

I. A Brief Introduction to Santhal Community and their Cultural Aspects

Nepal is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-lingual country where various ethnic groups like Indo-Europeans, People of Asian Aborigines, and Mongolians are living side by side in harmony from pre-historic time. Multi-ethnicity is, thus, one of the major characteristics of Nepalese society that such rich tapestry of ethnic diversity has made Nepal a unique country in this world. There are more than hundred ethnic groups/ communities and each of them has their own distinct cultural identity and uniqueness. Such a great variety and diversity of races, religions, castes, cultures, languages of this land are, to some extent, the result of its geographical locality and social history.

Nepal is a meeting ground for people of different culture and ethnicity. Situated at the natural watershed that runs through the middle of the largest continent in the world, this land has traditionally attracted and given shelter to people from all direction from pre-historic time (nomadic period). As a result, several independent and distinct ethnic groups are living with their own languages, religious practices, life style, food habits, clothing, and cultural behaviors. Many of these ethnic and cultural groups have, in the course of time and as a result of contemporary scientific and societal development, undergone changes drastically and come into the mainstream cultural, social behaviors of this nation. They have in many cases left their almost all pre-historic, typical cultural behaviors, and societal patterns and practices. But there are still some other ethnic groups who have preserved their ethnicity, cultural richness, and diversities, and distinctness even by assimilating many positive attitudes and norms, and ideas of their other advanced neighboring groups and of world as a whole. Thus, over a period of time, many have undergone various social and cultural changes. In some cases, ethnic people are accepted to be more near and dependent on

nature than other people and ethnic groups who have assimilated, in a considerable scale, other behaviors and practices of modern scientific and technological world. But now things have changed and many, almost all, ethnic groups of Nepal have started assimilating and adopting different modern social patterns, and behaviors leaving their full dependence on nature, and raw natural resources. Due to their mixed settlement with other cultural groups, many changes have occurred in such participants of ethnic groups as they have started affecting and assimilating each others' good social and cultural behaviors, and aspects. And it can be read or traced or named as the impacts of cultural and societal modernity in the social lives and cultural values of these participants groups.

Among many ethnic groups of Nepal, Santhal is one who has played equally important role to add the beauty on the ethnic and cultural tapestry of Nepal. And it has its own cultural and social pattern. According to *A Study on Child Mortality in the Santhal Community*:

Nepal Foundation of Indigenous Nationalities (NDFIN) has identified 59 indigenous nationalities which occupy 37 percent of Nepal's total population . . . The Santhal community is one that adds to the rich and eclectic cultural resourcefulness of Nepal that has a unique blend of many cultural, traditional, linguistic, and social system. (1-2)

Santhal is originally an indigenous ethnic group of Nepal who has their own typical and distinct cultural and social behaviors, linguistic system and social patterns and plays equally vital role to the cultural diversity of Nepal.

There is a considerable debate about the identity if this group in terms of their nationality. Many writers and researchers who have studied about this ethnic group are of the opinion that Santhals are immigrants of Terai of Nepal but some of other

researchers have presented this ethnic group as one indigenous group of Nepal thus one aboriginal Nepalese tribe. Motherhood Care Nepal in its course of study has presented Santhals as an immigrant ethnic group of Nepal. In its *A Study in Child Mortality in the Santhal Community*, they write:

Anthropologists claim that the Santhals originated in Africa. They migrated to east and came to settle in the Indian subcontinent in due course of time. Racially, they belong to Austro-Asiatic group of human families. Their dark skin, curly hair, and strongly built figure explain their racial characteristics. Some believe that they came from the Districts of Santha, that is why they still call them Santan (offspring) or decedents of the Santha State. (2)

Here, Motherhood Care Nepal has, by analyzing their physical proximity with Austro-Asiatic group of human families, presented Santhal as an immigrant ethnic group to this land. They are believed to have come from Santha District of India.

They are believed to have come to Nepal by long time as a nomadic tribe. They have migrated from one place to another in different seasons searching favorable environment and finally have rested to the dense forest area of Terai belt of Nepal. They have though much physical similarity with Tharus and Rajbanshi and Koches of these Terai belt of Nepal, have many other distinct own cultural patterns and social behaviours but they are not native tribe of Nepal. Nagendra Sharma, too, forwards same idea in his *Nepali Janajiwani* and presents them as an immigrant group. He writes:

Physically and in accordance with their clothing habits, though Santhals have much similarity with Tharus, Rajbansi and Koche, culturally they have their own distinct and separate practices. This

unique and culturally distinct ethnic group of Nepal who mainly dwells in its southern eastern areas, Morang and Jhapa districts from long time, can be listed as local ethnic groups of the areas . . . They appear similar to Tharus, Rajbanshi and Koches of these areas by their physical attributes, structures and clothing habits . . . in fact they are not an aboriginal tribe of Nepal (My Translation, 24).

For Sharma too, though this group lives in mixed settlement in eastern Terai belt of Nepal from prehistoric time period is not an aboriginal tribe but an immigrant group.

This tribe has distinct cultural identity and especiality and social, economic system, clothes and food habits to follow. They live in isolation from other communities primarily near the side of forest area and river bank mainly. Dr. Rajesh Gautam, Asoke K. Thapa-Magar has similar view. They write, "Among the tribes populating the areas of Jhapa and Morang districts in the Mechi and Koshi Zones respectively, the Satar is one which possesses its own cultural identity and especiality" (220). Motherhood Care Nepal too has similar view in this regard. They write:

Santhals live in isolation from other communities, basically near the forest area and on the bank of the river. They live in a cluster at least two or three houses of their close paternal relatives. They cultivate few goats, pigs, hens but the agricultural land is rare. They celebrate their own life style, as per our eye, they enjoy primitive life except some young boys wear jeans. They have their own believes and rituals and hardly participate in social events. (1)

For them, Santhal originally love to follow their own cultural, social, and political pattern and like to dwell in isolation to other social groups by the forest or river side.

Large number of Santhal people live in Bihar and then in mid-Indian states. They can be found in Odisha, West Bengal, and Assam State too. Their total population was believed to be 2.8 million by the decade of 60's in the 20th century India. Danka of India was believed to be their mainland. They have come to Nepal or its Terai belt nearly about 6/7 decades ago from different subdivision of Bihar State of India. Now they are scattered in different countries along with Nepal. Maldives, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Mauritius are some of them. Especially in Nepal, they can be located/point out in eastern Terai belt. Nepal, Ratnamai in his project work report (Feb. 2004) writes:

In Nepal, they are especially found in Jhapa, Morang and Sunsari districts. In Jhapa, they live in Dhulabari, Jyamirgadhi, Dhajjan, Kakarvitta, Duhagadi, Anarmani, Garamani, Haldibari, Bhadrapur, Mahespur, Chandragadi, Saranamati, Kumarkhod, Taghandubba, Chakchaki, Surunga, Satasi, Mahabhara, Sibganj, Rajghad, Ghailadubbha, Charpane VDCs and the areas connected to these VDCs . . . In Morang, they live in Urlabari and other areas joined with Jhapa district. In Sunsari, they are found in Inaruwa and Itahari. Many writers and researchers have agreed about the habitat of Santals as Jhapa and Morang districts of Nepal. (10)

Here, Nepal has particularized Jhapa, Morang, Sunsari districts of Nepal as main areas where one can find Santals. One reason behind their dense settlement in these areas of eastern Nepal is because they are benefited with dense forest areas there.

Santals have their own distinct and prosperous culture and way of life. They have their own religion and customs to follow and god and goddess to worship. Many believe them as Hindu. But Motherhood Care Nepal in its report *A Study in Child*

Mortality in the Santhal Community claims, "Sarna is their religion . . . They do not worship idols, nor make temples for their deity . . . They are a peaceful and harmonious community" (3).

It's a century of globalization and nothing have been successful to remain untouched and pure in this era i.e. everyone and everything is receiving either willingly or unwillingly the effects of other culture and modern cultural trends. Thus Santhal Community too is not an exception in this matter. We can see traces to much extent the impacts of modernity upon the social, cultural distinctness/uniqueness by correcting its many orthodoxical and un-scientific tradition, cultural behaviors and habits. Thus they are now on the vertex of change. Their dressing patterns have been changed. They have now even started accepting different labor works and official jobs as their main source of economy and earning of livelihood leaving their prehistoric activities of hunting and seeking wild roots and fruits for livelihood.

These changes are directly or indirectly the outcomes of mixed settlement they have resorted to in recent years. Intercultural mixing, the advent of development and education and the role of different social organizations are attributable for these change i.e. their major cultural aspects. For example, such changes can be found/traced in the name of their tribe. Now they accept 'Satar' word as a word suggesting Santhal. Actually, Santhal was the word to denote their tribe in common. Dahal, Chintamani in this regard writes:

Actually in words of Satar themselves they became Satar because of the pronunciation of the Terai indigenous tribe Rajbanshi. When Santhal entered Nepal from India especially pronunciation of Rajbanshi left the word 'al' from Santhal and they pronounced it as Santhar or Satar and at last it became Satar. (8)

For Dahal, the change in the pronunciation of word 'Santhal' to 'Satar' and their assent to it is one major change occurred in their lives caused by their common/mixed settlement and constant/regular contact to the people from other social groups.

They are very much friendly and peaceful tribe. They are completely natural, honest, and simple. They know how to be joyous and content even in the worst materialistic situation. Physically, there is much more similarities between this tribe and other Austro-Asiatic group of human families. About their physical outlook, Bista in his *People of Nepal* says, "Their dark complexion, curly hair, and muscular well proportioned bodies are very much like those of the Tharus" (138). Dahal too has similar view in this regard. He writes:

Racially they belong to Austro-Asiatic group of human families. The dark skin, curly hair and strongly built figure explore their racial characteristics. They are short in stature with Dravidian feature. They have small head, black and wrinkled hair, downward eye cover by yellow color at white part. They are simple, honest and brave. (qtd. in *Nepal* 4)

For Dahal, despite looking wild and dark, Santhals are simple, honest, and brave. They are a peaceful and harmonious community.

Every ethnic group have their own separate and distinct history, cultural behaviors, and social patterns on which they proud of and find some sense of affinity. And in this regard, Santhal too is no more an exception that they have their own history and belief of origin. They believe themselves to be descendents of God and Goddess like Sun and Moon. According to their myth, earth was first covered with water. And its only dwellers were "Thakur Jeeu" and his servants. Then one day he simply thought of creating life on earth and in this way human got created. As per the

myth of this tribe, there were at that time seven daughters and seven sons of a couple of duck. Later they got separated by quarreling. Daughters took the side of the she-duck; “Pinchu Budee” and left the area and started dwelling in other areas. On the course of time, they one day accidentally met each other. Forgetting their relationship, they indulge in sexual activities which resulted in seven different castes of this tribe. Dahal too writes about the same myth:

They kept incest relationship which resulted in different seven castes of this tribe like I. Kisku, II. Murmu, III. Hemram, IV. Soren, V. Hasda, VI. Mardi, VII. Tudu. And then later came other castes like Baske(kee), Besra, Pauriya, and Kore. In this way, they believe themselves to be created directly by “Thakur Jeeu”. (30)

They worship different gods and goddess to prevent any type of problems and danger in their physical world. “Majhee Sthan”, “Jaherera”, “Goshae Era”, “Maranburu” were some names of their deities. Like peoples from other tribes and communities of Nepal, they too have strong belief on the supremacy of Gods and accepte them as the controller of all worldly affairs. But they are not stature worshiper. "We don't worship statues rather pray to nature, trees, and earth (Dharti)" (Basu Besra, Interview). It is one of the good aspect of their culture. Despite believing on the existence of some invisible power of abstract gods, they pay their respect to visible supremacy of nature, and Earth.

In relation to birth rites, this community has some distinct practices in comparison to other tribes from the surrounding areas. About such variation, Shastradatta Panta in his *Jhapaka Aadibasi* writes, ". . . unlike in other lower classes' case, there is no more such customs of taking a pregnant woman impure and improper for any ancestral rituals after the eighth months of her pregnancy" (22). Rituals of

naming, “nwaran”, is performed in either the first day or the third or seventh day of the child birth as it depends upon the economic situation of the family. They don’t go to the hospital rather takes help of “Sudeni”. The “Sudeni”, who is assigned the task by the society, handles the delivery. In this ritual, they practice some distinct activity. For example, they bury the umbilical cord under the main door of the house. In this regard *Motherhood Care Nepal* writes, "In the birth of a child, the umbilical cord is broken and buried under the main door of the house by mid-wives" (3). The child receives name after his/her grandparents as a reverence to their ancestors. In this regard, Dahal in his *Sanskritika Bibid Pakchhama Satar Ra Gangai Gatiharu* writes:

After the child birth, “Sudeni” releases the umbilical cord with arrow. They name the child either in the same or the next day . . . Unlike of other ethnic groups, they don’t name the child after the name of the day or month of his/her birth. (48)

They name the child after the name of their grandparents. They celebrate this day with “Nimada Madie”, an especial dish, prepared by cooking “Aruwa rice” and “Nim Patta”. And after the naming of the child, the mother must get free from the delivery pollution by paying homage to their god. Panta in this respect writes:

They name the child with ether name to their grand pa or grandmother as the sex of the child. Thus four names are enough for each family. And they always maintain the age/seniority off hierarchy in naming rituals. The “sudeni” names the child and she must call all the women by the village. Then they celebrate “Nimada Madie”, child birth party by cooking “Aruwa rice” and “Nim Patta”. The mother is believed to be impure and must be purified from delivery pollution through nwaran rituals of the child. (22-23)

Child birth is a very cheerful and easy event for each Santhal. They have no more the sense of discrimination between son and daughter. All the villagers/members of the community celebrate this day with joy.

They do not seem to have habituated with the rituals of “Pasni” and “Chhawar” (an auspicious day for hair cutting of a child for the first time) like that of people of the surrounding areas. Ritual of naming, “nwaran” is all for a child during his/her child age. Thus there is no any fixed day/age for feeding and hair cutting.

Custom of marriage of this group is very distinct in relation to other cultural groups. They celebrate it with singing, dancing, and feasting with wine. They are more liberal and advance in terms of their beliefs and practices of marriage. They as per their social rule, are monogamous. They don't practice early marriage and have no more the dowry system. Bista in his *People of Nepal* writes, "Marriage as a rule is monogamous and patri-local and descent is patri-lineal . . . Satars do not practice early marriage. Usually the ages of the bride and the groom are twenty years or more. The young people enjoy absolute freedom in pre-marital sexual activities" (139). They don't take marriage as a big social/familial burden. They are much more liberal in marriage practice. But always avoid any physical/sexual relationship with the people of same clan unit but it is not similar to different caste system of Hindu societies. They often arrange marriage by mutual understanding of the boy and girl. In other case, parents plays vital role to arrange and organize the marriage. In both practices, both boy and girl get enough time and freedom to understand each other. From the initial phase of their marriage, they follow distinct activities. Panta in this regard writes, "In the consent of both parties, they fix the marriage date by providing meat, wine, and some money to the parents of girl by the boy's side" (24). The date may be extended up to a year.

Culturally, a Santhal can adopt any of the marriage practices to manage/settle his familial life as there are almost ten different marriage practices. Unlike in other Hindu culture, they practice love marriage, arrange marriage, forcefull marriage and other too. In this regard, Dahal writes:

They practice different marriage practices . . . Kirin Bahu Bapla (Arrange Marring), Hireem Chetan Bapla (Polygamy), Sanya Bapla (widow/widower Marriage), Gharadee Jawai Bapla (in such practice boy stays in girl's house permanently), Golat Bapla (exchange marriage), Jawaee Kirinok Bapla (in such marriage girl's party trace the ex-lover of the girl), Niriwo Lok Bapla (in such marriage girl forces the boy to accept her), Itut Bapla (in such marriage boy forces the girl to accept him), Apangeer Bapla (love marriage), and Tukee Dipil Bapla (in such marriage, girl's parents simply leave her in the boy's house). (49)

This shows a freedom, that all girls and boys of this community practice. Such freedom is available to all to settle his/her married life. They are not forced to follow any fixed pattern.

They take marriage as a great ceremony no matter what is the process. Anyone can choose either method to marry but the whole society celebrates it with music, dance, wine, and feast. Socially, they spend their much more time in entertainment; indulge in romance, hunting, and music. So culturally, they arrange a marriage for about 12 days and in these days they undergo different cultural practices, rituals and have fun too. In this regard, Dahal writes, "As per their practice, they take 12 days to complete a marriage ritual" (50).

They are very much strict about the inter-caste or inter community marriage and always try to discourage it so inter-caste and inter-community marriage is almost impossible in this community in such cases. In case of such incident, they punish the boy or the girl and their family members which they called “Bitlyaha”. In this regard Panta writes:

They are strict about the inter-tribe marriage. If anyone from the other communities (tribes) happen to receive/marry girl from this community will be heavily punished. All Santhals from the girl's party, in such case, vandalize the boy's house and urinate all the edible materials of the house. It is called “Bitlyaha”. (28)

Participants from the boy's side do not directly go to the bride's house. “Jug Majhi” (head of the village) must first go to them to welcome and pay homage. Then only they enter the village. Seven people lift the bride on bamboo basket while groom plants “Sindur” in her's head. At that time, brother in law or uncle in law of the boy lift the groom in his solder. Thus groom party stay in the bride's house for that day. They celebrate the evening with music, song and wine, meat. Thus on next day morning after ritual bath by near river, pay their homage to their ancestors. Then the bride's father sends his daughter to the groom's house singing songs of tragedy and best wishes. This shows their excessive love to their descendents. Both sides must arrange feast in both sides to fix the marriage.

In case of death of relatives or any family member, Santhal bury the dead body by the side of forest in a fixed area as it is their rule. But it is not compulsion for one to perform the post funeral ceremony by the same day. They organize this event for one day and celebrate with wine, music and feast calling all the members of the community but it depends upon the then economic situation of the family. They can

arrange this event within 2/3 years of the funeral day. There is no any other fixed ritual to be performed or followed. Panta in *Jhapaka Aadibasi* writes:

Despite the presence of priest of their own tribe there are no any fixed rituals and customs to be followed during rituals of death of any family member. They crematories the dead body in accordance to the then socio-economic situation. (28)

In this sense they are more liberal and follow practical rituals than the rituals followed by people of surrounding areas. They complete the funeral ritual within a day after that of crematories. As practice it is to be completed on third day of the accident but one can arrange it within 2/3 years of the accident. Panta says if there occurred another death in a family then they complete all those funeral rituals at once. For this ritual they save necessary materials and prepare enough meat, rice and wine. And on the ritual day they call all the relatives and all other acquainted people from the village and feed them fully. "This ritual/feasting is called "Bhog Bhandan" . . . the person who performs the "Bhog Bhandan" will bald his head. Otherwise he is, like other allowed touching anything, eating, and staying together with other" (Panta 29).

Panta further writes:

One will first forward the message of the event to the "Naike" and then he will forward the message to other people of the community. Then they will crematories the dead body with his own bed . . . women from the village cleanse the dead body's legs, hands and head on his own plate . . . there is the ritual of crematorizing all the belongs like clothes, utensils, wealth with the dead body. (29)

They are believed to be the follower of Hindu and Christian religious norms. But their rituals are quite different as they sing song and organize musical event for happy

farewell of the bygone family member and community member, crematorizes all the belongings of the dead person like clothes, utensils, wealth with the dead body.

Actually they call themselves to be the follower of *Sarna* religion, another distinct cultural, social pattern of their own. Thus though they call themselves to be a Hindu or a Christian, follow their own distinct social and cultural and religious pattern.

The Santhals have their own religion to follow and deities to worship. So they call “Sarna” as their religion. “Thakurji” is, thus, their ancestral deity. Their social order and system are very much different on one hand and prosperous on the other than the social systems of people from other Nepalese Communities. Bista in this respect in his *People of Nepal* writes:

They inhabit in small and simple villages in the middle of the forests and their social lives are well organized and strictly discipline . . . Law and order within the community is maintained with the help of a village council. The decision of the village council is obeyed without hesitation by the villagers. The council of the village elders is presided over by a “Majhi” who is appointed as the headman with the unanimous support of the village. (139)

They live in isolation by forming their own group. And follow their own social order, and rule to maintain social discipline and peace. In this regard this tribe is unique and rich too.

They all follow a separate system, structure of the village council called “Modehad” to maintain their social, cultural order, and to solve every social problem since they live in isolation, away from any touch with people from other communities. And this council is powered enough to solve their all social problems. So nothing comes outside from their society and community. And this council works very

democratically. “Majhi Hadam” will be the supreme power holder of this council and works very wisely by taking advises from the community. Panta, about this village council in his *Jhapaka Aadibasi* writes:

“Majhi Hadam” is an elected leader of the village for unlimited time period. He may run the council for his whole life and it may be transferable to his descendents if they are of good mannered. He must rule according to the democratic norms and values that his decisions must be correct in all manner . . . he is assigned the duty to look after and perform all necessary rituals in the sacred shrine of “Majhi Hadam” . . . He can even quite his duty freely by just calling the meeting of the village council. (30)

All the members of the village council have separate and specific duties to be performed and they will be sincere to it and adopt democratic norms and values too as much as possible.

Songs have especial and important role in their life that they use it in every occasion in which they reflect their sense of love, passion, homage to god, love of nature, sense of brotherhood and desires for mutual and social relationship. After the long day hard work, they relax themselves with music of “Tirio”, “Dhodro Banam”, “Phet Banam”, “Junko”, “Singa”. They celebrate many festivals and songs, music and dances are essential in such occasions. Panta further writes:

“Sahrai” is their one main festival. It is celebrated as “kali Puja” (Tihar of Hindu custom). In this festival they worship cow. It begins from month of Kartik and ends in month of Margh . . . all enjoy this festival with feasting, singing and dancing . . . “Sankrat”, “Baha”, “Ero”, “Dasahara” are some other major festivals of this community. (36)

Nepalese people belong either to the Aryan or Mangolian or Dravidian race and their mixtures. Thus the rich tapestry of ethnic diversity is Nepal's one prominent cultural characteristic. Culture is a social phenomenon which directly gets affected by the surrounding social environment and in contrast poses the capacity to affect the social and cultural behavior of the people of the area too. Thus culture is always a changing phenomenon which always keeps on developing and changing. Thus the history of human society is the history of their constant struggle and change. It poses the power to influence the cultural, social, economic, political, familial aspects of every cultural groups of the surrounding. In such struggle every social class tries to implant/force their cultural behaviors and patterns and norms to the cultural life practices of other groups and assimilate other's good cultural aspects in their social, cultural structure which have made it possible the formation of 21st century advance civilization. Thus change is a continual and ever going practice of human civilization in which each try to influence other and in contrast gets affected too. And it made possible the advancement of human civilization from the Stone Age to this current advance age of science and technology.

Now things have chaged. And Santhals too have undergone many changes. They have started living in semi-urban and urban areas living the forest and river bank side in mixed settlement with other ethnic groups of different social and cultural background. They have now started adopting different modern means of science and technologies to ease their social lives and even started showing their interest in the political scenario of the nation. About the ongoing cultural transformation of Santhal tribe Dor Bahadur Bista in his *Sabai Jatko Fulbari* writes:

Because of mixed settlement and their constant interacting with peoples of other communities these people have now much aware

about their tribal consciousness. Though there are no any planning and direct inspiration from other sides, especially government to make them modern, developed. Due to the establishment of direct monarch reign, issues like . . . so, slowly those orthodoxical and traditional unscientific practices are no more receiving any respect by youths and adults of the group. Phase of social transformation of any social group/system begins from such process/activities. (My Translation, 103-104)

For Bista, these changes are the direct result of their mixed settlement in recent time and also the result of different programs run by government and NGOs and INGOs. Thus changes and transformation in their behavior is more evident in recent ages.

In short, in recent days there has come greater transformation in their living practices due to the regular contact with other communities in their mixed settlement and several programs organized and run by different INGOs and NGOs to uplift their living condition. They have become more conscious about their and others' position in the society. Some Santhal youth have even acquired education and are able to hold satisfactory position in the field of employment, social service and politics too. In the past they were totally away from contact with other communities, used to live in dense forest of Terai Region as a nomadic group, totally dependent upon hunting and seeking wild roots and fruits for their livelihood. But now things have changed much. They are now in semi-nomadic situation. They had their own life style and cultural practices which are totally distinct from that of the cultural practices of people of the surrounding areas at first. But in these days it seems that they have come under influences primarily of Hinduism and Christianity. They have even engaged themselves in different wage labor activities and agricultural activities for their

earning of livelihood. Some have even joined different office jobs and government services. In this regard, they are seen adopting some of the characteristics of physical advancement and modern technology. But they are too much conscious about their unique cultural identity and practice an aware enough to preserve their distinct cultural features and uniqueness.

II. Alternative Modernity and Cultural Change in Santhal Community

The idea of modernity was supposed to have begun with the enlightenment period in the west which highly focused on human rationality and gave excessive priority over it claiming reasoning as a sole means to free human. Kant is, thus, believed to be a main thinker to generate the idea of modernity. Modernity is the consciousness of time and space, experience of the self and other. It conceives time and space as nonlinear, disjunctive, and non-locutionary phenomenon. It is sometime understood as break from the tradition. So it continually introduces new and distinct social, cultural, and technological patterns of life. It promises new and distinct socio-cultural-political life, joy and development which even threaten the traditional socio-cultural patterns. In this view, Marshall Berman writes:

There is a mode of vital experience-experience of space and time, of the self and other, of life's possibilities and perils- that is shared by men and women all over the world today. I will call this body of experience "modernity". To be modern is to find ourselves in an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world- and at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, and everything we are. (15)

For Berman, modernity, the consciousness of time and space not only promises joy, adventure, bright future and possibilities, the positive aspects but also threatens our self, and culture that is everything we have at the same time.

Similarly the Mexican poet and critic Octavio Paz too understands modernity in terms of radical movement, break and a constant threat to the customs and cultural patterns of the contemporary social cultural behavior of a society of a particular time

period. He says, modernity is "Cut off from the past and continually hurtling forward at such a dizzy pace that it cannot take root that it merely survives from one day to the next" (qtd. in Berman 35).

The seventeenth and eighteenth century's debate over the idea of ancient and modern literary style gave rise to the idea of modernity that we now understand in our age. Now, it is defined in terms of rejection of classical aesthetics, the timeless beauty and the reliance over the modern world of science and technology. Gerard Delanty in his *The Discourse of Modernity: Enlightenment, Modernity and Fin-de-Siecle Sociology* writes:

The idea of modernity found one of its first expressions in the seventeenth and eighteenth century debate between the 'ancients and the moderns', or the battle of the books, concerning literary style and the status of the classics . . . The moderns were those who had rejected classic style, such as the idea of timeless beauty or the reverence for the Augustan Age, in favor of the contemporary, which was characterized by a strong belief in science and progress. (8-9)

For him, modernity refutes the classical ideas even of aesthetics and highly relies over changed social behaviors and scientific development and progress.

Modernity is actually related to change. It is the outcome of consciousness of time and space, development of science and technology. In this regard Tylor argues that, "Modernity is not that form of life toward which all cultures converges as they discard beliefs that held our forefather's back. Rather, it is a moment from one constellation of background understanding to another, which repositions the self in relation to other and the good (24)". Now the same monolithic western form of

modernity is leading itself to the world globalization which crosses every geographical, national, and cultural boundary.

Generally modernity is understood in terms of a battle between antique and contemporary. Modernity is characterized by a loss of faith and decay of accepted social norms and values. It is a disagreement about the established principles of society, politics, literature, culture, and religion and always urges for a need of transformation or transition of beliefs to the world of reason, rationale namely world of science. Mostly excessive focus upon the importance and value of human rationale and science in the eighteenth century enlightenment period marked the beginning of modernity. It marks the superiority over the antique social, cultural values and patterns. Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar by describing the similar characteristics of modernity in his *Alternative Modernities* writes:

The term modern generally designates the consciousness of an age that imagines it-self as having made the transition from the old to the new . . . in the other version, which comes into prominence with the Enlightenment] the modern is associated with the scientific superiority of the present over antiquity. With visions of the infinite progress of knowledge and continuous improvement in moral and material life, modern at last free itself from the spell of antiquity. (5-6)

Modernity and modernism is a European invention that it was born and developed in Western European nations in some seventeenth and eighteenth century and dispersed all over the world with their political project of colonization. Thus, with its rise, rest of the world received its impact either directly or indirectly. Thus we can categorize modernity into two as direct (hegemonic) and indirect (influential). Regarding the emergence of modernity, Gaonkar writes:

Modernity has traveled from the west to the rest of the world not only in terms of cultural forms, social practices, and institutional arrangements but also as a form of discourse that interrogates the present. That questioning of the present, whether in vernacular or in cosmopolitan idioms, which is taking place, at every national and cultural site today cannot escape the legacy of western discourse on modernity. (13)

For Gaonkar, the concept of modernity, the western concept of life, society, customs has influenced the world in one or the other way and has obstructed their every cultural and national site today.

Modernity was actually a western concept emerged officially with enlightenment. Rest of the world later received the influences of modernity in either way- directly or indirectly. Those colonized nations accepted the new way of social, cultural life as an advanced social practice and patterns of institutional arrangements and other non-colonized countries became its victim in indirectly that they accepted its effects thorough scientific development and technologies unknowingly. And at other case, they got indirectly affected by the advance cultural, social, and economic pattern of neighboring communities and groups. Thus the hegemonic western culture with the help of its colonial mission spread their concept of modernism and practices of modernity successfully throughout the world in years after enlightenment.

At first modernity had come into prominence with single mission, like Kant found it a means to free human beings from their tutelage with the excessive focus on their rationale. Thus, we can say that, at that time it was a monolithic concept. But in the course of time, with its journey to twentieth century, that very single concept has now started suggesting multiple and heterogeneous ideas and that it aims to create

heterogeneous societies with multiple features. Thus, now not such monolithic concept like that of enlightenment can describe our society but plural modernities. In this view Marshall Berman writes:

As the modern public expands, it shatters into a multitude of fragments, speaking on commensurable private languages; the idea of modernity, conceived in numerous fragmentary ways loses much of its vividness, resonance and depth, and loses its capacity to organize and give meaning to people's lives. As a result of all this, we find ourselves today in the midst of a modern age that had lost touch with the roots of its modernity. (17)

For Berman, the western eighteenth century concept of enlightenment that is modernism has now remained no more in its traditional form. With the globalization of this concept, now it has become plural and now it has lost its all root to its own history.

Now the same idea of western modernity has become a global phenomenon. The process of colonization supported it to spread all over the world giving rise to the new concept of globalization which has now compensated the earlier role of modernity. Anthony McGrew in his *A Global Society* claims, "Giddens considers globalization to be one of the most visible consequences of modernity" (47). The process of colonization paved the way of globalization that it eased the modernity to be a global cultural pattern, a new way of life. Sanjiv Upreti believes that "colonization led to a globalization of the forms of western capitalism" (227). Upreti further writes:

The modernity that we often talk and theorize about, argues Radhakrishna, is actually only western modernity, having its roots in

Europe; the same modernity that was disseminated worldwide during the era of colonization, an which continues to be the cultural dominant in the contemporary era of intensified globalization. (232)

For Upreti too, European colonization of non-western countries helped European modernity to spread into the world. And now, it is resulting another new global issue of globalization which, Upreti thinks, is again supporting and helping the same western European concept of modernity to spread worldwide.

It is the time of modernization and globalization of science, information and technology which, unlike that of eighteen or nineteenth century monolithic western form of modernity now focuses on the importance of local culture with it simultaneously. The sense of cultural changes, cultural admixtures, cultural hybridity, acculturation, diffusion of cultures of world, and their localization is now thus a world phenomenon pervading the world along with the spreading of modernity.

Globalization is a sharing of cultural norms and values world widely. It is related to social, cultural, economic and political aspects of people of this world with their constant interactions. In this view Edwardo Mendieta in his *Afterword Identities; Postcolonial and Global* writes, "Globalization has to do . . . with processes of political, cultural, and social integration that in many ways antecede economic globalization" (410). It is not just an economic globalization but a more complicated interaction of local with global. Mendieta in this issue further writes, "We have the emergence of cultural formations and trends that are not easily reducible to national forms of cultural sovereignty and affirmation. Such musical, fashion, and even literary products are, rather the products of the interaction between local contexts and global trends" (410). For Mendieta, modern concepts of multiplicity of cultural patterns of

life are thus the result of the interactions of societies enforced by the global concept of globalization.

Similar is the view of Chris Barker too that he too defines globalization as a concept "constituted by the ever increasing abundance of global connections and our understanding of them" (155). Thus now modernity is understood in terms of heterogeneous concept which focuses upon hybridity of cultures which ultimately leads to glocalization or say global modernity in plural sense. Therefore it is now resulting different and differing forms of modernities rather than a singular, uniform modernity like that of modernity of Kant or Berman which was the only means to free human beings from their self incurred tutelage or a radical break to tradition.

Featherstone too has similar view. He writes:

Modernity should not be seen, not only in temporal terms (i.e. as an epochal social transformation) but also in spatial and relational terms. Different spatial zones of the global have . . . become modern in a variety of ways. This requires us to speak of global modernities in the plural. (qtd. in Barker 156)

For Featherstone, globalization should now be taken with local too along with the western idea of imperial capitalism and political, cultural imperialism and colonization.

Thus the global and the local are now in constant play in the concept of globalization which as result is producing a hybrid world culture. Every nation and society is undergoing a sort of cultural transformation and the very monolithic western concept of modernity too now carries this spirit of local with it. Sanjiv Uperti says, "Post structural and post colonial thinkers . . . are of the opinion that modernity should be thought of in local, rather than universal terms. Both tend to focus upon the

geo-cultural contexts to modernity; contexts that are tied to specific locations" (232). According to Upreti, now the concept of local too is emerging in such a prominent way like that of global and is establishing all cultural groups and their culture and norms as important as that of the culture and social patterns of western society.

Dipesh Chakrabarty in his *Habitation of Modernity* valorizes the native Indian culture, mainly its political tradition of modern twentieth and twentieth first centuries. As an Indian, he always tried his best to bring Indian local ideas, tradition, and cultures in the world in another way and tried his best to establish it in this twentieth first century world. Each culture has its own typical idea, customs, and their meanings on which its practitioners try to stick their identity with. In India too in 1920 Gandhi popularized white "Khadi" and it became an epitome for sincere political leaders and their genuineness. The white color of "Khadi" used to symbolizes purity and it is same even to this day. Chakrabarty to valorize such idea writes:

The white of "Khadi" symbolizes the Hindu idea of purity . . . its coarseness an identification with both simplicity and poverty; together, they stand for the politician's capacity to renounce his own material well-being, to make sacrifices . . . in the public/national interest . . . "Khadi" is my excuse for thinking about alternative constructions of the values of public life-and, in particular, about ways in which heterogeneous possibilities are both opened up and closed off-in the modernity that is the legacy of colonial rule . . . its continuous use by men in Indian public life also sustains another reading, one that addresses desires for alternative constructions of the public sphere, constructions that illustrate the heterogeneity of cultural practices that gives Indian modernity its sense of difference. (52-55)

For Chakrabarty, it is the typical Indian political symbol and culture which is still carrying the same meaning that the white color of “Khadi” means sense of patriotism and national interest of its users. “Khadi” and its loaded political value (meaning) suggests the alternative constructed public value of India. It opened a free forum for India to practice and establish its own an alternative local political culture even during the time of British colonization. So it challenged the western modernity and constructed its own local political culture and read it in contrast with the then mainstream western modernity which Chakrabarty thinks was the very practice of locality.

We are not of course the part of a single, unitary world culture now. Cultural hybridity and global cultural process of integration and disintegration have made this earlier unitary idea of colonization, homogeneous world culture. Pieterse is of similar view. He writes, ". . . [I]ntroverted cultures, which have been prominent over a long stretch of history and which over shadowed translocal culture are gradually receding into the background while translocal culture made up of diverse elements is coming to the foreground" (qtd. in Barker 158). Now global and local have come together in every field of discourse. Every nation and state and society particularly and individually influences the current concept of globalization. Barker too has similar view that he says, "All locals are now subject to the influences of distant places" (158). Robertson too writes:

Globalization is therefore understood as the something . . . more than a diffusion of western institutions across the world, in which other cultures are crushed . . . In the same way that globalization universalizes aspects of modern social life e.g. the nation-state assembly line production, consumer fashions, etc; it simultaneously

encourages particularization by relativizing both "locale" and "place" so that intensification . . . of uniqueness . . . is therefore fostered. (qtd. in McGrew 478)

Thus for Robertson, globalization should be understood as a single forum for increasing contact place for global nations and local societies which as per him encourage the cultural hybridity at one hand and on the other focuses on the particularization of locale.

The globalization process, especially after the Second World War, is seen as producing unified and integrated hybrid culture. Hence in such condition, the local cultures are seemed to be battered out of existence with the excessive focus upon consumer goods, mass media programs and telecommunication services run especially by western developed countries. Thus, such sort of modernity has caused the deterioration of local ideas of cultural and social practices of non-western countries and societies. Featherstone too has similar view with it. He writes:

The process of globalization is . . . uneven, and if one aspect of it is the consciousness of the world as a single place, then it is in this select quarters of world cities that we find people working in environments which rely upon advanced means of communications which overcome time-space separation, as new means of communication effectively make possible simultaneous transactions which sustain deterritorialized cultures. (350)

Featherstone too conceives modernity either in globalized form, a set of transformations that any culture can or will inevitably undergoes and it, for him, is not a positive aspect of current world affair only. It causes sense of loss of original, local, and loss of sense of affinity that one owns in any social cultural life.

Globalization, as it has focused upon the continuous integration of contradictory societies within it, draws in a considerable portion, the consciousness of self and individuality. Now, every society and culture has started shifting their interest from the very homonizing concept of modernity and globalization to their own typical social, cultural and traditional pattern. Thus it has now led globalization towards global modernity. Dirlik writes:

Important transformations in global relations over the past three decades call for a re-conceptualized modernity . . . as global modernity. Re-conceptualizing modernity . . . has been the goal of much scholarship during this same period, cutting across ideological and methodological divides. The effort to overcome Euro-centrism and to bring into modernity the voices, experiences, and cultural legacies of others. (276)

For Dirlik, this new idea of global modernity has the capacity to be plural, to incorporate multiple ideas and to give different and typical and genuine sense of identity to all social classes in this world. It has now become a local concept as it has left Euro-centrism.

Decolonization, after the Second World War and the fall of socialism opened the way to globalization which after all turned to be a forum for all. It focused on the expression in the fragmentation of the single modernity into multiple and alternative modernities. Such new context brought culture back into reaffirm the persistence of local subjectivities and local appropriation of capitalist modernity. The revival of Chinese Confucianism, the call for the Sinicization and Islamicization of sociology are few example of it. Dirlik says, “A case in point is the Confucian revival in

contemporary China . . . the past century years have witnessed calls for the 'Sinicization' and 'Islamicization' of sociology" (279). He further writes,

The decline and fall of socialism in the course of the 1980's opened the way to the globalization of capital. It also eliminated socialism as a crucial obstacle to cultural appropriations-and, therefore, the proliferation of modernities, which now find expression in the fragmentation of a single modernity into multiple and alternative modernities . . . ours is a time of reversals when traditions and ideologies that were assigned by modernization discourse to the dustbin of history have made a comeback with a vengeance, empowered by reconfigurations in global relations, and legitimized by the repudiation of Eurocentrism. (276-279)

Dirlik believes that the very Euro-centric, monolithic modernity with its excessive focus on integration of world into a single frame opened the way to multiple modernities invalidating its own idea of single center. Thus, now, there is the idea of local and plural and multiple in use in this post-war, decolonized world.

Dirlik says modernity unlike the very Eurocentric concept as it was developed and used in eighteenth and nineteenth century western colonization period has now carried a global scope openly and it now speaks about the new idea of globalcentrism. He believes, "Modernity all along has been global in scope, plural in form and direct, and hybrid not only across cultural boundaries but also in the relationship of modern to the traditional" (276).

It involves the assimilation of local with global issues thus tries to redefine and re-articulate the global relation with new perspective in relation to local

circumstances, cultural-social and political patterns and creates transnational communities and social patterns which can cross all the territorial boundaries.

Alternative modernities recognize the running mass consciousness of global difference and contradictions which is now an issue of debate in this twenty first century world. It speaks strongly against the very concept of unity and homogenization forwarded by modernity, globalization, and global modernity. Alternative modernity valorizes the cultural difference of societies, focuses the persistence of tradition and civilizational legacies, multiplicity. Dirlik further writes:

. . . [G]lobal difference and conflict . . . are as much characteristics of the contemporary world...differences, and the appearance of 'alternative' or 'multiple modernities', . . . are expressions, and articulations, of the contradictions of modernity which are now universalized across, as well as within, societies . . . alternative modernity . . . presently valorized the persistence of tradition and 'civilizational' legacies. (275)

Dirlik finds alternative modernities as the only alternative to bring into light the long marginalized concept of local, multiple, and plural. It equally, like that in modernity, focuses the very spirit of local in it.

People have started facing multiple forms of modernity working not in a single western monolithic pattern but facilitating different societies of our contemporary world to transform their societies in a moderate form to facilitate their lives with scientific advancement and development. Thus now that very idea of modernity has associated with the idea of intercultural contact zones and a place for producing hybrid culture. Gaonker says that, "Modernity today is global and multiple and no longer has a governing center and master-narratives to accompany it" (13).

Gaonker thinks, in this world of globalization which is now leading the whole world towards glocalization have started working differently. It has now started to focus upon the locality leaving its original attempt for creating a single world culture, or for the convergence of cultures throughout the world. Under the impacts of modernization, each world society is undergoing changes either positively or negatively. And though such cultural or social changes of one cultural group of one place appear similar to the changes that occur in societies of other places don't necessarily, and cannot lead to a single point i.e. unification of all world cultures for establishment of single-cultured world. Different beginning point of such development ensures heterogeneity which will be the base for multiplicities in modernity. It enforces cultural differences, locality leading the whole world to alternative modernities. Gaonker says:

A cultural theory . . . holds that modernity always unfolds within a specific cultural or civilizational context . . . different starting points for the transition to modernity lead to different outcomes. Under the impacts of modernity, all societies will undergo certain changes . . . Some of those changes may be similar, but that does not amount to convergence . . . A cultural theory directs one to examine how 'the pull of sameness and the forces making for differences interact in specific ways under the exigencies of history and politics to produce alternative modernities at different national and cultural sites. In short, modernity is not one, but many. (15-16)

For Gaonker, such type of changes caused by the impacts of modernity of different time cannot lead the whole world to single monolithic direction of cultural

convergence, does not amount to cultural convergence and rather produce alternative modernities at different national and cultural sites.

To think in term of multiple modernities i.e. alternative modernities doesnot mean rejection of the legacy of western modernity. Though it traveled from the west to change the whole world cultures in a fixed and single pattern is now resulting and highlighting the differences of these cultures in contrast it now is focusing on the importance of plurality and differences and is giving rise of alternative modernities in this world. To understand it we have to, as per Gaonker, think through and think against of it.

The very idea of alternative modernity has its origin in the tendency of questioning the present because the very sense of contemporary and present claims itself as the modern in every social and national boundary and site these days. It forcefully traces the fragments and dissimilarity and the axis to divergence in the seeming unity and homogeneity of modernity."It generally assumes that . . . lived experiences and the embodied characters of modernity vary vastly from site to site" (Gaonker 17).

The idea of multiple modernities goes against the views of long prevalent discourse of modernity in scholarly field. It goes directly against the view of the classical theories of modernity that all society faces the same kind of changes; the convergence of industrial societies that the basic institutional constellations would ultimately take over in all modernizing and modern societies. But it believes, in reality the actual developments in modernizing societies have refuted the homogenizing and hegemonic assumptions of this western program of modernity. It now has given rise to multiple institutional and ideological patterns in this world. Dirlik writes, "Ours is a time of reversals when tradition and ideologies that were

assigned by modernization discourse to the dustbin of history have made a comeback with a vengeance, empowered by reconfigurations in global relations, and legitimized by the repudiation of Euro-centrism" (277). Here Dirlik brings the actual point to beginning of call for local cultural values of modern societies which had at first in the process of adopting modern Euro-centric world values, abandoned their individuality, cultural and local identity.

Arguments for multiple modernities are no less important than the arguments for globalization that it too assumes the cultural differences of our societies as the products of modernization of nations, cultures, civilizations, and ethnicities. Dirlik views, "Multiple modernities suggest a global multiculturalism, that reifies cultures in order to render manageable cultural and political incoherence; diversity management on global scale" (284).

'Alternative modernity' has enough space to the voices of diverse cultures of the world. It has now emerged as a new paradigm for grasping the reconfiguration of power in the contemporary world as the indirect colonization has governed every aspects of world in this post colonization time period. Dirlik too has similar view. He writes, "The 'multiple modernities' idea is the concomitant ascendancy of globalization as a new paradigm for grasping the reconfiguration of power in the contemporary world" (284).

Now a cultural approach to modernity, such as in advocacies of multiple or alternative modernities, erases the fear of singularity of modernity by substituting homogenized notion of culture by identifying different separate marks of societies, dynamics of cultures and politics.

The concept of alternative modernities is the sole concept that most of the communities of our world at present are buttressing so as to change and fit themselves

into the new framework of time and space, namely, global context. It now thus carries both the features of local and foreign at the same time and it is only capable enough to carry the current social situation of our societies.

Now, the Santhal community of eastern part of Nepal, Jhapa also seems to have been involved in the alternative form of modernity in their locality and are now on the vertex of change. Their clothing habits, food patterns, social structures, family sizes, educational status along with economic behavior have changed in a considerable degree. But these Santhali have neither adopted the western pattern of social life totally nor have preserved their cultural and social traits purely and separately from the influences of other cultural patterns. Rather they are now practicing a different and hybrid culture in their areas that may be tagged as glocalized culture. Living in the surrounding of other advanced cultures and also among global world scenario, they are now carrying mixed culture; hybrid one. But it is not a sudden and drastic change rather a slow and gradual process and development. Slowly and gradually they are familiarizing themselves with modern advance scientific equipments such as televisions, radios, music players, mobiles, computers, bicycles, motorcycles, buses, tractors, trucks, and other vehicles. They are thus under the influence of indirect hegemony of other advanced cultures or namely west. They either knowingly or unknowing assimilating different patterns of social lives of neighboring societies to facilitate their lives preserving their few important and distinct cultural behavior at the same time.

Change is necessary for every society as it marks the shifts from one stage to another and plays important role in making our society developed where life would be more comfortable and easy. There would be the incorporation of culture and society

which aims to produce advance cultural behavior. Gaonker says, "To think in terms of alternative is to privilege a particular angle of interrogation" (14). He further writes:

The site of alternative modernities is also the site of double negotiations- between societal modernization and cultural modernity, and between hidden capacities for the similarity and different. Thus alternative modernities produce combinations and recombinations that are endlessly surprising . . . everywhere, at every national cultural site, modernity is not one but many; modernity is not new but old and familiar; modernity is incomplete and necessarily so. (18)

For Gaonkar, modernity is such social form which is always marked by continuous play of cultures and societies. It always redefines our social and cultural as well as political patterns of life. It is necessary, inevitable and incomplete too.

In nutshell, modernity is an accepted idea which says about the difference from the past or tradition, decay of faith and the slippage from the accepted/trusted customs and loss of certitude in the issues of religions and ethics. It was at first believed to have begun in Europe assigned with the single Euro-centric world value. At that time, it used to carry the very spirit of the Europe throughout the world. But now things have changed. Now that very monolithic, single, Euro-centric concept carries the idea of possibility and existence of multiple truths applied in other contexts as well. Through the globalization of this very idea of modernity, it has now turned to be alternative modernities which etymologically suggest the idea of plurality. Now this twenty first century world practices the alternative modernities which give equal space and recognition to the idea of local. It is all inclusive idea now. It is evident in every aspect of behavior and practices of people of the world. It is evident in languages, sports, music, foods, paintings, cultural performances, films, media

cultures and ways of life in general. It is so because it gives equal importance the truths and practices of people from every corner of the world. It contextualizes itself in every local context. So this research tries to identify the alternative modernities and its influences in relation to the Santhal community from the eastern part of Nepal, especially of four Ward Numbers 3, 9 and 7, 8 of Chandragadi VDC and Jyamirgadi VDC of Jhapa respectively.

III. Modernity, Santhal and Cultural Change

Social and cultural changes and transformations are inevitable and necessary part of every society. Thus every society undergoes social, economic, cultural, political changes. And such changes are evident especially there, in ethnic groups' attempt for resource management for their livelihood, cultural and economic patterns. Such changes are the results of their consciousness of time and space, influences of other advanced neighboring cultural, social groups and it is at every time erasing such ethnic group of their identical cultural and social patterns of life. And in this context Santhal is one of the ethnic groups of Nepal which is undergoing changes, changes in terms of their cultural and social patterns and that they are now on the vertex of cultural and social transformation.

Primarily, such ethnic groups especially Santhals' cultural practices are under influences of other advanced neighboring cultural groups and secondly they have also assimilated different aspects of modern science and technology in their social lives knowingly or unknowingly. Now they work in different work stations like of tea estates and garment industries as a labor force leaving their traditional occupation of hunting and collecting wild fruits and roots for their livelihood. They have now even started possessing mobiles, televisions, music players, bicycle, motorcycles, and tractors. Though they possess no arable land officially, they have now started working in field by accepting agriculture as their main occupation for their livelihood by managing fix settlement in the areas. Due to such practices they are now losing their grip upon their own traditional social practices of hunting. It is due to their continuous contact with other advanced social groups, and different programs conducted by Nepalese government and other NGOs and INGOs to improve the social, economic

and educational, political situation of different ethnic groups of Nepal. Thus they are changing their earlier nomadic life style and developing a new behavior to settle and manage life in a fix socio-political space. But such changes are not good in all cases. Such changes have not only eased their life style but also destroyed many such distinct behaviors of ethnic groups like Santhal which were identical to them.

Due to such changes it seems to be problematic for upcoming Santhal generations to associate themselves to their cultures to identify them. Santhals were rich in their tradition, culture, rituals, and social structures but due to such developments and influences of current time, they are forgetting their typical customs and are replacing it by other new forms of societal, cultural life patterns.

This work of research will explore into some such fundamental clues and tries to explore the real current situation of this community at present time. It is based on direct observation, interview and questionnaires but it mainly relied on qualitative technique of research. The main area of this research study is the Jhapa district of eastern Nepal. The research has been centered in Jyamirgadi VDC-7 and 8 and Chandragadi VDC-3 and 9 of Jhapa district.

Many of the earlier researchers have claimed Santhal as an immigrant tribe to Nepal. But few others accept them to be the first comer to this area. They so talk in favor of them and claim them to be native ethnic group. Anyway now many Jhapali and people even from other areas have started accepting them as an inevitable part of the social life of Nepal. Such researchers call them to be an inhabitant of this area and Nepal as well and talk for their equal political and social rights. Even the journal forwarded by His majesty of Nepal government in 2032, *Mechi Dekhi Mahakali* claims themselves to be an immigrant ethnic group to this South Asian region. It says, "Santhals are not indigenous people of Nepal and they are recognized as recently

entered tribal group in Terai" (236). In contrary to this, now many other researches of contemporary time have started recognizing Santhals as native ethnic group of this area. Chintamani Dahal in his *Sanskritika Bibidh Pakchhama Satar ra Gangai Gaatiharu* writes:

. . . [M]eche, Dhimal, Rajbansi, Satar, and Kishan are taken as an aboriginal ethnic group of this area. Among them especially Dhimal are the real native group and rest have migrated to this area from the southern areas which now falls under greater India. They have immigrated to this area gradually deforesting and cultivating the dense forest of Terai for many centuries. In this regard, with their first settlement all these above mentioned groups can be taken as aboriginal ethnic group of these areas. (5)

Dahal, taking the point of their first settlement in the dense forest areas of Terai belt of Nepal accepts Santhal like other many ethnic groups of this area as an aboriginal ethnic groups of Nepal though they had first come from southern flat areas which are now under the maps of India.

At present, there are about 50,000 Santhals living especially in different parts of eastern Nepal and Jhapa district alone have provided dwelling places for about of 24,000 of them in its different semi-urban areas like Dhulabari, Jyamirgadi, Kakarbhatta, Satighatta, Chandragadi, Kumarkhod, Anarmani, Charpane and other. In this research I focused on qualitative technique rather than on quantitative one. So I have chosen some representative areas of Chandragadi VDC and Jyamirgadi VDC and talked with about 50 Santhals of different age groups. So at least, this research covers the whole situation of Santhals of Jhapa and to some extent of Nepal too.

This work of research has mainly focused on the Santhal communities and its inhabitants of Chandragadi VDC-3 and 9, and Jyamirgadi VDC Ward No. 7 and 8 to prove its hypothesis that Santhals are on the vertex of change due to their mixed settlement with other cultural groups of the areas and due to their fascination and gradual incorporation of the modern means and development of science and technology.

Language

There are various changes seen in the language patterns used by different age groups of Santhals. And same is the case with their cultural practices, rituals, settlement, profession, festivals, and population status.

During the direct observation it is found that this community has received influences mainly from other advanced neighboring social groups in their language. Linguistically they are “Santhali” speaking people. “Santhali” is the name of their language, which falls under “Munda” language group of the Austro Asiatic family, which has its own sound pattern and script. Motherhood Care Nepal in this regard writes:

Santhals language belongs to the Munda group languages of the Austro Asiatic family. They call their language Santhali, which is the sub-group of Munda language. They have their own script invented by Pandit Raghunath Murmi in 1925. The script is “OL Chiki” and also called “OL Cemet” which has 30 letters, among which 6 are vowels.

(2-3)

Though they have their own linguistic system, they even use Nepali, Rajbansi and languages of other ethnic groups. Now such change is starker and it has even caused deterioration in number of the Santhali language user. If we divide the total Santhals

of contemporary time into different generations and form three groups like first generation of old aged people, second generation of adults people, and third generation of school going Santhals then such change in case of language can be more evident. First generation of Santhal, in which fall all Santhals of old age uses Santhali as their means of communication in their almost all activities. Few of them know Nepali and other local language too but prefer to use Santhali. The second generation knows santhali well but prefers to speak in Nepali in public area as they find it easy to communicate and prefer to use Santhali in their household activities. But the third generations, children, seldom knows Santhali and even prefer using Nepali with their family members too.

It is due to the influences of cultures and languages of their neighbors, the education system available in those areas where they receive education and due to their friend circle and mixed settlement.



Huts by Santhals and Santhal women in their houses



Pulis Tudu in the Chandragadi Tea Estate's quarter no. 2 of Chandragadi VDC

At first Santhals used to live in their enclosed relatives circles in a separate village area often by forest or river bank sides. But now things have changed and due to the influences of growing urbanization and industrialization, they started dwelling in mixed social circles with people from other social, cultural background. In schools, Santhali children receive education in Nepali and English mediums and Government of Nepal too has even managed English language for such students of school going age to learn in schools. Such education system has mainly prepared them to prefer Nepali as their means of communication. In past years of 50's and 60's, there emerged different NGOs and INGOs which run and worked in the field of health, education, motherhood, environment and tried their best to promote and uplift the then poor situation of ethnic groups of rural areas of Nepal. They had run their programs using Nepali as their means of communication. Other have run other different programs about education in pre-nursery and nursery level which directly forced and encouraged such ethnic groups to use Nepali in their daily life. Santhali pupils who had participated on such programs entertained Nepali words, English letters in the course of programs. And they too got friend circle from diverse social groups where the only common language available to speak had Nepali which too forced them to habituate themselves with Nepali as their means of communication. In such pre-primary and nursery schools, different types of curriculum activities like sports, song,

dances habituated those pupils to use Nepali in their household activities too. Almost all villages of Jhapa district are now under the access of such programs, and Santhali group too send their children in such programs as it is cheap and even free of fees too in other cases to teach their children which gradually and unknowingly are separating them and their children from their own linguistic heritage.



Aarati Besra and Aasa Mandi (highlighted figures) in their class one with friends in Aaraniko Primary School, Satighatta, Jyamirgadi VDC-8,



Parbati Sonaram (highlighted one) with her friends in her grade 4 in Aaraniko Primary School, Satighatta, Jyamirgadi VDC-8



Books used by children of Sikar Murmu in his house in Jyamirgadi VDC-7

They find it easy, reliable and good to send their children in such programs because they do not find any discrimination on such programs among pupils in terms of gender, cast and ethnicity. Such institutions are easy for their access and they have

found those pupils clever who attend such programs. And Santhali too send their children in such institutions. They have understood the importance of education. So almost all Santhal families prefer to send their children to get education up to higher level in different schools nearby as it is managed free of cost by Nepal government. And these institutions promote and prepare such pupils to use Nepali in their all fields as the education system is based on Nepali medium. They too create a friend circle in their lives which too forces them to choose Nepali as their means of communication.

Thus, the pupil from their early stage of life gets entertained with Nepali language and prefer it in their household too as a means of communication which have now, in a considerable number, reduced the number of Santhali language users. Even the adult and old aged people are forced to use Nepali as their means of communication because they work with people of other ethnic group where Nepali will be the only common language.

Jhapa is mainly known for its ethnic diversity that people from many cultural social backgrounds have settled in this area. Thus there is a stark need of one common language and culture. And it is from long time that its residents are practicing and attempting though silently, informally to develop a common culture and social behavior for all. And thus they have accepted Nepali as their common language. There is a majority of Nepali speaking groups. Its each ethnic groups practice their own cultural, social patterns, linguistic behavior, and Santhal too is no exception to it. But it is very difficult to adjust in such admixture and diversity without following any common culture, mainly linguistic pattern and it is necessary too in all areas of their lives that may be their school or work station or village area or public spheres. And such constant interaction to people from other cultural groups have, to some extent, forced other non native groups and ethnic groups of these areas who have different

mother tongue than Nepali to use Nepali. And to adjust in such difficulty these ethnic groups have managed to use languages; their mother tongue and that common language equally. And it is now resulting differently, negatively if we talk from the perspective of this ethnic group. The contemporary new generations of these ethnic groups now prefer Nepali in their daily lives and children, too, find it uneasy to use their mother tongue. They understand it but hesitate to reply lacking words' spontaneity.

Santhali people now use Nepali or Hindi songs, calendars, newspapers in their lives. Hindi and Nepali songs have almost replaced their cultural musical instruments which they used to play in their different cultural activities. It slowly and gradually is erasing them of their cultures. Now they are losing their grip and easy access to their own Santhali language and it can be predicted that if the situation remained same for coming few decades then they will certainly find their own language strange and unusual to use and rather claim Nepali as their mother tongue. And it is nothing but the direct result of the contemporary prevailing schooling system, their mixed settlement, and their strong liking to the cultures and social behaviors of other advanced neighboring cultural groups.

Profession

Modern advancement of science and technology, prevailing education system, and the growing culture of urbanization have mainly influenced all ethnic groups of Nepal and it is more evident in case of Santhals of Jhapa district. Advancement of science and technology, their consciousness about fundamental rights and their fascination to the modern world of information and technology has promoted them to get access of many scientific and technological advancement of this time like television, mobile, music player, FMs, and different vehicles. Urbanization has

increased their contact with other social groups and the world and modern education system have promoted importance of common language in their lives too. And all its positive and negative impacts are evident in lives and cultures and social patterns of Santhals of Jhapa.

Now almost all people from the world try their best to get connected with the contemporary advancement of our time and try their best to use advanced scientific technologies and it has made the life easier and comfortable too. Though this ethnic group lacks enough monetary power and knowledge of modern science and technology, try their best to get their access with such developments. Many of them have now started living in fixed place by building permanent houses. They have now started using electricity for their household. TV, mobile, FM, music player can be seen in their daily life as their home appliances.



Dhenka Besra of Jyamirgadi VDC-7, Jhapa with his Television

They have now started leaving their traditional profession of hunting and collecting wild roots and fruits. Contemporary time demands strong high income and their traditional profession of hunting, and farming provide them little opportunities and economic freedom thus they have now started working as labor forces in different industries to earn good livelihood. They have even gathering different official document like license, passports, citizenship card, birth certificates, marriage certificates and educational certificates to involve themselves in other official and

manual labor work. Many of them can be found working in tractor and other public vehicles as labor and staff and they even work in tea estate, pull rickshaws.



Citizen certificate of Miss Talu Baske of Chandragadi VDC-3



Birth Certificate of Miss Sanjana Besra of Jyamirgadi VDC-8



Umesh Murmu, Jyamirgadi VDC-4,
driving Me. 1 Tha-13, tractor



Santhal girls working in Chandragadi
Tea Estate, Chandragadi, Jhapa

Many people have also adopted agriculture and animal husbandry as their profession. But in course of observation I found none of them possessing their own land to cultivate.



Sikar Murmu of Jyamirgadi VDC-8, Satighatta , with his animals

Some of the Santhal youngsters and adults have received higher level education too. They in such cases have involved in different offices. Some of them teach in local schools or institution and few have even managed their own business.

Motherhood Care Nepal regarding their economic activities writes, "The Santhals re a semi-nomadic community. Earlier, they relied heavily on hunting and seeking wild roots and fruits . . . [T]hey live on whatever is available in the lap of nature" (6-7). But it is different. Because of the growing trend of deforestation and urbanization, Santhals are lacking enough places to rely on their tradition economic activities and they too have started settling with other advanced ethnic groups which have forced them to adopt other jobs for their livelihood. Motherhood Care Nepal further writes:

Santhal, a self-sustaine community of the few, closely knit around their secluded and semi-wild natural habitat is slowly exposed to the mass, and is forced to seek adjustment in dense settlements amidst many intersections of inter-cultural admixtures. Their uniqueness is gradually at stake, and they are losing their very essence of their primordial form of living. (7)

Actually, this was a nomad group. Except those, who used to possess their property, used to change their settlement areas annually. Now they like to live in fix area and have even engaged themselves in different offices and work stations and industries to earn their livelihood.

Dahal writes, "As these Santhali too say they have migrated from the Dumka, Dinajpur, Bangladesh of Santhali Praganna fo india for about 4/5 centuries ago to Kumarkhod fo Jhapa District" (29). This proves them first as a nomad and an immigrant tribe of Nepal who have now left their trend of migrating and settled in different areas of Jhapa and Morang districts. Now the house style too has been changed. Many of them have used metal sheet to cover their houses which are wider with doors and windows. But in such cases too they still decorate their walls by carving beautiful figures of different wild lives and flowers on it. Though there are no such definite program and plans conducted and prepared by Government and other private sectors, changes are apparent in their social, personal life due to indirect influence of rules and laws of state and social behaviors and cultural patterns of other advanced neighboring social and cultural groups. Bista in this regard writes:

They are now aware of different laws and programs like "Panchayat" "Ward Member", compulsory saving ,safe farmer . . . were forwarded by His Government of Nepal in its "Panchayat System" which has resulted the condemnation of many orthodoxies in their own ethnic group. And social changes occur in such similar way. (103-104)

Now they are more conscious about their social and political rights and it is the direct result of their growing consciousness level and contabt with other advanced neighboring social groups.

Social System

Impacts of modernization have ruined their social system which was one of the best then that of any other ethnic group of Nepal. Santhals used to practice a very good and well furnished social structure within their communities which used to maintain their social system, security, and discipline. Nothing from their society were issues of social disagreement. They used to categorize social duties to run their community peacefully. “Majhihadam” used to be the head of the society who used to resolve any social disagreement and all used to accept it. But now there are no such practices in use. Though they still assign someone as “Majhihadam”, but he lacks such absolute power now. Bista about it writes, "Up to this time, their social, judicial and cultural practices are well furnished . . . [T]hey used to resolve any sorts of disagreement by grounding a stone in the center of the community just after punishing the culprit" (104).



Marang Besra, “Majhi Hadam” of his community of Jyamirgadi VDC-8, Satighatta

“Majhi Sthan” in Marang Besra's house

“Judit”, “Naike”, “Jagmajhi” are there but they perform no such actions to contribute for social discipline. It is because they are now under pressure of modernization and are forced to work hard to get access of its advancement.

Dress

Now, their traditional cultural dressing habit is deteriorating in this tribe. Their cultural dresses were “Dhoti”, “Langauti” and “Gangi” for men and “Petani” for

females. Though there are no any dresses to decorate their head, Santhals use “Barko” to cover their heads. Females use “Panchi” and “Parahad”. They decorate themselves with “Makadi”, “Chudi”, “Sankha”, “Khaga”, “Bank”, “Hasali”, and “Chain”. They love to carve fix tattoos and marks, “Godani” in different parts of their hands and legs. But it is changing. Dahal writes, "They have simple clothing habit . . . “Dhoti”, and “Ganji”, “Lagauti” are the cultural dresses of Santhal males and “Petani” as the cultural dress of females . . . but now, Santhal males use pants and T-shirts, and females use Sari, blauge. And they have even started using other dress too" (39). This, for Dahal, marks the gradual and slow change that is hitting the different parts of their lifestyle and cultures of this ethnic group.



Santhals with their traditional musical instruments celebrating “Baha”, a cultural program in their cultural dresses

Santhals have their own customs to follow on the birth of a child. As their society was enclosed by their relatives only, they too did not use to lay their dependency on this work too. They used to assign a midwife in the village to support delivery. The “Sudeni” and “Dum”, a lower class people by the side village support and manage the delivery and all rest celebrates it with feast. “Nimadi” was their typical food prepared on the day to celebrate the birth. Santhals used to give such food, prepared by rice and “Nim leaves” for three days of birth to the pregnant

woman. Panta says, "They allow only "Nimadi" for three days to the new mother. Nothing more is allowed . . . and it is their ritual" (50).

But now this custom has changed. They, Santhals now heavily rely on hospitals and health care centers there by for child birth and other diseases. Many Santhals go to the hospital for safe child birth. Sikar Murmu says, "I don't wait for "Dhami" and "Sudeni" but just run to hospital" (Interview). But they prepare "Nimadi" on the birth day and celebrate it with other relatives. Now they have started providing other nutritious foods, medicines to the newly born baby and mother, vaccinate them in time and time which were restricted previously. They now have almost left the custom of cutting the umbilical cord with the arrow and don't underground the umbilical cord in the main door of the house. Impacts of different programs run by different NGOs and INGOs and Government of Nepal for safe child birth and motherhood have changed them considerably and they now prefer such services in their lives. Their repeated and constant contact with other advanced neighboring ethnic groups, modern education system and their growing access to modern world of information and technology are few determining forces in increasing their conscious level in such matters.

Rituals of naming, "nawran", is the only rituals to be done in the pre-marital life of a Santhal child. And this customs too have got changed in considerable degree. They have still same sense of equality towards the either gender of child. They do not discriminate them in terms of gender. They conduct the "nawran" on the same day of child birth or the next day and name the child after the name of their ancestors as it was their custom. But now they have even started naming the child after other Nepali name too for it becomes easy later for the child to be familiar in public areas. The name of the "nawran" then will be limited to their customs only. As

I have already presented, Aasa Mandi, Parbati Soren, Anita Hemran, Arati Besra are few examples of them.

By assimilating the modern ways of settling familial life and cultural practices of marriage, Santhals have started reforming their traditional rituals of marriage. Previously, there were about ten different types of marriage methods and one was free to choose either of them. But now things have got shorten. Most of Santhals now prefer either love or arrange marriage. They have even reduced the marriage days from 12 to 2 or 3 days. At first the whole community used to indulge in this ceremony but now due to their involvement in other works for livelihood, they cannot manage time for many days. Thus they complete marriage ceremony in 2 or 3 days. They leaving their traditional musical instruments prefer using music players, DVDs and CDs. But despite such vast changes they are even practicing many other cultures in its original manner. They still don't prefer dowry in marriage. Freedom to understand the other party is equally given to both girl and boy. They don't like inter-caste and inter-clan marriage and even discourage them. Now they have started possessing marriage certificates too and prepare birth certificates of their children. Custom of accepting widow sister-in-law is still in practice. In marriage they have started using modern western dresses leaving their cultural dresses. They lift the bride in bamboo bucket just for custom. Earlier practice of recitation of musical lines on the day of marriage is now almost dead. Music players and other advanced musical instruments have replaced them totally.

Customs of death too have got changed. Traditionally they used to bury the dead body by the forest side with all his/her belongings like bed, dresses, and dinning plates. On the death of any family member at first, they used to cleanse the all parts of the dead body with pure water and used to apply oil all over the body. Then they used to bury it. On the funeral period, they

used to sing and pray wishing happy departure and the better time of soul in the land of God. Such songs used to carry the philosophy of life that all have to die one day after their birth. This custom is still in use. But adults and the children don't know it well. They have even started burying the dead body by the river side. But they still arrange the post funeral activity for one day which may occur in any year. One can manage such ritual in common if there occurred more than one death in the family in short period of time. "I have conducted the "Kiriya" of four of my family members just before my marriage day since I was an orphan" (Interview, Mistri Hemram). And they still have to arrange "Bhog Bhandam", a feast arranged for villagers for their support on such disaster. Panta says, "This ritual is called "Bhog Bhandam" . . . the person who performs the "Bhog Bhandan" will bald his head . . . he is allowed to touch, eat, and stay together with other" (29). Such types of freedom in practicing rituals are still there in this cultural group.

Festivals

They still build "Thani", "Majhi Sthan" in village but now it appears that they are not much sincere to it. Many of them go to the Hindu Temples near by the village. Many Santhals have even changed their religion to Christianity and there are many of them who call themselves to be the follower of Christianity. Dahal says, "Mainly Santhals are divided into two; Hindu and Christian, in terms of their religion from about 80 years" (31). Thus they have even started changing their religion too from "Sarna" to Christianity.

In this way during this research it is found that the Santhal community is under the influences of modern advancement of science and technology, growing industrialization on the areas, and mainly under the influences of their advanced neighboring cultural groups. Such influences can be found in terms of their language, profession, cultures and festivals, dressing

pattern major rituals of life; birth ritual, marriage ritual and ritual of death. They are now attempting hard to assimilate such changes of their community and also attempting hard to be equipped with current advancement of science and technology. Thus it can be claimed that they are on the vertex of change. But such changes don't always draw positive results only. And it is justifiable in case of changes that are taking places in the society and lives of Santhals.

Now most of Santhals do not prefer Santhali language i.e. "Ol Chiki" in their community too. Nepali language has substituted it. Though it has eased them to be familiar with other cultural groups of the surrounding area, it is erasing them of their identical part of their society that in near future, if the trend remained same, then will be almost no more "Ol Chiki" users.

They are now seen settling in semi-urban areas and most of them have left shifting from places to places by building fixed type houses. Thus now they no more call themselves a nomad tribe but a Nepali. Now they have started engaging themselves in different labor and office works which provide them some more economic security. Numbers of literate Santhals are growing as many of them have started believing on the power of education. Thus now many Santhali children join primary level schooling programs. And all such changes are the results of their growing consciousness of the modern world, and the results of different programs run by different INGOs and NGOs and Government of Nepal to promote and uplift the backward and poor social and cultural condition of different ethnic groups who dwells in different parts of Nepal.

Thus now the previously marked nomadic tribe of eastern south terai belt namely Santhals have now changed both culturally and socially to much degree. They have now almost left their traditional occupation of hunting and collecting of wild herbs, fruits, and plants for their livelihood by relying upon agriculture and other manual and official jobs. They have even started

dwelling in mixed settlement with other social groups. Many Santhals have acquired formal education too. Citizenship cards, birth and marriage certificates, and land owning certificates have been issued and they have even acquired political rights of voting too. Possession of land, house, different vehicles, modern equipments of communication too mark the change in their social, cultural behavior, and enforce the hypothesis as true that Santhals are really on the vertex of social, cultural change. But such changes have not caused the total deterioration of their cultural traits and issues of identity rather have in contrast reformed their traditional way of life to advanced one. With their constant contact with other modern advanced social groups, they are now practicing different types of culture and social patterns and behaviours in their community which can be named as hybrid culture.

Though such changes have changed their social lifestyle, it is at the same time threatening their cultures too which were their property and bases of their identity. And knowingly or unknowingly these Santhals are modifying their cultures and social practices and rituals and practicing hybrid culture. Even in such diverse effects of globalization they are capable enough to preserve their few important cultural activities and it is worth mentioning. Now there are glocalised versions of cultures in their practice.

IV. Conclusion

Culture is that which makes one social group distinct from other. It is the thing that gives its belongings a sense of individuality and an issue to stick their identity with. Thus each of cultural group claims their individuality in terms of their social, cultural and economic behaviors. At first in the course of formation of society, each ethnic group used to practice and follow their

own socio-cultural practice strongly to associate themselves with it. So culture and rituals become issue of identity to them.

Now things have changed. It is the era of modernism and postmodernism where concepts like of globalization and glocalization are taking considerable place and their impacts in the society is a lot. And it is affecting every social, cultural aspects of people of each ethnic group of this world. Development of modern education system, massive influence of modern science and technology, worldwide global network of information and technology and the active participation of people of every social sphere on such advancement have now changed the earlier scenario of social, cultural pattern of world. Thus no culture and social group is now seen untouched and unaffected either positively or negatively by such global matters. As a result, every ethnic group, no matter from any corner of this world, is facing a strong urge of change, especial cultural one and as a result travelling towards the direction of cultural change i.e. advancement by assimilating those social, cultural, economic behaviors which are proved scientifically to be appropriate for one to develop sound mental, physical and cultural personality. In such transformation, generally, every social, ethnic group is consuming those patterns of socio-cultural forms which are accepted and practiced by other economically capable and educated neighboring social groups. And it does not necessarily derive positive transformation in all cases. So in such case, each ethnic tribe should try to preserve their some distinct, typical cultural social behaviors while transforming them to fit in this postmodern glocalized world which would later be the base for them to prove/justify their identity, their individuality. They need to preserve and keep on practicing their own few distinct cultural practices in their local sphere to which they can associate their identity. Such impacts of modernism and postmodernism, globalization, and glocalization are now worldwide and Santhal

community of Eastern Terai belt of Nepal are no more exception to such change and are on the vertex of change socially and culturally.

Santhal community of different parts of Southern area of Jhapa and Morang districts are such a social/ethnic group which used to possess and practice a different social, cultural behaviors, dressing and food patterns which were believed to be prosperous, and complete in themselves by different anthropologists and researchers of social sciences. But now, due to such impressive modernization and globalization, their cultural, social practices and rituals are undergoing change and they are now practicing many such social, cultural practices which were in fact not theirs. They had their own distinct tribal, ethnic, and cultural behaviors which are now deteriorating day by day as they are assimilating eagerly and happily other forms of modern advanced global world culture. But while pointing such change, we should not forget their continuous attempts to preserve their few cultural social practices with which they find a sense of affinity and feel some sense of association of their identity and individuality. Impacts of globalization and culture, social behaviors of other advanced neighboring social groups are there which are forcing them to change themselves culturally and they are, in these days assimilating their typical social, tribal behaviors incessantly with it to practice hybrid form of modernity i.e. alternative modernity.

Such impacts and urge for change can be seen mainly in the pattern of their language. Linguistically, Santhals use Santhali as their mother tongue which has its own script known as “Ol Chiki”. But most adults and children of contemporary time do not find much sense of affinity with it. Rather they find Nepali comfortable to use in their every sphere and it is due to the result of contemporary education system of Government of Nepal which has managed all its education policies and programs under Nepali language and their constant touch with other

Nepali language users caused by their mixed settlement. But even in such cases too, elders from Santhal community are striving their best in their local sphere to draw interest to their children with their language. Thus they prefer Santhali in their household activities mostly. The attempt of Pd. Ragnath Murmu in 1925 in inventing “Ol Chiki” script too is one good example of it.

Such type of change and their contrary attempts can be seen in their different cultural practices that they celebrate throughout a year, their major life cycle rites. A vast change is evident in their profession. Every social group is now under indirect conflict with other all the time producing some unique cultural practices, social behaviors. And such products are different in case of each geographical area. The era of colonization and the modern era of science, information and technology have forwarded the idea that change and struggle for change is the only way to fit oneself in this modern world and almost all ethnic group of Nepal are consuming this idea in any way by transforming them culturally, socially and by in tuning themselves with contemporary world of technology and information. And same is the case with Santhals. They have now left the jungle side and started settling in semi-urban areas, leaving their earlier total dependence to nature by starting selling their physical force to earn their livelihood. They have, even left their earlier nomadic tribal behaviors by settling in fixed area and by increasing their contact with other neighboring social groups, by acquiring different official documents and by committing publicly to be sincere with rules and laws of Nepal. They now call Nepali as their nationality.

Adults and children of this ethnic group are now questioning their own orthodox different social behaviors and practices. Now, almost all Santhals send their children to schools nearby to acquire formal education, and believe heavily upon modern scientific technology of medicine and treatment. They now try their best to save money of their hard earning for future plans, take

active participation in political, social activities and issues of public welfare. Marriage practice, which was typical in their case, too has now changed considerably. They have now started working hard to earn and to secure better livelihood.

Thus, Santhal tribe is gradually in cultural and social change and it is mainly due to the pervasive impacts of modern advancement of science and technologies and development of information and communication of this 21st century world. Thus they are now on the vertex of change. And the influences of other advanced neighboring cultural groups' social and culture behaviors too are massive and inciting force to change Santhals of Jhapa and Morang districts of Nepal. And they are now practicing and celebrating hybrid social and cultural behaviors that is their glocalized experiences where they are by practicing social and cultural behaviors of modern world are also preserving their some distinct and typical tribal cultural qualities and practices.

Works Cited

- Barker, Chris. *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*. London: Sage Publication, 2003.
- Berman, Marshall. "Modernity: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow". *All That's Solid Melts into Air*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Bista, Dor Bahadur. *People of Nepal*. Ed. 2nd. Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 1972.
- Bista, Dor Bahadur. *SabaiJaatko Phulbari*. Ed. 8th. Lalitpur: Sajha Prakashan, 2064 B.S.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. *Habitation of Modernity: Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies*. Dehil: Permanent Block, 2002.
- Dahal, Chintamani. *Jhapaka Satar Jatiko Sanskritik Aadyayan*. Kathmandu: 2050 B.S.
- Dahal, Chintamani. *Sanskritika Bibid Pakchhama Satar Ra Gangai Jatihar*. Kathmand: Tribhuwan University, 2040 B.S.
- Delanty, Gerard. "The Discourses of Modernity: Enlightenment, Modernity and Fin-de-Siecle Sociology". *Modernity and Art*. Kathmandu: TU CDE, M.Phil Course Package, 2007: 50-73.
- Dirlik, Arif. "European Journal of Social Theory". *Global Modernity? Modernity in an Age of Global Capitalism*. London: Sage Publications, 2003: 275-292.
- Featherstone, Mike. "Identities: Localism, Globalism and Cultural Identity". *Identities: Race, Class, Gender and Nationality II*. Ed. Martin Linda, Alcoff and Mendiata. Black Well Publication, 2003.
- Gaonkar, Dilip Parameswor. "Alternative Modernities". *On Alternative Modernities*. India: Duke University Press, 1999.
- Gautam, Dr. Rajesh, Asok K. Thapa Magar. *Tribal Ethnography of Nepal VII*. India: Book Faith Publication, 1994.

- His Majesty, Government of Nepal. "Satarharu". *Mechi Dekhi Mahakali*. Kathmandu: His Government of Nepal Printing Press, 2031: 232-236.
- McGrew, Andrew. "Postcolonial Theory and Literature; Modernity, Travel and Translation Modernities." *A Global Society?* Kathmandu: TU CDE, M.Phil Course Package, 2007: 467-499.
- Mendiata, Edwardo. "Afterword Identities". *Identities: Race, Class, Gender and Nationality II*. Ed. Martin Linda, Alcos and Mendiata. Black Well Publication, 2003.
- Nepal, Ratnamani. *Educational Status of the Satar Community*. Kathmandu: Tribhuwan University, 2004.
- Panta, Shastradatta. *Jhapaka Aadibasi*. Kathmandu: Sajha Prakashan, 2041 B.S.
- Sharma, Nagendra. *Nepali Janajiwani*. Darjiling: Aachala Bhagawati Prakashan, 1976.
- Subba, Tej. *Child Mortality in the Santhal Community*. Kathmandu: Motherhood Care Nepal, 2008.
- Tylor, Charles. "Alternative Modernities". *Two Theories of Modernity*. Canada: Hastings Center Report 25, 1995: 24-33.
- Upreti, Sanjiv. *Nepali Modernities and Postmodernities: Theatre, Culture and Politics*. Kathmandu: Mandala Book Point, December 2007.