

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Modernity and Its Pervasive Impact on Traditional Oral Songs and Poetry

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the Degree Of Master in Arts in English**

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Letter of Recommendation

This is to certify that Mr. Chitra Raj Bhandari has completed his dissertation entitled “**Modernity and Its Pervasive Impact on Traditional Oral Songs and Poetry**” under my guidance. Therefore, I recommend this dissertation to be submitted to the Central Department of English for final examination of viva voice.

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Approval Letter

This thesis entitled “**Modernity and Its Pervasive Impact on Traditional Oral Songs and Poetry**” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Mr. Chitra Raj Bhandari has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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Abstract

Saguns and *phags*, the cultural songs sung by the members of Doteli community in various auspicious occasions, incorporate the traditional life style of the community members. However with the development of modern consciousness aided by various factors of modernization like education, transportation, communication, state bureaucracy and its apparatus, various governmental and nongovernmental development agencies, the community is on the verge of losing its cultural traits. With the loss of many of unique cultural traits these songs are losing their signification within the Doteli cultural system. In this connection, this thesis attempts to map the changes in oral cultures and rituals like *Phags* and *Saguns* focusing on the urgent need to preserve their cultural aura.

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I. *Phags* and *Saguns* as Doteli Folk Songs

Phags and *Saguns* are auspicious and traditional Doteli folk songs sung by women folks in groups, known as *Phagari* and *Sagunaris* respectively, on various auspicious and religious occasions in Doti Pradesh. These songs are structured in the tradition of oral poetry and thus are transmitted orally from one generation to another. These songs have deep relations with the occasions and auspicious occasions for the consecrating value added to them and are therefore also known as *Mangalgeet* or *Sanskargeet*. (Panthaha 6). Having religious tone and based on Vedic rites and rituals, they draw up their materials from various sources like the Vedas, Puranas, and local history and from the cultural activities of the local culture of which they are an integral part. *Saguns* generally means good omen be it in verbal form or in the form of offerings. *Saguns*, in Doti Pradesh, signify those songs that are sung in the inauguration part of any function accompanying *Swastibaachan* (incantations of the *Puranas* and Vedas), and which are good wishes for the completion and fruitfulness of the occasion without any disturbance and obstructions. *Phags* are songs that are sung in various auspicious occasions and vary according to the occasion. Furthermore according to Pantha:

These songs are loaded with description of the materials and procedure of puja, praise, and eulogy of gods, portrayal of character, and explanation of the verses of the concerned puranas the portrayal of social aspects. Besides rendering the occasion musical and pleasant, without them any worshipping carried out is thought to be incomplete, unsuccessful, and fruitless in this area.¹ (Pantha 94)

¹ All translations from Nepali to English in this dissertation, unless otherwise mentioned, are mine.

Both of these cultural songs are indivisible part of all the worshipping, festivals and celebration of this region.

Phags and *Saguns* are sung throughout Doti Pradesh, which itself is a cultural division consisting of all the nine districts of Far-Western Development Region.

Phags and *Saguns* occupy a sacred place among other folksongs that are found in this area and are categorized as *chokha geet* (pristine songs). Professor Pantha categorizes the folk tunes of this region into *Ghargeet*, *Bangeet* and *Chokha geet* based on their subject matter. *Bangeet* are loaded with emotional feelings and incorporate the mundane and material desires of human beings. *Deudageet* fall into this category.

Ghargeet on the other hand are sung in groups by male and female equally and have less degree of emotionality and have satirical and comical subject matters. Unlike *Bangeet* and *Ghargeet*, *Chokhageet* are based on religious texts and practical aspects and lack the diasporic element. *Chait*, *Dhamari*, *Bhalaulo*, *Saguns*, and *Phags* are some examples of this type of songs. These songs preserve and promote the sanctity of an *anusthan*. Due to this pristine nature, they derive the status of *lokveda*, created by the women folk of the place for preserving the ethics and values inherited from their ancestors. It represents the poetic effort of the illiterate female folks. In lack of the ability write down it into words they might have created these songs based on their knowledge of the epics and contemporary social life.

For all Dotelis *Phags* have are highly sacred place and are taken as must for the completion of any auspicious function and the presence of phagari in the place of worshipping or celebration is given a worshipful stature. *Sagunaris* and *phagaris* presence in the place of *anusthan* (place of worship) is taken itself to be good omen besides the verse of their songs. The verses of *Phags* and *Saguns* are as important as the verses of the puranas themselves. The female nature that of love and caring is

reflected in these songs. It fulfills the lack of the puranas which sometimes seems to dry in terms of emotionality. This desire of human beings is supplemented by these verses, as they are highly pragmatic and emotional in tone. They highlight the religious importance of the *anusthan* itself by putting light on various aspects of it.

Women are other half of human civilization and incorporating them in the socio-cultural mainstream is of vital importance. Though the society, of which these songs are an integral part, is said to be 'backward' in terms of economic progress, nevertheless these songs along with the huge bulk of its folk literature and customs is sufficient to prove its wealthy status in terms of its culture and songs like *Phags* that are creation of the 'better half' are sufficient to suffice females position in the mainstream culture. *Phags* and *Saguns* are only some of them. They are cultural songs due to their ability to maintain their position as an integral and inevitable part of the society. The society basically consists of Hindus. Along with transportation, which was introduced in this region almost three decades ago, people belonging to other faiths and religion were also introduced in this region. But then also they are limited in newly developed road-side towns. Thus the majority of the Hindu community of this region continues with the some of the cultural practices of their ancestors. But nothing remains the same in front the cruel and inevitable wheel of time and its flag-bearer: change. Time has changed and with it Doti is also changing. To a great extent change in every aspect of life is now visible. The culture is now being categorized as 'old' and 'new'. In this tide of change the traditions and values of Doti are being swept away. But it's not the end of it all.

In a landmark effort to preserve the Doti's past, Dr. Jairaj Pantha in *Anjulubhari Saguns, Poltabhari Phag*, has recorded most of the *Phags* and *Saguns* of this region. Though the culture is moving towards its destruction, the text is an

effort to preserve some of its verbal cultural practices and performative art in textual format. This text traces out various aspects of *Saguns* and phag and most importantly has compiled 150 *Phags* and 3 *Saguns*. Though the actual count, as the writer acknowledges in his prefatory note, may be double than this, but then also, the ones which are collected in this volume are similar to ones that the writer is unable to accumulate. To be more precise the outlines of the *Phags* that are left is similar to the ones that are included in here and owe the differences to linguistic variation that is prevalent in the Doteli language. The phonological and morphological differences that are found in this language throughout Doti and the presence of various local gods make up varieties of *Phags* and *Saguns* huge. But this huge bulk of *Phags* and *Saguns* are not collected in this anthology. Along with these, it's noteworthy that the *Phags* and *Saguns* focus mainly on the Brahmin and Chettri community, who are its major practitioner, as source. And it is acknowledged that, "though other lower castes in the Hindu hierarchy do perform this cultural practice, the author could not reach out for them" (Pantha 8).

Furthermore the volume presents a vivid socio-cultural picture of Doti by highlighting its rich cultural, social, and religious practices, its norms, customs, values, ethics, mores, and way of living. Along with presenting the present day complicated lifestyles of this region the writer more beautifully carves out its past unspoiled, unravished and pristine agrarian lifestyle. It identifies the importance of *Saguns* and *Phags* in cultivating the devotional spirit towards gods, in establishing and forming the base for social relationships, in its being a localized form of *karmakand*, in the preservation of racial pride and above all in its being the epitome of female creativity and their contribution to Doteli folk literature. Reflecting on their importance, the book highlights there being the "mostly desired means of

entertainment for seasoned women folks”, the “preserver of cultural splendor”, “the conserver of socio-cultural environment”, being the “background to Nepali literature” and mostly for their “contribution in imparting a musical environment” to the members of that society of which they are part (Pantha 13-25)

Moreover, the book then goes on to trace out the history of performative arts and gradually focuses on folksongs and in this also especially *Phags* and *Saguns* in Doti Pradesh. It traces out the origin of cultural songs in Vedic era and concludes them to be created alongside *Puranas*, *Upanishads* and *Brahamangrath*. The book further traces out the remnant of this practice in the neighboring states of India: Gadwal and Kumaon. Along with the subject matter of these songs, their bases are also analyzed. Both of these songs embody the emotional and creative strains of the creator and these abstract emotions can only be expressed through music. The deeply buried musical elements of these songs are analyzed beautifully along with their structure. *Phags* and *Saguns* are the product of fact and fiction. Their epical dimensions are clearly sorted out by explaining about the characters, subject matter, characterization, plot development, stanza formation, the rhetorical devices used, rhyming scheme, balance between the storyline and poetic strains, styles along with the use of language as well as it focuses on the dynamics of language and its effect on the vocabulary of these songs.

The book builds up the whole context for the compilation of the songs. *Saguns* and *Phags* ranging from birth to marriage and that belonging to various anusthans are then presented with extended commentary on the subject matter, their styles, their structure, subject matter and most importantly they are translated into Nepali. This effort made by the author makes it easier for the reader to grasp the underlying meaning of these lines and thereby fulfills the need of an inquisitive reader to know

about the songs and importance. The text would have been useless, in absence of the commentary and explanation, to readers other than who are well versed in Doteli and its culture. It is successful in presenting the songs within the spirit of Doti itself.

The book acquires the status of cultural text due to its effort made in the exposition of the context itself before presenting the text. Any performative art is useless unless it is anchored in a context. Like language, in which a word acquires its meaning when placed in the context of language system, a cultural act gets its signification only when it is analyzed by placing in the cultural domain of which it is a part. When pulled out of it and placed in an alien territory, it loses its signification.

Oral poetry is ephemeral art and its existence depends on the memory and practice done by the member of cultural group. Cultures are a dynamic phenomenon and so are the practices carried out by practitioners. The double edged nature of culture with the change of time discards some practices and incorporates some others. The generations of human races differ from one another in terms of their ideals and practices. The reluctance of the young generation in following up the footsteps of their ancestors leads to the disappearance of some of the practices. The existence of any cultural practice depends on the level of interest that it can arise in the newer generation.

With the passing of time the fellowship of Doteli folks, in carrying and handing over of the cultural 'torch' which they have carried till now, seems to be falling. The fellowship began to weaken with the introduction of the roads to this region. The agrarian far-west confronted the materiality of the post-modern cultures. The doors of far-west were opened to cultural change with the introduction of modernization, technological advances, modern education system, and global ethos. This cultural values and ethos that are molded in the 'ethical flames' of the

cosmopolitan and metropolitan cafés and dance bars are now devouring Doteli cultural heritages.

Phags and *Saguns* have lost their popularity among the present day Doteli folks. The younger generations have lost their interest in them. It does no more suits to the taste of these youngsters, who are the product of modern science and are cultured in realm of cyber and pop culture. The primary reasons are many. The oral tradition is basically dependent on memory power. The modern life of this region has divided its inhabitant's mind towards various desires and in the rush to fulfill them, they "don't have time for learning them" and even though they know some of them they "don't have time to sing them by attending ritualistic function" (Appendix IV-142). This lack of interest in attending functions and singing these auspicious songs clearly shows up the breaking of the social bonds that existed in the past. Indifference towards other members of society, a hallmark of modern civilization, is found in the young daughters and daughter-in-laws of this society.

Modernity in this area was introduced in the form of migration. In 1965 AD this region came under the cruel attack of famine. Due to this a large portion of the population migrated to Kanchanpur and Kailali. This diasporas soon adjusted towards their new surroundings by neglecting some of their indigenous culture. Economically they became sound and focused more on education of their off-springs than on passing their culture. Their occasional visit to ancestral home brought with them changes. They inspired the locals to adopt their way of living. In this regard Dr. Pantha comments:

During their short stay, they try to be more cultured and civilized than the locals in order to be make themselves different from them. These ladies do not participate in the local *Puja*, *Bratband* and *Upvas* with

the female folks. Due to their stable economic condition their way of life is taken as the manifestation of supreme culture and civilization. As a result the locals themselves also neglect their culture due to their desire of being called cultured and civilized. In this light of this context it becomes improbable of the older generation to inspire their younger generations for following and conserving their traditions become thinner. (Pantha 40)

Modern education system also has bigger share in corroding the traditions of this region. Nepali and English were adopted as means of teaching and learning by this system. Due to the negligence of Doteli language in educational sphere, the young generation began to neglect Doteli language and along with it the culture, as it didn't pay them out in anything. The parents also inspired their offspring to learn these non-native languages due to their importance in the larger Nepali society, of which the Doteli were becoming members with the accessibility of road networks.

Roads have played a vital role in changing the society. Like any other concept of development, this infrastructure also has both of them. Though it really helped the Doteli folks to develop economically and educationally, culturally it acted as a virus, which corrupted the traditions of *Phags* and *Saguns* but Doteli cultural system itself. It exposed the agrarian and illiterate Doteli folks to the western culture that traveled there in the product cartoons and in the tape-recorders of the *lahures*. It also brought along with it other migrants from various parts of the country. These migrant workers settled down near the roads. Due to their knowledge of the official language, Nepali, and due to business, which provided them with better financial conditions, than that of the most of the locals, they established their cultural supremacy over the locals, even though they number were few. Moreover the fashions and fads that this businessman

introduced into this region had a profound effect on the culture of this region. Various cosmopolitan cultures were introduced in this region in the forms of *Levi's* Jeans, *Timberland* Shirt, and *Hi-Tech* shoes by the businessmen.

The local culture gave way to the modern culture. The cultural supremacy established by the English and Nepali speakers, their urban centered residence, their employment status, and their luxurious quotidian activities allured the Doteli folks towards their culture. The older generation, who are hard conservatives, didn't yield to these changes. Nevertheless they inspired their off spring to join the other side, as it yielded them more benefits than they would get by remaining with Doteli culture. The results are drastic.

In lack of younger generation who could carry on the age-old traditions of the society, the culture is being swept out and a civilization is coming to an end in this western end of the country. Though various efforts have been made at individual level to preserve these age-old traditions of the society, in lack of successors its future is setting in the west. The performative arts of any region have their cultural significance in performance in a particular context and in a particular medium. *Phags* and *Saguns*, as performative arts, also have some criteria, which are to be fulfilled, for acquiring their cultural significance. But meeting of all this criteria would be just a quixotic effort in the near future, if something is not done for the preservation of these folksongs. For folksongs this crisis is not new, at least if they are put in the global context.

The Ballads of European countries, the *Dharmasastras* of the Hindus, and even the *Mangalgeet* of Kumaon and Gadhwal and other various oral poetical traditions faced this crisis. But efforts were carried out by individuals as well as by government to preserve them in of the forms- - oral, visual, or textual. Understanding the

importance of the traditional songs, this book makes effort in preserving the tradition by presenting various cultural aspects of the songs along with presenting various cultural methods and practices that act as structural necessity to these songs. Thus as a cultural text the book represents the true picture of yesterdays idyllic Doti while contrasting it with the mechanical Doti pacing quickly towards modernization. This thesis attempts to map the changed geography of oral cultures and rituals like *Phags* and *Saguns* while focusing on the urgent need to preserve their cultural aura.

II. Modernity Global and the Local

Modernity: The Eclipse of the Community²

To define modernity, keeping in mind the huge literature that has so far been built up in defining it, in this small space of my dissertation would be really an 'oxomorus' effort. So, in this space the researcher will try to define modernity, in relation to its role in the modernization of the global society and the consequent rise of globalization and its effect on the glocal cultures. Furthermore the discourse of modernity will be analyzed on the basis of its reception and adaptation by the global as well as the 'glocal' communities and the impact that it had on the 'West' and the 'Rest'.

Key Concepts in Cultural Theory defines modernity as a "mode of vital experience- experience of space and time, of the self and others, of life's possibilities and perils- that is shared by men and women all over the world today". Modernity then is an "experience" that is "new" and this new is ever changing, ever renewing, ever destroying and ever becoming. In this sense, to be modern is to find ourselves always in a flux and change which is clouded with uncertainty and which is bereft of any traditions or morality to be guided with. So, to be modern is to find oneself in an "environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, and growth, transformation of our self and the world and which at the same time threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are". So, the universe of modernity might be said to be an oven-cum-incubator, in which as Marx said 'all that is solid melts into air' (246).

Initially, the term was used to differentiate the Christian epoch from their pagan past in the writing of the St. Augustine. From then on this distinction has been

² Taken from the title of the book, "The Eclipse of the Community" by Maurice Stein.
(Featherstone 343)

reviewed and shifted to various locations in the centuries that followed it. After middle ages, its next stop was the renaissance and coming up to seventeenth and eighteenth century, modernity was associated with Enlightenment, which brought about technological and industrial advancements in the Western society. In this light modernity is not only that which is recent but also progressive (Edger 244).

Marshal Bauman in his seminal essay *All that is Solid Melts into Air* periodizes modernity into three progressive phases. The first phase starts at the start of the sixteenth century and ends with the end of eighteenth century. During this period people “had little or no sense of modern public life or community, within which their trials and hopes can be shared” (Bauman 17). The second phase began in the late eighteenth century with the “reverberation” of the great French revolution that brought “great upheavals that came in every dimension of personal, social, and political life” (Bauman). Coming up to nineteenth century, the landscape in which modernity was experienced, and was “highly developed, disaffected and dynamic” (Bauman 17). The landscape was that of:

steam engines; automatic factories; railroads; vast new industrial zones; of teeming cities, that have grown overnight; [...] of daily newspaper; telegraphs; telephones and other mass media; of increasingly strong nation states, and multinational organization of capital and [...] an ever expanding world market; embracing all, capable of the most spectacular growth, capable of appalling waste and devastation, capable of everything except solidity and stability.
(Bauman 18-19)

The third period of modernity started in the early decades of the twentieth century modernity by this time had become global and by developing a culture of modernism

achieved remarkable achievements in every field. But in the later part of this period, the modernist “had shrinkage of perspective and imaginative range as [...] they lurched towards rigid polarities and flat totalization” (Bauman 24). As a result of this modernity lost most of its vividness, resonance, and depth and lost its capacity to organize and give way to public life (Bauman 17).

Though, the earlier epochs provided some conditions for the growth of the modern consciousness, it was Enlightenment period that “provided the language in which modernity first came to be defined” (Hall 162). Although Reformation had a great impact on the religious worldview of the contemporary mass, and though French Revolution had triggered the common public’s traditional mindset to question the pillars of tradition. The spirit of questioning was institutionalized by Enlightenment. Kant’s maxim *sapere audie* (Dare to Know), characterizes epoch’s rationalistic thinking. This attitude was characterized by a number of significant other attitudes which were instrumental in turning this era modern (Edger et al. 126).

This period in the western history was characterized by series of social and cultural changes, which were brought about through “reliance on reason” and “experience” and which provided impetus to the development of science and scientific consciousness along with “secularization” and “instrumental rationality”. Other elements that were important in shaping this epoch as modern was its reliance on the growth of industrial society, social mobility, market economy, literacy, bureaucratization and consolidation of the nation state. The concept that was central to this epoch was its “valorization of individual as free, autonomous, self controlled and reflexive” (Edger et al. 546).

Moreover the Enlightenment philosophy was charged with an, emancipatory motive which would lead humanity towards universal truths which subsequently,

according Barker, would lay “the foundations for humanity’s [march towards] [...] progress” (188). Moreover Enlightenment thought for him was:

marked by its belief that Reason demystifies and illuminates the world over and against religion, myth, and superstition. For Enlightenment thinkers, human activity, rationality and scientific exploration mark the break with the tradition that modernity heralds. In both its scientific project and its moral- political project, Enlightenment philosophy sought universal truths. That is, knowledge and moral principles that applied across time, space and cultural difference. (Barker 188-89)

Thus the spirit of questioning the present is at the very centre of modern consciousness. According to Gaonkar, Kant, Baudelaire and Foucault also address modernity as an attitude: “a mode of relating to contemporary reality [...] a philosophic ethos that could be described as a permanent critique of our historical era” (12). For them, according to him, that attitude or ethos of modernity finds its reflexive articulation in a distinctive “type of philosophical interrogation- one that simultaneously problematizes man’s relation to the present and the constitution of the self as an autonomous subject” (12).

This attitude of critiquing of modernity brought the human subject at the very centre of the universe. Moreover the principle of modern world was, to quote W F Hegel, “freedom of subjectivity, the principle that all the essential factors present in the intellectual whole are now coming into their right in the course of their development” (Habermas 7). Thus Subjectivity was related with ‘freedom’ and ‘reflection’. The connotations that are at the centre of this concept according to Habermas are; individualism; the right to criticism; autonomy of action and ideal philosophy. For him the grounds on which the principle of subjectivity mushroomed

were the Reformation; the Enlightenment; and the French Revolution. Furthermore he asserts that Martin Luther King's preaching of the "individual consciousness" and the resultant Protestantism shifted the faith of individuals from preaching and traditions, unto himself. Along with this the other factors that contributed to the growth of the reliance of human on their subjectivity, according to him, were the "Declaration of the Rights of Men" and the Napoleonic Code, which was given currency by the 'Freedom of Will'. Moreover in modernity, "religious life, state, society, science, morality, and art are transformed into just so many embodiments of the principle of subjectivity" (Habermas 17). The modern subject, who conditioned by these historical events has had been renewing its consciousness and questioning its present incessantly, renewing itself and simultaneously renovating its surrounding. This condition of the subject conditioned the growth of modern institution and apparatus that paved way for modernization.

Modernization, the process that brings about modernity and that continually feeds it, is constituted of many processes

that are cumulative and mutually reinforcing, to the formation of capital and the mobilization of resources; to the development of the forces of production and the increase in the productivity of labor; to the establishment of centralized political power and formation of national identities; to the proliferation of rights of political participants, of urban forms of life and of formal schooling; to the secularization of values and norms and so on. (Habermas 75)

These imperatives of modernization came into life with modern subjects' daring to ask. This "daring" resulted into the birth of modern science which for Berman had given birth to discoveries that not only changed man's view of the world but also

changed his position in it (16). Furthermore, “modernization fueled from industrialization”, according to Berman, transformed the

scientific knowledge in to technology, [to create] new environments and destroys old ones, speeds up the whole tempo of life, generates new forms of corporate power and class struggle; uneven demographic upheavals;[...] rapid and often cataclysmic urban growth; systems of mass growth, dynamic in their development, enveloping and budding together the most diverse people and societies’ increasingly powerful nation states ; [...] mass social movements of people, challenging their political and economic rulers, striving to gain some more control over their lives; finally bearing and [...] all these people and institutions along an ever expanding, drastically fluctuating capitalist world market. (16)

To sum up the basic assumption that defines modern consciousness, in words of Sanjeev Upreti, “is its focus on human rationality rather than religious faith; and that it is secular in its temper rather than shaped by mythological or religious imagination” (2).

The rationalistic and critiquing attitude of the modern subject had changed many aspect of the socio-cultural life. The changes occurred primarily due to the development of science, technology and the new method of mercantile trade, which in itself was a factor that contributed to the perpetuation of modernity.

In light of its “secular and human centered worldview”, Upreti, has divided modern culture into three interrelated strands: “capitalist/technological modernity; politico-ethical and cultural modernity” (2). The first of these modernities came into existence with the displacement of the feudal centered agro based economy to

industry and market based economy during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The growth of this modernity was accelerated by the rise of the modern nation states in Africa, Latin America and Asia and there subsequent colonization by powerful European nations like England, Germany and France for raw materials as well as market for their products. This colonization subsequently became the “instrument in globalizing Western capitalism”. But this strand of modernity would not have been possible without the growth of science and technology. Subsequent adaptation of the new technology by the industries assisted the industries in “renovating” and “modifying” and subsequently revolutionizing their production and distribution mechanism. Thus technology assisted capitalism in “shifting its contours and updating its efficiency” and in becoming a “global phenomenon” (Upreti 3). Thus this relationship between them is highlighted by the term capitalist/technological modernity.

Another strand of modernity puts light on the “displacement of the religious authority”, in “governing and prescribing socio-ethical norms and values”, to “secular laws of the modern state”(Upreti 3). Instead of “relying on religious scripture” that characterized the pre-modern society, with the onset of modernity the societies relied on modern secular laws and political systems (Upreti 3). This trend of modernity is, in light of this facts, is termed as the politico-ethical. Another important strand of modernity is cultural aesthetic one. This strand of modernity emerged with the secularization of church dominated medieval Europe that was assisted by the capitalistic/technological modernity. In the field arts and culture now the “worshipful attention”, which previously was given to ecclesiastical and royal matters, was shifted towards common man. The growing and bourgeoning European middle classes had “shifted its attention” towards the concern of common man. Literary movements like

Romanticism and Realism that emerged in the subsequent centuries were the “outcome of this very strand of modernity (Upreti 3-4).

Modernity, which had emerged in the West under certain historical conditions, is now a global phenomenon. In its long run it continues to shape and reshape itself. In line with this argument, Upreti asserts that, even though the theorists like Lytord and Baudillard have “declared it dead”, theorist like Andreas Hussyen and Hans Bertans, with whom he also agrees, see “its continuity in the form of postmodernity” that privileges “multiplicity” and “differences” in contrast to the “modernist quest of universal truths”. The modernist quest for universal truths was the product of white middle class “European male” and was “patently Eurocentric”. But with the globalization of modernity and its consequent encounter with variable local contexts, with various local and “heterogeneous truths” and multiple “cultural forces” and “actors”, the “quest for a universal truth” was “displaced by multiplicity of truths”. Even though, the “quest of modernity seems to have ended” with the rise of postmodernity, “it still survives”. Furthermore he asserts that the meta-narrative of modernity for a “uni-centered terrain” has been replaced with two major meta-narratives of modern world: “The Marxist concept of classless society and liberal humanist concept of democracy with social justice [...]”. The contemporary world, of which we are a part, is experiencing “a new avatar of modernity” (6-7).

Thus with the incarnation of modernity that has multiple narratives at its base, the equation between modernization and westernization has been problematized. This view of modernity, that emphasis on the multiplicity of truths, paves way for the analysis of modification that modernity has undergone, in its journey, in both its spatial and temporal dimensions and its subsequent globalalization.

Expansion of Western Modernity

Before exploring the experiences that modernity experienced in its temporal and spatial journey, it is necessary, at least for the researcher, to explore the nature of its vehicle, which in itself is product of modernity: globalization.

The word globalization is a “longstanding historical tendency towards the worldwide interconnection of the peoples of the planet, their cultures and institution, resulting from many different social processes” (Mato 284).

Furthermore for J.Tomilson:

The idea of globalization suggest interconnection and interdependencies of all global areas which happen in a less purposefull way. It happens as the result of economic and cultural practices which do not, of themselves, aim at global integration but which nonetheless produce it. (Barker 166)

Globalization is an outcome of the widely interconnected world, in which a locale is always affected, due to the interdependencies and the interconnections among global societies, with decisions made on the other corner of the earth.

For Daniel Mato, though globalization has been “on air for centuries”, our epoch can truly be said the age of globalization due to the development of: “worldwide consciousness of globalization”; rapid “global interconnection among social agents”, made possible by the emergence of worldwide system of production and distribution, the wide availability and accessibility of the means of communication and the groundbreaking innovations being carried out in this field; and the “worldwide development of numerous international, transnational organizations”, whose sole motive is to “connect global societies”. Moreover the mushrooming growth of these organizations is also the characteristics of

globalization. Along with these, the dissolution of the “colonial empires” and the “quasi end of the cold war” paved way for communications among the “polarities”, which subsequently has paved the way for dialogue in between them and furthered “intense globalization”. Thus there are varied social actors and their impact depends upon the scope of their field: “global”; “transnational”; “national”, “regional”, and “local” (284-85).

The ubiquitous global social actors like the US and European governmental and non-governmental agencies and other multilateral agencies have been globalizing their “own representation” of “democracy”, “human rights”, “justice”, and other social categories that represent them. Along with them other organizations, whether local, regional, or international like the World Bank, or the ADB or local or regional organization of countries like the SAARC, or any organization of that of journalist, anthropologist, the media or the like, fund or promote certain activities or programs only when their representation in this projects or activities are given priorities or materialize. In light of this process, though the “local identities” are not shaped by “exogenous actors’ or influences, nevertheless they are constructed by the locals, who have been “exposed” to the “practice and representation of these global agents” (Mato 285). Though important, globalization cannot be comprehended within these components. Along with them, there are other factors, which are and were imperative to the development of globalization.

Other factors that were and are important for the development of this process are similar to those put forward by Anthony Giddens:

Capitalism, the interstate system, militarism and industrialism. Each of these three dimensions embodies a distinctive globalizing imperative, nurtured by quite different institutional forces and constituencies. Thus

he logic and contradictions of the capitalist world-economy influences the pace and patterns of economic globalization. While within the interstate form, it is the ‘universalism of the nation state’ form, which is responsible for the creation of a single world. [...] the globalizing of military power [...] is tied to the logic of militarism, while the changing global division of labor is conditioned by the logic of industrialism. (McGrew 224)

Thus, with the development of this infrastructure of global modernity, according to McGrew, industrialism, capitalism, and the nation state have been globalized throughout twentieth century.

Moreover for him, while the earlier phases of globalization had “physically unified” the world, the recent phases of globalization have brought societies and civilization of “exogenous origins” together. This, for him does not necessarily involves the process of “homogenization” or “uniform global political unification” but instead a complex condition that has been instrumental in reconstituting the world as a single “social space” by structuring patterns of “human interaction”, “interconnectedness” and “awareness”. As a consequence of these patterns, he argues that the events and decision taken on a particular place on the globe have notable impact upon the locals and communities on the other side of the globe. Due to the unobstructed flow of knowledge, capital, and consumer goods and with the establishment of transnational networks, “abstract human relationship” have been formed globally, that have affected every dimension of social, cultural, economic and other aspects of life at individual, communal, social, and national level throughout the globe (212).

Globalization was then an outcome of the simultaneous development and disjunctive flows of what A. Appadurai terms “mediascapes”, “technoscapes”, “financescapes”, “ethnoscapes” and “ideoscapes”(Barker 158-59). Without the development of any of this scapes, globalization would not have been possible neither would have been the spread of modernity. The adaptation of the capitalist economy (financescapes), by most of the nation-states (ideoscapes) has resulted in the development of widespread media networks (mediascapes) and transportation system which in turn subsequently adopted the advancement of technology (technoscapes), furthered the growth of capitalism, by establishing, in the words of Calhoun, “indirect social relationship”(207). This has led, for A. Giddens “disembedding” of social relationship and consequently in a “disembodied” global structure” (McGrew 214).

The adoption of capitalist economy and its subsequent development provided the nation states medium and means for spreading its ideologies and in integrating its territories culturally by the production of a “national culture”. Furthermore, the nation-states are influenced by exogenous ideologies of other countries represented by multinational, transnational, bilateral or national organizations and corporations. Thus modernity is shared bit by bit among national and international societies, which justifies that the relation between these ‘scapes’ are not one-way traffic and eventually do not harbor the condition for an “ordered global village”, but render “multiple points of conflict, antagonism and contradiction” (Barker 207).

Thus modernity though born in west under certain socio-historical conditions is now global and has reached every corner of Mother Earth, not suddenly but slowly and steadily, in the cargo boxes, in the letters and pockets of the administrators and colonizer bearing their imprint, furthered by nationalism and accelerated with development of global media houses, migration, and capital. The process is on and

modernity continues to roll into new pastures from every corner of earth to every corner of earth, though the west still remains to be the major centre for the production of global modernity.

Modernity in the ‘Rest’

The journey of modernity to the culturally “others” of the Westerners had been an experience of multiple and mixed outcomes: one that of exploiter and that of the exploited. In its journey from the “West” to the “Rest”, some feature of western modernity retain while some have diminished and while some other are added to it. Thus, non-Westerners are now, in the words for Gaonkar, “engaged critically in their own hybrid modernities” (18). Moreover, he argues that, even though modernity is now a global phenomenon, it carries its birth mark of the western discourse: the attitude of questioning of the present. For him, though non-Western modernities carry along with them the elements of Western societal modernizations like: “scientific rationalization; secularism; forms of popular government and bureaucratic administrative system; market driven industrial economy” and cultural modernization: “privileging of individuals need for self expression and self realization over the claim of society [...] [they] are transformed according to the local culture and politics” (15).

The process through which the locals modify global modernity and make it suitably theirs is what Gaonkar calls “creative adaptation” (18). For him this process provides a space for the locales, where they not only blur the edge of global modernity, but also make themselves modern and construct an identity instead of being made modern by exogenous forces. The locals not only experience it but also negotiate it and appropriate it according to their needs through the process of creative adaptation.

Modernities that are different from one place to another and the variations in it largely depend on the socio-political, religious, geographical, and other local specific historical conditions of the place. But it doesn't mean that modernity of one place is different from other. According to Roudomtof:

In terms of form modernity is globalized and this globalization of modernity is evident in the construction of world culture consisting of formal rules and regulations. In terms of content, however modernity is localized, thereby producing glocalised modernities- each of which is shaped by the particular historical specificity of a cultural context and the ways in which particular regions and civilizations have interacted with each other over the course of the last centuries. (1)

Modernity in terms of forms, which are mostly "Western" has exploited local structures and brought uniformity in their social, economic, political and to some extent cultural patterns by spreading all over the world within the last two centuries. Due to the dissemination of the forms of modernity among "nation states that are more isomorphic [...], they change more uniformly than is commonly recognised" (Meyer et al. 173). But, due to "internal decoupling" (Meyer et al. 173), or "localization" (Roudomtof 47), or "creative adaptation" (Gaonkar 18), of the content of modernity the trajectory of modernity is pushed away from convergence. According to Roudometof:

[F]ormal modernity pertains to the constitution of sites and rules that regulate contact with others- ranging from diplomatic encounters to the operation of multinational corporations to the spaces of international legal practices. [...] [Whereas] social space that pertains to modernity's content involves the operation of the private sphere but

also the workings of neighborhood relations. [...] The interplay between the localization of the content of modernity and the globalization of the forms of modernity [...] [are] constant. [T]hese two analytically distinct aspects of modernity can [not] be clearly separated in everyday life. On the contrary, [...] [these] two processes proceed simultaneously and synchronically with each other. National symbols, flags, international sports competitions, and other similar media provide good examples of sites that bring together the form and the content of modernity. (47-48)

Thus glocal modernities are shaped both from external as well as internal forces. Their contents are influenced by the global modernity as well as from their internal historical and cultural traditions, while the forms are imported from major storehouses or the dominant global players like the Western modern states. The impact is that the 'traditional' societies and nation are transformed into modern nation-states. Along with other countries, even fundamentalist dominated Islamist nations or Japan who until recently was adopting the policy of cultural isolation, and which now falls into the category of the Western nations itself, have not remained unaffected by this characteristics of modernity.

The impacts of modernity and the subsequent rise of glocal modernities in previously colonized countries of Africa and Asia are more acute. Though it doesn't mean that the uncolonized countries are exempt of its effects. First of the growth of the modern consciousness among the Indians, as the representative of the colonized countries, can be found in the anti-colonial and nationalist movements that fueled up in the early half of the twentieth century. Some of the factors that facilitated the growth modern consciousness, in case of India, according to Mandair, were: the

imposition of English as the official language; establishment and subsequent propagation of a vast number of Anglo-Vernacular schools in the northern part of the country during the mid-nineteenth century; the growth of print culture and its subsequent use in journey from the oral to print culture; and the birth of many ideological discourse in early nineteenth century and their subsequent import to colonial India brought changes in Indian social and cultural life (649). This developments lead to development of modern consciousness which ultimately culminated in its independence in 1947.

From then on India has largely modernized due to its diplomatic contacts, development of scientific consciousness, and other institutions of modernity and its modernity remains highly hybridized in terms of its content or what the researcher would like to call “deshi modernity”. The benefits of “development”, which for Upreti, along with “neo-liberal ideal of democratic free market” are the “grand narratives of modernity”, are mostly restricted to urban centers, while only ‘dry’ discourse along with some “residues of development” has penetrated the rural villages of these countries (23). But due to technological development and advancement in industrialization, India is gradually becoming more modern and a source of global modernity itself.

But the case with other Asian and African countries in terms of modernity is disjunctive: they are simultaneously pre-modern, modern, and post-modern. In this regard Upreti asserts:

Even though forms of Western modernity - including its ethico-political, cultural-aesthetic - spread through the non western cultures of Asia and Africa, however the economic base of many of these countries like Nepal and Bangladesh, Bhutan and Afghanistan for

example, remained rooted to agriculture, especially agriculture based in older forms of technology. It is true that growing urbanization and growth of industry and commerce brought massive changes in these nations. At the same time, however, institutional forms and ideologies rooted in pre-modern world views- continued and continue to dominate the political and cultural life of those nations”. (9)

Thus, modernity has different effects on locales depending upon the socio-cultural base of the locality and its adaptation in terms of form and content of the largely globalized western modernity.

Modernity in the ‘Himalayan Land’

Nepal has a unique experience of its modernity. Though never under colonial rule, Nepal nevertheless adapted and reformed modernity bit by bit and which remains yet ever emerging and ever modified. The first form of modernity, according to Pigg, that Nepal encapsulated was the formation the concept of nation-state that was sovereign, politically demarcated territory and inhabited by culturally unique people (498). The demarcation of political boundaries in 1816 AD, the adaptation of legal code, *muluki ain*, in 1854 AD, which “functioned in effect as a constitution: a codification, but also a reification and homogenization of existing customs, usages and practices”(Guneratne 754) and the designation of Nepali as the official language around 1930 AD transformed Nepal into a modern nation-state. The period ranging from 1945, through first Jana Andolan of 1951AD which “displaced the autocratic regime of Rana with Multiparty democracy” and paved the way for “democratic practice” and the “displacement of the popular government with partyless Panchyat system”, for Upreti, was the first phase of modernity in Nepal (10).

Furthermore he asserts that though the socio-economic condition of the nation remained pre-modern, “modern discourses” of “democracy”, “equality”, “social justice’ were largely in the air during this air with the contribution of political leaders, expatriate Nepalis in India and the soldiers who had returned home after “exposure to the European forms of modernity” (10).

The second period of modernity ranges within the period of Panchyat system, starting from the “banning of the political parties in 1960 to the restoration of democracy following the Jana Andolan of 1990”. And lastly, the period ranging from “Jana Andolan of 1990 and Jana Andolan of 2006” is the “third phase of modernity” (Upreti 12). Though Nepal has till now gone, as we have seen through, three phases of modernity, its reception and impact on the traditional cultural institutions has been varied.

In locales, those are relatively isolated from the modern technologies of communication, development projects carried out by different NGO(s) and INGO(s), and who are deprived of modern means of transportation and thus largely seceded from the modern means of health care and deprived of such other modern facilities. The Nepalese in these locales are leading a pre-modern life that is based on pre-modern forms of social rituals and whose economy is still based on feudalism. And moreover the technologies and the belief system that they practice are still pre-modern.

But this does not mean that all the rural parts of Nepal are necessarily pre-modern. Though the institutions are relatively pre-modern, there has been gradual rise in modern consciousness among them. Doti Pradesh, which was largely seceded in terms of development, has been rich in its traditional and cultural practices. Though the economy of this region is still based on agriculture, but due: to the influx of the

discourse of development of various NGO(s) and INGO(s); the marginalization of regional language in public and private use; the development of road-side towns and the subsequent heterogenization of the culture practices of the population that mushroomed in them, accessibility to modern means of communication and transportation, which regularly import the global and Nepali modernity to the local towns; the school text books that standardize the paternalistic discourse of patriotism that propagate the ideology of homogenous Nepali national identity; and moreover due the destruction of tradition cultures by the Maoist insurgency that was carried out in this area, has subsequently resulted in Nepalization of the Doteli culture.

The discourse of rationality which lies at the core of the modern reflexive consciousness is actively at work in this region. The traditional societies are typically *religious* [...] [based on] a system of metaphysical beliefs or teachings which have been [...] arrived at by extra-rational means [...] and recorded in scriptures or other sacred texts which are then mediated by religious authorities. [...] [In such societies there is] a depth of meaning, a feeling for the profound mystery and poetry of human existence [...]. Despite widespread disease, poverty, and oppression, members of pre-materialist societies evinced a certain confidence and largesse that came from a sense of being plugged into the sources of Creation. Praise and gratitude animated their basic attitudes, resulting in everyday cultures of great beauty and grace.”

(Mathews 87-88)

This societies are now being destroyed by the encroachment of modernity. Thus like any other traditional society, modernity is corroding off the traditional cultural practices of the Doti Pradesh. The oral tradition of *Phags* and *Saguns*, which are

highly religious and ethical in their content, are now gradually diminishing under the pull of the modern practices, in which the inhabitants of this region are involved into. Though much attention is paid to the conservation of the deuda geet by singers and music companies along with media groups like national and regional FM radios, the state owned Radio Nepal, and other state owned and private TV channels, very less or no attention is paid to the conservation of these songs.

With the rapid spread of societal and cultural modernity, shared social values are giving way to individualism, materialism, and instrumentalism. Though they have led, to some extent, to social development and material progress but this has been only at the cost of shared values and meanings and moreover they are used as ideological justification for the subordination of Doteli minorities and cultures. Cultural songs like *Phags* and *Saguns* are highly ethical and normative in tone and content and their performance is only possible when the members of society have shared domain of mutual co-operation and co-ordination. And as mutual co-operation and harmony among the members of the society is fading away with the unleashing of hedonistic and individualistic impulses of modernity, the performance of *Saguns* and *Phag* is now diminishing.

The book, *Anjuli Bhari Saguns Polta Bhari Phag*, is an endeavor to preserve these cultural songs in textual format. Moreover the text has also provided a pastoral picture of Doteli society in which these songs were meaningful. The indigenous cultural practices of this Pradesh, which have now been largely substituted, by Nepali and other world cultures, are kept intact in this collection. Not only does it explain the significance of *Saguns* and *Phags*, but also explores the cultural contexts in which they were and are meaningful.

III. Modernity and It's Pervasive Impact on Traditional Oral Songs and Poetry

Anjuli Bhari Saguns Polta Bhari Phag as a Cultural Text

The text *Anjuli Bhari Saguns Polta Bhari Phag* is a cultural archive which records the cultural practices of Doti pradesh that are now more and more perishing and changing due to the modernization and the subsequent Nepalization of the indigenous Doteli culture. This text has recorded some of the traditional Doteli cultural songs in textual format. As a cultural text, this text records the cultural songs

Saguns and *Phags*, which incorporate in them the traditional lifestyles of people living in that locality, their behavioral pattern, their social structure, language, folklores, customs, religion, morals, institutions, norms, values, history and so on.

Generally, every text is a cultural text, as it reflects the culture of a particular place. Language itself is the carrier of culture and a text written in particular language does carries within it the culture of that place. As a writer, every individual is a representation of the culture of which he is a part. It is the culture that shapes the life style, behavior, norms, and values of an individual. A book written by an individual than always is an imprint of the culture of which the writer is a part and product. But, *Anjuli Bhari Saguns Polta Bhari Phag* is a cultural text not only in that sense. It's a cultural text because, as mentioned earlier, it provides a total exposure to the culture of a particular place, which in the words of E. B. Tylor “ is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities acquired by man as member of a society” (Bhusan & Sachdeva 759).

The cultural traits of a society are affected by the geographic as well as socio-political factors of a society like the ability of human beings to adapt to its surrounding, scientific discoveries and inventions and change in the modes of

productions (Bhusan and Sachdev 772-73). Cultures are community specific and

within a society there can be different subcultures. The social structure itself is a product of the norms and values, which are defined by the community for its own use. Based on these norms and values other institutions and systems are shaped by the community. The institutions like marriage, family, and so on are almost universal but the difference in their practice by different society makes one culture unique from other. Other institutional practices like the economic activity and religion have major influence on the overall social structure of a society. Because of these broad categories, culture in Nepal also differ from each other and at some point also do converge. The traditional culture that was and to some extent, is still practiced within the Doteli community of the Far Western Development Region and is, to some extent, unique in itself in most of the aspects that have just been mentioned.

The Doteli community had been practicing a culture that had and, to some extent has been, unique. The cultural patterns of Doteli Society consisted of spiritualism, joint family, caste system and so on. The norms and values system of this society were rigorously based on the Vedic traditions of the Hindu system. The world view of the simple folks that live here was until recently religious more than scientific, emotional rather than rational, spiritual rather than mundane. Though guided by the over arching Hindu scriptures, the community has its own localized form of them and these were the very basis of the social structure of this community. The localization of the content of the Hindu scriptures is what had rendered a touch of uniqueness to this culture. The culture of this community was more agrarian and Thus, tribal in nature than modern. But this does not mean that it lacked cultural condition. In matter of cultural richness it has a civilization status. Art, literature, dances of a society reflects its civilization roots and its cultural status. The healthier and creative these faculties in a society the more it acquires a civilization status.

Literary genres like *Deuda*, *Phags*, *Saguns*, *Chaits*, *Dhamarese*, *Khel*, paintings like the *Jeev matrika*, and *Jiuti*, dances like the *Deuda naanch*, *Hudkeli nanch*, *Holi nanch*, *Chait nanch* and other performative arts of this region reflect the cultural heritage that this society possess. These performative arts along with other arts reflect the ways of life of this community in its entirety. The institutional practices, mores, values, and norms of this society are preserved in them.

Like every other culture, Doteli culture is also social heritage rather than individual, it is idealistic, it fulfills some needs of its practitioner, it is integrated and has the capacity to incorporate new element into it, its primary vehicle is language, which helps to learn the past wisdom and subsequently becomes instrumental in transmitting the accumulated wisdom; it also involves division of labor on the basis of caste system, which had helped in developing special skills to a specific group of people and had thus, resulted in increasing interdependence among the members of the society. Every culture has a social system and a social structure that meets the demands of the system. It is the presence of a social system that is common in every culture but along with it, it is again the type of social system, which determines the social structure of the society that brings the difference in a social system. The social systems that were and some of which still are practiced within Doti pradesh are reflected in this text.

For the smooth functioning of social system obedience to it by the members of the community is an essential pre-requisite. Its survival always hinges to this condition. The function of a system is to bring social control and this can be attained only if it is valued.

The songs *Saguns* and *Phags* that are incorporated in this text are written in Doteli language. Presenting them in the language in which they are sung in their

native land is what makes this text primarily a cultural text. Language is the primary factor that is essential for the formation of a community. Language is necessary for a human to understand his fellow beings and to be understood by them. It is a social creation, a human invention, an unconscious invention of the whole community. In the words of W D Whitney:

Language making is a mere incident of social life and of cultural growth. It is as great an error to hold that at some period men are engaged in making and laying up expressions for their own future use and that of their descendants, as that, at another period, succession shall find expression. Each period provides just what it has occasion for, nothing more. The production of language is a continuous process; it varies in rate and kind with the circumstances and habits of the speaking community, but it never ceases; there was never a time when it was more truly going than at present. (Sachdeva and Bhusan 118-19)

Thus, like any other language in the world, Doteli language is not an individual production but an outcome of many individuals and generations belonging to the Doteli community. It is this possession that primarily differentiates a Doteli from other Nepalese. Sociologically, it is this language that moulds an individual Doteli from childhood. A Doteli child learns about most of the things surrounding him through the use of his mother tongue. And as a member of the Doteli society, it is this language that primarily fulfilled the need of an individual of establishing social relationships and for the communicating ideas with other members of the society.

Moreover this language, like any other languages in the world, is the bearer of the culture and is the medium of transmission from one generation to another generation. For Sachdeva and Bhusan:

Language conserves our culture, which it passes to posterity. [...] the culture that exists at a given time and place has come from the past and is the result of accumulation of the things, attitudes, ideas, knowledge, error and prejudice. It is man [...] who through language has acquired a high degree of culture and civilization. (119)

Thus, it is language which has turned a 'savage man' into 'noble man' and by using Doteli language as a medium to record the *Phags* and *Saguns*, the text is incorporating primarily the culture of the Doteli community, which as Sachdeva and Bhusan has put it, is the sum totality of all the knowledge, attitudes, ideas, error, prejudice acquired by the Doteli community. It is primarily art, paintings, and other literary genres that express the cultural heritages of a society.

This text exposes the cultural richness of the locality by primarily focusing on *Saguns* and *Phags* as literary creation of the Doteli women as an instrument for maintaining social order within the society. Unlike Deuda, another variant of the diverse Doteli literary genre, they have no sensual references in them and are therefore also categorized as *chokha geet* (pristine songs). In this context the writer remarks:

They emphasize on ethical values rather than entertainment and rather than the romantic literature of '*saili and maili*'. It is invaluable gift created and secured by the Doteli females for the Doteli society to facilitate it with spiritual values and devotion. (Pantha 9)

Phag's and *Saguns'* cultural values lie in their ritualistic dimension. As cultural songs, these genres of Doteli folk literature were created by Doteli women by drawing materials from various classical Hindu scriptures. These were subsequently localized

to the immediate environment for fulfilling the ethical, moral, ritualistic, and normative function of the community:

[...] *phag* is Doteli languages' own type of tune, prosody, verse, rhythm, ethical song, auspicious song, and major basis, which creates social unity, and moreover it's the ancestors' gift for saving the racial dignity of its practitioners. (Pantha 7)

Thus, *Phags* and *Saguns* are traditional, auspicious and overtly ritualistic songs of Doteli society composed and sung by its female members for guiding social behavior and actions of its member and this text has taken them as its subject matter for which it is cultural in its content.

For the smooth functioning of the society, along with language, social customs are important means of normalizing social behavior and the *Saguns* and *Phags* reflect the social customs that are part of the Doteli society. In a society customs are important part of its social mechanism. It is custom that primarily moulds the personality of an individual, as from birth to death a person is always under the confluence of many social customs. They are essential to the life of a society and are held so sacred that any violation of them is regarded not only a challenge or a crime but also a sacrilege calling upon the people the vengeance of the gods. They are followed not only because they have been handed down traditionally but also because they carry the sentiments and feelings of the society as well as that of the individuals. Customs influence both the private and public sphere of life. *Phags* and *Saguns* depict the influences that Doteli customs have on the thoughts, beliefs, and manners of an individual belonging to the Doteli community.

As part of the customs in Doti Pradesh, there are various cultural signs that signify good and bad omen. Ghee, curd, speaking good omens, looking for *Saguns*

auspicious time for doing something and taking god Brihaspati as the provider of such time, performing benediction before starting the function are some of the customs that are part of the Doteli society. The custom of giving ghee and sweet to the *Sagunaris* by the organizer and taking the Brahmin priest as the manifestation of the Goddesses Saraswoti and Brihaspati were inherent within traditional Doteli culture. These customs are incorporated in the *Saguns* given below:

We *Sagunaris* offer
 you Panegyric wishes
 Speak good omens
 Will get two *mannas* of sweet and ghee
 Speak nicely the panegyric wishes
 Who will offer good omens who will give the auspicious
 time? Who will perform the benediction?
 Goddesses Saraswoti will provide benediction,
Brihaspati will give auspicious time
 Both present in this panegyric singers (Pantha 316)

This *Sagun* is a representation of the customs and belief systems that the Doteli folks believed in. As this *Saguns* says, the *Sagunaris* were themselves taken as the symbol of good omen and it is their presence in the function that provided it with religious sanctity. Any function held in their absence was thought to be incomplete. Another instance of customs that is incorporated within *Phags* is given below:

Oh lad who told you your
 name Told your name
 The Brahmin pandit told me my name oh mothers
 They told me my name with the cone of gold

They told me my name with the sacred bell and conch shell
 They told me my name with the *janai* and rupees oh
 mothers (Appendix III- 123)

This *phag* is sung while the newly born infant is told his/her name in the naming ceremony. Naming ceremony is one of the major rituals in a Hindu society and this is done with utter devotion. The ceremony is carried out in the presence of all the family members, relatives, villagers, the Brahmin priest, *phagaris*, and *Sagunaris* and above all amidst the thought-to-be-presence of gods and ancestors, who are invoked and invited at the very beginning of the ceremony. It is the custom of Doteli community that the Brahmin names the child and after him the father of child and his mother and than others according to the seniority of the members that are present over there³. The custom of using a cone made up of gold, conch shell, sacred bells, *janai*,⁴ and rupees is very ritualistic.

All the articles used in this ceremony are used for their sacred value. Gold is taken as the purest of the metals, conch shell gets its importance primarily because of is being one of the *astra* (weapon) carried by god Vishnu, the bells that are used in this ceremony are not ordinary bells too. The bells belong to the local gods and are taken from the house, where the local god's belonging are kept and due to this they are taken to be utterly sacred. *Janai* as in other Hindu society is the sacred thread worn by Hindus and moreover rupee is used in this context not for its material value but for its social value. Thus, the customs that are incorporated in this *phag* give a glimpse of a society that is utterly religious in its nature. This is proven from the

³ For full version of this *phag* and roll of seniority that is maintained on this occasion please refer to the appendix.

⁴ A *janai* is supposed to be a sacred thread that is worn by all the male members, except by the ones who are supposed to be untouchable, within a Hindu society. The untouchables are thought to be inherently impure and are not allowed to wear a *janai*. It is thought that the inherent impurity in them

defiles the sanctity of a *janai*. The number of threads in a *janai* varies according to the caste and clan of the man who is wearing it. The equivalent of *janai* worn by women within this community is *dudhago*.

sacred value that is added to the articles that are used in the naming ceremony. Like any other society, besides customs other agencies of social control, which play important role in regulating social behavior in this society, are religion and morality.

In this society religion has been an important socializing factor. It has been helping in maintaining social behavior of its member. Religion has been a composition of beliefs, symbols and practices that are related to a supra being who is thought to be guiding and controlling their destiny. As for Glock and Stark, religion is collection of “those institutionalized systems of beliefs, symbols values, and practices that provide groups of men with solutions to their questions of ultimate being” (Bhusan and Sachdeva: 654). Religion in this society also has been fulfilling the spiritual as well as the social needs of its member, even though it is highly personal in nature.

Like other religions, Doteli folks also believe in some supernatural forces possessing power, which influence their lives. Since man is dependent on these powers, he adjusts himself to them. For these, like other follower of various religions, the Doteli folks also have devised some outward acts like prayers, hymns, *kirtans*, *yagyas*, *Phags*, and other forms of reverence. It is through these means that they tried to supplement their helplessness in changing their destiny. Fatalism is something that lies at the very core of the Hinduism. Accordingly the best way for one to change his/her destiny was to please the gods.

This belief is reflected in the following extract of *phag* taken from the *phag* of *mangalacharan* sung while the mother is giving birth to the baby and is suffering from birth pangs.

Bless us oh gods and ancestors

Bless us oh five gods

Bless us oh lord *Bhumteuli* lord of all land

Bless us oh Ganesh of the lake. (Pantha 186)

This starting stanza of the *phag* first of calls on the gods, ancestors, five gods and the local god *Bhumteuli* for help in easing off the birth pangs and for the successful birth of the child. It reflects their faith on the superior and unseen forces that they think change and shape their destiny. It is this belief that primarily sustained their faith on these forces and attracted them for their worship whenever they needed their help. Moreover by worshipping them in their good days they tried to secure the supply of happiness and prosperity for their future. In a way the gods were and are still taken as the manifestation of the natural elements. Like any other agrarian society, this society was also primarily dependent on natural elements for good harvest, which was necessary for their survival. The five gods referred to here are the embodiments of five natural elements (*panchamahavut*) viz earth (*prithvi*), water (*Jal*), fire (*Agni*), air (*Vaiyu*), and sky (*dyaus*). What is significant in this *phag* is the reflection of the utter faith that this people had on their worship of these elements for attaining better living conditions. The physical nature was rendered sacred with a desire to attain benefits according to their wish. It is not that they lack understanding of their infamy in this condition. They are well aware that water cannot be a god as they themselves use it for various purposes from worshipping to cleaning.

Worshipping is basically a means devised by humans for taming the natural elements by establishing bilateral relationship between themselves and the natural forces, which is based on their faith on fatalism and on the super power of nature that influence their life. Along with this, the people have certain rituals, ascribed to certain deities, which were performed with utter sanctity and devotion. The given extract of

phag taken from the *phag* sung on the occasion of *sastikarma*⁵ while worshipping lord Ganesh reflects the ritualistic necessity that was maintained within the domain of religion that is followed in this community:

There can be no *hoom* without fire and no

Veda without Brahma

There can be no *jagy* without lord Ganesh

The *jagy* has been organized for getting son
and prosperity

Oh lords accept my offerings. (Pantha 211)

For offering worship (*hoom*) to the fire god, it is necessary that there is the presence of fire in the altar (*havankunda*). In this ritual a mixture of ghee, barley, and *teel* is offered to the fire accompanied with certain incantations from the puranas. This act of paying worship is thought to be of great virtue and is supposed to yielding better fruits for its organizer. The benefactor of the offerings that are made to *Agni* is not only limited to him but also to other gods. So it is the most acclaimed means of pleasing the gods. This *phag* further explicates the importance of god Brahma. Brahma is supposed to be the procreator of Vedas and without him the Vedas existence cannot be imagined. It is this belief that has made him important for the community members.

Vedas are basically volumes that have provided knowledge about sustaining life on earth and without the assistance of their knowledge it would have been

⁵ This ritual is carried out on the sixth day of the baby's birth. On the evening of this day, Ganesh, *kalash*, *matrika*, *navgraha*, *dwarmatrika*, *sastidevi*, *sakandadev* and light (*dweep*) are worshipped and *argha* is established. This ritual is performed only if the baby is baby boy and if the family is a well to do (Panthahaa: 199). After the puja is performed all the lights in the house are kept on and all the pariticiPanthahas sing different *bhajans* (hymns). The mother and baby are given new clothes on this occasion. This occasion is special because it is believed that on this night the fate (*horo*) of the baby is determined by the goddesses *Bhaavani* and to please her all of the family members remain awake singing hymns and lighting the room so that she gets impressed by all the

arrangements done for her reception and gives a good fate to the infant.

impossible for them to sustain their life. The society itself is structured based on the knowledge provided by Vedas. Moreover the last two lines put the intentions of the organizer behind performing this worship. It is the need of the organizer for a son and prosperity that has made him to perform this ritual. Without belief on the existence of these supernatural forces, an individual would never do this. This cultural belief is reflected in this *phag* and thus, can be said to be reflecting the cultural condition of the people, which they follow as member of the community.

As a socializing factor religion has been helping the individuals in rationalizing and Thus, rendering their sufferings bearable and in providing cohesion to social values as part of the society. When the hopes of an individual are blighted and when all that it planned by is swept away man is in dire need of something that would console him. It is this necessity that is fulfilled by religion. Faith in god has been compensating him and sustaining his interests in life and making it bearable. In the following *phag*, this is sung while the mother is, giving birth to baby puts light on this tendency of human beings:

Saraswoti is residing on your right and Parvati on the
left Speak oh goddesses from all the corners
Oh sisters take the names of gods and ancestors
God and ancestors will award you. (Pantha 186)

The mother who is suffering from the birth pangs is overwhelmed by the pain. To make the pain bearable and to give her hope of survival, the phagaris acknowledge the supposed presence of benevolent goddess like the Saraswoti and Parvati besides the mother and request on them to soothing off the pains of the mother by talking with her. Furthermore, the phagaris request the mother and other attendants for uttering the names of the ancestors and gods in this hour of grave trouble. It is this condition of

helplessness that makes them to remember the gods and ancestors, who, they think, can only help them in making this an occasion of celebration. Thus, the dire needs of these simple folks pushes them to the door of faith upon these supernatural forces which are imbibed in them right from their childhood as part of their cultural subscription, of which they are lifelong members and mentors.

The members of a community learn and pass on their knowledge and skills to their posterity before they depart from this world. While on this earth, it is primarily religion that helps them to interpret things and natural phenomenon outside their cognition capacity. It is this function of religion, which provides solutions to some complex questions of human beings. Complex questions like that of post-mortem life are answered by religion rather than any rational branch of knowledge. The pieces of puzzle that humans are not able to put together by applying dry rationality are completed when the rationality is substituted by faith on religion. Passing on this life sustaining skill to their posterity is an important aspect of human life. The following extract, taken from the *phag* sung while worshipping lord Ganesh during the wedding ceremony, held at the groom's house, reflects how this cultural condition is met by its members:

Oh lad worship lord Ganesh

He will save you from ill luck

Oh mother with what I should worship lord Ganesh

What offerings will bring me good luck. (Pantha 465)

The mother who has herself faith in this ritual now prepares her son for learning to bestow faith upon god for saving oneself from ill luck and ill conditions on this earth and for attaining a better after life. He is taught with what he should be worshipping a particular god. The son as a Hindu is supposed to be submissive and disciplined and

thus, follow the orders of his parents. A prototype of the son figure is reflected in this *phag*. Every parent has desire that their offspring follow their ideals and principles. The desire of the traditional Doteli parents primarily was that their offspring carry on their ideals of religion. For fulfilling this purpose the groom is here being taught by the mother about the method of worshipping lord Ganesh and the benefits that he will get from it. Another instance giving directions for paying respects to god and their possible benefits is reflected in this extract of *phag*, which is sung while the groom is getting ready for his wedding journey:

Oh lad you will find god *betaal* above you

Pay your respect by bowing down with
your hands together

Oh lad offer *acheta* to him

Oh lad may you be blessed by him. (Pantha 488)

The groom is here directed by mother for paying his respects to God *betaal* by bowing down and offering him virgin rice (*acheta*). *Betaal* is a local god and the mother is trying to attract the attention of her son for paying his respects to this god on his way. She is in fear that, failure to do so by her son would invite fearful consequence, which, obviously she doesn't desire. In trying to secure a good future for her son, she is also imbibing in him the tendency of positing faith on the supernatural for fulfilling their desires and protecting them from fearful conditions. Moreover, religion is the foundation upon which social values are based. Social values are more religious than scientific. Their effectiveness lies in belief and not in skepticism or rationality. They are most effective when they are not seen through rational eyes. It is religion that compels a man to accept limits upon his needs and

desires. The actions and needs of the members of this community were also influenced by the Hinduism.

The lifestyles and modes of action that these individuals followed were highly religious. From birth to death, each and every action was based on the prescription that was put forward by religion. Religious rites are performed on many occasions as birth, initiation, marriage, *pumas*, sickness, death and so on. Before performing any actions it was god, which they put first. All the religious rites are performed in order to get away from their sins and to attain better fruits from their toils. The *phag* given below explicates more on this situation:

I worship lord Ganesh with unbroken *Sali*
 rice Long live lord Ganesh
 I worship lord Ganesh with a pair of *janai*
 Long live lord Ganesh
 With great music being played outside
 Lord Ganesh is worshipped inside
 Bless us oh Ganapati with prosperity and intellect
 Please take away our sorrows (Appendix II- 110)

This *phag* is sung while god Ganesh is worshipped on any auspicious ceremony. According to Hinduism, lord Ganesh is supposed to be worshipped first of all gods. In accordance with this belief, the phagaris here present a picture of the worshipping. In the place of worship, in a Doteli society, there used to be always *badai* music being played by *dholi*⁶. The phagaris are describing this music in the background and

⁶ An untouchable caste in this society who stitches clothes and plays the traditional musical instruments like *damaha*, *dain*, *bhyakur*, *sunayabaja* and so on. While a puja is being performed he plays a musical tune on *dain* and *damaha* known as *badai*. This tune is supposed to be sacred and is played only when some worshipping is underway. The society is based on the social stratification supposed to be done

by king Manu, a mythological Hindu king. According to this principle the Hindu society is divided into four castes: Brahmin; Chettri; Baisya; and Shudra. The Brahmins performed

euologizing lord Ganesh along with worshipping him with a pair of *janai*. In the second line of the second stanza, after the primary eulogy is finished, the phagaris now come down to their reality and the objective behind of all that is done. They now accept their inferiority in front of this great being, who rules their destiny, by requesting him for his blessings, prosperity and intellect and moreover for taking away their sorrows. Thus, *Phags* explicate and incorporate this agency of social control in them and thus, are primarily cultural. Cultural analysis of *Phags* until now has shown their relevance in the social canvas of Doteli community. Their importance lies in the fact they are local derivatives of the Hindu social organization prescribed by different Vedas, *puranas* and religious scripture of Hindu religion. Thus, religion has been at the very centre of its social formation.

As a consequence of religion and its preaching, every society has a certain concepts regarding morality. The moral standards of a society differ according to space and time. They can be different in different societies at a given time and can differ in the same society in time continuum.

The social good is what constitutes morality. For any action to be moral or immoral it is not the action that can justify its position but it is the cultural context in which it is performed and defined. A society always prescribes certain rules of conduct for its members for being observed by them in certain contexts. These rules of social behavior should and ought to be observed by its members as they are based on the principal of good and evil. The “rules and principles concerned with good and

duties like worshipping the gods and other literary and scholarly activities. The chettris, who occupy the second position in the caste hierarchy mainly were responsible for the defending the society from external aggression- - they were of warrior faith. Baisnavs were in the third position in hierarchy. They are tradesman and are the main persons for running commercial activities in the society. At the bottom of this hierarchy are the Shudras. They basically serve all the upper caste and perform menial jobs according to the sub classification that is done in between them (Sharma: 47-48). The Shudras

were supposed to be untouchables and lacked and still lack the privileges of giving *daan* or performing other religious rites performed by other higher castes in the society.

evils manifested to us by conscience constitute what we call morality. These rules are admitted at large by the community” (Bhusan and Sachdeva 671). Generally to be moral is to be honest, faithful, truthful, and virtuous. Both religion and morality are interrelated.

Religion and morality are interconnected. Primarily it is religion that defines morality. In words of the classic cultural critic M Arnold, “religion is morality touched with emotion” (Bhusan and Sachdeva 671). The customs, norms, and values that are practiced in a society are always influenced by the standards of the morality that are defined within a society. Hinduism has a strong hold over the moral world in this society. Every action is judged on the basis of the Hindu scriptures. A daughter in law is supposed to be doing all the household chores and the mother in law is supposed to do any work only if she is free and willing. Thus, primarily it’s the duty of the daughter in law to do work and it is the will of the mother in law to do a work. In this context if the daughter in law rests leaving the mother in law to do some work, it is regarded as highly immoral act done on the part of the daughter in law. Similar is the case in all relationships and kinship system that exist in this society. Some of the acts that are said to immoral in the Doteli society are mentioned in the *phag* given below:

All the milk is taken away from cow’s udder

Calf is not given any milk in that Earth of yours

[...]where father and sons, mothers and daughters

do business among themselves

[...] where younger brother plays and elders carries load

[...]where maternal uncle and niece plough together and

sleep together

[...] where mother in law carries fertilizers and daughter in law
combs her hair

That world is full of sins. (Pantha 372-73)

These immoral acts done on earth (Doteli community) are being catalogued by *Baisanar* (fire god) as reasons for his unwillingness to descend on earth. As there is a *puja* to be performed in the house of a *yajman*⁷ of a Brahmin, the Brahmin is sent to call on the *Baisanar* in the *puja*. After a long journey, when the Brahmin at last finds out *Baisanar* is not willing to accompany the Brahmin due to the sins or immoral acts that are done on earth. According to *Baisanar*, whom is a religious character more than a natural element, taking all the milk from the cow's udder, doing business among family members, niece and maternal uncle ploughing and sleeping together, mother in law working while her daughter in law is resting, younger brother playing while elder one is working and so on are sins. These sins, which here are conveyed to other members of that society by the phagaris through *Phags* set up the moral standards of the society.

So, in accordance to this *phag*, which is a mixture of both the local beliefs and religious scripture, all the above mentioned acts are immoral. Thus, religion and morality are intertwined. For the smooth functioning of a society some moral standards are necessary and the moral standards of the traditional Doteli society were defined by Hindu religion. And these moral standards are transmitted from one

⁷ A Brahmin performs different religious rites in various houses of various villages for which he is called upon. The member of the society in whose house he performs the *puja* is a *yajman*. A *yajman* is of different *gotra* than that of the Brahman priest. Usually a Brahman priest inherits the *yajman* families from his family. But sometimes people change their Brahmin priest according to their choice. Like other lower caste who are *khalerus* Brahmin priest don't take *khalo* from their *yajmans* but do visit their *yajman*'s house on auspicious occasions like *purne* (full moon night), *ausi* (dark night), *sakranti* (first day of any month), *masanti* (the last day of a month) and other special days that

are termed sacred by the Hindu lunar calendar. They are the family priest of the *yajman*'s family and perform all the rites of the *karmakanda*.

generation to another generation through various social creations like *Phags* and are thus, cultural in function.

As cultural text, *Phags* are the flag bearer when it comes to the norms and values that were followed by the traditional Doteli community. Norms and values that are observed in this community, like religion and morality, regulate social behavior of an individual and the community of which he is a part. Every society specifies certain standards of appropriate behavior, which helps in regulating the society. These behaviors, called social norms, are different from individual values, which are more or less eccentric in nature and strive in achieving personal benefits rather than common goal. In contrast to individual values, social values are behaviors that are centered on the welfare of the others. Similarly, norms are standard prescribed by society for maintaining social etiquette. They are rules that a member within a group has to follow. It is code of conduct that an individual has to follow as part of group. It is a pattern of setting limits on individual behavior.

It is due to the norms of certain society that within the system of kinship, brothers and sisters are not allowed for sex. Thus, they denote ideal behavior and set out the normative order within the society. Due to the similarity in the standards of behavior in the society brought about by norms, it brings cohesion in the behavior of the members of a society. A member always tries to conform and inculcate these standards in his behavior as his incapacity to do so might stain his social character and result in loss of prestige and in some cases makes him a social outcast. Man is social by nature and always tries to gain a respectable place within the society for which he always tries his level best to conform the social norms and live up to the social standards and Doteli society is not an exception in their formation.

Doteli society has been highly religious in the rituals while performing any rituals. Marriage as an institution is a way for fulfilling the physical and social needs of individuals. But in this also, when a son is married a mother is happy along with being sad. She becomes happy as her son is now an adult and is going to get married. But the same cause becomes a moment of sadness for her. She becomes sad because after marriage her son, for whom she was the dearest, will now acquire another person and replace her. These emotional values are given in the following *phag* that is sung when the groom gets ready for his wedding journey:

My dear son you are about to marry a lass
 So pay the price of the milk that you sucked
 By going to *Kashi and Paryag* and putting *pinda* for you I
 will pay the price of your milk. (Appendix II – 117)

According to the norms and value system that the Doteli society followed, mother and son had bilateral relations. It was a two way relation. There was bond of love between them but more than that they were both bound by their sense of duty. For a mother the most proud thing in this society was when her son got married and entered his conjugal life. She was even happier when she got her grandson. Her happiness came out of her sense of realization that she had been able to raise her son to that stage. Again it was taken to be a prestige for a son if he performed *shradhya*⁸ in *Kashi* and *Paryagraj*. His happiness also sprouted from the sense of fulfilling his duty. It was the

⁸ *Sharadhya* is a form of worship that is conducted for the dead ancestors and parents. The method of doing a *shradhya* is defined by Hindu scriptures and is conducted accordingly. It is believed that the offerings that a son offers to his parents and ancestors on the day of the *shradhya* make the ancestors happy and if the *shradhya* is done in *Kashi* (a town in Northern India located on the banks of Ganges) and *Paryagraj* (another northern Indian town); they get *mukti* (salvation) from the birth cycles. *Kashi* and *Paryagraj* have special significance in Hindu society due to the Ganges. The Ganges are thought to be brought on this earth by King Bharat, a king in Hindu mythology, for purging off the sins of his ancestors and to bring them salvation. So, accordingly it is believed to be the place where a Hindu has to perform a *shradhya* for the *mukti* of his ancestors and dead parents. For details into the procedures of performing

shradhyas see Lynn Bennett (92-120). The rituals described in this book are of a Hindu community and the procedures are similar to that performed in Doteli community.

best thing a son did in this community. Looking after parents in their old age is a duty on the part of the son as granted and it does not entail a sense of superiority for the son as does the act of doing *shradhya* and other funeral rites of the parents.

Another instance of the traditional norms that the members of this community followed is the relationship between the in laws. Both of these parties have a relation in which both are superior to each other. In the following *phag*, which is also sung when the groom is getting prepared for embarking on his wedding journey, the home of the in-laws is said to be in Mathura. This name is used for all. Mathura is said to be the house of god Krishna's in laws. So in accordance with this every groom in this community is taken as god Krishna and his in laws home as Mathura. The mothers (Phagaris) direct the son to pay his respect to his in laws, which he will find in Mathura:

In *Mathura* you will find your father and mother in
law Show them respect by bowing down
On the way you will find your brother in
laws Be smart dear son. (Appendix II -117)

What is more normative in this *phag* is the way the mother is guiding her son. The phagaris here are acting as the mother of the groom. They are guiding the groom for possible things that will happen and his actions in such situation. According to the norms brother in laws played trick on the groom. So, the mother being worried about it is cautioning him on the possible mischief. Giving respect to the father and mother in law and having a friendly relation with brother and sister in laws constitutes the norms and value system that is followed in affinal kinship.

On the part of the daughter she is also thoroughly directed about the norms and values that she has to observe when in the house of her in laws. In the following

extracts of *phag*, which is sung before the bride starts for her in laws home; she is exposed to the norms and values that she has to follow as a wife, daughter in law and daughter of a respectable noble family:

Worship the legs of your husband

Worship him as the image of god

Be as soft as butter and be bear all the pains as
mother earth

Always keep smiling as a flower. (Pantha 661)

This *phag* is an endeavor on the part of the mothers, to prepare their daughters for her conjugal life. According to the values of the society, a husband was supposed to be above god for a wife and this is what she is told. Worshipping the legs of the husband by the wife was thought to be holy. The footsteps of the husband were holy more than any pilgrimage, for a wife. The water that had been touched by the foot of the husband is more holy than the water of the holy Ganges. Moreover, the *phag* also instills in her the value of sacrifice. She is expected to be as bearing as mother Earth and soft than the butter to her in laws and husband. She has to put the wishes and desires of her husband and in laws in first priority and she has to bear all the pains that she might get, with a smile on her face like a “flower”.

The next *phag* prepares her for her duties in her in laws house by telling her the norms and values that a daughter in law has to follow:

Perform all your duties without forgetting

Get up in early morning, don't sleep more. (Pantha 661)

As a daughter the actions of a female are guided by certain norms and values of the society. A late sleeper daughter in law is always a subject of social ridicule. She is supposed to get up early in the morning, do the household chores like husking of the

rice grains, sweeping the house, and scrubbing the floor with red mud and cow dung, fetch water from the water spouts. Before it is daylight, she had to finish cleaning up the dung from the stable of cattle. At times of the harvest, while the male members sleep, the female members have to go in the harvest field for cutting or collecting the harvest or for cutting fodder for the cattle or for transporting the fertilizers on the field. The mothers besides preparing her for the duties that she had to perform in her in laws home prepare her for maintaining good moral conduct.

You are a daughter and daughter in law of a noble
family Maintain the prestige of both families

Don't do things that will stain families' image. (Pantha 662)

This *phag* reflects the value that a female carries on with her. She is the carrier of prestige of both the families. It is the norm of the society that a girl should be educated about good conduct in her paternal house. And this extract also guides the bride before she leaves the house of her father with her husband. As a daughter in law, her action now will determine the relationship between these families and their prestige. As her actions have at stake prestige of both families, she is guided by the phagaris to be benevolent and dutiful in her in laws house. The institutions of this society are unique in their renderings. Institutions like marriage and religion are almost universal but these same institutions have some practices that vary from other Hindu society.

An individual cannot survive alone. He needs someone and something of his own. For fulfilling his physical and social needs, like every other society on this earth, Doteli society also has devised certain rules and procedures. Like Bogardus for whom, “a social institution is a structure society that is organized to meet the needs of people chiefly through well established procedures” (Bhusan and Sachdeva 81), social

institutions devised by the Doteli society primarily fulfill the needs of the individual through processes that are sanctioned by the society. It is through these institutions that individuals within this society execute and meet their wants. Every social institution is based on certain customs and values. Marriage, education, and religion are some of the institutions within this society that have some specific procedures.

Marriage in this society was primarily the means of fulfilling the needs of both male and female. Child marriage was mostly practiced and due to this the selection of the bride and groom was primarily under the control of the parents:

The virgin has crossed one year and now she is
 two She has crossed three and four years
 The virgin has crossed five years and now she is six
 Now she has become of marriage age. (Pantha 566)

This extract of a *phag* that is sung while preparing materials for *kanyadaan* reflects the tradition of child marriage. According to this tradition, a virgin was supposed to be undefiled by adultery so giving her to someone within a ceremony was thought to be highly sacred. For performing this supreme *daan* child marriage was practiced in this community. A girl according to this concept of *daan*⁹ was married before she entered her menstrual cycles. Once she entered the cycle she was no more a *kanya* (virgin). Giving a girl in marriage by doing all the rituals amidst a religious ceremony

⁹ According to Hinduism, which is followed in this society, it is believed that marrying off a virgin girl to man of similar caste is of supreme religious significance. Other *daans* that are practiced in this culture are *goudaan* (offering a cow to the brahmin priest), *bhumidaan* (offering a piece of land to the brahmin priest), *balidaan* (offering animal sacrifice to an idol: in this kind of *daan* the head and some other part of the sacrificed animal is taken by priest, while the rest of the animal is eaten by the donor and his kinsmen as *prasad* given to them by the deity, to whom the sacrifice was made), *annadaan* (offering grains to the brahmin priest), and *dravyadaan* (offering valuables either in the form of money or precious metals like gold to the brahmin priest). Unlike other *daans*, a *kanya* is offered to the groom. *Occasions* for offering a *daan* are different. They are made mainly for three recipients: Hindu gods like the *Agni, Jal, Vaiyu, Ganesh, Kalash* and the local gods which the family worships or to the dead ancestors of the family or to various sages who had contributed their life and knowledge for facilitating human life. According to Hinduism, it is the “duty and religion of every Hindu male to pay off the debts of these three groups: Gods; ancestors; and sages” (Sharma 39). All of these *daan* have relatively less importance as they are supposed

to yield lesser amount of blessings and help relatively less in attaining *mukti* of themselves and their ancestors from their sins and life cycles.

is thought to be earning holy blessings from god. These blessings were supposed to help in attaining salvation from the birth cycles for the doer and his ancestors. The given *phag*, which is sung when the virgin is handed over to the bride (*daan*), puts up similar sentiments:

Religion and work are both important

Whatever you donate is of importance

The supreme *daan* in religion

And work is *kanyadaan*. (Pantha 578)

Thus, as this *phag* says, it is *kanyadaan*, that is of supreme importance according to religion and local society. On this occasion of *kanyadaan*, the mother puts water on the hands of the father who is holding the hand of the bride till the incantations, which are sung by the Brahmin priest are over. Once the incantations are over the hand of the virgin is handed over to the groom.

On the occasion of marriage, the *phagaris*, give their voice to the sentiments of the girl, who herself is unaware of all these. What the *phag* says is not the belief of the bride but that of the society. As mentioned earlier, giving *kanyadaan* does not only bear's fruit for donors but also for their ancestors (*pitri*). Washing the feet of the bride and sipping some of it and sprinkling some of it on the head purges the doer of his/her sins and earns blessings for his ancestors. *Kanyadaan* is done either by the elder member of the family if the family is joint family or by the parents of the bride if it is a nuclear family. But the feet of the *kanya* were washed by all the relatives of the bride. The given *phag*, which is sung when the feet of the bride are washed up by her family members before doing the *daan*, puts up similar sentiments as:

Oh father wash my feet

Wash my feet and sprinkle the water on your head

The gods will be happy and the ancestors

Will attain salvation. (Pantha 569)

Thus, besides *kanyadaan*, washing the feet of a *kanya* (virgin) is thought to be of supreme offerings so everyone likes to marry off their girls at an early age.

As the bride used to be of small age, her parents searched the groom. Paternal choice primarily determined the fate of the girls who were not aware of what is happening with their life:

Oh father please marry us to noble

house Or else let us stay in this house

Oh father please do bring a good groom for us

Or else let us stay in this house. (Pantha 553)

This *phag* is sung when the bride is brought for performing the ritual of *kanyadaan*. The phagaris in this *phag* speak up for the daughter and demand the father for looking for a good home and husband for his daughter. The groom was selected by the parents and the choice of the girl was not taken into consideration as she used to be a child. In this case, this *phag* along with reflecting the practice of child marriage done in this community also shows the concern of the phagaris for the bride. As females, they too have shared the same fate of being married in childhood and know the pangs of getting a house where there is a step mother in law, when the groom is buffalo herder, when the house to which they are given is not well to do, when the husband is drunkard or a quarreler or a gambler. So, other part of this *phag* goes on to include other topics and request the father for not giving away the daughter to such a house.

The custom of child marriage provided the bride, as mentioned earlier, opportunity for socialization with the family of her in laws. If the mother in law happens to be good a hearted woman, than the daughter in law did have good family

environment to grow up. It is in this environment that the daughter in law learned most of the rituals carried out in the society. She was not allowed to take part in entertainments like playing and singing *Deuda* or staying in other friend's house more often. But nevertheless she was encouraged to learn serious things thought to be moral like *Phags* and *Saguns*. In an interview with an elder phagari of Mailoda¹⁰, she put that she was married in her childhood and it is in her in laws house that she learnt

Phags:

C: Than, *jhaija* when did u learn *Phags* ?

J: well dear I don't remember it exactly, learnt to sing them in my childhood.

C: so u learnt it right from your childhood

J: my mother –in-law (*jiu*) used to sing, I went with her, and another *jiu* also used to sing, we also used to sing with them, she used to always call on me wherever she went and I never left her. And began to sing and learn *Phags* wherever I went. If I was in Badam or in Rumail or anywhere I sang with them and learnt their *phag*.

(Appendix IV –137)

From this conversation, it is evident that she was married in her childhood and as a small daughter in law it was her mother in law, with whom she used to stay for most of the time and not the husband. So marriage here is an institution that did not primarily fulfilled physical needs of the individuals as soon as it is done but it was a way of securing a partner. Moreover this practice of child marriage prepared the bride to follow the ways of her in laws house. As the childhood is spent in the in laws

¹⁰ Mailoda is a village in Ganeshpur VDC-4, Dadeldhura. The phagari belongs to this village, her maternal home is in Rumail (Kailpalmandu VDC-5) and her mother in law's house was in Badam. Her sister in law was married in the village of Bheta (Ashigram VDC-6). So due to these

relationship network her mother in law used to visit these villages and she also accompanied her as she was benevolent to her. But this is not the case with the entire daughter in law.

home, the daughter in law became more acquainted with the norms and values that were followed in her (in laws) house.

As a social agency, marriage primarily functioned as a means of socialization in this context. The girl and the boy knew each other right from their childhood and a better understanding between them was supposed to help them to go on well in their life. Conjugal life for them was based more on the notion of duty rather than romance, as romance died out throughout the years, which they took to reach maturity. It is not that it did not fulfill the physical needs of the individuals; it did, but was of secondary function. A female in this society did most of the farm work. She is the one who primarily did all the household chores and looked after the farms and other activities. Males role in the farming area and household area were limited and they were supposed to earn money through wages either from neighboring country India or locally. The responsibilities that were primarily defined for the males were that of ploughing the fields and cutting fire woods. A woman did not and does not do either of this work. The first of this is not done by any of the females in any of the villages of this community- - it is definitely a male realm, while the other one is sometimes 'encroached' by the females though not assigned to them. Family as an institution primarily helped them to get on well with their farming activities and as the farming is based on manual labor, group work was necessary. The group that the females created came handy in completing their work.

Along with marriage it is educational institution that is necessary for the functioning of society. The institution of education has great impact on the social structure and system. It is one of the major agencies, which plays important role in social control, and socialization of the younger generation. The educational system in the traditional Doteli society was primarily based on Vedic tradition. Education was

limited to males and was Vedic in nature. This Vedic education shaped the function of the members within a society. The secondary institutions of education were either the home of individual scholars of this community or were located in some Indian towns like Kashi, Banaras, and Haridwar etc. According to the Vedic tradition after the initiation (*bratband*¹¹) of a boy was done he was sent to a *guru* (master) for acquiring education. The education was based on Hindu scriptures. The members of this society Thus, educated in the Vedic tradition maintained and followed the Hindu religious norms and values. The practice of sending a son to Kashi for education is reflected in the following *phag*:

Who sent my son to *Kashi* for

studying Sent my son for studies

A son who was bathed with milk and

massaged with ghee

Who sent my son to Kashi for studying. (Pantha 420)

This *phag* is an extract from the *phag* that is sung while performing the initiation rites of the boy. It is after performing this rite that the baby boy was qualified for attaining education that was based on Hindu scriptures. This *phag* moreover presents the emotion and feelings of a mother towards her son whom she had till then kept under her own personal care and whom she had reared with uttermost care and benevolence.

¹¹ According to Kamalraj Sharma, in Vedic tradition there are “four *ashrams*” (stages) in life that a Hindu has to follow. Except for the *shudras*, all the castes have to follow this system. The first of these *ashrams* is “*Brahmcharya ashram*”. This ashram starts from the initiation (*bratband*) ceremony and extends up to around 25 years of age. During this period, celibacy is maintained and the individual gains education, art and crafts according to his caste, which become useful for him in his domestic life. The second is “*grihasta ashram*”. The individual after being educated thoroughly in his family occupation now takes over the occupation and enters domestic life by getting married. Most often the individual is married before he goes in search of a *guru* for getting education but the consummation of love between the couple is left till the individual finishes his *brahmcharya ashram*. The third *ashram* starts when the couple reaches around 50 years. In “*vaanprastha ashram*” the couple enters forest and lives the life of a hermit. The couple stays together and basically depends upon fruits and nuts for food. After the completion of this stage around 75 years of age, the “*sanyas ashram*” starts. In this *ashram* the individual forsakes his identity marker like his family, *gotra*, his

family name and indulges in meditation. In this stage the “individual tries to attain salvation from the birth cycles” through “penance”, “worshipping”, and “meditation of the supreme Self”. (35-37)

The reluctance of the mother to send away her son to Kashi is not for nothing. She knows the hardships that the students in Vedic tradition had to undergo and her son, for her, is not prepared for it as she has never given him trouble or has made him go through hardships. Though education was often given at home or in some local towns by some local scholars, some well to do family used to send their son to Kashi, Banaras, or Haridwar. These are the centers that have high reputation as centers of learning like Athens in classical age or like the Florence of Italy during the Renaissance. This sentiment of the community is filled up in the following *phag* also:

If the lad goes to *Kashi* he will acquire fourteen types of
 knowledge Will glorify the name of his father
 If the lad goes to *Kashi* he will acquire all kinds
 of knowledge
 Will glorify the whole of his clan. (Pantha 422)

If the child was unable to go Kashi or other centers of learning, he basically had to depend on a local scholar for his education. In that case, individual's education was limited to the knowledge of the scholar who guided him. Thus, the individual was supposed to be an ordinary individual with ordinary educational and professional skills. So, every parent had the desire to send their son to some renowned centers of learning so that they could earn knowledge related to every field. A person according to this tradition was thought to be knowledgeable if he had knowledge of all the Hindu scriptures along with other practical knowledge. The scholar was an Aristotelian scholar, a person of multiple personality. This extract of the *phag* reflects this desire and trend of the society. Moreover it is not just a reflection of the desire of the parents, but also the blessings of the phagari to the lad, whose initiation (*upnayan* or *bartaband*) has just finished. During this ceremony, the individual begs alms from

the attendants over there; this marks his entrance into the *brahmcharya ashram*. After this day onwards he had to set out in search of a guru who would impart knowledge to him and this condition had been beautifully presented in this *phag*, which can be observed in these lines. Astrologer (*jyotik*) and *pundits* (scholar of Hindu scriptures) are some professions that every parents in this region expect their son to adopt.

The following *phag* exemplifies this cultural desire in the form of a song, which is sung on the occasion of *bhatchakhayi* while giving the lad pen, weapons, grains and other materials to touch. A baby is given cereals and other cooked food after it completes five months by taking an auspicious time from the astrologer. This is an important ceremony, on this occasion the child is given new clothes as from that day onwards he becomes partially independent from his mother by eating cooked food. As an individual, this is the first occasion after birth when the child becomes dependent on external things other than his/her mother for fulfilling his/her hunger. A human as an individual is alone in this world and love always is a hindrance for an individual's journey to the supreme Self. The detachment from the loved ones and desires starts from this stage. This occasion is Thus, celebrated in 'full swing' by the family members.

The present extract is a *phag*, which is sung while the baby is exposed to material things. Exposing him to these things, as said earlier, lets him/her to know about means that s/he will be using in his/her life. As soon as the baby is released partially from the dependency of his mother for his/her food, there is a need of other means for him to earn his/her food. So, now the baby is exposed to other material means like various food grains, weapons, books, pen, and other tools that will help him/her in fulfilling his/her desires and sustain in the society on his/her own. This rich cultural tradition is reflected in this *phag*. Every object that the baby is given for

touching has some importance and is a means of gaining something that is useful in sustaining life:

Oh son hold on the reed pen

You will become a scholar

Oh son hold the pot of ink

The essence of astrologer will be filled in your heart. (Pantha 258) The pen and ink pot are given to the child as means of gaining education. The society's love for literacy and that too in scriptures is reflected in this extract also. The child is said on to hold on the pen and the ink-pot. The intentions of the phagaris, who represent the belief of the society itself, is that by getting acquainted with these things the child might develop love for literacy and eventually become a astrologer. An astrologer (*jyotik*) in this society was a highly prestigious profession and was also an intellectual. So the phagaris put on this desire of every parent in this *phag*, for which it has been relevant on that occasion and is thus, cultural in its rendering.

For the smooth functioning of a society, every society devises some kind of classification for the helping society in functioning properly. This functional need in this community is fulfilled through division of labor based on caste. This system allows a particular caste of people to do some special task in the society and gain specialization in that field. This acquired specialization in that field is passed on from one generation to another. Though all of the castes in this society were involved in agriculture, but only for few of them it was prime economic source. The family occupation was their prime source of income.

Basically the caste division was similar to other caste systems that existed and in some place still exists, within various Hindu societies in the Indian sub continent. All the sub castes within the caste group of Shudras were termed untouchables. Castes

like *tamata*, *bishwokarma* (*luhar*), *dholi*, *bhool*, *bhaant*, *parki*, *turka*, *koli* are some of the caste that were thought to be untouchables and were assigned with specific jobs. A *tamata* made copper vessels that were used for domestic purposes and sometimes he used to do some work of iron or a substitute *luhar*. *Luhars* are responsible for making iron utensils that are necessary for farming and domestic activities. He was also assigned the job of sharpening the farming tools. A *dholi* is responsible for stitching clothes and for playing the auspicious music (*badai*) on auspicious occasions. A *bhool* was primarily responsible for giving rope made up of raw leather known as *halunto*. This was used in tying the plough to the bar that is fixed upon the oxen while ploughing the farm-fields. This is an important agricultural tool. Besides they also used to put skins on the back of the baskets that were used to carry away dung from one place to another.

The *bhaant* were primarily means of entertainment. They were the singing and dancing folks. They used to sing on important occasions and festivals. The *parkis* weaved different types of baskets like *doko*, *supo*, and *chaparo* out of reeds. These all articles are necessary in farming activities. Along with this they also provided twigs of reed, which are necessary in making leaf plates in various occasions. These folks also made the traditional reed pen. Some of the occupation of these craftsmen is reflected in the following extracts of *Phags*, which are sung while making leaf plates on various occasions.

This *phag* is sung while leaf plates are made on the occasion of *sastikarma*. For intertwining the leaves the people used special twigs (*sinka*) made out of reeds (*ningala*). According to the local customs, it was the duty of the *parki* to provide them:

We need loads of leaves

Oh *parkis* go and bring bundles of bamboo
twigs We need bundles of twigs. (Pantha 200)

It is this sense of duty that made the society function by fulfilling all the necessities of its member. Another instance of this division can be viewed in this *phag*:

Than after the son went to the house of
tailor Ordered him for a vest
Than after the son went to the house of blacksmith
Ordered him to prepare as strange cooking vessel (*kadai*). (Pantha 225)

This *phag* is sung on the occasion of *nwaran* while worshipping *jiuti*¹². The *phag* while reflecting the importance of worshipping *jiuti* records the deeds of a niece, who is invited by his cruel maternal uncle Kansha¹³. The niece who is about to set on the journey to his maternal uncles house goes to house of *luhar* and makes a cooking cauldron (*kadai*) for his maternal uncle and makes a vest (*bhoto*) from the *dholi*'s house. His particular needs are fulfilled by some particular castes of the society. Without the specialization that these individuals had gained through division of labor the needs of society would have been not fulfilled. In lack of division of labor there would be anarchy in the society. It is primarily this division of labor on the basis of caste that helped this society in functioning properly and in fulfilling its need. Moreover the division of labor has a religious sanctity. Every caste's place in this hierarchy was sacred and their work was always a matter of pride for them.

¹² *Jiuti* or *jeevmatrika* is the combined painting Kalyani, Mangala, Bhadra, Punya, Punyamukhi, Jaya, and Bijaya goddesses. This form of painting is worshipped on various occasions and the painting differs slightly according to the occasion (Pantha 227). A paste of wheat or rice flour is used to make this painting and the painter is given something for it. It is done on the inner wall of the house and is a sacred place.

¹³ The reference is made to a mythological king Kansha, who was the maternal uncle of Lord Krishna. According to Hindu mythology Kansha wanted to kill Krishna as a child but was unsuccessful. In this *phag* this situation is dramatised to show the importance of *Jeevmatrika* worship. Though Krishna is well aware of his maternal uncle's desire to kill him he nevertheless cannot neglect the invitation that he has been sent by his mama and prepares these articles some for his personal use

and for offering at the puja. The *phag* through this dramatisation basically highlights the importance of the worship of *Jeevmatrika*.

To sum up, *Phags* and *Saguns* as cultural songs reflect unspoiled ways of Doteli life style. These songs reflect the social structure of the society with its unique forms of institutions, norms, values, belief system, customs, rituals, and folkways that had been influenced and guided by the overarching Hindu religious system. Moreover, these songs themselves have been important source of socialization in the traditional Doteli society. They perpetuated the guidelines of the society and shaped the individuals right from their birth. They expressed the needs of the individual and the ways of acquiring them. They explain the mundane aspects of life in light of spirituality, which itself is the reflection of the belief system of the society that viewed every natural action and phenomenon as the manifestation of the divine. They are the expressions that reflect the faith of the folks on divinity and at the same time are the means of those folks through which they tried to establish relationship with the divine consciousness.

But due to the confluence of various factors on the social system and structure of this society, these cultural expressions have gradually lost their signification within the present Doteli community. The community, which articulated their expressions in the forms of *Phags*, *Saguns*, chait, dhamari, Deuda, dhesko, baat, and other folksongs, has now been modified in its structural and functional aspect. Due to the interdependence between social structure and system, the changes in the structure have brought massive changes in the social system. And in lack of the social system, of which these folkways were part, they have now been gradually being eroded away. The prime factor that has changed this agrarian society is modernity, which has been accompanied and propelled by Nepalization and globalization.

Loss of the Aura of *Saguns* and *Phags*: Intervention of Modernity

Like every agrarian community around the world the life style of Doteli community has also changed. In its new *avatar* the community has lost its self sufficiency, a major characteristic of agrarian society, and has now become and becoming more and more dependent on the outer world. The lifestyle, belief, customs, norms, values, institutions and faith of the community, which has now been connected to the rest of the world through various modern means of communication and transportation, have changed and to a large extent lost their traditional signification.

These social categories are now being replaced by their modern version. Due to the change within the social systems, there have been changes in the social structure too. Loss in the tradition of singing *Saguns* and *Phag*, which represent the traditional lifestyles of this community, is an instance of the changed attitude of the community members towards their traditional values, norms, and customs and as a whole their traditional way of life.

Phags and *Saguns* are traditional and ritualistic songs, which are sung on various auspicious functions, were also instrumental in guiding the social behavior and actions of its member, within that system. But with the turn of the wheel of time the definition of social morality, norms, values and institutional practices and moreover the importance that was given to their language, have changed and with it these songs are also losing their significance in the cultural system of Doteli society, of which they were integral part. Due to the various discourses and actions of development, that were carried out by the state and that occurred out of necessity, this society has had been adopting new ways of life which has resulted in loss of its traditional life styles.

The major identity marker of a community is language. As language is bearer of the culture, the erosion in the importance given to Doteli language by its speakers,

reflects the erosion in the importance that is given by them to their culture. And this erosion has been an invention of modernity. The modern form of state which is defined in terms of a homogenous culture which is brought about primarily by a national language that is used as the official language in various organs of the state machinery and a constitution that gives recognition to the state's actions and governs the country, is largely responsible for the erosion of communal affinity that existed within traditional societies. The apparatus of the modern states like the means of mass communication, education, trade, transportation, and bureaucracy has been importing the love for other languages in the dominion of this community also.

Doteli language though sufficient in itself to fulfill the need of community members to communicate within the community, has been insufficient to meet the demands of the modern Doteli community. The modern Doteli community has been part of modern Nepali state, whose official language is Nepali. Socially, Nepali speakers are regarded as more cultured and prosperous. The school text books that are taught in the schools of this community are in Nepali and thus, it has been a necessity for children to learn Nepali more than Doteli. This compulsion of reading textbooks in languages other than their native language has gradually turned into an opportunity for them to learn a language that might provide them better social status than they would acquire as native speakers. Along with the domination of Doteli language by Nepali language, Doteli language has been yet further marginalized by English, which is defined as the international language by the government text books. Under the confluence of these both national and international languages, Doteli language has been largely neglected by its speakers.

As the language is not given importance in any sphere of life, the language has been largely neglected. Along with students, local elites and officials of various

governmental and nongovernmental officials working within this community, the villagers have also been under the spell of using Nepali and English language in their day to day activities. Due to neglect of Doteli language within the community and moreover within the family by its speaker the culture has not been “transferred” from one generation to other (M. Paneru Appendix V B – 152) has been largely responsible for the erosion of the Doteli culture and consequently in the practice of singing *Phags* and *Saguns* in the community. Moreover for L P Joshi, “due to [external influence] they are paying less attention to old lifestyles and traditions by gradually paying less attention to their practice” (Appendix V C- 155)

Thus, the community is now identifying itself more with Nepali and English language than with Doteli. While all this is said it does not mean that Doteli language is not spoken at all in any condition. Doteli is spoken but not with utter willingness and interest as it was in the past. Besides language other cultural components, which are part of *Phags* and *Saguns*, have been modified in their ritualistic dimension and have largely failed to gain signification in *Saguns* and *Phags*. And in lack incorporation of these modifications in *Phags* and *Saguns*, these songs have lost significance in the cultural arena.

The traditional institutions of marriage, education, family, and religion that were in practice in this region were highly ritualistic and were propelled by a faith upon tradition rather than personal desires. The institutions were highly social rather than individual in their renderings. The marriages were performed more out of family needs and sense of duty on the part of parents rather than the need of the couple who were married. The institution of marriage, though dealing with the life of two persons, was primarily under parental control and was decided by the parents and other family

members. Child marriage was widely practiced. *Phags* related with marriage explains this situation.

The following *phag*, which is full of pledge from the bride's side to the father, can be of signification only if the bride is a child, who doesnot know what is good for her and even if she knows cannot speak for herself with her father. In such a condition only this *phag*, which basically is a request made on behalf of the bride by the phagaris- - who very well understand the pros and cons of getting a good or bad husband, can have signification:

Father give us to a poor or a rich But
 don't give us to a buffalo herder
 The herder spends his night making ropes Wanders
 in the mountains in the day. (Pantha 554)

This *phag* is sung by the phagaris when the bride enters into the *Vivahamandap* (sacred enclosure made for performing the marital rituals). It is a condition when the bride is not married but is about to be married. Once married it cannot be undone so the *phag* is itself a reminder or checklist for the father to check out what kind of a son in law he has selected for his daughter. In traditional Doteli society, one of the professional classes that were thought to be not able to provide a good life to his wife was a buffalo herder. A herder was busy most of the time with grazing and cutting fodder for his buffalos and at night he used be mostly busy with making essential things that are necessary for him. In such a condition, a wife did not get wishful attention from her herder husband. And a life without the love of a person is no life at all. After all material prosperity is not everything. For a complete life love and care is essential. This sentiment is very well understood by the phagaris who composed this *phag*. Thus, in order to avoid such a situation they caution the father as there is still

time left to cover any mistakes that he might have done knowingly or unknowingly. But now this condition has changed. In the present context girls are married at relatively mature age than before.

Moreover the professional class of *gothalas* is now 'defunct'. Unlike their predecessors, the girls now choose their grooms or at least have some say in choosing their grooms. With the influence of modern laws and modern education system the practice of child marriage has been nearly abolished:

From five years the virgin is now six Now
she is of marrying age. (Pantha 566)

The condition, which this extract of a *phag* that is sung during while preparing the material for performing the ritual of *kanyadaan*, is no more functional. According to the modern laws, child marriage now is defined as a social crime. Though the scriptures still say that *kanyadaan* can gain salvation for ancestors of the doer, modern law restricts this act terming it as abuse of child right. The spiritual values that propelled child marriage have knelt down in front of the punishment that the modern law dictates for such an act. Moreover with the influence of the modern world, a couple now is married only if the two of them have seen each other and like each other.

A modern form of law restricts forceful marriage between two persons and terms it as a social crime. The culture in which the fate of girl's future was decided by the parents is now a thing of past. The boys and girls now see each other, if not have love affair, before they decide to marry. So parents now play a functionary role in marriage rather than the dominant role. They are becoming a means, which just facilitate the process, and the decision is now in the hands of the boy and girl who are to be married. Thus, the presumption and condition in which this *phag* was

meaningful has been eroded away by modern law, development agencies, and modern education and thus, resulted in the loss of its signification within the cultural context.

This *phag* is also based on the existence of some traditional occupation. *Gothalas* (buffalo herder) that existed in this region has now changed their profession. The first of the reason behind this change was the gradual handover of forest to local communities under the community forestry programme enforced by the state throughout the nation in the recent decades. The forest is the most important prerequisite for the occupation of a *Gothalas*. As the *phag* says a *gothalo* needs ample grazing field for his buffalos to graze. With the handover of the forest to the local communities and the formation of forest user groups, a resident of another village cannot use the forest of another village without permission from the user group. In such a condition rearing buffalos has become problematic.

Moreover, due to various development schemes that various governmental and nongovernmental organizations have been providing in this community has diverted the attention of the locals from their traditional occupation. With easy loan schemes and various trainings provided by these organizations, individuals are now unwilling to adopt traditional occupations like that of buffalo herder which is full of hardships and less secure in comparison to the opportunities that are provided by governmental and nongovernmental organization under the scheme of rural development. Thus, the concept of development that has been at the very centre of modern consciousness has changed another condition in which this *phag* was meaningful.

Phags are part of rituals. Doteli society in the past followed scriptural commandments without any distortions and the actions performed were highly ritualistic. Viewing every action and opportunity as given by gods was a marked

characteristics of this society. There was faith in the Vedic norms and customs.

The following *phag* exemplifies this trend:

Ganesh has arrived for assisting the completion of our ritual
 Saraswoti has arrived for assisting the completion of our
 ritual Brahma provided us good omen,
 Brihaspati provided the auspicious
 time The time for the rites has arrived
 Step forward Oh father
 Sprinkle the water of my feet on your head, the gods will be
 pleased You will attain bliss in heaven. (Pantha 569)

This *phag* is the initial part of the *phag* that is sung while the feet of the bride are washed by the parents and other relatives. The initial lines by mentioning the presence of gods and goddesses highlight the ritualistic importance of the occasion. In this context marriage ceremony is a highly sanctified occasion, which was thought to be made even more religiously meaningful with the thoughtful presence of the gods and goddesses. And in such a context all the procedures were carried strictly according to the dictates of the *karmakanda*. Failure to fulfill any of the requirements was thought to be a sacrilege.

All the marriage procedures were overtly religious and were followed rigorously. Only in such a context, this *phag*, that presupposes the presence of gods and goddesses and the attainment of salvation by washing the feet of virgin bride, is meaningful. This ritualistic dimension of marriage as rites is now being replaced with the modern sense of duty on the parts of parents. Though the feet of the *Kanya* are still washed and the water is still sprinkled by them on their head, it lacks the utter faith that people had on it as means of salvation.

There are many factors behind this change in attitude. Firstly the modern brides don't fulfill the condition of being a *kanya* as they are all mature adults when they are married. The girls nowadays are nowadays no more *kanya*. As they are married in their adulthood, they all enter their menstrual cycles before they are married and this makes them a non-*kanya* in the traditional sense. Secondly there is change in the attitude of parents towards marriage of their daughter. Unlike their ancestors, they now perform marriage only for securing a good future for their daughter and relieving themselves from their duty as parents and for maintaining their social prestige. This shift of attitude from utterly spiritual to mundane is an outcome of the modern system of education and assimilation of the western models of behavior. Though at the underlying structure this institution retains some of the values of Hindu *karmakanda*, at the surface structure the rites prescribed by it have been creolized. This creolization has been an outcome of the 'project of modernity'. This project has rationalized man's action and has substituted faith with sheer rationality and skepticism. And in this changed context the *phag* has become to a large extent valueless due to the loss of the norms and values on which they were based.

Along with the ritualistic practices the institution of marriage has also changed in other practices. Marriages in the past were based on the principle of male dominance and female obedience. The females were supposed to be giving worshipful attention to their husband. The relation was not based on the principle of equality. It was more religious than mundane. For a wife her husband was thought to be the incarnation of God. Wives were the devotees of their husband. She was supposed to worship the feet of her husband in the morning and sprinkle the water on her head. She was moreover supposed to be submissive and docile to the commands of her

husband and his family members. In this respect the relation between them was based on the principle of inequality:

Worship the legs of your husband

Worship him as the image of god

Be as soft as butter and be bear all the pains as mother

earth Always keep smiling as a flower. (Pantha 661)

This extract, taken from a *phag* that is sung while the bride is being told about her duties as a wife before she sets off from her paternal home to her husband's house, describes the relation between the wife and husband in the traditional Doteli community. As a wife, she had to be soft as 'butter' and bear all the pains like mother earth, who according to Hindu mythology, has been bearing all the pain inflicted upon her by her children (humans) on earth. But now with the influx of modern discourses of female equality that have been spreading in this community with the help of development agencies belonging to the national and international community, the basis of marriage has been shifted from devotional to partnership. Even though it lacks the utter vigor in implementing the western model of equality among males and females, nevertheless it lacks the utter vigor of male and female discrimination that the Hindu religious system that was practiced in Doteli society prescribes for the females. Nowadays the relation between a wife and husband is based on a glocalised principle that has been put together with extracts of equality from the modern discourses and extracts of female subjugation from the Hindu religious philosophy.

In such a context, though the belief in the above extract of *phag* still retains in most of the older females, it lacks the utter ritualistic dimension to a greater degree in most of the younger generation. In such a condition, the *phag* of which the above extract is a part has lost its signification.

Along with paying her respect to her husband, a wife in a traditional Doteli society, was supposed to please the members of the house and moreover do all the chores of the house. As the family structure of traditional Doteli family was joint family, her duty was not only limited to her husband but also to other members of the family:

You will find your father and mother in
 law In the inner room of the house
 Oh lass do pay your respect to them by bowing
 down Pay your respect to your elder sister in law
 By bowing down to her. (Pantha 661)

This practice of paying respect to other members of the family was necessary in that context. As part of family, harmonious relation with other members of the family was necessary. As an agrarian society, where most of the work was menial and could not be attained without manpower, it was necessity to live together and for staying together, undermining of individuality was a necessary pre-requisite. In this context the *phag* is relevant. But the scenario is now changed. The change in the family structure has been triggered by many factors. First of all the education system of the Doteli community, like all the communities all over the country, is based on the principle of individuality. The discourse in the school level text books and the posters on the wall of the hospitals and public places put up by the health ministry and other social organizations have been propagating the image of nuclear family as the best family. Secondly, with the help of trainings and help from various national and international organizations, agricultural products have been commercialized.

Previously, farming was limited to fulfilling the needs of the family and focused on growing crops necessary for sustaining the family. But now with the

trainings and materials provided by these organizations, the farmers do commercial farming like vegetable, soya bean, horticulture, and other methods of farming according to their suitability. This trend has also been fueled with development of transportation facilities in this community. This infrastructure of development has helped these professional farmers in providing fresh and modern seeds for farming and along with this they have also provided with potential markets, which can now be marketed to any part of the country. In these changed conditions, the workforce that was needed for the traditional farming is not necessary in the modern farming and thus, the need of the joint family structure has been eroded away. In such a context, the *phag* of which the above extract is a part, has lost most of its signification.

Along with changes in the principle of marriage, changes in other practices can also be seen. In the traditional Doteli society, in a marriage ceremony the bride's side had an upper hand in determining the relationship. The groom's side had to fulfill all the requirements of bride and bride's side. At times, the groom had to lend money to the bride's father for the money and this money was given as loan, it was rarely returned back. The groom had to bring all the things - - jewelries, clothes, sweets, and so on that were demanded by the bride's family. And at times, when the groom was not in a good economic condition to afford all the demands, he used to borrow them from others. This situation is depicted in the following extract of *phag*, which is sung while the things given to the bride by the groom are inspected by the bride's family:

They have deceived by giving brass for gold and zinc for
silver Put persons like this in the cowsheds along with the
bulls They brought old *cholo* and others *ghangri*
Paste charcoal on the face of these deceitful persons
[...] Oh Rama oh Shiva please don't curse us

Please don't give us such punishment

We request you with all our fingers. (Pantha 590-91)

While looking at the clothes (*cholo* and *ghangri*) and jewelries, it is revealed that the clothes are second hand and the jewelries are made of fake metals like brass and zinc instead of gold and silver. So in anger, the bride's side now declares the punishment of putting the groom's father in the cowshed with the bulls and of putting charcoal on his face for his deception. In the Doteli society both of these activities are highly infamous punishment. There are some implications in this *phag* that reflect some of cultural condition of the society. Firstly it reflects the economic condition of the people due to deception was done, secondly the punishment that was given by the community for such crimes and thirdly the authority that the brides side had with them in determining the marriage relations. All of these conditions have slackened their vigor.

Firstly the economic condition of the inhabitants has been changing towards better than before, secondly communal punishment has lost its authority and every kind of crime is now judged by the court of law more than the community, and thirdly the bride's side have lost most of the influence or authority in determining the marriage. Nowadays it is not the groom who bargains for jewelries and dresses but it is grooms side that looks for more and more dowry from the bride's side. The primary agents behind this kind of changes have been once again brought about by modern consciousness.

With the development in development infrastructure of the nation, this part of the nation has also experienced government efforts in improving their economic condition with the help of various schemes and plans targeted towards raising their educational and economical level. For attaining the target of development in this part

of the country, the community is provided with modern means of communication and transportation. Though development in various fields has now connected the community with the outer world and has solved many of the problems that they were facing, it nevertheless has also changed its cultural conditions. With the new conditions being substituting the older one, the *Phags*, like the one under discussion, are also losing their object of signification.

Another push to the Hindu prescription of marriage has been scored in the hour of performing marital rites. In the Vedic tradition, which is followed by this society, marriages were primarily conducted at night. According to this tradition, *kanyadaan* as a ritual must only be performed at an auspicious hour. And such an auspicious hour is thought to be found at night. So, *kanyadaan* in this region were performed at night. The following extract, ripped off from the *phag* that is sung while performing the ritual of *kanyadaan*, puts light on this Vedic tradition:

Rouse oh father from your sleep

The time of *kanyadaan* has arrived

[...] Rouse oh mother from your sleep

The time of *kanyadaan* has arrived. (Pantha 576)

As the marriages were conducted were conducted at night hours and by the time of *kanyadaan* came around most of the members of the family used to feel asleep. So the phagaris sensitive to this issue have put this trend into rhymes. But there has been change in the outlook of Doteli people towards marriage. Traditionally it was performed in the form of a ritual but now it is viewed in the form of a social function, which provides sanction to the union of two human beings. But again it doesn't mean that auspicious hour is not worked out at all and rituals are not performed at all. It is done but not with the utter sanctity with which it was performed traditionally.

Traditionally, all the relatives of the bride used to wash the feet of *kanyadaan* by waking up to late night; they used to fast until they had not performed this ritual. For them it was really a means of getting salvation. But now this ritualistic dimension has been lost.

In the present context, firstly marriages are performed during day and this type of marriage is locally also called as “one day *bya* (marriage)”. And even if the marriage is of two days and the marital rites are performed at night, except the family members of the bride, all the relatives of the bride register their gifts or money kept in an envelope in the register known as *godo dhuneko nau* (list of the persons who washed the feet of the bride). So the shift from actual feet to register, from night today is a shift from rituals to practicality. The ritualistic practices have their existence in faith rather than rationality. A religious practice can only survive if it is not questioned and followed by its believer. In lack of this utterly important factor, religion cannot guide society nor can it sustain. With the erosion of faith on ritualistic practices, triggered mostly modern scientific education system which teaches to question each and everything and which is taught at schools and transmitted in various means of communication, Doteli folks have questioned most of the rituals. And though there is still faith upon religion, their faith upon rituals as means of attaining fruits after life is now getting weaker.

Traditional Doteli society had been ritualistic. But with the loss of traditional values and norms due to the influx of modern scientific discourses, under the spell of which the locals term their traditional practices as orthodox and conservative and most of all the faith in religious practices as blind faith, have decentered the given *Saguns* from its context. Its value as a good omen is now limited to a song which describes the supposed presence of some gods:

With the pot of curd in his hands and garland around his
neck Lord Ganesh has arrived

Wearing red shawl, mounting on the

duck Mother Saraswoti has arrived

Carrying Vedas under his arms, wearing *rudrakshya*

necklace God Brihaspati has arrived

Holding leaves of bananas and vegetable of *kuledo*

Thirty three lakh Gods have arrived. (Pantha 676)

This *Saguns* is meant for singing while the groom is returning from the bride's home. In its usage, it's a good omen that is presented by the female folks. So to make the occasion more sacred and for wishing them a prosperous conjugal life they call on the presence of Gods on the occasion. For this purpose the gods and mythical semiotic is described in this *Saguns*. This *Saguns* reflects the faith of the singers upon the gods mentioned here for securing them a good future. It is primarily this faith of the listeners and singers upon the gods that makes up the context in which this *Saguns* gains its signification. This *Saguns* is now sung not because it has some practical usage in the function but because it has been a custom of the society, which should be 'preserved as far as possible'¹⁴.

Previously this *Saguns* reflected the faith of the individuals and therefore had importance in their life and was sung with uttermost sincerity but with the changes that have been brought in the life of the individuals of this society, this *Saguns* is now a custom of their ancestors which reflects their ancestors religious mindset and does not have so much of reflection of their own attitudes in it. Due to loss of religious faith in the inhabitants of this community, the sanctity of this *Saguns* has diminished.

¹⁴ Laxmi Joshi, a local resident, emphasized the need to preserve saguns and phags in the society through incorporating them in school syllabus. (Appendix 5-III)

The loss of faith in religion has been primarily an intervention of modernity. Religion is based on faith. The modern education that is based on empirical research methods have led to the questioning of many of the principles of religion. The spirit of questioning which lies at the very centre of modernity, has been at work in this context too. Triggered by the modern education and various development discourses the locals have been active in questioning their religious practices. The tradition of *dhamijhakri* has now not only being questioned but termed as superstition by the text books¹⁵. In such a context when the members of the society read a practice of their society as social evil, they inculcate it themselves. The primary factor for their belief in the text is because it is taught in school and the language which is used is Nepali - - a language which is thought to be superior to theirs. This colonial sentiment that has been embedded in the locals is largely responsible for their tendency to give up their own cultural practice and adopt the culture and life styles that have been propagated by Nepali and English speakers. Thus, scientific education system which is thought to be a weapon for enlightening the masses and pulling them out of poverty and superstition has been largely responsible for bringing about changes in the attitudes of Doteli community members towards religious practices and rituals.

Besides this, in the past religion was successful in fulfilling the limited needs of its followers. But with the rapid changes, the needs of the humans have also changed. The needs of the individuals in the past were elementary, mostly limited to food, shelter, clothes, and other amenities that were not possible for them to make. All the community's need was fulfilled with the help of an elaborate and closed system of division of labor based on hierarchical system of caste. With the help of this system, each member of a caste fulfilled a functionary part in the society. The

¹⁵ In the social studies book, prepared by Curriculum Development Center, the custom of *dhamijhakri* has been placed under the topic of Social Evils.

interdependence of the members within the community largely made the community independent of external help in fulfilling its need. The needs were simple and were related with the simple agrarian activities of the members. The literature of *phag* as cultural text reflects on this situation and the following two extracts are example of this:

We need loads of leaves

Oh *parkis* go and bring bundles of bamboo

twigs We need bundles of twigs (Pantha 200)

Than after the son went to the house of

tailor Ordered him for a vest

Than after the son went to the house of blacksmith

Ordered him to prepare as strange cooking vessel (*kadai*). (Pantha 225)

But this condition has now been changed. The isolated and mostly agrarian community has now been interconnected with the global community through the road networks and other mass media that have penetrated into this region. With the spread of modern law and modern liberal humanist discourse of human rights the caste system is now being wiped away. Besides the modern form of law that works on the principle of equality, insufficiency of this traditional division to fulfill the modern needs of the community's member is the cause behind its disintegration. The dehumanization that had distilled out of the division of society on the basis of the caste and subsequent exploitation done on the so called untouchables of the society has now been condemned not only by the national society but also by the international society. The community is now surveyed by national and international Human Rights watch dog for human rights violation. The Doteli community now does not belong to them but its membership is now shared by members from all over the world. In such a

situation these extracts of *phag* that are based on that system of traditional Doteli society seems to be out of place in the present context.

The traditional tailors (*dholi*) now call themselves *damai*¹⁶ (modern tailors) on the basis of modern skills of stitching modern trousers and shirts that they have gained nowadays. This shift in the nomenclature is not only a linguistic transfer but also a change in their social status. By calling themselves *damai* the *dholis* are trying to liberate themselves from the clutches of the traditional caste system, which gave them the position of servant and the upper castes as their ancient lordships. Instead of a caste within the traditional society, they are now a professional class who do their work on the basis of monetary wages paid to them on the spot and annually in the form of *khalo*. This shift from an untouchable caste to a professional class has been brought about with the development of modern capitalist awareness among them brought about by various governmental and non-governmental organizations who work for the upliftment of these types of downtrodden castes. Along with the discourse of equality, these organizations have also provided these downtrodden castes with professional trainings and capital to build up and expand their service. This has led to the breaking of the servitude of these people on the upper castes for their living and change in the structure of the society.

Another cause behind the decline of the community and Thus, in the practice of *Phags* and *Saguns* is decline in mutual cooperation and interdependence among the members of the society. In past the division of labor was instrumental in bringing the members of the communities member together as there need could not be fulfilled

¹⁶ Though both *dholi* and *damai* stitch clothes, there is vast difference in between them. *Dholis* take *khalo* from their customers, whom they acquire as family possessions. They used to take their customers as their *rithis* (lords). They were well versed in stitching traditional clothes like *suruwal*, *esta coat*, *kurta*, *angado*, *gaman* and so on. But the *damais* are mostly synonymous with modern day tailors. This group of people are migrants and were brought into this region by some

elites who had a taste for Western and other modern dresses that the *dholis* could not make. Moreover the *damais* don't take their customers as their lords.

without that. Every caste was given a specific place and function within the cultural domain. The given extract of *phag* explicates this situation well:

Brahmin oh son of the Brahma
 I call on you to in search of God *Baisanar*
 Hungry and me the thirsty
 How can I go in search of him
 [...]Me the penniless and grain less
 How can I go in search of him. (Pantha 366)

For performing the ritual of *hoom* (scarifying ghee, *teel*, and barley) the organizer does need to call on the fire god (Baisanar). This can be done by a Brahmin whose expertise is the field of scriptures. It is primarily his knowledge of scriptures that he makes a living on. Other caste in the society cannot perform this function of the Brahmin. Due to the interdependency Thus, created in the society with the caste system it provided coherence within the society. But now the bondage of interdependence among the members is slackening than ever it was.

Due to the facilities of communication and transportation, it is not necessary for depending upon a local Brahmin. With the use of modern means of communication a Brahmin from another location can be invited to perform the function. This lack of slackening of the communal bond or this shift from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* has been affected the tradition of singing *Phags* and *Saguns* themselves. The basic necessity for the singing *Phags* and *Saguns* is the presence of the group of singers. With the slackening of communal feeling and decrease in the interdependence among the community members, the necessity to maintain social relationship with other members of the society is not imperative anymore for a member of the Doteli community. A diachronic analysis of the

communal interdependence within this community confirms to the Friedrich Tönnies fear that that the growth of capitalism leads to the gradual disappearance of traditional community, based on custom and tradition and a sense of belonging (Mautner: 166).

The interdependence among the members was influenced by religion and mostly operated under it along with giving it continuity. The tradition of singing *phag* and *Saguns* is an instance of this bilateral edge. For conducting a function, co-operation of the local females was essential for preparing essential things for the function. For instance, for a marriage function all the rice and flour needed for the host was prepared by the female folks. The rice necessary for the function was husked by the village women and along with that all the wheat and rice flour was grinded by them by taking them to water grinding mill or sometimes by using their own grinding stones at home. Along with preparing the entire ration needed for the function, these women used to prepare all the food necessary for the function. Besides this, all the things necessary for the cattle of that house were arranged by other women of the village. In light of all these contribution, the *Sagunaris* or *phagaris* were the first to be invited for the function. These *phagaris* and *Sagunaris* had multiple roles to perform during a function. The following extract is of a *Saguns*, in which the parrot is chosen as a messenger to invite the *Sagunaris*:

Oh parrot of Banaras
Please go and invite the panegyric singers
I know neither the village nor their names
At whose doorstep should I give the invitation
(This) will be the name (that) will be the
village Deliver the invitation to her house

[...] Oh panegyric singers please accept and attend the invitation. (Pantha 316)

But with the influx of modern means of trade and mercantile services in this area the social integrity that was a defined characteristic of this agrarian is swept away. Man is by nature eccentric and is social only to the extent where others are instrumental in achieving his ends. And in the present context when the world is reduced to a 'village', man's need have been fulfilled by capitalism and subsequent globalization. This double faceted process have been shaping the needs of the Doteli folks as well as fulfilling their needs. The needs of a community member are now fulfilled not by the community members but by modern industries that are located all around the globe. The necessity of village women for husking and grinding flour in a function is now been replaced by modern rice mills and flour industries. The villagers in this community now buy prepared rice from the shops and grind their wheat in local grinding mills run by diesel or electricity.

Moreover, due to the discourse of equality among males and females fueled by different governmental and non governmental agencies in this community, now most of the cooking for the feast is done by the males of the society. The change in this situation has reduced the interdependence among the community members and consequently much attention is not given to invite the women folks to the function. They are now invited not for doing chores of that house but as guest of that house. The mutual cooperation between the members of this society is disappearing and with it social and communal interaction, interdependence, and cooperation is disappearing. The decline in the interest to invite the women and phagaris in a function has also reduced the trend of singing *Phags* and *Saguns*.

Along with the loss of interdependence among the community members, there has been gradual erosion in social customs. Due to the high priority given to the sisters and daughters by the folks of this community, they were called by their brother personally. For singing *Saguns* their presence was felt necessary.

Oh sister and brother in law, let's go on the altar at our
home I will not go alone by deceiving my husband
My elder brother will come forward
Will deploy horse for his brother in law and carriers for his sister And
himself carry his niece and nieces on his shoulders. (Pantha 320)

The sister in this *Saguns* denies going with the parrot (messenger) and demands the presence of her brother for inviting her and her family. And this was very well understood by the brothers also. The following *phag* is also an example of the understanding that was between the sisters and brothers of their respective duty in following the necessity of social customs:

Brother is now dressed in vest and *suruwal*
Took in his hand the stick of *beata*
Keeping books under his arm pit
Brother embarked towards the house of his sister. (Pantha 228)

Both of these instances reflect the necessity of calling on the sisters and daughters of a family by going personally. But with the development of communication facilities in this community, this custom is in more in use. With the use of modern means of communication, the daughters and sisters of the house are invited to the function and the need of the brother to go to her sister's house is no more necessary. With the end of this custom, these *Phags* have also lost their object of reflection.

Moreover the content of both of these *Phags* are now no more in use. In the past the sisters or daughters used to go their paternal house without asking the permission of their husband and in laws. The line “I will not go alone by deceiving my husband” reflects that trend. The daughters and sisters of that time, as said earlier were married before they used to get mature. In such a context, they sometimes did not have the capacity to understand their duties and social norms. So, whenever they could not resist the desire to visit their paternal home and on not getting the permission from their in laws, they used to run away from their husband’s house. But, now the condition is different. First of all the daughters are not married earlier and other thing is that, even if they want to visit their paternal house, due to awareness raised about domestic violence against women by different governmental organizations, NGOs and INGOs, daughter in laws have far more liberty than their mother in laws. A programme *Ama samuh* operated by the government have been helping in creating social awareness among the villagers about the rights of the females as daughter, daughter in law, mother and mother in law. This programme has also been instrumental in providing informal education to the illiterate females.

The image of an ideal male as reflected in the above extract is no more functional. The traditional vest (*bhoto*) and *suruwal* are now replaced by casual, cotton and jeans trousers mostly imported from China and India. The community now rarely uses the dresses that were used by their ancestors. Other items that reflected the prosperity of the males at that time are the cane stick (*beata ki laudi*) and religious books that they carried with themselves. In the present context, neither of these items are the objects of prosperity. They have been now replaced by modern dresses like trousers and shirts and jacket, wrist watches, mobile phones, modern bags, *bansbari* (leather) and sport shoes, and *palpali* or *bhadgaule topi* (cap). Besides the dresses and

shoes that are mostly imported from outside the country, the adaptation of *palpali* and *bhadgaule* cap as an emblem of prosperity by the males of this community is an influence of the national culture that defined and still defines both of these *topis* as representing Nepalese national identity.

National dress is a concept that is attached with the formation of modern state; it is a form that is adopted by all the modern nation states, though the manifestation differs from one country to another. This primarily is thought to be bringing homogeneity in the heterogeneous culture of the modern citizenry of a nation. The Doteli males exemplify this. The Doteli males are also like the present Prime Minister, who in his semiotics paradoxically reflects an admixture of ideologies and culture. All though he denied wearing *daura suruwal* as representing the totalitarian royalist ideology he nevertheless did the courtesy to wear a *bhadgaule topi* on his head and this represents that he is a Nepali. In absence of this topi he is an international citizen if judged from his semiotics. The PM is a true representation of a Doteli male, who is also a perfect conglomerate of cultures in his semiotic. Just like the PM who by wearing western clothes wanted to show that he is not a follower of 'regressive' tradition, which for him, was represented by *daura suruwal*, the Doteli males also, through their dress reflect their modern mindset.

The Doteli community has now achieved a greater degree of development through the availability of basic infrastructure of development like hospitals, education, electricity, roads, education and so on. With the availability of these modern resources, the traditional lifestyle and skills of the community are gradually disappearing at a greater pace than ever before. In a traditional Doteli society, child birth used to take at home. The following extract of *phag*, sung while the baby is born, gives a glimpse of it:

Defeating the watery marsh the son has taken
 birth The mother has defeated death
 Let the tidings of this good news be given to the
 father He must be sitting in the courtyard
 Let this good news be given to him
 [...]Let this good news be given to uncle
 [...]Let this good news be give to my brother. (Pantha 165-166)

The phagaris used to sing this *phag*, while the baby was being delivered by the mother. It was supposed that, singing of *phag* during the birth of baby used to ease of the birth pangs of the mother. The extract is celebrating the birth of the baby and eulogizing the effort of the mother and baby and is sending this good message to the father, uncle, brother, and to other members of the family who used to be around the house. But now with the development of the Primary Health Post in most of the parts of this community, child birth now mostly takes place in hospitals. Moreover to attract the pregnant women to give birth to their babies in hospital, the government has been providing some money if the baby is born in a government hospital. Besides this scheme of the government, various non-governmental organizations have been active in this field for securing safe hood to motherhood. In this changed scenario, the *phag*, from which the extract is taken above, has lost its signification in the cultural system of Doteli community.

Along with this, another loss that has been visible in this community in this community is the loss in the use of *Ghatta* (water mill) for grinding flour. The following extract of *phag*, which is sung on the occasion of *nwaran* (naming ceremony), has reflected that traditional way of life. The *ghattas* are located on the river banks and mostly away from human settlement. So the *ghattalos* (one who is

using the *ghatta* for grinding) used to ask for some sweets from the females who were going to their paternal home or to their husband's house. The females used to carry sweets like *baabar*, *puri*, *nisosya*, *manta*, *laun*, *kheer* and so on where ever they went. In Doteli culture, while going to the house of any of the relatives, some sweets should be taken. They are taken as the sign of mutual love and affection. And *ghattalos*, who were well aware of this practice used to request for some sweets from the females. Along with the *ghattalos* the pedestrians, cattle herders used to keep *syauli* (bunch of flowers or green leaves) for requesting sweets from them. *Syauli* is also thought to be good omen and Thus, when it is kept on the street, for showing that sign of good omen one has to donate something either money or sweets:

Ghatalo will stop me at the water mill, pedestrian on the
way How may I go to my maternal home
I will give rent to the *Ghatalo*, money to the *syauli*
Let's go sister to maternal house. (Pantha 229)

Along with the loss of the *ghattas* in this region, the culture of cooking traditional sweets has also been eroded. Though taking sweets to the relatives house on visit still retains in the cultural system, the traditional sweets are now mostly substituted by modern biscuits, *chau chau* (noodles), *deshi mithai* (sweets made by Indians) and so on. Along with that, the practice of keeping *syauli* has also been losing its hold, as it is not viewed in its traditional aspect. The skepticism that lies at the very heart of the modernist attitude has been at work in this community. As a result, the traditions, which are mostly based on faith, have been losing their significance in the cultural system of this community.

Institutions as mentioned earlier are means of fulfilling the primary needs of human beings. Though every social institution has its own importance, each of them

is interrelated and influences each other. The kind of education influences the religious practices of the society, which in turn affects the structure of the marriage and consequently that of the family and vice versa. Thus, even if one of the institutions is modified, it brings great repercussions in other social institutions of the society. Changes within and out of the social settings might bring radical changes in the institutional practices of a society. With the changes that come into social norms and values the system of these institutions also changes to meet the demands of individuals. One of the major factors behind the loss of faith upon rituals and customs has been the change in education system of this community. The customs and rituals of this community were based on the Vedic tradition and these were sustained as its members were educated according to the Vedic tradition. The following extract of a *phag*, that is sung while doing the initiation rites, puts light on traditional system of education that was practiced in this community:

Who sent my son to *Kashi*¹⁷ for studying

[...]A son who was bathed with milk and massaged with
ghee Who sent my son to *Kashi* for studying

[...]If the lad goes to *Kashi* he will acquire fourteen types
of knowledge

Will glorify the name of his father

If the lad goes to *Kashi* he will acquire all kinds of knowledge

Will glorify the whole of his clan. (Pantha 420-22)

As this extract portrays, traditional Doteli community's education was based on Hindu scriptures and accordingly religious centers like *Kashi*, *Haridwar* and so on were important place for acquiring education outside the community. Though

¹⁷ A town in northern India famous for its classical Hindu education.

education was limited to Brahmin and chettris, it nevertheless helped the society to function. As it were Brahmin who interpreted social actions on the basis of scriptures, their word on any social act was final. This also helped in maintaining social customs and rituals, which were derived from the Hindu scriptures themselves. But with the influx of modern education system in this region, that is mostly scientific in its outlook, the traditional system of social customs and rituals have been losing their significance in the community. The above *phag*, which describes the traditional educational pattern, has lost its object of reflection and Thus, has been rendered insignificant in the cultural system.

Moreover in the traditional society, parents always desired their son to be scholar in scriptures and the mostly praised profession was that of a *pujari* (priest) and *jyotik* (astrologer). These aspirations of the parents have been reflected in the following extract of the *phag*, which is sung on the occasion of *Bhatchakhayi*:

Oh son hold on the reed pen

You will become a scholar

Oh son hold the pot of ink

The essence of astrologer will be filled in your heart. (Pantha 258)

The aspirations of the parents that have been depicted in this *phag*, with the confluence of modern education system and other factors have now been changed. Now, for most of the parents professions like doctor, engineer, and so on are attractive. This change in preference itself has been brought about by the changed demands of the community. The changes in the mode of education Thus, have not only changed the ways of the society but also its norms and values.

Traditionally it was a matter of social prestige to keep *haliya* and *daas*. The landlords used to keep *haliya* and *daas* for doing all their farm and domestic work.

These both are types of bonded labors and usually worked until they repaid the money that they had borrowed from the person. At times people even worked as *daas* and *haliya* for some piece of land that was given to them for use until they worked for the landlord. Along with ploughing the fields the *haliyas* had to plough the field and assist in other works of the house like cutting firewood, going to *ghatta*, grazing cattle of the family for whom he is working as a *haliya*. An extract of the *phag*, which is sung during the initiation ceremony, portrays this practice of the traditional Doteli community:

The ploughman who ploughs the field cleared the forest

[...]The son of tenant set fire to the cuttings and chopping

[...]My abundant servants sowed cotton for me. (Pantha 392)

The practice of keeping *haliya* has now been legally termed as illegal. The modern law of the state prohibits anyone from keeping slaves and *haliyas*. Besides the government, various governmental and nongovernmental organizations have been active in eradicating the practice of *haliya*. Similar to the *Kamaaya mukti andolaan* that is being operated in the terai region for the liberation (*mukti*) of the Tharu people from bonded labor (*Kamaaya*), *haliya mukti aandalon* has been operated in this community and this has been successful in releasing many of the *haliyas* from their dehumanizing condition. The impact is more profound on the use of this *phag* in ceremony. Due to the break in traditions like this, community literatures like *phag* have lost their subject matter and thus, have been rendered insignificant in the community.

As an agrarian society, as said earlier the community used to fulfill its primary needs on its own and with little help from outside the community. Even for making a

janai the work was divided among various social actors who were interrelated. Oh lad who sowed the cotton for you:

[...]My abundant servants sowed cotton for
 m Who did the wedding of the cotton
 [...]My *Khalerus*¹⁸ women wedded my
 cotton Who plucked off your cotton oh lad
 My sister and brother in law plucked off the
 cotton [...]Who gave the shape to your *janai*
 God Ramchandra shaped the *janai* for
 me Who assembled the *janai* for you lad
 My father assembled the *janai* for me. (Pantha 393)

The formation of *janai* as this *phag* depicts was indeed a complex process. As it was necessary according to the beliefs of the society, it was made. And its formation entailed a complex division of labor within the community. This *phag* acknowledges the actors involved in the formation of the *janai*. The inclusion of God Ramchandra is also very significant. He has been involved and credited for the assembling of the *janai* by the *phagari* for reflecting the sanctity that it carries. With the development of modern cotton industries within the country along with at the international level cotton thread necessary for its formation is now made and supplied by modern thread industries. Moreover, the modern capitalist market has even has started the production of *janai* at industrial level and has been subsequently supplying it in the market. The

¹⁸ In this region there is system of giving grains rice, wheat and other things yearly to their blacksmith, tailors, *bhool* (people who eat the dead and old bulls, cows, and other domestic animals of other people are called *bhool bhool* has certain families for which he provides skins of animals which are used for many domestic purpose. These groups of people are also called *chamaar*.) etc., known as *khaleru*, in the form of *khalo*. For taking away the *khalo*, the *khalerus* have to come to the site, known as *khalo*, where the crops are harvested. The *haliya* (ploughman) of a family gets greater and better *khalo* than other

khalerus as he is the one who ploughs the field and helps the family for which he works in other household works like cutting wood, going to the though he is a bonded labor.

journey of the making of a *janai* from individuals themselves to the modern industries has been itself another instance of modernist encroachment upon the traditional way of the community. And in light of this changed situation the *phag* has just been rendered a misnomer.

The most profound effect of modernity in this community is on its traditional values and norms. The values and norms that were practiced by this society were in fact influenced by religion and every custom and value of this society was thought to be sacred. Modernity has taken away sacredness from the values and norms of the community. The kinship system within this society was based on the foundation of Hindu religion. Every relationship within the community has its own kind of propriety to be fulfilled by the member of the community. Some of the norms and values within the kinship system followed by the community are reflected in the following extract of a *phag* that is sung while lightening up the fire on the altar:

Where father and sons, mothers and daughters do business
among themselves
That world is full of sins
[...] where younger brother plays and elders carries load
[...] where maternal uncle and niece plough together and sleep
together [...] where mother in law carries fertilizers and daughter
in law combs her hair
That world is full of sins. (Pantha 372-73)

According to this *phag*, it has termed the practice of doing business between parents and children as sinful. The playing of the younger brother while the elder works, the condition in which maternal uncle and niece sleep on the same bed and the condition where a mother in law works while her daughter in law takes rest were termed by the

society as sins. With the influence of natural Darwinism that sees every human being in continuous effort to survive the struggle for his life, most of the sanctity that the kinship structure had within it has now been lost. Relationships that were previously functional based on religion and faith have now lost most of their ritualistic dimensions with the influx of modern education, which has been preaching its rationalistic discourses in this community.

The basis for the survival of a community is the sustenance of communal feeling in its member. It is the bond of cooperation that primarily keeps the community functional. An agrarian community due to the lack of modern instruments and facilities relies on the other member of the community for their needs. So even out of necessity there are close ties between the members of the society. As every action of an individual could hamper the other members of the community, care was taken that any actions taken by a community member did not hamper any of the other member of the community. The community moreover emphasized the societal values than individual values. It proposed for the sacrifice of the personal for the communal. The following extract of a *phag* that is sung while offering *Jaldhara* reflects this communal feeling of its members:

No one can afford a golden water-
 pot Make water-pot of copper
 Nobody can afford a silver
 cauldron Make a bronze cauldron
 Father you are prosperous you might afford
 it The poor will remain unmarried
 Make oh father copper water-pot
 Make oh father bronze cauldron. (Pantha 572)

This extract is picked from the *phag* that is sung while performing *kanyadaan*. The fathers desire to make a golden water pot, and silver cauldron is being requested by the bride to be suppressed. The request for the suppression of these desires reflects the endeavor of the phagaris to maintain social balance and harmony in the society. If this desires of the bride's father are allowed to be done than it would bring a sense of competition among the members of the society and that would ultimately bring an end to the cooperation between the members of the society. This fear of the phagaris has become a reality in the present context. With demographic upheavals and the spread of modern norms social harmony has now been shattered into pieces. Not only community, family has now been reduced from its joint structure to nuclear structure. Within family members, along with the community members, the sense of competition is now more domineering. And with the weakening of the sense of belonging within the members of the community the society is becoming engulfed within the modernist rhetoric of the self. An individual now sees himself as the as 'divine lineage in mortal guise'. This shift confirms F. Tönnies fear.

IV. Conclusion

Analysis of *Saguns* and *Phags* incorporated in *Anjuli Bhari Saguns and Polta Bhari Phag* and those collected by the researcher reflect the cultural bearings that they incorporate in them. As cultural songs, they reflect the institutional practices like marriage, family, religion, education and the social customs, traditions, norms, and values that were and to some extent are still practiced in the Doteli community. Like the traditional Doteli life style, which was based on the commandments of Hindu scriptures, the subject matter of these songs is also religious and Thus, cultural. Along with the religious faith of the community members, these songs reflect their quotidian activities. But with the turn of the screw like every traditional community around the globe the life style of Doteli community has also changed. The lifestyle, language, belief, customs, norms, values, institutions and faith of the community, which has now been connected to the rest of the world through various modern means of communication and transportation, have changed and to a large extent lost their traditional signification. The alteration in the social structure brought about by modernization and the subsequent Nepalization of the indigenous Doteli culture, has resulted in loss of ritualistic dimension of Doteli culture.

As evident from the analysis of *Phags* and *Saguns*, the life style of this community was very much religious and their actions had been very much ritualistic. With the encroachment of modern scientific education, which advocates on empirical evidences, the younger generation lack utter faith in rituals for attaining their needs. The replacement of traditional education system based on Hindu scriptures, which had shaped the traditional lifestyle of this community, with modern empirical education has decentered most of the cultural practices of this community. The classical education system was based on the mythological worldview presented by Hindu

scriptures. The worldview of these younger generations is far wider than that of their predecessors. Though this generation of youngsters does have faith in religion and rituals, they lack the vigor and enthusiasm and moreover faith upon rituals as means of attaining better living conditions. They now reflect the protestant ethic of 'work is worship'.

The self reflective attitude amplified by other factors like transportation, communication, health services, state bureaucracy, nationalism in the form of Nepalization and consumerism boosted by globalization of commerce and industries, has brought massive changes in the traditional practices of this community and with it *Saguns* and *Phags* have lost their most of their object of signification. Transportation

has played vital role in breaking the cultural isolation of this community. This community, which had been acting out self sufficient until recently, is now more dependent on the outer world for fulfilling its need. The shift from self sufficiency to dependency on outer world has broken the interdependence of community members among each other for fulfilling their needs. Moreover the division of labor based on caste system that was responsible in fulfilling in needs of the community members has now been shattered. Along with modern means of communication, modern education has also been successful in uprooting the traditional division of labor based on caste system. The tradition of caste system practice is now being termed as evil by the school text books and crime by the constitution of the nation, of which the community is a member. The efforts of various governmental and nongovernmental development agencies to uproot this traditional economic structure of the Doteli community have also been successful to a great extent. And all of these changes have been brought about with the development

of modern means of communication and transportation that have interconnected this small extract of the globe with its entirety.

The products and services that were produced and provided by each caste are now produced by factories and industries that are established around the globe and supplied to this community with the aid of modern transportation and communication facilities. Furthermore the needs of the community members are now fulfilled through employment in various industries within the country and outside the country and this have shaken-off their dependence upon agriculture and nature for their survival. This shift from feudalism to capitalism has been able to pull down the structure of traditional society and with it the traditional systems of this community are also being swept away.

The system of marriage and family has also undergone massive structural changes due to modern discourses of individuality and gender equality. In the traditional society this community relied on joint family as a lot of work force was needed for farming activities. But, now with the community's adaptation of modern occupations and professions, the family structure has also been reduced to nuclear family. The shift from joint family to nuclear family has resulted in lack of cooperation and instead has fostered competition within the family members for better progress. The practice of competition is grown even more within the community. As a result a sense of alienation is prevailing within the once harmonious community and family.

In traditional a wife was a devotee of her husband in this community. But with the modern discourses of gender equality, that has reached in this community primarily through the effort of various national and international development agencies and modern education, the status of a wife has been changing from a devotee

to an equal partner. Moreover, the customs, values, and norms that were integral part of the traditional community are now being constantly questioned and replaced with their modern versions. These social categories, which came into existence due to faith of communities members upon them as part of their religion, are now being questioned upon and replaced with modern ones. This has been accelerated with the shift in viewing religion. Religion in traditional community functioned as a means of fulfilling practical as well as spiritual needs but now with the community being interconnected with the global society and its material resources, religion has been only limited to personal faith and as a means of fulfilling the spiritual needs of the individual. It has lost its capacity to bind the members of the community together.

With the slackening of faith upon religion as way of life, there has been gradual slackening of faith in the ritualistic practices that the community had been performing as a Hindu community. Though most of the *rite de passages* of Hindu religion *are* still performed in this community, they lack the faith that they entailed as means of shaping destiny and as means of gaining better fruits for their present and after-life. Marriage, one of the major life cycle ceremonies in Hindu religion, was previously performed by the parents by following according to the commandments of the scripture as they had faith upon it as means attaining salvation for them and their ancestors. But now this faith has been shattered, as along with other reasons, the introduction of modern education and law, a *kanya*, which is essential pre-requisite, cannot be married. Now, the marriage on the parts of the parents has been just a duty in which they function as medium of bringing two persons together as partners for their life.

The traditional skills and professions practiced in this region has been transformed, modified, and replaced with modern ones. Due to various trainings and

skill development programs that had been conducted in this community by various development agencies, its members are now gradually giving up their traditional skills and professions and adopting new ones. This shift reflects the changed attitude of the community members towards their traditional way of life.

The community's cultural identity has been mostly tarnished with the slackening of importance that the community members give for speaking Doteli language within the community. The preference that is given to extra-territorial languages is a reflection of the shift in preference for other cultures and life-styles.

Thus, in such a condition when the community has been losing its traditional social structure, systems, institutions, customs, values, norms and moreover its language speakers, under the confluence of various factors of modernization, the cultural songs *Phags* and *Saguns*, which as cultural texts incorporate in them all these cultural categories, are losing and to some extent have lost its aura within the Doteli cultural system.

Appendixes

Appendix-I

Group- A

Video source: GAV-1:

Singers: Haru Devi Joshi, Age-75 years

Hareena Devi Joshi (I), Age-70 years

Hareena Devi Joshi (II), Age-36 years

Parvati Devi Joshi, Age-65 years

Location: Jimroda, Ganeshpur VDC- 3, Dadeldhura, Nepal

Phag of *Kalasthapna*

(Phag sung while establishing *Kalash*)

Kaile kalash koraya chan

Kaile kalash koridina

Ama babule kalash koryachan

Kumalaile kalash koridina

Who ordered for the carving of *kalash*

Who will carve the *kalash*

Father and mother ordered for carving the *kalash*

Servants carved out the *kalash*

Kaile kalash koryachan

Kaile kalash koridina

Kakajiule kalash koraya chan

Kumalaile kalash koridina

Who ordered for carving the *kalash*

Who will carve the *kalash*

Uncle ordered for carving the *kalash*

Servants carved out the *kalash*

Kaile kalash koryachan

Kaile kalash koridina
Dadajiule kalash koryachan
Kumalaile kalash koridina

Who ordered for carving the *kalash*
 Who will carve the *kalash*
 Dear brother ordered for carving the *kalash*
 Servants carved out the *kalash*

Kaile kalash thapayachan
Kaile kalash thapidina
Babajiule kalash thapayachan
Bramanle kalash thapidina

Who ordered for establishing the *kalash*
 Who will establish the *kalash*
 Father ordered for establishing the *kalash*
 The Brahmin will establish the *kalash*

Kaile kalash thapyachan
Kaile kalash thapidina
Kakajiule kalash thapyachan
Bramanle kalash thapidina

Who ordered for establishing the *kalash*
 Who will establish the *kalash*
 Uncle ordered for establishing the *kalash*
 The Brahmin will establish the *kalash*

Kaile kalash thapayachan
Kaile kalash thapidina
Dadajiule kalash thapayachan

Bramanle kalash thapidina

Who ordered for establishing the *kalash*
 Who will establish the *kalash*
 Elder brother ordered for establishing the *kalash*
 The Brahmin will establish the *kalash*

Kaile kalash thapayachan
Kaile kalash thapidina
Babajiule thapayachan
Bramanle kalash pujidina

Who ordered for establishing the *kalash*
 Who will establish the *kalash*
 Father ordered for establishing the *kalash*
 The Brahmin will establish the *kalash*

Bramanle kalash pujoyachan
Babajiule kalash pujidina
Kakajiule kalash pujayachan
Bramanle kalash pujidina

Brahman guided in worshipping the *kalash*
 Father worshipped the *kalash*
 Uncle arranged for worshipping the *kalash*
 Brahman worshipped the *kalash*

Kakajiule kalash pujayachan
Bramanle kalash pujidina
Dadajiule kalash pujoyachan
Bramanle kalash pujidina

Uncle arranged for worshipping the *kalash*

Brahman worshipped the *kalash*

Elder brother arranged for worshipping the *kalash*

Brahman worshipped the *kalash*

Appendix - II:

Group B

Singers:

Deba Devi Bhandari- 75 yrs

Manni Devi Bhandari- 42 yrs

Dumari Devi Bhandari-45yrs

Laxmi Devi Bhandari-58yrs

Location: Mailoda, Ganeshpur VDC-4, Dadeldhura, Nepal

1) Phag of *Ganeshpujan*:

(Phag sung while worshipping god Ganesh)

Devi Bhandari a senior and renowned phagari of this area. Her own vocal cord is not in good condition as she has just returned home after singing for nine days in a *nawaha* in a nearby village. So, though she doesn't sing, she nevertheless directs other junior phagaris, in this record, wherever they are confused.

Video Source: GBV-1

Bair bajana chatees baja

Bhitra ganashaiko puja

Sidhi diya Ganapati budhi diya Ganapati

Bikhan hari tumai diya

With great music being played outside

Lord Ganesh is worshipped inside

Bless us oh Ganapati with prosperity and intellect

Please take away our sorrows

Ganapati pujumai gaika dudhaile

Jai jai dev Ganesh

Ganapati pujumai gangaika jalailaile

Jai jai dev Ganesh

I worship lord Ganesh with cow's milk

Long live lord Ganesh

I worship lord Ganesh with water from the Ganges
 Long live lord Ganesh

Bair bajana chatees baja
Bhitra ganashaiko puja
Sidhi diya Ganapati, budhi diya Ganapati
Bikhan hari tumai diya

With great music being played outside
 Lord Ganesh is worshipped inside
 Bless us oh Ganapati with prosperity and intellect
 Please take away our sorrows

Ganapati puju mai haria dubaile
Jai jai dev Ganesh
Ganapati pujumai paella pithaile
Jai jai dev Ganesh

I worship lord Ganesh with sacred grass
 Long live lord Ganesh
 I worship lord Ganesh with the sacred yellow powder
 Long live lord Ganesh

Bair bajana chatees baja
Bhitra ganashaiko puja
Sidhi diya Ganapati budhi diya Ganapati
Bikhan hari tumai diya

With great music being played outside
 Lord Ganesh is worshipped inside
 Bless us oh Ganapati with prosperity and intellect
 Please take away our sorrows

Ganapati puju mai Saliva achetaile

Jai jai dev Ganesh
Ganapati pujumai jolai janaile
Jai jai dev Ganesh

I worship lord Ganesh with unbroken *Sali* rice
 Long live lord Ganesh
 I worship lord Ganesh with a pair of *janai*
 Long live lord Ganesh

Ganapati puju mai korai kapadale
Jai jai dev Ganesh

I worship lord Ganesh with virgin piece of cloth
 Long live lord Ganesh

Bair bajana chatees baja
Bhitar ganashaiko puja
Sidhi diya Ganapati budhi diya Ganapati
Bikhan hari tumai diya

With great music being played outside
 Lord Ganesh is worshipped inside
 Bless us oh Ganapati with prosperity and intellect
 Please take away our sorrows

Ganapati puju mai phalainaphulaile
Jai jai dev Ganesh
Ganapati puju mai jwolai suparile
Jai jai dev Ganesh

I worship lord Ganesh with flowers and fruits
 Long live lord Ganesh

I worship lord Ganesh with a pair of beetle nut

Long live lord Ganesh

2) Phag sung during the making of *bedi*. (*Bedi puda phag*)

Audio Source: GBA-2

Ko re gayo bala tera Udaipur
Ko re leyo medaniko mati
Jetha baba gaya mera Udaipur
Maikhi leya medaniko mati

Oh lad who went to *Udaipur* for you
 Who brought the *medani* mud
 My elder father went to *Udaipur*
 Brought the mud of *medani* for me

Babajiu gaya mera Udaipur
Maikhi leya medaniko mati
Anguthikole kori kori pagadika chal badi
Leyo balo medaniko mati

My father went to *Udaipur*
 Brought the mud of *medani* for me
 By digging the mud with his ring and tying it in his turban
 The lad has brought the mud of *medani*

(A junior phagari says to the senior phagari that she used to sing so nicely, today what would have happened to her vocal cord. She replies that she does not know what was happening to her)

Lyas meri ijumayo anamiko baro maida
Maire pudaao thaur thaur bedi
Katinau kothaiki chakali Baisanar

Oh mother please provide best of flour

I will draw the *bedi*

What is the breath of the *Baisanar*

How many rooms are there in the *bedi*

Sastsati kothaiki chakali Baisanar

Basati kothaiki bedi

The *Baisanar* is of sixty seven squares

The *bedi* is of sixty two squares

Bas Burma bas Burma purva mukhi

Ara Burma bedaiki dhuni

Hiya jan dapkaya bauli jan laskaya

Ara Burma bedaiki dhuni

Oh Brahmin please sit facing towards the East

Please worship the *bedi* oh Brahmin

Don't throb your heart and shake your hands oh Brahmin

Please worship the *bedi* oh Brahmin

Hiyo jati holo mero surdhar

Bauli jati holi surgyani

Jibya meri kagati ko paat

My heartbeats are placid

My hands are attentive

My tongue as smooth as the leaf of a lemon

(The phagari stop here and elder phagari directs them for the remaining of the phag. But she to is not able to complete the whole of this phag but still neglecting the missing part they continue the remaining of the phag)

Audio Source: GBA-3

Jetha Burma bedi pur
Kanso Burma bedi pur
Utikancho bedaiki dhuni

The elder Brahma is drawing the *bedi*
 Younger Brahma is drawing the *bedi*
 Younger than them is worshipping the *bedi*

Audio Source: GBA- 4

(The phagaris are asked about the style of singing and they respond that there were different ways of singing from village to village. And here they present another way of singing the phag of *matrika pujan* from that sung in their village)

3) Phag sung during worshipping *matrika*

Sejani matari mayo pujani
aaj Pujani bhayeicha

Decorate and worship the matari today
 Let's worship

(The elder member corrects the lead singer over here and tells her to say *pujani gaiyecha* instead of *pujani bhayeicha*, and further more directs her to say it as *sejani matari mayo pujani aaj*. The phagaris continue further)

Pujani matari mayo sejani aaj
Mayo sejani aaj

The matari is going to be worshipped today so decorate it
 Oh mother decorate it today

(The phagaris are again directed by the elder one to say *gangaika jalle pujani aaj*)

Gangaika jalle pujani aaj mayo pujani aaj mayo pujan aaj

It is to be worshipped today with the holy water of Ganges oh mother

(Again the phagaris are directed to say *pujani* first and then *sejani*)

Pujani matari sejani aaj mayo sejani aaj

Hariauda dubaile pujani aaj mayau pujani aaj

Sejani matari mayau pujani aaj mayau pujani aaj

The *matari* is going to be worshipped today decorate it oh mother decorate it today

It is to be worshipped with the sacred grass so decorate it oh mother decorate it

The *matari* is going to be worshipped today so decorate it oh mother decorate it today

(The other member of the group objects here as the phag has not been in the order as the elder had directed previously. The lead singer now corrects her direction)

Sejani matari pujani aaj mayau pujani aaj

Decorate the *matari* it is to be worshipped today oh mother

(The back singer now corrects the lead singer to sing as *pujani matari mayau sejani aaj mayau sejani aaj*. The lead singer continues again)

Pieala pithaele pujani aaj mayau sejani aaj

It is to be worshipped today with the sacred yellow powder oh mother decorate it

(Again the lead singer is confused in her sentence and uses *sejani* instead of *pujani*. But other phagaris know it and they don't follow her instead she follows

her in the following line)

Sejani matari mayau sejani aaj mayau sejani aaj

Salika achetaile pujani aaj mayau pujani aaj

Pujani matari mayau sejani aaj mayau sejani aaj

The matari is going to be worshipped today so decorate it oh mother decorate it today

It is to be worshipped today with unbroken *Sali* rice oh mother decorate

it It is to be worshipped today so decorate it oh mother decorate it

(Here the elder directs to use *gaika dudhle gaika gheule* in the *Phags* to the phagaris)

Gaika dudhle pujani aaj mayau pujani aaj

Pujani matari mayau sejani aaj mayau sejani aaj

It is to be worshipped today with cow milk oh mother decorate it

It is to be worshipped today so decorate it oh mother decorate it

(Again the elder one interrupts here and directs them to sing slowly without making haste and suggests them now to use *gaika gobar, gaika gheule kora na kapadale, jwolai janaile, and jwolai suparile*. But the young lead phagari reminds the elder one as they have used *dudhaile* they can't use *gobar and gheu* and instead says that it is better to use *korakapadaile*)

Pujani matari mayau sejani aaj mayau sejani aaj

Kora na kapadaile pujani aaj

Pujani matari mayau sejani aaj

Jwolai janaile pujani aaj

The *matari* is going to be worshipped today decorate it oh mother decorate it today

It is to be worshipped with the virgin cloth today

The *matari* is going to be worshipped today so decorate it oh mother decorate it today

It is to be worshipped with a pair of *janai*

Pujani matari mayau sejani aaj

Jwolai na rupaile pujani aaj

Pujani matari mayau sejani aaj

Phool na phalaile pujani aaj

The *matari* is going to be worshipped today decorate it oh mother decorate it today

It is to be worshipped with a pair of rupees today

The *matari* is going to be worshipped today so decorate it oh mother decorate it today

It is to be worshipped with fruits and flowers

(Here again the elder phagari says to younger lead phagari to include *jau*, *teel* and *kush* in the phag)

Pujani matari mayau sejani aaj

Jau teel kushaile pujani aaj

The *matari* is going to be worshipped today decorate it oh mother decorate it today

It is to be worshipped with the *kush* grass today

.....

The phagari now decide to stop the phag. The researcher asks questions about what the phag was about and he is answered with inputs from all, that the phag was that of *matari* and that this phag comes after *kalash* and *Ganesh* has been worshiped. According to them, ritually first *Ganesh* than *Kalash* and than *Matari* is worshipped in any occasion whether it's a wedding or that of *Gora* or any other *Puja*. The lead phagari now begins to sing another phag. The phag is sung when the groom is ready to set on his wedding journey. At this time the mother demands the price of her milk from the son. Though this ritual is not performed anymore by the mother, but the phag is still sung.

4) *Dudhko mol magne bela ko phag*

(Phag sung while the mother demands the price of her milk from the bridegroom)

Tuire gaye bala mera beti bayeunu
Mero dija dudadiko moal
Gaya jaulo pinda halo Paryag pinda halo
Tire halo dudadiko moal

My dear son you are about to marry a lass
 So pay the price of the milk that you sucked
 By going to *Kashi and Paryag* and putting *pinda* for you
 I will pay the price of your milk

Bata bata huna bala
Badi magrau
Tuire balo nir chakhi gaya

On the way you will find
 Grand *magraus*
 Dear son do drink water at them

Bata bata huna bala phulayi bhadi
Tuire phool paeri gaye
Bata bata huni bala bisan dali
Tuire balo sael basi gaye

On the way there will be gardens full of flower
 Do wear on some flowers
 On the way there will be *pipal* trees
 Dear son take rest under its shelter

Mathura nagari bala sasu sasura
Tuire balo neudi dhog diye

Bata bata hunna bala jethu sala

Tuire bala chaturaiab bhaye

In *Mathura* you will find your father and mother in law
 Show them respect by bowing down
 On the way you will find your brother in laws
 Be smart dear son

Chatur chatur mera baba jiu
Maire huulo chaturaiyaiko beta
Kasa paiye sasu sasura
Kyau kyauko bhojan khayi

My father is smart
 I will show that im also a smart son
 How are your mother and father in law
 What types of dishes did you eat

Nikayi paya maile sasu sasura
Ghiukela bhojan khaya

I got nice father and mother in law
 I ate delicacies made of ghee

(Here the young lead phagari gets confused again about another stanza and is helped out by the older one. the main phagari who is unable to sing due to her bad throat also reveals the fact that the younger one has left many of the stanzas in between like)

Kasa payi bala tuile sasu sasura
Kaso rakhyo adar bhau
Bhalai paya ama maile sasu sasura
Bhalayo rakhyo adar bhar

How are your father and mother in law

How much respect did they give you

I got nice father and mother in law
I was given due respect

(This stanza is now sung by the young lead singer and the group)

Kasa payi bala tuile sasu sasura
Kaso rakhyo adar bhau
Bhalai paya ama maile sasu sasura
Bhalayo rakhyo adar bhar

How are your father and mother in law
How much respect did they give you
I got nice father and mother in law
I was given due respect

(Now the group starts to discuss some of the events related to the life of old phagari. The old phagari laments about her bygone age when she able to sing the *Phags* and was appreciated by all where ever she went. Her companion and teacher and friend that she mentions as *Saukani* had died one month before these *Phags* were recorded and she is remembered by all this women folks for her knowledge of *Phags* and her sweet and melodious voice. After some well wishes for her, the phagaris than tell that rhythm that is used in *matari* phag is different from other *Phags*. Moreover they also reveal on being questioned by the researcher that *Goudaan* also has *Phags*. On being asked about the *Phags* of *Nauran* (Naming Ceremony) the group except the old one say that they don't have knowledge about it and young lead phagari satisfies herself saying that once when she was with the cattle she had sung all of that phag but now she doesn't remember them anymore. All of them know a little bit but except the old one no one knows the phag in its entirety. And as she can't sing, now she is requested by other phagaris to say the lyrics which she does promptly while all other take this lesson.

Audio Source: GBA- 4

Paili maas balo mero jalthal, dosara maas rakatchal..... paili maas balo
 (Audio source: GBA-6) *phool kesari...tesara maas rakat chala bhayo..... chautha*
maas chamkailo bhayo.....panchau maas panchkalyani.....chayaun maas.....

(The lad was in watery form in the first month,... second month the lad came into the form of *kesar*,... third month blood was running into him, ... fourth month the baby was in shape, ...fifth month the lad was came into the star shape...sixth mass)
 This *Phags* were not sung but were just told to the young phagaris for them to remember. Moreover they are not complete she has only reached six (*chayaun*) month (*maas*) and this Phag extend up to nine month and other activities done after birth. Due to the lack of battery for the recorder the Phag was not recorded further and the session had to end over there.

Appendix: III

Group C

Singers:

Dhana Devi Bhandari-58 years

Tara Devi Bhandari-29years

Laxmi Devi Bhandari-63years

Location: Pari-Mailoda, Ganeshpur-4, Dadeldhura.

Audio and Visual sources: GCV-1 and GCA-2

1.1) Phag of *Nwaran* (Phags of naming ceremony)

Paili maas balaile garavabhadan

liyo Dosara maas bala jal thal bhayo

Tesara maas balo chamkailo (she is confused on this word)

bhayo Choutha maas balo chamkailo bhayo

Panchau maas balo jalthal khel

Chayaun maas sastaikothi baas

Satau maas balo saptai kothi

baas Athaun maas balo bato khoj

(In the first month the baby germinated in the womb, in the second month he became a watery mass, third month the baby came into shape, in fourth month the child came into shape, in fifth month the baby began to play in the watery marsh, in sixth month the child came into the sixth chamber, in the seventh month the child came into the seventh month and in the eighth month the baby began to search the way out of the womb.)

From the record GCA-3

Nayau maas balo manda log ayo

Jab bati balaile garbadhan rachihalyo

Tabaibati mayariko tajo

Ijumaile sachi halyo anai

Babaijiule dhanai sanchi halyo

Ajai mera balyaiko kaaj

Jab bati balo mero hili khel chuli pur

Tab bati hari mayariko tajo

In the ninth month the lad came onto this earth
 Since the lad was germinated into the womb
 Mother has been accumulating necessary
 things Mother saved necessary grains
 Father saved money
 Today is the ceremony of my lad
 Since the child was playing in the watery marsh of the
 womb The mother had been saving things

Gayaidile gheu sanchyo maudile maha sanchyo
Ajai lagyo balayaika kaam
Ijumaiyele maida babaile punai sanchyo
Ajai lagyo balaika kaaj

Cow saved ghee and the bees saved honey
 Today all of it was useful in the ceremony
 Mother had saved flour father had saved money
 Today it was all useful for the ceremony of the child

Jaal phanti ayo balo
Ran jiti ayi maya
Tuire bala jirahae

The lad came out of the watery marsh of the womb
 The mother survived the battle with death
 May you long live oh lad

Tuire balo debatayiko dhami bhaye pujari bhaye
Tuire balo jieya koti koti barsha
Rajaiko manukhaeye
Tuire bala jijagiraeye

Jijagiraeye bala lakh barish

Pauparampar pado tero bansh

May you be *dhami* of the god may you be his worshipper

Oh lad may you live billions of years

Oh lad may you serve the king

Oh lad may you live long

Oh lad may you live millions of years

May your descendants achieve name and fame

1.2) Phag of naming ceremony (*Nausunaona*) sung in the (*Nwaran*)

Baptizing ceremony

Kaikaile bala tera naam sunayo

Bala naam sunayo

Barman panitaile naam sunayo mayau naam sunayo

Sunaiki pipirele naam sunayo

Sanka ghanta bajaile naam sunayo

Janai rupaille naam sunayo mayau naam sunayo

Oh lad who told you your name

Told your name

The Brahmin pandit told me my name oh mothers

They told me my name with the cone of gold

They told me my name with the sacred bell and conch shell

They told me my name with the *janai* and rupees oh mothers

(The phagaris stop here as one of them is unsatisfied with the pattern of this phag.

The younger one objects to this order of *Phags* and inserts another pattern to it,

which others also readily agree as been missing from the above till now)

Kyau kyaule bala mera naam sunayo

Bala naam sunayo

Phalainaphulaile naam sunayo mayau naam sunayo

Kyau kyaule bala mera naam sunayo

Bala naam sunayo

Oh lad with what things was your name told to you
 Lad did they tell you your name
 They told me my name with fruits and flowers oh mothers
 Oh lad with what things was your name told to you
 Lad did they tell you your name

Pieala pithaile naam sunayo mayau naam sunayo
Salika achetaile naam sunayo mayau naam sunayo
Hariauda dubaile naam sunayo mayau naam sunayo

Oh mothers they told me my name with the auspicious yellow
 powder Oh mothers they told me my name with unbroken *Sali* rice
 Oh mothers they told me my name with green *dubo* grass

Kai kaile bala mera naam sunayo bala naam sunayo
Ama baba humaraile naam sunayo mayau naam sunayo

Oh my lad who told you your name, told your name
 My mother and father told me my name oh mothers

Kaikaile bala mera naam sunayo bala mera naam sunayo
Kaka kaki humaraile naam sunayo mayau naam sunayo

Oh my lad who told you your name, told your name
 My uncle and aunty told me my name oh mothers

Kaikaile bala mera naam sunayo bala mera naam sunayo
Mama Mauli humaraile naam sunayo mayau naam sunayo

Oh my lad who told you your name, told your name

My maternal uncles and aunties told me my name oh mothers

2) Phag of *bartaband*.

(*Phags* sung in the initiation ceremony)

Audio Source: GCA-4

In this record this phagaris discuss the content of the phag (*bartabanda*). From the discussion it comes out that Dhana knows this phag but not actually fully and she also reveals that she had learnt this phag from some women of *Kuledi* another nearby village when they had gone to *Gagnaan*¹⁹ (Seti river that flows in Doti district: on *makarsakranti*²⁰ the women of these place go to this river for taking bath). On this trip she also acknowledges other two women who had sung on this occasion. On his her mother-in-law, the old lead phagari in the next group and the other is *Saukani* the deceased phagari for whom both she and her mother-in-law lament. The phag of *bartabanda* is according to them very long and none of them know it fully. So before they start to sing whatever they know, they make it clear that it might be in fragments. The researcher to boost their confidence also says that it doesn't matters.

Harinaike chala mayau kyau kaaj chayio mayau kyau kaaj chayio
Mujaiki jeudi mayo kyau kaaj chayio mayau kyau kaaj chayio Harinaike
chala bala bhalai kaaj chayincha bala bhalai kaaj chayincha Mujaiki
jeudi bala bhalai kaaj chayincha bala bhalai kaaj chayincha

Oh mothers for what occasion is the skin of deer needed
 Oh mothers for what purpose is the rope of *muja* needed
 Oh lad the skin of deer is needed for auspicious ceremonies
 Oh lad the rope of *muja* needed for auspicious ceremonies

Betaiki laudi kyau kaaj chayincha mayau kyau kaaj chayincha

¹⁹ According to Hindu belief system river Ganga is a holy river. It is believed that by taking bath in

this river, especially on *makarsranti*, one can purge off his/her sins.

²⁰ The first day of the month of Magh in *Vikram Sambat* (V.S) –Vikram era calendar

Betaiki laudi bala bhalai kaaj chayincha bala bhalai kaaj chayincha
Rodingaiki laudi kyau kaaj chayincha mayau kyau kaaj chayincha
Rodingaiki laudi bala bhalai kaaj chayincha bala bhalai kaaj chayincha

Oh mothers for what occasions is the stick of *beta* needed
 Oh lad the stick of *beta* is needed for auspicious occasions
 Oh mothers for what purpose is the stick of *roding* needed
 Oh lad the stick of *roding* is needed for auspicious occasions

Likhulakdi mayau kyau kaaj chayincha mayau kyau kaaj chayincha
Likhulakdi bala bhalai kaaj chayincha bala bhalai kaaj chayincha

Oh mothers for what occasions is the stick of sugarcane needed
 Oh lad the stick of sugarcane is needed for auspicious occasions

Harinaiki chala mayau ka kasya paincha mayau ka kasya
paincha Lekako harin bala aula dhapayo bala aula dhapayo
Aulo dhapaya harin khaal jayi pasyo bala khaal jayi pasyo
Khaal jayi pasyo harinaiki chala bala harinaiki chala

Oh mothers how and where do I get the skin of deer
 The deer of the high mountains is driven down to the basins
 Oh lad the deer of the basin entered the watery marsh
 Oh lad the deer skin has been kept in the water pond

(In the above lines the phagaris are confused about the content itself as none of them remember the phag in its entirety so the right words are missing, nevertheless they move further ahead)

Jhiki halyo harinaiki gadi halyo chaala bala gadi halyo chaala Harinaike
chaala kyau kaaj chayincha mayau kyau kaaj chayincha Harinaike chaala
bala bhalai kaaj chayincha bala bhalai kaaj chayincha

Oh lad the skin of the deer was peeled off

Oh mother for what purpose is the deer skin needed
 Oh lad the deer skin is needed for auspicious occasions

Kai kai le bala tera kataal katyo bala kataal katyo
Hunkani dankanile kataal katyo mayau kataal katyo

Oh lad who cleared the forest of the new land for you
 Someone cleared the forest of the new land for me

Babajiu humaraile kataal kedyo mayau kataal kedyo
Kakajiu humaraile kataal polayo mayau kataal polayo

Oh mothers my father collected the choppings and cuttings of the clearing
 Oh mothers my uncle collected the chopping and cuttings of the clearing

Kai kaile bala tera kataal khantyo bala kataal khantyo
Hunkani dankanile kataal khantyo kataal khantyo

Oh lad who dug the new land for you
 Oh mothers someone dug up the new land for me

Kai kaile bala tera kapas boyocha bala kapas boyocha
Babajiu humaraile kapas boyocha mayau kapas bayocha

Oh lad who sowed the cotton seed for you
 Oh mothers my father sowed the cotton seeds for me

Kai kaile bala mera kataal godyaocha bala kataal godyaocha Hunkani
dankanile mayau kataal godyaocha mayau kataal godyocha

Oh lad who wedded the cotton in the new land for you
 Oh mothers someone wedded the cotton in the new land for me

Kai kaile bala mera kapas tipyocha bala kapas tipyocha

Iju mayau humarile kapas tipyocha mayau kapas tipyo cha

Oh my lad who plucked off the cotton for you

Oh mothers my dear mother plucked off the cotton for me

Kai kaile bala tera kapas purva kapas puryao

Babajiu humaraile kapas puryo mayau kapas puryo

Oh lad who winded the cotton for you

Oh mothers my father winded the cotton for me

Audio Source: GCA-5

Now they discuss the further part of this phag, which discusses the *janai* that are given to various castes in this area. But they come to conclusion that they don't know how many threads are there in the *janai* (sacred thread) of different castes so lastly give up this phag over here

Audio Source: GCA-6

3) Phags of marriage sung while the vermilion is put on the forehead of the bride by the groom.

Kai tuile dula gedi sachi rakhi bhagi

rakhi Kai sit anchal gachayi

Panchau deu maile sakhi rakhya bhagi

rakhya Dulahaya sit achal gacheya

Oh bride whom did you keep as witness and well wishers

With whom did you tie up bridal knot

I kept the five gods as witnesses and well wishers

I tied up the bridal knot with the bride groom

Kai tuile dula gedi sachi rakhi bhagi

rakhi Kai sit achal gachayi

Sankha ghanta baja maile sakhi rakhya bhagi rakhya

Dulaya sit achal gacheya

Oh bride whom did you keep as witness and well
wishers With whom did you tie up the bridal knot
I kept the holy conch and bell as witnesses and well
wishers I tied up the bridal knot with the bride groom

Kai tuile dula gedi sakhi rakhi bhagi rakhi

Kai sit achal gacheyi

Aganiko ago maile sanchi rakhya bhagi rakhya

Dulaya sit achal gacheya

Oh bride whom did you keep as witnesses and well
wishers With whom did you tie up the bridal knot
I kept the holy fire as witness and well wisher
I tied up the bridal knot with the bride groom

Audio Source: GCA-7

Kai tuile dulai gedi sanchi rakhi bhagi rakhi

Kai sit tuile anchal gacheyi

Bamanaika baed maile sachi rakhya bhagi rakhya

Dulaya sit achal gacheya

Oh bride whom did you keep as witnesses and well
wishers With whom did you tie up the bridal knot
I kept the Vedas of the Brahmin as witnesses and well
wishers I tied the bridal knot with the bride groom

Kai tuile dulai gedi sachi rakhi bhagi rakhi

Kai sit anchal gacheyi

Phagari ka phag maile sanchi rakhya bhagi rakhya

Dulaya sit anchal gacheya

Oh bride whom did you keep as witnesses and well wishers
 With whom did you tie up the bridal knot
 I kept the *Phags* of the phagari as witnesses and well wishers
 I tied the bridal knot with the bride groom

Kai tuile dulai gedi sanchi rakhi bhagi rakhi
Kai sit anchal gacheyi
Dholiki badai maile sanchi rakhya bhagi rakhya
Dulaya sit anchal gacheya

Oh bride whom did you keep as witnesses and well
 wishers With whom did you tie up the bridal knot
 I kept the auspicious music of the *dholi* as witnesses and well
 wishers I tied the bridal knot with the bride groom

3) *Anchal gantho parne bela ko Phag*

(Phag sung while tying the bridal knot)

Sankha dhuni baed dhuni anchal padyo cha gantho
Hariauda dubaile anchali padyo cha gantho
Pieala pithaile anchali padyo cha gantho
Salika achaitale anchali padyo cha gantho

The bridal knot was tied amidst the music of conch and hymns of the
 Vedas The bridal knot was tied with the sacred *dubo* grass
 The bridal knot was tied with auspicious yellow powder
 The bridal knot was tied with unbroken *Sali* rice

Haledaile anchali padyo cha gantho
Jwolai suparile anchali padyo cha gantho
Jwalana rupaile anchali padyo cha gantho
Jwalana janaile anchali padyo cha gantho

The bridal knot was tied with fresh turmeric

The bridal knot was tied with a pair of beetle nut

The bridal knot was tied with couple of rupees

The bridal knot was tied with a pair of *janai*

At the end of this record the phagaris confess that they have been leaving half part of the stanzas while saying all materials with which the bridal knot is tied. Before saying them a refrain was to be there and the refrain was *kyau kyaule balika mera anchal padyo gantho* and then they sing another phag given below

4) *Baulale latta laune bela phag*

(The phag sung while the bridegroom is wearing clothes)

Pair bala pair bala kantaiko pheta

Kantaiko pheta bala bhautai

soyaeo Pair bala gataiko baago

Gataiko baago bala bhautai soyaeo

Oh lad, wear the *pheta* around your waist

The lad looks handsome with the *pheta* around his waist

Oh lad, wear the vest

The lad looks handsome in the vest

Pair bala jaangaika sutana

Jaangaika sutana bala bhautai soyaeo

Pair bala mathai ki sadi

Mathaiki sadi bala bhautai soyaeo

Wear oh lad the *suruwal*

The lad looks handsome in *suruwal*

Wear oh lad the turban around your head

The lad looks handsome in the turban

Pair bala srikhanda chandan

Srikhanda chandan bala bhautai soyaeo

Pair bala salika acheta

Salika acheta bhautai soyaeo

Oh lad put on the *tika* of sandalwood paste on your forehead
 The lad looks handsome with the sandalwood *tika* on his
 forehead Oh lad put on the unbroken *sali* rice on your forehead
 The lad looks handsome with the unbroken *Sali* rice on his forehead

Pair bala rudras mala
Rudurasai mala bala bhautai soyaeo
Pair bala muhan mala
Muhanai mala bala bhautai soyaeo

Oh lad wear the *rudras* necklace
 The lad looks handsome in the *rudras* necklace
 Oh lad wear the coral necklace around your neck
 The lad looks handsome with coral necklace around his neck

Pair bala kokhi kundal
Kokhi kundal bala bhautai soyaeo
Pair bala sir pur chata
Sir pur chata bala bhautai soyaeo

Wear oh lad the earrings²¹
 The lad looks handsome in the earrings
 Wear oh lad the turban around your head
 The lad looks handsome in the turban

Pair bala subarea suta
Sabaria suta bala bhautai soyaeo
Pair bala phoolayaiki mala
Phoolayaiki mala bala bhautai soyaeo

Wear oh lad the *subarea suta*

²¹ Though in the untranslated text the word *kokhi* is used in the translation it is corrected with the help of the phagaris as *kaan*, which means ears. The word *kokhi* means armpit and *kundal* mean ring.

The lad looks handsome in *subarea suta*
 Wear oh lad garland of flowers around your neck
 The lad looks handsome in the garland

(The phagaris now end this phag, though one of them says that they have missed *kulai* (cap) but others assert that they have said it and it was *mathaiki sari*.)

Audio source: GCA-8

The discussion in the early part is related to the content of the *Phags*. Where it is revealed that the things that have been used earlier are now displaced like the *pheta* is now displaced by belt and *siraiki sari* is displaced by cap. There is a discussion on the ethnic doteli language and the words that are used in *Phags*. The discussion also makes it clear that the words *dulai* and *dulaya* in the following stanza taken from the above phag are their substitutes for *bauli* and *swami*

Kai tuile dulai gedi sanchi rakhi bhagi rakhi
Kai sit tuile anchal gacheyi
Bamanaika baed maile sachi rakhya bhagi rakhya
Dulaya sit achal gacheya

(Audio Source: GCA-9 & GCA-10)

In GCA-9 and in the initial part of GCA-10 the phagaris discuss about the content of the phag that is sung while lighting up the *diyo*.

5) Phag sung during lighting up the *diyo* (*Bati balya belako phag*)

Diyo jaga puta buari
Padigaicha gailadi saanjha

Oh daughter in law light up the holy lamp
 The evening has darkened

(Here they discuss upon the rhythm of the phag and after discussing it all it's concluded that it's the same everywhere and the tone in which they are singing is same all over)

Diyo jaga diyo jaga kola boar
Padi gaecha gailadi saanjha
Kyau ki bati diu kyauko gheu
Kyauko diyeda mathi diyore jagau

Oh daughter in law light up the holy lamp
 The evening has darkened
 Of what should I make the wick, what should I use to light it
 Of what should be the earthenware lamp be

Kapur basi gheauimathi sapuraiki bati
Sunaika diyeda mathi diyore jagau

Light the lamp with thin cotton wick using kapur mixed ghee
 Light the lamp on the earthenware made of gold

Kasanre debata boli diyore jagau
Kasu bari phal pau nir
Chanar surjai debata boli diyo jagau
Bharat boli phal pau nir

For which god should I light the lamp
 How may I get fruits from it
 Light the lamp in the name of sun and moon gods
 You will get the fruits by saying *bharat*

Kashan debata boli diyo jagau
Kasu gari phal pau nir
Tetis koti boli diyo jagau

Bharat boli phal pau nir

For which god should I light the lamp
 How may I get fruits from it
 Light the lamp in the name of thirty three billions of gods
 You will get the fruits by saying *bharat*

Kasan debata boli diyo jagau
Kasu gari phal pau nir
Panchai dev boli diyo jagau
Bharat boli phal pau nir

For which god should I light the lamp
 How may I get fruits from it
 Light the lamp in the name of five gods
 You will get the fruits by saying *bharat*

Nagarai debata boli diyo jagau
Bharat boli phal pau nir

Light the lamp in the name of god *Nagarai*²²
 You will get the fruits by saying *bharat*

Kasan debata boli diyo jagau
Kasu gari phal pau nir
Laateshwor debata boli diyo jagau
Bharat boli phal pau nir

For which god should I light the lamp
 How may I get fruits from it
 Light the lamp in the name of god *Laateshwor*
 You will get the fruits by saying *bharat*

²² *Nagarai, Bhunteuli, Laateshwor, kailpal, and Mushani* are some of the local gods. *Nagarai* is the most senior and powerful god among them. He is the *sai* (lord) to all of them except *Mushani* for

whom he is *bada sai* (elder lord). *Mushani* is worshipped by untouchable castes and is the servant to all other gods that are worshipped by upper castes.

Kasan debata boli diyo jagau
Kasu gari phal pau nir
Kailali debata boli diyo jagau
Bharat boli phal pau nir

For which god should I light the lamp
 How may I get fruits from it
 Light the lamp in the name of god *Kailpal*
 You will get the fruits by saying *bharat*

Kasan debata boli diyo jagau
Kasu gari phal pau nir
Bhumteuli debata diyo jagau
Bharat boli phal pau nir

For which god should I light the lamp
 How may I get fruits from it
 Light the lamp in the name of god *Bhumteuli*
 You will get the fruits by saying *bharat*

Kasan debata boli diyo jagau
Kasu gari phal pau nir
Mushani debata boli diyo jagau
Bharat boli phal pau nir.

For which god should I light the lamp
 How may I get fruits from it
 Light the lamp in the name of god *Mushani*
 You will get the fruits by saying *bharat*

Appendix: IV

Interview 1:

Respondent: Deba Devi Bhandari,

Resident of Ganeshpur-4,

Dadeldhura. Age: Above 75 years.

(The respondent is a senior phagari of the area) Speakers :

R: Researcher

J: Deba Devi Bhandari

Video Source: GEV-1

C: *Jhaija* (elder sister of mummy) how old are you?

J: Well, dear don't remember, how much did it happen? I was signed up for old-age pension when I was sixty.

C: So you are seventy.

J: Well, I am one month older than your father is. How old is he? C: Well, then you are more than 75 years?

J: yes dear.

C: Than, *jhaija* when did u learn *Phags*?

J: well dear I don't remember it exactly, learnt to sing them in my childhood. C: so u learnt it right from your childhood

J: my mother –in-law (*jiu*) used to sing, I went with her, and another *jiu* also used to sing, we also used to sing with them, she used to always call on me wherever she went and I never left her. And began to sing and learn *Phags* wherever I went. If I was in *Badam*, or in *Rumail* or anywhere I sang with them and learnt their phag

C: so u learned *Phags* from every

one J: yes dear

C: well *Phags* are of different types?

J: well they are different according to places. *Bheta*'s are different from *Badam* and so are they different from those of *Rumail*...

(Another phagari enters the room)

Come here (to another phagari) let's take photograph

Group discussion of group B

Speakers:

Laxmi Devi Bhandari: D

Dumari Devi Bhandari: B

Manni Devi Bhandari: M

Deba Devi Bhandari: J

Researcher: R

Audio Source: GEA-1

R: Elder mummy from when did u began to sing *Phags*? Was it from childhood?

J: Yes dear. Since my childhood.

R: Is there any difference between the *Phags* that were sung while you were a child and those sung nowadays?

J: Well certainly there must be dear.

R: Are there any differences that you have found between the *Phags* that you sung as a child and nowadays?

J: I have forgotten *Phags* that I used to sing previously sing. Isn't it sister. We have forgotten the *Phags* that were sung by our mother in laws. What *Dhauri ki ija* (Dhauri's mother - *Saukani* the main phagari of this village who is no more with them) used to sing, we also sing them.

B: Yes phupu (sister of one's father). We sing those sung by *Saukani didi*.

R: Well, than the paternal home of *Dhauri ki ija* was in Jayshera (a village that falls in another VDC or cultural realm known *Dankot*. This realm is different in many aspects from the *Paschya Gurkha*- the cultural realm of which this phagaris are resident. The writer of the book *Anjuli bhari Saguns Polta bhari phag* is a local of *Dankot*). That means the phag you are singing are of *Dankot* and the *Phags* of *Paschya* have gone.

J: Yes dear

B: Hmm

R: So, it means that *Phags* go on changing. J: Yes

B: Yes

R: Do you remember any phag that is different from the phag that you used to sing previously?

J: Well in the days of my mother in law, while the bride used to get prepared for his marriage they used to say

Tuire balo ramchanar chali gaye beti bayeunu

Mero dija dudadiko moal
Dudadi dudadi jia jan bol tiri diulo dudadiko moal
 My dear Ramchandra as you are about to marry
 Pay the price of my milk that you have suckled
 Please mother don't reiterate it, I will pay the price

Gaya jaulo pinda halo asthu cheptan arlo
Tiri diulo dudadiko moal

I will put a *pinda* and deliver your skull bone in the Ganges of
 Kashi And pay the price of your milk that I have suckled

Ka tuile ramchanar beti roji
Ka tu beaunu chali janai

My dear son where have you looked for your bride
 Where are you going for marriage

My mother in law used to sing this phag
Mathura nagari maile beti roji
Woi ma beaunu chali jano

I have selected a bride for myself in the town of Mathura
 Im going there for marrying

Ko re bala tera baed pedal
Ko re tera beti byaelo
Ko tera mangal galo

Oh lad who will read the Vedas for you
 Who will perform the marriage rites
 Who will sing the panegyric songs for you

Afui ma iju mayau bed padlo

Afui ma mangal gaulo

Afui ma bhumari ritulo

Oh mothers I will myself read the Vedas

I will myself sing the panegyric songs

I will myself circle the holy fire

This is what my mother in law used to sing.

Bata bata hunna bala siling dali

Tuire bala sael basi raheya

Bata bata hunna bala bisana dali

Tuire bala sael basi raheya

Oh lad there will be *siling* tree on the way

My dear lad do take some rest under its shelter

Oh lad there will be *pipal* tree on the way

My dear lad do take some rest under its shelter

Bata bata hunna bala mear mandir

Tuire niudi dhog diye

Bata bata hunna bala pati magrau

Tuire bala nir chakhi gaye

Oh lad on the way there will be temples and shrines

My dear do offer your respect to them by bowing down

Oh lad on the way there will be water spouts

My dear do drink water at them

Bata bata hunna bala sasu sasura

Tuire bala niudi dhog diye

Bata bata hunna bala jethu sala

Tuire bala chaturaiab bhaye

On the way you will find your in laws
 Show them respect by bowing down
 On the way you will find your brother in laws
 Oh lad be smart and remain on your guard

Chatur chatur hunna jetha bau
Hum hula chaturai ka beta

My fathers are smart
 We will show that we are their sons

Well this is what my mother in law used to say.

R: What do nowadays say in this context?

J: They also say the same thing.

B: Yes we sing the same.

R: Are there any *Phags* that have become different from before? Previously you were saying that they used to sing this and nowadays it's sung differently. You said that there are changes in the *Phags* of *Gaura*?

R: Well, yes in *Gaura's* phag our mother in laws like Prada brother's mother used to say:

Dakh dadim bhadi bharat nuali
(k ba) tai muni basi gayin nari

(she doesn't remember the initial words)

Bar baithigain bar baithi narile kyau phal payo

(Under the shade of pomegranate besides the water spout of
 bharat under it has a women sat for fasting

What blessings have the fasting women

got) Nowadays we don't say that.

R: What do u say nowadays?

J: We say nothing at all. We used to sing it when the *Gaura* was folded after
 bringing at home. Isn't it sister?

B: Yes. Once you also had sung that.

J: *Dakh dadim bhadi bharat nuali taimunti* here the name of the person who is taking

the fasting of *Gaura* was taken. As your grandmother was the Gorai (person

hosting the *Gora*) her name was taken first and than others. Than we used to say *tin nari bar baithigain bar baithi narile kyau phal payo, bar baithi narile jwol put payo jwalo bhatar payo*. In this way name of the every women in the village was taken and it was repeated for each of them.

Nowadays it's not sung.

(Under the shade of pomegranate besides the water spout of *bharat* under it has a women sat for fasting... What blessings have the fasting women got... the women on fasting has got two sons and good position in her house)

J: Jhaija *Phags* are all sacred as they are all about religion than which one do you prefer, *deuda*, or *phag*?

J: Phag dear.

B: phag.

J: But *deuda* also have equal importance. Both of them help to express our emotions, which may be of happiness or sadness.

B: Without both of them and with only one of them it (any festival or religious rite) doesn't looks well.

J: Even when we are in forest for collecting fodder or wood we contemplate on our conditions and sing out our conditions in the form of *deuda*. As we are completely overtaken by the emotion we began to sob on it

B: Even the surroundings of the jungle do not seem good without *deuda*.

J: Well in jungle too some sing their sorrows and then cry whereas some sing out of happiness.

R: Than do you want to say that *Phags* bring normality in our society. J: Yes dear. That's it.

R: Well Jhaija you all learned *Phags* from your mother in laws. How are the present day girls learning it?

J: They have learnt from us. Do you think that we have sent to any schools for learning phag?

R: What I mean to say is that earlier the girls used to give a lot of attention to learn *Phags*. Do the girls of nowadays pay so much attention for learning them?

J: Come on dear, nowadays girls don't give attention to it.

D: Well *jiu* (mother in law) has said what should I do here?

J: nothing has finished and said. He is recording come on sit down. He was just asking

me about what we used to sing. So I said him we used to sing this and this. I

told him *Phags* that were sung earlier. Come on now sit down and sing.

We can't sit here for the whole night.

D: Oh! Yes

B: I am also very tired.

J: Well first sing some short stanzas if possible I will also sing and if I couldn't than I will listen and you will sing. I don't think I can sing.

D: Which phag is to be sung? Is it of Ganesh?

J: First sing some short verses. Of what should we sing? You come on to my side *nani* (daughter in law).

R: How do you all feel while you are singing *Phags*?

J: We really feel excited if our vocal is in good condition. I never get tired of singing but with this throat how to sing?

D: Well if I had my vocal in shape as it was in the days of my youth I would love to sing phag.

R: *Bhauju* (sister in law) some say that they feel as if they are worshipping god while they are singing *Phags*. Do you also feel like that?

J: It surely does dear.

D: Alas, today your brother read a book and it contained all the *athvalis* in it. Who would have printed all that? It said all that we say while we are rinsing the *biruda* (mixture of various pulses as an offering for lord ganesh. In general Nepali this is called *quati*) like *kaile katal khantyo*, *kaile polyo*, *kati kosa lagya*, *kati kosa launau*, *kati kosa magna gaya*, to which place *maheswor*(lord Shiva) went for begging *biruda*

Appendix V

Appendix: V-

A Interview 2

Respondents:

Hareena Devi Joshi (I)-

J Age-65 years

Hareena Devi Joshi (II)-

B, Age-36 years

Researcher: R

Location: Ganeshpur-3, Dadeldhura.

The first respondent is elder mother (*Jhajja*) of the researcher and the second one who is the daughter in law of the first is sister in law (*Bhauju*). So the letter J represents the first one while the letter B represents the second one and the letter R is assigned to the researcher himself.

R: Do you know any of the *Phags*?

B: I don't know any of them.

R: There are around 150 to 200 *Phags*. Of them how many *Phags* do you know? B: I don't know even a single one.

R: Do you know the *Phags* of *Nauran*?

B: Well I know the *Phags* of *nwaran*, wedding, *bartaband*,

gaura. R: So you know so many *Phags*?

B: Than?

R: We don't get time.

R: *Jhajja* how many *Phags* do you know?

J: I know the *Phags* of *Deuta* (Gods), *bartaband*, and

wedding. R: At what age did you learn *Phag*?

J: I also could not get time to learn them when I was of her age. I learnt them in the latter half of my life.

R: So you also learnt *phag*

lately? J: Yes.

R: So, you didn't learn any *Phags* at *Rumail* (her paternal village).

H2: How could I learn *Phags* over there? I was married when I was seven years and after that too I stayed over there as my mother passed away. I didn't

have a mother over there and mother in law here to teach me *Phags*.

R: So, it's easy to learn *Phags* if there is mother in law in a house who knows them? H2: Yes.

R: So, from whom did you learn *Phags* over here?

J: Well later on I mixed up in the group of phagaris over here and learnt them.

R: So once you were mixed up with the phagaris, you also learnt *Phags*. And do you know *Phags* nowadays?

J: Yes now I know most of the

Phags. R: On what occasions are

Phags sung? J: Means?

R: Are *Phags* sung if someone dies?

J: If someone dies? No, *Phags* are not sung.

R: So, on what occasions are they sung? Are they sung in auspicious occasions? J: Yes they are sung on every auspicious occasions.

R: Are they sung while the paddy is being accumulated from the rice fields?

J: No but we sung *Phags* while we are planting paddy and while we store them in the *bhakari* (a round structure made of reed for storing grains. The neck and bottom are very narrow and the middle part of it is bulged out. The bottom is flat and is open at the top. The shape of this structure is like that of top whose tip is sliced off. It is made by local basket weavers known as *parki*.)

R: Ok that's great. Don't you feel difficult in remembering so many of *Phags*?

J: No I don't feel any difficult in remembering them. Instead of that I always yearn for learning more of them.

R: Can you memorize a phag if you listen to it once? J: Yes, I can.

R: When you were young did you learn *deuda*?

J: Yes I learnt *deuda* but I didn't learn phag at that time. It was only after your brothers went away (to India) that I started involving in social works and accompanied phagaris. It was during this period that I learnt *Phags*.

R: Jhaija people say that until people are young they like *deuda* and when they grow older they develop spiritual inclinations and consequently love *Phags*. What do you think about this perception?

J: Yes they are right. When I was young I was involved in *deuda*, *khel* and so on but lately when I became acquainted with the phagaris I became fond of *Phags*.

R: Which one, phag or deuda do you think are important for a society? Or are both of them important?

J: We don't need both of them. *Phags* are sufficient.

R: But you yourself said that you liked to sing *deuda* when you were young. Then don't you think other people who will grow younger and who are younger will need them?

J: Well, yes they will need.

R: So, we need both of them in our society. But we are having problem. As the old people who knew *Phags* have passed away and though there are still some of them who know it they don't get learners as nowadays the girls are more occupied with their textbook. Than who will learn *Phags*?

J: Well *Phags* also should be learnt by them.

R: But due to lack of learners *Phags* have been disappearing.

J: well old people who are mostly illiterate stay at home and will sing phag until they are but once they die who will sing phag? So the younger generation should learn phag.

R: Than what should be done to teach *Phags* to these youngsters?

J: Well those who have desire to learn *Phags* should involve in society and learn *Phags* and those who think that they don't need *Phags*, let them do whatever they like.

R: Should parents encourage their offspring to go in the society and learn *Phags*. Do you think this will be more fruitful?

R: No it's not the duty of the parents to encourage. They should go on their own. Well in case of a wedding she (her daughter in law) goes out of her excitement but when it comes to *gaura* she runs away from that site. You can ask her I have never denied her in going to such places. There are *athvalis* (a ritualistic song narrating how lord Shiva got married and how the ingredients of the *biruda* were prepared by him) and other such songs that are sung in that occasion. I always yearn that she might join me, but she never comes near to it.

R: Who is she?

J: She is my daughter in law.

R: OK. So she doesn't know *Phags* that you know.

J: Ask if she ever goes near to such sites where there is a social gathering?

R: Why do you think she doesn't go to such places? Did you go to social gatherings when you were of her age?

J: Well I also don't know why she doesn't go. I used to be involved in every social gathering in the village when I was of her age.

R: Jhaija what are *Phags* about?

J: *Phags* are about *Phags*!

R: Would you sing a phag? Any one.

J: Which phag would you like me to sing?

R: The phag that is sung while worshipping Ganesh, or *kalash* or whatever you like. Which *Phags* do you like the most?

J: I like the *Phags* sung while making *Bedi*, *Ganesh* worshipping, and others like that sung in weddings, *bartaband*, all of them. I like all of them.

R: OK so you like all of them. I think *Phags* of Ganesh-kalash puja will be better. Isn't it? By the way how many types of *Phags* are there?

J: Well there are various types of them. The *Phags* of *Ganesh puja*, *Kalash puja*, *bedi*, *wedding*, *bartaband* all of them are different from each other.

R: So all of them are different from each other. Is it possible to sing one of them on another occasion?

J: No, it can't be. All *Phags* are different in terms of their content, their rhythm, their pattern of singing.

R: Are you able to remember all these things coherently? J: Oh yes, I can remember.

R: Well jhaija now sing a phag for

us. J: which one?

R: Which ever you like. Either that of *bedi purda (making)* (making) or whatever you like?

J: Well, it's hard to sing alone. Voice and rhythm don't come into tune. R: Take your time and sing how much you can.

J: Well ok I will sing one stanza first. Actually I get nervous while singing the initial lines.

R: It's ok. Take your time.

(she starts to sing the

phag) J:

Lyas meri iju mayau dhule maida

Barman bedi purana

Ko re brama bedi pura ko re brama baed pada

Ko re brama bedaiki dhuni

Oh my dear mothers provide me flour

The Brahmin will make the *bedi*

Which Brahmin will make the *bedi*, who will read the

Vedas And which of them will offer offerings to *bedi*

Jetha brama bedi pura kaansa brama bedi pura

Ute kaansa bedi ki dhuni

The eldest Brahmin will make the *bedi*, younger than him will read the

Vedas The youngest will offer the offerings to the

Base tumid barman purva mukhi

Asnan Kashi tir

Basa tumi purva mukhi

Pau chal dakshin tir

Oh Brahmin please take a seat facing the east

Please wash your hands towards Kashi

Please sit down facing towards the east

Stretch your legs towards the south

Hiya jan dagai burma bauli jan kamai burma

Nikoi aria bedai ki dhuni

Hiyo jati cha mero baeda bharyo

Bauli meri yo sur dhar

Don't throb your heart and shake your hands oh Brahmin

Oh Brahmin please worship the *bedi* nicely

My heartbeats are fully charged with the hymns of Vedas

My hands are attentive

My tongue as smooth as the leaf of a lemon

Hiyo jan dagai burma bauli jan kamai burma

Nikoi arayea bedai ki dhuni

Hiyo jati cha mero bedai bharyo

Jibya meri kagati ko paat

Don't throb your heart and shake your hands oh Brahmin

Oh Brahmin please worship the *bedi* nicely

My heartbeats are fully charged with the hymns of Vedas

My tongue as smooth as the leaf of a lemon

Hiyo jati cha mera bedai bharyo

Ankhi jwol pareva nazar

Hiyo jati cha mero baed bharyo

Bauli meri yo surdhar.

My heartbeats are fully charged with the hymns of

Vedas My eyes are as sharp as that of the pigeon

My heartbeats are fully charged with the hymns of

Vedas My hands are attentive

These are the *Phags* of *baedi*.

R: So after this Ganesh and Kalash are worshipped and those *Phags* are sung at that time.

J: Well if it's a minor occasion than Ganesh Kalash are worshipped but if not than other things are done like if the *bedi* is on the day when the wedding is returning from the brides home than after the puja of *bedi* the bride is taken inside and if the *bedi* is on the day when the bride groom reaches the bridal house than the bride groom will be taken to *baulekuda*²³ and *Phags* of that occasion will be sung.

²³

A special type of tent made by keeping vertical and horizontal logs of wood and sparsely

covered with leaves of mango, *paiyu*, *pipal*, sugarcane. The leaves of these trees are thought to be sacred. The groom sits here until the bride's family does rituals that are necessary before the wedding

R: So for whatever the purpose of the bedi is made, the *Phags* are same. J: Yes.

rituals are performed. Once the rituals are performed, the groom is called inside for conducting the rituals related with marriage. It is at this time that the father of the bride hands over his daughters hand to the bride through taking a *sankalp* – handful of water containing *kush* grass, flowers, cow dung, a piece of sandalwood and the auspicious red powder (*abir*), accompanied with incantations from the puranas. The *sankalp* (pledge) is than given to the groom along with the hand of the bride.

This ritual is known as *kanyadaan*, which in Hinduism is thought to be the greatest of all *daan*.

Appendix: V-B

Speaker:

Motiram Paneru-

M Researcher- C

The speaker is a resident of Kailpalmandu-6, Dadeldhura. He is a scholar of Hindu Scriptures and had been Campus chief of Sharadha Vidyapeeth, Kanchanpur, Mahakali, where he still teaches Sanskrit grammar and other Hindu scriptures.

Video Source: GCV-1

C: How do you define the tradition of *Phags* and *Saguns*?

M: It's a culture that encompasses all. It's not caste specific or race specific or gender specific. It's a culture of all, made for the welfare of human kind itself.

C: well it's said that *Phags* and *Saguns* are not found in lower caste people. Is it true? M: well it's not so. It's found in lower caste people also. Well in terms of caste, Rig-Veda, which is the oldest Veda, doesn't have caste divisions. It only mentioned only one caste or race that is human kind. The present day differentiation of lower and upper caste is just a superstition that is based on nature of the work. But according to Vedas also, those who have good knowledge of Vedas is a Brahmin so if a man of lower caste can also be Brahmin on the basis of his knowledge and practice. Lower class is just a nomenclature. I think the rhetoric of caste is just a superstition.

C: So, you want to say that *Phags* are not limited to castes.

M: Well, these *Phags* are sung in our areas not only in the houses of the elite classes but also in the houses of so called *dalits* or lower castes. It's sung in their houses also, they also have their own kind of cultural practices. So these are songs for everyone.

C: are there differences in *Phags* according to geographical locations?

M: In *Phags* there are differences in the words of *Phags* as different localities have their own use of words. And this is natural. These differences are just linguistic differences.

C: for some people *Phags* are necessary and in view of all the *Phags* and *Saguns* that are sung and made it seems that every occasion has a phag for it. Is it mandatory or optional?

M: well *Phags* aren't just hoax. It's a part of our culture and ritualistic rites. *Phags* are good omens. All the philosophers, modern as well ancient have worked for the welfare of human kind. Even the modern politicians always say that they have been working for the welfare of the public and sometimes they have shown it also. And in our context also, *Phags* are oriented towards the welfare of the human kind like our Hinduism which says *sarve bhavantu sukhina*, may all leave in peace, may all see only good things, may all please and may all be happy and may nobody gets inflicted by pain. According to this, equal access to peace is given to all. This principle is modified according to geographical and socio-cultural aspects of a society. Every culture prescribes some moral values and norms for guiding the society. That's why this doesn't misguide the society for me it rather improves the society. The preservation of this kind of cultural practices will improve the society. So even by alluring the old people who know these *Phags*, these songs should be conserved.

C: well sir.

M: These *Phags* are also of different types. One is the *birgatha* and others. There are different types of them. There are some political. To conserve various folk traditions is our duty.

C: What do you think are the factors, which have eroded the traditions of *Phags* and *Saguns*?

M: We left practicing our culture and we also have been not able to transfer them to our children. Neither have we able to expose them to it nor can we do it. For instance when we go to cities like Kathmandu, we speak Nepali. Even if the Newars of Kathmandu speak Newari we feel inferior to speak Doteli over there. This is also one of the major causes behind the erosion of this tradition.

C: Do you have any suggestions for improving this situation?

M: For improving this situation, we will have to take the help of those who know it. Like the old men and women of the society, who know it. We have to go them. We also have to try to understand them along with their history. We should not only learn as they are but also should try omitting the superstitions in it. It's not

that they are all good. But generally they are good. Every culture

in Nepal from east to west reflects the local culture and in it Doteli culture is one of the richest. It's rich in its language. Even the Nepali language, according to historians and treatises, has its roots in Doteli language. So to conserve it we will have to record them.

C: In context of *Saguns* and *Phags*, it is said that there was great enthusiasm in the women of olden times to sing *Saguns* and *Phags*. How much have you found this in the contemporary women folks?

M: nowadays I have not found so much of enthusiasm in them. And it's a sorrowful state also.

C: Acharyaji thank you very much for providing your insights and providing me your precious time

M: I would also like to thank you for providing me the opportunity to express the thoughts on this matter.

Appendix: V -C

Speakers:

L: Laxmi Prasad

Joshi C: Researcher

Laxmi Prasad Joshi

Age: 54 years

Resident of Bamangau, Ganeshpur-6,

Dadeldhura. Graduate in Sanskrit from Banaras

High School Teacher and former principal of a local school: Bad-

Basantpur Higher Secondary School.

Video source: GFV-1

C: Shastriji is singing of Phag with Vedas and Puranas essential?

L: Actually they are not essential but even though it's our tradition and they are felt to be necessary

C: For some the *Phags* that are sung nowadays are different from the *Phags* sung previously. Have they changed? What is your opinion about it?

L: They have not

changed. C: Yes

L: The way of singing might have changed but they have not changed. C: So, they are the same?

L: Yes, they are the same.

C: On my way here, I heard some *Phags* and they used the word *dulaha dulahi*.

Previously according to them, *swami* was used. Doesn't it affect the structure of *Phags*?

L: No, it doesn't. It is as it

is. C: Well?

L: Yes, it doesn't.

C: According to some locals the spirit in singing *Phags* as it was 30-40 years ago, is not found in the present day women. What is your opinion?

L: Well, yes I would have to say that they have not paid so much attention to

it. C: Well than can we do something for attracting their attention to it?

L: Surely, we have to support them for preserving our tradition by requesting the old women, who know them to sing, on auspicious occasions. While they sing the young ones should sit with them and learn with them.

C: What do you think are the causes behind the loss of tradition of singing *Phags*? L: Well, its modernity.

C: Modernity? Would you like some specific factors for its loss?

L: Well. Let's say modernity itself. Today's girls and women are not showing interest in them.

C: Previously the women folks were illiterate and in comparison to them the present day more or less literate. But then also instead of showing more interest to them, they have not. For creating in them an interest towards it, do you think there is a need of incorporating our regional culture in the school syllabus?

L: Sure. Yes at least something of our culture must be included in the school syllabus.

C: Well nowadays a regional syllabus is said to be under construction. And under this scheme a text book in Doteli is to come out. What do you think might be its contribution in preserving this culture?

L: Yes, this syllabus is made by incorporating suggestions from old people about Doteli culture. This would, I think bring some positive changes.

C: Another thing that is seen in this context is that previously these songs were taken as source of entertainment as well as for spiritual purposes but nowadays it is no more so. What do you think are its causes?

L: Nowadays people are moving towards modernity: Modern fashion, modern foods, and modern living styles. Due to this they are paying less attention to old lifestyles and traditions by gradually paying less attention to their practice. It's because of modernity.

C: Do you think this condition can be improved?

L: Yes it can be improved. By giving priorities it can also be improved. It can be preserved. It's not that it can't be done.

C: You are a school teacher. In that context does your school conduct cultural programs about *Phags* and other cultures?

L: Nowadays, we have made a local subject whose syllabus is based on local culture and history. Its optional subject and highlights the importance of local culture.

C: Does this course include cultures like *Phags* and *Saguns* in it?

L: Yes, it includes some *Phags*, some *Saguns*, some *deuda*, and other cultural songs.

C: Is it for preserving them?

L: Yes for preserving them. The schools had English as optional subject from grade 1 to 5. But now we have made a text book under the supervision of the local school resource centre. This text book contains the cultural practices of gaura, *Phags*, deudas. Moreover it highlights the importance of various places like the Ugratara mandir, Ghatalthan, Kailpalmandu and other such places.

C: What are the objectives of this subject?

L: Its objective is to preserve our culture and tradition by giving information about them.

C: Shastriji thank you very much for your valuable time.

L: I am also thankful to you for letting me express my thoughts.

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