

**A STUDY ON PARADOX OF IHI AND SINGLE WOMANHOOD WITH RESPECT TO
MYTHS AND SYMBOLIC MEANING IN NEWAR COMMUNITY**

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

This dissertation entitled “**A study on Paradox of Ihi and Single Womanhood with Respect to Myths and Symbolic Meaning in Newar Community**” has been prepared by **Jeni Thapa Magar** under my supervision for partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts in Anthropology. I forward it for final evaluation and approval.

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Certification

This is to certify that the thesis entitled "**Paradox of Ihi and Single Womanhood with Respect to Myths and Symbolic Meanings in Newar Community**" submitted by **Ms. Jeni Thapa Magar** towards partial fulfillment of Degree of Master of Arts in Anthropology is based on the original research and study under the guidance of **Mr. Nabin Rawal**. The thesis in part or full is the property of Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur and thereof should not be used for the purpose of awarding any academic degree in any other institution.

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ABSTRACT

Newars, the traditional inhabitants of Kathmandu, distinguish themselves from the dominant *Brahman-Chhetri* culture in the performance of two rituals of Girls namely *Ihi* and *Barha*. Both of these ceremonies are related to marriage of girls with mortal god so that she never becomes single woman in her life.

The study aimed to explore the symbolic meaning of *Ihi* and assess the real status of single women. *Panga Des* of Kathmandu district was selected as a study area because *Newar* community dominates this residential area.

A multi stage sampling was carried out to select respondents. Key informants were consulted to find out the targeted groups. Among *Newar* women, single women were considered as targeted respondents. Single-woman includes widow, divorcee, unmarried (age over 35 years) and woman abandoned by her husband. The sampling size was taken as 28 % of the total single-woman of the study area (i.e. 62).

The structured questionnaire was carried out to interview the respondents. Different questionnaires were used for different group of single-woman. The study was conducted in a small *Newar* settlement so its findings should not be generalized with whole *Newar* community. The study revealed that most of single women perceive these social customs as symbolic practice. So, the discrimination against divorced woman and widows also prevailed in *Newar* community. The study recommended adopting the social custom in the spirit of its cultural norms. Further, the study suggested for more comprehensive analysis in this social custom.

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GLOSSARY

<i>Astamatrika</i>	=	The eight mother goddesses.
<i>B r h</i>	=	Puberty ceremony; for twelve days the girl is confined to a dark room occulted from the males and sun.
Bel	=	A kind of fruit; wood apple used in mock marriage in <i>Ihi</i> as symbol of god <i>Narayan</i> .
<i>Deo-Bhaju</i>	=	The Brahmin caste which provides priestly function to the Newars.
<i>Dewali</i> group	=	A deity of the Newars which unites all the agnatic members into a group. It is woven round the cult of ancestor.
<i>Du (n)-yee-ya (n)</i>	=	One of the functional group in Newar community who does not perform <i>Ihi</i> .
<i>Ihi</i>	=	Mock marriage of a Newar girl with God <i>Narayan</i> who is represented by a golden emblem; a <i>bel</i> fruit is kept as a witness of this marriage.
<i>Ihi-Munke</i>	=	Similar to <i>Ihi</i> .
<i>Ihi-Chukegu</i>	=	Welcome ceremony for <i>Ihi</i> girl at the end of <i>Ihi</i> ceremony.
<i>Jutho-chokho</i>	=	Pure and impure.
<i>Jyapu</i>	=	An indigenous caste of Kathmandu Valley
<i>Kanyadan</i>	=	Ritual offering a girl to god <i>Narayan</i> in the <i>Ihi</i> ceremony.
<i>Khat</i>	=	A wooden structure used for carrying dead body.
<i>Lasakusha puja</i>	=	A ritual which involves the conduction of a person to be initiated to the ceremonial booth by names of a long iron key held by the <i>thakali nakin</i> (the eldest women in the family) and the person concerned.
<i>Narayan</i>	=	God <i>Bishnu</i>
<i>Newari</i>	=	A caste
<i>Newars</i>	=	An ethnic group of Nepal
<i>Parvati</i>	=	Name of Hindu Goddess or wife of God <i>Shiva</i> .
<i>Pativrata dharma</i>	=	Hindu culture in which a wife fully devoted to her husband.
<i>Sagun</i>	=	Good luck.
<i>Sindoor</i>	=	Vermillion; a red powder put in the forehead by Nepali hindu women; a symbol of marriage in Hindu culture.
<i>Supari</i>	=	Beatle nut; a symbolic meaning of relation.
<i>Suvarna Kumar</i>	=	An incarnation of God <i>Narayan</i>
<i>Tika</i>	=	A mixture of colour powder and rice put in the forehead during the ritual.
<i>Vivah</i>	=	A marriage.

Abbreviation

BS : Bikram Sambat (Era)
NS : Nepal Sambat (Era)
WHR : Women for Human Rights