

Tribhuvan University

Representation of Consumer Culture in Modern Nepali TeejSongs

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By

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Letter of Recommendation

This is to certify that RaghuNathWaglehas prepared this thesis entitled“Representation of Consumer Culture in Modern Nepali TeejSongs” under my supervision. I recommend this thesis for the viva-voce.

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KeshabSigdel

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Approval Letter

This thesis entitled “Representation of Consumer Culture in Modern Nepali Teej Songs” submitted to the Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Raghu Nath Wagle has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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## Representation of Consumer Culture in Modern Nepali TeejSongs

### Abstract

*This thesis analyzes the influence of consumer culture in Nepali teejsongs. This research is based on the study of six selected teejsongs belonging to three decades ranging from 1990s to 2020s. The songs are “Bedanakopoko” (Pack of pain), “Bhararara rani chari” (Fluttering queen-bird) “Teejaayodidilinajanihainara” (Aren’t you going to bring sister in teej) “Poilajanapaam” (May I get chance to elope) “Hong Kong kosari le Nepal kodhuloudaayo” (Hong Kong’s sari is sweeping dust in Nepal) and “Dar khayekosurmaa” (In a mood after the feast). There is a change in the content and style of Nepali teej songs of the 1990s compared to those of the present time (2020s) as a reflection of change in social attitude and behavior. A comparative study of the teej songs from the 1990s and 2020s show that teej songs have shifted both in terms of the use of images for women freedom or happiness in lyrics and also in the presentation of consumption of food, dress, ornaments and gadgets during teej celebrations in their visual representations. In this thesis, I argue that Nepali teej songs manifest the dominant consumer ideology of the time they are produced in.*

**Key Words:** Teej song, consumerism, culture, fashion, transformation, maternal home

This thesis explores how Nepali teej songs from 1990s to 2020s have gradually transformed in content and style as a response to consumerism culture. Even the visuals produced for those songs reflect such changes. The songs have themselves turned into consumer commodities as the present composers of such songs don’t limit themselves to the cultural spirit of the songs. Still, they are concerned with the salability of such products that can hit the trend on social sites. This commercializing tendency of teejsongs has directly affected the themes

and style of the lyrics and the visuals, melody, and the instruments used in the songs produced in the recent decade. The lyrics and visuals are changed from traditional to modern forms as the lyrics represent different themes than it used to in earlier days. For example, in the songs of 90s, the content of the lyrics included themes about reminiscences of the childhood and maternal home; willingness to meet parents and relatives, the feast of *dar*, sorrows, and hardships in the husband's home, and a longing for freedom from the strict family obligations at husband's house. In the recent *teej* songs, the themes mostly are about the consumption of new clothes and ornament, images of beautification and love, and social freedom. Previously, those songs were played using musical instruments like *madal*, flute, and *sarangi* whereas the recent songs also use instruments like guitar and drum sets. The visuals of the *teej* songs of the 90s show women wearing traditional clothes *sari* and *cholo*, whereas the songs of the recent decade show women wearing pants, skirts, and t-shirts. The setting of the modern *teej* song is also transformed from rural to urban. These changes in the lyrics and the songs' visual productions show the influence of consumerism in Nepali *teej* songs.

In this paper, I have studied “Bedanakopoko” (Pack of pain) by Prajapati Parajuli and “Bharara rani chari” (Fluttering queen-bird) by Bima Kumari Dura from the 1990s. Both these songs present the lamentation of a woman who does not get permission to go to her maternal home during *teej*. Similarly, I have worked on “Teejaayodidilina janiahainara” (Aren't you going to bring sister during *teej*) by Ramesh BG and Bima Kumari Dura and “Poilajanapaam” (May I get chance to elope) by Komal Oli from 2000s. In “Teejaayo”, the woman does not want to go to the maternal home because of her father's poverty. She enjoys a relatively sophisticated life with her rich husband. In the second song, an unmarried girl wants

to elope and asserts that she is in search of a very sophisticated boy with a car and affluent money in his pocket. Likewise, “Hong Kong kosari le Nepal kodhuloudayo” (Hong Kong’s sari is sweeping dust in Nepal) by TilakOli and “Dar khayekosur ma” (In a mood after the feast) by SaraswatiBhujel, ChandaDahal, PawanKhatiwada and MahadevTripathi are songs from the 2020s. They reflect the theme of consuming food and imported clothes.

Teej is a Hindu festival, celebrated typically by members of the Brahmin and Chhetri community in the hills and women following Awadhi culture in Tarai. Married women observe a day-long fast for their husband’s longevity; unmarried hope of being blessed with someone as good as Lord Shiva. In the hills, Teej, more commonly known as HaritalikaTeej, has become synonymous with married women dressed in red sarees, getting together and dancing to songs that are uniquely referred to as Teej songs. Like many festivals in Nepal, this has been passed down from generations and has become a social norm for those who live at home and abroad. Teej songs refer to the songs sung by Nepalese women during the fasting, commemorating *Parvati*, a mythological character, who stayed on fast to invoke Lord Shiva to get him as her husband.

The central themes of the teej songs are women's experience after their marriages. In the past, the songs included the subject matter of women's problems in their husband’s house and about their longings to reunite with their parental home. During teej festivals, married women gather in religious sites or other public spaces and express their sorrows and concerns through their songs which is sung in a specific style and rhythm. This gathering with music evokes nostalgic memories. Thus it also serves as a medium to share and flood out their miseries and life struggles. Music is a major mood setter of this festival as all their suppressed

feelings are expressed through music. These days, the subject matter of teej songs is usually directed to the celebration, fashion, and consumerism aspect of the festival like clothes, food, and ways of celebration.

*Teej* is one of the most vibrant festivals of Hindu women in Nepal that is associated with food, colorful dresses, accessories, singing, and dancing. It is also one of the only occasions where women in Nepali communities occupy and claim ownership of public spaces openly and visibly. "If one visits the Pashupatinath temple on the day of fasting, one can see women colored in red and green take over the streets dancing and singing. Women in our society are not supposed to be "loitering" in public space" (Niroula 6). In other words, it is a culture that is materially visible. In this thesis, I employ the theoretical concept of cultural materialism to analyze the selected teej songs.

Cultural materialism, according to Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield studies the implication of literary texts in history (qtd. in Brannigan 94). The main subject matter in the literary text is culture. Raymond Williams defines culture as a way of life. It included their collective practices, beliefs, social customs, political values, and forms of expression. A materialist approach to culture examines how "culture was produced technologically, practically and ideologically" (Brannigan 95).

Cultural materialism is concerned with understanding the political present as mediated through the past for the sake of changing the present. Cultural materialism has the influence of three Marxist thinkers: Antonio Gramsci, Raymond Williams, and Louis Althusser. Gramsci presents the notion of hegemony, which claims that in any culture, there is a dominant group that has power. But this dominant group is checked by other subordinated groups (Gramsci 181-182). Raymond Williams talks about competing cultures that may be complicit with the dominant culture. It may



affect the events in the present, which can produce a "residual culture," paving the way to a new culture, which Williams calls "emergent culture" (Williams 124). On the other, Althusser talks about ideological interpellation. He claims that all acts are governed by ideology. And ideology has a material existence. Ideology for Althusser is an imagined relationship between an individual and their material conditions (Althusser 2001).

For the sake of this thesis, I consider three key assumptions of cultural materialism as listed by NeemaParvini:

1. That social dissidence is not only possible but inevitable as a result of the competing discourses that foster contradictions in any dominant ideology.
2. That the present is in need of radical change, and the process of change can be advanced in the sphere of education by searching for moments of contradiction and dissidence in the culture of the past.
3. That genuine dissidence comes from "dissident subcultures" and hence the search for dissidence itself must first come from a "dissident subculture," an attack on hegemony from the margins of discourse where the hegemonic ideology has the weakest hold over its subjects. (Parvini 137)

The liberal democratic environment created an environment that supports personal choice, women's freedom, free-market economies that thrive on consumerist culture. As a result, the traditional custom of observing teej including dresses, food, the content of songs, and choice of public spaces that together made a culture of teej is substituted by new practices of observing teej, which has the influence of the new liberal democratic political environment and the changing consumerist culture. Hishila Yami, a well-known politician, admits that the recent days' songs are changing compared to the earlier songs in their themes and purpose.

She views that “unlike new songs, the old teej songs were more focused on the expression of female plight, simple lifestyle, tribute to maternal home and were more directed to represent the essence of teej songs” (Yami, 2009).

This modification in the food culture, dress, and content of the teej songs marks the influence of the competing discourses about women rights and human dignity. The authoritarian political regime directly supported the patriarchal ideology that dominated women's roles in society. But the liberal economy encouraged consumerist culture, and the liberal political system encouraged women to participate in the public sphere. So, the new songs were more about increasing awareness about their rights and roles in society. They were coupled with the changes in the food and dress as a marker of change in the past cultures. On the one hand, women's teej celebration is hegemonized by patriarchal and consumerist culture; they aspire to claim the public sphere by resorting to consumerism.

The originality of teej festival is being lost due to several influences, including political and economic. In this regard, Kamala Sharma quotes the former minister of Nepal Urmila Aryal: “All songs are not good, some have brought consciousness, but some are likely to be censored. Some songs are only highlighting women’s physical beauty. These songs should be full of lesson of woman’s empowerment directed towards change”(Sangi 3). All teej songs do not reflect the original cultural sentiments as the later teej songs are influenced by the consumer culture and westernization. Some songs just valorize the women’s body with the new human rights awareness of "my body, my rights". The new songs are loaded with the idea of women empowerment, equality, and social development. But they often go to the extent of valorizing their body that is considered "vulgar" by the old patriarchal ideology. The government has established a censor board to see into the matters of

such vulgarity in the songs. But the question of vulgarity is contested.

This research has focused on the influence of consumer culture, which has triggered the cultural transformation as reflected in modern Teej songs. On the one hand, with the change of consumer culture, the teej songs are also transformed; they demonstrate the consumer culture through the lyrics, style, ornament, clothes, etc. And on the other hand, the teej song has become the consumerist commodity because most of the songs have been composed and/or produced so that they are sold more with higher viewership on social sites, including Youtube.

In earlier decades, teej was a cultural medium for women to express their sufferings and injustice in their husbands' homes. It was the occasion when they could go to their parental homes; get united with their relatives and childhood friends; exchange their difficulties and sorrows; enjoy delicious dishes specially prepared on the eve of teej. They sang songs expressing their sorrows either in their parental house or in the religious sites. The commercial music industry has altered the way teej songs are produced and consumed by modern people. From the mushrooming artists to popular musicians, the teej song has become a tool to promote their music by experimenting with the style and representation. About a decade ago, the television used to be flooded with the visual of women wearing red saree, fasting and queuing up at the temples, singing miseries of life and longing for *maiti*. Mary M. Cameron in her book *On the Edge of the Auspicious: Gender and Caste in Nepal* explains the significance of *maiti* in Nepali culture in the following way:

The maita represents an idealized place of childhood and adolescence and an idyllic time when the physical landscape and the movement of agricultural season and ritual cycles are first experienced by a girl.

Women say they remember their *maiti* in dreams, in songs, in yawns, and

in sneezes, Maiti is a metonym for the people living there, conventionally associated with parents, siblings, sisters-in-law, and grandparent; the maiti is a key symbol in women's psychological and emotional states. A married woman's soul often returns to her natal home to see the people there, as they appear in her dreams.(188)

But these days, the visuals and lyrics of teej songs are more dominated by the subjects like new fashion, makeups, modern dance, songs about equality and empowerment, and feasting on new cuisines and beverages. It does not mean the old customs are altered. But there is an influence of the liberal political system and consumerist culture. The dissenting voices are getting stronger, and a new teej culture is emerging. Teej is not only a religious ritual but an occasion for social and political interaction. But it is also immensely influenced by new ways of celebration that are associated with modern forms of consumption.

The contradiction of the new teej songs is that they seek equality for women by challenging the old patriarchal ideology, but at the same time, they objectify women, making them an object of consumption. In this regard, Mannu Shahi writes that "the traditional approach to Teej music exalts women as being the centerpiece of the festival; however, contemporary songs represent women as mere tools of entertainment. Similar to the notion of an "item" song, the modern Teej music enhances the patriarchal concept further and employs a religious medium to objectify women"(4).

The form of Nepali teej songs in the present time has gone through a visible transformation. Earlier, it was entirely based on human orality. Now, there are different technologies of recordings and transmission, including live audio-video transmission. Currently, women are rarely involved in singing. They play the audio or

the video of the songs and dance in the recorded songs. It has massively increased the use of modern gadgets like microphones, audio-video players, computers and cellular phones, and other recording and transmission machines. Though the traditional forms of singing and dancing also have survived despite these technological changes.

While studying the teej songs from 2000s, the lyrics present the women's longing for maternal home. But the songs from the 2010s are different as they focus on their aspiration for the modern lifestyle, fashion, expensive purchases, and extravagant showcasing of jewelry. In a way, modern teej songs have lost the earlier themes of daughter-parent relationship and longings for the maternal home.

In the song “Bedanakopoko” by Prajapati Parajuli and Haridevi Koirala, the lyrical conversation between mother and brother concerning fetching sister home during teej gives a feeling that those songs were associated with family values and relationships and had very little or almost nothing with consumer culture. The song begins in this way:

Brother: Ok, mother, I will go to bring sister

But what shall I take a gift

Mother: These days she's very thin

So take her the ghee and special rice

Brother: Let's take the cucumber to for pickle

Mother: Take the money and have tea-biscuit on the way (Parajuli and Koirala, 0:53- 2:30)

“Bedanakopoko” indicates an awareness on the part of women conscious of her oppression done to her at her husband's family. It depicts the inner feeling of a woman in a patriarchal society. This song discusses the situation where a brother is making necessary preparation to visit his sister's home during teej. In the song, there is no

description of the desire for materialistic products. It instead details the rural life and representing the traditional values associated with teej.

Furthermore, this song also shows that the daughter-in-law in the song cannot make her own decision to go to her maternal house without her mother-in-law's permission. This event shows the limited personal freedom of married women in the society of the 1990s and earlier. Therefore the songs of those times also express their wish for personal freedom and economic independence. The songs themselves gave agency to their desire for freedom from their captive life.

Unlike the songs of the 1990s, the modern teej songs of the 2020s focus on different social contexts as their economic and political status has changed. For example, in the song “Dar khayekosur ma” (In the mood after the feast) by Saraswati Bhujel, Chanda Dahal, Pawan Khatiwada, and Mahadev Tripathi, the lyric represent the desires of independent and free women: “We shall meet on the meadow of a rooftop house, We shall have light feast and dance, Kaale brother is playing *madal*, Bale brother is playing *jhurma*”. These lines show that the women are free to visit other houses during teej and dance as they wish without taking permission of anyone. Besides, in the visual of this song, women are seen dancing in shorts rather than wearing traditional sarees. Unlike the traditional times when dancing took place in the religious sites, now they happen at sophisticated personal spaces or hotels. They are accompanied by men playing musical instrument to help them celebrate.

In the song "Bedanakopoko" from the 1990s, the sister sings the following lines when she sees her brother in her house:

Sister: Out of blue, my bother, you arrived

Please keep waiting till I fetch water

Brother: I'm here to take you home

Where is brother-in-law, he's not around

Sister: This year I may not get chance to visit maternal home

Your brother-in-law is playing card (Parajuli and Koirala, 2:50-3:50)

As the song proceeds further, the brother takes permission from his sister's mother-in-law and his sister's husband to take her home. The first thing the sister asks is about the health of her parents. But these days, technology has made it possible for everyone, including the married daughters connected to their parents or relatives any time they want. Easy road access, transportation facilities have eased the physical contact of married daughters to her family members. So, they need not wait for teej to meet with one another. So, the content of the teej songs has changed. The song also shows how the woman's husband and mother-in-law are trying to stop her because they will need her to do the household works. The song also shows that the woman is not courageous enough to protest against her family's decision. This song shows the strong patriarchal hold on the female in relation to their personal freedom and choices.

But in the song titled "Hong Kong kosaree le," there is a visible impact of the materialistic desires of women rather than the sorrows and familial sentiments as shown in the earlier teej songs. In the song, the featured women are shown wearing expensive jewelry and dresses, which indirectly gives an impression that teej is all about showing off the material prosperity to claim higher social status. The traditional form of patriarchal power is contested by the power of consumerism. Of course, this consumerism opens up public space for women, thereby expanding the range of personal freedom and choice. But they are bound by economic power.

Steven Miles has explained how consumer goods impact our social status “Consumer goods and services potentially play an important role in who we are and how we construct our social lives, in terms of how we use such goods and services and how we relate to other people through such goods and services” (3). In the song “Hong kongkosadi le”, the lyric begins with descriptions of women's dressing and ornaments. Let us consider the following lines from the song:

Some are wearing red sari some are wearing *pauju*

I combed the hair and put *gajal* looking at mirror

With red dress and lipstick I'm beautiful

Everybody in village praise my looks

(Oli and Khadka, 0:16- 1:50)

Unlike the “Bedanakopoko” from the 1990s, in this song, there is completely a different context of teej where the women have no family restriction, neither are they bound by any visible burden of household responsibility. They do not talk about their sorrows. Rather they sing in praise of their new international brand clothes and ornaments. In this song's visual, a group of women is seen dancing freely with a group of men wearing a new dress and various kinds of jewelry. It is nothing to do with the suffering of women in the literal sense. It may be because society was growing relatively liberal after the political change of 1990.

The earlier songs mainly used to feature rural life and culture where consumption was largely limited to home-grown products and teej celebrations were also based on mutual exchanges of feeling with one another. But the teej songs after 2060 B.S. began to include market-based products, clothes, and jewelry. Gradually, in the songs of 2070s B.S., teej songs featured women throwing lavish parties with wine, music, and dancing as a demonstration of



wealth and a sense of freedom. In the songs from the earlier decades, teej songs had more space for women's narration of their problems in their husband's house. And the songs of the recent decades show teej songs as a celebration of their material prosperity and consumer-freedom. One important thing here is that women in the earlier decades had little choice on what they eat and wear. It was culturally and economically dictated by the husband or other family members. Women of the recent decades, as shown in the teej songs, enjoy the consumer-freedom. This is one of the major shifts in the teej songs.

The development of teej songs in Nepal can be seen as a precursor of feminist advocacy before the arrival of western feminism in Nepal. Teej songs in the earlier decades were used to express their dissatisfaction and protest against the patriarchal domination through those songs though such voices remained largely "unheard." *Maiti* (maternal house) was a key symbol to express their hope where they could feel free and fearless. But due to the changing dynamics in consumerism, maternal homes that are unable to afford the consumer expectations are no more a place of attraction except natural human sentiments: Regarding the changing focus of teej culture Savyna Dhakal writes:

There have been changes in the way Teej is celebrated. The change is more prominent in cities like Kathmandu, where the festival has become more of an excuse for women to party and show off their clothes and jewellery. Singing and dancing have been replaced by kitty parties and drinking. The women are less bothered about the religious significance of the festival. However, the traditional ways are still followed in villages, where women gather in groups and dance to folk tunes. Adorned in red, they keep strict fasts, visit temples, and stick to

their rites and rituals. (6)

The primary reason behind celebrating teej with songs and dance has been overshadowed by the wake of modern consumer culture and its influence on festivals. Before, the celebration of teej used to hold religious significance and was more influenced by cultural practice. Nowadays, the overall purpose of teej festival and cultural practices like singing and dancing during teej has been linked with materialistic and consumerist culture. Traditional vibes of teej songs and dance have been replaced by the exhibiting attitude of urban women who use teej festival as an opportunity to fulfill their consumption desires. This claim is supported by the fact that these days everyone organizes teej celebration parties many weeks before the actual festival. One who cannot organize such a party or one who is not invited to such parties has almost become like a social outcast. Teej celebration has, in that sense, become a festival of consumerism and cultural space to exhibit material prosperity.

Steven Miles, in his book entitled *Consumerism: As a Way of Life* has argued that consumerism has become a way of life and it has influenced every aspect of society, including the songs:

Consumerism appears to have become part and parcel of the very fabric of modern life. Areas of social life that were previously free of the demands of the marketplace have had to adapt to a world where the needs and desires of the consumer are apparently paramount. How we consume, why we consume, and the parameters laid down for us within which we consume have become increasingly significant influences on how we construct our everyday lives. (1)

If consumerism has become so influential to human beings, we need to study how their influences are visible in Nepali teej songs. In regard to teej songs, consumerism can be linked with materialism because there is a difference between buying needful goods and extravagantly spending money to exhibit one's economic position in society. The modern teej songs are more directed to materialistic considerations because they talk more about buying jewelry, throwing parties, and having expensive wines in the name of celebrating teej. In the same context, Joel Kovel has argued that "Spaces such as shopping malls become very 'natural' settings for society. It can then be argued that capitalism shows materialist consumerism as 'natural' or 'normal' or even 'desirable' behavior"(53). This statement clarifies that material consumerism is increasingly becoming normal in society, and agents like modern teej song are making it normal by persuading the women to have materialistic lifestyle.

The popular teej song "Poilajaanapaam" by KomalOli, in the literal sense, wishes for a desire to elope. This has to do with the right to choose one's partner by oneself. In traditional Nepali societies, daughters were not allowed to choose their husband by themselves. In that sense, this song is a great leap forward in demanding that rights. But her song still has a traditional echo where she still prays the god for such an opportunity. Maybe that is just a desire. But the song indicates that it is still controlled by the family and society. KomalOli faced severe criticism for her 'salacious' and 'improper' lyrics of this song. The lines of her song go like this:

God, I worshipped and fasted on Teej,

Now, I hope that my appeal will be successful,

I don't want to stay in my natal home forever,

This very year, may I elope.

May I elope, Shiva, may I elope this very year.

May I elope, Shiva, may I elope

Hoping for a husband, I chant your name.

This very year, may I elope, Shiva, may I elope,

May I, may I, may I (Oli, 0:20-1:22)

Freedom of choice is the key theme of this song. Or in other words, the song has a strong desire to have a husband or a partner. These kinds of explicit expressions of the desire for a husband were rare in earlier songs. The fasting in teej songs has two key religious associations. It is believed that when married women take a fast, it will add to their husbands' longevity. And when unmarried women fast, they have a greater chance to have a good husband. In one of the myths, goddess Parvati went through a fasting period in order to get Lord Shiva (also known as Mahadev) as her husband. Even this was a key idea underlying the reason for fasting, it was not explicitly expressed in the songs.

KomalOli's "Poilajaanapaam" has another key motive. She is a well-known and professional teej song producer and singer. Choosing themes that go against traditional values make it controversial, and the audience is likely to increase. It is possible that selection of the word choices was a conscious act where teej song is has just turned into a commodity. Cultural practices are commodified for making a profit in the entertainment industry. This phenomena is an interesting part in the recent teej songs. Now the choice of words and visuals of the songs are largely shaped by the market of teej songs. So, the women's issue gets lesser importance and the selling value of the "women's songs" becomes more important. The market economy has used the discourse of patriarchal domination and female marginalization for making a

profit. And it becomes even more difficult to distinguish was the women's agenda, and the market's agenda differ.

Though KomalOli's song made a sensation in Nepal and other songs were also made as a reply to this song, this did not positively contribute to women's liberation. It was considered a vulgarization of culture. It shows that songs that protest and intervene in the cultural malpractices with a strong respect to some of the key sentiments of the culture are better received in society. This song was a success as a commodity of the music industry but a kind of failure in furthering the cause of women's agenda.

Comparing KomalOli's song with “Bedanakopoko” shows a contrasting situation. In the latter song, a woman living in her husband's house desperately want to visit her maternal homes and request her mother-in-law to let her go. This teej song has expressed the inner desire of women and her longing for maternal home, which was the reality of 1990s Nepali society. The words used in the songs too are very formal and seems to sync with the emotion of the female counterparts. This song hasn't used any market strategy for becoming popular or getting the attention of the audience; rather it's an expression of the original sentiment and plight of rural women during teej. The ending line of the songs goes like this:

Brother: Mother will ask me, why you haven't brought sister

She will be tensed if I return home without you

Sister: I will come soon if I finish this household

Go now brother; I will come to enjoy feast tonight (Parajuli, 6:50-7:55)

But KomalOli's song presents a situation where a woman wants to go to her husband's home. She is bored of staying at the parent's home or, in other words, she wants to enjoy the pleasure of conjugal life. Implicitly, she wants to consume the

satisfaction of bodily pleasure. And such desires are also associated with the desire for consumption. To become a bride in Nepali society is to have new clothes and jewelry. Desire to elope has these two significant associations for bodily consumption and material consumption of clothes and jewelry. Though the song does not explicitly express this idea, the prevailing cultural practices clearly suggest these associations. Stirr also views that Oli's "Poilajanapaam" does not touch the inner emotion of females rather triggered aggression in them for being overtly expressive (260).

"Hong Kong kosaree le" seems to be an advertisement for a particular product, that is, the saree produced in Hong Kong. The major part of the song details different clothes and jewelry. Consider the following lines from the song:

Someone wearing a red sari

Someone wearing beautiful ornaments

In this festival of teej

I've arrived in my beloved's village

Hong Kong's *sari* is sweeping the dust of Nepal

Dance in with the sound of your ornaments (Oli and Khadka, 00:42-1: 15)

The video of this song begins by featuring a woman wearing a lot of jewelry, red sari, *gajal*, and retouching her lipstick. The camera separately shows her ornaments, focusing on her golden necklets, earrings, and then bangles. All other women featured in the background are also seen wearing similar kinds of ornaments and sari. As Niroula has argued about recent teej songs, "Another concern is the extravagant display of jewelry, which exacerbates class divides and can put a dent on finances" (2). These types of songs promote a general culture of consumerism and thereby intervening the existing teej culture of fasting and mutual exchange of

sentiment and feeling through a cultural exhibition of material wealth. When a large number of Nepali women are not economically independent, they fall prey to the interest of patriarchy to fulfill their desires for consumption. Patriarchy and capitalism join together for the domination of women.

In the song “Bharara rani chari” by Bima Kumari Dura from the 1990s, the woman is shown unable to visit her maternal house in teej. The video of the song presents the visual of heartbroken women who is working in the field by remembering her maternal house and her mother. The song does not contain any lines that directly desire material goods. It just expresses her confinement and her desire to fly away like a bird. The song presents the hardships of women in the husband's house and her longing for a maternal house.

I need to fetch water in the early morning

Mother! In this teej also I'm unable to come home

No single day have I been freed from *doko-namlo*

Everyday I'm subjected to harsh words of mother-in-law

I walk around the hill carrying loads of grass everyday (Dura, 1:48- 2:58)

This song details the household problem of women and the desire for freedom.

Regardless of whether this song represents actual events or the mere sentiment of the time, it possesses certain historical value regarding the status of women in society.

For understanding the change in the representation of teej songs, we need to analyze the visuals as well as the verbal contents in the song:

Mother! Serve well to the guest coming in home

Life is always unsatisfied for those who beget a daughter

I need to clean house on a very early morning

I think my life will pass on like this

Fill the gee and keep it safe, mother

We shall meet this year if I remain alive (Dura, 04:01- 05:27)

The visuals as well as the words in this song, are directly linked with the expression of a daughter and her inability to visit the maternal house during teej. Unlike the songs of 2020s, the subject matter of these 90s songs was not influenced by consumerism culture because the society at that time was also not much indulged in such a lifestyle as of today. Unlike Dura's song, another teej song entitled "Teejaayodidilinajanihainara" by Ramesh BG and BimaKumari presents the context where a sister happy with her rich husband and enjoying materialistic life is unwilling to visit poor maternal house:

Brother: How is the celebration in city?

In village we are celebrating teej with fun

My heart is aching remembering you my sister

Sister: Last year also you came to return empty hand

Please don't come this year,

This year also I've no time to visit the maternal house (BG and Kumari,  
04:01-05:15)

These lines explain where the brother is calling sister to invite for teej, and sister is making an excuse to not come. It's totally different from earlier teej songs which used to express the homecoming desire of married daughters to visit their maternal house during teej. This song is the representation of the influence of consumerism culture in Nepali society and its replication in teej songs. In the decade of the 90s, the unavailability of goods and luxuries to married daughters like food, nice clothes, and a comfortable lifestyle used to be the subject matter of teej songs. However, along with the change in a social lifestyle, married women also began to have access to



consumerist lifestyles, and slowly the subject matter and themes of teej songs too changed to represent modern women. The interesting shift in these songs is that instead of the patriarchal trap as in earlier songs, the modern women are in the trap of capitalism through consumerist culture. Though it seems to promise freedom for women, it drags them into the vicious circle of consumerism.

Another teej song “Dar hhayekosurmaa” (In the mood after the feast) by SaraswatiBhujel, ChandaDahal, PawanKhatiwada and MahadevTripathi can be analyzed in terms of its visuals and the way words are used in the song. This song is an example of how teej songs are finding new adaptation amid consumerism culture and how their subject matters are changed to fit the demand of consumerist society. “Dar khayekosurmaa” features some modern models in their sophisticated dress dancing to modern music, and the major theme of the song is nothing other than feasting. The song neither gives agency to female characters nor talks about their desires, emotions, and other theme of teej celebration. The commercialized music industry is giving more focus to the sellable song than the songs with women's issues. Teej songs are reduced into mere consumer goods themselves. The beginning line of “Dar khayekosurmaa” goes like this:

We shall meet in the meadow of the rooftop

We shall have a light feast and dance

Kale brother is playing *madal*, bale brother playing *jhurma*

We shall dance in teej song after the feast

Mother to shall dance one-two round today

Sister-in-law you too don't feel ashamed to laugh

Kale brother is playing *madal*, bale brother playing *jhurma*

We shall dance in teej song after the feast (Bhujel, et.al, 01:32-03:49)

There is no line throughout the song that presents female problems or gives agency to the female voice, for which the culture of teej song was originally created. The cultural teej songs are now reduced to "item song" that only serves the market purpose. Integrating the market strategy with the teej culture, capitalism is exploiting both women's agenda and the culture to make a profit and diverting it from its original purpose of furthering female voices of protest.

Although there is a lack of evidence to point out the origin of songs and music related to teej, from whatever songs from the recent past are available, a visible shift can be seen in the choice of words, rhythm, subject matter and musical instruments played in the teej songs. Earlier teej songs focused more on the miserable condition of women and their desire for freedom, whereas modern teej songs are related to love affairs, modernity, fashion, lavish lifestyle, and celebration. The ability to consume has become the marker of social status. And consumerism has influenced the way women think and act. Therefore, consumerism has become a major social and economic marker of women's social happiness.

The study of the selected teej songs shows a clear shift in the subject matter, word choice, style, and the use of visual contents and music in the teej songs from the 1990s to the 2020s. According to the notion of cultural materialism, the new consumerist ideology competes with the old patriarchal ideology though one does not entirely replace the other. The influence of the one over the other opens up the possibility of a new culture. The tradition of teej continues but in a new form and way. Moreover, the songs demonstrate that consumerism turns out to be the dominant ideology. Patriarchy still functions but with the support of consumerism. Consumerism has shaped the way women (and for that matter general of thinking for men as well) and also their behavior. Consumerism works with a promise for freedom

for women. It brings women into the public for consumption. But the contradiction is that they remain dependent on the males for fulfilling those desires. Capitalism does not completely ignore the issues of women. It supports the agenda of freedom and equality on the surface, but at the same time drags indirectly to another trap of social prestige through consumption habits. But such consumptions are possible through economic dependence on the males. However, the songs do not explicitly utter this situation, but implicitly, the songs hint at a new phenomenon of social domination through women's own consent.

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