars, a marriage is not possible without a *lami* and must be present for all rituals involved in the marriage. More recently, the phenomenon of ‘professional *lamis*’ who act as match-makers and charge a substantial amount of money for their services have also come into existence, which will be discussed below.

Table 7.4: Spouse Selection for MS Respondents

Current Age	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	Total
MALE							
Parents	-	-	-	5.0	-	-	5.0
Relatives	-	5.0	5.0	10.0	5.0	-	25.0
Friends	-	5.0	7.5		2.5	2.5	17.5
Lami	-	5.0	7.5	7.5	5.0	2.5	27.5
Self	-	5.0	5.0	7.5	-	-	17.5
Others	-	2.5	2.5	-	2.5	-	7.5
Total	-	17.5	22.5	15.0	10.0	5	100.0
FEMALE							
Parents	2.5	2.5	-	2.5	2.5	-	10.0
Relatives	7.5	7.5	10.0	7.5	10.0	-	42.5
Friends	2.5	-	-	2.5	2.5	-	7.5
Lami	-	2.5	7.5	5.0	7.5	7.5	30.0
Self	-	2.5	2.5	-	-	-	5.0
Others	-	-	2.5	-	-	2.5	5.0
Total	10.0	12.5	22.5	15.0	20.0	10.0	100.0

Source: Field Research, 2008.

The study has found that majority of the marriages were arranged by *lamis* (in which case they were friends or relatives who later took on the role of a *lami*) and relatives. The role of parents finding matches for their children is seen to be very low among both sexes. This, however, does not indicate their lack of decision making in the process. In most cases in the past, it was ultimately the parents who decided on the match put forward by the others. But there is a trend seen in the changes taking place in spouse selection. Elderly informants said that during their time of marriage, boys and girls were not even allowed to see each other

before they got married. In some cases, they would know nothing about who they were marrying while some might hear about the person through relatives or friends. A few decades later, they were allowed to meet once or maybe even twice, and exchange a few words. These days, there is a trend to allow the couple to 'date' and get to know each other first before deciding on their own whether they want to get married or not before the marriage is fixed. They can now reject an offer if they want. This is the most preferred practice by many families nowadays, where in a way, marriages are still arranged, but also not forced upon the couple. (This new trend of marriage has been termed as a 'combination marriage' which will be discussed in more detail in the following paragraphs). While this does show a definite relaxation of traditional rules in spouse selection, it does not apply to exogamous marriages. The control over spouse selection still being in the hands of someone other than oneself is also reflected by the data presented in Table 7.5, which shows a high predominance of arranged marriages.

Spouse selection made by oneself is seen to be very low, 17.5 percent among the male and only 5 percent among the female, all of whom came from the same *tol* of Dhalashikwo. Consequently, no female from Phalchasa has selected a spouse on her own. Most of these marriages based on self decision are found to be love marriages, again most of which are exogamous, some involving elopement and very few endogamous. These marriages are based on romantic love between the couple and may have encountered some resistance from the families, which is why it is dubbed as a love marriage. As mentioned above the trend where a couple are introduced, given a chance to get to know each other first, and then decide to go ahead with the arrangements for marriage, are now termed as combination of arranged and love, in which an arrangement converts into a love marriage. This term has been in use only recently and can be seen as a new trend in marriage practices at present. When probed further on this issue, the respondents deny that these marriages are simply arranged even if that was how it began in the first place. It sounds like a sort of explanation on their part that perhaps now things are starting to change, and the importance of being in love before entering into a marriage is being recognized, which was not the case at all in the past when marriages even to complete strangers was the norm. It could also be viewed as a solution that has been formulated in order to balance out the two extremes of conformity and

rebellion, where both sides are made to compromise. The concerned persons or the boy and girl who are to marry are also given the freedom to choose their spouse, while still keeping within acceptable boundaries of caste and kin. However, a marriage which begins with love (where the spouse selection is made by self) and later arranged with the family's consent is not considered as a combination marriage. These were stated by the respondents as purely love marriages. It must be understood that there is no strict definition of a combined marriage, and the above descriptions are only based on the responses of the MS respondents. Even though love marriages were always around, they were still considered a taboo among the Manandhars. One key informant said love marriages began to appear 'openly' as far back as 40 years ago. Another said that they only began fairly recently, i.e. 20 or so years ago and before that all marriages were arranged. These diverse opinions may be based on the fact that every *tol* or *guthi* followed their own set of rules regarding marriage and the people acted according to the degree of strictness of these rules. Nevertheless, love marriages are still very low in number today compared to arranged marriages.

A recent development of modern times is a professional *lami*, who acts as a matchmaker and not just a mediator in the marriage. This type of *lami* makes a living out of matchmaking by accepting a fee for his services (personal interview with key informant). They put together an album with the photographs of young men and women looking to marry, according to caste, and show the photographs to interested families. If a match is finalized in this way, the fee the *lamis* charge could go upto 15,000 Rupees. Some have been reported to ask for a half *tola* of gold. The charge is also reported to be higher if a match is found for a girl, because females are more vulnerable to remaining unmarried if they do not find a match during their prime years. Thus their dependence on match-makers is higher.

These sorts of arrangements have also been seen taking place in the Manandhar community. The Kendriya Manandhar Sangh viewed this situation as a source of a problem for the families who are compelled to spend a lot of money in marriages. Since finding a suitable match is difficult, many families are willing to pay any amount to have their children married in time. The Sangh therefore have started a Marriage Bureau since last year (2062 B.S.) which works to find suitable matches for Manandhar men and women. They have formulated

a system in which any Manandhar man or woman can fill out a form providing family details and the qualities that they desire in a spouse. The forms are tallied amongst themselves and if a match is found, the concerned persons are informed of it and left to make the final decision. Since its establishment, the Bureau has had one successful marriage through its efforts. No fee is claimed for these services.

The objectives of the Marriage Bureau is not only to assist the Manandhar community in finding suitable marriage partners but also to curb excessive expenses needed to be made for marriages. Another drawback experienced from arranging marriages through professional *lamis* was that many families claimed their daughters became ‘famous’ from the wide circulation of their photographs, and not to their advantage. For example, a photograph of a girl was first shown to one man who rejected her, and was later shown to another man who was acquainted to the first one. After hearing that the first person had already rejected her, the second person ended up rejected her also. This kind of trend made prospects of finding matches more difficult for some women. The Marriage Bureau, therefore, came up with the solution to limit the dependency on *lamis* in arranging marriages. None of the cases of arrangement by *lamis* in the current study are by professionals.

Table 7.5: Kind of Marriage of MS Respondents

Kind of Marriage	Male	Female
Arranged Marriage	72.5	85.0
Love Marriage	22.5	5.0
Combined Marriage	5.0	10.0
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Research, 2008.

Table 7.4 shows spouse selection made by self is very low among men as well as women. A majority of the selection is done by relatives and *lamis*. The role of parents in finding spouses for their children is also low, but the results show that there is little change in spouse selection and most young people are adhering to traditional practices of marriage arrangement.

Table 7.5 also supports this fact. Arranged marriages are much higher than other kinds of marriages. Love marriages are even lower among females. Only 5 percent of females have engaged in love marriages compared to 22.5 percent among the men, suggesting that women have the lesser choice in spouse selection than men. All the love marriages, with the exception of a few, have been found to be exogamous marriages. The combined form of marriage which is the newest trend, is also quite insignificant in number, although it is double among females than males. This goes to show that a majority of parents are still pushing for conventional norms and either resisting change from younger generations, or the younger generations themselves are still under the strong influence of social norms when it comes to marriage.

In most cases of arranged marriages among the younger age groups, the respondents claimed it to be the choice of their parents and not their own. They said they were not ready for marriage and were pressured into it either because of circumstance or force from their parents. The low number of love marriages is also an indication to slow change of traditional norms. The obvious explanation for this is that the new generations are being brought up to conform to traditional norms when it comes to marriage. So far rebellion towards this is low and many have either conformed to the traditional norm or followed it willingly. But to what extent this will continue in the future is questionable, although presumptions could be made on this based on the views of the respondents towards exogamous marriages, which will be discussed below.

7.3 Endogamy and Exogamy

The fact that endogamous marriages are still predominant is clear from the findings on spouse selection and kinds of marriages. Arranged marriages are all endogamous, with the exception of a few exogamous marriages that were arranged, which are highly exceptional cases. The reasons for these marriages can only be speculated that they were done under special circumstances where women of other castes had to be sought. It is thus clear that marriages can also depend on situational factors, wherever an endogamous marriage is not possible, exogamous marriages can be easily accepted. Such cases reveal that unconventional

means are sometimes adopted according to the circumstance and situation at hand. Therefore, adaptation to circumstances can also be reasons for change (see Chhetri, 1990 for similar study on adaptation of Tibetan refugees).

Phalchasa currently has 9 out of 24 households with inter-caste marriages with a total of 14 individuals married to other castes, both Newars and non-Newars. Eight of them are male (including either household heads or their sons) and 6 are female (daughters and sisters of the household heads). The females are not listed as part of the households as they are already married but this information was collected during the HHC. Likewise, 18 households out of 54 in Dhalashikwo have inter-caste marriages, with a total of 24 individuals married to non-Manandhar castes. 14 of them are male and 10 are female. Data presented in Table 5.4 in Chapter V includes the number of inter-caste marriages among Manandhars according to *tol* and settlement 9 years ago in 2055 B.S. (Manandhar, 1999). Here, the number of inter-caste marriages listed in Phalchasa during that time was only 1, that of a male (the relation to the household head in the inter-caste marriage is stated as the son's wife). The number of inter-caste marriages in Dhalashikwo was 5, all listed as daughters of the household head. Therefore, there is definitely a large rise in the number of inter-caste marriages in the last 9 years.

The views of the respondents on exogamy tell a story contrary to the findings on the kinds of marriages prevailing. While a majority of the marriages in the study area have been found to be arranged, the views of the respondents reflect openness towards love and exogamous marriages. It can be assumed that because all arranged marriages in the Manandhar community will be arranged only within the same caste, all exogamous marriages will be love marriages. Data presented in Tables 7.6 and 7.7 reflect the views on exogamous marriages of Manandhars with other Newar castes and with non-Newar castes or ethnic groups respectively. A majority of both male (90 percent) and female (77.5 percent) have replied that they support an exogamous marriage with other Newar castes (see Table 7.6). This may very well be the reason for the high rise in exogamous marriages in both *tois* in the last decade or so. But despite this fact, the argument still remains that if so many people are

saying they support an inter-caste marriage, why are there still so few of them in practice compared to endogamous marriages?

When it comes to inter-caste marriages, some Newars seem to be more receptive if the marriage is with a Newar and not a different ethnic group altogether. They say since all Newars have similar basic customs, there are fewer cultural differences to deal with than with other ethnic groups. However low in number, those who did not approve of exogamy must also not be ignored. This could mean that the sense of caste purity is still present. Another explanation was given that there are many adjustment problems that arise in an exogamous marriage. Many individuals prefer not to ‘take chances’ by doing things differently when it is so much easier to stick to traditional customs. This not only creates a situation of social sanction but a feeling of security as well. Some feel that a Manandhar boy marrying a non-Manandhar girl is more acceptable than vice versa. This is because of their concern for the girl’s fate in her new home where everything will be new to her and whether she will be accepted by the family or not. They fear that in most cases, she will have to endure discrimination or even ill treatment if the family is conservative and non-accepting.

Table 7.6: Views of MS Respondents on Exogamy with Other Newar Castes

Current Age	PHALCHASA/DHALASHIKWO			
	MALE		FEMALE	
	Support	Do not support	Support	Do not support
20-29	-	-	12.5	-
30-39	20.0	2.5	15.0	-
40-49	22.5	5.0	20.0	2.5
50-59	30.0	-	15.0	2.5
60-69	12.5	2.5	7.5	15.0
70+	5.0	-	7.5	2.5
Total	90.0	10.0	77.5	22.5

Source: Field Research, 2008.

More males have claimed to support exogamy with other Newars than females. There is a catch to this however. A majority of those who said they supported marriage of Manandhars with other Newars said they supported it provided that it is not with a caste considered lower in status (i.e. hypogamy). Among these, more men said they preferred marriage with a

woman of equal or higher caste (i.e. hypergamy). Some also said that even if caste status was not an issue to them, it would create problems with the *guthiyars* and *phukis* who could ostracize such unions. The *guthiyars* could have the groom outcasted and expelled from the *guthi* if he decided to go ahead with a hypogamous marriage anyway. As mentioned in Chapter V, consent of the *guthiyars* was essential before fixing a marriage in order to check rules on pollution.

These days, even if an exogamous marriage does take place against the wishes of the *guthiyars*, the groom may be allowed to remain in the *guthi* in some cases, but his bride may or may not be accepted. According to one case, a Manandhar man married a Chitrakar woman who was refused entrance into the *guthi*. Their children were, however, allowed entrance and enjoyed all ritual and social rights of the group. She was widowed and upon her own death, the *phukis* did not follow pollution rights and partake in her funeral services. In most of such cases, if a male child is born, the children will be accepted as part of the *guthi* even if the mother is not. In cases of marriages with other ethnic groups, the probability of this is less likely. Another case from an informant was of a hypogamous marriage involving a Manandhar woman marrying a man of higher status. The woman's father-in-law accepted her in his house, but refused to accept ritually relevant food, i.e., boiled rice cooked by her. He did not however, refuse rice cooked by her children.

It is also interesting to see that many of the respondents of higher age groups (above 60 years) have said they support inter-caste marriages. The younger groups are also of the same view. Many of the elders did say that their views actually did not matter anymore because the youngsters these days ultimately would do whatever they liked, and trying to influence their decisions on marriage was a waste of time. They almost seemed annoyed and frustrated by the situation. Some of them felt that it was pointless to talk about caste rank and status in this day and age and young people had a right to decide who they wanted to marry regardless of caste. Those who denounced it had strong opinions on their support for endogamous unions.

Maximum percentage of the women who disapproved of exogamy are above 40 years of age, the highest among whom are in the age group of 60-69. Most of them held traditional values

in terms of endogamy and insisted Manandhars should marry only within their own caste. Those among other age groups with this view had different reasons for their response. Their impressions on exogamy had turned negative by observing the experiences of others who were in exogamous relations. These experiences were mostly related to problems of adjustment, unfair treatment and discrimination, especially of the women in hypergamous marriages or women married into a higher caste. Incidents were related of Manandhar women married to men of higher castes where they were not allowed to enter the kitchen, some women where members of the household refused to take boiled rice cooked by them or simply mistreated on the grounds of her lower caste status. These stories not only included Manandhar women but women of other castes as well.

Although the views are varied, it is clear that a majority have accepted this change in the marriage practice, which is becoming more and more of a reality to face, mainly with the younger generations. It is obvious from the responses that parents are also becoming torn between their children’s wishes and the sake of maintaining traditional norms and values.

Table 7.7: Views of MS Respondents on Exogamy with Non-Newar Castes/Ethnic Groups

Current Age	PHALCHASA/DHALASHIKWO			
	MALE		FEMALE	
	Support	Do not support	Support	Do not support
20-29	-	-	2.5	10.0
30-39	12.5	10.0	15.0	-
40-49	17.5	10.0	10.0	12.5
50-59	17.5	12.5	7.5	10.0
60-69	10.0	5.0	7.5	15.0
70+	5.0	-	7.5	2.5
Total	62.5	37.5	50.0	50.0

Source: Field Research, 2008.

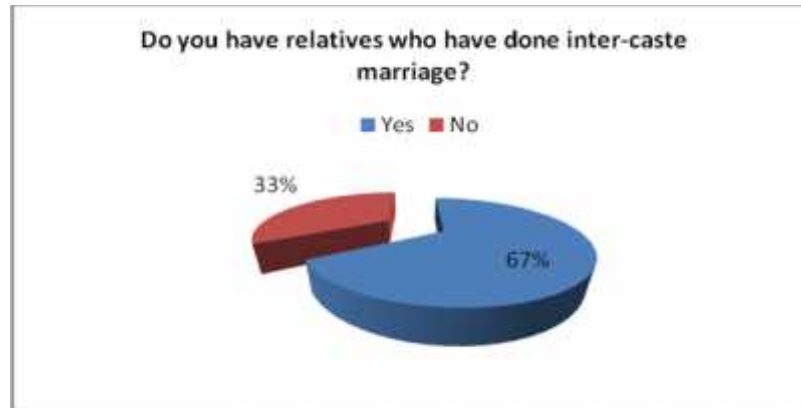
With the study of exogamy and the people’s attitudes towards it, the issue of ethnicity was also found to be a major factor of influence. The respondents were a little more skeptical when it came to exogamous marriages with ethnic groups other than Newars. The data in Table 7.7 show that more men seem to support exogamy with non-Newars than women, as is

the case in marriage with other Newar castes. The explanation for more men supporting exogamy could also be that according to Newar customs, women who marry down automatically lose their status, while men who marry down can retain their status, provided that his wife is of clean caste. Fifty percent of the women said they did not support a marriage with non-Newars. The feelings towards this were much stronger than those expressed regarding marriage with other Newars because according to the respondents, the cultural differences with non-Newars are vaster, therefore the fear of conflict following the marriage is also greater.

However, a paradox created from the views on exogamy with Newars and non-Newars is the fact that while there are exogamous marriages with non-Newar groups considered casteless or lower caste by Newars such as Tamangs and Sherpas, there are no such marriages with Newar castes considered untouchable. In fact, most respondents had stronger feelings of rejection towards untouchable Newar castes than towards Tamangs or Sherpas. This reflects a stronger sense of caste purity needing to be maintained among the Newars themselves rather than other ethnic groups.

Figure 1 reveals that 67.7 percent of respondents have relatives (ranging from the same household to close relatives and *phukis*) in exogamous marriages (i.e., married to other castes). From this information, we learn that there could be far more exogamous marriages in practice in other *tols* and *guthis* of the Manandhars, possibly because they are larger in size. Only 33.3 percent said they have no relatives who have done inter-caste marriage. According to informants, it is highly unlikely for any family these days to have no one who has married outside their caste, but this response could be based on their lack of knowledge of their *phukis* or they are reluctant to make such information public.

Figure 1: Respondents with Relatives in Inter-caste Marriages



Source: Field Research, 2008.

The number of relatives married to other castes mentioned by the respondents from both *tols* ranged from 1 to 9. The castes and ethnicities of the spouses of relatives and the household members themselves ranged from Newar, Brahman, Chhetri, Gurung, Sherpa, Lama, Madhesi, Tamang, Subba, Rai, Tibetans and some foreign nationals. Majority belong to the Newar caste among whom Shrestha and Maharjan are high in number. Other Newar castes are Dangol, Tuladhar, Joshi, Nakarmi, Bajracharya, Karmacharya, Ranjitkar, Malla, Tamrakar and Shakya. No one mentioned any Newar caste of 'untouchable' status. Whether they do or do not exist is questionable. Castes from Brahman and Chhetri group includes Koirala, Dahal, K.C. Rana, Upadhyaya, Karki, Adhikari and Budhathoki. Other castes included Mehta, Mittal and French and British nationals.

7.4 Acceptance of Exogamy by the *Deo puja Guthi* (Dewali Guthi)

The main conflict that arises from exogamous marriages in Newar society is in membership into the *deo puja guthi*. The worship of the lineage diety or *dugu dya* is sacramental and maintainance of caste purity is considered essential. Allowance of castes considered of lower status is therefore forbidden by many *guthis*. Informants as well as respondents have stated that most Manandhars nowadays have relaxed the rules of allowing brides of other castes into the *deo puja guthi*. Most have allowed women considered of same or higher rank into the *guthi* while some have not. Almost all the respondents have claimed that they have heard of no one in the Manandhar community who have married a woman considered of untouchable

caste (according to the hierarchic classification, castes from whom water cannot be accepted).

The Manandhars also do not consider some castes to belong to the same rank as themselves, even if they are classified as being of the same rank in the heirarchic stratification. An example of this is the caste Ranjitkar (*Chhipa*) in Newari, who belong to the dyer community. Other non-Newar castes like Sherpas, Lamas, Tibetans are also considered casteless by Newars. Exogamous marriages of these castes were found to have had more problems with acceptance from the *guthi*. The study has also revealed that some of the individuals from higher castes have also been rejected entrance into the *guthi*.

Table 7.8: Number of MS Respondents on their Knowledge of Brides from Exogamous Marriages Accepted and Not Accepted into the *Deo Puja Guthi*

Response		Response	
Accepted	54 (67.5%)	Not accepted	27 (33.7%)
Don't know	26 (32.5%)	Don't know	53 (66.2%)
Total	80 (100%)	Total	80 (100%)

Source: Field Research, 2008.

According to Table 7.8, 67.5 percent of the respondents have claimed that they have heard of cases where brides from exogamous unions were allowed into the *guthi*. In the past, according to the elderly key informants, around 50 years back, this would not have been possible and if there were exogamous marriages, the brides considered of lower caste would not have been allowed at all. Some women considered of higher castes were allowed into the *guthi*. Even these days, there are few cases of 'lower caste' women being allowed into the *guthi* in the case of Manandhars. Most of the exogamous marriages among the respondents show that brides have been allowed into the *guthi*, but there are some who have not been allowed. Among the MS respondents, women of exogamous marriages have been allowed but some of the Manandhar women themselves have not been allowed. The reason for this was that these households were no longer a part of a *deo puja guthi* because of disagreements or conflicts with their *guthiyars*.

There are many incidents reported by respondents where brides of intercaste marriages were rejected entrance into the *guthi*. Several respondents spoke of a *guthi* where such brides were entered only after the death of the *thakali*. In this case, the succeeding *thakali* relaxed the restrictions and all brides of exogamous marriages of that lineage group were finally accepted into the *guthi*. While this is a fairly recent episode, it was said that there were many mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law who were entered into the *guthi* together. Another such case was reported of a different *tole*, where no bride of intercaste marriages were allowed entrance, until the son of the *thakali* himself eloped and married a girl of a different caste. The *thakali* then chose to allow his son's wife into the *guthi* after which all of the other brides of the *tole* followed suit and finally became a part of the *guthi*. Such cases reflect that changes have also occurred based on situational factors.

Table 7.9: Number of Respondents on their Knowledge of the Ethnicity of the Brides from Exogamous Marriages Accepted and Not Accepted into the Deo Puja Guthi

PHALCHASA/DHALASHIKWO		
Ethnicity	Accepted	Not accepted
Newar	38 (39.1%)	12 (12.4%)
Chhetri/Brahman	17 (17.5%)	11 (11.3%)
Others	11 (11.3%)	8 (08.33%)

Source: Field Research, 2008.

Data in Table 7.9 show that 38 percent of respondents have knowledge of Newars being admitted into the *guthis*. Knowledge of Chhetri and Brahmans being accepted is also higher in comparison to other castes. Knowledge of non-acceptance is quite low in comparison to that of acceptance. Some respondents said that these days the rules have been relaxed and most *toles* and *guthis* have started allowing brides from other castes into the *guthis*. Some said that there are those who still follow orthodox rules and do not accept any other caste whether considered high or low into the *guthi*.

7.5 Views on Divorce and Remarriage

According to Table 6.7 in Chapter VI there are only 3 divorced individuals and 2 separated in both the *toles*. Obviously, the divorce rate has fallen since the old days, when it was said that

divorce was common among the Newars. Since there is no data available showing the rate of divorces among the Manandhars, a comparative study is difficult.

Table 7.10: Distribution of MS Respondents on Their Views on Divorce (in percent)

Response	Male	Female	Total
Approve	17.5	26.3	43.8
Disapprove	21.3	16.3	37.5
Indifferent	11.3	7.5	18.8
Total	50.0	50.0	100.0

Source: Field Research, 2008.

Table 7.10 shows the respondents' views on divorce. Surprisingly, more people seem to approve of the practice of divorce. Both men and women approved to it on the grounds that they should not remain in a marriage involving cruelty and ill-treatment from the husband. They also said that if the couple are completely incompatible and are not able to resolve differences, they can divorce, provided that they have no children and are still young enough to find other partners. Those who disapproved looked down upon divorce and believed marriage to be a bond never to be severed. They also said that women are more hard-hit by a divorce than men, as their lives would be ruined.

Divorce was thought to be a common practice among the Manandhars some two to three generations ago. Informants said that it was not uncommon for married men or women to eventually leave each other, especially if they were married as children. Not all girls and boys in this situation developed affectionate feelings towards their spouses once they matured and started living as husband and wife. Many would dislike each other and this led to divorce. As one respondent who married at the age of 14 claimed that she divorced her husband because she thought her husband was not attractive and his demeanor was '*chhuchha*' or callous towards her. One day she just returned to her natal home and never went back. She has not remarried since. Divorces over trivial matters were therefore common in the old days. Such cases of divorce are also documented by Nepali (1965).

Sometimes divorces were forced upon the couple even if the husband and wife did not want to get divorced. This is quite surprising because most parents today would not like their

daughters to be divorced. There are two very different cases found in this regard. There was one case in the past where the father once summoned for his daughter to visit him from her husband's house. When the in-laws ignored his request and did not send her home, in a burst of anger, he had his daughter immediately brought back home. He not only had her forcibly divorced from her husband but also pressured her to marry another man. She remained in her father's house for over a year during which time she received offers of marriage from other men. She staunchly resisted against remarriage and it was only after the father's death that she and her husband were able to reunite. Neither had ever wished or intended to be separated or divorced. This also shows that the causes of divorce could be the parents and conflict between the families.

Cases of conflict between the daughter-in-law and the mother-in-law has also been reported as the cause of separation and divorce. In these cases, the husband is either not able to contradict his mother and take the side of his wife, or he agrees to everything she says if she is expressing displeasure towards her daughter-in-law. While the daughter-in-law is always expected to remain submissive and carry out all household duties, the son is also expected to do whatever his elders say and not go against their wishes. In the past, this was also the cause of polygamous marriages in some families. The mother-in-law would simply deem her son's new wife as useless and have him marry a second wife. An instance in which the husband and wife were not allowed privacy is also reported. After her son's marriage, the mother had the couple move into the room adjoining her own and would not even allow them to speak to each other. While the son is not able to oppose his mother, conflict between her and his wife gave rise to separation issues.

Today, the fathers of divorced daughters of the two *tols* in the study are completely distraught over their children's fate. They consider divorce as a great injustice to women who have to face it. They also think that divorce should only be considered if the circumstance demands it and reconciliation is impossible.

Table 7.11: Respondents on their Views on Remarriage after Divorce

Response	Male	Female	Total
Approve	42.5	42.5	85.0
Disapprove	5.0	5.0	10.0
Indifferent	2.5	2.5	5.0
Total	50.0	50.0	100.0

Source: Field Research, 2008.

Table 7.12: Respondents on their Views on Remarriage after Widowhood

Response	Male	Female	Total
Approve	42.5	36.3	78.8
Disapprove	5.0	7.5	12.5
Indifferent	2.5	6.3	8.75
Total	50.0	50.0	100.0

Source: Field Research, 2008.

Again, the issue regarding remarriage is more focussed on the remarriage of the women than men. According to many respondents, men have no problems of remarriage and as one respondent put it, they don't waste any time at all, even after a wife has passed away. They said that there are less restrictions or criticism for the remarriage of a man. But for women, many were of the view that the constraints are many regarding remarriage. Most of the respondents also said that they approved of remarriage only if the woman had no children and was still in her youth. The female respondents were vocal about women having the same rights as the men and should have every right to remarry if they wanted. The reality however was also stated by some as being more complicated than so simply put by the others. They deliberated on the fact that society was still against remarriage of women, especially widows and was looked upon as disgraceful and improper. They said that even if one knew that there is nothing wrong in remarrying after divorce or being widowed, and that it is the right thing to do if one wished, one might have to face more troubles because of ill-treatment from the society. Also, since social alliances have been seen to be an integral part of a Newars life, they may not be able to escape the harshness of people's comments and condemnation. The few respondents who did disapprove of remarriage simply thought it was shameful.

While the number of separations and divorces are very few among the studied areas, remarriages are also found to be very few. Surprisingly, only one case of remarriage was

found among the current households in the whole study area. None of the divorced or widowed in the sample have remarried.

The interpretation of *Ihi* as a custom that rescues women from the difficulties of widowhood have also been questioned by many writers. Gellner has tried to examine this and explains that in practice, divorce and widow remarriage are indeed very difficult for women (Gellner, 2001). In the case of Manandhars, widows do follow rules of pollution by wearing white and are barred from partaking in auspicious rituals, especially those during which women clad in red saris. They are not allowed in rituals like receiving the bride into the home (*bhamcha dukagu*) and the *barah pikagu* and *Ihi* rituals. There is therefore a considerable loss of status for widows. Divorce is also difficult, as Gellner states, parents and brothers will always urge a woman to bear the brunt of an unsatisfactory husband by considering it her bad luck. If a divorce does occur, she must return to her natal home where problems may arise with her brothers' wives and cause them to form a separate household. Such incidents are not uncommon which is why this practice is being avoided.

7.6 Major Findings

The major findings of the study can be summed up as follows.

-) Some ritualistic customs in the marriage practices of the Manandhars have ceased to exist with changing times, while some have been deliberately discontinued through mutual agreement of the community for the sake of checking social disorders like excessive expenditures during marriages.
-) Regarding age of marriage, the trend of women marrying earlier than men is still prevalent.
-) Maximum marriages involve circumstances where spouses are selected by others, mostly parents and relatives, clearly indicating predominance of arranged marriages. Self made decisions on spouse selection is very low among women. Selection by self is also not high among men. However, some changes in arranged marriages are seen where personal choice and final decision is left to be made by the prospective bride or groom.

-) Arranged marriages are very high among both men and women. Love marriages are low among both, more so among the women. This shows that endogamous marriages are preferred even by educated groups.
-) Combination marriage, though very low, has emerged as a new trend in marriage arrangements, which can prove to be a catalyst to bringing about major changes in traditional marriage patterns in the future.
-) The number of households with exogamous marriages is low. But a larger number of respondents have relatives engaged in inter-caste marriages (67 percent in total).
-) Views on exogamy with other Newar castes seem to be positive. A maximum number of respondents say that they would support such a marriage, only under the condition that the marriage is not with lower or 'untouchable' caste.
-) Views on exogamy with non-Newars carry more skepticism. Support for marriage with non-Newars is lower compared to support with other Newars. The reason given was that they are culturally and customarily more different and hence adjustments would be more difficult.
-) Respondents reveal that *guthis* have accepted significant number of brides from exogamous marriages.
-) Divorce and separation rates are negligible, but views on divorce reveal that more people will approve of divorce if circumstances demand it.
-) Views on remarriage after divorce and widowhood also reveal approval for the same from maximum respondents.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

This study has focused on the Manandhars of Kathmandu and their persistent and changing behaviours in marriage practices. Factors pertaining to age of marriage, spouse selection, kinds of marriage arrangements and exogamous marriages have been explored.

Discussions on these factors revealed that the Manandhars are trying their best to maintain their traditional values of marriage practices. So far, they have been quite successful in maintaining norms of endogamy. However, they are also aware of the impending changes which may have to be faced with the new generation. Many cases of traditional norms of endogamy in marriage being challenged have occurred since the old days and are increasing with every generation. Having to face the inevitable has forced people to get caught up in a dilemma of conforming to norms or complying with changing attitudes.

The data on spouse selection and kinds of marriages suggest that the rules of isogamy are still strong but the data on their opinions regarding exogamy suggests otherwise. Even if responses from most Manandhars imply that the rules of isogamy are being relaxed and they themselves support exogamous marriages, it is still a matter of debate. Almost all seem to reject hypogamous marriages (especially to 'untouchable' castes). A.C. Paranjpe's study on caste relations in India deals with social behaviours from a psychological point of view. From his research on attitudes of young college students towards exogamous marriages, he writes,

“For inter-caste marriages to be more common, it would be helpful if these young men and women (most of whom are unmarried and are of marriageable age) have more favourable attitudes towards intercaste marriages. No one can say, of course, that there will actually be more intercaste marriages if many young people are favourably disposed towards this idea. In the first place, it is clear that attitudes are but one of the several factors that determine action in such a complex

problem. Second, it is recognized that people do not always say what they believe and practice what they think is good or right. Yet, attitudes can be regarded as one of the important impellers toward relevant action. Favourable attitudes would indicate at least the absence of an initial barrier against action in that direction.” (Paranjpe, 1970, p.63).

This clearly explains that the favourable responses towards exogamous marriages are probably based on the fact that the marriage must not be hypogamous. However, the obvious growth of exogamous marriages and the younger generation’s rejection of caste statuses can also predict some change in the strong ideals of isogamy among the Manandhars. While marriages with ‘untouchable’ Newar castes has not been encountered in this study, marriages with castes considered lower have been encountered and these have more or less been accepted eventually by families if not immediately.

Exogamous marriages of the past faced more difficulties and outright rejection by not only the community but by family members as well, resulting in excommunication from the *guthi* and the household. All these marriages were the outcome of elopements. These days, elopements are definitely declining and reasoning with the parents for acceptance is being adopted. Exogamous marriages these days therefore face less resistance from the immediate families, if not from *guthi* members. Almost everyone has claimed that marriages with ‘untouchable’ castes will not be accepted by the *guthis*.

There is no doubt that endogamy is one of the most essential characteristics of the caste system. While people are aware that exogamous marriages are bound to increase under various circumstances, it also in turn raises the question of what exactly do exogamous marriages really mean to the Manandhars or any other Newar caste for that matter? The issue of maintaining caste purity has been discussed by many authors and remains true in the case of this study as well. Despite the changes that have occurred in marriage practices, it is difficult to assess if the caste structure of the Newars is being weakened at all. Many still hold traditional values of caste which are no doubt perpetuating isogamy. Some educated groups may have deviated from this notion and refuse to accept caste as a basis for marriage. On the other hand, even educated groups can still prefer marrying within the same caste, as is

pointed out by Paranjpe (1970) in his study of caste relations in India. He has said that despite the modernization of educated people, marriage is still an area where influence of traditional values and social customs are very strong on the individual. This can be attributed to their attempts at avoiding customary differences that may arise from inter-caste marriages or even pressure on the individual by a majority to conform to traditional norms (Paranjpe, 1970). The same can also be said of the Manandhars and their need to conform to tradition, which can explain the persistence of isogamy and the importance of caste purity.

Another explanation could be that the main concern of the Manandhars is that exogamous marriages will slowly weaken cultural values in the younger generation. This therefore, has implications on the cultural and traditional issues which identify them as a distinct Newar caste. If the younger generations will not uphold these traditions, their distinction of being 'Manandhars' among the many Newar castes will slowly disappear. Chhetri (1990) has pointed out in his study of adaptation of Tibetan refugees in Pokhara by examining persistence and change in their culture and traditions, including marriage practices and family patterns. He has written,

“The most persistent facet of any ethnic group in the face of the forces of socio-cultural change is perhaps the ‘identity’ and the core practices of their culture that are considered markers of ethnic distinctiveness.” (Chhetri, 1990, p.194).

His study revealed that marriage, among others, was one of main markers of identity of the Tibetans and maintaining their marriage practices was one way of maintaining their ethnic identity while living in a host community. The same could be said for the Manandhars, except in their case, caste distinctiveness is perhaps more relevant than ethnic distinctiveness. Hence, their preoccupation with maintaining control over marriage patterns can be explained by their need to maintain their culture. In examining why there have been so little changes in endogamous marriages, Chhetri (1990) has assessed in his study that like the Tibetans, other ethnic groups of Nepal are also endogamous in nature, hence making it easier for the Tibetans to maintain their own traditional norms of endogamy (Chhetri, 1990). Likewise, the Manandhars have also been successful until now to maintain this practice, simply because all

other Newar castes and many other ethnic groups of Nepal (with the exception of the pure Buddhist groups, e.g., Sherpas, Tamangs Limbus etc.) are also endogamous in nature.

On the other hand, the findings have also revealed that the respondents are aware of many more exogamous marriages, either among relatives or other Manandhar families. This vital information depicts that the changes may be occurring more extensively than it may appear. Even if exogamous marriages in the current study are still few, they have certainly grown in number since the last 8 years. Respondents claim to have someone in their family who has engaged in an exogamous marriage, indicating that there could be a lot more of them in other *tols* and *guthis*. Widespread knowledge of cases of acceptance of exogamous marriages by *guthis* also signifies the same. The reasons for this change in traditional *guthi* rules can be attributed to the new individualistic and egalitarian ideas of the younger generation. As put by Toffin (2005), the Newar youth today are concerned less with religion and ritual feasts resulting in increased conflict with their elders, hence bringing about a breakdown in traditional *guthi* values. Because the *guthi* plays an important role in the marriage practices of the Manandhars, changes occurring in one of these institutions will definitely have an effect on the other.

All in all, a trend of slow but steady change can be seen from this study. Even those customs which have continued are likely to change further if other ethnic groups of the society are on the same track towards change.

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Annex 2

The Manandhars of Kathmandu: A Study on Continuity and Change in Marriage Practices Sample Survey Questionnaire

A. General Information

Tol:Household No.:.....
Household Head's
Name:.....
Respondent's Name:.....
Age:..... Sex: Male Female
Primary Occupation:.....
Total no. of family members.....: No. of Males.....No. of Females.....

B. Spouse Selection and Age at Marriage

1. What is your marital status?

	<u>Current</u>	<u>Past</u>
a) Married	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Separated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reasons.....		
c) Divorced	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reasons.....		
d) Widowed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. How old were you and your spouse at the time of marriage?

Self.....Spouse.....

3. At what age did boys and girls normally get married at the time of your own marriage?

Boys.....Girls.....

4. Do you think you were ready for marriage at the time you were married?

Yes No

Reasons.....
.....

5. Who chose your spouse for you?

Parents Relatives Friends Lami Self Others
(specify).....

6. Did you check your horoscope (*chino*) before marriage?
 Yes No
 If yes, what was the result?
 Match No match

7. Would you consider your marriage as:
 a) Arranged
 b) Love marriage
 c) Combination of both

8. At what age do you think boys and girls should get married?
 Boys.....Girls.....

C. Family Size

1. Total no. of children born.....Total no. of living children.....
2. Do you want another child? If yes,
 Son..... nos. Daughter..... nos.
3. How many brothers and sisters do you have? (Fill in the table below)

Relation	Age	Marital Status*

***Marital Status:** NM=Never Married; CM=Currently Married; Wid=Widowed; Sep=Separated; Div=Divorced

4. How many children do you think a couple should have?
 Total.....nos. Sons.....nos. Daughters.....nos.

D. Endogamy and Exogamy

1. What ethnic group/caste does your spouse come from?
 Ethnic group.....Caste.....

3. Do you think a widow/widower should get remarried?

Yes No Don't know

Reasons.....
.....
.....
.....

Annex 1

The Manandhars of Kathmandu: A Study on Continuity and Change in Marriage Practices Household Survey

Respondent-Male Caste/Ethnic
 Group/Clan.....Ward No.: ... District: Kathmandu
 Respondent-Female..... Caste/Ethnic Group/Clan.....
 Ward No.: District: Kathmandu
 Current Address..... Household No (.. to ..).....
Tol:.....
 Name of Data Collector..... Dates: First Visit (1).....
 Second Visit (2).....

Please provide some information on individuals who belong to this household (begin with the oldest person).

Individual ID (Full name)	Relation to Household Head	Sex	Age	Marital Status	Age of Marriage	Occupation		Education* (See note)	Residential	
						Primary	Secondary		Full Time	Part Time

Relation: HH=Household Head, Hu=Husband; Wi=Wife; Br=Brother; Si=Sister; Fa=Father; Mo=Mother; So=Son; Da=Daughter. (Use combinations of these for other relations).

Tole: Pha=Phalchasa; Dha=Dhalashikwo

Marital Status: NM=Never Married; CM=Currently Married; Wid=Widowed; Sep=Separated; Div=Divorced

Education*: 1=Illiterate, 2=Literate, 3=KG 4=1 to10 class, 5=SLC pass, 6=Intermediate pass, 7=Bachelors pass, 8=Masters pass, 9=Doctorate

Occupation: a) Agriculture b) Industry c) Trade d) Business e) Service f) Student g) Housewife h) Unemployed i) Others (Specify)

Table 5.4: Distribution of Manandhar Population by Sex, Marital Status and

S.No	Places	No. of Families	Population			Marital Status		Level of Education					
			Male	Female	Total	Married	Un-married	Illiterate	Literate	10 Pass	SLC Pass	IA Pass	BA Pass
1	Thahiti	117	579	644	1,223	582	641	249	954	537	123	154	112
2	Vava Durga	17	65	67	132	71	61	14	118	76	16	16	6
3	Mache Ga	46	119	123	242	111	131	123	119	119			
4	Khampu Siguthi	12	46	43	89	41	48	29	60	55	3	1	1
5	Tukucha Guthi	16	61	60	121	61	60	25	96	68	20	6	2
6	Sakola Dhivaratri Guthi	85	264	270	534	265	269	170	364	307	26	25	4
7	Bindya Guthi	28	101	115	216	106	110	30	186	122	24	26	9
8	Maiti Devi Chare Guthi	10	28	37	65	31	34	9	56	40	7	3	6
9	Tekhacho Bhaktapur	43	133	135	268	124	144	111	157	133	5	12	6
10	Tapalachi Bhaktapur	25	76	78	154	82	72	42	112	102	8	2	
11	Phayakha	38	122	141	263	132	131	55	208	187	7	9	4
12	Dhalasikwa	36	138	135	273	131	142	46	227	124	39	40	19
13	Phalchasa	22	76	85	161	79	82	30	131	73	8	27	21
14	Takhache Khala	25	94	88	182	81	101	21	161	87	21	30	19
15	Nyagmani Phedi	32	133	130	263	122	141	38	225	143	24	34	19
16	Chaswado	64	293	342	635	307	328	100	535	327	59	76	55
17	Prasauni Guthi	26	107	104	211	107	104	39	172	91	26	38	12
18	Kipu	93	307	313	620	300	320	118	502	397	54	30	18
19	Salhu Guthi	16	41	53	94	41	53	15	79	43	15	7	11
20	Nusa	134	547	604	1,151	576	575	122	1,029	559	145	149	107
21	Chabahil Guthi	24	97	110	207	101	106	46	161	100	28	25	4
22	Marudhoka	77	370	186	556	301	255	51	505	253	58	87	60

Source: Kendriya Manandhar Sangh (Statistics), 2055 B.S.

-Table Continued

S.No	Places	No. of Families	Population			Marital Status		Level of Education					
			Male	Female	Total	Married	Un-married	Illiterate	Literate	10 Pass	SLC Pass	IA Pass	BA Pass
23	Phampi	26	98	87	185	78	107	33	152	111	24	12	3
24	Panti	21	68	63	131	63	68	52	79	67	8	3	1
25	Sakwo	30	117	109	226	108	118	74	152	129	11	8	2
26	Wotu	61	273	252	525	257	268	57	468	269	48	78	44
27	Dachi	14	38	39	77	33	44	16	61	57	1	1	2
28	Janakpur	16	43	54	97	58	39	4	93	49	17	17	9
29	Sanga	22	63	82	145	61	84	56	89	85	1	3	
30	Birgunj Birta	26	101	111	212	116	96	9	203	135	27		12
31	Talachi	29	85	70	155	82	73	21	134	47	27	27	21
32	Layakusa	70	367	354	721	369	352	105	616	321	86	119	60
33	Daisa	63	325	331	656	358	298	71	585	264	87	109	78
34	Saldada Shangja	50	158	150	308	148	160	110	198	182	12	2	1
35	Khaniya PaniRamechap	54	184	185	369	174	195	282	87	81	5	1	
36	Dadikot	32	96	114	210	106	104	95	115	112		3	
37	Pokhara	21	77	86	163	71	92	36	127	90	17	12	7
38	Pakarbas Ramechap	25	208	(2)	206	105	101	117	89	89			
39	Narayanghat	28	121	134	255	120	135	33	222	163	24	26	7
40	Dharan	17	59	53	112	60	52	8	104	56	22	13	10
41	Golmadhi Bhaktapur	35	172	171	343	152	191	86	257	238	14	4	1
42	Tokha	15	32	48	80	33	47	20	60	51	2	2	5
43	Pukhudhya	109	485	525	1,010	525	485	137	876	423	118	169	117
44	Hetauda	38	163	195	358	177	181	38	320	185	39	62	24
45	Palpa	12	55	54	109	54	55	22	87	72		7	6
46	Banepa	116	389	409	798	383	415	226	572	456	61	30	18
47	Biratnagar	3	8	6	14	6	8		14	9	3		1
	Total	1,919	7,582	7,543	15,125	7,449	7,676	3,191	11,917	7,684	1,370	1,505	924
	Percentage		50.1	49.9		49.2	50.8	21.1	78.8	50.8	9.1	10	6.1

Source: Kendriya Manandhar Sangh (Statistics), 2055 B.S.

Note: SOWI=Son's Wife; DA=Daughter

GLOSSARY

- Barah chwonegu*: Puberty rite observed by Newar girls on the onset of their first menstrual period.
- Barah pikagu*: The ritual of releasing a girl from her confinement during the *barah tegu* and *barah chonegu* ceremonies.
- Bel bibaha: (Nepali) Same as *Ihi*.
- Bhamcha dukaygu*: The ritual of the bride crossing the threshold of the groom's home for the first time or ritually entering the bride into the home.
- Bhwe*: Feast.
- Bya*: The fruit of the Bel plant (*Aegle marmelos*), used during rituals of the *Ihi* ceremony.
- Barah tegu*: Pre-puberty rite observed by Newar girls before their first menstrual periods.
- Dewali *guthi*: (Nepali) Same as *digu dyah guthi*.
- Digu dyah guthi* or *deo puja guthi*: The institution or *guthi* which is responsible to maintain the cult of the ancestors by celebrating the festival of the lineage deity or *digu dyah*.
- Digu dyah*: A form of the lineage deity.
- Guthi*: A formal association formed for the management of various religious and social activities.
- Guthiar*: A member who represents his household in the *guthi* committee.
- Gwe kyagu*: The ritual of accepting betel nuts from the bride by her kin signifying her taking leave from her parent's house.
- Gwe*: Betel nut.
- Hwongkegu*: Marriage ritual performed at the groom's home.
- Ihi*: A Newar girl's mock marriage ceremony.
- Jilaja dukagu*: The ritual of receiving the groom at the bride's home, wherein he is introduced to her kin.
- Kaji*: The administrative head of *twa* or *tole* of the Manandhars.
- Kanya dan: Ritual of offering a girl to God Narayan during the marriage ceremony (the *Ihi* ceremony in the case of Newar girls)
- Khala*: Lineage group.
- Khwa swegu*: The ritual of the bride's kin visiting the bride at the groom's home a few days after their marriage. The literal meaning is 'seeing the face'.
- Kul devata: (Nepali) Same as *digu dyah*.
- Lakha tegu*: The custom of presenting *lakha* sweets to the bride's parents before marriage.
- Lakhamari*: A traditional kind of sweet hard bread.

Lami: The person acting as mediator or go-between for both sides of the family in a marriage.

Lun digu dyah: The deity or group of deities made of metal (usually gold) which is the counterpart of the *lwon digu dyah* and placed in the house of the *thakali* for worship. During the main *puja* of the dewali festival, this is placed alongside the *lwon digu dyah*.

Lwon digu dyah: The lineage deity or *digu dyah* made of stone which is located in its original site. *Lwon* means stone.

Par pachuke: The phrase used to denote divorce in Newari.

Phuki: The group of patrilineally related households.

Puja: Worship.

Putu gwe: Betel nuts given by the bride to her parents before taking leave from their home. The betel nuts are woven inside a decorative cloth.

Sabja nakegu: The ritual of the bride sharing the groom's food during the *hwonkegu* ceremony.

Sah: Oil press.

Sal: (Nepali) Same as *sah*.

Si guthi: The institution or *guthi* responsible for carrying out death rituals and disposal of a corpse.

Sisi tegu: The custom of delaying the bride's arrival into the groom's home by keeping her in another house for a night.

Swayamvar: Hindu marriage ritual where bride and groom exchange garlands.

Tha: che(n): A married woman's affinal household.

Thakali: The chief among the members of a *guthi*, usually the eldest living member.

Tol: (Nepali) A village-like special segment of a Newar town or city.

Twa: (Newari) Same as *tol*.