



The Role of Newar Community for Preserving Chandeshwori Jatra in Tokha, Nepal

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Abstract

Tokha Chandeshwori is situated in the bordering regions of wards 2 and 3 within the Tokha Municipality of the Kathmandu district in the Bagmati Province of Nepal. The inhabitants of this area enthusiastically celebrate a multitude of vibrant festivals and Jatras, including Nepal Sambat, Buddha Jayanti, Dashain, Tihar, Yomaripunhi, Gaijatra, Chaite Dashain, Sakamulipunhi, Balchaturdashi, BisketJatra, Indra Jatra, and more, on auspicious occasions. Among these, the Chandeshwori Jatra stands out as an extraordinary intangible cultural heritage and a prominent festive tourism attraction in Tokha. This Jatra is celebrated twice a year under different names, each featuring distinct rites and rituals. One of these occasions is Sakamulipunhi, which is a smaller Jatra culminating on the day of Balchaturdashi. The other is Bisket Jatra, which begins on the final day of the last Nepali month and concludes on the fourth day of the month of Baishakh. The Bisket Jatra is especially captivating, featuring eight chariots parading through the streets, the melodious sounds of Newari instruments, and the convergence of people from various parts of the Kathmandu Valley, including tourists who come to witness this grand festival. This famous Jatra is considered an integral part of Tokha's identity and a popular cultural tourism product for the region. This study aims to delve into various aspects associated with this festival, including its historical significance, the materials and methods involved, customs and customary laws, the intricate processes and processions, and most importantly, the role played by the Newar Community in preserving this cherished Jatra. The research has utilized both primary and secondary sources of data and information. Primary data have been gathered through observations, interviews, and focus group discussions, while secondary information has been derived from an extensive literature review.

Keywords: History and practices, means and materials, process and procession, customs and customary laws, role of the Newar community.

Introduction

Goddess *Chandeswori* temple complex is a famous historical, cultural and religious site of Kathmandu Valley. It is located in *Tokha* Municipality between ward no 2 and 3, 10 Km north from Kathmandu the capital city of Nepal. It is demarked by *Sapana tirtha* and River *Vishnumati* from east, *Nuwakot* district from north, *Sapana* River from west and Kathmandu Metropolitan City from the south. The question when the *Tokha* region was developed as a human settlement is still in under research, there is lack of exact evidences that can proof the historicity of the site. But

it is believed that *Tokha* region was developed as a settlement area before the regime of Lichchhavi dynasty. There is an inscription of 519 AD in *Tapalichhi tole* of Lichchhavi period where the terms *Tilamaka* i.e. cannel and *Gulma* i.e. arm force were used which can help to trace its historicity till to the Lichchhavi age (Vajracharya, 2030, pp. 266-267).

During the medieval period *Tokha* was known as the names *Laxmipur* and *Vijayapur* as the very famous site for the historical, cultural, religious and arts and architectural perspectives (Shrestha,

1996, p. 285). Mainly *Tokha* is divided into two traditional villages named *thane lachhi* and *kone lachhi* in which *Thane lachhi* is upper part whereas *Kone lachhi* represents the lower one. Sometime the upper village i.e. *Thane lachhi* is also known as *Tokha Chandeswori* and lower village i.e. *Kone lachhi* is identified as *Tokha Saraswoti tole*. Due to the temples of goddesses *Chandeswori* and *Saraswoti* the villages are known as the same names respectively.

As mentioned in *Himawatkhand* a famous religious scripture, local people believed *Chandeswori* is the *Chandikeswor Pindarak* of epic period. It is located in the lap of *Shivapuri* Conservation Area where different villages such as *Yalaga, Thalaga, Ganchhe, Pukhusi, Demalachhi, Pithetole, Ikulaga, tothilaga, Dundhighale, baghe Twapacha* are still seemed in existence (Dhaubanjari, 2019, p. 83). Within *Chandeswori* squire there are several historical, cultural, religious and arts and architectural heritages such as *Sapana tirtha, Ganesh, Mahadev* temple, *Chandeswori* temples, images of *Narayan, Ganesh, Bhimasesn, Suryabinayak, Karyabinayak, Mahadev, Mahakal, Chandikeswor, Chunidevi, Jaleswor, Satidevi, Gaurishankar, Taleju, Pithadewata, Aagamadewata, Karunamaya, Buddha, Prajapati, Saraswoti, Viswokarma, Laxmi, Garud* can be observed.

Apart from the *Chandeswori* of *Tokha*, there are other temples of goddess *Chandeswori* in Kathmandu Valley which are found in *Panauti, Bhaktapur* and *Patan* as well. But among them, the *Chandeswori* of *Tokha* is known as the oldest one than the others where inscriptions of ancient and medieval periods are found. Not only from the perspective of tangible cultural treasures *Chandeswori* is also famous for its intangible heritages where everyone can observe the different types of festive events and *Jatras* every years in different auspicious days and seasons including *Chandeswori Jatra* itself.

It is believed that the present structure of *Chandeshwari* was established by *Shri 3 Juddha Shamsher* in his regime. During the reconstruction period he has created struts depicting with sexual activities for the purpose of creating hatred towards the attractive sexual activities of the Buddhists. *Chandeswori Jatra* of *Tokha* includes the famous *Bisket Jatra* celebrated by *Newar* community. The preparation starts before a month and it is usually celebrated from 30th day of *Chaitra* and remaining till to the 5th day of the month of *Baisakh*, including the auspicious occasion of New Year. The sculpture of goddess *Chandeswori* is taken out from the temple on 1st day of *Baisakh* and exhibited within the *Tokha* city in a chariot the day prior. On third day of *Baisakh* the sculpture is dipped and washed in the holy water of a pond in *Bhutkhel* and returned thereafter. People dresses up in their cultural attire and dance during the *Jatra*. The social faith and aesthetic value get enhanced by such religious practice of *Tokha*.

In Nepal, there are several studies concerning on festivals and *Jatras* have been carried out by the native and scholars from the abroad. Whatsoever, the *Chandeswori Jatra* and the role of *Newar* community for preserving it are still not properly explored and highlighted, thus it is identified as the big research gaps and problems which have been addressed through this article. It is a matter of immense shame of academic field. Hence, for fulfilling the research gaps and addressing the problem which is mentioned below, this paper entitled *the role of Newar community for preserving Chandeshwori Jatra in Tokha, Nepal* has been prepared.

Research Problems and Gaps

Customs and belief are widely popular in Nepal. The practices of carrying a chariot in *Jatra* is still unknown to many people have a same caste. There are some research problems and gaps regarding the celebrating this *Jatra*. Some of them are less interest to young generation toward it. Modernization impact also the issue of this *Jatra*. Also the government of Nepal did support to this *Jatra*. As well as there are several groups of *Guthis* so there is no specialist leader which make hard to decision making processes. More over most of the young generation do not have any idea about culture that they are still following. In brief, what is its historicity? What are the materials and methods used in the *Jatra*? What are the major rites and rituals perform during the procession? What are the major customs and customary laws associated with the procession? How for *Newar* community is considered responsible for preserving the precious intangible cultural heritage? These are the major research problems and gaps of this issue. Therefore by using afore mentioned research questions this paper has been prepared. This would help to identify the role of *Newar* people for preserving the *Chandeshwori Jatra*. In addition, it would help to reinforce the motivation for the further research work.

Objectives of the Study

This paper deals with the *Chandeshwori Jatra* of *Tokha* as an intangible cultural heritage of Nepal. The general objectives of this study encompass presenting general information about *Tokha* and the goddess *Chandeswori*. Meanwhile, the specific objectives of this research involve exploring, identifying, and justifying various aspects associated with this festival. These aspects include its historicity, the materials and methods used, the major rites and rituals performed during the procession, significant customs and customary laws, and the role of the *Newar* community in preserving the *Chandeshwori Jatra*.

Literature Review

Theoretical foundation is considered as an important tool that helps to evaluate the research problem, research questions and gaps as well. In scientific research reviewing the literature is known as the key approach of constructing solid theoretical foundation. Thus, in this research the available literatures relevant with festivals and *Jatras* especially with *Chandeswori Jatra* have been reviewed.

Kunwar (1981/82) wrote a paper named *Sikabhway: ek adhyan* (A Study of *Sikabhway*), published in the journal *Nepalese Culture* Vol 11, through the paper Kunwar critically analyzed *Sikabhway* an indigenous festival of *Newar* community celebrates in the *Tokha* region. He has also compared to the *Sikabhway* festival with the *Sikabhway* festivals celebrate in other parts of Kathmandu Valley.

Arcodia and Michelle's (2006, pp. 1-18) article entitled *Festival Attendance and Development of Social Capital* has published from the *Journal of Convention & Event Tourism* in volume 8(2). Through this paper researchers have highlighted about the degree to which festival attendance facilitates the augmentation of social capital by drawing upon the literature from various discipline in order to conceptualize the synergy between festivals and social capital has been determined. This paper provides the information about festival for this research work.

Darnal (2050) wrote an article entitled *Tokhasthit Chandeshwori Chhetra* in the journal *Nagarpalika Smarika* in which Darnal mentioned *Tokha* and especially the temple of goddess

Chandeswori as an important historical, religious and cultural site and heritage of Kathmandu Valley.

Maharjan's (2067) book entitled *Kathmandu Jilaka Gabisa: ek adhyayan* (A Study of the Village Development Committee of Kathmandu District) is one of the important source which deals with profile of VDCs of Kathmandu district. During the study researcher has made critically discussion about the historical, cultural, religious, arts and architectures aspects of *Tokha* VDC. In his book he also highlights different festivals including *Chandeswori Jatra* as well.

Khanal (2071) wrote a book entitled *Aitihasikanagari Tokha Chandeswori* (Historical City Tokha Chandeswori) in which Khanal has highlighted *Tokha Chandeswori* site through the historical, cultural, religious, arts and architectures perspectives.

Bhattaarai (2075) has published an article entitled *Tokha Amurta Sampadama Nagapyankha ra Ya:yankha Samskriti* in the journal *Amurta Samskriti*. As per the researcher Tokha was popular as the names of *Laxmipur* and *Vijayapur* in medieval Nepal. In this article researcher has especially discussed about the *Nagapyankha* i.e. snake dance and *Yapyankha* that are performed in Tokha as the famous dances among the *Newar* community.

Shrestha's (2075) book entitled *Aitihaska Nagar Tokha* (Historical City Tokha) deals with the different aspects such as historical, cultural, religious, arts and architectures, inscriptions and their descriptions, goddess *Chandeswori* temple, priesthood system, *guthi* system, various festivals including *Chandeswori Jatra* in brief.

K.C. (2076) has conducted his Master Level thesis on *Tokhasthit Chandeswori Mandirko Sanskritik Adhyayan*, submitted to the central department of Nepalese History, Culture and Archaeology, where researcher has explored and highlighted to the goddess *Chandaswori* and its procession and other different tangible and intangible cultural heritages.

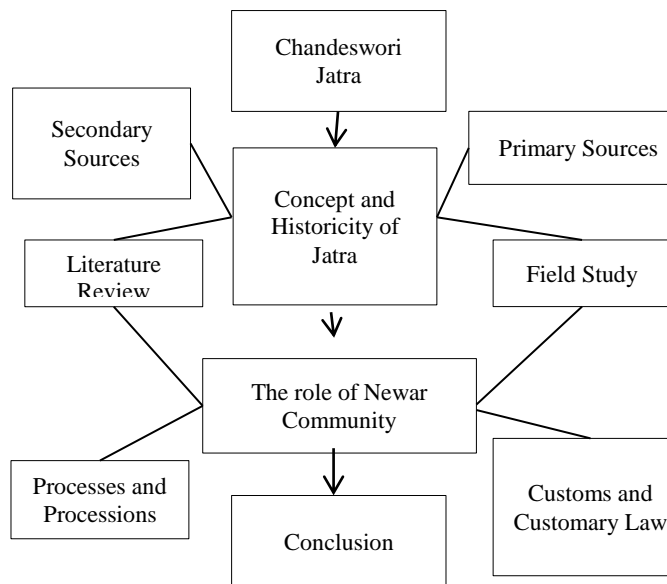
Dulal's (2021, pp. 88-106) article entitled 'Kha Me' Jatra of Bhaktapur: An Intangible Cultural Heritage of Nepal has published from the journal *Literary Studies* in Vol. 34. Through this paper researcher has highlighted about the concept, historical background, origin and development of festival and jatra in the context of Nepal as well. This paper provides the theoretical concept of Jatra and festival; therefore, it is more important for this study.

Dulal (2022, pp. 1-22) wrote another article entitled *Prospects of Promoting Festival Tourism: A Case Study of Khame Jatra in Bhaktapur*, published from the journal *Nepalese Culture* in Vol. XV. In this paper researcher has discussed and justified Khame Jatra as an important cultural tourism product for promoting festival tourism in Bhaktapur.

Beside afore mention literature other such as Kayastha (2026) *Shree Chandeswori Mahatmya*, Thapa (2027) *Chandesworira Chandesworiko Praduebhab*, Joshi (2050, pp. 6-11) *Chandeswori*, Bhattaarai (2064) *Tokha Chhetrako Samskritika Adhyayan*, Dhaubanjari (2079, pp. 101-104) *Kathmandau Upatyakaka Bastiharu* (The Settlement of Kathmandu Valley) have been reviewed in this paper and included the ideas in appropriate sections. Finally, the above reviewed literatures are known as the main sources of secondary information. For generating theoretical and practical knowledge they are considered quite useful to this study.

Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework considers as the element for conducting social research. Therefore, in this study for addressing the above mentioned research gaps, problems and fulfilling the determine objectives the following conceptual framework has been adopted.



Based on the keywords, problems, objectives, and the aforementioned figure, this paper primarily discusses the following major issues related to *Chandeswori Jatra* of *Tokha*: the utilization of materials and methods, community involvement, procession details, customs and customary laws, and the role of the *Newar* community in preserving the *Chandeswori Jatra*.

Research Methodology

This research is relying on descriptive research design. In this research only qualitative data have been obtained, therefore, it is based on qualitative method. During the study naturalistic inquiry has been adopted for seeking an in-depth understanding of social phenomena. As per geographical setting this research has been confined only in *Chandeswori* or *Tokha* area. While taking about subject it is based on only *Chandeswori Jatra* and analyzing the role of *Newar* community for preserving this intangible cultural heritage.

Both primary sources of data and secondary information have been collected and analyzed. For the collection of primary data researchers have applied field survey method in which observation, interview and focus group discussion approaches had been used whereas the secondary data have been gathered by conducting literature review. Talking about observation, the third researcher has been viewed *Chandeswori Jatra* very closely where chariot plays chief role during the procession.

During the field survey third researcher has conducted interview in the field where only 25 local people as the sample by applying purposive sampling method which is based on non probability sampling of the study. Third researcher also takes more interviews with others peoples of *Tokha*. At last, the first and second researchers have conducted focus group discussion including six people in a group. This helps to find out the history, using materials and methods, involving communities, customs and customary laws and identify the role of *Newar* community for preserving *Chandeswori Jatra* as well.

Findings and Discussion

This research is based on primary data and secondary information. Similarly, in this study quantitative data were not collected and analyze. Therefore, it is based on qualitative research design. The purpose of the discussion is to interpret and describe the significance of the findings in the light of what was already known about the research problem being investigated, and to explain any new understanding or fresh insights about the problem after taken the findings into consideration.

It is field based study. During the field survey, the third researcher has applied observation, an interview and the first and second researchers have been carried out focus group discussion for gathering primary data. What is goddess *Chandeswori*? How and when *Chandeswori Jatra* is celebrated? Why the people of *Tokha* celebrate it? What the role have been playing by the *Newar* community for preserving *Chandeswori Jatra* in *Tokha*? These are the major questions which have been asked to the local people in the field work. Similarly, during the field survey, the process, rites and rituals and participation of local and tourists have been observed. Finally, after collecting appropriate data and information and doing in-depth analyze, the finding and discussion of this paper has been presented as follows.

Concept and Historicity of Festival and Jatra

The term festival has been used for hundreds of years that can be used to a multitude of events. The Policy Studies Institute (PSI, 1992, p. 1; in Bowdin, Glen, Allen, O' Toole, Harris & Macdonnel, 2011, p. 19) notes that a festival is traditionally a time of celebration, relaxation and recuperation which is often followed by a period of hard physical labour, sowing or harvesting of crops. The essential feature of festival is the celebration of reaffirmation community or culture. The artistic content of such event varies and many have a religious or ritualistic aspect, but music, dance and drama are the important features of any celebration. In this respect Falassi (1987, p. 2; in Page & Connel, 2014, pp. 27-46) says that:

in social science, festivals denote.... a periodically recurrent, social occasion in which through a multiplicity of forms and a series of coordinated events, direct or indirect participation, and to various degree, all members of a whole community, united by ethnic, linguistic, religious, historical bonds, share a worldview. Both the social function and the symbolic meaning of the festivals are closely related to a series of overt activities that the community recognizes as essential to its ideology and worldview, to its social identity, its historical continuity, and to its physical survival, which is ultimately what festivals celebrate.

Festivals reflect the dynamic value systems of individuals united by the same customs, images, collective memory, habits and experiences. Festivals can be replicated and each generation can pass on something of its content to the next (Derrett, 2003, p. 51). Festival is an event ordinarily celebrated by a community, centering on some characteristic aspect of that community and its religion and cultures. It is often marked as a local or national holiday. Festivals and *Jatras* are religious and cultural ceremonies which are celebrated for recalling of special events, keep patience to the gods and goddesses, protection of man and animals, and for the betterment of agro-farming. As cultural events, festivals are significant because they attract tourists. In this circumstance Smith (2003, p. 140) mentions that:

Festivals celebrated in a particular location from small villages to large towns aims to bring people together to celebrate their local

area. These festivals are subdivided into different groups viz. those run by voluntary groups and those run by local authorities. Today, although many festivals aim to cater primary for the local community, they succeed nevertheless in attracting tourists, and around 56 percent of all festivals are created with a tourist audience in mind. Festivals have a higher concentration of visitors in areas of the country that are already established as tourist destinations, and the majority of festival organizers therefore design the programs content with the attraction of tourists in mind.

As per the literary sources, in the Eastern culture and civilization, the tradition of celebrating festivals and *Jatras* began from the Vedic period where one can find an episode that the Emperors offer sacrifice of the horse at the festival of *Ashomegha Yagna* (Majapuria, 1981, p. 2). In the Vedic Period the words *Maha* and *Jata* were used as the synonyms of festival and *Jatra* respectively (Dulal, 2021, p. 94). According to *Haribanshapuran* Lord Krishna had lifted *Gobardhan* hill, the particular event is known as the *Girimaha* festival. A Jain literature *Gayadhammakaha* mentions different *Mahas* and *Jatas* such as *Indramaha*, *Skandamaha*, *Rudaijata*, *Sivajata*, *Nagajata* (Agarawal, 1964, pp. 4-5). The tradition of celebrating festivals and *Jatras* can also be observed in India. The *Viswamitra* and *Indrajatra* are very popular festivals of New Delhi (Sharma, 1978, p. 27). Regarding the *Jatra*, Levy (1992, p. 420) mentions that:

While many cylindrical events are associated with movement of people to one or another temple or pilgrimage site in a more or less haphazard manner some cylindrical events are characterized systematic and formalized movements through some unit of space. Sometime a deity is moved through space, sometimes and more rarely devotees a deity is temple or shrine or to a series of them, in some prescribed order. Both the carrying of the deity and the more formalized movements of worshipers through the city is called as it is elsewhere in South Asia, a *Jatra* (from the *Sanskrit Yatra*, a journey, festive train, procession, pilgrimage).

Festivals are celebrations of something the local community wishes to share and which involves the public as participants in the experience. Festivals must have as a prime objective a maximum amount of people participation, which must be an experience that is different from or broader than day to day living. In general aspect festivals can be taken as a special day with a memory of religious events celebrated in unity and cooperation. in this regard Anderson (1988, p. 26) mentions that:

Jatra is a kind of event performed, when the idol is decorated and carried about gala religious procession for a variety of reasons-to honor him, give him a pleasurable outing, present him to other gods and goddesses, take him for his annual bathing ceremony or simply to allow him, the opportunity of watching some festival or ceremony with the celebrating populace.

Essentially, festival may be regarded as the cultural resources of an area that make possible the successful hosting of visitors (Uysal, Gahan, & Martin, B.S. 1993, p. 5). In Nepal, from the ancient period up to now, the people of different ethnic groups have been continuously celebrating different festive events as per their culture and traditions. in this circumstance Pandey (2008, p. 231) writes:

As a multiethnic, multilingual, multi-religious country with diverse caste, religion and races, the tradition of celebrating festivals and *Jatras* seem very old and is deeply rooted in the Nepalese society. Most of the festivals are religious and related with the procession of the gods and goddesses venerated in Kathmandu Valley. Even in

the past, festivals were strictly observed by the people.

Inscriptional records suggest that these practices existed as the *Kailash* and *Varaha Jatras* during the *Lichchhavi* period (Vajracharya, 2030, pp. 275-278). With diversifying nature, several colorful festivals and *Jatras* in different territories can be found. Therefore, it is said that Nepal is the only unique country in the world with more festivals and feasts than the working days. Though an exaggeration, Nepalese observe numerous festivals of different natures and categories. Some festivals are celebrated on a national scale, some regionally and some only by certain communities in certain areas and localities (Amatya, 2011, p. 39).

Abided by the lunar calendar, different festivals are celebrated all the year round. The celebration of these festivals may be nationwide, regional or just confined to the village or city (Satyal, 2001, pp. 22-23). Grand festivals are occasionally observed which lasts four months, commencing in *Baisakh*, and ending in *Shrawan*. It consists in visiting the shrines of the Gods in Nepal, which are said to be 2733 (Kirkpatrick, 2013, p. 196).

As whole, Nepal celebrates several festivals and *Jatras* as the national, regional, local and community level within a year. Therefore, Nepal is a unique country for the researchers to study colorful and meaningful festive events. Every festivals and *Jatras* have their own special identities, features and significance. Among them, this paper deals with Chandeshwori *Jatra* which belongs to *Newar* community especially in *Tokha*. It is celebrated during the month of *Baisakha*.

An Overview of Chandeshwori Jatra

When the second researcher take an interview with the people in *tokha* have some knowledge about the history of *Chandeshwori jatra* and *Chandeshwori* temple. The main activity of this *jatra* is that carrying chariots. People believe that by doing this it gives safety to the Nepalese citizen and spread peace to the whole nation and also every one can wish what they want from the god in the life.

Chandeshwori temple was built in the 17th century. The priesthood system of the temple is belonged to the *Karmacharya* family from the very earlier. The latest priest Dharma Raj *Karmacharya* said that his father *Shyam Bahadur Karmacharya* was also the priest of this temple before passed. Before him *Jognarayan Karmacharya* was the priest of the old generation and has four sons *Pitेश्वor Karmacharya*, *Kashinath Karmacharya*, *Panna Karmacharya* & *Ratna Bahadur Karmacharya* who became priest from time to time.

During the celebration of *Jatras* there performs some functions such as *Guthi parva puja* for a month which is celebrated by the *Guthi* of their local community member, dance performing *puja*, *sakamuli punney* which used to celebrate once a time in 6 Month and the *Bisket Jatra* is the main & most important festival of *Chandeshwori*. While conducting field survey the researchers found out that *Chandeshwori Jatra* is celebrated by *Newari* community who participate by wearing their traditional dresses and ornaments as well.

There are several types of *Guthi*. Although, the *Tokha* Municipality wards no 2 and 3 have been taking full and final responsibility of all the budgetary part, hence the *Chandeshwori Jatra* performs on both wards. Moreover, saw how *Jatra* preparation was done by the *Newar* community. They prepared for musical instrument for *Jatra*. Chariot carried by lots of people excluding female. It means only male are involving for carrying the chariot. During the *jatra*

most of the girls were played flute music and also danced on music and songs of *Newar* community.

History and Practices

As per the views of priest the history of goddess *Chandeshwori* temple trace back into the *Lichchhavi* period. There was a history of *Satyayug* where Sati Devi did suicide in *Ashomegha Yogya*. Her right shoulder had been falling in *Chandeshwori* temple. There are lots of gods and goddesses but especially *Chandeshwor* which is also known as *Parvati* or *Bhagwati*. In the past there was one a big tree where goddess *Parvati* lay under the tree but after time people who used to worship there. They started to keep bell, mirror and many more things in the tree, which resulted that the branches of tree gradually started to get dry and finally the whole tree became dry. Then people make temple at the top of that trees root and still there was roots under the *Chandeshwori* temple.

Chandeshwori temple is that place where *Ashomegha Yogya* i.e. a ritual of fire sacrifice was done by *Dakshyaprajapati* in the era of *Satyayoug*. During the *Yogya*, *Dakshyaprajapati* follow up every god and goddesses, *Yakshya*, *Gandarva*, *Kinnar*, *Daitya* except Sati Devi and his consort Lord Shiva. At the same time *Narad Muni*, a pious sage was looking everyone who was present at the *Yogya* but he didn't saw the Lord Shiva and *Satidevi*. So, he went to the *Kailash Parvati* to search them and ask why they didn't come there. And also, *Narad Muni* tell them about *Yogya* after listening to *Narad Muni Sati Devi* want to go there and she request to his consort and he agreed then *Narad Muni* and *Sati Devi* went to place where *Ashomegha Yogya* was going on.

Furthermore, Sati Devi asked to his father *Dakshya Prajapati* about why they didn't invite them in this big *Yogya*, then her father answered that Lord Shiva used to wear a tiger skin in a body, snake in the neck and used to take different kinds of drugs like *bhanga*, *dhaturo*, weed etc. So, that they don't want to follow up him after listening every nonsense that makes Sati Devi angry and totally hurt to Sati Devi by that she can't stand there for a second so jumps into the *Yogyakunda* inside that Sati Devi or *Parvati puja* was running. Like that Sati Devi died in as homer *Yogyakund* and still if dig there, can get *kharani* i.e. ashes. While Lord Shiva carried the dead body of her consort then gradually the body started to crumble and her right shoulder had been falling in goddess *Chandeshwori* Temple.

Finally, on the basis of afore discussion, the history of goddess *Chandeshwori* can be traced into the dates back to the *Lichchhavi* dynasty, whereas, the *Jatra* is to be believed to have been started during the reign of *Pratap Malla*. *Guthi* is a special group of people involved in launching and celebrating the *Jatra* successfully.

Using Means and Materials

In this research researchers have found lots of things that used in *Chandeshwori Jatra*. There are two main *Jatra* which is celebrated in 2 wards of *Tokha* Municipality especially in *Newar* community. There are several means and materials for celebrating each and every festival of *Newar* community of *Tokha* in *Jatras* and religious ceremony on the basis of cultural values norms and customary laws and rules. There are different types of flowers, leaves of flowers, fruits, beans, incents, oil lamps, yellow, red color and mixture of different color of wet rice other worship material which is used in worship by different communities as per their religious belief and sects.

There are lots of materials is needed to worship *Jatra*. Chariot is the main materials or object which is help to represent *Newari* culture in the world. Chariot is that object other caste does not use of follow. Goddess *Chandeshwori* Temple was destroyed in the earthquake of 1990. Again, they build and again it destroyed in 2072 earthquake and reconstructed it. There are lots of statues of different gods and goddesses, human beings and animals there in the temple complex. In this research researchers find out some customary laws, materials and methods which is used in *Chandeshwori Jatra*, researcher found the history of *Chandeshwori* area and also the temple.

Means and materials are also taken the main object of the festival or *jatra*. As per the same doctrine during the *Chandeshwori* or *Bisket jatra* there are some gold plated god goddess which kept in role by role in the house of *guthi*'s members, there as some gods like *Chandeshwori*, *Sapanthirtha*, *Ganesh*, *Mahadev* (*chandeshwor*), *Parvati* (*chandeshwori*) or *Bhagwati*, *Tala Ganesh* or *Kor Ganesh*, *Masan Kali* and *Saraswati*. eight chariots, two *Dhwaja* of *Sapanthirtha* which is known as father and mother of *sapanthirtha* there are different different types of food like *samaybaji*, *lakhamari*, different types of *Newar* dress of male and female as well as ornaments of gods and goddess, musical instruments specially music instruments of *Newar* community are *Dhimay*, *Dholak*, *Khin*, *Dha*, *Daha*, *Dam Khin*, *Mag Khin*, *Bhusya*, *Chusya*, *Ta*, *Tainai*, *Piwach*, *Sarangi*, *Basuri*, *Jhyali*, *rice*, *koncha* or represent of god *Bhairav* which is a pot of rice alcohol, sacrifice of cock, male goat, *chaku*, ghee, curd, egg of hen and duck, fish, varieties, *Samyabhaji* during the *Jatra*.

Processes and Processions

According to local people *Chandeshwori Jatra* is much important *Jatra* on this area. On the *Chandeswori* temple kali *Chandeswori Bhagawati* has also been established which known as the forms of goddess *Manakamana* and *Dhakshinkali*. It believes that when one worship that kali *Chandeshwori* he or she don't need to worship separately or don't need to go *Manakamana* to worship there. At the last day of *Chaitra* people went to *Bhagdwar* and they bath at night 12 o'clock at pond of *Sapanathirtha* temple and *Jatra* begins. The main reason of the *Jatras* are get together, inner peace, promotion of *Newar* culture, self-satisfaction, promotion of *Newar* instrument, also the source of entertainment etc. It is the medium of know the *Newar* culture through instrument, dresses and language. There is close relationship between *Jatra* and temple (Interview: Dharmendra Shrestha, Chairman of ward no. 2 of *Tokha* Municipality).

Legendry tells that *Tettiskotidevatas* were lived there in *Chandeshwori* temple. In the *Lichchhavi* period people started to celebtate *Chandeshwori Jatra* where one is held on *Chakrapani* which is also main *Jatra* of *Chandeshwori* temple which is end in *Balachaturdashi*. *Bisket Jatra* is the biggest and longest *jatra* in *Tokha*. Sometime it is also known as two years *Jatra* or *Bisket Jatra*. There are other temples such as *Sapanathirtha*, *Ganeshthan*, *Kora Ganesh*, *Mahankali*, *Bhairav* and so on and while priest performs *tanrik* worship to the goddess nobody can see. As whole the *Chandeswori Jatra* in *Tokha* celebrates about five days by conducting following activities.

Chandeswori is known as *Shakalmunipunhi* which is started from some days after finishing *dashain*. This *jatra* will be remained till fifteen days. *Guthi* member used to do *Aarti* in the evening and night as well from *Dashain purnima* till one month. After it, in the day of *Shakamulihpunhi* morning around 9.00 AM, chariot of

Chandeshwori temple will bring into the temple from big *lachhi*. Then there will be first worship by six members of *guthi* by red color, yellow color, *jautil*, different type of pure dish or *prasad*, fruits, *samaybaji*, alcohol, rice alcohol, soybeans, ginger, one egg, and sacrifice of cock. After finishing six members of *guthi* then another group of another *guthi* starts to worship who have seven members in that group which is also known as carrying chariot they worship by ghee, honey, *chaku*, garlic, *chhyela*, ginger, one egg, rice alcohol and *samaybaji* (Interview: Ram Kaji Shrestha).

After finishing that worship then local people worship and then they celebrate there at the noon and at the night *Shiva* and *Parvati* kept into the chariot and taken to the whole *Tokha* core and at last chariot kept into the big *Lachhi* or also known as *Dwhyachhyn*. After 15 days *Balachaturdashi*, it is the last day of that *jatra* in this day worship will be done and in *Balachaturdashi* eat different dishes and *jatra* will be finished.

Now, second *Jatra* and the main & the most important festival celebrate in *Chandeshwori* by the local community called a *Bisket Jatra*. This Festival was celebrated for five days and started from end of the *Chitra* and remained till to fourth day of the month of *Baisakh*. *Bisket Jatra* is the biggest and longest *Jatra* in *Tokha* Municipality. It is also known as two years *Jatra* because of it started from last day of last month's *Chaitra* and end of forth day of 1st month of *Baisakh*. In the last day of *Chaitra* chariot of goddess *Chandeshwori* and chariot of Lord *Mushkhareshwor* *Shiva* will bring to the *Chandeshwori* temple and other six Chariots also take to their own place from *Thalagtole*. All the *guthi*'s member came to *Chandeshwori* temple from morning to night to worship to *Chandeshwor* i.e. *Shiva* and *Chandeshwori* i.e. *Parvati* and stay whole night in temple with different activities like singing of *Newari* songs, playing *Newari* instruments as well as doing *Aarti* and so on. Foe is the main needed material of this *Jatra*.

First Day: Especially, *Jatra* begins from the first day of the month of *Baishakh* as the form of *Bishket Jatra*. So, in this day in the morning priests' worship to gods and goddesses same like other day. Daily worship after finished that people start to come to worship. Because of victory over demon *Chandasur* and also people worship god goddess to celebrate New Year. At the end of the day again chariot put into the *Thalagtole* at night. In that place *Dawakhalag* will be present their and also, they stay whole night by doing *Bhajan* with eating *Samyabaji*, *Kirtan* play the instruments and so on.

Second day: This day *Bishket Jatra* also known as *Siduri Jatra* will bring out into the procession. In this day, in the morning all the gods and goddesses put in the eight chariots with their ornaments. The eight chariots such as *Chandeswori* Chariot, *Sapanthirtha* Chariot, *Masankali* Chariot, *Saraswoti* Chariot, *Shiva* Chariot, *Ganeshthan* Chariot, *Kore Ganesh* or *Tallo Ganesh* Chariot and *Ganesh Kumar* i.e. Chariot living god have been took part on the processions in this day of *Bishkhet Jatra*. During the *Jatra guthi*'s members make beautiful decoration of Chariot with flowers, flags, and many more. First of all, priests' worship to all the Chariots and also does *Shankalpa* i.e. obligation then after people believes that firstly chariot of *Ganesh Kumar* have to take one round in *Tokha* core then after other seven chariot can be taken to the different areas inside the *Tokha* circle. After finishing one round of Chariot of *Ganesh Kumar* then after all the people of *Tokha* come to bring the materials of worship like *Samayadhala*, egg, fruits, incense lamp, flowers from their own house and also,

they give chicken indulgence as well as from *Talejuguthi* they give chicken indulgence (Source: Observation).

In this day eight chariots taken from the *Thalagtole*. Lots of people carry the chariot on rotation system. The peoples of *Thalagtole* come to see the *Jatra* it means carrying Chariot and people worship in the way while chariot taken too different also, place after *Thalagtole* it went to *Ganeshthan*. After reaching *Ganesh* temple it takes to the *Sanu* or lowers *Lachhi* and then after it will take to the big or upper *Lachhi*. Then after *Yallahtole* then after again it takes to the big *Lachhi* and put their whole night. Many people come to celebrate at night with *Dawakhalag* which means group of people who plays different musical instruments belong to *Newari* community, while doing celebration they sing a *Newari* and also a *jatra's* song like *Tokha Biska Nakha* and perform dance as well. In this process peoples bring incense lamp to do *Aarti* at evening and wake up whole night by doing these activities (Interview: Rajesh Shrestha).

Third day: The processes and processions of this day are also same like the second day of *Bishket Jatra*. In the morning priest pays worship for the first in the *Chandeshwori* temple and then worship to the chariot. After finishing worship of chariot, they make plan when chariots of *Ganesh* and *Kumar* will take to surround of *Tokha* core. This chariot will not carry out at night. Most special thing of this day is five chariots will be drowning into the pond. It has believed that in those three days chariot will be so dirty so chariot taken into the pond and start to drowning. In this time all the people take enjoy by observing that activities and also dance and play with musical instruments belong to *Newar* community.

After finished that activity then five chariots have taken to the *Bhutkhel*. Out of five one chariot which name is *Masan Kali*. At the same time people play with the instruments and they do *Newari* dance too. While returning *Tokha* by carrying chariots *Masankali* and *Kor Ganesh* they stop the way of another three chariots at the *Tokha* gate. It is believed that *Masankali* invite to rest of the Chariots and he doesn't want to let them go because they are guest of *Masankali*. After sometimes *Masankali* Chariot give the way to return. At the night of this day they do same activities which they had done yesterday night and they eat very popular foods and drinks of *Newar* community in a party and they celebrate whole night (Source: Observation).

Forth day: It is considered as the final day of *Jatra*. In this day all the god goddess will bring in that big *Lachhi* then worship by priests. Most especial things of this day are there is one circle way of chariot play. That road is covered by white cloth and chariot play should not go out of that clothe. So, while carrying that chariot same activities of entertainment like dancing in *Newari* tune or play *Newari* instruments there are different types of group of people of playing *Newari* instruments *khalag*. Then, slowly Chariot plays follow the fixed way and then after many people pray the god goddess or chariot and worship by worship materials. At last Chariot put into the *Thalagtole* and locals gives *samaybaji* to the chariot carrying people as well as instrument playing people and they celebrate then all goes their home at late night (Interview: Sangita Maharjan).

Fifth day: It is concluding day of this *Jatra*. Early in the morning priest pay the daily worship in the goddess *Chandeshwori* temple. Priest worships special in that day and pray to god that while during this *Jatra* if there had been something wrong please forgive

us and so on at the same time and that all the *guthi* members of *Tokha* core and also *Dawakhalag*, chariot carrying people and some people of that community goes to the barraging to do *rastapuja*. So, this *puja* will be done by sacrificing of cock and they worship to god and they eat *Newari* foods in special *bhooj* and they return to their own house and finally the *Jatra* came into an end.

Customs and Customary laws

Customs and customary laws are differentiating between each other one of the important aspects of identity of any indigenous ethnic groups. It helps to control, manage, guide and regulate a member, family and community within their norms, values, privilege traditions and discipline of that particular ethnic group. Customs are the organizations, which perform their responsibility as an institution in the community. Generally, every ethnic community has their own special organization. They do different task in their community according to the norms and requirements of the society. These types of organizations which are founded in accordance with the provision of customary law are called indigenous institutions of the community (ILO, 2009, P. 81).

Every year there will be two *Chandeshwori Jatras*. While carrying chariot they can't wear shoes, while having period or menstruation she cannot participate in that *jatra*, also where some people die his/her relatives cannot participate in this *jatra*. They have to sacrifice of either hen, either goat or either male buffalo especially 2nd, 3rd and 4th days of the *jatra*. Starting of *Bisaketjatra* people of *Tokha* can't cross river, it is believes of people.

As the customary law pure dress should be wear, and most of the priests wear yellow white and red dresses. But other people can wear which they want to wear but it should be pure. *Newari* dresses and ornaments were used mostly in the *jatra* which also help to promote and keep *Newar* identity and prestige in the society. There are also other customary rules that are while carrying chariot they can't wear shoes, while having period or menstruation she cannot participate in that *jatra*. Likewise, where some people die his/her relatives can also not participate in this *jatra*. This *jatra* will do because of victory over demon *Chandasur* and also with believes that while having short *jatra* so that is not enough so this *Bisaketjatra* start to celebrate for full satisfaction of the people in *Tokha*.

Role of Newar Community for Preserving the Jatra

The *Newars* are the major ethnic group, who has been living in *Tokha* from the very early. The term *Newar* is applied to designate a number of former ethnic groups who have, through centuries of interbreeding, been welded into a homogeneous community with common traditions of language and other social heritage (Nepali, 1965, p. 18). Mainly, the *Newar* caste can be classified into six major hierarchical groups. Priestly castes, high castes, upper castes, lower castes, unclean castes and untouchable castes are the major divisions that can be observed in the *Newar* community. Religiously they are also divided in to Hindu and Buddhist as well. Brahmins, *Chhathar*, *Panchar*, *Tini*, *Jyapu* (level-1), *Tama*, *Kumha* and *Awa*, *Jyapu* (level-2), *Jyapu* (level-3), *Chipi*, *Cyo* or *Cya*, *Dwin*, the borderline- clean *thars*, *Nae*, *Jugi*, *Don*, *Kulu*, *Pore*, *Cyamakhala*, *Halahulu* are the major *thars* of *Newars* (Levy, 1992, pp. 78-85). In this regard, some scholars mentioned that there are 336 different caste groups in the *Newar* community (Dhaubanjari, 2075, pp. 59-61).

Chandeswori pilgrimage site is densely settled and occupied by *Newar*, an ethnic community of Kathmandu Valley where different types of cultural heritage and religious sects and beliefs have been found in practices from the very earlier. The people involved in the *Jatra* are usually the locals, followers of the *Jatra*, priest and *Guthiyar* the people who are the member of *Guthis*. *Newars* are the main dwellers of this *Jatra* but people who are interested can participate in the ceremony without any obstruction, the role of priest is accomplished by the generation of *Karmacharya* a group of *Newar* community. At present *Dharmendra Karmacharya* and the members of his families are performing pooja as the main priest for this *Jatra*. There is a separate *Guthis* for carrying the chariots during the *Jatra* as well.

Newars are the main disciple of the *Tokha* where there may be more than five hundred houses of *Newari* in *Tokha*. They are mainly belonging to *Shrestha*, *Maharjan*, *Dangol*, *Karmacharya*, *Barmacharya* and *Shakya* sub caste in the main town area, while *Brahmin*, *Tamang* and *Chhetri* are also found in little in numbers inside the core area. *Chandeswori Jatra* is a Hindu festival where majorities of Hindu *Newars* take part whereas, there are few people among them follow the Buddhist and also, they are participating during the festival. This is a time when whole of *Newar* community in *Tokha* get out of their sadness, tension and stress through this *Bisket Jatra* or *Chandeswori Jatra*.

There exist about eight to nine types of *Guthis* at present separated as per their respective functions or roles. As the roles and responsibilities *Thakali* is a leader and also there some members of *guthi* and also eldest person of *Newar* community in *Tokha*. But at present priest whose name is *Dharmaraj Karmacharya* is the *Thakali* and *guthi* member too. His family creeds are the main priest for this *Bisket Jatra*. There is a separate *guthi* for carrying the chariot during the *Jatra* as well. The images of gods and goddesses are placed inside *Chandeswori* temple which is very famous and historical place.

Therefore, the social and cultural value found in *Tokha* core is dominated by the *Newar* ethnic group. Absolutely *Newars* are the richest in their socio-cultural practices in *Tokha*. As far as the role of *Newar* community for the preservation of *Chandeswori jatra* is concerned, there can observe the people of *Newar* community have continuously been playing positive and noteworthy role as the priests, *guthis* and *thakalis* and members of the *guthis* through the ages. Obviously, due to the positive role of the same community the tradition and culture associated with the goddess *Chandeswori* and *jatra* have transformed and existed till to the date.

Conclusion

This study was conducted to find the detail about the *Chandeswori Jatra* of *Tokha*. In this research, 25 samples were selected for the collection of primary data through interviews and focus group discussions. The study revealed that while most respondents were aware of this *Jatra*, only a few respondents possessed knowledge about the means and materials used, customary laws, and the process and procession of this festival. The *Chandeswori* temple in *Tokha* was established during the *Lichchhavi* period, and the first *Jatra* was celebrated after its founding during the *Sakamulihpunih* period. The temple hosts two distinct *Jatras*. Additionally, there are different types of *Guthis* associated with the temple, including ornaments-related *guthi*, *musyaguthi*, *patipauwaguthi*, *pujariguthi*, and chariot-carrying *guthi*, among others.

While these lessons may be applicable to researchers and other similar contexts, it is crucial for researchers to tailor their strategies according to the local context and document their experiences. This allows other researchers and stakeholders to draw insights and lessons from the shared experiences. This research is designed to achieve several objectives, including identifying the ideology behind the *Chandeswori* temple and the *Jatra*, examining the laws and rules related to the *Jatra*, exploring the materials and methods used in the *Jatra*, investigating the major rites and rituals performed during the procession, and analyzing the major customs and customary laws associated with the procession. Furthermore, this study delves into the significant cultural heritage of the *Newar* community's role in preserving the *Chandeswori Jatra* in *Tokha*.

Implication

This paper highlights that the *Chandeswori Jatra* is facing challenges in today's generation. Educated individuals are increasingly embracing Western culture, while the older generation struggles to preserve it. Although the *Chandeswori Jatra* is traditionally celebrated by the *Newar* community, it also attracts participants from other communities. However, there is still a lack of awareness about this cultural event among many people. This *Jatra* serves as an identity marker for the *Newar* community and has the potential to represent our country, Nepal, as a whole. Therefore, there is a need to promote and preserve this tradition.

The research focuses on the intangible cultural heritage of the *Chandeswori* pilgrimage site, specifically related to the *Chandeswori Jatra*. The information generated by this study can enlighten those within the community who are unaware of the significance of the *Chandeswori Jatra*. Furthermore, this research explores the role of the *Newar* community in preserving the *Chandeswori Jatra* and upholding cultural beliefs associated with gods and goddesses. It also aims to promote *Tokha* as a significant tourism destination. Consequently, this research is valuable for individuals seeking to understand the intangible cultural heritage of the study area, particularly in relation to the *Chandeswori Jatra*.

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