

I. Limbus and the Limbu culture

The historically and culturally rich area situated from the Arun river in the west to Mechi river in the east, and Tibet in the north to Jhapa, Sunsari and Morang in the south is called *Limbuwan*. This area covers Nine districts of two zones of the eastern Nepal which are Jhapa, Ilam, Panthar, Taplejung in Mechi zone and Morang, Sunsari, Dhankuta, Terhthum and Sankhuwashava in Koshi zone. *Limbuwan* is also known as *pallo-kirat* or *far-kirat*. As per the history of *Limbuwan*, the country was won by the help of the bows. So it was named *Limbuwan* after long discussion. *Li*-bow, *Aabu* -hit, *wan*-to name or in *Limbu* language, the won country by the bows is *Limbuwan*.

However, different views and sentiments are found about the areas of *Limbuwan*. There is no debate about its history but some claim only hilly areas of east and some claim plain areas also extended to Indian Territory. *Brihat Nepali Shabdakosh* defines that “the hilly-areas of Mechi and Koshi zones where is permanent residence of *Limbu* tribes since very beginning” (1113). We know from another historicist that not only the hilly-areas of Mechi and Koshi zones, the *Limbuwan* might have extended to further southern part of Jhapa, Morang and Sunsari. Shiva Kumar Shrestha states in his *Limbuwanko Aitihāsik Adhyayan*, “the southern border of *Limbuwan* was *Bhunde Simal* of *Haraincha*, in the beginning, the southern border was up to *Pharvesgunj*” (34). Similarly Chaitanya Subba also supports the existence of *Limbuwan* in his *The Culture and Religion of Limbus* (1995):

Historically known as *Limbuwan*, the area lies between the Arun river in the west, the border with Sikkim and West Bengal states of India in the east, the northern parts of the plains of Morang, Sunsari and Jhapa

in the south and the border with Tibet, China in the north, almost covering an area of 11,655 sq. kilometres. (iv)

The *Limbuwan* state has its own separate history that how *Limbuwan* existed as an independent state. The historicists and the Limbus believed that *Limbuwan* emerged in 6th century from *Kirat* dynasty. *Shan Mokwan* people of *Sittang* valley of north Burma came to Assam with ten leaders of them. When they came to Assam, they found that the land was already occupied by people of their own stock. So they came further west to the terai lands of North Bengele and from there they came up to the hilly parts of east Nepal which were under eight *Kirat* chiefs. Likelihood, the *Limbus* and the *Nangas* tribes of India might have historical close relation. To some extent, there is unity in their language. *Shan Mokwan* people began to settle down in the *Kirat* state. When their families multiplied, they became so crowded that their chiefs began to feel some evils against them. The *Kirat* chiefs oppressed them so much so that the children of these *Shan Mokwan* people could not tolerate them any longer. So they began to conspire against their rulers. Imansing Chemjong writes in his book *The History and Culture of The Kirat People*, “they held meetings in places called *Ambe Pojoma*, *Kamket Lungma* and *Sumhet Lungma*, discussed and finally decided to revolt against their rulers [...]” (50-51). Then, the soldiers of ten leaders won and began to rule dividing into ten states in *Limbuwan*. The same writer I.S. Cheamjong writes in his next book *Kirat Itihas*:

There eight kings were killed one by one in the battlefield. [...] the winners assembled in the holy place of *Ambe pojoma*, *Kamket Lungma* and *Sumhet Lungma*, and thanked their god. [...] They discussed that who would be now the king in the state? What would be

the name of the state? First, they concluded that the country would be Limbuwan because it was won by the help of the bows. (19)

Likewise they concluded after long discussion that *Limbuwan* would be ten states to be ruled for ease and bordered the *Limbuwan*. *Limbuwan* has its diversity in terms of culture, language, geography etc. but unity in regard of nationality. *Limbuwan* is the homeland of *Limbus*. *Limbuwan* is itself multi-ethnic society.

Many tribes have settled here, but we find the majority of *Limbus* in their own typical cultural norms. The history analysts say that the *Limbus* are not in number how much they would be because when they did treaty with Prithivi Narayan shah, thirty two thousands *Limbus* left the land. And also many *Limbus* were killed in world war 1st and 2nd. In the support of it, Shiva Kumar Shrestha writes, “thirty-two thousands *Limbus* migrated to Sikkim leaving their motherland” (92, *Limbuwanko Aitihāsik Adhyayan*). That is why, *Limbus* are found living different districts of India and Burma as well.

Limbus have a distinct culture, tradition, and religion of their own, though they are living together with their Hindu and Buddhist neighbours. They have a long tradition of narrating or reciting *Mundhums* and performing certain rituals and observing ceremonies in their own distinctive ways. *Mundhum* is a legend, a folklore, prehistoric accounts, sermons and moral or philosophical exhortation in poetic language. The *Mundhum* guides them in different ways. Imansing Chemjong defines the *Mundhum* in his *History and Culture of The Kirat People*, “the word *Mundhum* means the power of great strength and the Kirat people of east Nepal take it to be a true, holy and a powerful scripture” (18). And writer Madhusudhan Pandey claims in his book *Nepalka Janjatiharū* that “as the Hindus have the Vedas as a holy text, they have the *Mundhum* which is used in both religion and spell” (109).

The typical culture and culture based literary tradition among the common *Limbus* are the noteworthy aspect of *Limbuwan*. In the first place, the land of *Limbuwan* itself is the source of culture and culture-oriented literary tradition. In fact, *Limbuwan* itself is a culturally rich land. The Himalayas, mountains, rivers and historical places of *Limbuwan* are the sources of poetic discourses. Primarily, such discourses are related to such geographical structures which have been handed down historically and culturally. Thus, the *Limbuwan* itself, its culture, and the certain group of common people having indigenous and poetic knowledge are some of the typical and striking features which help identify *Limbuwan* as the *Limbuwan* of the *Limbus*. One of the discrete features in culture of *Limbuwan* is to perform *Kelang* in wedding ceremonies and happy occasions. Other some of the cultural forms, *Palam*, *Yalang*, *Hakpare*, *Khyali* etc. are held in the fairs around *Limbuwan*. These are the cultural ornaments in *Limbu* communities. Thus, *Limbuwan* is a unique land in culture, custom, language and literature.

Nepal is a small country with 1, 47,181 sq. km in area but more than 101 tribes live here. In this regard, Nepal is rich in culture, language, and so on. Among the tribes, *Limbus* form one of the principal tribes of Nepal. The *Limbus*, themselves are rich in culture, literature, customs, religion, and language. The *Limbu* tribe is second in size to the *Rai*, among *Kiratis*. Like their *Rai* cousins the *Limbu* have an area traditionally their own called *Limbuwan* or *Pallo-Kirat*. They are the predominant people in *Limbuwan*, although of course there are also members of almost every other ethnic group in Nepal including Brahmans, Chhetris, many Newar businessmen and shopkeepers from Kathmandu valley and representatives of neighbouring ethnic groups like the *Rai*, *Sherpa*, *Tamang* and even *Lepcha* of *Sikkim*. The *Limbu* people are about four lakhs in population in Nepal. Not only in Nepal,

they have been living out of Nepal such as in different states of India, Darjeeling , Sikkim, West-Bengal, Assam, and also in Hong Kong, Burma, UK etc.

The history of *Limbu* states that after the third revolution of *Kirat* people in 6th century. The *Limbuwan* state existed and the inhabitants of *Limbuwan* called themselves as the *Limbus*. *Brihat Nepali shabdakosh* defines the *Limbus* that “a kirat people (tribe) who live in Limbuwan area” (1113). According to Iman Singh Chemjong, the representatives of the ten leaders of *Shan Mokwan* people again assembled in a meeting at their holy place *Ambe pojoma*, discussed and decided to name their nationality. Accordingly, they resolved and changed the name of *Shan Mokwan* into *Yakha-thumba* or *Limbu*. The ten leaders or chiefs became *ten Limbus* and the word *Yakhathumba* was retained as the new name for the race. Thus, the *ten Limbus* became the administrators of the entire *Yakhathumba* race. They further resolved to convert all the old Kirat people into this new race of *Yakhathumbas*.

Later on, when the *ten Limbus* lost their power of administration, all the *Yakhathumbas* began to call themselves *Limbus*. Kumar Lingden reads in his *work-letter* submitted on 22 Shrawn, 2063 at Damak, “Limbuwan, first, existed and then Limbu, so to keep the existence of Limbus, anyway Limbuwan is a must. The Limbus without Limbuwan is as a separated kite from its thread and they and their identity could come to sad end at any time” (8, *Bi. Sam. 1831 ko Lalmohar ra Limbuwan*).

In the ancient time, *Limbus* were said to have been hunters and lived by it and later they became agriculturists. In the course of time they became successful rulers too. They were brave, fierce, warlike warriors too. Some people define the *Limbu* in this way-the component *li* means ‘bow’ and *pu* means ‘bird’. The *Limbus* were well known archer and they might have called themselves as *Li? Pu* and later it might have become *Limbu*.

They also call themselves *Yakthumba*. People interpret this term variously. For example, *Yak* means fort and *Kedhumba* means brave or the brave man of the fort and on the other way, *E?K?* means back and *Kedhumba* means hard working. The first example shows that the *Limbus* were brave to guard their fort or it indicates that they were brave, fierce, and brave soldiers and the second meaning indicates that they were known as good agriculturists, hard working in the past. This *E?K?Kedhumba* later might have become *Yakthumba*. Chaitanya Subba says in his *The Culture and Religion of Limbus* that “some believe that Yakthumba is a derivative of Yaksa and some interpret its literal meaning as the Yaksa winner. In Limbu language, it denotes ‘heroes of the hills’ which bears the connotation of Kirat” (20).

The *Limbus* are believed to be the descendents of three stocks of earlier *Kirats*—a branch coming through the north, known as *Lhashagotra*, a branch of coming from south and south east, known as *Kashigotra*, and the other one known as *Lungbongba*. The *Limbus* remained rulers of this land until the Gurkha ruler became their sovereign. *Limbus* fought with Gurkhas for twelve years and finally the Gurkha ruler granted a commission, with certain ruling power to the chief of each districts or *thums* and lands and tax privileges for his community members, which lead to the agreement for ceasing war. Vijaya Narayan (1584-1609) was the last king who ruled his kingdom with the close cooperation of *Murehang*, one of the *Limbu* leaders of *Phedap thum*. Locally we find the designation *Limbuwan* prefixed by *das*, as *Das-Limbuwan*, meaning the *ten Limbu Lands*, referring to the common belief that at one time in the early days there were ten *Limbu rajas*.

The proper term of address for *Limbus* is *subba*. To be addressed as *subba* is not only acceptable, it is in fact flattering. Dor bahadur Bista says in his *the People of Nepal*, “the title *subba* was given to *Limbu* headman at the time the territory of the

Kirat was annexed to the kingdom of Nepal some two hundred and thirty years ago” (47). The *subba* is natural leader of his fellow villagers. There are usually eight or ten *kipatiya* families under one *subba*. A few *Rais* live and farm on *Limbu kpat* lands, but they are not considered *kipatiya*. Instead, they hold the title of *raiti* and must pay land taxes to the *subba*. Sometimes a *subba* may have assistants to help him in carrying out his work. The office of a *Subba* is inherited by his eldest son in addition to a share of the parental property, which is divided equally among all the sons.

Limbu settlements are found between the altitudes of 2,500 and 4,000 feet above sea level. The houses are of one storey, built of stone with thatch roofs. They are washed with a red and white earth colouring; windows and doors are black. Houses of the few rich people are generally larger than the average, often roofed with slate and with a wooden balcony around the house at the first floor level.

Tongba is a favourite social drink. Every man has a large wooden mug, which is filled on occasion with thick millet beer and drunk through a bamboo tube. At present, a majority of the *Limbus* are in debt, either to a rich ex-Gurkha officer or to a rich Brahman, Chhetri or Newar, who has lent the money against the security of land. Marriage rules in general are similar to those of the *Rai* community. There can be marriage by arrangement, capture of elopement, the procedures for each of which have been described in the preceding section on the *Rais*, and indeed are found among many other Nepali groups. Ideal marriageable age is eighteen to twenty years except in the case of some arranged marriages of younger partners.

Their basic profession is farming, but a good many men go out to join the British or Indian Ghurkha regiments, or to work in other government departments. They were encouraged to seek work in Kathmandu only after the Rana regime was deposed in 1951. A great many *Limbu* men go in search of seasonal work to

Dharan, Biratnagar, Jhapa, Darjeeling, Sikkim and Assam.

The *Limbu* are divided into a number of clans (thars). Some of the *Limbu* thars are further sub-divided, each sub-division having a separate name of its own. Most of the thar members live together in more or less well defined locales. Some names are identical with the place name of residence of the group. Each of this sub-division is again divided into family groups which are strictly exogamous and intolerant of incest. Outside of these latter family categories a *Limbu* is free to choose his marriage partner from within the *Limbu* tribe. Chaitanya Subba in his *The Culture and Religion of Limbus*, in this regard argues:

Limbus are found in several (clans) groupings. According to Khagendra Singh Angbuhang, there are several (218) sub-groupings among sixteen major groups of Limbus. These are Mabohang (26subgroups), Thegim (11subgroups), Shreng (10), Phago (20), Sanwa (19), Bokhim (5), Khokyahang (17), Thebe (5), Papohang (13), Ijam (6), Yakpangden (16), Phedap (12), Nembang (14), Hukpahang (17), and Khewa (22). (25)

Thus, *Limbus* are divided into several types or clans (thars). These clans are further divided into sub clans, such as *Chikcho*, *Chongbang*, *Imusong*, *Kadi*, *Serma*, *Payango*, *Lawati*, *Lohorung*, *Lekuwa*, *Lewahang*, *Pargharri*, *Sanwa* and so on. More than 270 clans (including sub-clans) have been found among *Limbus*. But there is no distinction or hierarchy in the clan status or division. It seems that the clan is only the name of the particular ancestor.

The *Limbus* have their own customs and traditions evolved through centuries and also various forms of culture which are typical in practice. The cultural performance is the unique feature of *Limbu* oral-text. The *Limbus* have a dynamic

culture, religion and tradition of their own. They have the holy text, *Mundhum* that guides them and gives the livelihood of their culture, religion and other traditions. The *Mundhum* contains the social, religious, philosophical, cultural and moral aspects of the *Limbus*. And also it describes the mythical aspects of *Mundhum* on the base of *Tageraningwaphuma*, called as their god. Imansing Chemjog states about Limbus cultural aspects and *mundhumian* roles on it in book, *History and Culture of Kirat People*:

The Yehang *Mundhum* contains the story of the first leader of mankind who made laws for the sake of improvement of human beings from the stage of animal life to the enlightened life and ways to control them by giving philosophy on spiritualism. [...] the leader has made rules for marriage, arbitration, purification and religion. (19)

According to *Mundhum*, *Yehang* is the first person who teaches and commences the rites and civilization to the people. The *Limbus* observe and perform rituals and ceremonies in their own typical and distinctive ways. They observe traditionally handed down divergent forms of cultures from birth-rite to death and other numerous forms of culture as *Chokphung*, *Samyok lung*, *Sobu*, *Phudong*, *Dungdunge*, *Sappok chomen*, *Tongsing takma*, *Kelang*, *Palam* as well as minor feast and festivals. They culturally worship *Hangsam Thebamang*, and *Suvending Sugu Yumamang* and also worship the earth, the sky, the hills, the rivers, the moon, the air, the fire etc. *Akwamasammang* is the god of inside pillar of the house. Accordingly, they worship of the name of *Nahen*, *Tamphungma*, *Mangena* etc. They need the priests to apply the whole culture, rituals and traditions in the *Limbu* communities. *Phedangba* is the main priest who recites *Mundhum*. *Samba*, *Yeba* and *Mangdemba* are also the priests who can recite the *Mundhum*. The *Limbus* believe that the *Budha subba* of Sunsari district

is the cultural pillar of them. Shiva Kumar Shrestha, focusing on *Budha subba* states that "if the Budha Subba is worshipped, the intention of the worshiper is fulfilled soon" (102). It supports that the *Budha Subba* of Dharan is, in a one sense cultural property of *Limbu* community.

The performance of culture involves a set of ideas, understanding, references of oral-art in own typical tradition, method, diction, versification and melody of singing and reciting. In this sense, *Limbu* socio-cultural observance and its performance have been embedded in a correlative system with the oral texts. Hence, the *Limbus* observe their distinct culture with the observance of literature. So *Limbu* culture involves the oral-art. With the cultural performance, the performance of oral-art takes place. In the *Limbu* community, the priests play a pivotal role to give alive and continuity of *Limbu* culture. Almost all cultural performances and the concerned oral poetic narratives are normally centered on them. To accomplish the rituals and to overcome the obstacles and disturbances, religious rituals is the versified narratives and diction which is one of the mentionable aspects of the *Limbu* culture. The performance of such cultural traditions is equally possible by *Tumyahangs* (adults) as well, but the effectiveness lies at the heart of *shammastic* performance. *Tumyahang* might not be as specific as the priests. The *Limbu* priests as well as *Tumyahang* and *Tumyahangma* (female adults) do not merely hold the cultural performances in the *Mundhumic* accounts, they also can perform various forms of oral-poetic narratives in different rites and rituals as well as in several indirect references. Such is the culture of *Limbus*. Thus, the cultural performance becomes the performance of *Limbu* literature.

But most probably they came in touch with Brahman Hindus during the rule

of *Sen* Kings in Morang and Makwanpur and partly accepted Brahmans as their priests which are evidenced by the name given to them in Nepali of Sanskrit words. Brahmans, since then, started to influence some aspects of the rites of *Limbus* and the rites, which have no elaborated *Mundhums* and rituals such as rites of birth, feeding rice and cutting hair for the first time etc. must have been replaced or modified by Hindu way of ritual performances. However, *Limbus* resisted the overall attempts of *Hinduisation* because of their culturally well-entrenched and customarily firmly established way of life. The *Mundhum* expert Chandra Kumar Serma claims in an interview that “the Hindus imposed Hinduism for long time upon the *Limbus*” (Interview).

But, the process of *Hinduisation* even under state patronage could not impress much to the great majority of the *Limbus*. Some impressions of Buddhism can also be observed in some aspects of rituals and interpretation of *Mundhums* but it could affect very little to the basic traits and complexes of the mainstream culture in comparison of other Kirat groups in Nepal. Chaitanya Subba, focusing on “the customs of ten *Limbus*” writes in his *The Culture and Religion of Limbus* that “the basic customs and tradition of *Limbus* are even well known today as the customs of *ten Limbus*” (40).

Mundhum and other sources reveal that *Sawa Yethang* (great eight leaders), the progenitors of *Susuwa Lilim* Yakthunghang or *Limbus*, were the enforcers of certain rules, rites and rituals and a moral life begins with them. It is believed that *Yetchham thim*, the rites were evolved and practiced by *Sawa Yethang* with the help of erudite *Phedangmas*, *Sambas* and these practices were unceasingly followed by their successive generations. Indeed, the rites and rituals that governed the life of *Limbus*.

By the study of *Limbus* psychology, they believe that *Kelang* has

mundhumian supernatural power. They can protect their livings by *Kelang*-doing. Otherwise newly built house cannot go long and newly married couple-relation can not remain together long as well. So, they rely on *Kelang* culture. Another understanding is that the *Kelang* culture governs the *Limbus* real life.

Nepal has more special features like ethnic diversities with multilingual, multi-cultural assets. We find here more than 93 languages. Some languages are going to be erased because of the lack of the preservation and dominated of Nepali language. Now, we can hope, to some extent that Federal Republican Nepal based on different nationalities will preserve the languages, cultures, rituals, scripts etc. Most of the Nepal's languages belong to Indo-European language family and some of them are related with Tibeto-Burman family. *Limbu* language is spoken in the *Limbuwan* mostly in the state of Sikkim, hill areas of West Bengal, Assam and other North-Eastern states of India. About six lakh *Limbu* people speak this language in the world scattered throughout India, Nepal, Bhutan , Hong Kong, Singapore, Myanmar, Brunei, Canada, UK and other parts of the world. B.K. Wanemfago writes of *Limbu* language in *Ningwasom*, "Limboo language is placed in the category of Tibeto-Himalaya, sub group on Tibeto-Burmese language family. People who speak this language are found in the eastern Nepal, Bhutan and North eastern Part of India including districts of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri" (10).

Though *Limbu* language is not prioritized in Nepal by government, it is one of the official languages out of the eleven languages recognized by the government of Sikkim, on 13th march 1981. It is widely spoken by about two lakh people of India, mostly in the state of Sikkim. It is very ancient language probably older than Nepali language. Our history also shows that there was long *Kirat* period in Nepal that hundred times previous than the Nepali Kingdom in Kathmandu. Now on the

domination of Nepali language culture and religion, *Limbu* language is in a shadow. It is going to be collapsed soon, if not preserved and prioritised. The extinction of any language is very bad for its speakers and country as well. So it needs more exercises to preserve *Limbu* language.

The *Limbus* form one of the principal tribes of Nepal. The *Limbus* call themselves *Yakthungba* and they call their language *Yakthung-paan* and in Nepali it is referred as *Limbu* Bhasa. The *Limbu* language has mainly four dialects. They are known as *Panthare* Dialect, *Chhathare* Dialect, *Tamarkhole* Dialect and *Feddape* Dialect. Although there are different dialects in *Limbu* language, they can communicate each other. We cannot find out particular disparate in mentioned dialects. Most of the *Limbus* speak the *panthare* dialects that is lingua franca among *Limbu* people. Perhaps, it is the leading dialects among them. Most of the eastern places in *Limbuwan* are named by *Limbu* languages such as *Angbung*, *Sapla*, *Khamlung*, *Kobek* etc of Terhthum district. *Tellabung*, *Hangpang*, *Numlik*, *Lekwa*, *Pakhumba* etc from Taplejung district are also named from the *Limbu* language. In Panther district also, such *Limbu* names are found.

Nowadays the domination of Nepali language is there in *Limbu* inhabitants of that *Limbu* language is being replaced by Nepali language. Such as headquarter of panther district is *Pheden* which means 'arsenal' but, nowadays, Nepali infection is there called *Phidim* and thus changing day by day. Next example is that of Terhthum's headquarter that is *Myanglung* which means *cat stone* in *Limbu* language. Thus Nepali infection seems in such *Limbu* language entity.

Now it can be estimated that very soon this language is may be, not in existence unless preserved. So, to preserve it, at present they (the *Limbus*) have established their central office for the development of the *Limbu* language and literature. So the central

office for the welfare of *Limbu* is in Kathmandu is also called 'Kirat Yakthung Chumlung'. It means the 'Kirat Limbu Association'. Now this central office also has started to research and preserve *Limbu* language.

And also *Limbu people* have their own script called *Kirat Sirijunga Scripts*. The *Limbu* community believes that the historical king *Sirijunga hang* (king) of *Yangwork Garh* (882-925 A.D.) of *Limbuwan* country first codified the *Limbu* language in scripts to educate his illiterate subjects through the teaching of *Yuma* religion. In honor of the codifier's name, the script has been named as *Sirijunga* script. It was invented as early as in 9th century A.D. In the support of this *Sirijunga* scripts, J. R. Subba writes that “ after about 800 years of king Sirijonga, his incarnate Teyongsi Sirijonga Sing Thebe (1704-1741) along with his eight disciples came to Hee-Martam, west Sikkim [...] in 1740 and started Limboo language and Yuma Mundhum teaching in Sikkim” (4). Thus we know that *Limbu* language and its script has its own historical background so that its existence is possible until today.

Nowadays, the creation of *Limbu* literature such as poeties, stories, essays, plays and so on, the history in *Limbu* language and scripts, grammar are being developed. An illustration of the prayer song sung in Sikkim school is as follow:

Nissam Mang Ye Sewaro
 Ae ningwa nuba choge O
 Hara mang itchhinge- O
 Nissammang ye sewaro
 Nuba saksak nagumbero
 Saksak menne mengigero
 Nissam mang ye sewaro

It is written in *Limbuwanko Aitihāsik Adhyayan* that “it is managed to study

up to class twelve in Sikkim and in Nepal about ninety primary schools have been conducted for Limbu language” (Shresth,110).

But these primary schools are in *Limbuwan* (Nepal) not by the donation of Nepal government. The *Limbus*, therefore, are in problems to develop their language and scripts. These days they are very energetic and motivated in their linguistic and cultural phenomenon realizing the neighbouring country's state Sikkim where *Limbu* language and culture are fully prioritized. They want the rights of language in Nepal making the source Sikkim; it is the source of *Limbuwan* in regard of *Limbu* language and cultures. In general understanding, it shocks the *Limbus* if they couldn't have practised their language and cultures at direct care in their own land.

II Mundhum and Limbu Communities

Kelang is a cultural dance of *Limbus* and *Limbu* communities wherein it is performed as a ritual performance. It is performed comprising certain cultural norms which has the goal of entertainment as well as cultural, social and philosophical aspects. It is one of the most popular dances among *Limbus*. Performance of *Kelang* is essential as the religious rituals while starting to live in a new house, *Metkamma* (marriage) and any other happy occasions of *Limbus*. It is performed in a circle line, wearing the traditional costumes and joining between Limbu male and female participants on the happy occasions. “*Chyabrun*g dance is essentially done by the young boys,” writes J. R. Subba of *Kelang*, as a performance among *Limbus* of the Eastern Himalayas, “It is performed by male dancers and in some occasions they are accompanied by female dancers too. Women do not carry the drums but stand in between the dancers and follow the beating sounds by clapping their hands and perform dance through proper stepping and bodily movements” (215).

The *Ke* (drum) is made from hollow-log of soft trees capable of producing deep tone suitable to open-air activities. We should know from the structure of *Ke* that it is intended to be melodious sound while playing it and the performance would be good-looks. It is, according to Yehang Lawti, performed on three more occasions of wedding ceremony to wish the successful conjugal lives of newly married couples, of newly built house praying the god, *Akwanama* to save the house from the assault of disasters and of splendid programme to welcome the honourable guests.

While performing *Kelang*, the dancers act or animate the various living birds and animals through dances. They perform their dances as an act of the birds and animals. They, through the birds and animals’ acting endeavour to communicate with nature so that the nature understands the dancers’ willing after that it is believed that

they are shared the blessings to mankind by the nature and at this moment the performance looks comedy and humorous. Hence, the *Ke (Chyabrung)* is played in a sense to perform for deluxe of the spectators. So while it is performed, it is thought that how the people are tempted or attracted to the *Kelang* display. To make more attractive performance, the *Ke* is decorated by using different colourful items such as flowers, ribbons and different colours.

Performance of *Kelang* is not only to gain entertainment but also to fulfil social duties. In *Limbu* communities, on the occasion of marriage, the hosts, guests and other participants perform *Kelang* and chant *Kesam*, songs sung with performance of *Kelang*. The song, *Kesam* has certain *mundhmian* features on behalf of newly married couples. It is compulsory to perform for them and they do in *Limbu* communities. At the time of drunk *sijonwa* (wine) by *Lokantis* (wedding processors). Raj bahadur Pandhak says that “the drummers should dance as the dancing of peacock and doves and also the gun should be fired” (94).

Human beings conduct different activities as a folk culture of a folk literature as they have different psychological level. Either it is a state of happiness or sorrowful, they express their feelings in impressive way. Whatever they externalize is the common presentation of social activities. It develops and goes on with human civilization. At the time of performance, participants present maximum traditional images and symbols as far as possible. Dresses, language, manners and other activities used by actors and actresses are traditional. People have a desire to get pleasure by observing such phenomena. While performing *Kelang* and *Kesam*, people get pleasure watching the performance of *Kelang* and hearing the song, *Kesam*. So the spectators stay around the performance area to watch it pleurably. According to Imansing Chemjong, the performance of *Kelang* includes:

The women folk join the men folk in the dance. Besides dancing, the men also beat the drums. The women stand one by one after each man and follow their movements of their hands and feet. They shake their hands and feet together turning right and left according to the sound of the Ke-drum and the small bells. (71-72)

Thus, while the *Kelang* is performed and the *Kesam* is sung together, the spectators get pleasure remaining around the performance area. The *Limbus* have various kinds of performative cultural and ritual phenomena. Such performative phenomena are done in various forms of ritualistic fabrics. In those rituals, they participate and perform like *Palam*, *Khyali*, *Hakpare*, *Yalang* and so on. The rituals are socially recognized institutions like wedding ceremony, local fairs and *Khauma* (the last obsequy ceremony) where oral texts are recited.

“Oral traditions” as Vansian says, “The expression ‘oral tradition’ applies both to a process and its products. The products are oral messages, base on previous oral messges at least a generation old. The process is the transmission of such messages by word of mouth [...]” (93). In regard of *Limbus*, the guideline is the *Mundhum*, a holy text to transmit such oral tradition from one generation to another. *Tumyahangs* (the elders) have been contributing to breathe the coming generations in such performative phenomena and *Mundhum* reciters are found who have directly and indirectly contribution in oral literatures. The *Limbu* community, therefore, is still rich in cultural and ritual phenomena.

In the same way, *Kelang* in Limbu communities has the mythical, cultural, social and philosophical significances that has pivotal role in shaping the lives of *Limbus*. In *Yakthumba* (Limbu) language, *Ke* means drum and *Lang* is dance but it occupies the cultural entity. The *Ke* and the beginning of the *Kelang* (drum-dance)

have a *Mundhum*-based myth. About the myth of *Ke*, Sher Bahadur Ingam begins “in the beginning the Kirat *Mundhum* tells about the invention of *Ke* [...] (62). The myth of *Kelang* is a part of the *Mundhum*, a holy book of Kirat often recited by the priest. Such mythical aspects of *Mundhum* are orated through the priest such *Phedangba*, *Samba*, *Yeba*, *Mangdemba*, and *Tumyahangs* as well.

Mostly the cultural and ritual phenomena such as *Yalang*, *Tongsing-tokma*, *Hakpare* etc. have mythical bases. *Kelang a Mundhum* based ritual has a myth. According to myth, there was a woman named *Tigenjangna* who was wandering around the jungle searching for food. She was so thirsty that when she found a stone filled with water, she drank it. Next day due to same hunger and thirst, she drank the water from log. Exactly she drank not water, but the urine of tiger and a man respectively from the stone and the log. In supporting this myth, Melanie Pappadis writes down:

One day, the man thought his only choice to kill his tiger brother (*Kesami*) or else be eaten. So he planned to kill the tiger. The man (*Lasami*) and the tiger met in the jungle. The man climbed up *Simal* tree for protection. He sat on the ninth branch of the tree. The man shot his arrow straight into the tiger’s mouth, and the tiger fell down from the tree...and de-skinned the tiger and made the Limbu drum, Chyabrung. (51)

The mother *Tigenjangna*, as per myth, had put the signals to know either the man is killed or the tiger. “Before the battle between *Kesami* (tiger) and *Lasami* (the man) to know the winner, the mother put a *sekmuri phung*(a kind of flower) called *Sillari phul* in Nepali for *Lasami* and *Andang(Babari phul)* for *Kesami* in pot” (Prakash, 29). At last, *Kesami* was killed but the mother was in grief. So *Kesami*

brought the skin of the tiger. He drove the skin to dry many places and finally it was dried in a place that is *Sehonamlang*. The *Mundhum* expert Chandra Kumar Serma relating the myth says that “the *Sehonamlang* (Chhala-sukuwa danda) lies in Panthar district” (Interview). Since then *Lasami* made a *hongsing* (tree-log) into an instrument by stretching the dried skin of *Kesami* and played to produce the sound *hurung-hurung* as that of *Kesami*, the tiger that listened by *Kesami* and mother becomes happy.

In this way, the *Limbus* believe in the myth as the part of their oral traditions. And there is another myth as how the *Kelang* (drum-dance) began as cultural property. About the mythical man *Lokpha Temba Hangpha Temba* who built first house, J.R.Subba writes:

Khappura Mellonghangma was killed in an accident during the house construction with her brother. [So] the house was soon caught by termites and other wood-cutter insects (Mudhak Thaknam). With the instruction of Sodhung Lepmuhang, Lokpha Temba Hangpha Temba brought Ladenhang and Phungdenhang with their long cylindrical hollow-log drums (Niyura Hongsing Ke) to kill the insect, termites, fungus etc by their *Kelang* (ke-dance) ritual. The drum dancers dance in the new house and made the insects fall on the ground by the power of their ritual dance and summoned the bird-Temlana Lakhrek which came immediately and ate the insects. (215)

Yehang Lawati writes down under this same myth forwarding a *Mundhumian* character *Wajaiba*, who was the first person to use the *Ke* for the prosperity and it is believed that the rites of *Kelang* began with him:

Wajaiba who was son of Sodhungen Lepmuhang made first house of mankind, but after few days the house was destructed. Many times he made but destructed. So he went to his father to take the way whether he bestows. [...] Sodhungen Lepmuhang instructed his son to take some expert- Kelangba , Phungdenhang, Kewaphung, Samkelo, and Kesangmiba. [...] They sent him to Lamsami to bring the Ke (chyabrun). (76-77)

Another *Mundhumist* Shiva Kumar Shrestha states that " after Lasami made the Ke, Wajaiba came back taking the Ke. Kesangmiba, Samkelo, Phungden hang, Kebangphungba, Kelangba danced whole night around the main pillar singing the song, Kesam; in this way, Kelang was invented" (36, *Kirati Lok Kathaharu*). We still find the *Kelang* culture in Limbuwan and Limbu communities. Most of the Limbus narrate the myths of *Kelang* and they exist as the cultural part of the Limbu communities.

So, *Kelang* is a cultural drum-dance which is danced by Limbu and non-Limbu young males and females singing a melody of loves and emotions. To know the meaning of it, it is necessary to separate the components of Kelang, that is *Ke* and *Lang*. In Limbu language, *Ke* means drum and *Lang* means dance. Hence, *Kelang* is a drum-dance and is also called *Chyaburng* dance which relates to the *Limbu* culture and has cultural importance in Limbu communities. "dancing is almost a part of the Limbu's life" (214) says J.R. Subba in his the *Limboos of the Eastern Himalayas*.

Chyabrun or *Ke* (drum) is made from hollow-log of soft trees (*soding sing*) capable of producing deep tune suitable to open-air activities . Its mouths or open portions on two sides are covered by tightened skin and distinct tunes are produced by striking it in its different places with sticks that is called *Sange* and with palms on

both sides. A bell, which is hung with the stick so that the bell is called *Siri pange* helps to produce the melodious sounds of *Ke*. The key that is added making a small hole into the *Ke* is called *Laippa*. It also helps to produce the long waves of its beating sounds.

The *Ke* (drum) is made in different sizes. There is no fixity about the size of *Ke*. The size of *Ke* puts the meaning of that how it produces the sharp melodious sounds. Some are big and some small and short. The *Kes* found in Sikkim are small and short. The *Kes* found in *Atharai thum* are big and short but in *Chauvish thum* produce the slow-base sounds. Roshan Angbung and Bhimsen Limbu are known well and popular performers in an interview say, “the size of *Ke* (drum) is in different kinds. No certain size is there. Some are long but short; some are short and big and so on” (personal interview).

And the musical instrument is decorated with colourful clothes and flowers.

J.R Subba describes in regard of *Kelang* performance as:

Chyabrung dance (Langma) is essentially done by the young boys by suspending the Chyabrung in front of the body with the help of leather cord following the percussion of the Chyabrung . It is usually danced without song . It is performed by male dancers and in some occasions, they are accompanied by female dancers also. Women do not carry the drums but stand in between the dancers and follow the beating sounds by clapping their hands and perform dance through proper stepping and bodily movements. (215)

Various messages are communicated through these dances, which heighten the state of sensibility and evoke kinaesthetic response in the audience. But the meaning has to be interpreted in its cultural context of settings. Most of the dances are very fast

depending on imitation of animals, birds, insects etc. The stepping and the beating of the drum has to be adjusted accordingly. The dancers have to wear their traditional costumes while dancing:

[The] male dancers dance by playing the Ke (Chyabrung) and female dancers follow them standing in between the male dancers. They play the Ta (Jhyamta) following the beating of Ke. The beating sound of Ke is produced according to the situations where it is organized. In marriage ceremony Mekkamgam, Thakpthamdham in new house opening and *Lamdaktak* in welcome program is the produced sounds of the drum. (Lawati, 75)

Kelang is performed in different situations and conditions. *Kelang* is known by different names under these situations and conditions. In some conditions, *Kelang* is done by singing a song which is called *Kesam*. So *Kelang* corresponds the *Kesam*. In some kinds, *Sarlaima sar* is the repeating rhyme of *Kesam*.

The *Kelang* performed as the cultural entity in Limbu communities, has various kinds of dances in *Chyabrung* of *Kelang* depending of imitation of various kinds of creatures. The gestures of different creatures are imitated in the *Kelang*. It can have more types because it is created by using the creative capacity. Hence, J. R. Subba writes in regard of its types that “they are named after particular bird or animal or insect, however they are genre-specific names” (216).

It is communicated with the nature by performing the imitations of different creatures. It, therefore, has no certain types. “In the beginning”, I S. Chemjong writes in *History and Culture of Kirat People*, “when people saw pigeons, turkeys and peacocks dancing, they imitated them and started dancing likewise. Thus, *Ke-Lang* dance is classified into various dance like” (71). Hence the *Kelang* (*Chyabrung* –

dance) is classified through different perspectives. *Kelang* has its simple types.

According to Imansing Chemjong, “*Ke-Lang* is known by three names” he writes in *History and Culture of the Kirat People*, “it is called *Thok-Tham-Gey* or *Heem-gey* at the time of performing a house warming puja ceremony. At the time of worshipping God, it is called *Dung-Dung-gey*. Again at the time of a marriage ceremony it is called the *Lam-gey* and *Mekkam-gey*” (70).

So, on the bases of different occasions the *Ke-Lang* can be divided as follow:

i). *Mekkamgam*; this type of *Ke-Lang* is performed on the occasion of marriage ceremony. At this type of *Ke-Lang* the sound of beating is as the sound of *Mekkamgam*. Under this *Mekkamgam* some sub-Langs (Dance) are found-
 a) *Lamdatte*, at the marriage ceremony, *Ke-Lang* is performed to welcome the guest that is called *Lamdatte Lang*. Even at the splendid programme, it is performed for the welcome of honourable guest. b) *Namdatte Lang*, in marriage, whole night dancing of *Ke-Lang* is called *Namdatte Lang*. c) *Lamdo/Semmui Lang*, this type of *Ke-Lang* is performed for farewell to those who might have come in marriage ceremony as the guest. d) *Fungwa Thama*, it is performed at the time of blessing to bride and groom by the priest and the relatives in marriage.

ii). *Dung-Dung-gey*; at the time of worshipping Gods, the *Ke-Lang* is called *Dung-Dung-gey*. Eventually *Dung-Dung-gey* is a kind of worshipping occasion in Limbu communities. At this time the *Ke-Lang* is done and called as *Dung-Dung-gey*. *Ke (Chyabrun)* sounds like *Dung-Dung*. iii) *Samba-Lang*; in some occasion *Samba* who is a Limbu priest dances that is called *Samba-Lang*. iv). *Tumyahang-Lang*, *Tumyahang* means Limbu adults who gather in certain occasions and dance that is called *Tumyahang* dance.

On the base of imitation of nature (creatures), *Ke-Lang* is classified as- i) *Kusarakpa Ke-Lang*, it is a classical *lang* (dance) that is traditionally inherited from generation to generation. It is danced by stepping the legs front and back matching with the beat of *Ke*. ii) *Yasha Lang* (it imitates the chamois), *Khire Lang* (Stag Dance), *Puttukey Lang* (Dove Dance), *Perewa Lang* (pigeon Dance), *Melluk Lang* (sheep Dance), *Muiya Lang* (Eagle Dance), *Mora Lang* (Peacock Dance), *Samdangwa Lang* (Lophophorous Dance), *Yomlakwa Lang* (crimson-horned pheasant Dance), *Pang-Pitchhama Lang* (High altitude Cow Dance), *Sanwa Lang* (Buffalo Dance), *Menda Lang* (Goat Dance), *Tokmi Lang* (Elephant Dance), *Waruk Lang* (Frog Dance), *Ngabhunji Lang* (The way of moving and making round a swarm of small fishes), *Sijowa Lang* (Swallow Dance), *Chillikkhiyamna Lang* (Durango Dance), *Chirphemba Lang* (Butterfly Dance), *Yema Pu Lang* (Fly Catcher bird Dance) etc.

Hence, the *Ke-Lang* (*Chyabrunge* Dance) cannot be limited in its certain types. Its types can be developed by imitating of other creatures too. Next condition to be classified the *Ke-Lang* is the location (area) where it is performed having different sizes and methods in motions. Which are like-*Yangrupe Kusarakpa Lang* (Chayangthapu of Panthar District), *Fedappe Kusarakpa Lang* (Terhathum District), *Athraithum Kusarakpa* (Dhankuta District), *Chhathare Kusarakpa* (Terhathum District), *Chaubishthum Kusarakpa* (Dhankuta District), *Charkholthum Kusarakpa* (Ilam District) *Maiwakhola Kusarakpa* (border of Taplejung and Panthar district) *Dasmajhiya Kusarakpa* (Sankhuwasabha District), *Charkhapan Kusarakpa* (Sankhuwasabha District)

In the primitive age, *Sodhungten Lepmuhang* became too glad listening that his son *Wajaiba* made a first home of mankind. *Lepmuhang* came down to *Wajaiba* with the dancers and singers. But at the time of building the house, *Sapparihangma* was

dead, so singing and dancing could not be on that happy occasion. *Lepmuhang's* team could not do *Mundhumian* phenomena. They returned only by putting the flower brought by them around four sides of the house. Then the main pillar of the house damaged due to termites. *Wajaiba* was suffering with the same problem for long time. For the solution of this problem, *Wajaiba* went to his father *Sodhungen Lepmuhang* and put the problem. It is written about the solution of *Wajaiba's* problem in *Maongol Kirat Limbu Sankshipta Ihihas, Thakthapu Mobohang Chemjong Bangshawali* that “his father sent the experts for solution, Kesangmiba, Samkelo, Phungdenhangwa, Kewaphungwa, Kelangwa with him” (49). Since then, these experts suggested them to dance around the newly built house by playing the *Ke (Chyabrun)*.

Again *Wajaiba* went to *Lasami* to bring *Ke (Chyabrun)*, *Lasami* made *Ke* for *Wajaiba*. About the invention of *Ke*, Shiva Kumar Shrestha writes in his book, *Kirati Lokkathaharu* that:

after listening to *Wajaiba*, *Lasami* cut down *Menosing Sudingsing* to make the *Ke*. He used the skin of *Kesami* (a *Mundhumian* Tiger) stretching on two sides of the log and played it. But it sounded no sharp and melodious. His mother *Tigenjangna* suggested him to use a *Key*, a needle of bamboo with *Sinjokpa* (a kind of seed) into the log and then it sounded *hurung-hurung*. (36)

Accordingly, they danced and revolved around the pillar of the newly built house. After then, the house of *Wajaiba* saved from the Termites and other disasters and calamities. Thus, the rites of *Kelang* existed. In *Limbu* communities, the rites of *Kelang* is there to worship the god, *Akwanama* who protect the main pillar of the house. Later on, the *Kelang* was begun to perform on other different occasions. *Melanie Pappadis* supports that “ the *Kelang* (dance), done at wedding

ceremonies and other religious ceremonies, and originated from imitating the animals” (49). Nowadays, the *Kelang* has become a cultural part of *Limbu*’s life. It is taken from the mimicry of different creatures and the nature.

Particularly, *Chyabrung (Kelang)* is a dance of legs movements. In each and every dances, the movement of legs is necessary. Likewise, by watching the movement of legs the types of *Kelang* are classified. In *Kelang*, *Ke* (drum) is played by hands, so the role of hands is less important. According to Aitahang Khajum, he writes in *Chyabrung ko Notation* that, “the use of the hands is applied only in Lamdatte Lang, Semmui Lang and Phungwa thama Lang of *Kelang*” (11, Tongsing).

In *Kelang* performance, the hands are used to indicate in dance. In *Kelang*, the beating of *Ke* and the movement of legs should match. The most important is to move the legs in *Kelang*, so left and right legs should be moved front and back in turn. While moving the legs, the dancers are so careful; *Kusarakpa* dance is classical dance which is inherited from generation to generation. All types of *Kelang* are done making the base of *Kusarakpa*. It is a fundamental of all kinds. *Kusarakpa* dance has twenty steps of legs in the movements of front and back. If the step begins with left leg, it also ends with left leg. In this way, while dancing it, leader is there who should be followed by others. So the system should not be broken in performance. Mostly the dancers wear their traditional dresses or uniform. It is performed making circle line on the ground. It makes easy to know the steps of *Kusarakpa Kelang* by following; the signs have been created to understand easily the steps of *Kelang* that- **ch**- chyang (sound by hands), **du** – dum (sound by a stick), **ch + du** – chyang + dum (sound by both hand and stick), (**R**) – right, (**L**) – left, () – front (take care while stepping), () – back, ()- turning to right, ()- turning to left, () – continue, (/) – bar, and () – completed once the stepping. If we hint mentioned above signs, it

is somehow level of understanding that how it is beaten the *Kelang* tune and also how it is performed.

Here the method of beating of the *Ke* is exemplified:

/ / **ch+ du/ ch / ch+du / ch / ch+du / ch+du / ch+du / ch / ch+du / ch / ch+du /**
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
ch+du / ch+du / ch / ch+du / ch / ch+du / ch / ch+du / ch / / - /
12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

The methods of stepping the left and right legs in *Kusarakpa* are hinted:

/ / **L /L /R /R /L /L /R /L /R /L /R /R /L /R /**
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
L /R /L /- /L /R /L / / - /
15 16 17 18 19 20

The beat of *Ke* (*Chyabrung*) and the steps of the legs go together as follow:

// // **ch du / ch / ch du / ch / ch du / ch du /**
L 1 L 2 R 3 R 4 L 5 L 6
ch du / - / ch / ch du / ch / ch du / ch du /
R 7 L 8 R 9 L 10 R 11 R 12
ch du / ch / - / ch du / ch / ch du / ch /
L 13 R 14 L 15 R 16 L 17 L 18 /
ch du / ch / / -
R 19 L 20 / / -

Thus, the beat of *Ke* and the steps of legs can be matched following the mentioned notation above. It is the notation of *Kusarakpa Lang*.

In some conditions, a song (*Kesam*) is sung along with the *Kelang*. The *Kesam* has its own importance in the performance of *Kelang*. It is said that the *Kesam* is the doer to be lived the *Kelang*. To make the *Kelang* meaningful in Limbu cultural society, *Kesam* is the important part. Through *the Kesam*, the drum-dancers talk with the Gods. This song (*Kesam*) is used in the occasion of new house-opening and marriage ceremony. “To save newly built house and married couple from different disasters,” Yehang Lawati expresses that “the Gods *Mujoklung*, *Mubokwama*, *Akwanama*, *Thakphutmang* or *Himsammang* are prayed and asked by singing *Kesam* for an auspicious blessing. *Kelang* is performed by revolving around the house three times” (78).

There is a saying about the beginning of *Kesam* which based on the *Mundhumian* myth. Prakash Phombo says about it that “Tigengjangna is in grief due to the death of Kesami killed by his brother Lasami in the battle. Lasami weeps and weeps. Later, the weeping and crying becomes the *Kesam*” (29).

At present, in *Limbu* communities, *Kesam* puts its own importance. The *Limbus* do not settle the newly built house down without the *Kesam Mundhum*. They believe that this type of *Mundhum* saves the house from awful disasters and calamities. Here, a model of *Kesam* is extracted as follow:

Thapsumlo Thakpa... thakpthamdham (3)

Niyara Tesum Sanghimmo...thakpthamdham (3)

Kusangba Pano Kanhimmo?...thakpthamdham (3)

Mundhangeri Seri Mandhaye ...thakpthamdham (3)

Khambutling Larang Mendhange ...thakpthamdham (3)

Thakpa nu Kubu Mendhange ...thakpthamdham (3)

Sitlangnu Singha Menjaye ...thakpthamdham (3)

Thapsumlo Thakpa ...Thakpthamdham (3)

The theme or meaning is that; lets thrash the termites, lets take the mind to newly built house, lets not come down the awful lightening, let not come dust and smoke, let not come termites and insects and let not damage main pillar of the house. Thus, the *Kesam* has the theme of safe of newly built house. The *Limbu* people believe that before living in house if the *Kesam Mundhum* is applied, different kinds of calamities do not assault the house and inhabitants of it. So, the performance of *Kelang* and *Kesam* still is being practiced in *Limbus*.

Kelang performance has certain conditions and situations to perform. It is not applicable in each and every Limbu cultures. *Kelang* puts the meaning with enjoy too. Therefore it is performed only on the happy occasions. Chaitanya Subba writes supporting the situation of *Kelang* performance that, "it is performed mostly in marriage ceremony and other happy occasions" (60-61). Thus it is not performed on sorrowful situations as in death situations and rites. So, it relates with the entertainment phenomena along with its own important in cultural phenomena.

Originally, this dance was performed on the occasion of *Himge*, a ceremonial function before occupying newly built house. This practice is less frequent today. If it is performed on the occasion of *Himge*, *Ke* dancers have to dance around the main pillar of the house and invoke to the God *Akwanama*, who protect the house. Then they come out of the house and make several rounds of the house and finally dance at the front courtyard. Same writer Chaitanya Subba says in his *The Culture and Religion of Limbu*:

The dancers have their own way of invoking and propitiating gods, various spirits and avoiding or evading evil incidents or bad days. The expert dancers have a strong faith that they don't need to recite

Mundhum but the hint expressed in the style of dance is enough to serve the purposes. Expert dancers are regarded as sambas. (60)

Nowadays, the rites of *Kelang* occupies mostly in marriage ceremonies. It has its own importance in marriage ceremony. In such occasions, it is performed by male dancers, and on some occasions, they are accompanied by female dancers also. As we know that the dancers have begun to include women also in their dance, women do not carry the drum but stand in between the dancers and follow the beating sounds by clapping their hands and perform dance through proper stepping and bodily movement.

In marriage ceremony, the drum-beaters enter the hall yelling and dancing step-by step. They dance round the main post of the hall room leading the bride, bride-groom, maids in waiting and the best- man for three rounds of dancing. After the completion of three rounds of dancing, they step and sit silently round the particular main post of the hall. After that one elderly man comes forward, sprinkles flowers before them as a offering of gratitude and expresses his gratitude on behalf the head member of that house for their taking trouble in obliging to his invitation at his son's marriage ceremony, for blessing the new couple for their prosperous future and for pleasing god as well as all the men present through their entertaining dance. Imansing Chemjong states in his *History and Culture of Kirat People* about the activities between an elderly man of the house and the drum-dancers before to perform the *Kelang* in marriage that "he (elder of the house) keeps a copper coin before them (the dancers) as a sign of promise for their remuneration and requests them to continue dancing the whole night and do bless the house" (72). The copper coin has the *Mundhumi* characteristic so that the promise must not be broken. It is a kind of agreement between the drum dancers and bride-groom family. The family likes to make *Kelang* performance as a significant part of the marriage ceremonies

which makes a kind reputation too in the society. Then, *Kelang* goes on for whole night.

In this way, the *Kelang* is a part of *Limbu* marriage ritual. In other situations such as the splendid cultural programmes, pujas etc., *Kelang* is performed as the cultural property. At these occasions, the dancers should wear traditional costumes. The *Kelang* with the traditional costumes make its performance beautiful.

III. Performance, Performativity and Rituals

The term performance has become extremely popular in recent years in a wide range of activities such as arts, literature and social sciences. As its popularity and sage has grown, so has become the complex body of writing about performance, attempting to analyze and understand just what sort of human activity it is. In "Research in Interpretation and Performance Studies: Trends, Issues, Priorities" Mary Strine, Beverly Long and Mary Hopkins begin with the extremely useful observation that performance is "an essentially contested concept" (191). Supporting their concept, it can be argued that performance studies have opened hitherto unnoticed spaces. It problematizes its own categorization. Thus performance is always performance for some one, some audience that they recognize and validate it as performance. It is difficult to say about the domains of the performance but it is conform to be observed.

In generally, performance means presentation or act which is performed with artistic ideas in certain occasions or festivals. Performance closely relates to human phenomenon that makes one different to another and extra too. In other understanding, it is a practical form of performing a ceremony, a play, a piece of music and such feats. The *Oxford Dictionary* defines performance as "the carrying out of a command, duty, purpose, promise etc, it is something performed or done, an action, act, deed or operation". Performance looks different from performance in another. It may depend on its own type of identity and its cultural panorama. Performance theory attempts to make clear what , how and why performance is both a key term and a key to understand the intricate way we participate in social and political life and creates its many expressive forms. Victor Turner, an American critic,

is of the opinion that performance is a social drama and is a combination of various genres of cultural performances. He writes:

I regard the social drama as the empirical unit of social process from which has been derived and is constantly derived, the various genres of cultural performance. [...] the major genres of cultural performance, from ritual to theatre and film, and narration, from myth to the novel not only originate in the social drama but also continue to draw meaning and force from the social drama. (93)

In particular, performance is closely associated with art; in fact they are complement to each other. On the same way, it comes to express with social cultures too.

Generally we should understand a performance as soon as it comes in our mind that performance is defined in common ideas, through two perspective- art and ritual.

It may help in understanding that Elizabeth Bell defines as, "performance is both process and product and performance is traditional and transformative" (16-17).

Theorists try to account for performance as something that happens, emerges, and grows in and through a process, a set of activities or specific behaviours. This process is described mostly on the base of emergent; so we can say that in performance something happens and emerges about the feelings of process and product.

Performance causes, creates, and produces both itself and things outside of itself. This productivity has many purposes that often languaged as functions, uses or intentions.

This purposeful productivity is utilized to do a number of things for individuals, groups and culture. Performance always makes reference to former ways of doing, acting, seeing, and believing. Those references can uphold the status quo, critique that status quo, or certain the political for changing the status-quo by performing anew.

Elin Diamond writes:

Performance is always a doing, and a thing done. On the one hand, performance describes certain embodied acts, in specific sites, witnessed by others. On the other hand, it is thing done, the completed event framed in time and space and remembered, misremembered, interpreted, and passionately revisited across a pre-existing discursive field. (qtd. in Bell, 16)

By here, it is clear that performance is a doing something or certain embodied acts. But there are specific sites. There are the aspects of bystanders/audiences. It is completed in certain time and space too. Even it can be concluded that a performance is a specific action or set of actions- dramatic , music, athletic, and so on- which occurs on a given occasion , in a particular place. Thus a performance can be defined, Pollock says as "a site of transformation and even a paradigm for cultural resistance". (qtd.in Bell, 17)

The above definitions attempt to answer what questions to explain and describe performance. While a text book ought to arrive at one definition for testing purposes, performance has too rich a heritage and too exciting future to pin it down. Process/product, productive/purposeful, and traditional/transformational are ways to describe and explain the many manifestations and politics of performance.

Ritual Performance

Ritual performances exhibit all the same formal characteristics as play. A special place is staked out, a sacred ground, creating a rule bound world of its own. And play, as pretend, infects poles of belief in ritual acts. All ritual involves participants who question the reality of what is happening. They willingly participate and experience the moods and feelings the rite seeks to create. Huizinga writes that

"whether one is sorcerer or sorcerized one is always knower and dupe at once. But one chooses to be the dupe" (23).

Ritual performance has its own characteristics which helps to develop its Mechanisms. Ritual theorists have agreed on three characteristics of ritual activities, according to Catherine Bell . It can be proved down the characteristics of ritual activities form the quotation of Elizabeth Bell. She writes in her *Theories of performance* that "first, ritual action is communal, involving groups of people who gain social solidarity through their participation. Second, the action is traditional and understood as carrying on ways of acting established in the past. Third, ritual is rooted in beliefs in divine beings" (128). Now we come to know that ritual is communal, traditional and a rooted beliefs.

Ritual performance is on the base of ritual characteristics. Ritual is acted so it is performed traditionally. Ritual is belief since the beginning. In literary understanding, ritual is ceremonial or symbolic act given importance by repetition; rituals often accompany rites of passage and religious observances. The observance or action in a set ordered and ceremonial way is ritual. It is practiced is a set of established norms and values. It is a pattern of actions and words followed regularly and precisely by a group of persons. Ritual is followed in different forms, in almost all the societies of world, in one or other forms. These combine act of ritual is origin of performance.

All of the above characteristics are manifested in and through performance. In short, ritual or ritual-like events do not exist outside of the performances that create them. So, Victor Turner likes" to think of ritual essentially as performance as enactment, and not primarily as rules or rubrics. The rules frame the ritual process, and the ritual process transcends in frame. A river needs banks or it will be a

dangerous flood, but banks without a river epitomize aridity" (155-56). Rituals and ritual-like actions abound in our daily lives as a way to give meaning and significance to experience. Two interrelated concepts; society and culture are crucial to understanding of ritual as performance. In its general sense, a society consists of any group of interacting animals, such as humans. But human societies often include millions or billions of people who share a common culture. Culture refers to the way of life learned and shared by people in social groups. Culture differs from the simpler, inborn types of thinking and behaviour that govern the lives of many animals. The people in a human society generally share common culture patterns. So anthropologists may refer to particular societies as cultures and rituals.

Ritual events are also marked by joy, fun and anticipation. For Turner, this is the 'room for play' that ritual performance enables the play with symbols, play with meanings, and play with words" (162). Laine Bergeson writes:

Ritual celebrations knit us into history and even into prehistory, connecting humans to each other over geography and time. [...] many still find connection in the rites and ceremonies passed down to them from the lives and faiths of their parents and grandparents. For others, contemporary life has grown so secular, colored by irony, or just plain different that the old ways of marking major traditions no longer resonate. [...] the need for ritual is so deep, though, that people have begun creating their own. (66)

Thus rituals include celebrating the arrival of *menopause*, *births* and *deaths* marked without *religious ceremonies*, *divorce ceremonies*, even *marry yourself* ceremonies.

Performativity of Ritual Performance

The term was first used by the Belgian anthropologist Arnold van Gennep to refer

the basic factors involved in performance such as birth, puberty, marriage and death. Rites of passage, ceremonies that mark a person's progress from one role, phase of life, or social status to another are performativity. Rites of passage occur in all societies and often involve symbolism and reaffirm the values of a society. Secret rites were part of the worship of several Greek deities, such as Hera, queen of the gods, Aphrodite, goddess of love, and Hecate, goddess of the underworld. Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick argue that performativity has enabled to a powerful appreciation of the ways that identities are constructed iteratively through complex citation processes. If one consequence of this appreciation has been a heightened willingness credit a performative dimension in all ritual, ceremonial, scripted behaviours, another would be the acknowledgement that philosophical essays themselves surely count as one such performative instance. They write that "performative seems to span the polarities of, at either extreme, the extroversion of the actor, the introversion of the signifier [...]" (175).

The most innovative and influential contribution to performance art in the 1960s came from women initially trained in dance, including German Pina Bausch, who incorporated sound and setting in grandiose spectacles, and American Elizabeth Streb, whose theatrical pieces mixed dance with gymnastics and circus acrobatics. Other successful performance artists include Americans Anna Halprin, Meredith Monk, and Yvonne Rainer, all of whom trained initially in dance; American Laurie Anderson, who combined music, video speech and electronics in her work; American Robert Wilson, who contributed text and spectacular décor to his performances; and American David Moss, who experimented with percussive vocal sounds in his solo works. Elizabeth Bell brings out about performativity that "Judith Butler first introduced the idea of performativity by utilizing metaphors from the theatre to ask

the theoretical question, 'how is gender produced?' Butler answers this question by making claims about embodiment, history, and boundaries as performed on stage" (179).

Performance is more near to linguistics. Linguists take it as an opposition for the word competence. Linguistically, it refers to the every utterance of internalized knowledge of sound system. The dictionary of stylistics defines performance as:

Usually discussed in opposition to competence [...], both terms are made famous in the generative grammar of Chomsky (1965).

Chomsky's main stress was on competent and performance was seen as secondary what we do when we actually speak, is the process of speaking and writing. (250)

From the above concept it is clear that the scope of performance is no longer easy to define. It is a composition of behaviour, an approach to experience; it is a play, sports, aesthetics, popular entertainment, experimental theatre and others.

Performativity is action related art which is conducted in mass, performing some rituals and celebrations. It is speech associated with some types of action. Richard Schechner terms performativity with magnitudes of performance argues, "Performance magnitude means not only size and duration but extension across cultural boundaries and penetration to the deepest state of historical, personal and neurological experience" (45).

It is hard to incur universally accepted meaning of performativity. However, it demonstrates and covers the whole human action from proscenium arch to social drama and performance which generally is supposed to have granted for the theatrical events. It is everywhere in theatre, courts, streets, hospital, farming house, in rituals,

celebrations and feats and in many such places. It is an art, associated with our culture, politics, and day to day actions.

Performativity is a highly stylized form of late twentieth century event, which constantly demands that its audience redefines and understands, it as an act of theatre itself. Lee A Jakobus analyses such experimentation of Richard Schechner and his performativity group in the following manner:

Most of the interesting late twentieth century experimental theatre was done in groups such as Richard Schechner's performance group, which created what Schechner called Environmental theatre in New York city in late 1960s and Jerzy Grotowski's policy laboratory theatre Wroclaw Poland, during the same period. (857)

The concept of performativity has captured broad meaning after 19660s with the concept of environmental theatre. It crossed the alley of theatre and entered into the broad continent of human actions. Regarding such of dynamism of performance Elin Daimond writes:

[...] since 1960s performativity has floated free of theatre precincts to describe an enormous range of cultural activity. It came after popular entertainments like speech folklore, political demonstration, conference behaviour ritual, medical and religious healing and aspects of human life. (66)

As performativity is idealized about embodiment, history and boundaries as performed onstage. On stage, performers materialize characters in and through their bodies. Elizabeth Bell writes that "Butler is careful not to use the construction, for that would imply social construction of identity" (179). Materialization-the body's appearance, acting, and doing – is her important term. In a way, characters in a play

do not exist until they enter the playing space or are spoken of by others.

Materialization, then, is about presence and language. So, gender identity or any other kind of identity is not something that we have but something that we do some thing that we have only by doing it again and again and again. Bodies onstage are always produced by and change through history. So actors always perform bodies within a set of historical convention and director's cues for how the body ought to move, gesture, and particulate itself onstage. In the support of it, Butler draws parallels to performance of gender that "the act that one does, the act that one performs is, in a sense, an act that has been going on before one arrived on the scene. Hence, gender is an act which has been rehearsed [...] but which requires individual actors in order to be actualized and reproduced as reality once again"(qtd. in Bell,179). She argues that gender identity has been conceptualized as per the chronological series in history. She means that gender is a practice of improvisation within a scene of constraints. Moreover one does not do one's gender alone. One is always doing with or for another, even if the other is only imaginary. Hence here, Bell mentioning to Butler writes that" this tension as acting in concert with others, and acting in accord with the conventions of gender" (180).

Next choreographing identity is a crucial subject matter to talk in performativity. Susan Leigh Foster argues that approaching the performance of gender as choreography is a fruitful way to concentrate on bodies, the codes and conventions for bodily movement and interaction, and the changing histories of those conventions through time. For Susan Leigh Foster, choreography is "the tradition of codes and conventions through which meaning is constructed in dance" (5). Those traditions and their meanings have changed through time. These changing codes and

conventions for gendered embodiments always resonate with cultural values that are structured, deeply embedded, and practiced by individuals.

Dance is vivid example of bodies materializing genders within historical codes and conventions, while all of us perform identity with reference to past ways of performing, some of us feel the weight of this history of conventions more heavily. Elin Diamond explains gender as "both a doing –a performance that puts conventionalgender attributes into possibly disruptive play- and a thing done – a pre-existing oppressive category" (4-5). History is a way to describe these past and present get of power relations and categories that weigh on people to compel certain kinds of performances.

In a sense, performativity as a theory of genders constitutes that rejects foundational approaches to gender's material and historical constitution in performance. Because identity is a performance accomplished within a scene of constraint, this performance can be utilized to critique the boundaries, institutions, and language that produce it. Performance work that shows as identity is not fixed and finished; is important to counter foundational approaches to identity, especially racial and ethnic identities.

Elizabeth Bell says that "to show identity in process through language, other performance seek to exaggerate, parody, and satirize the products of performance by exposing the ways the performances are accomplished" (185). Performances that feature the processes of the identities are ways to question, play, and applaud the gap between appearances and reality. These processes are important for post modern approaches to identity as performed, not solely founded in biology, culture, roles, psyche, or difference.

At last, performance based on *Kelang* is an identity that is related to *Limbu* rituals. *Limbus* are proud of the *Kelang* and take enjoy with performativity of it. In that, *Limbus* have ritual, social, culture, gender identity in *Kelang* performativity. At the time of gender question, *Limbus* claim that *Kelang* performance is an answer of gender-equality because male and female, both, can participate openly in it. So, gender identity of *Limbu* communities is embodied through the performativity of *Kelang*. *Kelang* is performed in *Limbus*' special days such as marriage ceremony, festivals, fairs etc. That is why; it is ritual performance which has carried traditional values too. It is done in marriage to bless new couples. Hence, we can say that it has a social target by its performativity. Same is applied in the occasion of newly built house to wish long live. So, it has the important significance of social construction of *Limbus*. *Kelang*, therefore, is the embodiment of social and cultural identity and livelihood of *Limbus*' social living as well.

IV. Kelang and Limbu's way of Life

In general understanding, *Kelang* is to be performed on certain occasions. It is a ritual dance performed in Limbu community. *Kelang* is constructed by two component words; *Ke* (drum) and *Lang* (dance) has the meaning of drum-dance. So, dance is, especially performed. This dance is not only dance but also the ritual dance, popular in *Limbuwan*, eastern area of Nepal.

Dancing has practically existed since the beginning of man. Primitive people were involved in religious dances or they just imitated animals. But social dancing is a different thing as it is done for the sheer pleasure of it. By nature human beings are fond of dancing as a social amusement. We, now, may consider dance as important as it reflects manners and actions of the people. On the same way *Kelang* is a drum dance which has been performing since primitive age. This ritual drum dance, *Kelang* relates to *Mundhum* which is the holy text of Limbus. J.R. Subba (Pandhak) posits that "Lodenhang and *Phungdenhang* were the first primitive Limboo persons to perform *Kelang* dance when the primitive man was learning the construct his house. Perhaps, this is the beginning of the settled agriculture of human beings" (224). That is why, *Limbus* are far primitive people because their ritual performance in community seems to be started from the very beginning. Their ritual performance, as per oral *Mundhum*, has been coined with *Mundhumian* myth. Myth totally accepts the ritual performance. Even the Limbus enunciate their human manners and actions through the ritual performances, so they can be defined as traditional, cultural and ritual people. They very much apply the performance through many rituals. Among them *Kelang* is an important one. This dance came to exist till now by transferring from generation to generation and it built some certain rules and could exist as ritual entity as well. Now, it is openly practised as cultural property. Dancing is almost a

part of the Limbus's life. They enjoy various kinds of traditional dances and express their joy and various other emotions through these dances. Although these dances are now dwindling day by day, still the *Limbus* can have succeeded to sustain it. There is no fixed time for dancing but usually during religious ritual ceremonies, after harvesting of the crops and in socio-religious festivities such as *Tongsing*, *Tribenimela* etc. Among their dances, *Kelang* is a main ritual dance.

Kelang, in another name *Chyabrung* dance is essential in the religious rituals of new house opening, *Metkamma* (marriage), or any other happy occasions of Limbu. But, *Kelangma* is not performed in sad occasions or death ceremonies. Pandhak again writes that " *Kelang* is not performed in sad occasions or death ceremonies except that of Yangrangsing *Kelang* by the shamanistic Limboo priests for religious ritual" (215). In death rites of sudden death by accident, the *Limbu* shaman called *Yeba* only uses *Ke* and in another sad condition, *Kelang* is not applied. *Limbus* seem too sensitive knowing that *Kelang* ritual, how, where and when to perform. *Kelang* is a way for entertainment too, so they don't perform in death rituals, in especial case , it means in death by sudden accident, they apply it being very sensitive through the shaman called *Yeba*, the important aspect of *Kelang* study is that how it is purely performative. The same above *Limbu* writer, Pandhak, writes about its performance:

Chyabrung dance (*Kelang*) is essentially done by the young boys by suspending the Chyabrung (drum) in front of the body with the help of leather cord following the percussion of the Chyabrung. It is usually danced without song. It is performed by male dancers and in some occasions, they are accompanied buy female dancers also. Women do not carry the drums but stand in between the dancers and follow the

beating sounds by clapping their hands and perform dance through proper stepping and bodily movements. (215)

Kelang is done in a circle and in the performance of it, male and female both participants can join but only in some conditions. In various, male only perform. They carry and play the *Ke* (drum) but women participate only follow the beating of *Ke* and move hands as well. The dancers have to wear their traditional costumes while dancing. The hands are used to beat the drum and imitate the nature and the legs are crucial to dance it. The legs must be stepped to perform it. The beautiness of it depends on the steps of the legs. The beating of drum should match the steps of the legs. Otherwise, it misses the rules of *Kelang* and the broken dance does not look beautiful. Hence, I mean tricky performance is must to show it beautiful. Here, hence, the identity of gender equality is clear in *Limbus* through the equal participation of performance.

Mainly *Kelang* is performed in *Himge*, (new house opening) and *Metkamma* (marriage ceremony). The dance was performed to save the house from various kinds of insects that destroy the wooden portions of the house and to ward off evil spirits and ghosts. The Limbus still believe that *Kelang* is an essential in to perform in the opening of the newly built house, *Himge*. The Limbus, hence, apply the *Kelang* performance is *Metkamma* where is the intention of blessing the new couple for their prosperous future.

The Limbus believe that *Kelang* is the salt in their marriage ceremonies. Iman Sing Chemjong says in his *History and Culture of Kirat People* that " they (dancers) stand up again and go out dancing, beating the drums and giving slogans of marriage cry in one vice. This continues all through the night in the house yard. They change their rhythms of the dance according to the beating of the drums" (72). In the marriage

ceremonies, *Kelang* is performed whole night in house yard for the prosperous life of the newly married couple and also the drum dancers and other participants get very much entertainments. We, therefore, can say that the *Kelang* has two intentions of ritual aspect and the entertaining aspects. Culturally *Kelang* is must in Limbus' marriage ceremonies.

The *Limbus* believe that it should be done in their real life. *Kelang* has its own meaning in *Limbu* ritual. Without it, a portion of *Limbu* life is half done. It is necessary in their daily life. So, it relates with life- philosophy (vision). In particular, mostly it is applied in two conditions i.e. *Himge*, house opening and *Metkamma*, marriage ceremony. Iman Sing Chemjong claims that "it is generally practiced at religions functions and marriage ceremonies" (70). In fact, in arrange marriage of *Limbus*, they perform *Kelang*. In such function, it has the philosophical aspects and also entertaining aspects. They, drum dancers, dance whole night by cheering which makes the ceremonies very fantastic. And also it has the cultural importance i.e. it should be done for *Mundhumian* activities which is applied with the *Limbu* priest. The priest and the drum dancers have equally role in the marriage ceremonies. *Kelang* is always accompanied by musical instruments, called *Ke* or *Chyabrun* (drum). Though *Kelang* means drum dance, another instruments are also used such as *perigey* or *kettle-drum*, *Ta* or Cymbal, *Muphro* or *Mephrama* or flute, *Kom* or Harp, *Sanai* or Trumpet, *Siripongey* or small bell and Yak tail. These instruments make the marriage ceremony very weighty in regard of entertainment. It is clear that *Limbus* are anyway with rituals; the rituals are performative. Performance and the *Limbus* are too close. Their identity is open with only the ritual performance. So, they use many instruments in ritual performance. The instruments are typical that help to impart their identity in

the society, it can be claimed that *Limbus* have typical rituals based on performance; most of the ritual of the *Limbus* are performative.

Dor bahadur Bista supports here that " earlier in the afternoon of the wedding a small group of men come to the groom's house to dance with drums which are hung around the neck and held in the hands. The grooms' house is overwhelmingly crowded by the time the bride enters" (52). Indeed, at this time, young boys become quite hilarious with a lot of practical joking and occasional outbursts of house amidst the noise and music. Inside, she and the groom receive *tika* on their foreheads from the parents and other relatives of the groom. Bista adds here again, "The bride and groom are seated in a corner where they remain throughout the night while the *fedangma*, priest recites *Mundhum*, the Kirati religious text " (52). *Fedangma* not only recites the *Mundhum* but also puts *tika* and blessings. It is believed that behind these all nightly affair is that it is a bad omen for the young couple to fall off to sleep while the *Fedangma* is reciting the *Mundhum*, so the young people present *Kelang* and keep making noise and also the *miksama* party keeps singing and dancing all the time to keep them awake.

Another translator and *Limbu* cultural writer Sher Bahadur Ingam says about the importance of *Kelang* in marriage ceremonies:

After finishing (completion) of marriage affair in the big room, the drum dancers enter making loud noise in happiest moment whereas all inside the room are waiting the drum dancers. The drum dancers lead bride, groom, and all the people to revolve around the main pillar three times. They stop dancing and sit around the pillar. An adult (gentleman) *Tumyahang* comes representing of wedding house to thank the drum dancers. Because they believe that the gods is happy

and bless the couple due to the Kelang, drum dance. The gentleman puts a coin of brass in front of the dancers to promise for wages if they perform Kelang whole night. Since then, they stand up and go out dancing and the drum-dancers dance for whole night. (64)

The *Limbus* cannot escape from the rituals because of their cultural features, they, anyhow, practise the marriage and new-house settling in their day to day life and to continue the generations, in such necessitated marriage and new house opening they proudly apply *Kelang* ritual as much that they believe it must be. *Kelang* is applied whole day and night viz performative. It is clear that *Kelang* is ritual performance in the wedding ceremonies of *Limbus*. It is considered as an important aspect for two intentions – the blessing of newly married couple and the entertainments in marriage ceremonies. *Limbus* perform it for their aesthetic and discursive values of prosperity and good future of newly married couples. Therefore, *Kelang* has crucial and ritual position in *Limbu* communities. Another condition of *Kelang* application is house opening, *Himge* in which it has cultural and ritual values. The *Limbus* believe that *Kelang* must be performed in *Himge* to save the house from different assaults before settling down, if they built a new house. In the condition of disappearing *Ke* (drums), they think of necessary, it means they have accepted *Kelang* as ritual dance and also they put it with the sustaining life of them. Chaitanya subba writes that “originally this dance was performed on the occasion of *Himge*, a ceremonial function before occupying newly built house” (60). This practice is less frequent today. The *Limbu* young are incapable to perform *Kelang* on comparison of near past. However, the *Limbu*-fellows are beginning a reformative campaign to *Kelang*. Even they are reviving it as cultural property. Subba forwards:

If it is performed on the occasion of *himge*, Ke dancers have to dance around the main pillar of the house and invoke to the god Akwanama, who protect the house. Then they come out of the house and make several rounds of the house and finally dance at the front courtyard.

[...] Ke dancers have their own way of invoking and propitiating gods, various spirits and avoiding or evading evil incidents or bad days. (60)

The *Limbus* have the god *Akwanama* that is located at the main pillar of the house.

They believe that if *Akkwanama* god is happy, the god saves the house from disastrous. That is why; they perform *Kelang* to save the house. The main pillar of the house is the symbol of the god *Akwanama*. The *Ke* dancers dance around the main pillar and then dance on the yard. And also they make several rounds of the house.

Thus, *Kelang* puts the meaning in the new house opening, *Himge*. Before in dancing, only male used to participate but now women also can participate. Likelihood, gender equality might be affecting in this case. Another *Sikkimeli* writer J.R. Subba writes about *Himge* that “ the drum dancers danced in the new house and made the insects fall on the ground by the power of their ritual dance and summoned the bird- *Temlena Lakhrek* which came immediately and ate the insects” (215). It is the part of myth.

Culturally it is handed down up to now to Limbu communities and they are applying same *Kelang* in the house opening. I mean they believe that it should be dance to save the house for long years.

Thus, not only above mentioned occasions, *Limbus* perform *Kelang* for other occasions too, such as; splendid programs, feasts, festivals and also in some *pujas*. Subba can be traced here that “ it is performed mostly in marriage ceremony and other happy occasions” (61). In other cases and conditions, *Kelang* is done intending to

entertain. To sum up, it is in *Limbu* communities and it represents of *Limbu* rituals. And, thus, they cannot be separated from rituals and its performance.

Mythical Background of Kelang

The study of how *Kelang* began in Limbus makes us go to its *Mundhumian* myth. Most of the rituals have its separate myth. The *Mundhum*, *Kirati* oral text contains all the *Limbus'* ritual myths. In a sentence, the myth of *Kelang* is *Mundhum* based myth. Myth means traditional story or story about gods. It is clear that ritual myths are the parts of religion. Many myths embody a belief in the supernatural events. All cultures have developed over time their religions and their heroes. We know the first home-construction, the invention of *Kelang*, *Yalang*, the rites of house opening etc in *Limbu* communities through the myths. Not only the incarnation of gods in *Limbu* communities, we know the interesting story of gods who were born as *Limbu* people i.e. it is described in *Mundhum* based myths.

Here, to know the mythical background of *Kelang* we should deviate it into *Ke* and *Lang*; *Ke* means in Nepali drum and *Lang* is dance. How *Ke* (drum) was invented and the *Lang* (dance) began in *Limbus*? Both have different mythical stories orated in *Mundhum*. According to the *mundhum's* description, the surce of *Ke* is *Keasami*. *Kesami* and *Namsami* are first children of first *Limbu* woman, *Tigenjangna*; this interesting story is found in *Mundhum* as a mythical story. This story is based on supernatural story that can't be believed but the cultural *Limbus* have been believing and have accepted. The characters are with supernatural power. Question may be raised that how a *Limbu* woman could give birth two- an animal, *Kesami* (tiger) and *Namsami* (human being)? *Kesami* is a tiger with animal nature. Prakash phombo says, "Kesami always used to jump to Namsami and also he used to say his mother, Tigejangna about to kill Namsami" (29).

The climax of the story grows that both of them are ready to kill one another. Due to this conflict, *Tigenjangna* is in sad. She seems with maternal emotion though her children are an animal and other man. Two brothers, at last, concluded for decisive war. Mother can not see their war of killing one to another. She just keeps two flowers to know the winner; *sekmuri phung* for *Namsami* and *Andang Phung* for *Kesami*. Still in *Limbu* communities, these flowers have extra importance culturally. Phombo adds here that "Tigenjangna is very much stricken with the message of Kesami's death, after their decisive war. She cries all the times" (29). Looking mother's deep grief, *Namsami* brings the skin of *Kesami* (tiger) and makes a drum which sounds of *hurung-hurung* as of the tiger (*Kesami*). So, now the drum is called *Ke*. Melanie Papadis supports that:

He (*Kesami*) fell on a branch on the ground and died. The mother was happy and threw flowers for good wishes for her son. The man (*Namsami*) climbed down from the tree and de-skinned the tiger, and made the *Limbu* drum, called *Chyabrun* (*Ke*). Then the mother and the man- brother did a *Kelang*, a tiger style dance, to this drum in honour of the tiger-brother's strength. (51)

In this way, the drum was made firstly by the skin of the tiger. In *Limbu* language, *keiwa* is the tiger. So we come to speculation that *Kelang* is named by the name of a tiger. Even we can trace here that *Ke* (drum) was invented from the skin of *Kesami*; *Kesami* is a character in *Limbu-mundhum* myth. To some extent, the myth of *Ke* matches with our guess.

Next important subject matter of *Lang* (dance) is that how it began after the invention of drum? To get answer of it, we can enter into the *mundum*-myth. This dance with drum joins to the first built house. So, *Kelang* began with the house

building, civilization. Or, it was practiced to save house from the disaster of insects. Chaitanya Subba writes about the first use of *Kelang* that “the dance was performed to save the house from various kinds of insects that destroy the wooden portions of the house and to ward off evil spirits” (59). The *Mundhum* experts can easily orate the story of the beginning of *Kelang*. The *Tumyahangs* feel proud if they know the myths about it. They, therefore, make subject matter of talk while they gather in some occasions and at tea guffs as well. Those who can describe more myths are assumed as the experts and also respected.

The *Mundhum* experts or *Tumyahangs* bring the story about the *Kelang* that *Lokpha Temba Hangpha Temba* built his house for the first time. During the construction of the house, *Khapura Mellonghangma* was killed in accident, was his sister. Due to her spirits (sogha), the built house could not remain for many years. The destruction of the house repeated many times. J.R. Subba views that "with the instruction of Sodhungen Lepmuhang, Lokpha Temba Hangpha Temba brought Ladenhang, and Phungdenhang with their long cylindrical hollow-log drums to kill the insect, termites, fungus etc by their *Kelang* culture" (215).

Another *Mundhum* expert, Yehang Lawati writes, "Singing thakthamma *Mundhum*, priests, *Kelangba*, Phungdenhang, Kewaphung, Samkelo and Kesangmiba danced around the main pillar (murumsitlang) of *Wajaiba*'s house whole night. Since then, it was protected from the destruction of the termites. Thus *Kelang* was ritualized“(77). On the same way, Yehang Lawati forwards that *Wajaiba* built his house for the first time but immediately destructed. He went to his father *Sodhungen Lepmuhang* taking these destructive problems. *Lepmuhang* sent him to solve the problems to some priests. The priests also suggested him to bring *Ke* (drum) from *Lasami*. *Lasami* had the idea of *Ke* and created it. Then, *Wajaiba* came with drum and the priests danced

around the main pillar of the house. For ever, *Wajaiba* got rid of the problems. In this way it was used, according to myth, for the house building.

Not only in *Himge* and marriage ceremony. It is performed in some other occasions. It is done and entertained in the organized cultural programs. It is performed to initiate the programs and the programs become continued. Nowadays it is often performed intending to save the *Limbu* rituals. Young boys and girls are conscious to reform it. The *Limbus* take *Kelang* performance as ritual movements. They have been endeavouring to bring it into mainstream of Nepali culture. *Kelang* is considered as a part of life. They enjoy it through traditional ways and express their joy, and various other emotions through these dances. It keeps the relation with the *Limbus* as the bond of nail and flesh.

Dynamicity and Diversity in Kelang

Cultures, rituals and oral literature are carried down in the forms of traditions in societies. Definitely there is some change but it carries traditional form and content as much as possible. It also contains archaic word and traditional form. Tank K C says, "Folk songs are the traditional of singing, playing and dancing in happiness and sorrow" (11).

Kelang, in the beginning was used in *Himge* purely but it came to change while it came to generation to generation. According to time, it occupies its form. Ritual and folk literature is natural expression of common people with simple musical instruments. *Kelang* is done by expressing humanity with the popular instrument in *Limbus Ke* (drum). From the performance of it, we evaluate that how the human beings take the nature and natural beings. *Kelang* and other such rituals are created by the same people with the time passes. In fact, with the course of time, the ritual exists. Jan Vansina says, "All most official traditions are accounts dealing with the history of

the corporate group that keeps them. They were performed publicly, on occasions that had great meaning for that group, and in the presents of the leaders of the group" (98).

Kelang has come to be changing from traditional form with the course of time. It depends on the holders, how they take it or on their tendencies. The practitioners change their perspectives in necessities; also their cultures and rituals are affected. *Kelang* also has the conditions of dynamicity. Its portion remains on how the government behaves, too. Rituals or folk literature develop with human civilization. As the change occurs on the society, the form and content of it also change gradually. Modern means of production is used and the life study of people is changed. Time and environments people have, costumes and jewellerys they wear, language they speak, are changed because newness is added to it. Vansina says, "Tales which are important source for the historian, certain material of very mixed age and parentage" (26). Modern people do not have sufficient time as in earlier people. They use short time to perform collectively. New materials and skills are added.

Kelang's spirit is in rural areas, villages but now, it has come to town areas. It is being practised in Dharan, Damak, Biratamod and even in Kathmandu. Generally, it occurs differently than in the village, because more facilities are available in towns. It might have changed while it came to towns from village. Govinda Angbuhang gives an interview that "people of town take and practise differently but not in regard of rules and bases" (Interview). So, performance changes as the new characters are added on tradition. The historical values are not wiped out from such rituals but extra qualities are added as sum of cumulative frequency of socio-cultural values. As the time passes, different newer style, subject, meaning are added and the ritual became more colourful.

We find the *Kelang* in various because people have different nature. They

are guided by their own tendencies. People cannot stay at stability and change appears. *Limbu* people saw different birds, animals and other elements of nature, and then they copied them in *Lang* (dance). It made their *Kelang* in various. It is the human nature to look extra and see extra. So they changed *Kelang*. Roshan Angbuhang views that "we can't say about *Kelang*'s types and also it will have further more types" (Interview). *Kelang* is done making the base of the creatures. So, a creative person can compose many others, imitating those creatures. Hence, it depends on up to the creative persons. J. R. Subba claims that "there are various kinds of dances in Chyabrung or Ke dance depending on imitation of various kinds of living creatures" (216).

Even in marriage (*metkamma*), *Kelang* is applied in various types. If we enter here, we find *Lamdatte*, *Namdatte*, *Semmui*, *Fungwa* and *Thama Lang* in the whole marriage ceremony. These all have its own importance, Yehang Lawati writes that "... namdatte lang, lamdo/ Semmui lang, Lamdak lang are main of *Kelang*" (75).

To consider its variety it depends on areas too. Though *Kelang* is named differently according to the particular areas, its classical body and rules are not broken. Anyway, it shows the diversity in *Kelang*. *Yangrupe*, *Fedappe*, *Atharaitum*, *Chhathare*, *Chaubisthum*, *Charkholthum*, *Kusarakpa lang* etc. are the varieties of *Kelang*, named after particular areas. Roshan Angbuhang exposes in an interview that "the areas and place also contribute to make *Kelang*'s varieties such as Charkhapan Kusarakpa, Dasmajhiya, Maiwakhola."

Now days, different sizes of *Ke* (drum) are seen; some are big, short, long etc. we know that *Kelang* is thought for in styles too. Bhimsen Lingdam describes, "Drum from Sikkim is short and big in size" (Interview). In the performance of *Kelang*, we glance that the dancers move their body as of animals, birds etc. the dancers diverse

Kelang to give much entertainment the audiences and spectators. They imitate stag (*Khire lang*), Dove (*Puttukey lang*), Peacock (*Mora lang*), Buffalo (*Sanwa lang*), goat (*Menda lang*) etc. this situation also gives *Kelang's* varieties or kinds.

In this way, we come to conclusion that first time *Kelang* was invented to an intention for prosperity; house opening (*himge*) and then marriage ceremonies (*metkamma*). Chaitanya Subba writes, "But today it is performed mostly in marriage ceremony and other happy occasions" (61). Since then, *Kelang* formed of dynamics and diversities. It reached, in the course of time, to town, city and to foreign countries such as Hong Kong, Brunei, UK etc. Anyhow, the loving of *Kelang* ritual and culture, want to save it as existence. They add it with their civilization. Lastly, dynamism is the inevitable element in society and in culture however the zest of ritual should be protected. The change as regards to decorations, styles and situations seems. Therefore *Kelang* is also influenced by it. As time passes and crosses the certain geographical line, the ritual slightly changes in its form and its way of performance especially new generation, who are tied by modernism have changed slightly in its ostensibility.

Pantheism in Kelang

Kelang is transmitted performance from the past beyond the generations. It definitely relates to the root or ancestor of *Limbu* people and it differs with another community and society. Therefore it specifies the people who they are and from where they are. Clifford Greertz, in his book, the *Interpretation of Culture* says, "Culture, the accumulated totality of such patter is not just an ornament of human existence but the principal basis of its specificity an essential condition for it" (46). Similarly Harsha Bahadur Buda Magar says in *Kirat Bansha ra Magarharu Eka Eitihasuk Sarbekshan*, "Any caste, sub caste, ethnics or society and community have

their own self existence in their lives which is the most important issue. Human beings are evaluated on the basis of such existence any caste, without self existence is similar to death body" (451). Every caste or community has their own existence or identity. And they love their existence, and try to save it.

Who he/she is and how he/she is answered only by traditional culture. Culture identifies individual of certain community, it relates to the original place and ancestor, and it also clears the goal of people. Greertz says, "Under the guidance of cultural patterns, historically created systems of meaning in terms of which we give form, order, point and direction to our lives. And the cultural patterns involved are not general but specific" (52). *Limbus* and *Kelang* is complement. One is hollow without another. *Limbus* are guided by some certain cultures and rituals; *Kelang* is one among them.

Kelang is an identity of *Limbus* or it makes *Limbus* unique with identity to the comparison to others. Hangwasang Yakthumba writes that "the culturally rich *Limbus*' *Kelang* is one important culture which is performed with a song, *Kesam*" (46). So, *Kelang* is itself affiliated to *Limbus* in regard of identification. Next identity also is there in *Kelang* performance i.e. female freedom. This condition of *Limbu* community is itself an identity which is found rarely in Nepali communities. So it is a mentionable identical view. J.R. Subba writes, "It is performed by male dancers and in some occasions they are accompanied by female dancers also" (215). While doing *Kelang*, male and female can participate in a circle. No hesitation is there. So we can say that *Kelang* is the present of equality and female freedom. This ritual, *Kelang*, is practiced in *Limbuwan* area, eastern districts of Nepal.

This is a remarkable issue of Pantheism which we find in *Kelang*. There is an eternal relationship between nature and *Limbus* like relationship between rose and

thorn. They claim that they are first people who came on the lap of nature, so they are aborigines. Hence, they keep close relations to nature. Melanie Papadis writes, “Limbus believe that God resides in nature and therefore have a very animistic view of nature and its elements. Limbus have a strong and determined nature, and are always ready to defend themselves and their land” (1). They are fond of natures; they go to the river and worship there, and also worship stones, fires etc. they go up the hills and worship there believing that there is god. Dabal Ketu writes in his book *Limbu Ko Itihas Ra Bartaman Awastha*, “Limbus are nature-lover and pantheistic, so they perform Kelang in imitation of all the creatures found in the world” (88-89). *Kelang* is, in a sense, a mimic; it is imitated that *Kelang* is the expression of all the creatures. Most of the creatures are endeavoured to imitate in *Kelang*.

Subba expresses again that “Chyabrunge or Ke dance depending on imitation of various kinds of living creatures hence, they are named after particular birds or animals or insects” (216). The source of *Kelang* is the natural movement or motion of the creatures. Therefore the dancers try to copy the creatures in dance. Sher bahadur Ingnam says that “in the beginning people saw a pigeon, a peacock in dancing, they danced imitating the birds” (63). Similarly J.R. Subba, Pandhak adds that “ these varieties are known as Yasa lang (Himalayan chamois dance), Khire lang (stag dance), Sippethukpa or puttukey lang(dove dance), Perewa lang (pigeon dance)[...]Tokmi lang (elephant dance), Waruk lang (frog dance), Chirphemba lang (butterfly dance)” (216). It is enough to know that behind these kinds of *Kelang* that these creatures are imitated. They *Limbus* belong to pantheism because they put close relationship to natures. *Kelang* is itself exposing the pantheistic qualities.

Limbus, therefore, are rich peopling as regards to rituals. Not only *Kelang* but also most of the rituals, *Tongsing*, *Palam* , *Yalang* etc of *Limbus* are performative.

They are too close to performative activities. They express their manners and actions via imitations of the creatures in *Kelang* ritual. They believe that in the nature of creatures and also they hope of blessings. So they can be categorized into pantheism. They have pantheistic views upon the rituals. *Kelang* ritual is totally pantheism based. They have distinct ways and ideas of performance in rituals that shape their own type of cultural identity.

V. Conclusion

As the researched analysis of *Kelang* from the perspective of ritual performance and performativity, the researcher has found that *Kelang* ritual is the foundation of Limbu life. The rituals like *Kelang* have solidly formed an identity of Limbus as one of the most unique tribes in Nepal and have been endeavouring to preserve it thinking as an inevitable cultural property.

Kelang is fully performative ritual performed in Limbu communities of eastern Nepal which has been transmitted from generation to generation; so *Kelang* becomes a way of externalizing the common feelings and messages for uneducated people. Not only in *Limbuwan* areas, *Kelang* is also performed as a ritual practice out of Nepal such as in some states of India, UK, Hong Kong, Singapore, Brunei etc.

Kelang is performed beating the drum called *Ke* among Limbu males in a circle mainly in Marriage ceremonies and newly built house openings and in some cases, females also can participate following the steps and the beatings of the drum. It is clear behind its performance that they believe to have blessings for their prosperity. Whenever *Kelang* is performed by imitating the creatures, the audiences/ spectators see the feelings and messages of nature. Thus, it provides messages and entertainments, and other social traditional beliefs and duties. Such action oriented performance makes easy transmit to new generations.

Though the Limbus celebrate different fairs and festivals at different time, *Kelang* is performed only on happy occasions. So, they enjoy it with drinks, wine, ale, *tongba* (bamboo beer) and performance imitating different creatures with hope of blessings. Thus, *Kelang* dose not explore their Pantheistic philosophy but also transports distinct performative aspects of Limbu life with distinct cultural identity.

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