

**SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AMONG THE NEWARS:
AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF JYAPU COMMUNITY
OF LALITPUR DISTRICT, NEPAL**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE**

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BY

SIPOY SARVESWAR

11SAPH02



**DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD
HYDERABAD- 500 046
DECEMBER 2016**



Department of Anthropology
University of Hyderabad

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work embodied in this dissertation entitled “***Social Organization among the Newars: An Ethnographic Study of Jyapu community of Lalitpur District, Nepal***” is carried out by me under the supervision of **Dr. George Tharakan C.**, Department of Anthropology, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad, and has not been submitted for any degree in part or in full to this University or any other University.

Date:

Hyderabad.

Sipoy Sarveswar



Department of Anthropology
University of Hyderabad

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This is to certify that **Mr. Sipoy Sarveswar** (Reg. No. **11SAPH02**) has carried out the work embodied in the present dissertation entitled “***Social Organization among the Newars: An Ethnographic Study of Jyapu community of Lalitpur District, Nepal***” under the supervision of **Dr. George Tharakan C.**, Department of Anthropology, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad. The dissertation represents his independent work and has not been submitted for any research degree of this University or any other University.

(Prof. B. V. Sharma)

Head

Department of Anthropology

(Dr. George Tharakan C.)

Supervisor

Department of Anthropology

(Prof. P. Venkat Rao)

Dean

School of Social Sciences

University of Hyderabad

Hyderabad



CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “***Social Organization among the Newars: An Ethnographic Study of Jyapu Community of Lalitpur District, Nepal***” submitted by **Sipoy Sarveswar** bearing registration number **11SAPH02** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Social Sciences is a bonafide work carried out by him under my supervision and guidance.

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1.	SA701	Advanced Anthropological Theories	4.00	Pass
2.	SA702	Advanced Research Methods	4.00	Pass
3.	SA704	Kinship and Marriage	4.00	Pass

Supervisor

Head of the Department

Dean of the School

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Enlightenment is what one may call understanding life philosophically. Life is intertwined with several processes and networks of people. The complex network, which shapes and defines one's life, is very important to understand not for the sake of others but for one's self. In this journey of understanding others, several network of people play a key role in shaping us of what we are. In this network of people, primarily come teachers, who follow the noble profession of teaching. In the movie 'Lucy (2014)', Lucy (Scarlett Johansson) asks, '*all this knowledge, I do not know what to do with it?*' Prof. Samuel Norman (Morgan Freeman) says, '*pass it on; there is no higher purpose of life than to pass on the knowledge*'. The teachers naturally do pass on the knowledge and help any individual to understand the complex structure of society.

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T=Top

B= Bottom

R= Right

L= Left

C= Centre

ABBREVIATIONS

F: Father

M: Mother

B: Brother

Z: Sister

S: Son

D: Daughter

H: Husband

W: Wife

NP: Nepali

New: Newari

MAPS



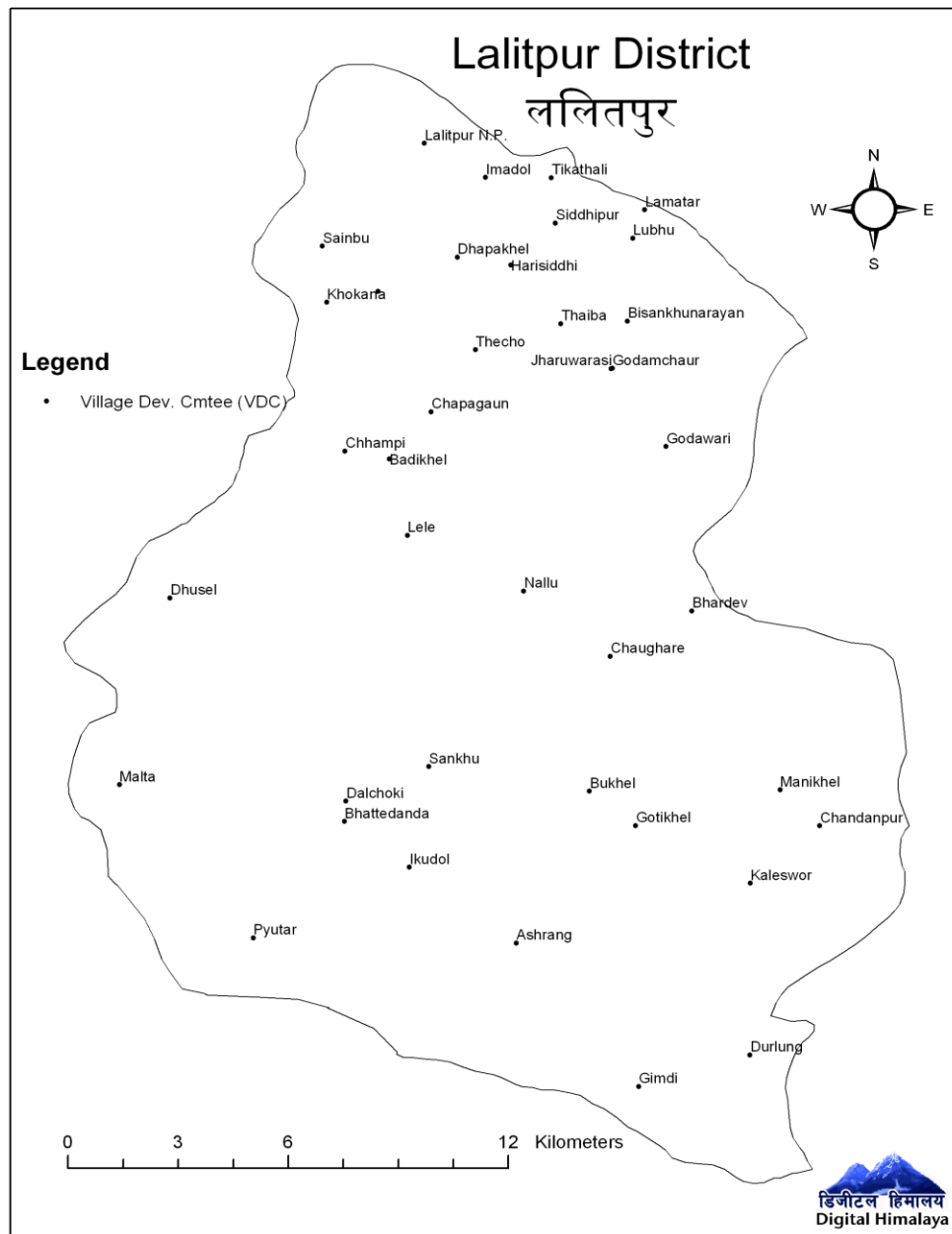
Map 1: Political Map of Nepal

(Map downloaded from Google)



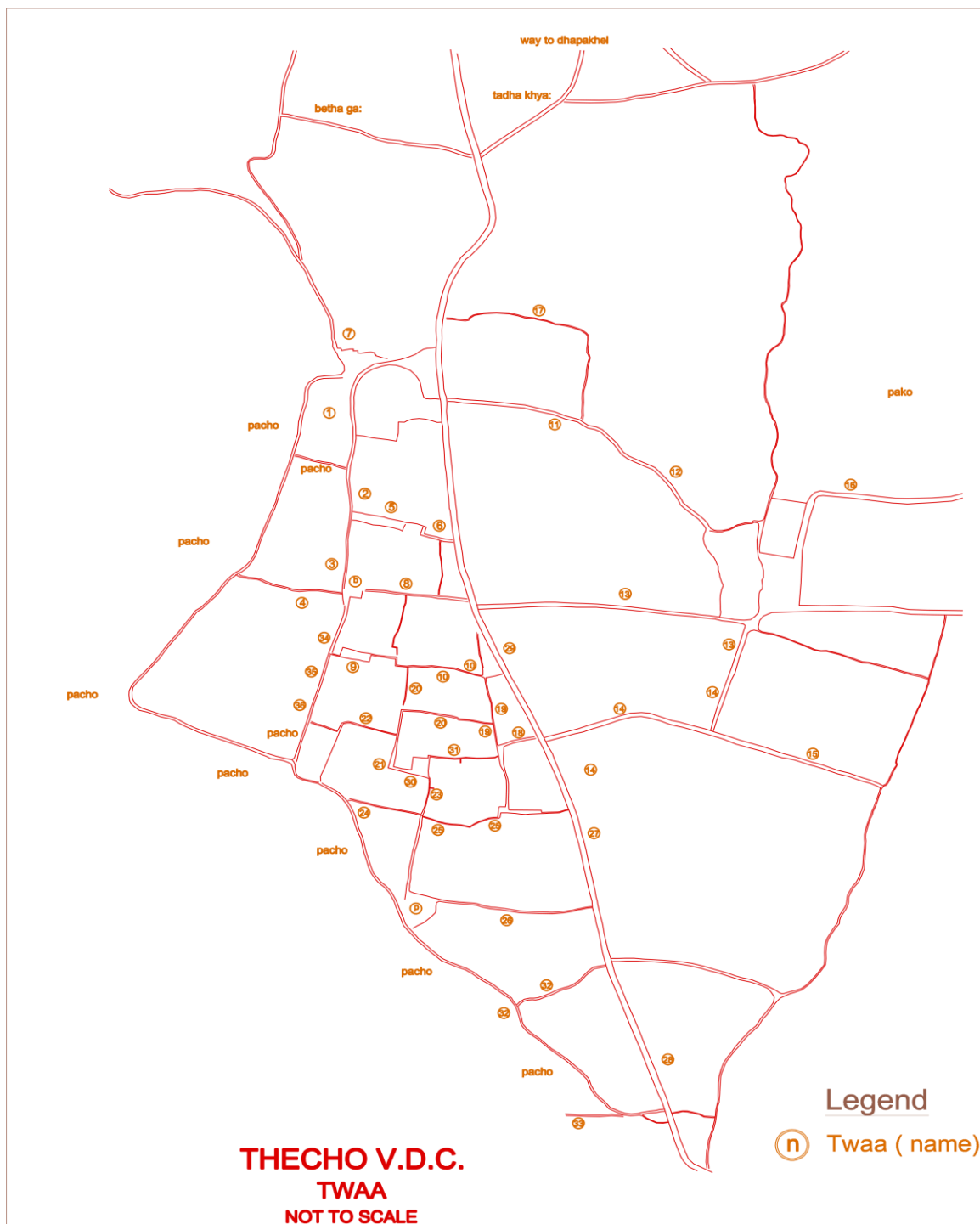
Map 2: Zonal Division of Nepal

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Map 3: Lalitpur District with all the Village Developmental Committees (VDC) including Thecho VDC

(Map downloaded from Digital Himalaya)



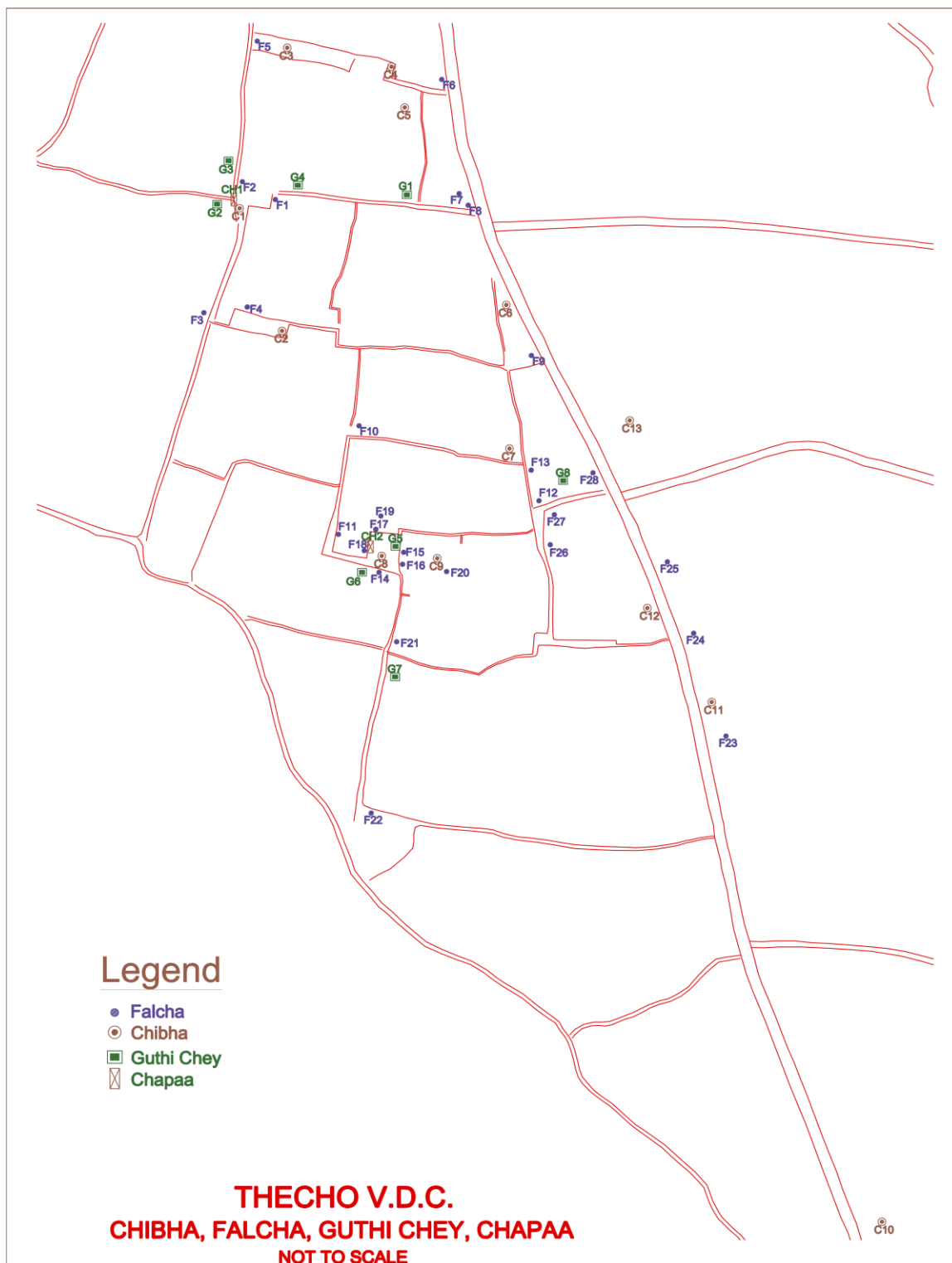
Map 6: Showing Different Toles/Twaa in Thecho Village

(Map drawn with the technical help of Purna Maharajan)

Map 6

Toles or Twa:

1. Khalbe
2. Kyo Twa * Donkasi
3. Chapa kwoye/ kutu tole/ laizol (Koye Lachi)
4. Way to pacho
5. Taa: Nani (Koye Lachi)
6. Pukhishi
7. Haagale
8. Nuchhe Twa (Nuche Tole)
9. Gwa nani
10. Sikha Twa:
11. Docha
12. Memcha Twa:
13. Koye Hochal
14. Choye hochal
15. Pama gaon
16. Dhurikhel
17. Maka Thali
18. Bhailazu/ Budha Pokhri/ Pukushi
19. Kacha Tole
20. Kutuzole/ Kuzo Tole/ Kujhha
21. Laizol
22. Pacho
23. Way to go to Pingal/ Dhlapa Tole
24. Pacho
25. Salcha
26. Datulocha (Middle Road) Dochula Cha:
27. Malligaon
28. Jallipati
29. Kushiko
30. Lachi (Choye)
31. DeyoKwo (Down to Temple)
32. Dhashiga
33. Schithaa Yanewu La: Cha
34. Jhochyey/ Jhole
35. Laskuti Tole
36. Chaswe Tole



Map 7: Showing Chibha, Falcha, Guthi Chey, Chapaa in the Thecho Village.

(Map drawn with the technical assistance of Purna Maharajan)

Map 7

Falcha

- F1. *Pingal/sarswathi falcha*
- F2. *Pacho falcha*
- F3. *Ta nani falcha*
- F4. *Ka: falcha*
- F5. *Nasa falcha*
- F6. *Chakwo falcha*
- F7. *Chapa falcha*
- F8. *Laijho falcha*
- F9. *Laizol falcha*
- F10. *Kutuzol falcha*
- F11. *Kacha falcha*
- F12. *Kacha falcha*
- F13. *Gwanani falcha*
- F14. *Laskuti falcha*
- F15. *Mesa falcha*
- F16. *Chakwo flacha*
- F17. *Nava suryodayi club/ falcha*
- F18. *Pukushi falcha*
- F19. *Meesa falcha*
- F20. *Nehasa falcha*
- F21. *Mandha falcha*
- F22. *Sata falcha.*
- F23. *Chika falcha*
- F24. *Pukishi/nayya falcha*
- F26. *Jastha falcha*
- F27: informants could not name it
- F28. *Subhanani falcha*

Chibha

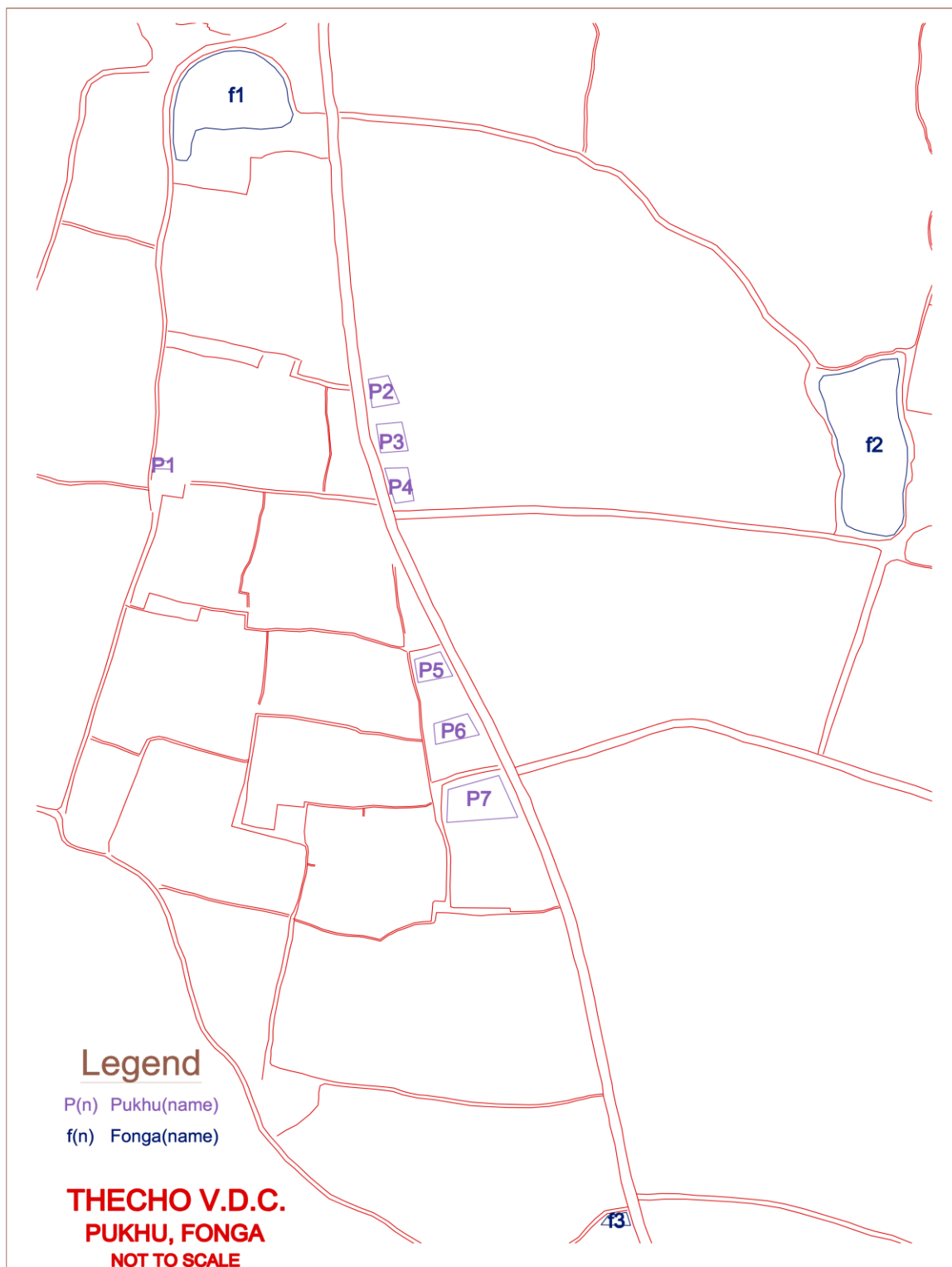
- C1. *Choyelachi chibha*
- C2. *Ta: Nani chibha*
- C3. *Kacha chibha*
- C4. *Gwanani chibha*
- C5. *Koye lachi chibha*
- C6. *Ta: Nani chibha*
- C7. *Pwasha/pukushi chibha*
- C8. *Damga nani chibha*
- C9. *Sikhachey chibha*
- C10. *Dharmasthali chibha*
- C11. *Malligaon chibha*
- C12. *Chardham chibha*
- C13. *Jalipati chibha*

Guthi Chey

- G1. *Nehsa guthi*
- G2. *Mu guthi*
- G3. *Kona guthi*
- G4. *Navadurga guthi*
- G5. *Paru guthi*
- G6. *Chare guthi*
- G7. *Punhe guthi*
- G8. *Bhairav guthi*

Chapaa

- CH1. *Choyelachi chapaa*
- CH2. *Koyelachi chapaa*



Map 8: Showing Pukhu and Fonga in Thecho Village.

(Map drawn with the technical help of Purna Maharajan)

Map 8

Pukhu (P)/Funga (f)

P1 : *Lachi pukhu*

P2 : *Koye pukhu*

P3 : *Dar pukhu/ Yamunya pukhu/ Mahadev pukhu*

P4 : *Choye pukhu*

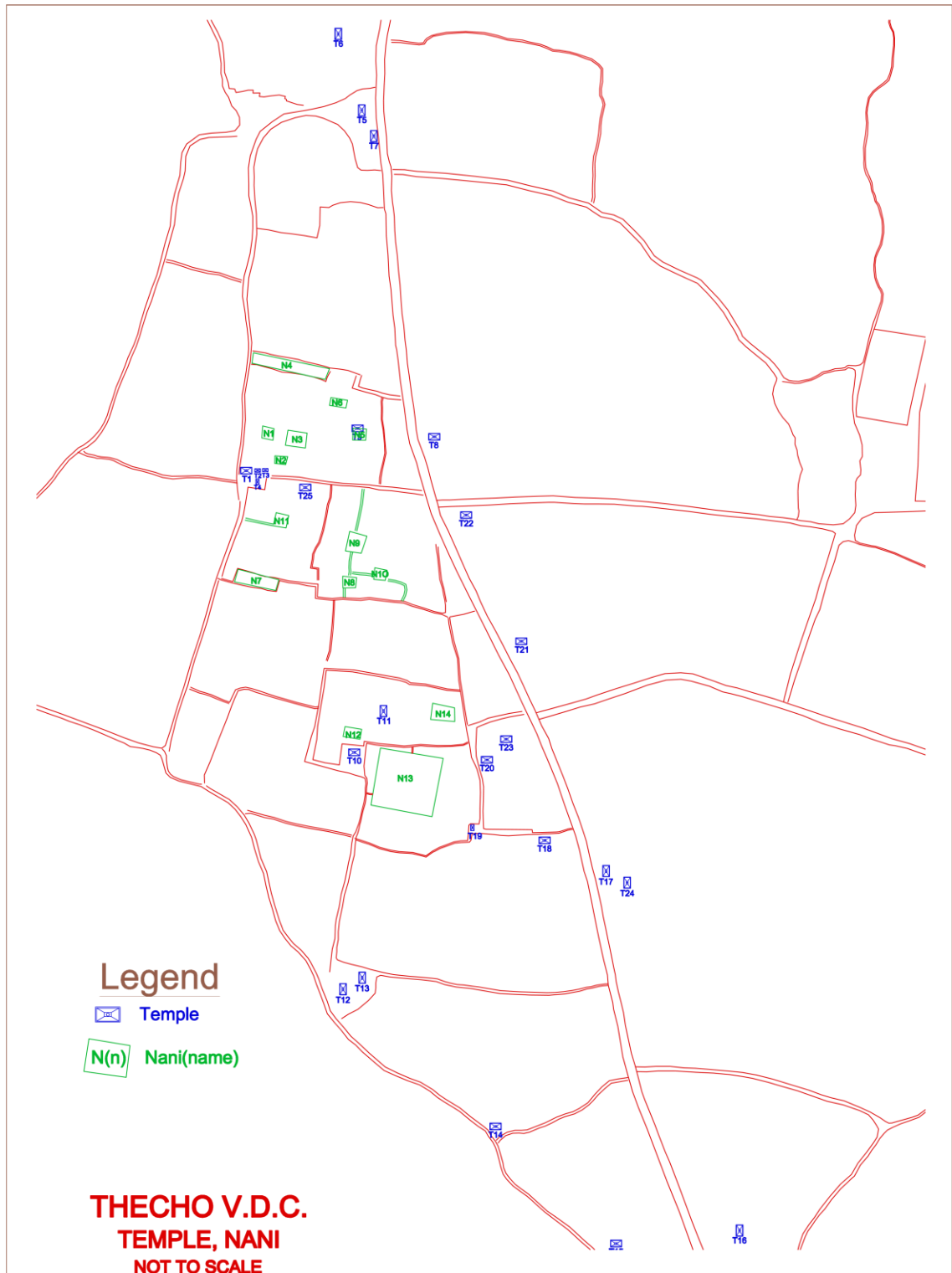
P5 : *Mandha pukhu*

P6 : *Kacha pukhu*

P7 : *Ta: Da: pukhu*

f1 : *Sarswathi funga*

f2 : *Dhurikhel funga*



Map 9: Showing Different Temples and Nanis in Thecho Village.

(Map drawn with the technical help of Purna Maharajan)

Map 9

Temples (T)

- T1 : Brahmayini Temple (S)
- T2 : Nasa Deyo Temple (W)
- T3 : Navadurga Temple (N)
- T4: Gana Deyo/ Sas mahadeyo/ Sarswathi Deyo (W)
- T5: Sidhi Binayak Temple (SW)
- T6: Beluvu Vanaram Bihar (E)
- T7 : Saraswathi Deyo (E)
- T8 : mahadev Temple (N/S)
- T9 : Nasa Guru Temple (S)
- T10 : Balkumari Temple (S)
- T11 : Krishna Temple (W)
- T12 : Pingal (W)
- T13 : Saraswathi Temple (W)
- T14 : Ridhi Binayak Temple (S)
- T15: Gorakh Nath (E)
- T16 : Gorakh Nath (E)
- T17 : Chardham (N/S/E/W)
- T18: Naradeyo (Near to Water tank)(N)
- T19 : Naradeyo (E)
- T20 : Mahadeyo (N)
- T21 : Ganadeyo (S)
- T22 : Kusiko Gwa Deyo (S)
- T23: Budha Bihar (Ta: Da Pukhu) (N)
- T24: Mathesndranath (W)
- T25: Ganadeyo Temple (N)

Nani (N)

N1 : *Subha nani*

N2 : *Deyo nani*

N3 : *Samaya nani*

N4 : *Ta: nani (koyelachi)*

N5 : *Damga nani*

N6 : *Bakha Nani*

N7 : *Gwa nani*

N8 : *Nanighal*

N9 : *Nanighal (Tara Libi)*

N10 : *Too nani*

N11 : *Khokhachey nani/ Balu Ta nani*

N12 : *Subha nani*

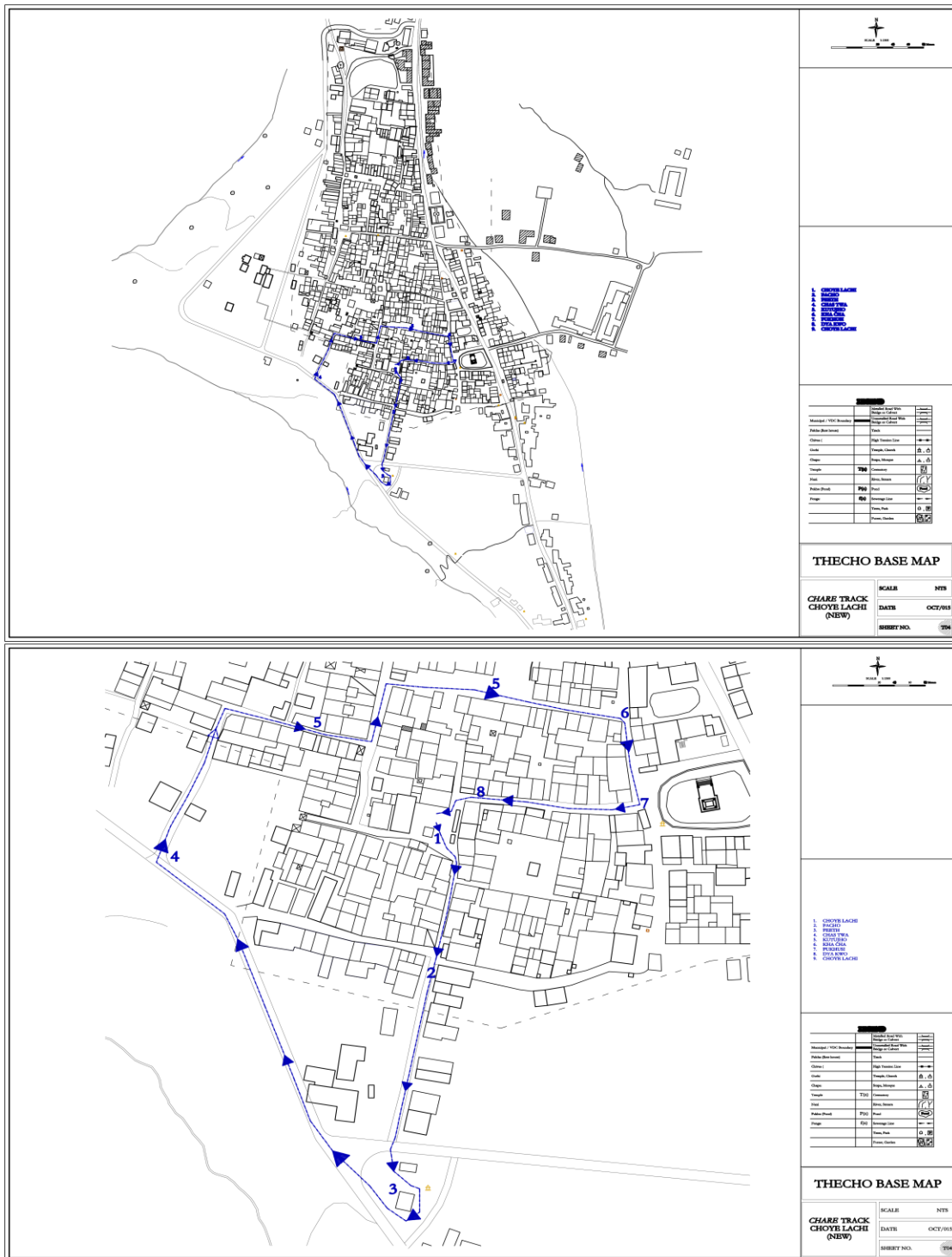
N13 : *Ta: nani (choyelachi)*

N14: *Duvva nani*



Map 11: Track of Jatara Koyelachi (Brahmayani)

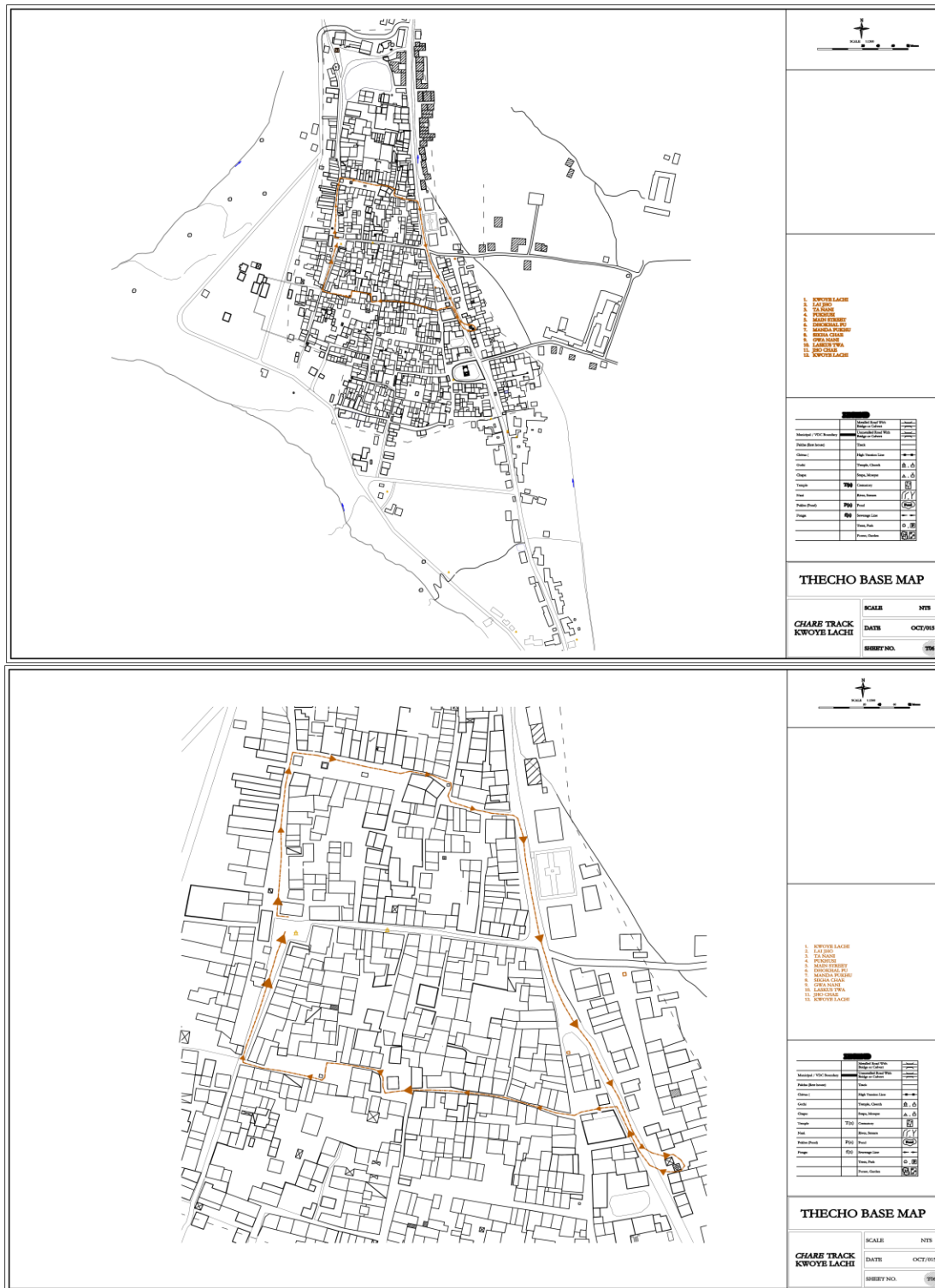
(Map drawn with the technical help of Purna Maharajan)



Map 13: New Charhe Track Choyelachi
 (Map drawn with the technical help of Purna Maharajan)

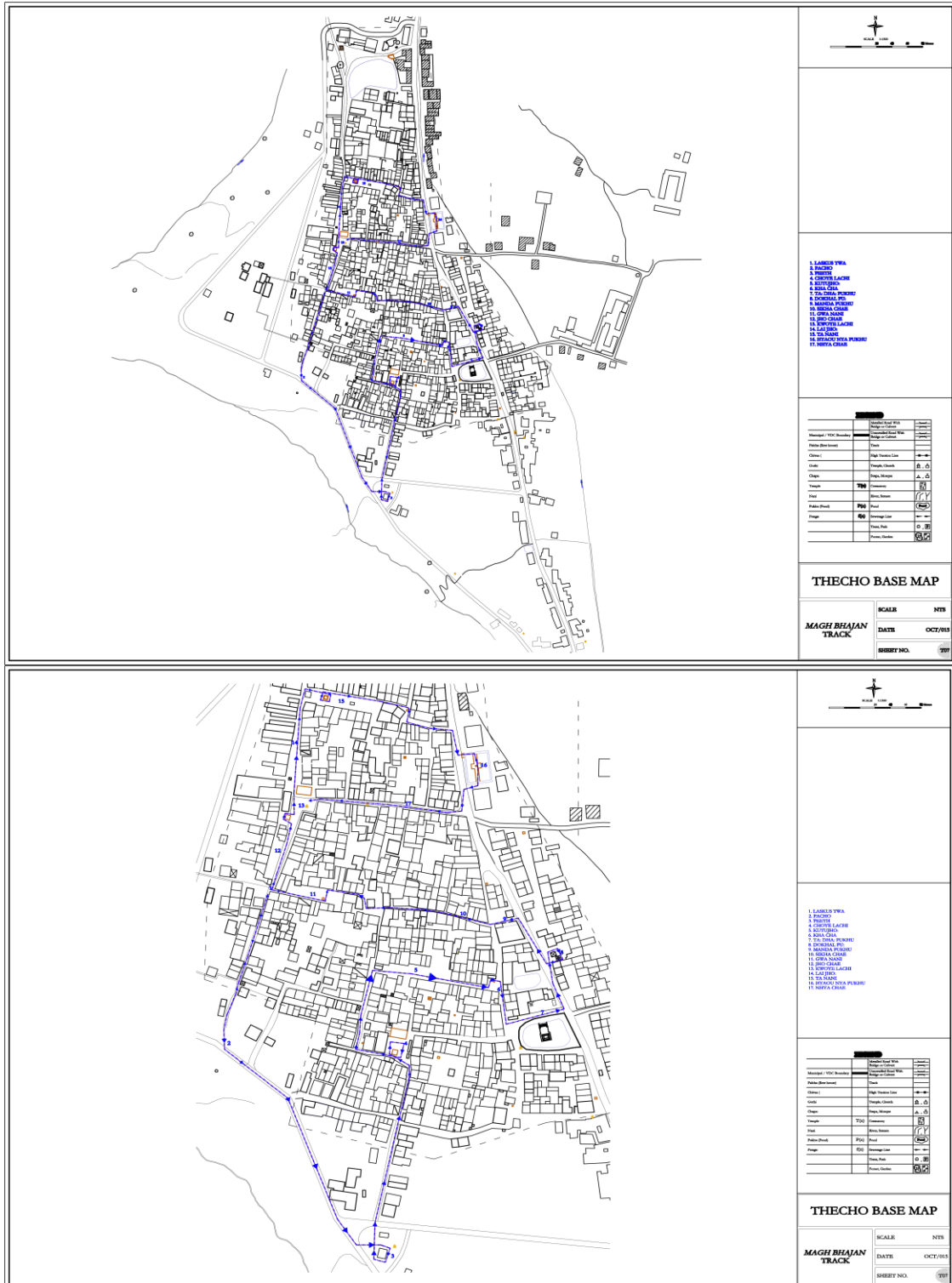


Map 14: Old Charhe Track Choyelachi
(Map drawn with the technical help of Purna Maharajan)



Map 15: Charhe Track koyelachi

(Map drawn with the technical help of Purna Maharajan)



Map 16: Magh Bhajan Track

(Map drawn with the technical help of Purna Maharajan)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Social Organization:

Social organization can be referred to as an ‘arrangement of activities’ (Radcliffe-Brown, 1952) or the overall activities carried out in a given social context’ (Barnard, 2010). Olsen gives us a detail account of the process of social organization: a ‘social organization is the dynamic process’ (1968, p. 2) and it is ‘the process of merging social actors into ordered social relationships’ (1968, p. 3). While discussing how the social organization exists in certain conditions, Olsen further elaborates by saying that ‘social organization inextricably intertwines with the larger setting in which it exists’, these settings invariably comprises ‘natural environment’, ‘population’, ‘human being’, ‘material technology’ and ‘social environment’. To sum up about the settings where the social organization exists Olsen says that, ‘individual and organizations almost always exist and act within a complex social environment’.

Firth (1961, p. 41-43) explains that, a community is a group of people sharing in common activities and bound by several relationships which ensures the individual’s aims are being met only when he/she participates in action along with others. He distinguishes four constituents which are considered as essential to ‘social existence in a community’, these are: ‘social alignment, social controls, social media, and social standards’. ‘Social alignment’ including ‘social structure’ comprises not only ‘corporate groups’ but also ‘associations of persons for such common aims as work or recreation’. People are arranged as per their community’s understanding of grading by rank, occupation, sex, age and by ritual hierarchy and also their arrangement by ‘social role and social status’. Community life is imbued with certain systems of beliefs and procedures by which each and every individual’s or group’s activity is guided and controlled. These ‘social controls’ are nothing but, systems of people’s technical or practical or empirical

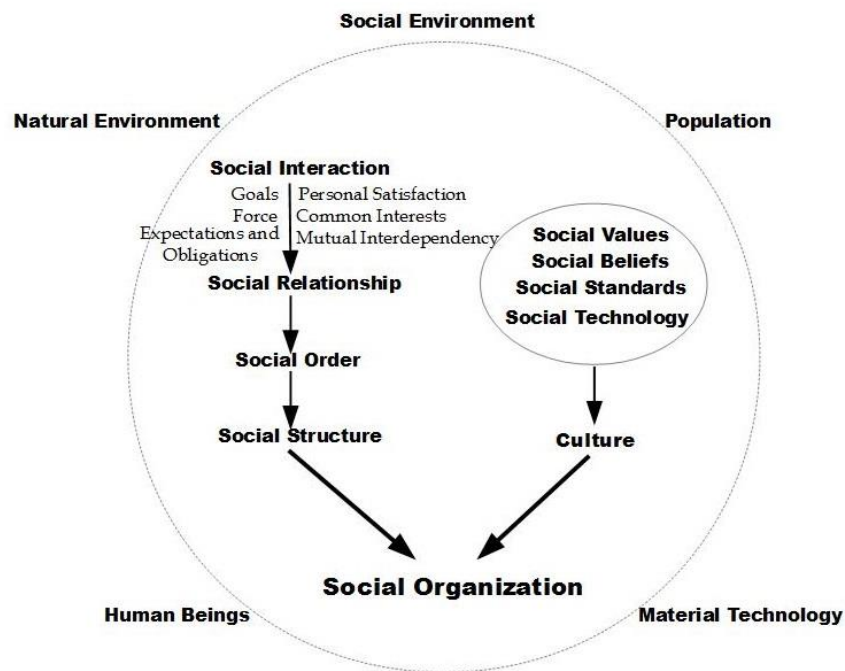
knowledge by the aid of which people manipulate the environment they live in. These social controls are again highly emotional, attached and supported with religious beliefs which dictates morality, law, and rules of the community. These social controls are also used to benefit one's own group even at the cost of exploiting the other group within a community. These social controls are passed on through a communication which Frith calls it as 'social media'. Social media comprises mainly of 'material goods' and 'language'. Material goods in the form of tools and transport facilitates the free flow of the material culture from one generation to the other. Language acts as a vehicle for the expression of thought and emotion. All community life involves a system of standards, graded by their own society based on the judgements they derive from the cultural experience in the particular set up. These 'social standards' represents 'systems of values' which are charged with emotions and has ideological components and they also stimulate and guide conduct.

For understanding social organization Firth says that, the aim is to understand social process. It is essential to understand the principles of social structure. But that by itself is not enough as it is also important to understand in any given condition how social activity is the result of 'complex set of elements', such as direct response for the structural principles by individuals, and how they perceive those structural principles, what principles they are choosing to follow and what they are trying to alter and how is power being exercised to achieve individual targets vis-à-vis group's obligations. Social process changes with time. Social events are not mere 'reflection or exemplification' of elements of the social structure, they affect situations which indeed affect actions which sometimes may not be reversible. The role players will be forced to make new sets of choices, through which the structure of society is also subject to change (1961, p. 61).

Olsen (1968) also tries to explain how social organizations have been created. He argues in two spheres, social order and culture. He says that, it all starts with the 'social interaction' between the individuals in the society, which leads to the formation of 'social relationship' which he calls as a 'case of enduring social interaction'. Olsen also says that the actors put forth the efforts necessary to create social relationship because of several

reasons, such as, ‘personal satisfaction, common interests and goals, expectations and obligations, mutual interdependency and force’. The established social relationships strive to have social order. Social relationships arrange in ‘multidimensional patterns’ that tend to stabilise themselves over the period. The ‘observed regularities and uniformities in social life that result from this process are called as social order’. ‘Social order arises as the interactions of social actors become recurrent through time and complexly patterned’. The continuing social order further favours to form a social structure. He also cautions that one should not misunderstand social organization to be static when it is referred with structure (as the term structure denotes the static process). He says that, ‘social structure is a perceptual and conceptual abstraction from social reality’ and social organization is always ‘becoming’ (Olsen, 1968, p. 45) (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Social Organization According to Olsen



Olsen also stretches from the point of social ordering to culture, in explaining how both social ordering and culture ‘extensively influence the other’ in the creation of social organization. Each and every social organization either explicitly or implicitly displays the cultural ideas (the components of culture are social values, social beliefs, social

standards, and social technology) of the society they exists. The social organization generally leaves a mark of the culture and how well the social order has been maintained which reflects in the social structure. He concludes, ‘social organization occurs as social actors interact in patterned and recurrent relationships to create social ordering, which in turn becomes infused with cultural ideas’ (1968, p. 62).

It is very important to understand the grouping of individuals or existing structure in order to understand and study the process of social organization (Lowie, 1966, p. 3; Parry, 1979 and Brown, 1964). In understanding the evolution of social organization, Murdock (1965) talks mainly about the evolution of groups such as family, descent patterns, kin groups and so on. Rivers opines that, social structure (organization) can be studied from two points of view. One, through describing the various forms of social structure, analysing each of its constituent elements, to study the relations of the elements to one another, to inquire into the social functions of their elements and to discover how these functions are related and succeed in producing an orderly and consistent organization. The second viewpoint is to understand the social structure from the historical set up (1991, p. 3-4).

This study further tries to understand, describe, and analyse the constituent elements of the social structure of the Newars of Thecho village. This study attempts to understand the relationship between these elements, and looked into the social functions of these elements and how they have manifested in the formation of social organization of the Newars of Thecho village. Rivers (1991) further classifies different social groupings, which we see daily in any society into six different categories, viz., domestic, political, occupational groupings, religion, education and societies or clubs (secret societies). This classification may fit into the different types of social groupings observed among the Newars of Thecho village. He also adds how these groupings can be broadly divided into voluntary groupings and involuntary groupings. In the context of the current

study, we can say *guthis*¹ (as quasi-voluntary groups²) and other groupings³ can be observed as voluntary groupings. Lowie, preferred to call these type of associations as “sodalities”, he further adds that, aims and functions keep on changing in these associations, and their very composition may be altered as situation and time demands, ‘They arise in response to certain needs, whether sentimental, social, economic, or religious, and are inevitable affected by coexisting institutions and folkways’ (1966, p. 294). The groupings such as family, kinship, and Caste are involuntary in nature. Lowie states that, ‘the first ethnologist to single out voluntary associations as a distinct and widespread cultural phenomenon was Schurtz’ (1966, p. 12). ‘All these different kinds of groupings are characterized by the feature of *Organization*. Membership of the group, and the process of joining and leaving the group, are the subject of definite social regulations, and involve certain duties and privileges in relation to the other members of the group’ (Rivers & Perry, 1924, p. 9).

This study has attempted to understand and analyze the social organization in Thecho village from existing social units such as family, kinship (through descent and alliance), *guthi* associations and other group formations (which are not *guthis*) and also finally through the caste system. These social units are discussed in detail in the following order (see figure 2 and 3), in the current study, analysis of social units proceeds from the smallest, most basic unit of society, that is family, to the biggest, more complex unit in the village that is the caste system. In the process of understanding different social units or groupings in a society, one has to see the position of individuals in relation to the groupings he/she has been associated. Humans deal with the groups they have been associated with, as an individual in two streams linearly and non-linearly. This study attempts to illustrate these linear (one after the other) and non-linear (all together, smaller

¹ A unique social institutions among the Newars, which has been institutionalized by making the membership through inheritance and each *guthi* having its own set of rules to govern themselves. Each *guthi* has certain responsibility to fulfill.

² Quasi voluntary, because the membership is not purely voluntary. Right after the demise of a *guthiyar*, his eldest or any son is expected to take his father’s position. Failing to do so, they might have to face the consequences such as the *guthi* no longer having any obligation to help the family to cremate in case of any death.

³ Such as *kosh*, *jhar goo*, *baja khala*, *bhajanmandal*, *pucha*, etc.,

group part of the larger group) pattern of relationship of an individual with the groups he/she is being associated. Linear fashion of association comes into play when the individual has to narrow down the priorities of sharing the resources or opportunities with his/her own group. Non-linear fashion gives overall collective notion of all the groups being part or inter-connected with each other to make it a multi-layered structure.

Figure 2: Uni-Linear Illustration of Social Organization

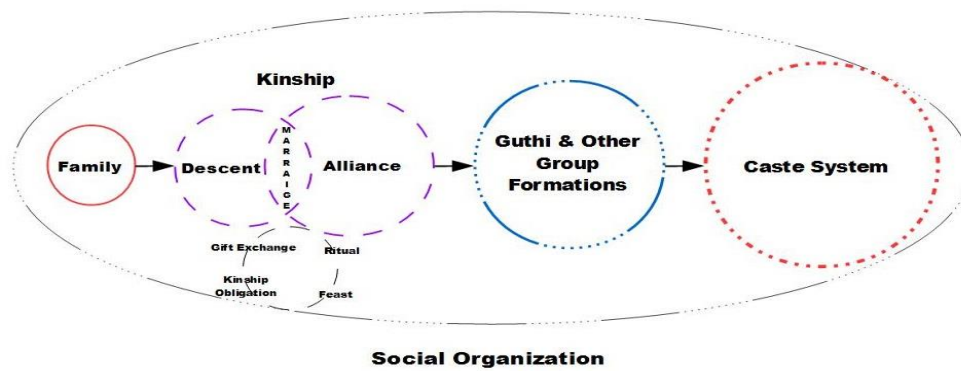
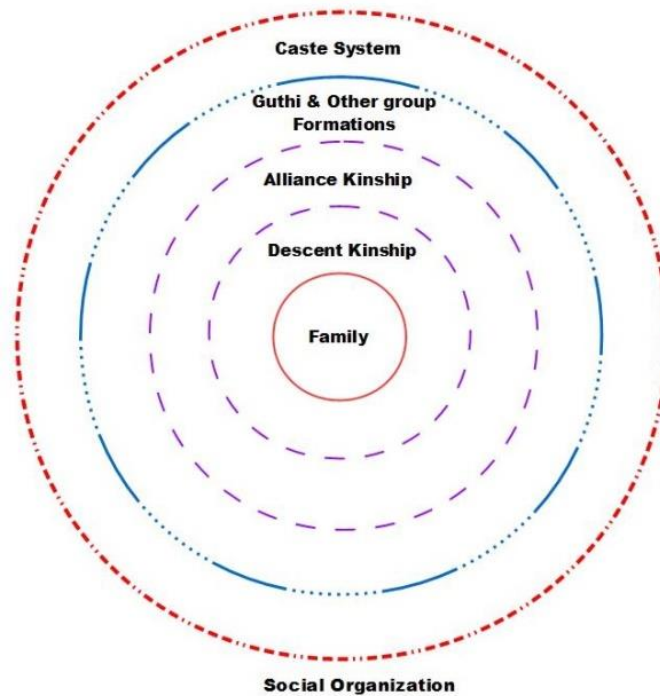


Figure 3: Non-Linear Illustration of Social Organization



Social Structure:

Social structure in its broadest sense refers to a whole set of features contributing to the making up of society. It becomes another name for system, organization, complex, pattern, type, and indeed does not fall very short of 'society as a whole' (Nadel, 1969). While quoting Ginsberg (1947, p. 1& 8), Nadel (1969), in explaining social structure says, 'the study of social structure is concerned with the principal forms of social organization, i.e. types of groups, associations and institutions and the complex of these which constitute societies... a full account of social structure would involve a review of the whole field of comparative institutions'. Nadel (1969) further discusses usage of structure in its loose sense by many scholars and some equating the social structure with the social organization. He concludes that, 'all the students of social structure are agreed that in studying *structure* we study essentially the interrelation or arrangement of *parts* in some total entity or *whole*'. In other words, the overall activities in the given social context can be considered as social organization. Whereas the 'social context' itself can be called as 'social structure' (Barnard, 2010). To elaborate on this, Brown (1952) defines social structure as 'an arrangement of persons in institutionally controlled or defined relationships'. Lopez & Scott (2002, p. 4-5) highly criticizes the scholars and other dictionaries for roughly defining the important concept 'social structure'. They further adds that, 'the concept of social structure points to a complex articulation of the institutional and relational elements of social life' and 'institutional structures and relational structures do depend...on embodied structures, but this doesn't make them any the less real'. 'This view should not be taken as implying any priority for 'structure' over 'action'... there can be no action without structure' (Archer, 1995). Olsen (1968) opines that, the moment one refers to social structure it gives an impression that it is static, albeit, the structures keep changing as they were mainly determined by the cultural ideas and as well as social order derived from social relationships and social interaction.

Earlier scholars who used social structure and social organization interchangeably was considered as a mistake, after Murdock (1949) seems to suggest a very wide meaning of 'social structure', one which bears little relation to the more precise

formulations of the other theorists, though it probably comes closer to the usual meaning of 'social organization'. Many anthropologists since have happily employed 'social structure' and 'social organization' synonymously' (Barnard, 2010). 'The evolution of social organization we refer merely to the normal processes of cultural change as these find special application in the area of social structure' (Murdock, 1949, p. 184) this study as it perceives, the social structure as integral part of the 'dynamic process' i.e. social organization has used both (social structure and social organization) synonymously.

Social Function:

The concept of function has been defined as phenomenon that 'involves the notion of *structure* consisting of a *set of relations* amongst *unit entities*, the *continuity* of the structure being maintained by a *life-process* made up of the *activities* of the constituent units' (Radcliffe-Brown, Structure and Function in Primitive Society: Essays and Addresses, 1952). The structure and organization are connected to each other by functional aspects involved in it. Organization can also be referred as process, and if the function ceases, the processes ends and hence the structure collapses, 'thus process is dependent on structure and continuity of structure is dependent on process' (Brown, 1952). Alternatively, if the community wishes to continue the structure (group formed) they might modify function that structure serves and prolonging the endurance of process/organization. In the context of Newars of Thecho village, *sa guthis*⁴ are one of the instances for this. The *sa guthis* which are traditionally formed as Mustard oil mills has lost its purpose of forming these groups in the modernization era. However, the members of the group wished to continue the group, hence they formed business enterprises at the place of the old oil extracting buildings and assemble for the annual feast which a *guthi* is obliged to organize for its members. It is the community's wish and attachment with the structure makes them re-form the structure, though the very purpose of establishing is at end.

⁴ *Sa guthis* are formed by the group of households to invest money and start a mustard oil extracting mill. The families who are associated initially takes turn to use the mill and extract oil which can be used for household consumption or by selling the oil they might also generate their livelihood.

The few (small) *guthis* in Thecho village ceased to function because they have lost their economic source, that is, land. Traditionally the lands were donated by either members or concerned persons for the survival of the *guthi*. The land reforms act and land surveying act had done much damage to the *guthis* in Thecho village. However, the small *guthis* wishes to continue and fulfil the obligations vested on them, but they could not do it because of the lack of financial support which they used to enjoy earlier, resulting to the *guthiyars* stopped functioning as a group. The function could not continue because of the external factor and the structure collapses altering the process of social organization in total.

In some other cases, the structure continues, by altering the process and function for which the structure has been established. Nonetheless, there are certain factors such as, the members can afford to share the expenses, or the function is so important that they members cannot forgo the groups responsibility and so on should be taken into consideration of such decision of the role players to continue the structure (see *sa guthis* in chapter five). If these factors are not favourable, even though the structure is serving the purpose, they (role players) might end the process and structure along with it.

Significance of the Study:

Earlier studies conducted among the Newars of Kathmandu valley by various scholars focused on different issues such as religion, identity, caste, and food (Fürer-Haimendorf, 1956; Gellner, 1996; Gellner & Quigley, 1999; Gellner, 1992; Levy & Rajopadhyaya, 1992; Nepali, 1965; Quigley, 1985; Löwdin, 1985; Quigley, 1984). Many of these studies were conducted within what is considered the city area, although the scholars believe that there is no much difference between the rural and urban Newar settlement. However, the study was conducted on the assumption that social organization differs from rural areas to urban areas. The peasants mainly occupy the rural area whereas the urban area is mainly occupied by the upper caste merchandise or other crafty caste groups. Therefore there is a clear class differentiation between rural and urban Newars, apart from class difference; the urban population is again mainly comprised of upper caste people among the Newars. This ethnographic study among the *Jyapus* is little different in these lines, when

compared with the earlier studies which focused on either priestly caste groups or the upper caste among the Newar caste hierarchy.

Jyapus are considered to one of the caste groups among the Newars, whose traditional occupation is farming. Lalitpur district in Kathmandu valley is known for *Jyapu* population. There was no adequate importance given for the *Jyapu* community and their process of social organization in the available literature of Newar studies. Per Löwdin (1985) who studied Sunakothi (which is an adjacent village to the Thecho) carried out fieldwork but his area of interest (food and dietary habits) was completely different from the current study. Moreover, another scholar (Toffin, 2007) who studied Chapagaon (Piangaon) focused on the lines of the social organization. However, his research was conducted in a village, which is considered as separate entity where the other neighbouring villages do not engage in matrimonial exchange with this village. This dissertation builds on Toffin's work, but Toffin gave less importance to, 'other group formations' among the Newars than this current study. This research differs from Toffin's, it discusses in detail about the *guthi* and other group formations and their functions and these group formations act as an integral part of the social organization of the Newars of Thecho village.

This project focuses not only on *guthi* system (which are institutionalised by allowing the membership through inheritance) but also heeds to the other associations whose membership is not through inheritance. Rather this dissertation also focuses on the voluntary groups with loose knitted rules when seen in comparison to the *guthi* system. The *guthi* system is constantly facing threats from different spheres. Some examples are, irregular and decreasing financial support⁵, and the value placed upon the *guthi* system is been deteriorating day by day. The modern opportunities paved way for the younger generation to move to the new places (abroad) leading to loss of membership in the *guthi* unlike their forefathers who were peasants and had no option (economically) but to stick

⁵ Traditionally, the members of the *guthis* have donated land, which should be used for the functioning of the *guthi*. This land used to serve as a source of income for the *guthi*. Most of the *guthis* in the Thecho village has lost their land and hence the source of income to fulfill the responsibilities vested on the *guthi*.

to the village and being part of the *guthi* organization. As Firth says, our discipline is losing its ‘most-prized raw material’, though people continue to exist, but the cultural practices are constantly changing and understanding the changes and existing social institutions are the ‘special province’ of the social anthropologists (1961, p. 1). Taking lead from this, this study attempts to record the structure and functioning of the *guthi* before it further disappears as a practice⁶. Apart from this ‘a feeling has arisen in some quarters that things have gone a little too far down the road toward this sort of deconstruction, and that to neglect kinship is to disregard a good deal of what any society explicitly recognizes⁷’ (Parkin, 1997). It is very important to understand the *guthi* associations and other group formations, which is as same as kinship for the Newars in the Thecho village. These *guthi* associations are self-governing ‘little republics’ with its own rules and having set of obligations towards its members and the village, making it most important social unit to understand the social organization of the Newars of the Thecho village. Most importantly the *guthis* are institutionalized as same as basic social units which anthropologists are interested to understand. Understanding *guthis* will add to the existing anthropological literature to understand how the group formations, which are strictly related through kinship,⁸ survive and be part of the social organization of their society.

Research Question:

The basic social units such as family, kinship (lineage and clan organization), marriage, *guthi* and other group formations (in this particular research) and caste systems are the ones, which acts as a foundations for any society. In addition, we are far from understanding them completely, as these institutions change their structure and function along with the changing context of time and space. Hence, there is a need to understand

⁶ During the field study it is been observed that, there are some small *guthis* that had been stopped functioning the details were explained further in the chapter V.

⁷ Writes in preface of his book, Kinship: An Introduction to the Basic Concepts.

⁸ It should be noted that, most of the *guthis* are formed by the same caste members. Except the *sa guthis* and other small *guthis* in *koyelachi* in Thecho were the *Maharajans* and *Malis* are members of the same *guthis*. However, the lower caste who are considered as so low in the caste hierarchy cannot be a member of the same *guthi* where the *Maharajans* or *Malis* are members. If one perceives the ‘caste is extended form of kinship’, *guthis* can also be understood as kinship oriented groups.

them in relation to several factors affecting them in the due course of time and there is dire necessary to conduct researches repeatedly to understand the basic units of the society from different communities. Few of the questions, which need much retrospection and much more attention in anthropological studies, are why does the family as a unit survive in spite of changing the form and structure. Why do certain marriage rules are practiced and how is that benefitting the community in the given social environment? Why does certain group formation occur in some communities and why not in others? How does the group formation sustained and established over the period and what are the challenges such groups are facing in the current scenario? Why does some feel pride about their Caste and why others avert it? How does the changing social units of the Social organization moulding itself into different form of social organization with the social conflicts and challenges it is facing? This study with the help of Newar of social organization has made an attempt to understand the above questions.

Objectives of the Study:

Aim of the present study is to have an understanding of the various social units (or social structures) of social organization found in the village. To analyse and understand each of its elements, to inquire into the social functions these units and their elements serve and to elaborate how these functions and structures produce the 'dynamic process' social organization as a whole system. Thus, the present study's objective is to understand the social organization among the Newars of Thecho Village. This overarching objective of this study is met through four subsidiary objectives, which are;

- To understand the structure and function of family, kinship (lineage and clan) and marriage (relatives by alliance) among the Newars of Thecho Village.
- To understand how the kinship obligations (with special focus on brother and sister relationship) operate with special focus on gift exchange and the role played by the kin members towards each other in the ritual process, and other social occasions.

- To understand the structure of *guthis* and other group formations among the Newars of Thecho village and to understand its role in social organization along with the changes happening to the *guthi* and other group formations in the village.
- To understand the caste structure in the Thecho village in relation to the *Jyapu* community in Thecho village. Also in understanding the strategies followed by the lower caste in resisting the upper caste hegemony and how the modern context is paving way for the new form of Newar social organization.

Methodology and Study Area:

This project is based on 13 months of ethnographic fieldwork carried out among the Newars of Thecho village. During the stay in Thecho village, different anthropological techniques were employed to collect the data. To understand the demographic details of the village, household survey was conducted with the help of schedule; the survey was conducted mostly in old part of the village (see map 5). Thecho was called as ‘Dharmasthallipur’ during the Malla Period (the dynasty before the Shah Dynasty invasion). The village has two temple complexes: Brahmayani and Balkumari. Based on these two temples, the entire village is divided into two parts: each part is surrounded by these temples either geographically or culturally. This is very common phenomenon for a Newar settlement, urban and rural alike (Levy & Rajopadhyaya, 1992; Fürer-Haimendorf, 1956; Toffin, 2007; Gutschow & Shrestha, 1975). Levy (1992) probes this aspect of dividing the village or city into two halves and states that the division of settlements into upper and lower can be a result of two different kings ruling the settlement and people indulging in the conflict. He quotes from Slusser (1982) that ‘some earlier antagonist political segments later merged into the towns’ (Slusser 1982, vol. 1, p. 91) (1992, p. 173-174). Those whose ancestral houses are situated in the upper (*choye*) or lower (*kowe*) part of the village are naturally considered citizens of that part. The goddesses Balkumari and Brahmayani are believed to be the goddesses who protect the *choye* and *koye* respectively, and the villagers also show interest in those goddesses more than the other. The kindred group living together may be a reason the villagers demonstrate great affiliation for their respective part of the village. The informants

observe that affiliates prefer to be seen in their respective parts of the village, and they want to witness and join in the musical procession of the goddess associated with their locality over the other. It is also often observed that the people from one part feel superior and condescending toward the other part. One informant from the lower part says both parts of the village lack an important element that characterises any Newari settlement. He explained '*koye pinga marru choye deepa marru*' which means that the lower part does not have the *pingal* which is considered *peeta* (the place where gods and goddess who protect the village from the evil spirits reside) and the upper part does not have *deepa* (a cremation ground). He stressed how preference is given to cremate a dead body from the lower part in those cases in which two deaths occur at the same time in the two different parts of the village. Moreover, informants have stated that there were frequent fights in the earlier days, but because of electricity and television, the frequency of fights has declined. It is elsewhere discussed a fight that occurred between the two parts of the village when it came to deciding which goddess should get the first preference of worship.

The increase in population pressured villagers to expand their territory, and they extended housing to other parts of the village, which were not occupied earlier. This expansion traces the loyalty demonstrated to the part of the village where kin and ancestral homes are located. Based on this modern extension of the village territory, the village can be divided further for better understanding. The whole village is separated by a modern commutable mortar road; the old part of the village is located on the east side, and a new part of the village is situated on the west side. The expression "new part of the village" here means that the people who once belonged to the old part of the village had constructed the houses because of the space constraints. The old part is very easy to differentiate from the new part. The old part contains almost all the temples, *falchas*, and the Buddhist *stupas*. All the religious processions have a particular track, which is confined only to the old part of the village. The streets and *toles* in the early (old) part contain the brick road surface maintained by the respective *guthis* in that locality⁹. In

⁹ Discussed in detail in the fifth chapter

general, the religious and cultural soul of the village vests within the old part of the village. On the other hand, the new section contains modern roads, which do not define the Newari village. The houses are modern in nature, and the new part of the village lacks architectural beauty and religious places. The fieldwork was concentrated in the old part of the Thecho for reasons mentioned above. However, the interviews and case studies to support the objectives of the study were also conducted from the new part of the village.

The Schedule to conduct the household survey was drafted to get information not only related to demographic details but also data related to the above mentioned objectives such as marriage relations, network of the villages connected to Thecho through marriage, inter-caste, inter-community marriage, association of the household with *guthi* and other organizations and so on.

Apart from the household survey, personal interviews with the identified key informants to understand the structure and functioning of the family, kinship, marriage and most importantly with the heads and members of the *guthis* and other groups within the Thecho village. Almost all the *guthis*, which are active during the fieldwork, have been studied in detail by collecting case studies and conducting in depth interviews with the elders or other member. If the *guthi* had a high number of people, interviews were conducted for a proportionally higher number of members. The members were selected from different age groups to understand the changing perceptions about the *guthi*. The non-*guthi* members were also interviewed to understand how the non-*guthi* member perceives the *guthi* within the given social context. While collecting the data about the groups such as *kosh*¹⁰, which has similar, structure and functioning through the village, a sample of the groups were selected through judgemental sampling method.

Different case studies were conducted to understand the exceptions and deviations within the given context and to understand how the people within the society try to

¹⁰ *Kosh* is a group formation among Newars of Thecho village. This group is mainly formed to save money and help each other with financial assistance. See Chapter five for more details.

understand these exceptions and deviations through their own interpretation regard to the functioning of the social system.

As a part of the study, all the village rituals were attended and participated to understand the festivals in detail and the oral narrations were neatly recorded and analysed in relation to the social organization of the Newars within this village. Apart from the village rituals, all the life cycle rituals carried out by the Newars within their lifetime, were noted, attended, and participated in the feast while either eating or serving to understand the different cultural traits. Audio-visual techniques¹¹ were also used along with the notes taken carefully during the ritual events or the personal interviews in order to avoid missing any minute details.

As the whole, the village is very active in their social life, by participating actively in the processions or celebrating the festivals as a whole entity, this has also provided many opportunities to build the rapport among the people. During one of the village carnivals, *hapa pucha* (a local voluntary youth association), organized a street play to educate the villagers on the issue of open defecation. This served as a good opportunity to build a rapport with the people of the village by taking part in the theatre play as one of the artists. Participating in *magh bhajan*, a month long procession by the lower part of the villagers during the month of *magh* (January –February), also gave a good chance to build rapport among the villagers. Participating in this procession had given a good chance not only to build rapport but also to observe things which otherwise would not have been possible.

Theoretical Background:

There are multiple theories through which one can understand the social organization of any society. Exchange theory proposes that, the actors involved have self-interest to indulge in the process of exchange for their own benefits; they continue to do so, leading to formation of the consistent patterns and establishing order. This will lead to defining

¹¹The photographs, videos and audio were recorded only after taking permission from the informants.

the social norms, which, the role players/actors obey it to follow, indeed for the survival of the whole society (Homans, 1951; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). The gift exchange happens among the kin members acts as a fundamental principle of their kinship systems and the kin members failing to call someone for the feast and would like to cease the gift exchange process can be understood as they no longer want to continue their kinship. Gift exchange among Newars has led to formation of the consistent patterns and establishing order.

It is a known fact that human beings cannot live in isolation, as they need to depend on each other for their survival. In the process of living together, human beings interact with each other, and these interactions are guided by their earlier past experiences emerging as a trend or a norm, which every individual who involves in interaction are expected to follow, thereafter, carefully meeting his ends through this interaction. The abstract concept of what if the social organizations are formed and exist because of this interaction guides the function they serve is considered as 'interaction theory' (Cooley, 1964; Rose, 1962; Parsons, 1949). The people in the Newar society also have a particular set of rules and regulations in every aspect of their interaction at different levels, such as, family, kinship, marriage, *guthi* and caste system. By following the established trends of interaction, one can understand the crux of social organization among the Newars.

The role of environment in determining the culture is widely debated in anthropology. Environment might not be sole determining factor to shape a cultural form; nonetheless, it is also an important contributing factor in shaping the culture. Ecological theory proposes that, social organization develops as the group of individuals approaches the environments using their invented technology to obtain resources and meeting their ends. Hence, social organizations act as a key factor for the survival of the individuals in that ecological setup (Duncan, Schnore, & Rossi, 1959).

Power theorists argue that, social organizations have developed to allow its actors to yield the social power in its various forms- 'authority, dominance, attraction, and force' (Olsen, 1968). Through these forms, they try to meet their goals of survival. Social power is both cause and aftermath reason for the establishment of social organization.

Power theorists argue that, the family, which is another form of social organization, might have been created for exercising power specifically in the terms of gender roles. Another instance to state here is that, the caste system, which is considered exploitative in nature mainly works on the line of exercising social power (Dahrendorf, 1959).

Normative theory argues that, norms play a key role in determining the process of social organization, individually it might appear as less important, but as a group, it serves as the true principle of social organization. These norms have an extensive impact on individual actions as they socialize and as the social control imposed on them by the community (Sumner, 1907; Linton, 1936).

Value theory proposes why the social organizations survive amidst the challenges faced by several factors such as modernization and so on. Common values as established by the social norms in the society show adverse impact on social life of the actors. These values has been imbibed institutionally in the collective actions and internalized within the individuals. Hence, though the form changes, the social organization exists in one or the other form (Parsons, 1966; Parsons, Shils, Naegle, & Pitts, 1961).

Trying to understand social organization from the above-mentioned theories individually is like viewing something from a particular lens. It will not be justified to understand the social organization from only any one of the above-mentioned theories. Hence, this study adopts eclectic approach to understand the social organization in its holistic sense.

Limitations:

The difference in skin colour, especially when the skin colour of the researcher¹² is considered inferior colour than the community the researcher intending to study, may pose a challenges during the fieldwork. Researcher was often addressed with his skin colour, and pet names were given to the researcher based on his skin colour. Children

¹² See appendix I.

calling the skin colour from distance and start to run are an event of fun, which is widely experienced.

The villagers interact with the vegetable vendors who are from parts of Indian state and generally developed the feeling of hatred towards them. They also feel that, the Indian government controls their government and create hindrance in the development of Nepal. This naturally had mounted a general hatred towards all the Indian Nationals. It was big hurdle in the process of collecting the data in the fieldwork.

The presence of very less number of lower caste populations is a great limitation in collecting the data during the fieldwork. The lower caste group population was not interested to share the information and if they were giving time, they mostly said that, the rituals they do are as same as the upper caste rituals. While collecting the narrations of the origins of the caste, the informants insisted to refer to the books published by their caste associations as they contain the complete story.

Chapter Schema:

The thesis has been divided into seven chapters. The first chapter titled 'Introduction' mainly deals with introduction of the topic 'social organization' and the theoretical frame to understand the social organization of the Newars of Thecho village. The chapter focuses on significance of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, methodology followed to collect the data, theoretical background of the study, limitations, and chapter scheme has been discussed.

The second chapter of the thesis titled 'Ethnographic Profile' gives an overall view to understand the Newars of Thecho village. This chapter deals with, field area, about the Thecho village, origin and history of the village, language, housing pattern, religion, calendar, days in a month, festivals celebrated in Thecho, indigenous measurement system, food, attire, demographic profile of the study area, literacy rate, economy (different economic practices with the detailed description of agricultural practices and seasons) and the superstitious beliefs etc., are also discussed in this chapter.

The third chapter, titled 'Family, Clan, and Marriage' has been divided into two sections. First section discusses the structure of the family, lineage, and clan. This gives a detailed account of how the family, lineage, and clan play key role in the social organization of the Newars. The second section of the chapter deals with marriage, which is considered as medium to create next set of relatives through alliance. This chapter also focuses on the types of family, nature of clan organization, and rules of marriage that shape the social organization in total.

Fourth chapter of the thesis, titled 'Ritual, Exchange, and Significance of Sibling Bond', discusses how the social organization of the Newars of Thecho village has been intertwined with the aspects of rituals conducted in one's own lifetime. This chapter also deals with, the feast organized in relation to the ritual, and how the culture dictates kinship obligations in these rituals, and feast, either in the form of a specific role to be played by certain kin relations, or by the process of gift exchange happens in the way of reciprocity. In addition to this, the chapter also focuses on the role of married out daughter in the natal house and vice versa, and her importance in the kinship among the Newar's social organization.

The fifth chapter, titled, '*Guthi* associations and other group formations in Thecho', discusses the structure and function of the *guthis* in detail. The chapter also discusses about the responsibilities vested on the *guthis* and how they carry forward as a special social institution (a phenomenon observed among the Newars) and how modernization is challenging the existence of the *guthi* system. Apart from discussing the *guthi* system, this chapter also tries to understand the different group formations, traditional and modern alike.

Sixth chapter, titled, 'Caste system among the Newars' discusses in detail about the caste groups in Thecho village, and their relation towards the 'dominant caste'. This chapter also explores how the lower caste fight against the caste discrimination, and the methods they adapt to resist the caste hegemony. This chapter also tries to address how the modern context is providing them (lower caste) with the opportunity to escape from the caste system, which was binding in nature by traditional caste occupation. This

chapter also addresses how the on-going social movement shapes and results in a new kind of institutional form deviating from the existing one. The seventh chapter, titled, 'Conclusion' tries to summarize views from all the chapters discussed in the whole dissertation.

CHAPTER II

ETHNOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA

A Glance at Newars within the Valley:

Newars of Nepal are considered *janjati* (Shrestha, 1998-99; Sunder, 2000-01), which means natives or original inhabitants of the Kathmandu Valley. Earlier the Kathmandu Valley, which was considered Nepal, included major towns Kantipur (Kathmandu or *Eh:*), Patan or Lalitpur (*Yela*), Bhaktapur (*Khwopa*) and Kirtipur¹³ (*Kuppu*). Elders in the Newar community claim that they are the original inhabitants of Nepal (not the unified modern present Nepal state, but the earlier Kathmandu Valley). As per traditional understanding, Kathmandu Valley was a lake, and people migrated from different regions. Nepali writes, the dirt of the valley is orchestrated into even strata, containing no stone. Underneath it happen beds of peat and phosphatic blue dirt that give the traditional manure. Geologists recommend this would never have been conceivable without the valley having been at one time a lake of standing water (1965, p. 5). There are different hypotheses explaining the origins of the Newars (different narrations about origin of valley can be found for example, Nepali (1965, p. 11)). According to Nepali, at the end of twelfth century, another line of dynasty emerged on the throne of Nepal. This was of the Mallas. The first king of this dynasty was Arimalla Deo (1206-1217 AD). The Mallas managed to rule till the first quarter of the fourteenth century. Nonetheless, during the rule of Ananta Malla, the ostensible suzerainty of the nation went on to the Karnatakas. The powerful chief Nanya Deo who called himself Karnatic ruler is said to have brought with him the Newars as soldiers in his armed force. Probably Nanya deo was an army chief under the Chalyukyias (1965, p. 14-15 & 30-31). Nepali mentions that,

¹³At present Kirtipur is considered an integral part of Kantipur (Kathmandu). Some historians mention that Kirtipur was also an independent kingdom as it resisted and gave a tough fight for the Prithvinarayan Shah while he tried to invade the Kathmandu valley, but this fact has been neglected and its importance lost in the due course of time.

the Newars might also be Nayars (see also Parmar, 1990) and the term Newars might have been derived from the word Nayars (1965, p. 28-29). Levy refers to, Kirkpatrick (1793) regarding the similarities between Newars and the matrilineal Nayars of Kerala, that it is sufficiently noteworthy that the Newar ladies, similar to those among the *Nairs* (Nayars), may, indeed, have liberty to choose as many husbands as they please, and they were also having the freedom to divorce the husbands at their will and wish on the slightest pretence (1969, p. 187). During the fieldwork, informants opined that their racial features are different from the other adjacent ethnic community. Some informants said they are a mixture of all kinds of races (see also Nepali, 1965, p. 25), and the epicanthic fold (which is a central feature of the Mongoloid race) is less observed among the Newars¹⁴. Nepali states that, the present Newars are drawn from the Abhiras, the Kirathas, the Lichavis, the Vaishya Thakuri and the Karnatakas, aside from the way that there might have been some ethnic group that gave the establishment to their present Newar sort (1965, p. 27). A detailed genetic study can reveal the racial characteristics of the Newars more appropriately.

According to the 2011 census, published by the National Planning Commission Secretariat, Central Bureau of Statistics, Kathmandu, Nepal (November 2012), the Newars population includes 6,42,352 male and 6,79,581 female (a total of 13,21,933) that comprise 5% of the total population of Nepal (2,64,94,504). Newars are the sixth largest ethnic community in Nepal. Moreover, the report suggests that 3.3% of the people in Nepal claim Newari as their mother tongue.

The Malla kings ruled Newars though Malla kings originated from outside the valley. They adopted and encouraged the Newar culture and religious practices, which eventually made them a part of the Newars. On the other hand, there was hatred among Newars towards Shah Kings. Prithvi Narayan Shah, who is the first ruler of the Shah dynasty, is believed to have unified modern Nepal after conquering different kingdoms in the ancient Nepal and made Kathmandu as his capital city (Gellner, 1991). Now,

¹⁴ For racial features of the Newars see Gopal Singh Nepali (1965, p. 25)

however, when the modern concept of 'nation' is questioned, Newari youth show patriotic sentiment.

The Newars feel that the Shah Dynasty Kings and Rana Prime Ministers suppressed Newari culture when cities were selected to be capitals of the unified modern nation. The prosperity, architectural skills and the geographical location (which is in between the trade route for India and Tibet) made the Kathmandu city more appropriate capital for the Shah Dynasty kings. Most of the Shah kings and Rana Prime Ministers perceived Newars as a direct threat; they suspected a coup if Newars were allowed in the military force¹⁵ and also overlooked them for positions in the bureaucracy, which made Newars confine themselves to agriculture and business. Newars, in general, are hardworking and Quigley (1984), mentions how skilled and how hard working the Newar farmers in comparison to their counterparts.

Field Area:

Nepal is divided into five Developmental Regions (viz., East, Central, West, Mid-West, and Far-West) and these Developmental Regions are again sub-divided into 14 zones (viz., Mechi, Koshi, Sagarmatha, Janakpur, Bagmati, Narayani, Gandaki, Lumbini, Dhawalagiri, Rapti, Bheri, Karnali, Seti, and Mahakali respectively). Fieldwork was carried out in the Thecho village, Lalitpur District. The Lalitpur district¹⁶ is located in the Bagmati zone, which comes under the Central Developmental Region. Developmental committees were established for the well-being of the villages¹⁷. The Thecho village developmental committee is located just about seven kilometres south of Lagankhel, is one among the forty village developmental committees of Lalitpur District¹⁸.

To the east of Thecho lie Jaruwarashi, Badegaun, Harishiddi, Godawari, and Dhapakhel. Bungamati and Khokana lie on the west, Sunakothi on the north and

¹⁵ It has been observed during the study that working in the Nepal military is a matter of pride by the Newar people.

¹⁶ Nepal is divided into 75 districts, 5 developmental regions, and 14 zones.

¹⁷ Each VDC is again sub-divided into 9 wards for administrative convenience. These wards are again sub-divided into different toles (Nep) *twah* (New) or streets.

¹⁸ See Lalitpur district map for the other 40 village development committees

Chapagaun, Chhampi towards the south. The Karmanasa rivulet on the east separates this village from Jarumarashi and Dhapakhel and the Nakkhu River on the west separates it from Bungamati and Khokana. The Nakkhu River flows through the southwestern parts of the village, and there are some arable stretches along this river. There is also small woodland in the southern part, and one can see the steep land in the north caused by a landslide. During heavy monsoons, the cultivable land is often washed away by the river. This village is situated at a height of about 4500' above sea level. It is located at 27°3' north latitude and 85°19' east longitude (see map 4).

About the Thecho Village:

Selected for the study, Thecho village is a continuation of pre-doctoral research, during which rapport was established. So far, studies of Newars by scholars have focused on city areas. However, this study focuses on a village area. The urban nature of the Newar settlements is an attractive factor for any researcher, but it becomes imperative to understand the Newars through a village study. The present study focuses on the *Jyapu* community, which is considered the middle of the social hierarchical ladder of the Newar caste system. The *Jyapu* community is large in number in the Lalitpur district, and this makes Thecho village a particularly appropriate place for fieldwork. Residents of the Thecho village are believed to be migrants from different villages. It is considered relatively new in comparison to Chapagaon and Sunakothi. The other villagers in the district also consider Thecho rich in culture. The *guthi* system (presented in the fifth chapter of this thesis) is a unique social system of the Newars. Subject to drastic changes in urban areas¹⁹, the presence of the *guthi* system is another reason for studying Thecho village. The table 1 below shows the caste-wise distribution of households in the lower and upper part of the study area.

¹⁹ Though the change in the *guthi* structure and function has also been observed in the Thecho, the villagers opine that the change factor affects the village less when compared with the *guthis* in the city areas.

Table 1: Households in Koyelachi and Choyelachi (Caste Wise)

Part of the village	<i>Gopalis</i>	<i>Maharjans</i>	<i>Malis</i>	<i>Napit</i>	<i>Shahi</i>	<i>Kapali</i>	Total
<i>koyelachi</i>	4	221	104	1	12	1	343
<i>choyelachi</i>	-	305	-	5	-	7	317
Total	4	526	104	6	12	8	660

Origin and History of the Village:

There are different explanations of why the village is called Thecho. The earlier people who lived in the lower part of the valley are called *dyecha*. Because of landslides, the place became uninhabitable and they migrated to the upper reaches of the village. Since then, whenever asked about dwelling whereabouts, the locals would term their new habitat as '*chhenchoy*' (*chhen* means house *choy* means upper). In due course, *chhenchoy* was transformed to Thecho. Among the many explanations about how the place acquired the name, this is the most interesting one. According to another version, in the beginning the population of the village was fragile. Later, people from the neighbouring lower reaches migrated to the upper reaches as they found it quite habitable, beautiful, and fertile. From then on, these people called this the *thaya-choy*. *Thaya* means place and *choy* indicate height. Later *thaya-choy* became Thecho. Additionally, people from the lower part believe that they are the migrants from the area on the border of Sunakothi (an adjacent village to the north) and present-day Thecho. It was established by the elders in a slanting position. Once a saint visited the temple and warned the people that they committed a mistake in installing the Shiva Linga in slanting position. As a result, the whole village would be affected by frequent landslides. As a result, people slowly started migrating to the upper parts of the adjacent place and were convinced to settle down in Thecho Village. The people who went to adjacent places from the Mahadev temple for worshipping their clan goddess strongly believe that they were once residents of this place that is why their clan goddesses were established there. As a matter of tradition, people came once a year to offer prayers to their respective clan goddess. Another narrative suggests that once in twelve years during the *baraha baras mela*, the Navadurga

guthi's mask dancers perform *pooja* in the *pingal* of Sunakothi as there is no *pingal*²⁰ initially for the Thecho (or to be more particular, there is no *pingal* for the *koyelachi*, and the Navadurga mask dance concerns itself only with the lower part of the village). Every time the Navadurga masked dancers come out in procession to perform the dance in Thecho, they have the tradition of starting from Sunakothi. Another informant from the lower part narrates that they are actually from the Kirtipur and when the Shah King seized an area in Kirithipur, some families migrated from Kirtipur to Thecho in order to escape from him and settle down. The people from the upper part of the village are considered to be migrants from Champi and other villages, which were adjacent to the Thecho and can be reached by walking through the fields and crossing the river. Some of the informants from the upper part opine that the clan goddesses earlier were situated at Champi and their original ancestor villages, but as it became inconvenient for the elders to walk all the way to the original places, they moved the clan goddesses nearby, into the territory of the Thecho.

Language:

Newars speak their own language called Newari, which was earlier referred to as Nepal *bhasa* (earlier the Kathmandu Valley alone was considered to be Nepal and hence the language spoken in the valley was called as Nepal *bhasa*) as well as the official language of Nepal, Nepali, which is also widely spoken in this village. Since Newars are in the majority, most of the people speak in their mother tongue Newari. The Newari language belongs to the Tibeto-Burman lingual group (see also Nepali, 1965, p. 79-81; Kansakar, 1997; Shakya, 2000-01; Weidert, 1984). The non-Newari people who migrated to Thecho, speak Nepali. Due to daily contact with the Newars, these migrants can understand Newari. Due to an increase in the number of children enrolled in schools, the

²⁰ The *pingal*, which is currently in the Thecho, is believed to be constructed much later by one of the three sisters from *Gopali* caste groups and the upper part of the Thecho people claimed that the *pingal* is theirs as the *pingal* is situated in the upper part of the Thecho. Why person from lower part of the village constructs a religious place in the upper part is unanswered question. However, some of the informants give us hints to understand this question, there might not be an upper part at all during the construction of the *pingal*, and the *pingal* is considered as a powerful place where the spirits reside it is always situated very far from the settlement in the adjacent villages. In Thecho, the *pingal* is adjacent to the settlement, some elders opine that, the *pingal* was also far from the settlement but the settlement was extended and moved near to *pingal*.

speakers of Nepali are on the rise. However, only a few Newari parents speak Nepali to their children at home. Since Nepal was never colonized, the influence of English was negligible in the village. However, in the course of time, with the help of globalization and media, both English and Hindi have become necessary for the Newars. Newari have eight different scripts. They are categorized based on usage. They are *ranjana lipi*; *prachalit nepal lipi* used by the common people; *pachumwo: lipi* (*pachu* means a housefly's antenna. The script looks like the antenna of a housefly. *Mwo* means headline); *nakinmwo: lipi* (*naki* means Nail); *litomwo: lipi*; *pachumol lipi*; *gwa:mwo: lipi*; and *kuimwo: lipi*.

Housing Pattern:

The house is not just a structure that gives shelter to people in a society, but the pattern of arrangement provides an understanding of the social structure, which is implicit. The economic disparity prevailing in the community is highlighted through housing patterns. The pattern of arrangement also reflects the differentiation practised by a caste group on the other castes in that the imposition of particular taboos is evident in the construction of houses. The lack of proper economic resources which subjugates the lower castes can also be discriminated. Kinship patterns and the prevalence of the caste system can also be understood by observing the impact of a given geographical location upon the housing pattern. Housing patterns also reveal how humans make use of the resources available within that environment and develop indigenous solutions to natural problems such as extreme temperature conditions.

In these ways, housing patterns in Thecho reveal many things to us. The houses are compactly built. The neighbourhood consists of kin members. Groups of houses are constructed in a square shape with a small way leading to a street to enter the group of houses. These houses have a common courtyard which is known as *nani*. *Nani* is a communally owned place by the people in that commune, and it cannot be sold by any single individual although every family living in that commune has user rights over the *nani*. *Nanis* may vary in size within the village, and each *nani* typically has a stone considered as a *mahadev* or *linga* form of Shiva. The women in the commune offer

prayers during regular prayer time daily. The *nani* is used by the commune to dry grains, to organize feasts, to meet and gossip. Women sit in the *nani* spinning wool, old people and new born babies take sun-baths and naps while lying on straw mats in the afternoons. The phenomenon of constructing the houses with *nanis* is more frequently observed in the old part of the Thecho.

For each house in the upper caste strata, *Maharjans* and *Malis* can be observed in three or more storied buildings. It is believed that the lower caste people are not allowed to construct houses similar to those of the upper castes. The lower caste is historically deprived of economic privileges and may not be able to afford to construct houses similar to those of the upper castes. However, in the context of social mobility and modern economic opportunities available to lower caste people, they too are constructing the houses, which are similar to upper caste housing designs. The non-availability of land, unlike in the plains, might be the reason for the people in the valley to adapt to this kind of housing pattern. The houses will be so compact sometimes we might not be able to differentiate one house from another. The two houses sometimes share a common wall, which again defines the characters of the social organization and communal living of the Newar society. Each part of the house has a special purpose to serve and certain rules to follow to maintain the virtue of that place. Let us get deep into understanding the house by analysing each part and purpose in detail.

The traditional houses are typically three-storied house. The upper levels are reached with the help of wooden stairs called *swan*. Wooden beams and bamboo and small sticks are used as a support for the ceiling; water mixed mud is laid and plastered. While walking on the floor, one senses that the house is so tender that the floor is trembling. The three stories are constructed with little height. An average of five feet height is maintained on each floor causing a tall person to bang his head in cases of negligence in minding his head. The low height is because the bricks were costly in those days, and fewer bricks are used in the construction of a shorter house. All the members of the family, except children, have to be very careful when they are walking in any part of the house in order to not get hurt. People will tell you openly that you should not stand on

the stairs for long, along with many ‘don’ts’ practiced in the Newari culture. However, the reason might be because the wooden stairs are in need of replacement or wooden beams might be affected with pests and might not be strong. While someone is climbing the stairs, another is not supposed to climb the stairs right above his head. People believe that such an act can be likened to standing on top of one’s head; it is disrespectful. Especially when the elders are climbing the stairs, the younger people are not allowed to climb the stairs right above those stairs leading to the next floor of the house.

The ground floor is called *chheli*, which is not meant for human habitation. *chheli* can also be divided into *penni chheli* (entrance part of the house) and *dhun chheli* (inner part or back gate of the house). *Penni chheli* is where the *nouga* used to be located in the house, just under the wooden stairs, which are called as *swan*. *Nouga* is a pit, which is situated right under the wooden stairs. This pit is used to keep the ash out of firewood, and the residents of the house can use it as a place to urinate. After a period, the ash is used as manure for the fields. However, excreting in the *nouga* is strictly prohibited. In fact, *nouga* is considered a form of god. There is a *guthi* in *choyelachi* called *nouga*²¹. *Kuti* is also kept in this *penni chheli*. In the *dhun chheli*, they store *kamucha* (a bamboo used as a balance to carry heavy items); cattle can also be kept in this place. It is believed that every household had a buffalo but now there are no buffaloes seen in the village except in one or two houses. Goats and chicken were raised, and they were generally kept in this *dhun chheli*. This *dhun chheli* also contains a pit called *saga*. *Saga* is the place where they throw waste, which is used as manure for the fields. The water after washing hands and vessels from the top where the kitchen is located finds its way to the *Saga*. Almost each and every household has *kebey* (kitchen garden). People say the dust from the courtyard enters through *penni chheli* and goes to the *dhun chheli* and reaches the *kebey*, and that is how the *kebey* continually receives fresh soil and fertile nature.

The living room which is on the second floor is called *maata*. The living room contains *dhuku kotha*, *maathan kotha* and a place to receive and entertain guests. *Dhuku*

²¹ Which will be discussed in detail in the fifth chapter in this thesis.

kotha has a prominent status in the house. The *dhuku kotha* contains grains and *kho* (traditional pots) to store the annual agricultural production and other items. This *dhuku kotha* will also have *bhin dyo* and goddess Lakshmi. Apart from the room having importance in the housing pattern, it can also be used to exercise power by the mother-in-law over the daughter-in-law. The particular room keys are controlled by the eldest female member as long as she can handle the domestic work. When she feels like it is time to pass the maintenance of the house on to the daughter-in-law, she will give the keys of the *dhuku kotha*, which is symbolic transferring of rights to the daughter-in-law to take the responsibility of the house. In order to get the keys, the daughter-in-law needs to prove that she is responsible and can handle the affairs of the house. She also should have given birth in order to win the number one status among the family. Controlling of the key by the eldest female member can also be understood as the exercising of power within the limitations of female gender roles within the family. Generally, in joint families the eldest daughter-in-law has more opportunity of getting the keys. However, it is not mandatory that she give the keys to the eldest daughter-in-law; she could pass them to another choice or a favourite daughter-in-law. The notions of power and controlling of the keys will be discussed more in detail in the third chapter. *Maathan kotha* is living room, which also contains bedroom. Each married couple has a bedroom. If there are siblings, they need to adjust within a single room. *Maathan kotha* also contains the television. Evening tea is taken while sitting in the *Maathan kotha* and talking with the other family members.

Thalle which means ‘up’ is the uppermost floor of the house. This is the place where the kitchen is situated. Some people might also call it *chotte*. Generally, in the kitchen some rules and regulations must be followed. One should not wear footwear which is used to walk around in the streets. If it is too cold to go barefoot, family members can wear footwear made out of woollen or straw in the kitchen. But wearing the footwear which is worn on the streets is strictly prohibited. Typical items, which we can see in the Newari households kitchen are *lonma* (the stone used for grinding) which they worship as a god, *bhutu* (the traditional hearth); *bhutu* (the section of a hearth they make *chhoyala* or barbequed buff); *teepa* (a traditional pot for boiling water), *gopcha* (a long

handled ladle to take the water from pot) and *bakhole* (a storage place for the paddy). *Baiga* is part of a kitchen which the Newars use for storing the straw or fire wood. Firewood is of maize straw and small lightweight sticks. Nowadays lot of households have LPG gas stoves and the use of traditional hearths has become occasional. They also store maize, chilli, beans, and seedlings for the next agricultural season in this *baiga*. Newars with a touch of humour say that a Newar household is not only a residing place for humans but also for animals. They add that cats stay in the *chheli* and rats stay in the *Baiga*.

Chirra or *barley* is a place where they wash vessels and hands before and after consuming the food. This is also used to keep the flowerpots and other ornamental plants. The kitchen garden and a terrace garden with small plants are an integral part of the Newar household. Table 4 shows the number of households that reported having a kitchen garden and terrace garden. The family members show special interest in watering the plants every day.

Economic disparity is evident through the modern way of constructing the houses. All traditional houses look alike. The moment an outsider happens to visit any Newari settlement, he or she will be surprised to observe the housing patterns and the inherent economic equality that can be noted. However, the economically well off families in the ancient times used to show off their prosperity through the woodcarvings of the windows. Apparently, the extravagant woodcarvings are a symbol of the richness of the old houses. The table 2 below shows the number of households, which can be categorised into traditional, semi-modern, and modern households in the study area.

Table 2: Type of the Houses in the Study Area

Caste Group	Traditional household	Semi Modern Household	Modern Household	Total
<i>Gopali</i>	01	02	01	04
<i>Maharjan</i>	176	78	272	526
<i>Mali</i>	50	06	48	104
<i>Napit</i>	06	-	-	06
<i>Shahi</i>	07	-	05	12
<i>Kapali</i>	06	-	02	08
Total	246	86	328	660

The lavatory is a new addition to the Newari Household; the educative measures to prevent the villagers from defecating in the open have led to the construction of lavatory in the household. However, culturally Newars are prohibited from defecating ‘within the house’. Now this cultural barrier has been overcome by incorporating the lavatory into the houses. Nonetheless, the lavatories are minuscule and congested except in large modern houses, which have spacious lavatories. One of the informants replied that ‘to get this little lavatory into the house they had to suffer the wrath of his grandmother who was reluctant to allow the construction of the lavatory in the house’. In the study area, 4.1% of the houses do not have lavatories.

There is no concept of a separate place for bathing. Villagers take bath in the courtyard, near the tap, or in the place they use for washing vessels. In the study area, only modern houses have a particular place called bathroom. In the study area, 31.6 % of the houses contain a bathroom in the house (see table 3).

Table 3: Households Containing the Lavatories and Bathrooms

Caste Group	Number of households having lavatory	Number of households having bathroom
<i>Gopali</i>	04	02
<i>Maharjan</i>	504	178
<i>Mali</i>	102	25
<i>Napit</i>	06	01
<i>Shahi</i>	10	01
<i>Kapali</i>	07	02
Total	633 (95.9%)	209 (31.6%)

Newari household usually contains a kitchen garden called *kebey*, where they grow vegetables for household consumption. In the study area, 51.2 % of houses have the kitchen garden. Moreover, Newars are also fancy of having ornamental plants in their house terrace. In the study area, 68 % of houses have plants on their terrace (see table 4).

Table 4: Households Containing Terrace Gardens and Kitchen Gardens

Caste group	Number of households having kitchen garden	Number of households having terrace garden
<i>Gopali</i>	03	04
<i>Maharjan</i>	281	359
<i>Mali</i>	43	73
<i>Napit</i>	03	01
<i>Shahi</i>	06	06
<i>Kapali</i>	05	06
Total	341 (51.2%)	449 (68%)

Religion:

The literature available on the Newars tells us that the Newars are followers of Hinduism or Buddhism or they follow both religions²². However, the observations from the field study provokes one to rethink branding the indigenous religion with already existing well-studied religions will blindfold researchers from understanding the true nature of religion. The Newars have a religion, which cannot be incorporated into either Hinduism or Buddhism. The local goddesses are not related to well-known gods/goddesses; the oral traditions reveal that the goddesses are indigenous. The religious items, such as piece of wood which is used to burn dead bodies and the big copper vessel and barbeque fork which are used to make food are worshipped during village *jatara*. The *guthi* cherish religious items such as *shi phanga* (which is used to cover dead bodies while taking the bodies to the cremation ground) the lamp, and a special bowl. The indigenous way of interpreting gods and the stories related to gods, begs the question: ‘is it wise to brand the Newars simply as Hindus or Buddhists?’ In-depth research should be conducted to understand the pantheon of the Newar religion. However, the people have been forced to believe that they are either Hindu or Buddhist by a religious colonization and people naturally affiliate and inform the researcher that they are either Hindus or Buddhist. The Hindu pantheons are worshipped with an indigenous touch. Hinduism often claims that Buddhism is an integral part of Hinduism. However, during the field study, some

²² See also (Lewis T. T., Newar-Tibetan Trade and the Domestication of "Siṃhalasārthabāhu Avadāna", 1993) (Lewis T. T., Patterns of Religious Belief in a Buddhist Merchant Community, Nepal, 1995)

youngsters rejected this view. They stated that the Newars are traditionally Buddhist, but when Shah Kings conquered the valley, they forced people to practice Hinduism as they patronized that religion. Because of state force, the people without a choice accepted Hinduism. The informants consciously state that they are following Buddhism, but the fact is that, the Hinduism and Buddhism are entwined and inseparable. Levy opines that the Hinduism propagated by the Brahmins found its way into the Buddhist Newars and paved the way for a new kind of intermingled religion which Newars follow today (1992, p. 38).

Eleven families are practicing Christianity. There is a church in the village. The families those practice Christianity are expected to abstain from drinking alcohol and consuming meat, as conventionally the religion practiced by the Newars demands the opposite. Some women in the family forced their husbands to accept Christianity in order to control their husbands' alcohol consumption. Once a person changes his religion from the Newar religion, he is outcast from the Newar community. The *guthi*, which cremate their dead, are relieved from the obligation.

Interestingly, the Buddhist preaching by the monks in the village encourages the villagers to abstain from meat as it indirectly goes against the preaching of the Buddha himself. Moreover, sects of people who follow *satyanarayan vrata* or *sanathan dharma* believe that they should not eat meat because it involves the killing of the animals and includes violence to other living beings. As a result, the members who strictly observe abstinence from meat face problems as the *guthi* feast or any other kind of Newar feast includes meat and alcohol. One of the informants said that he stopped going to the *guthi* once he took another religion that required abstaining from meat because in the *guthi* feast, meat is served. He also added that if family members eat meat, the *guthiyar* has the choice of taking the meat home. However, in his case, all the members of his family abstain from eating meat, so he felt he should not continue being a *guthiyar*, and he quit the *guthi*. This instance illustrates the Newar religious practice of eating meat and consuming alcoholic beverages in the feast. Thus, it is sanctioned by the religion that if anyone fails to do so, he or she violates the Newar religion.

As a part of a household survey, even though the researcher is aware that Hinduism and Buddhism are considered and practiced as one religion, the question was asked: “What religion does the household practice?” The answers from the respondents were intriguing. Thirty one households (4.69 %) gave answers such as ‘we follow the religion which others do practice,’ ‘we follow the religion which orders killing animals for meat,’ ‘we follow the religion of Balkumari or Brahmayini,’ and ‘we follow the religion of Newars.’ Some said that they followed the religion, which forbids eating meat. The table 5 below gives overall responses to the questions on religion from the household survey.

Table 5: Different Religions Followed by the Households in the Study Area

Caste groups	Hinduism	Buddhism	Hinduism+ Buddhism	Christianity	Hinduism+ Christianity	Buddhism+ Christianity	Others	Total
<i>Gopali</i>	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
<i>Maharjan</i>	342	73	77	7	4	-	23	526
<i>Mali</i>	80	10	3	1	2	1	7	104
<i>Napit</i>	3	2	-	1	-	-	-	6
<i>Shahi</i>	8	-	-	2	1	-	1	12
<i>Kapali</i>	7	-	1	-	-	-	-	8
Total	444	85	81	11	7	1	31	660

Calendar:

In modern days, the Newars follow three different kinds of calendars. One is the Newar calendar, which is called Nepal²³ *sambat* (Pradhan, 1999-2000; Manandhar, 1999-2000). According to the Newar calendar, the field study was conducted in the year 1132-1133. The second calendar is the national calendar of the Modern Nepal which is called as *bikram sambat* which was adopted from the Indian ruler Vikram Aditya²⁴ to mark his

²³ One should not get confused with the name Nepal as explained earlier; the old four Newari cities were called Nepal. It is only after the Prithvi Narayan Shah conquered the valley that he named the modern unified state as Nepal

²⁴ Chandragupta II the great (very often referred to as Vikramaditya or Chandragupta Vikramaditya in Sanskrit) was one of the most powerful emperors of the Gupta Empire. His rule spanned 375-413/15 CE. During which the Gupta Empire achieved its zenith. The period of prominence of the Gupta dynasty is very often referred to as the Golden Age of India

ascendancy to the throne according to the *bikram sambat*. According to this calendar, the fieldwork was carried out in the year 2069-2070. For reference, the Gregorian calendar marks the year the fieldwork was carried out as 2012-2013 (see table 6).

The Nepal *sambat* is mainly based on the lunar calculations, and the *bikram sambat* is based on both solar and lunar calculations. The *bikarm sambat* is similar to the calendars used in the Indian context traditionally. The festivals celebrated by the Newars include the dates from both the calendars. Festivals by both the calendars are practiced. Festivals practiced by the Newars are discussed in brief in the following section.

Table 6: The Newari Months and its Equivalent Bikram Sambat and Gregorian Year Months

S. No	Newar/ Nepal Sambat (1133) Months	Bikram sambat (2069-2070) Months	Gregorian Year (2012-2013) Months
1.	<i>Kachhala</i>	<i>Kartik-Mangsir</i>	Nov-Dec
2.	<i>Thinla</i>	<i>Mangsir-push</i>	Dec-Jan
3.	<i>Pohela</i>	<i>push-magh</i>	Jan-Feb
4.	<i>Silla</i>	<i>magh-Falgun</i>	Feb-Mar
5.	<i>Chilla</i>	<i>Falgun-Chaitra</i>	Mar-April
6.	<i>Chaula</i>	<i>Chaitra-Baishak</i>	April-May
7.	<i>Bachhala</i>	<i>Baishak - Jestha</i>	May-June
8.	<i>Tachhala</i>	<i>Jestha-Asar</i>	Jun-July
9.	<i>Dilla</i>	<i>Asar-Shawun</i>	July-Aug
10.	<i>Gunla</i>	<i>Shawun-Bhadra</i>	Aug-Sep
11.	<i>Yenla</i>	<i>Bhadra-Ashoj</i>	Sep-Oct
12.	<i>Koula</i>	<i>Ashoj-Kartik</i>	Oct-Nov
13.	<i>Anala</i>		

Days in the Month:

The month begins on the no moon day, and there are two sets of days in a month, *thwo* and *ga*. *Thwo* is from the no moon to the full moon, and *ga* is from the full moon to the no moon. The days in each set is determined by the moon's rotation around the earth, which may vary from 15 days to 13 days (see table 7).

Table 7: Days in a Month

Days	Waxing Moon or Thwo	Days	Waning Moon or Ga
1.	<i>Paru</i>	16.	<i>Paru</i>
2.	<i>Dutiya</i>	17.	<i>Dutiya</i>
3.	<i>Tritiya</i>	18.	<i>Tritiya</i>
4.	<i>Chauthi</i>	19.	<i>Chauthi</i>
5.	<i>Panchami</i>	20.	<i>Panchami</i>
6.	<i>Khasthi</i>	21.	<i>Khasthi</i>
7.	<i>Saptami</i>	22.	<i>Saptami</i>
8.	<i>Astami</i>	23.	<i>Astami</i>
9.	<i>Navami</i>	24.	<i>Navami</i>
10.	<i>Dashami</i>	25.	<i>Dashami</i>
11.	<i>Ekadashi</i>	26.	<i>Ekadashi</i>
12.	<i>Dwadashi</i>	27.	<i>Dwadashi</i>
13.	<i>Trayodashi</i>	28.	<i>Trayodashi</i>
14.	<i>Charhe or Chaturdasi</i>	29.	<i>Charhe or Chaturdasi</i>
15.	<i>Poorni/ Punhi</i>	30.	<i>Amavasa</i>

Festivals Celebrated in Thecho:

Festivals among the Newars are celebrated with reverence and grandeur. Apart from the life cycle rituals, the villagers often see the festivals as an opportunity for the socialization process. Most of the festivals are celebrated by all the people within the village as a collective action. The table 8 shows the different festivals celebrated throughout the year by the Newars of Thecho village.

Table 8: Festivals Celebrated in the Study Area

No.	Newari Month	Nepali Month	Gregorian Month	Festivals celebrated	significance of the festival
12.	Koula	Ashoj-Kartik	Oct-Nov	1. <i>Na La Soneyagu</i> 2. <i>Navami or mahanavami or syakutaku</i> 3. <i>Mohini tikka</i> 4. <i>Katin punhi</i> 5. <i>Kwa pooja</i> 6. <i>Khicha pooja</i> 7. <i>Lakshmi pooja</i>	1. The soft mud is brought, and the grains are sowed in it before ten days from the <i>dashain</i> . 2. Offers sacrifice for the agricultural equipment and offer prayer to the <i>bhin dyo</i> . 3. All the family members gather to receive the black <i>tikka</i> and blessings from the eldest male member of the family. 4. On the day of full moon, the <i>chibha guthis</i> will worship the <i>chibhas</i> and distribute <i>samaybaji</i> . 5. Worshipping the Crow. 6. Worshipping the Dog. 7. Worshipping the Lakshmi or <i>Bhin dyo</i> .
1.	Kachhala	Kartik-Mangsir	Nov-Dec	8. <i>Mha: Pooja</i> 9. <i>Khija pooja</i> ²⁵ 10. <i>Cho: Bha: apan</i> 11. <i>Sakimana punhi</i> 12. <i>Pasupathi cha: waneyugu</i>	8. Worshipping one's self. 9. Worshipping the brother. 10. Fasting after reaching the <i>cho: bha</i> . 11. Eating <i>sakmul</i> and worshipping the god by making art out of the popped grains. 12. Going to Pasupathinath temple to stay a night and worship the Shiva <i>lingas</i> .
2.	Thinla	Mangsir-push	Dec-Jan	13. <i>Yomuri punhi</i> 14. Village <i>jatara</i> for six days ²⁶ 15. <i>Disi chanhe pooja</i>	13. Eating sweet item cooked through steam, stuffed with sesame and jaggery. 14. Village carnival for Brahmayini and Balkumari. 15. After <i>jatara</i> .
3.	Pohela	push-magh	Jan-Feb	16. <i>Musya Dulli</i> 17. <i>Swasthani vrata</i> ²⁷ 18. <i>Maghe Shankranthi or Dwa Chaku Sahlu</i> 19. <i>Lain Charhe</i>	16. With popped or deep fried <i>musya</i> they have to visit Sunakothi <i>degudyo</i> . 17. Swasthani vrata katha observed by women for their husband's health and prosperity. 18. Beginning of <i>magh</i> procession and inviting the <i>mhyay macha</i> to give <i>chaku</i> . 19. <i>Lain charhe</i> .
4.	Silla	magh-falgun	Feb-Mar	20. <i>Basantha panchami</i> 21. <i>Lagalaga chyukegu</i> 22. <i>Chaku ja nayegu</i> 23. <i>Chhoyala bhu</i>	20. Worshipping sarswathi and making pilgrimage to the nearest holy places. 21. Going to Naku River to drop the pumpkin shell lamps. 22. Cooking the sweet rice at the riverbank and having feast. 23. The First day of the <i>depcha pooja</i> , the clan

²⁵ 5,6,7,8 and 9th festivals are celebrated in a row and the new year of the Newars is celebrated on the day *Mha: Pooja*.

²⁶ See Appendix II for elaborated details of the Village Jatara.

²⁷ Itlis (1985, p. 8) writes, "during the medieval period Mall Kings commissioned Vajracharya authorship of classical Newari Dramas based on *swasthani*; other classical and modern dance drama or *pyakha* continued to be written and performed"

				for depcha 24. Ni silla 25. Soyneya dulli or degu dyo pooja 26. Kowla 27. Shiva rathri	members meet to discuss the feast arrangements. 24. The second day of the <i>depcha pooja</i>, people are expected to clean the houses. 25. The third day of the <i>depcha pooja</i>, the clan members offers prayers to their clan goddess. 26. Fourth day of the <i>depcha pooja</i>, change of <i>pala: ta:</i> and concluding feast. 27. Worshipping Shiva all night.
5.	Chilla	falgun-Chaitra	Mar-April	28. Holi 29. Lakhu maha dyo pooja 30. Gooda jatara	28. Playing with water balloons. 29. <i>Nehas guthi</i> offers prayers to the <i>nani</i> and claiming the space of the Mask Dance. 30. Thecho does not celebrate this festival, but the different groups organize <i>sas pooja</i> on this day.
6.	Chaula	Chaitra - Baishak	April-May	31. Choubha dyo nhawon 32. Khai saalu 33. Bunga dyo nhawon 34. Maa ya khwaa swo-wenegu	31. Riskeshwar will be bathed in the meeting point of Bagmath and Naku Rivers. 32. <i>Kwathi</i> (Soup made out of nine grains) had to be consumed (first day of the Bikram <i>sambat</i> Calendar). 33. People go to see the <i>Bunga dyo</i> (Machhindranath) bathed. 34. Seeing/worshipping the mother.
7.	Bachhala	Baishak-Jestha	May-June	35. Bunga dyo is kept in Chariot 36. Akshya trithiya and bunga dey saligu 37. Swanyaa Punhi	35. Machhindranath is kept in Charriot in Patan and on the same day, they have to eat <i>naaka</i> (a kind of leaf). 36. The chariot will be first drawn. 37. Budhaa jayanthi is celebrated.
8.	Tachhala	Jestha-Asar	Jun-July	38. Sravana Sankratnithi and sithinakha or mhyay macha nakha 39. Kumar pooja 40. Dhou baji neyugu 41. Dhilla charhe pooja	38. Acculturated festival and also Newari <i>mhyay macha nakha</i>, married out girls were invited to the house to have a feast. 39. Worshipping the God Kumar and also they worship and clean the water bodies. 40. On the day of <i>saptami</i>, they have to eat curd and beaten rice. 41. <i>Gopali</i> caste group is supposed to go and bring Machhindranath from Kuruvaku.
9.	Dilla	Asar-Shawun	July-Aug	42. Visits Ganesh temple on chaturthi 43. Guru Punhi 44. Gattemangal or Kya machanakha	42. Visiting any of the five Ganesh temples on <i>chaturthi</i> is considered as auspicious. 43. Worshipping the guru is done on this day. 44. Burning the effigy made up of green leaves and wheat straw of a demon and sons will also be offered feast.
10.	Gunla	Shawun-Bhadra	Aug-Sep	45. Kheer neyugu 46. Haku moosa phoyegu 47. Bahi dyo boyegu 48. Swayambhu cha choneyugu 49. Juga charhe and bahi dyo 50. Krishna astami 51. Chhoyala	54. The whole month the <i>baja khalas</i> will do <i>bhajan</i> in the <i>lachi</i> of Brahmayini and Balkumari; on the <i>chaturthi</i> people are supposed to <i>kheer</i> (The rice made with sweet and milk). 45. <i>Haku musya</i> and other grains are allowed to sprout, and it is eaten. 46. The Buddha, who is considered as Beautiful, will be brought out of the Bihar; the villagers go to Bihar to visit this Buddha. 47. People go to the Swayambu to sleep there for a night.

				<i>bhuye</i> 52. <i>Saparu or gai jatara</i> ²⁸ 53. <i>Mataya jatra</i>	48. On this day, people are expected to eat peach seed after popping it. Moreover, on the same <i>bahi dyo</i> is brought to the village, for the villagers to offer prayers. 49. Lord Krishna Birthday is celebrated. 50. <i>Lakhey</i> and <i>timpaku</i> dance will be organized to collect money from the people by the <i>baja khalas</i> . 51. <i>Saparu</i> festival, the families where the death occurred within a year, goes around the village distributing green small peas and dramas, and songs will be also played on the memory of the dead. 52. A big village carnival of fun and joy with different innovative costumes will be organized while the musical associations render their services for this procession.
11.	<i>Yanla</i>	<i>Bhadra -Ashoj</i>	Sep-Oct	55. <i>Halmulla nayegu</i> 56. <i>Pissi wayegu.</i> 57. <i>Dyo swayegu</i> 58. <i>Indra jatara</i>	53. On the day of <i>Chaturthi</i> , they are supposed to eat <i>halmulla</i> . 54. On the day of <i>astami</i> , they start the process called <i>pissi</i> , where the women and men go in the village to offer lamp and musical services. 55. On the day of <i>ekadasi</i> , the villager put up poles for the coming <i>Indra jatara</i> . 56. A day before full moon day, they celebrate <i>Indra jatara</i> .

The Concept of Beauty:

The notion of beauty varies from generation to generation and from one gender to another. Old women opined that in olden days girls, who were not too fat or too thin with long hair, were considered beautiful. They used to wear Newari traditional dress all the time unlike nowadays, in which traditional dress is merely ritual attire for the women in Thecho. The calf-muscles are considered to be attractive, and to attract boys, females expose the calf-muscle. Just a little above the ankle and below the calf-muscle, all old women have a tattoo, which is considered to be the most beautiful body decoration from the past. Women used to go to Kathmandu where an expert person do this tattoo for two and half rupee for each leg. If women had the tattoo on both legs, (most of the women have tattoos on both legs) he would do small tattooing on the hand free of cost. The women used to save money for more than a year to get these tattoos done. It is popularly believed that having tattoos enhances the beauty of the calf-muscle. The thick and healthy

²⁸ See also (Grieve, A Celebration of Grieving, Carnival and Satire: Bhaktapur Newars' '*saparu*' Festival, 1998-99)

shape calf-muscle was considered most beautiful in those days. The Newari women pierce their ears but not their noses. We cannot find a single person who pierced her nose. When asked why they do not have the practice of piercing nose, most of the informants replied that it was not traditionally practiced.

Mustard is fried in the mud pot and powdered in the wooden vessels (traditionally used to powder the grains) and then mixed with water and used as soap. It is believed that this method of washing the face will remove black spots and prevent the skin from wrinkling fast. No moisturizers are required, and it keeps the skin fresh and beautiful. For footwear, women used to wear shoes woven from paddy straw. One of the old informants opined, ‘we did not have the shoes which are available nowadays to decorate us, so we used to decorate ourselves with whatever available’. When asked whom they say is more beautiful, the girls in the present generation, or the girls in earlier times, the informant replied that ‘back in those days we did not have proper food to eat, and we had to work all day and night. Everyone used to look pale and not that beautiful compared to the girls nowadays. The girls nowadays do not need to do that much work and they are maintaining their beauty with the help of beauty parlours, so the girls nowadays are more beautiful than back in our days’. In earlier times, the girls who are married used to wear a bangle made of silver, which used to be an identification to differentiate the unmarried girls from those married women. However, nowadays the practice of wearing this bangle has disappeared. It is very hard to differentiate married women from unmarried women unless the villagers know the individual.

Males, on the other hand, who had short hair and thick moustaches used to be considered handsome, but the beard has never been considered attractive. When asked how you would determine if a man were handsome in earlier times, the informant narrated the following, ‘in our days the boys were made to work a lot, the moment they could lift the weights, they used to be taken along with the father for work either in field or to buy the mustards from the hills. They did not have money, so they had to carry the vegetables or any other agricultural products to barter for mustard with hill people, and they had to carry the weight both times. In addition, mustard oil selling is one of the

major economic activities apart from agriculture. So back then, the boys used to work all day and night and they had to do that without proper food. On the other hand, the boys who did not work used to look handsome and beautiful. Even though we thought them handsome, parents would not want them for our marriages because they were lazy, and they always preferred the boys who work hard and take the responsibility of organizing a family.

Boys always used to wear the *tupuli* and girls were prohibited from wearing any kind of cap. Against the cold wind, they used to cover their head with their *gacha* or saree or shawl but not with anything in the form of cap. Nowadays the girls wear caps against the winter, which is now tolerated by society. When asked why only men used to wear *tupuli*, the informant opined that ‘we used to have long hair to protect us from cold, but the boys were made to cut their hair short, so they used to wear the *tupuli* all the time to protect themselves from the cold.’

Indigenous Measurement Systems of Thecho Village:

Newars live in the valley where land availability is very low. The land is measured in two ways. One way is based on how many seeds they can sow: that is *pathi*. The second way of measuring the land is based on square feet: that is *ropani*. One *ropani* can be divided into 16 *aanas*. One *aana* can be divided into 4 *paisa*, and one *paisa* can be divided into 4 *dams*. One *mana* is equal to 2 *aanas*. Additionally, a *ropani* can also be divided into 8 *manas*. Alternatively, we can divide the one *ropani* into 16 *aanas*/ 64 *paisa*/ 256 *dam*/ 8 *manas* (see table 9).

Table 9: Measurement of Land

1 <i>Ropani</i>	16 <i>Aanas</i>
1 <i>Aana</i>	4 <i>Paisa</i>
1 <i>Paisa</i>	4 <i>Dam</i>
1 <i>Mana</i>	2 <i>Aanas</i>
1 <i>Ropani</i>	8 <i>Manas</i>
1 <i>Ropani</i>	16 <i>Aanas</i> 64 <i>Paisa</i> 256 <i>Dam</i> 8 <i>Manas</i>

The following table 10 gives us an understanding about the indigenous terms for measuring the time among the Newars. Newars also have traditional measuring jars and traditional balance which is used till date (see plate 1).

Table 10: Indigenous way of Measuring Time

English	Newari
Year	<i>Dan:</i>
Month	<i>La</i>
Half of a month (15 days)	<i>Bachi</i>
Week	<i>Wa</i>
Day	<i>Nhi</i>
Hour	<i>Ghou</i>

Food:

Food is an important aspect of culture. It is not just an aspect to suppress the metabolic activity called hunger. Food is a means for a researcher to understand the social organization of the community he or she is studying. In the context of Newars, food plays a crucial role in understanding the social organization. Without understanding the food and other social values associated with it, one cannot understand the social organization of the Newar community.

Newars social organization revolves around food. For each festival, the Newar tradition orders its practitioners to eat something or other, which is season specific. The Newars conduct their feasts in a lavish way. Some of the informants opined that the typical Newar feast should comprise ninety-four cuisines. The feast should contain meat of the buffalo and alcoholic beverages. Based on the consumption of meat of the buffalo and alcoholic beverages, the adjacent communities have traditionally had a condescending attitude toward the Newars.

The normal food habits of the Newars include a heavy meal in the morning with rice, dal soup, and some vegetables for breakfast. In the afternoon, they have very light lunch during which they generally consume beaten rice with *aalu* curry or fresh vegetable pickles and may be served with some pieces of meat. Again, the night meal will be

heavy, possibly with a meat item if the family's economic status allows it. The youngsters prefer to eat modern food such as *chowmein* and noodles rather than beaten rice for the lunch.

The importance of food and its role as a gift or good omen will be discussed in detail in the coming chapter. The traditional Newar feast should comprise items such as: *kya* (egg), *hakumusya* (black soya bean), *achar* (radish, peas, coriander, chilli and some other spices), *may:*(green gram), *mayao:* (cooked green gram), *oucha* (boiled spinach and mustard leaves), *chhoyala* (barbequed meat of the buffalo), *chura/ baji* (beaten rice), *booba* (peas, horse gram, Bengal gram and other grains which are popped), *palu* (ginger), *yomuri* (sesame with jaggery stuffed inside the rice flour and cooked in steam), *aitho* (rice wine which is black in colour), *youtho* (rice wine which is red in colour), *katto* (rice wine which is yellow in colour) and *aila* (alcoholic beverage distilled out of fermented grains).

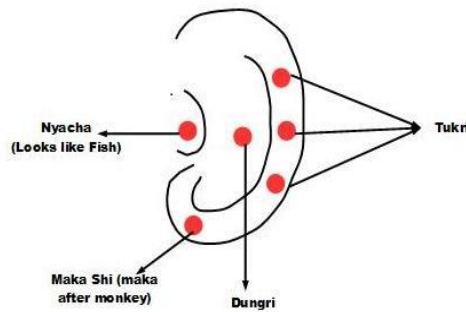
Attire:

Female Attire:

Women are referred as *missa*; the ornaments worn by the women are referred as *thissa*. Only during special occasions, the women wear a five-string ornament called *nhyapu shikha*. In addition to braiding their hair, they use traditional braiding ornament called *sachika*, which can be of different colours (the braiding process of the *sachika* is known as *teyuyu*). However, widows are not allowed to wear the red *sachika*. In the olden days, it was compulsory that everyone should wear it, not only occasionally but regularly. It has been observed that all the women have braids and their hair properly done except at the time of attending funeral procession; they leave their hair loose only at that time. They have four varieties of earrings and four different names are based on the part, of the ear on which they are wearing the ring. The ornaments are called *dungri*, *tukri*, *nyacha* (which looks like fish) and *maka shi* (*maka* is monkey) (see figure 4). Wearing the earring is very important for the Newari women as they do not have the habit of piercing the nose, and married girls are expected to wear the earring compulsorily. That does not

mean unmarried girls cannot wear it, but it is mandatory on the part of the married girls. It was traditional for groom's family to gift the earring at the time of marriage, but this is not practiced these days. Newari women wear traditional red beads which are as the neck ornament called *bhin pu*. On all the major occasions when they wore the traditional dress, they wore *sikha* which means silver chain.

Figure 4: Different Varieties of Ear-Rings



Women wear silver bangles called *bombai churra*, and normal bangles are referred as *churra*. *Khali* is silver anklet and the rings worn on fingers are called *angu*. Special shoes are called *makmali lakha*. Generally *bhin pu* and *khali* are not worn by unmarried girls. Married women can wear them on a regular basis, but unmarried girls are allowed to wear it on festive occasions.

The traditional clothes worn by the Newari women are *gacha* (generally white in colour worn around the waist and to cover the breast of the women). *Pottu la* (jacket, which they wore as a top wear). *Janni* and *hakku parshi* are traditional Newari dress, in black and red colour it is generally wrapped around waist and on the back of part of the body. It is worn in that way so the calf-muscles are exposed and in the front the *parshi* will be folded as layers giving a beautiful look. Earlier, unmarried girls wore *jangaa surruva*, which is a loose *kurtha* and *salwar* type. After marriage, they are expected to wear the *haku parshi*.

Now, modern clothes like jeans, 'tee shirts' have made their way to the Newari culture. The parents and society do not object much about the dress the girls wear as long

as it does not attract other attention and comments. During any auspicious ritual, all the women prefer to wear red coloured *saree*, and it is prohibited for the widows to wear red *saree*. It is also observed that the group of women who are friends or working together will wear same colour *sarees* while they attend any feast or marriage.

We can generally observe three generations wearing three different clothing styles- elder generations (above 55 years old) wear traditional *janni* and *haku parssi* or the *saree*, middle-aged people (above 38 years old) wears *sarees* and shawls or *gacha* in case of cold. The younger generation (below 30 years old) wear jeans, tee shirts, modern jackets along with *chudidhar* and other modern dress what were unknown to earlier generations.

Male Attire:

Typical Newari men wear dress lik- *khaga tupali* (a black traditional Newari *tupali*), *sakal daka* (the coloured *tupali* is worn regularly and is believed to have acculturated from other communities in Nepal), *tapa la* (shirt), *kaas* (traditional coat), *suruwa* (for going out), *laka* (shoes), and *janni*. Men also used to wear *gacha*, which allows the wearer to bear the cold. It is thick white cloth, which resembles the shawl.

Kadha is a kind of silk cloth, which in the *tamang/lama* tradition is gifted as a gesture of honour and has been adopted by the Newars in the process of acculturation. *Betali* is a piece of white cloth, which should be worn on the head by the boy who is undergoing *kyata pooja* or by the person who is celebrating his *janku*. By the attire, the people will generally understand that the male person who is wearing is undergoing the life cycle ritual.

Khaga tupali is a traditional black Newari cap, now seldom worn. All the eldest male members wear the coloured *tupali*. In the ritual processions or musical association processions the *khaga tupali* is preferred. Wearing a *tupali* is a symbol of identity for Newars or for Nepalis.

The modern clothes for men have also made their way to Newari culture. Men generally wear jeans, Tee Shirts, and suit while going for the marriage. We can generally observe three generations wearing three different ways of clothes, elder generations (above 55 years old) wearing traditional Nepali dress, middle age group (above 38 years old) wearing the stitched pant and shirt but not the Tee shirts or modern sweat shirts to protect them from cold, they generally wear sweaters. The young generation (below 35 years old) wearing jeans, Tee shirt, modern jackets to protect themselves from the cold and younger generation wear *tupali* on occasions. The elders wear *tupali* on a regular basis also unless they are observing the death pollution.

Demographic Profile of the Study Area:

The following table 11 gives us an overall idea of different caste groups residing in the different wards in the study area where the household survey has been conducted.

Table 11: Households in Each Ward

	<i>Gopali</i>	<i>Maharjan</i>	<i>Mali</i>	<i>Napit</i>	<i>Shahi</i>	<i>Kapali</i>	Total
Ward I	-	173	-	5	-	4	182
Ward II	-	77	-	-	-	-	77
Ward III	-	65	-	-	-	2	67
Ward IV	-	105	13	1	-	-	119
Ward V	4	48	-	-	12	2	66
Ward VI	-	18	85	-	-	-	103
Ward VII	-	35	3	-	-	-	38
Ward VIII	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Ward IX	-	4	3	-	-	-	7
Grand Total	4	526	104	6	12	8	660

The following table (12) gives us the demographic details of the study area where the household survey was conducted. Table (12) also gives us the information of number of infants, teenagers, youngsters, adults, and elderly people and the sex ratio of the study area.

Table 12: Demographic Profile of the Study Area

Age	Gender	Gopali	Maharjan	Mali	Napit	Shahi	Kapali	Total
0-2	M	1	49	8	-	-	-	58
	F	-	37	5	-	-	-	42
3-9	M	-	126	32	-	4	2	164
	F	-	103	30	-	3	1	137
10-19	M	-	217	40	2	8	4	273
	F	2	197	55	2	7	2	266
20-29	M	3	316	54	3	9	5	388
	F	-	341	67	7	7	7	430
30-39	M	1	263	62	-	7	4	339
	F	1	271	50	1	4	2	331
40-49	M	-	201	36	4	7	2	250
	F	3	208	18	4	6	3	239
50-59	M	3	150	28	1	3	1	184
	F	-	147	32	1	2	1	187
60-69	M	-	98	17	1	2	3	121
	F	-	88	19	-	3	1	111
70-79	M	-	55	11	-	1	-	67
	F	1	62	12	1	3	2	80
80-89	M	4	20	2	-	-	1	23
	F	-	21	5	-	-	1	28
Above 90	M	-	4	-	-	-	-	4
	F	-	9	3	-	1	-	13
Total	M	8	1499	290	11	41	22	1871
	F	12	1484	296	16	36	20	1864

**3
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3
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Literacy Rate:

Education and literacy are two different aspects and one should not forget to make a distinction between. Education may be obtained from several ways. An individual receives education of different aspects from different source and the process of learning and getting educated does not end till his/her death. Whereas, the literacy is something, which says that the person who is literate will have the ability to read, write and do simple arithmetic. The changing times derive how one will define the literacy and education. While conducting the survey, it was observed that the modern education was

introduced only 20 years ago in the village²⁹. Though the elders were able to speak Newari language they will not be able to read the script, it is the same with Nepali, and due to their experiences, they might be able to do simple arithmetic. It will not be fair to judge the literacy of the community when there were no equal opportunities to learn how to read and write. Hence, the data has been analysed based on the non-student male/female who can read and who cannot read. By non-student male it is meant that they are below the age of 40, and they could not read or can read has been analysed. Those who are above the age of 40 are considered as male/female who cannot read. Another important factor observed during the survey is that, the informant to avoid the social judgement from the interviewer or the neighbours, often replied that they have studied ‘*alli alli*’ which means little and when probed further what do they mean by little they say may be of third or fourth class. Another woman informant confronted and criticised for including such a question about educational qualification, and she added ‘what if I lied to you about my educational qualification and how you will know, Whether I am saying truth or no?’ (See table 13)

Table 13: Literacy Rate of the People in the Study Area

Name of the Caste	Non student male who can read	Non student female who can read	Non student male who cannot read	Non student female who cannot read	Male who cannot read	Female who cannot read	Male infants	Female infants	Total
<i>Gopali</i>	5	6	2	4	1	2	-	-	20
<i>Maharjan</i>	782	477	476	451	210	523	31	33	2983
<i>Mali</i>	156	101	73	90	55	102	6	3	586
<i>Napit</i>	7	5	3	8	1	3	-	-	27
<i>Shahi</i>	16	12	13	9	12	15	-		77
<i>Kapali</i>	13	8	5	4	4	8	-	-	42
Total	979	609	572	566	283	653	37	36	3735

²⁹ However, there was a government school, but the prominence of education was very less. One of the informant said how his uncle (*paju*) choose to join the business run by his family rather than going to the education, though he can afford to go to the school. In addition to the above informants version, there are few cases where the informants expressed their regret for not choosing to go to school, and ended up in what they are now as peasants, carpenter and so on.

Economy:

The economy of the Thecho depends on multiple sources. The villagers, men and women, seize the opportunities to find their livelihood. Itis writes, 'women are the centre of many of these enighbourhood activities, and economic control and authority is part of the identity of women in Nepal, especially among Newars' (1985, p. 19). Most of the families depend on agriculture as their prime source of income. The household survey reveals that a number of working population told that they indulged in business rather than agriculture. The agriculture helps them to grow their own food, which they can use for their consumption. The surplus food will be sold or used to exchange for the products, which they cannot grow for themselves. The informants will be busy during the agricultural season, which have been discussed in detail below.

In addition to the agriculture, people open shops, or start a business, this will act as a source of income, which can be substantial for agriculture. Traditionally they depend on the oil pressing and selling the mustard oil, which were traditionally other caste groups' occupations. For this oil pressing purpose, there were *guthis* established. These *guthis* will be discussed in detail in the fifth chapter of this thesis.

The third way of earning livelihood the villagers indulge in sculpture making; the bronze sculpture making and woodcarving. The occupations like carpentry, mason were also reported. More importantly, the 'social desirable' occupation is going to the office. Irrespective of what they do after going to the office does not matter, but it is as a desirable job to go to office and work³⁰. The informants whose family members go to office to work often replied 'office *vaneyu*' (going to office) for the question what job their family member does. However, many of the informants seem to be not aware of what is that their family members do after going to the office (See table 14 and 15).

³⁰ It is popularly believed that, Newars has been systematically excluded from the bureaucracy by the Shah kings in order to discourage the Newars part in the administration and other decision making process. It is natural for the people to desire about something, which they get it rare.

Table 14: Occupation of Males in the Study Area

Occupation	<i>Gopali</i>	<i>Maharjan</i>	<i>Mali</i>	<i>Napit</i>	<i>Shahi</i>	<i>Kapali</i>	Total
Agriculture	-	172	46	1	2	3	224
Business	2	247	29	-	10	-	288
Services	1	342	46	5	3	2	399
Sculpture related	1	110	34	-	2	4	151
Student	2	476	73	3	13	5	572
Carpentry	-	27	32	-	-	1	60
Mason	-	29	9	-	1	3	42
Infants/other s	1	53	11	-	-	2	67
NO	1	49	10	2	3	3	68
Total	8	1505	290	11	34	23	1871

Table 15: Occupation of Females in the Study Area

Occupation	<i>Gopali</i>	<i>Maharjan</i>	<i>Mali</i>	<i>Napit</i>	<i>Shahi</i>	<i>Kapali</i>	Total
Agriculture	5	398	94	6	6	6	515
Carpet Related works	-	130	44	-	2	4	180
Business	3	149	16	-	9	-	177
Sculpture related	-	37	5	-	-	-	42
Services	-	202	23	-	2	3	230
Student	4	451	90	8	9	4	566
Infants/other s	-	38	5	-	-	1	44
NO	-	82	16	2	8	2	110
Total	12	1487	293	16	36	20	1864

Agriculture:

Almost all the houses of *Maharjans* and *Malis* have the agricultural lands. Apart from the lands owned by individuals, the *guthi* land can also be leased out by the *guthi* for tenancy. The following table 16 shows the number of households who had reported that they have land holdings.

Table 16: Households having Land

Caste Group	Number of households who have land	Total number of households
<i>Gopali</i>	03	04
<i>Maharjan</i>	506	526
<i>Mali</i>	102	104
<i>Napit</i>	06	06
<i>Shahi</i>	12	12
<i>Kapali</i>	06	08
Total	635	660

There are two major agricultural seasons in a year. From the month of *baisak*, they start the plantation. The crops that are grown in this first season of the year are shown in table (17).

Table 17: Crops Grown in the First Season of Agriculture

Crop	Local name	Time period of the crop
Paddy	<i>Wo</i>	4-6 months
Corn		4 months
Chilli	<i>Malta</i>	3 months
Soya bean	<i>Musya</i> (<i>pello musya</i> big size) (<i>sola musya</i> small size)	3 and 4 months respectively
Beans	<i>Simi</i> (white ones)	Two and half months
Red coloured beans	<i>Rajma</i>	Two and half months
Turmeric	<i>Halu</i>	It is a crop of two years we can start harvesting this from one year.
Elephant foot yam	<i>sakkhi</i>	It is a crop of two years we can start harvesting this from one year.
Cucumber	<i>Tushi</i>	3-4 months
Pumpkin	<i>Passhi</i>	3-4 months
Bitter guard	<i>Kai ko ka cha</i>	3-4 months
Ladies finger	<i>Ram toriyan</i>	3-4 months
Brinjal	<i>Vanta</i>	3-4 months
<i>Va pusa</i> (preparation for the paddy transplanted should start this season)		
	<i>Eskulcha</i> (<i>nep.</i>)	3-4 months
	<i>Ka kocha</i>	3-4 months
Snake guard	<i>Toriyan</i>	3-4 months
The Red Paddy	<i>Wola</i>	3 months

Paddy and Corn are grown in the same season but in different months. The land, which does not have irrigation facility, is preferred for maize, as maize is mostly rain fed crop. The land, which has proper irrigation facility, is preferred for rice cultivation. The rice plantation should start immediately after the festival of *sithi nakha* or *mhyay macha nakha*, which lies in the month of *sravan*. The people should be able to finish the paddy plantation by the festival of *gattemangal*. In case they failed to do so, the particular households will not celebrate the *gattemangal*. People generally differentiate the land, which is near to the riverside as *baga bhu*, and it is considered fertile and prone to get affected when there are floods. The people remembered the occurrences of floods in Thecho in the years of 2011 and 2038 (BS) (see table 18).

Table 18: Crops Grown in the Second Season of Agriculture

Crops	Local name	Time period of the crop
In the month of <i>Sravan</i>		
Paddy	<i>Wa piyu</i> or <i>sina jya</i>	Four months and three months based on the variety
In the month of <i>Badhra</i>		
Mustard	<i>Too</i>	Two and a half to 3 months
Radish	<i>Lain</i>	One and a half month to 3 months
Carrot	<i>Gajar</i>	One and a half month to 3 months
Cauliflower	<i>Kauli</i>	3-6 months
Cabbage	<i>Banda</i>	3-6 months
In the month of <i>Push</i>		
Coriander	<i>Dhaniya/ Dhanucha</i>	Within 4-5 months, they harvest it to use the leaves for garnishing, and they need to wait for some more months in order to harvest the coriander
	<i>Bakala</i>	4-5 months
Peas	<i>Kegu</i>	4-5 months
	<i>Moosu</i> (Yellow dal or orange)	4-5 months
	<i>Tashhi</i>	4-5 months
Spinach	<i>Palcha</i>	4-5 months
Garlic	<i>Lava</i>	
Onion	<i>Pyaj</i>	
Small onions	<i>Cha cha</i>	
Lettuce	<i>Pachhicha</i>	

Wheat plantation will start right after paddy harvest; wheat is a crop of 5-6 months. The people will be very busy in these four months during rice and maize plantation and harvest and during wheat plantation and harvest season.

Aalu (potato) plays a key role in the regular diet patterns of the villagers in Thecho. *Paalu* (ginger) has an additional importance and ritual significance. These two items are not supposed to be grown by the villagers in Lalitpur districts. It is believed that if anyone grows these two crops, the family members will fall sick, and they will invite the inauspiciousness upon their family. However, some of the informants opined that this might be the trick and rumour propagated by the farmers in the Bhaktapur where they grow *aalu* and *paalu*. And in order to retain the monopoly they might have come up with such rumour so that the people in the Lalitpur district have to depend on them for these two items. However, in the recent days, the farmers in this village are also growing *aalu* and *paalu* though the elders do not prefer or suggest doing so.

Those crops, which need careful sowing of seeds, such as corn or *rajma* and kind of grains, the children, are not allowed to indulge in sowing the seeds. It is believed that in case if the person, who is sowing these seeds, misses out to sow a row, the family members will fall sick and might be lead to mortal danger as well. One of the informants, (whose grandfather is respected and celebrated as one of the *bairi* or *baidyo* who is believed to have knowledge of treating the illness with the ritual methods) informed that his family have experienced this kind of situation, when the family members were falling ill one after the other. In great confusion, they sought help from his grandfather who told them that they have neglected to sow seeds in a row in the field. In order to rectify the mistake done by the family they were suggested to offer a prayer and a sacrifice to the agricultural field. The informant strongly believed that only after this offering was done, the family members were recovered from their illness. This particular belief can also be understood as sowing of these grains is not as same as sowing the seeds of wheat and rice. The corn and other such grains, which are usually sown through single grain, need to be done carefully in order, not to get fewer yields. The land availability is very less, and they need to manage and get maximum results out of the minimum available resources

within the given limitations. Having such beliefs will make the people more careful when they are sowing the seeds.

It is also believed that if they happen to take their meal before time, for instance if the family have the habit of taking the food at nine in the morning and they happen to take food before that time on the day of *sithi nakha*, they believe that at the time of rice plantation they will be bitten by ants. The belief might also be originated as on the day of *sithi nakha* they need to take the *wo:* prepared with a lot of grains and it generally takes little more time to cook than the usual time. In addition, as they believe they should eat this *wo:* on the day of *sithi nakha*, they might have started propagating that they should not eat their meals before the agreed time on this day. It is also believed that by eating the *musya* during the *sithi nakha* the poison of the snake will not affect if anyone happens to be bitten by a snake.

The obligations of married out daughters in helping their natal house during the agricultural season are discussed in the following chapter IV. In case a family needs support for doing the agricultural work, they will hire a person who is called as *jami*, which means paid labourer. The work exchange can also take place between two individuals in the mutual agreement saying that ‘I will work today in your field and you have to come to work tomorrow in my field’. This is just an unwritten agreement between two individuals and in this way; they do not need to pay the money for the services of the other person. This kind of labour exchange is referred as *bewla*. Sometimes the people in the same *tole* who might be lineage members will come together to form a group called *jaku* or *jakuti* or *jhar goo* (discussed in detail in the chapter V).

Carpet Related Works:

The carpet weaving industry was a modern introduction to the Newar economic system in the Thecho village. Generally, the Newars are known for weaving their own clothes. The traditional weaving machines were given as a part of bridal gifts from the bride's parent's side. The weaving machines are still owned by some families, and they weave clothes when the time permits. Unlike the traditional weaving, the carpet industry is highly for

the consumption of outsiders. The Newar and non-Newar (generally men) will have a network of business. They will approach the major contractor who has got the orders from abroad, mainly from Germany and other European countries, and he will delegate the orders to these petty industrial owners in villages. The major contractor himself will decide the size, shape, colour of the woollen, and the woollen will also be given by him in order to maintain the quality of the carpet. The petty industrial owners from Thecho will bring the order to the village. As the villages are cost effective to run such industries, the non-Newars also migrate, establish industry by hiring a building for the purpose, and mobilize Newar and non-Newar women to work for them to weave these carpets. This is one of the main reasons for the hill dwellers (non-Newars) to migrate to the Newar settlement as this gives them a source of livelihood. Some non-Newars family informed that their husbands had left to gulf countries to work there in the informal sector, since they do not have any means to earn their livelihood. The women along with the children had migrated to the village and educating the children also working as a carpet weaver.

Newari women not only weave the carpet but there are also other carpet related services. The raw wool will be brought to the village and distributed to the women who are associated with this wool distribution centre and the women are expected to spin the wool and return the same amount of spun wool according to the raw wool they have received. Those women who are not skilled enough to weave the carpet will generally depend up on the wool spinning. The women who are skilled in the carpet weaving will either go to the industry to sit along with other Newari women and non-Newari men³¹ and women who indulge in the carpet weaving. These women will have the separate frames for carpet weaving. They may weave the carpet by joint venture of two or three women and divide the money they get by weaving the carpet after finishing the work. Alternatively, the carpet industry owner will give single frames to women who are interested and skilled to weave, but does not want to go to the industry to weave.

³¹ Newari men does not involve in the carpet weaving, though the high number of men had involved in the carpet industry, but they will handle this business in the higher level such as, they will be the owners of the carpet industry, or getting the raw wool from the outside and distribute to the women in the village. Or get the contracts from outside and give back the order once the carpet weaving is finished.

However, the women who received single frames from the owner are not supposed to weave the carpet of other industries. She is liable to weave the carpets of the same person who had given her the frame.

This carpet related work provides a source of income for the Newari women, but the payment is based on the work a person do rather than the hours of work they spend. The women informants who are indulged in this carpet weaving responded that ‘this work gives them freedom to work whenever they can. If the agricultural season starts or if there is domestic work which they needed to attend in the case of festival or a feast organized in their *depcha* households, they need to attend the works rather than coming to the carpet weaving industry. They can come in their free time and earn good money’. It is also observed that the women who indulge in carpet weaving spend a considerable amount of their time in this and earn good money. One of the carpet owners also informed that the amount of work done would come down drastically during the periods of the agricultural season or during the season of village festivals. In addition, women show interest only to indulge in carpet weaving when they have free time. He also said, ‘we cannot force them to work more time, because it is a part time work for them, that is why we pay them based on the work they do rather than the hours of work they do’.

Business:

Newars are traditionally considered as the business community. It is believed that they had trade links with the Tibet and India. Apart from the historical reasons, the Newar prefer to start a business rather than any other occupation because it gives freedom to work and autonomy to attend the feasts of their relatives and neighbours and their rituals require a longer period. One of the shopkeepers who was working as a primary school teacher, quit his job and started running an eatery in the village. When asked why he had chosen to start an eatery giving up the school-teacher job, he said that he had fields to cultivate and his mother was not feeling well. So he had to be there to attend to all these other works, which cannot be managed without him. He added that the obligations vested on any Newars to help their *depcha* members or neighbours who are organizing feast and other cultural rituals, made him to take the decision to open a shop rather than working in

the school. It is also observed that in many cases the shopkeepers said they are not liable to answer anyone if he or she is not opening shop though it will affect their business, but not the freedom to do whatever they wish to do. Youngsters also show interest to open up a business either on the partnership basis or individual basis (see table 19).

Table 19: Small Scale Industries in the Study Area

Caste Group	Small Scale Industry in the household
<i>Gopali</i>	04
<i>Maharjan</i>	195
<i>Mali</i>	49
<i>Napit</i>	02
<i>Shahi</i>	-
<i>Kapali</i>	-

Sculpture Making Economy:

This is one of the main occupations other than agriculture in Thecho's economic system. The sculpture is made out of bronze and other metals. The sculptures made out of bronze in different shapes and different forms, such as Buddha and other Hindu and Buddha mythological and religious figures have a great value abroad. However, the people who indulge in making the sculpture were deprived of their money for the hard work they invest. Sculpture making is a process that involves many stages of work by different experts in the respective stages of finishing the sculpture. Intermediary between the buyer and worker will become seller. He gives work to the initial stage of making sculpture, making the mould of the desirable size and shape for the idol. The wax mould will be sent to the next stage where the metal will be melted and poured into the moulds, the wax moulds will be removed, and the rough forms of statues will be sent to further processing. The stages, which follow, are refining the work and welding the statue, removing the dirt from the statue and painting eyes and finally gold coating the statue. The experts in the respective fields handle each stage of work. The intermediary, who coordinates with all the people working, will pay the money for them as per the market rate. Usually the cost of the idol in the international market will be very high. However, the workers will be paid very less when compared to the international market prices the statue gets.

Sometimes the whole family will involve in the sculpture making. A total of 151 male and 42 female in the sample survey indulge in sculpture making.

Along with the bronze sculpture making, there are very few who practice woodcarving. Woodcarving is considered as a very hard profession that one chooses. It needs many years of apprenticeship to master the art, and hence very less people choose this profession. However, the wood carving profession is having a great demand in the market.

Other Services:

As mentioned earlier, the Shah kings and Rana prime ministers had prevented the Newars (who pose a direct threat to the authority of the monarch from the outsiders) from entering bureaucratic services. May be, as a result, the Newars admire and value the option of working for the government. In modern days, most of the newars consider 'going to the office for work' as the best of occupation. During the household survey it has been observed that the people who are not aware of what work their husbands or fathers does after going from the village to their office in the city or adjacent town, often says in the tone of pride that 'office *vanneyu*' which means that the occupation they do is going to office.

CHAPTER III

FAMILY, CLAN AND MARRIAGE

Human beings learnt to organize themselves into different groups in the process of human evolution. Gerda Lerner opines, ‘homo sapiens become true humans’, by the process of forming a group. She continues to say that, humans have mastered certain aspects such as ‘preserve themselves, propagate the species, and create shelter for themselves and their offspring unlike animals, human beings invent tools, alter the environment, speculate about their own mortality and make mental constructs to explain the meaning of their existence and their relationship to the supernatural in making symbols, creating languages and symbolic systems’ (1986, p. 199). It is one of the vital factors for the survival of human beings as a species. These groups may vary in their size and the degree of affiliation an individual is liable to show. The rules pertaining to these groupings and the responsibilities vested on the members of the group vary from culture to culture, making human beings across the globe a unique species that have learnt quickly to adapt to that particular geographical setting. These groups such as family, kinship, marriage and caste groups were not only formed but also institutionalised with set of rules and norms to be observed, and these norms and rules can be altered and changed as per the demands of the situations of the time and space. The groups were institutionalised for the continuation of society as a single structure. The structure of any society will keep changing as per the requirement of the changing functions of that particular group or in general as a society. The changing function and the structure might be largely determined by the time and the space the community is living in.

This chapter tries to analyse the structure and function of the fundamental social groupings such as family, lineage, clan, and the kin relations, which were brought together through the marriage alliance. This chapter starts from understanding the smallest unit of the society, that is, family, to consanguineous kin members who are related through blood and culturally constructed measures of considering a group of

people as descendants of same ancestor, to affinal kin members through marriage alliance.

Family:

Family among the Newars is often referred by the term *bhutu*, meaning hearth. The essence is to indicate that the group of people cooking together should be considered as a family. Though several families live together in the same household (under the same roof), the traditional way of deciding who should be joining the *guthi* (after their father's demise) is based on the family that cooks separately³². Though the brothers live together and cook separately, they often say that they are of the same family. The family by definition according to the Newars is that, 'either the place of living or the same place of cooking or residing in the same cluster or related by blood with a traceable ancestry'. It is obfuscatory to define the family from the perception of Newars; however, one can say that those who are cooking from the same hearth should be considered as immediate family. Levy & Rajopadhyaya writes the household is a setting for intimacy; it is for the training of the youngsters, for preparing them to handle their life in the coming future, and also making them ready to adopt the cultural practices where the household is situated. The family has a clear cut boundary of corporate and spatial inside and outside, and tries to secure itself within through privacy and secrecy. There is no specific name for the household in Newari, but its members sometimes refer to each other with the Nepali or Hindi term '*jahan*'. Sometimes the group is referred to by terms that refer to the sharing of boiled food, particularly rice, such as *chaga jasi* 'one rice pot'. In case of separation of a household unit, it is conventionally referred as 'having stopped sharing a kitchen area', or 'having stopped eating boiled rice together', the main metaphor for the household, as is generally true of household units in other parts of the world that its members share a common cooking and eating place (1992, p. 111).

³²Though this is not practiced now-a-days, as the members are adequate enough to run the *guthi* currently, one of the informant opined that, earlier the *guthiyars* were very few and so the *guthi* had the rule to make it mandatory for the male member who separated from his father and formed a nuclear family.

A household is generally referred as *chhen*³³ in Newari. A household may comprise of a few nuclear families or a joint family that are linked by blood. Newars generally reside as a group of people who are patrilineally linked. If there is no space for residing together as one group, some of the families establish their houses in the new part of the village, and some other families migrate to the nearest town area in the pursuit of livelihood opportunities. In the *koyelachi*, the general pattern of household comprises a group of houses opening towards a courtyard called *nani*, and this phenomenon is less observed in the *choyelachi*. There are only three *nanis* in the *choyelachi* against seven in the *koyelachi*³⁴. In case there is no *nani*, one can see the patrilineally linked houses constructed in one line in the streets of the old part of the village.

The households act as a corporate social group, extending their help to one another. It is not necessary in all the cases that the household should be linked by blood or traces their common ancestry; sometimes mere residing together is enough to help each other as a corporate social group. One of the informants, who work in an office in Lalitpur, was seen during the day time, which is not usual. When asked why he did not go to the office, he replied saying, ‘today my neighbours are celebrating the *kyata pooja* for their son, and they are organizing a feast, so I need to be there to help them’. In another instance, one family was reconstructing their house; it is obligatory on the part of the kin members to help them on the day, they are constructing the roof of their house³⁵. In addition to the kin members, the neighbours who are not related by blood also involve in helping the family constructing the house. Among Newars, social values are attached to the behaviour of helping each other. Generally, people respect those who are active in helping others and those who do not help and tend to escape from helping others will be treated in the same way. Women in the neighbourhood join the family the next day of organizing the feast in washing the big vessel used for cooking the feast items. Men

³³Even temples were referred by adding prefix *dyo* or *degu* to the *chhen* indicating the gods and goddess also live in their own houses.

³⁴As it is believed and informed by many informants the *koyelachi* is considered older when compared with the *choyelachi*. Hence, we can see a more traditional way of house construction in the *koyelachi* rather than the *choyelachi*.

³⁵As that particular day demands more human forces to finish the task as soon as possible.

generally help to buy the meat and other necessary items as suggested by the appointed traditional cooks for the feast; they also extend their help during cutting, cooking the meat and serving the feast items to the guests while the feast is organized. The friends and relatives who have offices or other work to attend try their best to give some time to the family, which is organizing the feast. They take out time either before going to attend their work or right after they return from their work. It is also a general phenomenon that the feasts are mostly organized on Saturday (which is a public holiday). The help from the friends and relatives does not confine only to the feast; it continues in whatever manner the help is required and where the human resource is needed. It is most common among the Newars of Thecho to observe the thin line between consanguine or affinal relations and friends. The order of inviting people for the feast mainly depends on the size of the feast the household wants to organize. First, the household is obliged to invite their own immediate lineage members. Second, the married out daughter and her relatives are invited. Third, the extended lineage members, that is clan members, and, if the feast is organized on a big scale, then the invitation may be extended to the other members from their own caste and non-caste members as well. The neighbours and the friends of the household do not naturally get a special invitation as they are expected to be part of the celebration. Hence, one can observe that, their participation in organizing the feast plays a pivotal role.

The household or family acting as a corporate group does not stop at merely helping each other during the time of organizing the feast; the family members help each other and work as one entity in order to earn their livelihood. Newars in Thecho mainly depend on agriculture for their livelihood, along with running shops, making bronze sculpture, running a carpet industry, sweets making and so on. The family functions as one with everyone sharing the work. One of the female informants informed that the married out daughters have the obligation to go and help their natal family when their brothers or father is going to transplant or harvest the crop. The married out daughters will also bring food items to be served and they will render their human labour during the work in the agricultural field. The informant further added that the married out daughters consider their right as well as responsibility to take active part in the natal family's feast

organization as well as sharing the work and lessening the burden of the natal family. The same will be done by the natal family towards their married out daughters; they send food items and one or two people from the family to help the married out daughter's family during the transplant or harvest of the crop. Agriculture being the traditional mode of earning their livelihood, the kinship obligations from the married out daughters and other kin members are observable. However, in the modern context the opening of new opportunities³⁶ to earn a livelihood is more confined to the family or household helping each other.

Apart from acting as a corporate group, family also works based on division of labour, with specified works assigned to the male and female members in the family. The women are supposed to start their day by offering prayers to the *pekha lachi* and go to offer prayers in the nearby shrines where the household is situated. The *koyelachi* people offering prayers at the Brahmayini temple and the *choyelachi* people offering prayers at the Balkumari temple is a familiar spectacle. In the houses, which do not have water connection, women are mainly responsible for getting the water from the nearby taps. The men prepare to start their daily routine based on whatsoever their means of livelihood options are. Though cooking is mainly the women's work, it is common for the men also to cook and serve food for their family members in case women are busy with some other tasks. In case of a household having a shop or their own business or involving in bronze sculpture making, it is observed that both men and women equally participate in the process. In the non-agricultural season, men were seen spending their free time playing cards³⁷; however, the women keep themselves busy either with cleaning the grains or with knitting straw mats, or dusting the straw mats and drying it in the sun and preserving it for the longer usage. In spite of the gendered division of labour, it is also observed that men and women cross this line of gendered division of labour and help each other to do domestic chores as well as professional duties to earn their livelihood.

³⁶See the Ethnographic chapter for further details of the several economic activities of the Newars of Thecho village.

³⁷Playing cards is deemed lethargic and socially not acceptable by many informants, it is very rare to see women playing cards. The children were not scolded or restricted from playing cards only during the family gatherings on the festive occasions.

In Newar society, oldsters are not only respected but also revered. In Newari culture mere attaining of old age is enough for them to respect their elders. On the celebration of *janku*, the oldsters are elevated from human form to Godly status. During the celebration of *janku*, the grandchildren take them in the palanquin³⁸ around the village to celebrate their *janku*. The children are taught by the parents through example how to treat and behave with elders in the family and society. The elders will assume the role of advisors and retire from running the family actively. They most often confine themselves to the religious activities, and male oldsters participate actively in the *guthi* and village processions. The eldest female of the household passes the responsibilities of managing the house to the eldest or favourite daughter-in-law when she thinks that it is time for her to hand over the responsibilities, and enjoys her retirement life. The passing of responsibilities is symbolically marked by passing the bunch of keys to the desired person to run the family. It has been observed that the eldest female member often holds back the key even after her daughter-in-law gets a daughter-in-law. The newly married girls are expected to not step into the room, which is considered as prayer room where the *bhin dyo*, who is considered as the family god is housed and it is often worshipped in secrecy. The same room is also used to store grains and other valuables³⁹. The gender of the eldest member or head of the family is insignificant, people consider the eldest by age rather than by gender, indicating that the male is not necessarily the head of the household.

Types of Family:

The Joint family is considered as an ideal family among the Newars of Thecho. However, continuing the joint family is interlinked with either the economic status of the family or the authority held by the elders of the family. One of the informants has said that, ‘where there is wealth, there will not be any conflicts among the family members, which leads to

³⁸It is the grandest way of celebrating the *janku* life cycle ritual for the elders who have achieved the age. It has also been observed that the eldest person who is celebrating the *janku* is given special attention by making him wear a white cloth as headgear and going in a procession to offer prayers to the clan goddess or *kuldeeptha*.

³⁹Refer Second chapter for more details about the room.

the continuation of the joint family'. Another informant reckoned that, sometimes it is not just the economic status of the family, which determines the nature of the family but also its members. If the eldest member of the family does not agree for the break in the family and he or she manages to resolve and maintain peace among the members of the family, the families will continue as a joint family. If not, they tend to break and form a nuclear family. One of the old informants also opined that, these days, economic opportunities opening up for youngsters and the expectations of married in daughters-in-law are the reasons for forming nuclear families out of joint families. In one of the cases in the village, when a grandson proposed to marry a girl from 'lower' caste, grandparents and parents initially denied permission for the marriage. However, the grandson was adamant in getting married to the girl he loved, and informed his family members that if they think it is going to affect the family's honour, he will marry the girl and live separately, and might migrate to Lalitpur (town) area. The parents and grandparents who did not wish to part from their grandson gave their consent, but asked the grandson to elope with her for four days and come back to live with them, so that they can save their respect in society, of not organizing a feast for inter-caste marriage. The couple eloped and came back after four days and started living with their parents and grandparents. The daughter-in-law was treated with love and care by the family members, and it was witnessed that the eldest female member of the house was feeding the newly married bride from another caste. She was treated with love and respect. In the due course of time, she was accepted as one of the family member. This instance serves as an illustration to show how Newars wish to be a joint family rather than forming nuclear families. The following table 20 shows the types of families in the study area from the Thecho village. However, collecting the types of family within the study area was a challenging aspect as villagers insisted they are joint family though they cook separately and live together. It is mostly brothers who live together though they cook separately, and the demarcation of the joint family is based on whether they live together or cook separately.

Table 20: Types of Families

Name of the caste group	Nuclear Family		Joint Family		Single Person/ Couple without offspring	The families who reported they live together and but cook separately
	Without dependents	With dependents	Without dependents	With dependents		
<i>Gopali</i>	02	01	01			
<i>Maharjan</i>	252	109	147	45	54	59
<i>Mali</i>	56	22	33	10	09	14
<i>Napit</i>	02	01	01		02	
<i>Shahi</i>	10	02	02	01	02	04
<i>Kapali</i>	05	05			02	02
Total	327	140	184	56	69	79

Lineage and Clan (Jahans and Depcha Guthi):

Next to social unit of the family, Newars extend their kinship network through their lineage. The direct descendants of the known male ancestor make a group called *kawa*. The *kawa* is a group of families who had emerged as separate families, but they were brothers who got married and had sons and grandsons. Two or more *kawas* can be called *phukis*. The *phuki* is a group of people who are related by blood, but the ancestry and the degree of relationship between the living members is blurred. However, the living members believe that they are related by blood, and their ancestors are related by blood. Two or more *phukis* can be considered as one *depcha*⁴⁰ *guthi*. The *depcha guthi*, can also be called *dewali guthi* (nep.), or can also, be referred as *jahans*. The usage of *jahan* is quite obfuscatory for the Newars in this village; the term *jahan* often refers to one's spouse. Also, *jahan* refers to one's own family or the families of one's brothers. Generally, villagers pose the question to the others 'gomma jahan du?' to ask how many brothers a person has. The same question is also put in a different way 'gomma daju khija du?', but often the term *jahan*⁴¹ is interchangeably used to ask how many brothers one has. *Jahan* also indicates the clan members, by which one can understand that the term in a larger context is considered as one entity. This can fit the larger relationships such as

⁴⁰ "the term 'depcha' appears to bear some affinity with the similar Sanskrit term 'Deva Ali' which means race, family or Dynasty of gods" (Nepali, 1965, p. 333)

⁴¹The *jahan* is also the term used to refer to one's spouse but not the term used to address.

wife, brothers' families and in larger context, of one's whole clan or any individual's immediate close knitted kin relationship.

Jahans often reside together in the group of houses constructed around an open space called *nani* (courtyard), which acts as a common property for all the houses in the courtyard. If the houses do not surround the courtyard, the houses are arranged in a straight row where the *jahans* live together. *Jahans* also often make a 'corporate group' or 'active group' which extends their help to each other on the occasions of any feast organized by their *jahan* members or during the construction of the house or any other occasion where the family might be needing the human resource in a large number.

Depcha guthi or *depcha khala* is a Newari term for the clan. The *depcha guthis* do not have any name, it is merely by the remembrance of the people they know who belong to which *depcha guthi*. The group which is referred as *depcha guthi* or *depcha khala* has the obligation to go to worship *kuldeeptha* or *degu dyo* once in a year. Levy & Rajopadhyaya, writes the ceremony performed once in a year at the *degu* god shrines is called either "*degu* God *pooja*" or "*dewali pooja*". Those households who go to the same *degu* god shrine together are the *phuki* group which is united in all the life cycle rituals of all its members, particularly, sharing the ritual pollution at the birth or death of its members, entailing to have performed prolonged purifying rites. This group shares ritual feasts, and acts a council to discuss problems related to the families. The members generally live in close proximity to each other, sometimes in the same courtyard. These groups must always split when they become too large to manage themselves (1992, p. 311). Inheritance is one of the criteria for the membership into *depcha guthi*, or married in daughters get their membership changed from their natal family's *depcha guthi* to the husband's *depcha guthi*, through formal introduction to all the members of the *depcha guthi* (see plate 3).

The *depcha khala/guthi*, which has more number of people will break into two different groups on mutual agreement, if they consider it is becoming hard to manage the large number of people, and thereafter the two different groups go separately for worshipping the *degu dyo*. Henceforth, they will be considered as two different *depcha*

khalas. Some of the reasons why the *depcha guthis* tend to break are, the members fight among themselves, may be because of property or any other issue such as marriage within the *depcha guthi* (getting the approval of the eldest members of the *depcha guthi* is very important before arranging a marriage for any of the families who associate themselves with *depcha guthis*). Or inter-caste marriage by a particular family that others in the *depcha guthi* did not approve of, or any of the members not respecting the elders and behaving in an ‘odd’ way, which is insulting the elders and so on. In one of the cases, where one family that did not wish to continue further with the *depcha guthi* had informed that they are no longer willing to join along with the (earlier) group to worship the *kuldeeptha* and to participate in the feast. Hence, they started going separately to worship the *degu dyo*, and eventually were relieved from the obligations they held towards their earlier group and vice versa. This particular family, that has father and two married sons living together, eventually will evolve into a bigger group over the generations. In spite of not going together with the group, this family still holds the right to worship the *kuldeeptha* (group of stones) at the same place. It should also be noted that, the *depcha guthi* which breaks into two different groups cannot join together again.

The two different groups of erstwhile single *depcha guthi* go to the same group of stones, which are considered as their *degu dyo* or *kuldeeptha*. Hence, one can observe, two or more groups who consider themselves as different *depcha guthis* go and worship the same group of stones, which is considered the *degu dyo* of these two or more groups. The reason being that, they earlier belonged to single *depcha guthi* and have their *samaybaji* (beaten rice with the combination of ginger, black soya beans, and a piece of meat, which is served as starter before a big feast, or as a *prasad*, food offered to the god, and considered to be having ritual importance) before continuing to have an elaborate feast in the house of the *pala*⁴² of the *depcha guthi*. It is not the God (the group of stones) or the common ancestor, which they believed to be the descendants of, but a clear cut understanding between the people who would like to continue as a *depcha guthi*, is what defines *depcha guthi*. One can go to the extent of saying it is more of a contractual

⁴² Pala is a turn bearer who acts as a secretary for the *guthi* for the period of year. In addition, see fifth chapter for detailed description.

relationship between the families involved than the blood bond to unify them. Once a *depcha guthi* has been separated and formed into two groups, they may marry from each other's group, though not immediately, but may be in the later generations. The *depcha guthi* not having a name also gives scope for the later generations to forge alliances, provided that there is no existing relationship for the last seven generations from both the parents' side. Once the *guthi* breaks into two different groups, the members are not obliged to follow the death pollution for the death of a member of the other group; they will be relieved of all the kinship obligations, which they were once obliged to as a part of the group. This might have evolved to facilitate people to have more number of active kin groups either in the form of breaking up from the bigger *deepcha guthis* or forging an marriage alliance in the later generations.

In the ancient times, some families came together and allotted a piece of land for the *depcha guthi* and bestowed the responsibility of offering *pinda*⁴³ every year without fail for the dead ancestors and to continue the group without separating themselves. Common land will be leased out for one of its members or to the *pala* who acts as a turn bearer to organize that year's feast. This common land often acts as a financial assistance for the *depcha guthi*. If a considerable group of families want to break from a *depcha guthi*, they may propose to split the land which is common in nature or demand the money for their share of land. If any of the individuals or a family wishes to sever ties with their *depcha guthi*, they will lose their entire claim on the land along with kinship obligations and duties the members of other groups have towards them.

It will be important to mention here the *depcha pooja* or *dewali* celebration in detail as it not only expresses the ritual process, but also shows the whole clan has been organized into a group. The celebration of *dewali* is the only opportunity for anyone to observe all the clans in action on a single day. In the month of *silla* (*Nepal sambat*), on

⁴³ Ritual offering made to the dead ancestors (at least for the last three generations). It is expected that the *pinda* should be offered every year, but villagers generally offer *pinda* while they conduct the life cycle ritual in their house. The eldest living male member offers it.

the day of *dashami*⁴⁴, the *depcha guthi* celebrate *chhoyala bhu*. The heads of the households, who are considered as *muchhen* or main households (representative house of an extended family) of the clan, represent to worship their *kuldeeptha*, meet in the *pala* house. Every head of the household should by turns, take the responsibility of being *pala* for the *depcha guthi* to take care of the preparation of the feast on the day of *depcha pooja* and the subsequent feast associated with the *depcha pooja*. They discuss about the items to be served in the feast and how the ritual should be conducted. In addition, they announce that the family members within the *depcha guthi* should not eat garlic or chicken preparations. These dietary restrictions are followed for the next three days beginning from the day of *chhoyala bhu*.

Next day of the *chhoyala bhu* is called *ni silla*. On this day the people are expected to clean their houses and wash their vessels and start preparing *ta: kha:*, a jelly meat item prepared from meat of the buffalo. The preparation of the *ta: kha:* needs nearly 8-12 hours and this meat preparations are made in the winter season. The winter allows the meat to form as jelly and it can be prepared by adding chilli or without chilli, to be eaten the next day.

The third day from the *chhoyala bhu* is called *soynaya dulli* or *degu dyo pooja* or *kuldeeptha pooja*. *Degu dyo* is a clan goddess. Each clan has a separate goddess, and this goddess is represented by a group of stones that varies from a single stone to a group of 9 stones. While explaining the importance of worshipping the *degu dyo*, one of the informants opined that, 'Praying to *degu dyo* will give good health and good omen. *Degu dyo* is considered to be something that stays in the head, and when it descends to the feet, the people fall ill'. The informant was unable to tell whether the *degu dyo* is male or female. He continued, 'we brought the stone and started worshipping it; we Newars just need a reason to celebrate and organize the feast and that is why we have *degu dyo*⁴⁵. The informant also opined that during his adult age, the Thecho did not have these many *degu dyos*, but now they have sprouted everywhere like mushrooms. The people who had *degu*

⁴⁴ Tenth day of the month *silla*. See also second chapter.

⁴⁵ Said with laughter and pun intended.

dyos in Champi and other distant places have brought them to the *pingal*⁴⁶ and *dashi* (one of the places in the village).

Some individuals who do not like to go for *depcha* worship along with their other *depcha guthi* members, may also go alone and offer *pooja* and have a feast individually. However, the individual should still abide by the *depcha* rules such as following the death pollution, not marrying within the *depcha guthi*, going and helping the other *depcha* members in case of any feast organized in other *depcha* members. Also, have the obligation to invite his *depcha guthi* members for feast. Those who prefer to go in groups, will start a little late as a procession with a sacrificial animal to be offered to their *degu dyo*.

The families who had new bride or new born babies, will introduce them to the *depcha khala* and those families are expected to come up with a feast item and serve the *depcha* members in order to celebrate their addition of the new member⁴⁷ into the *depcha guthi*. The *pooja* (prayers) will be offered upon reaching *degu dyo*. The *wo* is a food item made of grains soaked and grinded and the batter is fried on the pan. These preparations are important for worshipping the *degu dyo*, along with piece of sugar cane, *to*:⁴⁸, *aila*⁴⁹, radish and duck egg (keeping chicken egg is a taboo) etc., The billy goat or duck⁵⁰ is sacrificed and the egg shell is broken slightly and kept in front of the *degu dyo* symbolically. The fire is offered by lighting a lamp and vermilion is applied to the *degudyo*. After these rituals, the family in charge of preparing the feast starts their work with the help of other members and meanwhile, the *samaybaji* is served to the members who were present for the worship. It is anticipated that all the members should be present and those who cannot make it to the worship will be imposed nominal amount as fine. The absentees are also allotted a plate while serving the feast, as the head of the

⁴⁶ Religious place which is considered as the dwelling place of the gods and goddess who keep the evil forces away. In other villages, the *pingal* is always situated near the *depa* (crematory ground), in Thecho, they are separated by the steep uphill within the distance of nearly half a kilometer.

⁴⁷In one case, the *depcha* members of a *Maharjan* Caste (upper caste) accepts a girl as their daughter-in-law from *Mali* Caste (Lower than *Maharjan*) which is not so common in practice.

⁴⁸ Rice beer, one of the alcohol beverages.

⁴⁹ Liquor distilled from the gains and malts. It is considered as a food item among the Newars.

⁵⁰But not the rooster, as eating chicken is prohibited during the *depcha*

household has to give the money for the absentee share also. Non- *depcha* members are strictly prohibited to participate in the feast. The *sika bhu* (a small ritual aspect conducted as part of the feast, where the topmost eight elders are given eight different parts of the billy goat's head in this ritual, to show respect and seek blessings from the eight topmost elders) was organized in order to show respect for the elders. In the evening, after the feast is concluded, the *depcha* members will go as a procession carrying the *pooja* items. Some *depcha guthis* will have musical instruments to play to lead the procession. Traditionally the *Kapali* caste groups are expected to come and play their caste musical instrument while the *Maharjan* caste group goes to worship their *degu dyo*. This practice has been stopped by the *Kapali* by an order from their caste *guthi*⁵¹.

The Fourth day from the *chhoyala bhu*, is called *kowla*. On this day, the heads of the households sit for a formal meeting and calculate the expenditure of the feasts organized on the day of *depcha* worship and also for the feasts organized by the *pala* whenever they meet to discuss and decide on organizing the rituals. Each head of the household should contribute for each and every member in his respective family as per the share from the total expenditure of the feast. Equal amount of food is offered even to newly born babies, and the same amount is received as a share while collecting the shares per person. The people who attend the *kowla* meeting will have a feast.

The next day after *kowla* is considered as *labha bhu*. On this day, the clan members will start eating garlic. Symbolically they tend to add more garlic than usual to break the week long dietary restriction of not eating chicken and garlic. From this day onwards, the members of the *depcha* can eat chicken and garlic without any restriction.

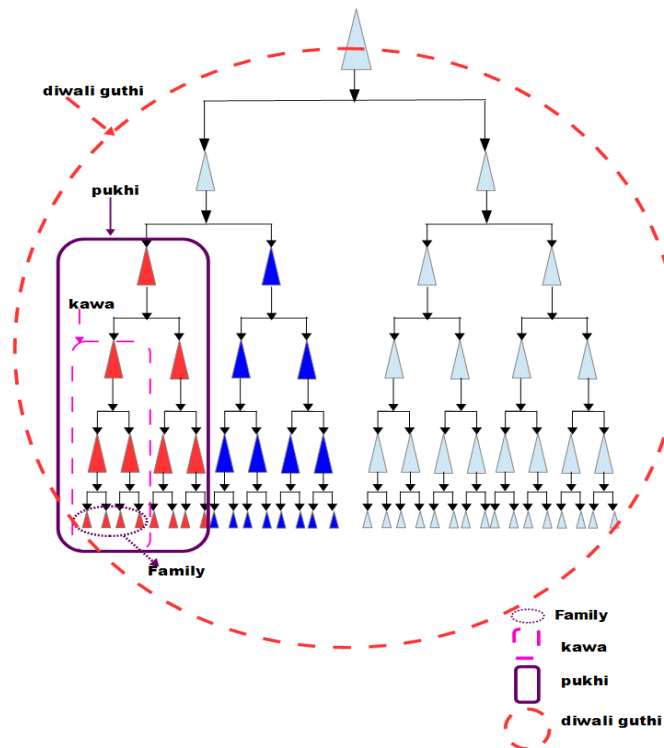
The *depcha guthi* is patrilineal, and this is a larger interactive group than the *jahans* and the neighbours. Each household has the obligation of calling their *depcha* members if they are organizing a feast. The *depcha* members will participate actively, in helping the household of the other *depcha guthi* members in organizing the feast on several occasions. In case any of the members is poor and he cannot organize the feast in

⁵¹See fifth chapter

a great way, the *thakali* (eldest members) of the *depcha guthi* will have the right to grant him permission to conduct the feast in a small way, but he should invite at least one person from the family within the *depcha guthi*. *Depcha* members will also have the obligation of observing the death pollution in case of any death in the households of their *depcha guthi*. In one of the cases, one family which has a big *depcha guthi* has not been celebrating *depcha* or any other major festival for the last eight years. The informant expressed her concern saying, ‘we are planning to propose to break away from the existing *depcha guthi*, as there are several families involved. If any member in the *depcha guthi* die we have the obligation to observe the death pollution which also includes not celebrating *depcha* or any other major festival, or conducting any life cycle rituals in a grand way, which we are feeling bad because of not worshipping the gods and goddess.’

Several families (*bhutu*), linked through common ancestor, come together to form a *kawo*, and several *kawos* come together to form lineages (*phukis*), and several *phukis* come together to form a clan (*depcha guthi/jahans*) (see figure 5).

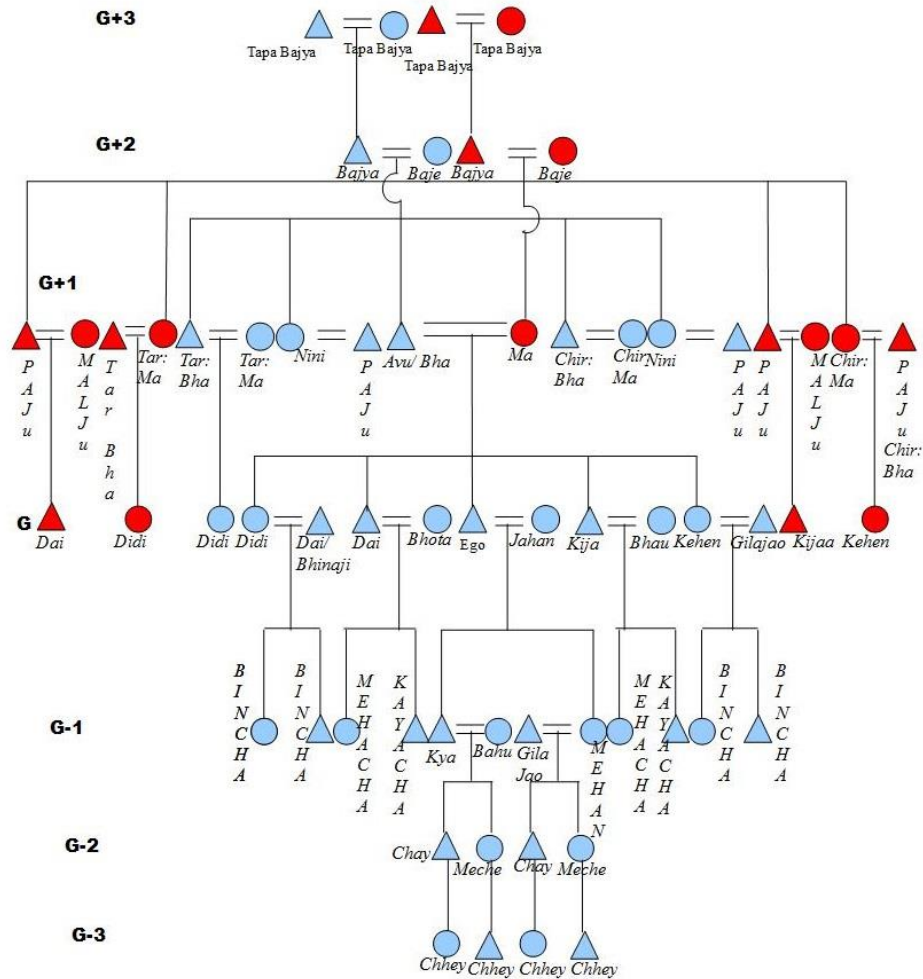
Figure 5: Lineage and Clan Organization among the Newars of Thecho Village



Marriage:

The question of whether the descent relation should be considered crucial or the affinal relation should also be considered as important in defining and organizing the kinship is a long lasting debate in the anthropological discourse. Newars perceive both the groups who are descent relations and affinal relations as kin members. Marriage alliances were formed among the Newars in order to extend their kin (social) network in addition to the existing descent kinship. Newars also perceive and have similar kinship terminologies to bridge the gap between kin relations of descent and the affinal. The kinship relations of the spouse are same as the spouse themselves. The term of address remains same for both the spouses. The term of reference changes slightly with adding of prefix '*sasa*' to the term of address. The newly married in daughter-in-law (or son-in-law) will call the mother of the groom as *ma*; while referring to others she will add *sasa-ma* differentiating mother from mother-in-law (see figure 6).

Figure 6: Kinship Terminology



Rules of Marriage:

As marriage is perceived to be a means of building larger kinship/social network among the Newars, it is important to understand the rules of marriage in order to understand the larger social organization of the Newar society. Newars have certain negative and positive marriage rules to be observed. Positive marriage rules or preferential marriage rules are such as, preferring to marry a person from the family that has a social reputation. A girl or a boy who is considered as hardworking and responsible is preferred as spouse for their daughter/son by the parents. Economically well off families are preferred over the poor families. The Social position of the head of the house of being a

guthiyar is also considered sometimes. His active participation in the *guthi*, his involvement in the religious processions, and his ability to organize the feast as per his financial situation permits, his nature of sharing or distributing the food occasionally as dictated by the custom, and his nature of fulfilling his obligations towards his kin members and so on, can be considered as aspects for marriage preference. These types of positive aspects can be overlooked, but the negative marriage rules should be followed seriously.

The marriage rules such as one should not marry out of their caste is observed by the villagers during the arranged marriages. Failing to follow this rule will attract the wrath of the *depcha guthi* members. Traditionally, the *guthi* (both *depcha guthi* and the other main *guthis* in the village) membership for the progeny of inter-caste marriage is denied especially if the marriage happens between a boy and a lower caste girl. However, the prevalent inter-caste marriages led to ease this rule, and now the *guthis* are not following this rule strictly. The people who belong to the same *depcha guthi* should not marry since they are considered as sibling relationship. This is followed very seriously among the Newars of Thecho. In fact, the only rule which is very seriously followed by them is the 'seven generation' rule. The marriage alliance should not be formed between the families who can trace their relationship to seven generations on both sides of the parents for both the couples. However, there were cases in Thecho, where the marriage has taken place between such couples where the relationship can only be traced back to four generations. On this, the elders of the *depcha guthi* showed their discontent, and did not agree to the marriage, but the youngsters eloped and came home after four days. That left the parents with no choice but to accept them as husband and wife of the family. However, this caused conflicts within the *depcha guthi* and the *depcha guthi* had to break, since overruling the traditions of *depcha guthi* cannot be tolerated, lest they draw attention of wrath from their *kuldeeptha*. All the people who go together to worship the *kuldeeptha* are considered as brothers and sisters. Hence, they cannot enter into the marriage alliance. One of the informants, who came to the village for vacations after working in South India, showed his surprise while sharing his observation of South Indians marrying their cross cousins. In addition, he added that if the elders in their

society find out that two people from the same *depcha guthi* love each other and wish to marry, they would be beaten up by tying them to the pole in the *lachi*⁵². However, no such incidents were either reported or observed during the field study. Tying them to the pole and beating up is a matter of expression here, but it has been informed that, once a person who attempted to steal the idol in the Balkumari temple was caught and tied to the pole in *lachi* and was beaten before handing him over to the police. The informant conveyed through facial expression the seriousness of the wrath one will draw from the elders in the society, by breaking such marriage rules.

The persons having body deformities are not preferred as potential spouses. The persons with family history of mental illness and other diseases such as leprosy are not preferred for marriage. In addition, the family members who are considered as short tempered and tend to fight with the people in society are not preferred as potential marriage partners. It is generally preferred that the girl should be 2-3 years younger to the boy, but in most of the cases husband and wife may be of same age or in some cases (including arranged marriages) the husband is younger to his wife (see table 21).

Table 21: Number of Younger Men Married Elder Women in the Study Area

Caste Group	Number of Men Married elder women
<i>Gopali</i>	-
<i>Maharjan</i>	24
<i>Mali</i>	10
<i>Napit</i>	-
<i>Shahi</i>	01
<i>Kapali</i>	-

The order of marriage among the siblings is also not strictly followed. If the younger sibling wants to get married, they can go ahead, and it does not have any consequential effect on the marriage of the elder siblings in the later stages (see table 22).

⁵² Temple complex is referred as *lachi*.

Table 22: Number of Younger Siblings got married before their Elder Siblings

Caste Group	Number of male married before the elder male siblings	Number of females married before the elder female siblings
<i>Gopali</i>	-	-
<i>Maharjan</i>	09	03
<i>Mali</i>	02	01
<i>Napit</i>	01	-
<i>Shahi</i>	-	-
<i>Kapali</i>	-	-

The groom's parents generally prefer a girl who is physical fit; they will disapprove a marriage alliance with the girl who has body deformities; they expect the girl to behave well, be obedient, and respect the elders, and feel responsible for the family. In the ancient days, the groom's parents were more careful in selecting a girl without *kori*; the people who are affected with the *kori* are called *kori pin* (*pin* generally indicates the plural form), *kori* may be deformity of any fingers or hands due to leprosy.

Initiation of Marriage Procedures:

Traditionally it is the parents that arrange the marriage. The bride and groom are not expected to see each other before the wedding. One of the informant recalled, 'In our generation, we never went to see the bride; in my own case, my wife came to my house and I saw her only after two days. I was shy to go and meet her. But nowadays, the boys do not marry without seeing the bride'. In recent days, the boy and the girl are allowed to meet and understand each other before the marriage. Regular meetings between the boy and girl are very common and after such meetings, if the boy and girl think that they do not want to go ahead with the marriage, they are free to do so.

In the earlier days, girls used to get married at a very young age. The practice of child marriage was prevalent some 30-40 years ago. Now the average age of marriage is 25 for both men and women. In case the groom's family has any girl in mind, they select a relative or a friend to act as a *lami*. This *lami* will act as a go-between the two families. Generally, it is expected that the groom's side should propose the marriage through the

lami, to the bride's side *lami*. A man or woman can be a *lami*, but the persons who are acting as *lami* are expected to have the persuasive ability. If the *lami* finds out that the girl's family is also interested to get into the marriage alliance then the *lami* asks both families to give their *jaata* (horoscope) to the other family, for showing it to the astrologer for the match of both the persons. If the *jaata* are not matching and the *joshi* (one of the caste groups among the Newars, whose traditional occupation is astrology) advises not to go ahead with the marriage, the talks between families cease and attempts to arrange the marriage are stopped. If experts say that both *jaatas* are matching, then the bride's side will ask their *lami* to inform the groom's side to further come and offer *lakha* (a ritual marriage gift or a traditional agreement between groom's side and bride's side agreeing to the marriage) to the bride. This process of taking *lakha* in a procession is called *lakha bhwaye* (giving the *lakha*). It can be given from a week to six months in advance of the marriage. For the *lakha bhwaye*, the groom's mother, along with other relatives such as groom's sisters and sister-in-law, father and sisters and other very close relatives (excluding groom), will go to the bride's home with ritual items such as, *jaki* (meaning rice) (*chhamana*, meaning one *mana*), *La*: (*chapa*, *putulan*);, *dhan swan* (a flower which is considered as important for the marriage ritual), betel nuts (*gwaye*) and *sindhur*. The mother-in-law, will apply *sindhur* and give her *dahu sagan*, and present her with the *dhan swan*⁵³ to be kept in the bride's hair, and she is gifted with clothes for the marriage ritual. On accepting this *lakha*, the bride is considered as wife of the person formally. She is not allowed to go to the *kuldeeptha* worship of her father's *depcha Guthi*, if the marriage is fixed after the *depcha*. On the day of *lakha bhwaye* the bride's family generally arranges the feast, but in olden days it was not mandatory for the bride's family to arrange a feast for their relatives. After giving the *lakha*, both parties will agree on the date of marriage, and they will start preliminary preparations for feast (if they are planning to arrange the feast). On the day agreed as the marriage date, the bride's family will conduct the feast (which is not again mandatory). From the groom's side, the groom's father, mother, *paju* (MB), *malju* (MBW), elder sister of the groom, and the *lami*

⁵³ A special flower, which is one of the main things to perform the marriage ritual, and should be brought by the groom.

of the two sides will go to bring the girl from her home. In traditional Newari marriage, presence of the groom is not necessary. Sometimes it is believed that if the groom is unable to reach the village on the agreed marriage date for any reason, the parents and relatives of the groom will go ahead with the marriage ritual and bring the bride to the groom's home. However, some informants have rejected such type of practices saying the marriage would not take place in the absence of the groom. The relatives of the groom take *sindhur* (vermilion), *dhan swan*, clothes, *pooja* plate, *dhau*, *jaki*, and other ritual items needed for marriage. The *paju* of the boy is expected to give *pajuku*, which is not practiced these days; the *pajuku* will generally include *ta: kha:* (mandatorily), *baji*, *aila*, *to:* and other essential items for the feast, 4-5 varieties of meat of the buffalo, and three varieties of raw pumpkin.

Traditionally there are three kinds of marriages in the Newari culture. In case the boy and girl elope, or when the youngsters propose that they want to get married to the person they love, and if the families agree to the marriage, there would not be any feast. Such kind of a marriage is called *khan chyaka* where only the girl will be brought to the groom's house and there would not be any kind of feast. Alternatively, if they elope, the parents do not have any obligation to arrange a feast. This type of marriage by elopement is considered as *pena wanegu* (returning after four days). If a small feast is organized on both the sides for the marriage, it is called *ni paku*. In this type of marriage, the groom's side will go to bring the bride when it is nearing sunset, and bring the girl in the night. This process of bringing the girl in the night is considered to be a simple way of traditional marriage which is generally referred as *ni paku*. The grand way of celebrating the marriage should contain the five types of *bhaja* (musical instruments) which is referred as *panche bhaja* such as *mal*, *who*, *khol malcha* or *jali*, drum-like traditional instrument, and *dama*. *Jugi/kapali* has to come to play the music. Both bride and groom organize a big feast. Such type of marriage is called *nya paku*. The *ni* indicates two *pathis* of *baji* which is a smaller feast compared with the *nya*, where there are five *pathis* of *baji*. In the *nya paku* type of marriage, the girl will be carried to the groom's house by the

Shahi caste group in a *doli*⁵⁴. When the bride's family arrives, the groom's mother applies *sindhur* on her and presents her with the *dhau sagan* and gifts, and the *pajuku*⁵⁵ will give gifts to the bride and present her with the *dhau sagan*.

Swayambar form of Marriage:

Newars practice a new form of marriage these days, known as *swayambar*. This form of marriage is considered as a product of acculturation process. One of the informants said that, the younger generations are placing high value on the marriages performed through *swayambar* and going as a procession to bring the girl to the groom's house and as a result, the traditional way of conducting a marriage is becoming very rare. It is believed that this form of marriage has been practiced only in recent times and it has become a symbol of high economic and social status to celebrate this kind of ritual with the help of a priest. The ritual process is as follows. The groom has to go to the bride's house along with other family members. However, parents avoid going for the *swayambar*. Before the groom starts from his house, his eldest sister will go to the nearest temple and offer prayers to the goddess, which their family has been associated with, and on her return from the temple, she will apply *sindhur* to the groom as an offering from the goddess to wish him good luck. By the time, the groom is ready to start, the friends of the groom and his brother, brother's wife, sisters and brother's friends will also join the groom to go to the bride's family to celebrate *swayambar*. Bronze pots decorated with flowers are placed at the door, which is considered as a symbol of auspiciousness. It is also believed that 'person carrying water pot' is a good omen before starting to any work.

The bride's house is the place where the marriage and associated rituals take place. The groom with limited number of relatives will come for attending this marriage ritual. The bride's family can decide where they are going to celebrate this marriage. It can be either at the bride's home or at any temple. So, the groom will be informed of the

⁵⁴Generally, the *Jyapus* will be the *doli* carriers in the marriage for the upper caste people. When it comes to the marriage of the *Jyapus* the *shahi* caste group is hired to do the job traditionally, but now a days they do not practice this.

⁵⁵This practice of *pajuku* is not followed these days.

place and time, and the groom, along with his brothers or his sisters, arrives at the place of marriage. The groom and other relatives come with the necessary ritual items, which they are supposed to bring for the marriage. The mother of the bride comes and offers *sindhur* for the groom and the father of the bride holds the groom's hand and takes him upstairs. The groom and his relatives are given snacks and refreshments if the marriage ritual preparations are not over, or if they had arrived before the appointed time.

The bride's family has to arrange the necessary items such as traditional mirror called *jala nhekan*, and *stupa* type of traditional item called *sinha moo*, which is supposed to represent the female and male respectively, and *sukunda* (a traditional oil lamp). The *gubhaju* (Buddhist priest) brings conch shell and *kataura*, which is made of silver. The traditional bronze water pot and a big water pot kept on the stand are also considered as important ritual items to be present during the marriage ceremony. The place where they celebrate this ritual should be plastered with cow dung and red soil for purification. Once the arrangement is finished, the *gubhaju* who has been hired by the bride's family for helping them in conducting the marriage rituals will call both bride and the groom to sit in their position facing west, and the priest guides them to worship the white flour conical shape called *goja*, which represents *chibha* or Ganesh. Both the bride and the groom worship it by offering the piece of thread, which symbolises cloth, and also offer fire, and water. On finishing this worship, the bride's mother offers them black and white mustard and other grains in order to remove the evil eye and shows them the lamp and puts it back in the *salicha*, which is used to keep the mustard. The *salicha* is further taken out of the house and then thrown away.

The *gubhaju* draws a swastik symbol on a plastered round surface for the next stage of the ritual. The grass garlands (which are a modern phenomenon), should be brought by the groom, and the bride's mother hands it over to the bride and the groom to exchange by standing facing opposite directions (girl facing east and boy facing west). The bride's mother helps to tie the groom's garland and groom's sister helps to tie the bride's garland. The people who are standing during the marriage ceremony clap their hands and cheer to celebrate. After exchanging the garlands, the groom presents the bride

with a gold chain, which he ties around her neck. In return, the bride gifts him a ring that she puts on his ring finger, and presents a wristwatch to the groom. Nevertheless, it is not mandatory to gift such gold items. After this exchange of ornaments, the *gubhaju* asks the married couple to sit and the bride's parents come with a plate to keep the traditional mirror. It is believed that the traditional mirror bears witness for the marriage. Parents of the bride hold the plate to pour water and milk on the hands of the bride and groom by the *gubhaju*. The couple are expected to hold some money in their hand, which is given to the *gubhaju* by both the bride and groom, and seek blessings. In return, *gubhaju* gives them betel nuts along with his blessings. The bride on receiving the betel nut touches the feet of the groom in order to seek his blessings. After that, the bride's father offers *sindhur* and flowers to the newly married couple. The *gubhaju* offers the *kokha* and applies *sindhur* for the married couple. In return, the couple gives him some money.

The red cloth which is brought by the groom's relatives has to be held by attaching the cloth to the forehead of the bride. While the bride's *nini* (FeZ) holds the end of the red cloth to the bride's forehead, the groom's sister holds the other end. The groom starts smearing the *sindhur* from the end where his sister is holding the cloth, in a row, until he reaches the forehead of the bride, and he applies the *sindhur* on her forehead and extends till the middle of her head. This process is repeated three times. Later, the cloth, along with the *sindhur* is folded and kept safely by the groom's relatives. With this, the marriage ceremony comes to an end. The bride and groom will take photographs with their relatives.

The groom leaves the bride's house after the marriage ritual without taking the bride, and the bride's family organizes the feast for their relatives. However, organizing the feast in the olden days was not mandatory for the bride's family. Though the villagers say that it is not obligatory on the part of the bride's family, it is expected of them from the society. During the feast, the bride is made to sit at an elevated dais for the relatives and friends to come and gift her money and household items, which will be useful for her in her new home. In return, the *lami* who is sitting next to her helps her to give the betel nuts to the relatives and friends who have come to give the gifts. The relatives and friends

participate in the feast organized by the bride's family. The friends of the bride's brother actively help the family to organize the feast. The bride's friends generally come in uniform colour attire, symbolically indicating that they are group of friends of the bride; they sit next to her and spend some time with her.

The boy returns with his parents in the evening, as the mother of the groom should be there to give *sagan* and take the bride home. On the arrival of the groom, he is introduced formally to the bride's family. In the earlier days, this procedure was carried out on the second day of the marriage. The groom is introduced to the bride's family, as the groom's presence is not required in the traditional way of the marriage rituals. Though the groom was there from the beginning, again this formal introduction⁵⁶ is done. The relatives and the family of the bride gift him money and things and, in return, he gives them betel nuts given to him by the groom's side *lami*, who was sitting right next to the groom. This process of giving gifts is called *lithu nhethu chaykegu*.

The relatives of the bride give gifts for her marriage. The gift items comprise electric items (in the recent days), utensils, which she can use in her new home, and also money. In return, the *lami* from the bride's side asks her to give 4 betel nuts in exchange. When the groom's parents inform that it is time to make a move, the bride starts crying, as she is departing formally from her family, and moving out to the other family. She is expected to cry. The groom's eldest sister sits next to the bride while she is weeping and consoles her. All the bride's family members, including the bride's mother, sisters-in-law, and sisters of the bride weep aloud, as they are parting with the bride. The elder brother has to carry her on his back, which is a ritual known as *liku chhoya heu* till the *pekha lachi* of the bride's house⁵⁷. The elder brother circumambulates the car⁵⁸, which has been brought by the groom's family to take the bride. Once she is brought down to

⁵⁶ It has been observed that fewer number of people attended the marriage ritual process, and greater number of people attending the feast. At this time, the bride and groom are introduced rather than at the time of the ritual process.

⁵⁷In one of the marriages, the brother carried her to the Balkumari *lachi*, made a circle there in the gesture of seeking blessings from the goddess, and again brought her back to the car in which the groom had come to take the bride home.

⁵⁸This is a recent phenomenon to take the bride in a car; if one does not have one, they will at least borrow or hire a car, and the status of the groom's family is interlinked with this practice in the modern days.

pekha lachi, the relatives, and family members bid farewell to her. All the while, she weeps in sorrow. If the house of the groom is located near the bride's house, within the same village, the elder sister of the groom is expected to carry the bride on her back (*liku chhoya heu*) till the *pekha lachi* of the groom's house. The bride's family sends her *kosa*, the lavish furniture, cupboards, and other household items, on the same day in a truck. Generally, the whole wedding happens over a period of three days but now it has been reduced to one day. The groom coming for the marriage ritual, and going back to his house to come in the evening to take the bride, and the bride's family giving her the *kosa* happen on the same day. In another case, the groom who happened to marry a girl from another town had to go very far from home. Hence, he could not go back and forth on the same day to pick her up. He attended the *swayambar*, stayed in the reception hall, where he was served all snacks and his friends were served liquor. The bride was given all the gifts and money from her relatives and friends, and she was further dropped till the vehicle by her elder brother. He circumambulated the vehicle three times before making her sit inside it, and the groom's sister (though he had his own sister, the FeBD was given the chance to sit) sat next to the girl. The car was driven for a short distance away to return to the party palace and this symbolised the girl leaving for the groom's house and returning the next day. The groom was made to sit on the dais and all the relatives of the bride gave him money and blessings, and in return, he gave them betel nut. The groom organized the feast on the next day in his house where the girl was made to sit, to be introduced to the groom's relatives, but the tradition of going to the bride's home by the groom for the formal introduction was not followed as it was done on the same day. One of the informants opined that people are now getting busy and it is a major reason for families trying to organize the marriage as short as they can.

After reaching the house, the mother-in-law does *chokabajin piya kaygu* (taking out the evil eye laid upon by others, by using broken beaten rice), and she guides the bride inside the house by asking her to hold the traditional iron key⁵⁹. The bride comes to the groom's house only with one female companion, who might be one of her friends, or

⁵⁹Might be the process of removing the evil eye on her; it is generally believed that the spirits cannot bear to touch the iron.

younger sister, or anyone she chooses. She is referred as *samalcha*. The grooms are expected to organize the feast in a big way on the next day of the *swayambar*. The bride is also introduced to the groom's side of the relatives, as they were not able to attend the *swayambar*. The *samalcha* who has accompanied the bride is given gifts and food by the groom's family and the *samalcha* leaves the bride in the groom's house and returns home the next day.

If the bride's family did not send any *kosa* on the same day of *swayambar*, they will bring *kosa* on the third day after the marriage. The gifts given by other relatives are also included in the *kosa*. The list of items brought to the groom's house is noted down on a piece of paper and the list is kept with both the *lamis*. In case the marriage contract has to break, the groom's family will have to return the items gifted by the bride's family. The bride's family is offered food by the groom's family.

On the fourth day, the groom's mother, along with other relatives are expected to go and drop the girl in her natal house. This process is called *penhu/(penhi) chhoyeu*. After four days of her stay in her natal house, the mother of the groom has to go to the bride's house and bring her back. This process is called *bhamcha satawanegu*. This practice might have originated to give some time and scope for the bride to stay in the groom's house for four days and judge her future home, and another four days in her natal house, to contemplate and take the decision whether to continue the marriage or not. However, the informants opined that the girl does not have a choice but to come when the mother-in-law goes to invite her to their family. Nonetheless, there was a case in the village, around 25 years ago when the parents arranged a marriage, and the boy and the girl had never met before the marriage. After the marriage, the boy did not like the girl, and forced his parents not to go to bring her after her four days stay in her natal house. One of the observed practices is that if she is not invited, she has to continue to stay at her natal house and not return on her own. It is assumed the marriage is at end.

Marriage by Mutual Consent of the Youngsters and Elopement:

Apart from the type of marriage which is arranged by the parents and the feast organized for their relatives, there are other types of marriages. The marriages by mutual consent of the youngsters, and elopement, also exist among the Newars of Thecho. The mutual consent of the youngsters which is referred as love marriage is prevalent among the Newars in the Thecho village. Elopement is just a symbolic way of contending the elder's decision against their marriage. Elopement is practiced in the cases where the elders oppose the marriage of the youngsters. If youngsters propose to marry a person whose family reputation is considered as not acceptable, or to a person from a lower caste, at times, parents of the groom suggest eloping with the girl so that they can skip arranging the feast. This situation may be of two types: first, if the parents agree to the marriage even though it is an inter-caste marriage, second, if they do not have enough financial resources to arrange for the feast. The elopement form of marriage has certain aspects of the traditional way of marriage. The eloped couple is expected to stay hidden in isolation without being found by both the parties' parents for four days. If they happen to be found in four days, the parents can break their relationship. After four days of hiding in isolation, the couple will be considered as husband and wife, and the parents then will not have a choice other than to accept them. This type of marriage is considered as *pena wanegu*, which means coming back after four days. The same practice was mentioned above in the traditional or arranged marriage where the girl is allowed to stay with her natal family, and then only the marriage is considered as complete. Elopements happen in the Thecho village for the following reasons: In one of the cases where a boy loved a girl from the neighbouring village she happened to be his very distant relative. According to the seven-generation marriage rule the girl's parents, especially the girl's mother objected to the marriage, but the boy's parents were okay with the marriage. Therefore, the boy informed his parents that he was going to elope with the girl whom he loved and he went to his *paju* (MB) house in another village and came back in one day. Though it is just one day against the rule of four days, the boy's parents arranged a formal marriage and the girl's parents did not have a choice but to accept.

Elopement is indeed socially not accepted, but is tolerated. During fieldwork, one of the girls in the neighbourhood had eloped. Her parents did not come out for two days. The parents are afraid of facing their neighbours and relatives because the society slanders about the issue (see table 23, 24, and 25).

In another case, a boy who had lost both his parents and his family was considered as not social by the villagers; fell in love with a girl from the same caste within the village. She informed her parents that she wished to marry him. The girl's parents objected stating his family did not have a good reputation in the village. She happened to be their only daughter, and hence they started searching for another alliance for the girl. But when their attempts to search a groom for their daughter became rigorous the girl insisted on marrying the boy whom she loved, and then the parents had no choice but to agree and they both were married. But during the 'father's day'⁶⁰ where the newly married ones⁶¹ have the obligation of going to their natal home and worship the father and offer a feast brought from her in-laws' house, and it is considered to be a symbolic way of understanding how well the daughter-in-law's family is doing economically. The affinal family provided a number of items for the feast. During that father's day where the boy accompanied his wife to carry the items to her natal home, he refused to go inside his in-law's house and when the reason was enquired, he mentioned that they do not like him and they slander about his character and his family with others in his absence, as the parents of the girl has been forced by their daughter to agree to the marriage. As an obligation, to provide the feast items, he accompanied her to her natal house and did not wish to go in, but insisted his elder sister to spend some time with his wife and he left immediately.

⁶⁰ One of the festivals celebrated to feed and show respect to the fathers in the Newari community, especially by the married out daughters and newly married out daughters, who celebrate their first father's day with grandeur. See also second chapter.

⁶¹ Not only the newly married ones, but also the married daughters come with feast items to worship their father and give him gifts and have feast with her family; however, the feast or the celebrations will not be as grand as that of the newly married out daughters.

Table 23: Marital Status of the Newars in the Study Area

Marital status	<i>Gopali</i>	<i>Maharjan</i>	<i>Mali</i>	<i>Napit</i>	<i>Shahi</i>	<i>Kapali</i>	Total
Number of Married Couples	4X2 = 8+1 9	808X2= 1616+4 1620	150X2= 300+1 301	7X2= 14	22X2 = 44	10X2= 20	2008
Number of Men Divorced/separated		10	2				12
Number of women divorced/separated		2	3			1	6
Number of Men Widowed		46	10			4	60
Number of Women Widowed	2	112	35	1	4	4	158
Bachelor Male including Infants	4	616	110	4	18	9	761
Bachelor Female including Infants	4	554	111	8	11	4	692
Male who are not married after 32 years		5	6				11
Female who are not married after 30 years	1	18	8				27
Total	20	2983	586	27	77	42	3735

Table 24: Forms of Marriage among the Newars in the Study Area

Type of Marriage	<i>Gopali</i>	<i>Maharjan</i>	<i>Mali</i>	<i>Napit</i>	<i>Shahi</i>	<i>Kapali</i>	Total
Love marriage* among the married couples	1	342	82	4	2	5	436
Arranged Marriage among the married couples	3	463	69	3	20	5	563
Love Marriage among the divorced or separated unions		30	11		1	2	44
Arranged marriage among the divorced and separated unions	30	11		1	2	30	74
							1117

*love marriage also includes elopement and love affair turned to arranged marriages.

Table 25: Marriage with the Youngster's Consent

Age	Marital Status	<i>Gopali</i>	<i>Maharjan</i>	<i>Mali</i>	<i>Napit</i>	<i>Shahi</i>	<i>Kapali</i>	Total
20-30 years	MC*		76	23	01	01	01	102
	W/D/S C [#]			03				03
30-40 years	MC	01	134	34		01	03	173
	W/D/S C							0
40-50 years	MC		71	11	01			83
	W/D/S C		04	03			02	09
50-60	MC		29	08	01		01	39

years	W/D/S C		04	01				05
60-70 years	MC		20	04	01			25
	W/D/S C		12	04				16
70-80 years	MC		11	02				13
	W/D/S C		01	03		01		05
80-90 years	MC		02					02
	W/D/S C		03					03
Above 90 years	MC							0
	W/D/S C		01	01				02
Total		01	368	97	04	03	07	480

*MC= Married Couple

#W/D/S C= Widowed/Divorced/Separated Couple

Bridal Gift or Kosa:

The male progeny inherit the property such as land and house. Therefore, the families, during the marriage, give the girls some gifts in order to help her to maintain and manage her household after she is married. A male informant who got married 48 years ago opined that, ‘the families cry if a girl is born, and they will smile if there is a boy’. The gifts to be given to the girl during the marriage are considered as burdensome for the family. Now-a-days, the society expects that the girls should be given *kosa* of electric items, costly cupboards, furniture etc. The items brought by the informant’s wife are as follows: cooking pots, plates to eat, *tañ pa* (to store water or *aila*), *sañra*⁶² (cupboard to keep clothes), two goats, and one sheep. The informant also added that, the *kosa*, which was given by the parents to the girl used to be of low quality, but now a days, the items given are of good quality and the parents’ economic status and the girl’s social respect in the society and in-law’s house is reflected in the number of goods and quality of the goods they give to the girl as the bridal gift. In the olden days the parents gave sheep, goats, water buffalos, or land to the girl as *kosa*. However, it was impossible to bring the cattle at the wedding venue, and hence, a practice of displaying symbolic items evolved. These items were the *sakipa* rope, symbolising a goat, the *suku* rope symbolising sheep, a

⁶²The informant, to imply that the *sandhas* or cupboard was thin, said if you just hit it with your bare hands, it would break.

nala rope (agave plant⁶³) symbolising the buffalo, and a fist full of mud indicating land. The informant also opined that now-a-days no one gives livestock or land to his or her daughter as a bridal gift. Those days they gave livestock because, the parents were worried how her affinal house would be, and they would provide the livestock to feed her or to save her in the time of economic or food crisis. The girls would take the livestock along with them to the fields for grazing. The informant also added that, nowadays the marriage means decorating themselves with make up by going to the beauty parlour.

Another female informant who got married about thirty years ago narrated about her bridal gift. She said a small feast was organized during her marriage. Her parents had given only 5-6 plates, one *bhatti* (basin which they generally use for washing clothes or to carry grains), rice cooking pots, *dava cha*, *panu cha*, and *sairra* (cupboard) as *kosa*. She opines that *pajuku* was given in those days without fail, but nowadays it is not mandatory. In the earlier times, the people were greedy and they did not give much. Some people even gave used vessels as *kosa*. Those days there used to be no work and no means of earning money. Whatever people would earn would not suffice for eating. However, the people were compelled to give the *kosa* and hence, gave whatever they had.

Another female informant who got married about twenty years ago narrated about her wedding and the bridal gifts given to her. The informant's bridal gifts from her natal house included *panucha* (the one used to serve or stir the rice), *dava cha* (The spoon used to serve the dal or liquid items), *charhes bhu* (plates), *karuwa* (Bronze water drinking pot), *fashi* (pot used to make *aila*) and *daraj* (a cupboard to keep her clothes). The above mentioned items were given by the bride's family. Two goats were given by *paju khala*⁶⁴ and two goats were given by her father's friends. Before her marriage, she would work in the carpet factory and her colleagues gifted her *Kata khola* (the bronze vessel specially used for carrying *pooja* items while worshipping the god) and nearly two thousand rupees pooled in by all the relatives. Generally, the money given as a gift was around 5-20 rupees.

⁶³ A plant species considered to have a lifespan of hundred years.

⁶⁴ Group of people who are maternal uncles or the friends of maternal uncles are considered as *paju khala*.

In the recent days, the bridal gifts given for the brides during the marriage include lavish items and modern electric items, television, refrigerator, sofa, cupboards and so on, based on the economic status of the bride's family. The informants also opined that the grooms are expected not to demand any bridal gift. It is a voluntary action on the part of the bride's parents for the happiness of their daughter in her in-laws house. The society's expectations about how a family should give the bridal gift is a determinant factor for giving the bridal gifts lavishly and putting up a display either while organizing the feast or while sending the *kosa* to the groom's house (see plate 2).

The marriage alliance cements a family or a kin network. It extends their social network and opens up to another kin network forming a larger group than the family, lineage, and clan. The marriage not only serves to form a new family and maintain the continuation of social units of the society, but also gives many opportunities for each other in the society. Where they can inter-depend either for earning their livelihood opportunities or for making sure that they have their 'own' set of people who will be obliged to exchange the gifts, other responsibilities and vice versa.

Family as a small and residential group provides chance for the individuals to interact more than any other group within the social organization. However, these interactions and responsibilities are not followed by the members seriously, may be because it is a close knitted group where the members interaction favour them not to follow rules which are specified by the society and culture. Family also acts as a group, which allows people to exchange directly. This interaction and exchange are not formal in nature; people in this group often overstep their duties, and it is not taken that seriously as the violation of norms. The lineage and clan groups are extension of the family group who are related by blood. Here the interactions tend to become formal, and the exchange becomes obligatory and in some cases mandatory. Unlike the family, here the members of the groups are expected to abide by the norms; failing to do so, will draw wrath of the other members of the group. Marriage alliances are formed to favour the exchange between two large groups. The more the number of people in the active group, the more they can depend on one another for their survival. Exercising power over the other can be

observed between the different genders, different set of age groups and it is done mainly to ascertain the social position and to establish the norms more firmly.

CHAPTER IV

RITUAL, EXCHANGE, AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SIBLING BOND

The earlier chapter has dealt with understanding of how family, clan, and marriage rituals take place, and marriage serves as a bonding factor to elaborate and extend their kinship relations to a wider range of kin network along with the descent relationship. This chapter tries to understand and analyse how the life cycle rituals takes place among the Newars, where every kin (sometimes non-kin members) is vested with responsibilities and everyone is expected to oblige. As the four important variables (ritual, feast, sister (kinship), and gift exchange) are closely interlinked and intertwined, it will not do good to see them in isolation, if one has to understand the social organization of Newars in total. Hence, this chapter tries to analyse the life cycle rituals and the kinship obligations vested on different kind of kin members (in particular to the life cycle ritual, and also in general over the lives of each other) followed by organizing feast for the life cycle ritual and how this same occasion marks the exchange of gifts among relatives and friends. Though the life cycle rituals act as '*rites de passage*' in every individual's life time, it is also a symbolic elevation of one's status through the initiation ceremonies organized in the particular age of an individual. The kin members have an obligation to help each other through out their lifetime. However, it is explicit in nature how the kin members were dictated to do certain things as part of ritual, making them and their roles significant when compared to other kin members. Each individual is believed to have certain kin members such as mother's brother (MB) and father's sister (FZ) in the extended kinship, to take care of them, to help them in the time of distress, and to share what they have with the other individual. The process of gift exchange in these life cycle rituals is another intriguing phenomenon, with specific prescriptions of which relative, should give what kind of gift, and with the varying degree of kinship relationship; the distribution of the gifts varies. The feast organized for the life cycle ritual itself is an act of reciprocity towards relatives and friends. As each family has the obligation to invite their kin members and relatives for the feast, they will also be invited when the other kin members

and friends are organizing feast. The feast is not a mere activity where a family feeds the invited relatives and friends, but it also serves as a yardstick to measure the social and economic status of the family which is organizing it. Newars see those who organize the feast in a grand way with high esteem even though he is not in a position to organize with such grandeur. Organizing feast can also act as a medium of social interaction for all the members who involve themselves in organizing the feast.

Among all relatives, the mother's brother (MB) and Father's sister (FZ) plays a key role in almost all the life cycle rituals of an individual. One may also say that, the Father's sister has more responsibilities in her brother's children's life cycle ritual than the Mother's brother. However, each natal house has a special obligation to incorporate and invite their married daughters for each feast they are organizing. It is very evident that though the daughter of the house goes on to live in other house after her marriage, she never really stops being a member of her natal family. Women have a term called *thachhen* to refer to their natal house whereas there is no special term to refer to their husband's house. The married daughters not only play a key role in the life cycle rituals but both the married daughters and the natal house has a quite a few obligations to fulfil even in day-to-day activities such as, construction of house, rice transplanting or harvesting the crop and so on.

Life Cycle Rituals and the Kinship Obligations among the Newars:

The kinship obligations towards other kin members are explicitly observable during the life cycle rituals conducted in one's own lifetime. Though life cycle rituals are not the only parameters to measure kinship obligations but they act as one of the important sources to observe and analyse kinship obligations at the time of ritual and also the implicit meaning of how particular relative is responsible for the individual who is conducting the life cycle ritual throughout his/her life. The following section tries to give a detail description of each life cycle rituals that Newars celebrate.

The Newars have a series of life cycle rituals from the birth to death of any individual. The life cycle rituals are celebrated either in simple way or in a grand way.

The nature of celebration is determined by number of people been invited for the feast which follows the ritual process. The choice is always open for the individual to decide how the life cycle rituals should be celebrated. However, the choice is highly determined by the expectations of the relatives and society. Certain life cycle rituals should be celebrated by parents for the progeny such as from birth to marriage and the progeny has to pay back in the form of celebrating certain life cycle rituals for their parents in post marriage life cycle rituals, later are celebrated by the youngsters for their elders including the death and the rituals followed by the death.

Pre-Birth Celebrations and Postpartum Rituals:

A pregnant girl usually does not show any interest having food⁶⁵ and she shows signs of weakness, and the family members realise that she has conceived. One of the informants opined that the economic conditions or the availability of food in old days did not give them any special diet during pregnancy. The diet of pregnant women is very normal along with the other family members. The old informant had recalled how her natal house gave her just a piece of *chaku* (sweet made up of sugar cane) when they came to know that she has conceived. Before one or one and half month of the expected delivery, that is from the sixth-eighth month of a woman's pregnancy, the members from her natal house (generally mother) go to her house to feed her the *baji* with curd. This process is called *dhaubaji naka wanegu*. However, this practice is not followed in Thecho. The girls who have come from outside Thecho will only celebrate the *dhaubaji naka wanegu*.

The parturition should take place in the husband's house, since it is strictly prohibited for women to deliver in her natal house⁶⁶. The parturition can happen anywhere in the house. If it is easy parturition, it can also happen in *betha kotha*; if the girl is suffering from pains for three or more days she will be brought out of the *betha*

⁶⁵ Informant has recalled that though the food, which used to be available, was not tasty and healthy, that food also the pregnant girls will not show interest.

⁶⁶ In one of the case, one person has asked her wife to go to her brother's house as the facility in their house is not appropriate and he felt that she needs more rest than usual, as her body conditions were not good. She asked her to stay in her brother's house, although it is also technically her natal house, but her parents are living separately not with her brother so he thought it is not coming in clash with the norm.

*kotha*⁶⁷. Once the child is born, the girl's parents come to know the news from neighbours but not through her husband's house. After the parturition, the whole house is plastered with cow dung in order to purify the house. Until four days the child and the mother are considered to be impure; to purify them, they celebrate the ritual called *machabu benkegu*. Until this day, the child is not exposed to sun, and within this four days if someone wants to see the child, they will be allowed. However, on the fourth day, that is, during *machabu benkegu*, the outsiders including relatives are not allowed to see either the child or the ritual. Only family members are expected to be present. During this ritual, the child is massaged with mustard oil and exposed to the sun and after that the child is bathed and the *ghar muli/thakali* (eldest female member) gifts new set of clothes and applies *tika* for the new born child. It is generally expected that the first clothes given to the child should come from the mother's natal house. The maternal grandmother of the newly born child comes with gifts and these clothes are indeed given by the *ghar muli* of the house.

After 10-15 days of the child's birth, the maternal grandmother of the child visits her daughter with feast items and specially made *to:* (which is sour in taste and considered to be healthy for the new mothers). This process of maternal grandmother of the child coming to feed her daughter and see the child is called as *chaku-nakha-wanegu* (coming with feast items). The girl's natal relatives come to see the child with some feast items and feed the mother and see the child; they generally come with gifts such as clothes for the child or some kind of nutritious items for the new mother. This process of relatives coming and visiting the newly born child and the mother is called as, *machabu swa wanegu*.

After one or one and half month, the mother's natal house especially the girl's mother will come to take the girl to their house. This event is called *machabhu lahika wanegu*. The girl will stay in her natal house for more than one month, during this time, the mother-in-law of the girl should go to the girl's natal house to offer feast items and

⁶⁷ The rooms above the *chheli* are considered as the *betha kotha*.

see the child and this is called *machabu swa wanegu*. When both the girl's house and boy's house decide that the girl should return to her in-laws, the mother-in-law of the girl should go and bring her and this practice is called *machabu lahika chomha sata wanegu*.

First Feeding Ceremony:

First feeding ceremony is called *ja nakedu* or *macha janku* in Newari, and in Nepali it is referred as *anna prassann*. It is the first feeding ceremony for the children. The child is decorated with new special red colour clothes along with the cap. Some families keep certain items symbolically representing education, agriculture and other profession related things, and it is believed that whatever item the child touches he/she will show proficiency in that profession. In addition, parents expect the child to touch the items representing the education such as pen, pencil, or book.

The *nini* (FZ) of the child and *paju* (MB), accompanied by the child's father's *nini* will go to the temple⁶⁸ to offer prayers to the lord Ganesh and feed rice to the child in the temple. *Nini* (FZ) has to feed the first spoon of rice to the child with the silver spoon which is brought by the *paju* (MB). Followed by *nini* of the child, the *paju* of the child and the *nini* of the child's father will also feed him/her three spoons of rice each. Earlier it used to be a practice to use the silver coin in the place of a silver spoon. After worshipping the Ganesh and feeding the child in the temple they return to the house.

On their return from the temple, the child is made to sit on the lap of the mother and all the family members who are organizing this *macha janku* should sit to receive the gifts, *dahu sagan* and respect from the child's maternal grandparent's family. The family members such as paternal grandparents, *nini*, *paju* and father sit according to their age in order. The child's maternal grandparents have to give gifts to the child and the child's parents (that is their own daughter and son-in-law) and to the paternal grandparents. The maternal grandmother of the child applies *sindhur* to the child and all the family members

⁶⁸Traditionally the village is divided into two parts *choyelachi* and *koyelachi*, upper part and lower part, which contain Bramhayini temple and Balakumari temple, which each family in that region will visit and offer their prayers and the children during *anna prasann* and *kyata pooja* will be taken to offer prayers to the Ganesh and the goddesses.

including her son (child's *paju*), and child's *nini* as well. A piece of white cloth is offered as a garland on every auspicious occasion including receiving someone from abroad, etc. After presenting this cloth, she applies yoghurt to the child with her left thumb in order to take away the evil eye, and she does this to all family members. It is considered as giving good omen to the child and family members. After applying the yoghurt on the forehead or on the sides of forehead, she presents clothes and nominal amount of money to the family members. After presenting clothes, she gives *sagan* (good omen or symbol of auspiciousness) which includes fried fish, boiled egg, *aila*, and sometimes *chhoyala*. They pour *aila* in a traditional brass vessel which is called *khola*, and the giver holds the brass cup in left hand and holds the fried egg and fish in right hand and offers the receiver by keeping right hand on top of left hand so that the person who receives from other side, receives *aila* with left hand and egg and fish with right hand. And they greet each other after exchanging this *sagan*. Once she presents the *sagan* to everyone assembled there, she pours *aila* from the traditional pot (*surin*) to the *khola* for three times in very little quantity. The receivers, before consuming *aila*, offer a small portion to the god or their dead ancestors, by just touching them and sprinkling their hands towards ground as a gesture. They offer food to the Gods and they offer small portion of what they are going to eat such as egg and fish by keeping them on the ground. Then they will drink *aila* and eat the egg. Followed by the maternal grandmother, the close relatives, such as *jahans* and other members present gifts to the child and the parents of the child. The gifts include clothes, toys for the child, nominal money, *sagan* items, fruits, and sweets.

The feast is served to the guests and in the evening the relatives and neighbours who are not able to come in the morning visit the house to give the *sagan* to the child and their parents and participate in the feast as well. Before this *anna prasann*, the child is not given any solid food. Starting with this first feeding ceremony, the child can be given solid food after celebrating this life cycle ritual. It is generally celebrated for male children at the age of completion of six months and should be celebrated within a month before reaching eighth month and for the female children at the completion of four months and preferable *macha janku* should be celebrated within one month. Nevertheless, they are not supposed to celebrate this life cycle ritual in the eighth month.

It became a symbol of status to organize the feast at least for the neighbours, *jahans* and friends. The informant opined that it was not at all a big feast. He said that he invited only 200 people for the feast. Another old informant said that the *macha janku* has been celebrated in a grand way only since last 20 years, and he went on to claim that his eldest grandson's *macha janku* was the first *macha janku* to be celebrated in the village in a grandeur and people from then onwards started following it as a custom.

Barha Kunegu:

*Barha*⁶⁹ means twelve days and *kunegu* means 'to be in isolation' or 'in prison'. *Barha kunegu* is celebrated for the Newari girls before their first menstruation. For this purpose, it is celebrated by the parents for small girls as soon as possible, preferably before the girl reaches her twelfth year. One of the old informant said that in her young age the *barha* used to take place at the age of ten, eleven, or twelve but now days the parents are willing to celebrate *barha* for their daughters from the age of five. However, the *barha* is not to be celebrated at the age of eight. If it is celebrated, it is believed that the girl will fall ill or meet with an accident or she will face the bad omen in her life or die during her first periods or she may become barren. So the eighth year of the girl is avoided for celebrating the *barha* but the celebration should be finished before her first periods. In other parts of the valley except Lalitpur, the girls have to go for *bel bibah* or *ihi*, which is considered as a mock marriage or marriage to the *bel* fruit (Bael or Aegle marmelos). One of the informants said that it is often misunderstood by the scholars as well as by the practitioners of this culture that the girl is getting married to the *bel* fruit. The name *bel bibah* indicates marriage to a *bel* fruit but according to the legend or myth it is believed that the goddess Parvathi while visiting the valley (which is believed to be her natal home) she witnessed the practice of *sathi*⁷⁰ and felt it is inhumane to force or accept the woman to die along with her dead husband. Therefore, she asked Lord Shiva to find a

⁶⁹ A different way of celebrating the *barha kunegu* has been mentioned by Nepali (1965, p. 112).

⁷⁰ *Sathi* is a practice where wife is expected to sacrifice herself by joining the pyre of her husband. Historically it is believed that, the widowhood is worse and it is better for the women to die rather than to continue as a widow. In other words, *sathi* is a socially sanctified suicide of women after her husband's death.

solution for this and Shiva approached lord Vishnu and asked him if it is possible for him to marry all the girls in the valley (Newari). As lord Vishnu is immortal, the girls will never become widows and there will be no need to practice *sathi*. Lord Vishnu agreed to this proposal and in the form of sun, he married the Newari girls, while lord Shiva in the form of *bel* fruit bore witness to the marriage. As the sun cannot die, the Newari girls will never be widowed. The marriage with humans or mortal beings is considered as social marriage but since they are already married to the sun, even if the mortal husband dies, she does not need to become a widow or practice the *sathi*. But in Lalitpur instead of *bel bibah*, the Newars practice only *barha* where the girl will be made to sit in a confined room for twelve days, and on the twelfth day she will be made to see the sun for the first time which indicates she is married to the sun, that is lord Vishnu. Here lord Shiva's role is not emphasised as in other parts of the valley. Levy & Rajopadhyaya says, *ih*i or mock marriage to the god Visnu/Narayana is carried out before a girl reaching her puberty. These rites themselves reveal certain anti-Brahmanical and anti-patrilineal biases. Their legendary origin was in an innovation introduced into the Kathmandu valley by the goddess Parvathi, (whose natal home it was), so as to prevent the disabilities of widows, a severe problem in the traditional Hindu social system, through the device of a first ritual marriage to a god. A woman's subsequent marriage to the mortal being becomes secondary, as her initial marriage was with the immortal being. Her true husband (god) never dies, and she never becomes widow. This practice also weakens the ideological support for child marriages, that is, a girl should be married and should be living in her husband's household prior to the girl achieving menstruation. In this *ih*i practice it is only necessary to marry her to the god before menarche (1992, p. 122). However, Gellner argues that "Historical data and contemporary practice show that the oft-cited freedom of Newar women to divorce and remarry without stigma probably only ever applied to low castes and outlying villages. The mock marriage of Newar girls to a god, while a ritual adaptation to the norms of Brahmanism, does not prevent a Newar woman from experiencing widowhood" (1991, p. 105).

Barha is a very difficult ritual to practice because of several taboos and violation of taboos leads to dreadful consequences. So many families do not prefer to make the

girls sit for twelve days even though celebrating *barha* is very important in a girl's lifetime. The girls who have not celebrated the *barha* are considered '*la chale maju*⁷¹' (water unacceptable⁷² person), which makes them unfit for marriage or a social life. Therefore, the Newars celebrate this ritual for their girls without fail but as mentioned above, it includes very tough procedures of rituals such as she should not be seen by any man including the family members and she should not even get exposed to the sun light. In other words, she should not allow the sunrays to touch her. There should not be any death in the family or *jahan*. Although, the girl is allowed to finish this ritual during the death pollution observance however, she is considered as *bital* (this Newari term indicates that the person had been violated from the taboos of *barha* which are again associated with the dreadful consequences like she might die during her first periods or she may fall ill and eventually lead to death). During this *barha* if any male sees her or she is exposed to the sunrays, she is considered as '*bital*'. As the process of this ritual is quite hard to practice without a mistake in the ritual process, several families make their daughters to sit only one day before the ritual gets over along with another girl who has been sitting for twelve days. This is also considered as celebrating or doing the *barha* for twelve days, but the girls who are joining for one day should not be elder than the girl who has been sitting for twelve days. This rule is followed very strictly and one of the informants recollected several incidents in Thecho where the girls who went to sit for one day in the *barha* happened to be elder to the girl who has been sitting for twelve days leading to serious problems for the girl who is sitting for all twelve days. Therefore, the families allow only younger girls to sit, and they allow only whom they know for sure that 'one day joining girls' are not elder to their girl who is sitting for the twelve days. If the girl, who comes to sit for one day, is twelve hours or six hours elder to the girl who is sitting for twelve days, then also she is not entertained to sit. It is popularly believed such girls eventually die or die during their first periods. So, any girl who is elder to the one

⁷¹ Although the informants were unable to give a single instance of such cases where the girl did not celebrate the *barha* and she is treated on par with the water unacceptable caste. The informants said so far whomsoever they know have finished and made sure that they celebrated this ritual for their daughters.

⁷²The water from her hand should not be accepted. She will be considered as the lowest according to the caste hierarchy.

who is going through the twelve days is not allowed for any reason.

Once the family members decided to celebrate the *barha* for their girl, they approach the *joshi* or who can read the *jaata* and make sure that she does not have any mistakes or *dosham* in her *jaata* and fixes a date and carry forward with ritual. In case if she has any mistakes in her *jaata*, her parents will be asked by the *joshi* to worship certain god or goddess to pacify them and to make the mistake correct and then they can carry forward with the ritual of *barha*. During this *barha* the girl has a companion preferably younger to her or who can take care of her. The companion's main job is to see that no men or sun rays should see her. Therefore, whenever the girl who sits for *barha* wants to attend the natural calls, the companion will be informed, and the companion makes sure that, the time is after sunset or before sunrise, and no male members are around and the girl can finish her natural calls. When question raised how they used to manage as in the earlier days there were no latrines in the houses the informant answered that they make use of chamber pot, which is disposed of by the companion. Nevertheless, at any chance she should not be exposed to the sunrays or should not be seen by any men. On the fourth day, the girl is made to take bath, and her mother gives *dahu sagan* and offers her food. After this process, the relatives can come for *chhusya musya nakha wanegu* where the relatives will bring fried or popped corn, beans, *halmula* and four varieties of dishes with one item with meat of the buffalo and *to:* and *aila* is served for the girl. All women members of *jahans* or close relatives are expected to visit the girl for this *chhusya musya nakha wanegu*. On the twelfth day at an auspicious time, the girl is prepared to bring out for seeing the sun. Before she comes out, the *thakali nakin* of the *depcha guthi* gives her *sagan* and bless her and then, she is brought out by covering her completely with a white cloth so that she would not be seen by any men before she sees sun on the twelfth day. She is brought to *pekhe lachi*, courtyard where a stone or engraving on the stone represents the house, and *Kumar* is worshipped. The *thakali nakin* guides the girl and other girls who have come to sit for one day to perform the *pooja* for *pekha lachi* and worship sun and once the girl or girls have seen the sun they can be seen by men. The girls are dressed like brides or with the best dress and will be taken to the Ganesh temple in *lachi* and from there to *pingal* and

from there to the *kuldeeptha* as a procession for seeking blessings from the gods. The one who is made to sit for twelve days should lead the procession to show that she is the one who was host for other girls and she is guided by the *thakali nakin*. If she (*thakali nakin*) cannot walk that far, any female member can guide them through the procession. With the procession, followed by a feast and presenting the gifts from the relatives to the girls who have celebrated the *barha*, the ritual is concluded.

Without celebrating this *barha*, the girls are not eligible to marry⁷³; so the parents see to that the girls have observed this *barha*. This is one of the reasons why villagers do not prefer to take girls from other parts of Nepal. Lalitpur's way of celebrating the ritual differs from Kathmandu and Bhakthapur, but they are considered as similar to that of Lalitpur.

Brathbandh or Kyata Pooja (Initiation Ceremony):

This ceremony is celebrated for the Newar boys. *Brathbandh* is a Nepali term, and this ceremony is called as *kyata pooja*⁷⁴ in Newari. *Kyata* means a particular inner wear/loincloth traditionally worn by Newar boys in ancient days. The significance of *kyata pooja* is that, the boy is considered as a man after this ceremony. So after celebrating this ceremony he is not supposed to be nude in public (which earlier as a child is accepted), and he should start learning how to behave like a grownup. The parents especially father will scold him if he is being seen naked and is taught to behave like matured, as he is no more a small boy. This particular initiation ritual symbolise the act of accepting the boy as a man in the society's '*rites de passage*'. This ritual can be celebrated when boy attains the age of 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11 (but not at the age of 8) as eight is considered to be inauspicious⁷⁵. To explain the *brathabandh* (Np.), the Newars

⁷³ In the ancient days when there was a practice of child marriage, the parents used to celebrate the *barha* after the marriage also.

⁷⁴ A different way of head shaving ceremony has been mentioned by Nepali (1965, p. 102)

⁷⁵ According to the Newar belief, system the 8 is considered as inauspicious, so the Newars will not celebrate any ceremony at the age of 8. Alternatively, the age, which is associated with number 8 such as, 18, 28, 38, and so on is also considered as inauspicious. It is not restricted not only for celebrating life cycle ceremonies, the date 8 is considered as inauspicious for starting any work. In case of a death among any *guthiyars* below 8 hierarchical order of the *guthiyars* the eldest son who has to take the 8th place will not

compare it with the sacred thread wearing ceremony of *Brahmins*. This ceremony is celebrated for binding him to the ritual duties and releasing him from childhood. This is one of the important ceremonies that have to be celebrated in one's lifetime because it symbolises passing from one status (as a boy) to another (as a man). Like the boy who undergoes this ceremony is considered as a man, the family members have to observe death pollution if the boy dies after the *kyata pooja*.

There are three ways of celebrating this ceremony. First, the boy is made to sit facing east and the *paju* (MB) has to start shaving the head of the sister's son (ZS), (symbolically he touches the hair with a silver blade on the three sides of the head). *Nau* brings this silver blade and to borrow this silver blade, the *paju* has to give *dakshina* to *Nau*. Then *paju* pretends to drag the silver blade on the four sides of the head as if he is shaving his *bhincha's* head. The *Nau* then offers the *paju* his scissors and the *paju* cuts the small piece of hair on the four sides of the head and gives the scissor back to the *Nau*. The *Nau* shaves rest of the hair but leaves *tikka* (small piece of hair). Before *Nau* starts to shave the head, he has to be presented with rice, money, and a piece of cloth by the boy (given by *nini* to the boy). *Nini* (FZ) has to hold a white piece of cloth on a plate since when *Nau* shaves the head, the hair is not supposed to fall on the ground (see plate 4). After *Nau* shaves the head, the female *Nau* called, as *Nauni*⁷⁶ (traditionally female *Nau* goes to every house to clean the nails of her patron) has to cut and clean the nails of the toes and apply red ochre to the feet as decorating them. The *shakya/bajracharya* (family priest) generally referred as *Guruju* has to perform the ritual, but some families do not hire *Guruju* for the priestly services. The families who do not hire a *Guruju* perform the

take it rather the second son will take the position as *guthiyar* and he also will not sit in the first feast organized by the *guthi*. During his position as eighth person in the *guthi* he will associate loss in business, or loss of family members or depression or unhappiness to this position. Therefore, Newars will be a kind of scared to have this position and consider the eight as inauspicious.

⁷⁶Traditionally *Nauni* used to go to each house where they have patronage to cut the nails, clean the fingers, and apply *aala*. Which is considered as antiseptic made from herbs (right now they are not making with the herbs instead they use colored substance for applying to the fingers in the feet). For her services she will receive, the payment may be immediately or may be after the patrons (who are mostly land owning caste *Maharjans*) get their crop harvested they will collect the grains for their services. Some of the informants have said that it is still in prevalent but *Nauni* reduced extending her services.

ritual as instructed by elders⁷⁷. Ears may also be pierced after shaving the head, but it is not mandatory. The shaved hair and cut nails are saved on a white piece of cloth by *nini*; it has to be taken away from home by *nini* herself. Generally they go to the place where they worship *kuldeeptha* and dispose of the hair and nails. Sometimes the hair and nails along with the cloth may also be disposed of in a stream far off from the settlements. The *nini* has to carry this hair by hiding it with her upper part of the *saree*⁷⁸ not allowing the onlookers to know what she has been carrying.

After *nini* returns from the stream/ *degu dyo*, one of the *nini* goes to the temple, which their family is associated with, to offer simple *pooja*. She offers *pooja* to lord Ganesh and returns to home. By this time, the boy takes a bath and gets ready to receive gifts and *sagan* from his relatives. The boy's maternal grandmother (boy's mother's natal house) has to offer first gifts to the boy after applying *sindhur* and offering him the white cloth as a symbol of respect. The boy's head will be wrapped with a long white cloth (like a turban) which is traditionally Newari practice to indicate that he is the one who has been undergoing the ceremony. After she presents her gifts, the boy is taken to the temple (the people in the upper part of the Thecho goes to Balkumari Temple and lower part of the Thecho goes to Brahmayini Temple to offer their prayers), accompanied by the *thakali* (eldest male member of the clan or *depcha guthi*), *Sakya (guruju)*, father and maternal uncle (*paju*) as a procession. Ganesh *pooja* is performed in the temple by offering animal sacrifice; *Kasai* (the caste which practice butchering traditionally) offers their services to the family by sacrificing a goat or a buffalo. If the family is sacrificing one to the god (according to the economic status of the family they sacrifice rooster, billy goat, male sheep, or buffalo) and the animal is sacrificed particularly to lord Ganesh. After offering *pooja* to lord Ganesh, they will move up to the Balkumari idol and offer prayers. After worshipping Balkumari, the *depcha guthi* members have *samaybaji* within the *dyo chhen* and two plates of *samaybaji* are kept at the beginning of the row. One plate

⁷⁷ Krish Maharjan's (11) *kyata pooja* was celebrated without any *Guruju* help. The elders (his grandmother and *thakali* were instructing them how to perform the ritual).

⁷⁸ Women generally cover all the items which they carry from one place to the other, with this upper part of the cloth or which are also called as *gacha*.

is for the goddess, and another plate is for the *charhe guthi pala*, who has to come and open the door of the Balkumari goddess. The boy gets the privilege to sit first in the row (except this ritual for any kind of *bhoj* the people has to sit according to their seniority in the age, elders sit first and young follow them in the row). After that *samaybaji*, the boy is brought back to their home and the remaining ritual is carried out in the home. The boy has to walk seven steps on the decorated diagram which represents a tree branch with big leaves while being accompanied by the *sakya* or *bajracharya* (priestly caste among the Buddhist Newars) chanting hymns. The *paju* (MB) has to keep some money for *pooja*, which is given to *guruju* along with *baji* (beaten rice), *jaku* (rice), *sabji* (other grains and vegetables) as a *dakshina* for his priestly service. Earlier the family, which received the service from *sakya*, has to carry the gifts as a procession to the house of the *guruju*. Mother of the boy who is undergoing the *kyata pooja* presents him with clothes and *sagan*. After her, the *ninis* present clothes and *sagan* to the boy and parents of the boy. Along with the boy's father, the *ninis* present *sagan* to all the brothers of the boy's father, i.e., her brothers. After every kin member presents gifts to the boy, the feast (*bhoj*) is arranged. If the house is big enough to accommodate all guests who are invited for the *bhoj*, the feast is organized in the house. Otherwise, they hire any of the *guthi* offices (which are commonly rented out for the feast purposes). The feast continues all day long, beginning from 12 at noon until eight in the night provided the feast is considered as grand one. The boy is made to sit in one corner for the friends and distant relatives to present gifts to him. Generally, the gifts include *baji*, clothes for the boy and parents, boiled or un-boiled egg along with a piece of fried fish and also fruits and sweets and toys for the boys. Every gift is given with an egg and fried fish, which makes the gift *sagan*.

The Second way of celebrating is considered as the grand way of celebrating the *kyata pooja*. In this, after the prayers are offered to lord Ganesh and Balkumari or Bramhayini a social drama takes place where the boy is asked to pretend like he is going to renounce the family life and take up ascetism (who will renounce all the worldly pleasure and lead his life very simply by begging and travelling all around the world). The boy is asked to walk away with a stick (as a traveller), and in olden days the boy was also

used to be dressed as a beggar or a monk. The mother pretends as if she is weeping and the *paju* (MB) brings his nephew back to his mother and makes the boy promise that he will not leave her and take the normal life rather than becoming ascetic, which he pretended in the beginning. Then the boy is taken back to home, and the remaining ceremony is performed as mentioned above. Some of the informants opined that this way of celebration is observed very less because this does not hold any meaning in contemporary period. Some of the economically well off families celebrate this kind of *kyata pooja* to show off their economic status and this type of ritual is interlinked with social status. After this ritual process, the grand feast follows for the relatives and friends and in return, they give the boy and the family gifts and *sagan*.

As this ceremony has to be celebrated before attaining 14 years, parents try to do it as soon as possible but they are not supposed to perform it for the boy when he is eight years old. In case if any death happens in the family in the year they are planning to celebrate it for their son, they would not celebrate any feast as they will be observing the death pollution or *chipa*. However, if the parents think that it is the last year of the boy to celebrate the *kyata pooja*, and coincidentally their family is observing the death ritual, the mother takes the boy to her natal house and performs his *kyata pooja* in simple way and *paju* performs his duties, as he is obliged to do. *Nini*'s role is not important in this type of celebrating *kyata pooja*. Moreover, there would not be any feast for this type of celebration.

If the parents are not willing to organize big feast for this ceremony because of their economic conditions they can seek permission from the *thakali* of the *depcha guthi* and organize a feast, only for their *jahan* members, and if the financial condition is very poor, then he is expected to offer feast for the *thakali* and one member (generally *kutane*⁷⁹ is considered to be representing the family in the clan) from the families within

⁷⁹ The male representative in the clan, who generally attends the meeting of the clan members, and also has the responsibility to pay money on behalf of the family members for the *depcha* feast which they have once in a year in front of their *degu dyo*. Generally, the married out sons, who got their property divided formally in front of other clan members, will be considered as *kutane*. From then onwards they will also act as representatives.

the *depcha guthi*. But such type of poor person⁸⁰ always gets social embarrassment for his lack of ability to mobilize money for organizing feast for his own *jahan* members.

The third way of celebrating the *kyata pooja* is leaving the sons in the Bihar (Buddhist monastery) to live a life of a monk for a certain time. The group of boys who are undergoing this live like monks during their stay in the monastery by wearing saffron robes, with shaved head, and live a life similar to monk without going to home at night. Parents and relatives come with food materials to feed the children who are undergoing this ceremony. In the context of Newari identity movement, the Newars are following Buddhism as their original religion and the families who celebrate their *kyata pooja* in this way are appreciated and revered. Some of the informants also opine that it is subtle way of escaping the criticism from the society for not being able to organize the feast for their sons' *kyata pooja*. It has also been observed that families in Thecho club two or three life cycle rituals in order to avoid the feast expenses. Generally, major and a minor life cycle rituals are combined (such as *kyata pooja* and marriage or *kyata pooja* and *janku* or *anna prasann* and marriage or *janku*) and one single feast is organized. However, the relatives who have been invited should give gifts for both the parties celebrating the life cycle rituals. That is not a common practice to club other life cycle rituals with death related feasts, yet in one of the case, where a family had to postpone the marriage for a year as one of the person has died, however at the concluding feast of the death pollution they had clubbed it with their son's marriage.

Janku:

Newars celebrate *janku* to recognize the attainment of a certain age for their elders. All sons are expected to perform this ceremony for their parents. This ceremony is celebrated for five times in a lifetime.

On attaining the age of 77 years, every elder is celebrated the ritual called *janku* (see plate 4). The humans are considered as gods on attaining the mentioned age. To

⁸⁰ On the contrary, the rich person who is not conducting the feast in a big way is appreciated and given social respect saying 'despite of his richness he is very simple'.

celebrate this ritual family's start preparing for the feast. It is considered as the highest respect the children (including married daughters) and grandchildren can give to the elders on attaining this age. Based on the economic conditions of the family they will decide how big the feast should be. If they are planning for the feast in a big way, the preparation of *katto* and *aila* should start at least from four-six months earlier. On the agreed day, the *janku* will be celebrated for the elders; if the couple (husband and wife) are both alive, the husband's age is considered for the celebrations. When husband attains the age of 77 years, his wife should also celebrate *janku* along with him even though she may not have attained the required age. Sometimes the wife might be elder to him, so they need to wait for the husband to achieve his required age to celebrate *janku*. If the wife is dead, the husband alone will celebrate *janku* on attaining the required age. If a woman becomes a widow, she has to wait until she attains the required age to celebrate this *janku*. Second and third *janku* for the women may be celebrated little earlier. It has been observed that people show interest to celebrate this *janku* for the elders even before they attain the age and it is accepted in the society for the women to celebrate *janku* before attaining the age. Nevertheless, in the case of men it is celebrated strictly after attaining the required age.

A day before the *janku* celebration, the *gubhaju* is invited to help them in the ritual process to offer *pinda*⁸¹ to the dead ancestors. The family members make the necessary arrangements for *pinda* offering ritual. The eldest male member shaves his head and wears just a *dhoti* while offering *pinda* to the dead ancestor. The *gubhaju* makes a *mandal* and keeps a white cone shaped structure called *goja*, which is made up of rice flour. This *goja* represents *chibha*, and a Buddha statue is also kept in the place of worshipping. The traditional oil lamp which has religious value called *sukunda*, and the water pot should also be kept in the place of worshipping. These items should be there whenever they conduct any kind of ritual, as it is believed that fire and water bear witness

⁸¹ Not only during *janku*, the *pinda* is offered to the dead ancestors on almost all the good occasions, the eldest male members is supposed to offer the *pinda*, for this the *gubhaju* is invited to help them to offer the *pinda*. Nevertheless, it is not mandatory to offer *pinda*. Nevertheless, there are *guthis* formed to offer *pinda* for the dead ancestors every year.

for the ritual, and it is a symbol of auspiciousness. The *gubhaju* guides the person who is offering *pinda* through the ritual, making him offer flowers and grains and money to the *mandal* and other items. A small piece of thread is offered to *sukunda*, water pot, and other items kept at the place of worship. This small piece of thread represents the clothes and it is equivalent of offering clothes to the gods who have been kept as a witness for the ritual process. *Gubhaju* asks the person to make *pinda*, which has to be offered with the items such as banana, beaten rice, cow's milk, and rice soaked in water, and other ritual items which should be added to make the *pinda*. Before mixing it, the person is supposed to keep the big bowl, which has been used to mix the *pinda* items on his left shoulder for some time while the *gubhaju* chants the hymns. After this, the person starts mixing the items with his two hands in order to make them semi solid substance and to make cone/*chibha* shaped structure. These structures are considered as *pinda*. The *chibha* is kept down from the bowl. It has been made and cleansed with cow's milk and applied *sindhur* and offered flowers. The four round shaped *pinda* are taken one by one and cleansed with cow's milk and a small pit is made by pressing it with fingers. The *gubhaju* while chanting the great grandfather's name of the person, who is offering the *pinda*, puts some sesame seeds and other grains in it, which is a direct offering for the three generations older dead ancestors. The same is done in the name of grandfather and father of the person who is offering the *pinda*, with two other round shaped flour structures. The fourth one is taken with the left hand and kept aside from these three *pinda* and *sindhur*; water and flowers are offered with the left hand. After the *pinda* are worshipped, the *gubhaju* asks the person to offer a piece of white cloth to the *pinda* as a symbol of offering cloth to the dead ancestors. The person cleanses the cloth with the cow's milk before offering it to the *pinda*. Later the person, who is offering *pinda*, offers little *to*: from the small brass pot to the *pinda*. The *gubhaju* will call other *jahan* and family members to come and offer their respect to the *pinda* as the ancestors are related to them. After every one has offered their respects to the *pinda*, the eldest female member offers rice and money to *gubhaju*, and after accepting it, he suggests the person who is offering *pinda* to put all the *pinda* other flowers and fruits offered to *pinda* in the bowl and take it

to the river and leave the *pinda* in the stream. With this, the *pinda* offering⁸² to the ancestors is over and the next day the family members celebrate *janku* for the elders who have attained the age of 77.

After offering *pinda*, the next day the family organizes the feast. Certain fried items which can be stored for the next day, such as *gulab jamun* is prepared on the previous day of the feast. All the neighbours and friends apart from the *jahan* members actively participate in the feast preparations. On the day of feast, if they are sacrificing a buffalo for meat, they do it in the morning and start cleaning the meat. Some families buy the meat in huge amount and start processing the meat as per the requirement of what they are going to cook. The appointed *bhalins* and friends start preparing and see to that the feast preparations are going well, but the family who is celebrating the *janku* is busy with the ritual process for the elders. Some families appoint *gubhaju* for doing this ritual, but in this particular case, the *gubhaju* was unable to come. Therefore, the family members celebrated the ritual without the help of *gubhaju*. The son and grandson of the couple who are celebrating their *janku* had bought the earrings, which have to be gifted by the son. This earring symbolises that they have celebrated their *janku* in the society, and for the second and third *janku*, the earrings keep adding to the elders' ears. The more earrings one has, the more he/she is considered an elder and is respected accordingly. The son himself puts the earrings to his parents. Wash their legs by keeping some coins at their feet and sprinkle the water on his head or pretends as if he is taking that water in his mouth thrice. He repeats this for both of them and gives his parents some money as token of respect. They keep a bowl and on top of a wooden plank across it where they can keep their feet conveniently for washing and taking blessings from others. Followed by him all the family members including daughter-in-law and grandsons repeat the same, by washing their feet with water and seeking their blessings by touching their feet with head or the knee with head and present them some money.

⁸² All the life cycle rituals should be conducted only after offering *pinda* to the dead ancestors. The eldest male member of the family generally performs it, for his three generations of the dead ancestors. It is believed that they will bless the person who is about to celebrate his life cycle ritual and bless the family for offering *pinda* timely without forgetting the dead ancestors.

After everyone has finished washing feet of the *janku* celebrating persons, the son wraps a white ceremonial cloth around his father's head as a turban as a symbol of celebrating the *janku*. The daughter-in-law offers prayers to them by offering popped rice and grains and flowers. She sprinkles these things on their head for thrice on each shoulder once and applies *sindhur* on their forehead and offers them the new clothes. She decorates her mother-in-law's head with flowers and offers new clothes and seeks blessings from both of them. After everyone has sought blessings, the couple or single individual who has been celebrating the *janku* are taken in a procession to the temple they are associated with (some go in a procession to the *degu dyo* place of worship to offer *pooja* and come back home). When they are coming out of the house, the musical association with which the family is associated comes to render the musical services and play music welcoming them, and the women in the house sprinkles popped rice on them and on their way as a symbol of auspiciousness. The person is lead as the procession of the musical instrument and the women keep sprinkling the popped rice on their way until they reach the temple. After reaching the temple, they worship the goddess and the family members give garland, and a necklace made up of popped rice and *kokha* to be worn by people who are participating in the ceremony, as this is happy and auspicious ceremony. The family also gifts *tupuli* and apply *sindhur* to everyone who are there as a part of the celebrations. After that, they are brought back from the temple to the house as a procession accompanied by the musical instruments and women leading their way sprinkling the popped rice. On the arrival at the house, the *janku* celebrated persons worship the house's door-way before entering it, the male who is celebrating the *janku*, offer flowers and *sindhur* for the door way and paste Buddha stickers or a snake with small Krishna on it and sprinkles the *sindhur* on top of the entry and enters the house.

It is the turn of their *mhyay macha* to offer gifts and *sagan* to the parents and other family members of the natal house. The married out daughters come with the *sagan* items and worship the parents or grandparents who are celebrating this *janku* and offer them gifts and seek blessings. They should offer the *sagan* to the whole family apart from the persons who are celebrating the *janku*. Once everyone is presented with *sagan* and gifts in the family of *janku* celebrating persons, the family members lead to the place (if it

is *guthi chhen* they have hired to organize the feast) where the feast has been organized to participate and to see to the arrangement. When it is time, the feast is organized from the afternoon and it continues until night 10 pm. The people who have celebrated their *janku* are made to sit in one place for the visitors to offer gifts and seek blessings from them. The music is played by the musical association and the feast continues with the guests and relatives who have been invited to the feast. The friends and *jahan* act as a *bhalins* and they take care of serving the feast and to see that no guest is left treated without respect. The guests and friends bring gifts and give it to the *janku* celebrated persons. In return, the *janku* celebrated persons bless them by offering *sindhur* to them.

One of the villagers who has informed by seeing an old Newari book⁸³, 'First *janku* is called as *bhimratharohan* and it is celebrated when a person attains the age of 77 years, 7 months, 7 days, 7 hours, 7 minutes and 7 seconds. Second *janku* is called as *chadrratharohan*, and it is celebrated when the person attains the age of 83 years, 4 months, 4 days (by this age that person would have already seen 1000 full moons). Third *janku* is called as *devaratharohan*, which is celebrated when the person attains the age of 88 years, 8 months and 8 days. During third *janku*, the person is pulled into the house by sons through the window, and the person is not expected to enter through the door. Fourth *janku* is called *divyaratharohan*, and it is celebrated when the person attains the age of 99 years, 9 months and 9 days. During fourth *janku*, the sons have to make a mud pot and pour water in it and make that person sit in the mud pot. The sons and grandsons have to break it and pull the person out of the mud pot and this symbolizes the birth of a child from the womb. The parent is treated as a child. Fifth *janku* is called *maha-divyaratharohan*, and it is celebrated when the person attains the age of 105 years, 8 months and 8 days'.

However, in the village they are simply called first *janku*, second *janku*, third *janku* and fourth *janku*. 77 years, 7 months, 7 days, 7 hours, 7 minutes and 7 seconds on attaining this age, Newars celebrate first *janku* for their elders. At the age of 83 on the

⁸³ Reference of the book is not available as the book is very old and lacks the details required for referencing.

first poornima, the family celebrates the second *janku* for the person who have attained that age. Generally, the grandsons are expected to carry the person who is celebrating the first *janku* in a palanquin and go around the village. During the second *janku* the family members are not supposed to offer feast with meat. So all together, they avoid the feast. Some people go to offer food or gifts to the *jetha nagarik samman*. On attaining ninety years, a Newar person celebrates the third *janku*. On the third *janku*, the person has to be kept in the chariot and dragged around the village by the grandsons and he/she has to be taken inside the window but not through the door. So in case the window is not wide enough to drag them in, the family needs to break the window and drag them in, through the window. On attaining 100 years, the fourth *janku* is celebrated. On this occasion, they make big pot and make the person sit in the pot and break open the pot and bring the person out, indicating that they have been born out of womb again. The fourth *janku* is considered as second birth for them, and the family members are supposed to do all child birth-purificatory rituals in order to get out of the birth pollution.

Once *janku* is celebrated they are relieved from the human form and they are considered as gods and goddesses. Women are relieved from the widow-hood. Once they have celebrated the *janku* they need not to follow, the widow-hood and they can wear red clothes, attend auspicious rituals and wear *sindhur* in red colour (vermillion) which is prohibited for a widow. The celebration of *janku* relieves a Newar from the obligations which they otherwise should be following. This celebration shows how attaining the older age is perceived by the Newars and how the society treats its elders.

One of the old informants had recalled how there were no persons who had celebrated *janku* in Thecho during his childhood or even at adulthood. He continued 'It used to be very rare to see such people, and they used to get a lot of respect. The people who are not related to those who celebrated *janku* also touch their knees and seek blessings from them; it used to be a respect they get for attaining that age. But now we can see people everywhere who have celebrated *janku*'. The informant himself celebrated two *jankus*, and he informed that he saw only one person in his lifetime who are above hundred years and had celebrated the four *jankus*. He also recalled how the family

members celebrated the *janku* in grandeur, by carrying her as procession and organizing a big feast with a lot of joy and enthusiasm (see table 26).

Table 26: Number of elders who celebrated janku in the study area

Caste group	First <i>janku</i> (>77 years)		Second <i>janku</i> (>83 years)		Third <i>janku</i> (>90 Years)		Fourth <i>janku</i> (>100 years)		Total
Gender	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
<i>Gopali</i>		1							1
<i>Maharjan</i>	1	7	9	9	1	5			32
<i>Maharjan</i> married couple	15X2=30		7X2=14						44
<i>Mali</i>	2	1	2	3		3			11
<i>Napit</i>									
<i>Shahi</i>				1					1
<i>Kapali</i>		2	1						3
Total	18	26	19	20	1	8			92

Death Ritual among the Newars:

Death:

When a death happens in the family, the family members inform their *guthi pala* and their relatives including *jahan*, *degu dyo guthi* members, and *mhyay macha khala*. Apart from the roles of *guthiyars* and deceased family members, the role of *mhyay macha* is very important in the one year long death related rituals⁸⁴. Married daughters who have to come and participate in the death procession come to the house of dead by wailing loudly wearing a special cloth around their waist called *gacha*, and they carry *po wa:* which is sprinkled all the way during the procession. All the married out daughters or women who are related by blood are allowed to participate in the death procession and can also come to the cremation ground, whereas, women who came to the family through marriage alliance are barred from participating in it. This practice indicates the importance of the married out daughters in the natal house.

On the fourth day, the *mhyay macha*, *ninipi*, *phukis* married out daughters (but not the women who are considered as *jahan* or *phuki* members) come to the family where the

⁸⁴ See appendix IV for the Necessary items required for the funeral rites and for the post death rituals.

death has occurred for a process called *penu locha wanegu* or *locha wanegu*. The ones who are entitled to go for this *locha wanegu* should carry three to four *manas* of *baji*, one packet of milk, one packet of salt, one or two *mana* of wheat flour, and small piece of ginger, *gundru* (fermented dried leaf vegetable) in a small amount, green leafy vegetable and one or two *mana* of rice. Generally, women go for *locha wanegu* after sunset. *Mhyay macha* saves a fistful of grains in a basket, and leaves the *khu* for the further consumption of her natal household member.

The seventh day of the death is called as *nayanbhu*. On this day the members of the deceased person's family are not supposed to touch or work in their own house, so the *mhyay macha* (the married daughters) reach in the morning to the deceased person's house and plaster the whole house including the *pekha lachi* with red soil and cow dung. They take bath and start cooking. Apart from rice, they have to prepare four other items, which compulsorily includes meat. Generally, the items prepared are *wamcha*, *dal* with ginger and roti. The rice grains and other items saved by every *mhyay macha* who come on fourth day (*locha*) is included in cooking as a symbol of food offering from their husband's family. In the earlier days, they used to cook large quantity of food, as they have to feed the *Jugis* or *Kapalis*. The *Kapalis* used to complain that, the food they cooked is not enough. Now-a-days they cook the required amount of food as the *Kapalis* have stopped coming to take the food on the *nayanbhu* day. The cooked food is kept in seven different plates. They purify the *pekha lachi* by pouring some water, and keep a leaf plate and pour this rice as a heap from the seven plates and place a boiled egg on the top of heaped rice. Other items including meat and roti, and they are kept in the leaf plate, along with one *salicha* of milk, one *salicha* of water, an oil lamp, *pooja* plate, some fruits and coins. They worship the food and in earlier days food is given to the *Jugis* as they are supposed to eat rice from each seven plates as an indication that the food have been offered for seven days to the deceased person. As the *Jugis* stopped coming to take food, the deceased person's family is now offering the food to dogs. It is believed that the deceased person will come in the form of a dog and have the food. It is also believed that the dog first eats the food item which the deceased person liked the most. An informant opined that the dog several times preferred to drink water and milk rather than meat and

egg (against to the animal behaviour). Families in the neighbourhood witness this rite with anxiety. The *mhyay macha* remember the dead person and wail for some time and feed the members of their natal family, as the members of the deceased person's family are not supposed to touch any utensils or work in their own home that day. The *mhyay macha* cooks the food and feed their natal family members. In some cases, they might cook the food all together while preparing the food of the spirit. After offering food to the deceased person, the remaining food is fed to the natal family members. After feeding the natal family members, they eat beaten rice (*baji*) if they are hungry and start cooking food again. At night around 10 to 11 pm when people are not around in the street, they again purify the *pekha lachi* by sprinkling the water and keep food as same as they did in the morning. But unlike in the morning, they would not keep the food first in seven plates instead they put rice seven times directly in the leaf plate and keep all the items including meat as same as they did in the morning, they cover the food with big mud lid called *atha*:⁸⁵ and return to their family. In the morning, the deceased person's family opens this *atha*: and have a look at the food they served. It is believed that one of the food items gets decreased in quantity than they have served on last night. It is believed that the spirit eats the food although the heavy mud lid is covered, and this is covered to prevent the dogs or any other animals to eat the food before the spirit eats. Sometimes the food item touched by the dog firstly in the morning is the same item which gets decreased in the night also, however it is not the case every time. They offer the food touched by the spirit in night to dog in the morning.

On the tenth day, the deceased person's family, and other *jahan* members who are obliged to observe the death pollution will assemble at the nearest *falcha* or a common place near any pond. The *mhyay macha* bring beaten rice; ginger meshed with salt to this common place. The deceased person's male members of the family shave their head whereas; the sons have to shave their moustache, beard, and eyebrows along with their head. *Jahan* male members and *phuki*'s male head of the family have to shave their head.

⁸⁵*Atha*: is traditionally used for washing clothes. In the current days this mud lid has been replaced by the aluminum or plastic vessels.

The boys who have not yet celebrated the *kyata pooja*⁸⁶ are not obliged to shave their head. For this purpose, they invite the *Nau* and *Nauni* to this common place. After shaving their head, the *Nauni* touch their nails with her traditional equipment, which is used for cutting the nails as an act of purification. After they have shaved and are touched by the nail cutting equipment, the *mhyay macha* sprinkle the cow's milk with the help of *gushi* grass. The sons start wearing white clothes⁸⁷ to show others that they are observing *chipa* or death pollution. These clothes are given to *Nau* and he have to present them back. For this, the members who receive clothes should give nominal amount of money as a *dakshina* to the *Nau* for his services in purifying the clothes. Some of the *mhyay macha* gift the clothes to their brothers, but it is not mandatory on the part of the *mhyay macha*. When asked why they need to go to the common place or *falcha* or near the pond the informant opined that, 'in earlier days the households did not have individual taps or water source and so they might have come to the *falcha* so that they can take bath after shaving their head'. These days they are not taking a bath in the pond but the ritual is still practiced near ponds as a 'cultural survival'. After sprinkling the cow's milk on their natal relatives, the *mhyay macha* gives small portion of mustard oil to the natal relatives. The relatives apply the oil over their hand and after applying the oil to their hands; they receive *baji* from the *mhyay macha* and eat it. With this rite, all the *fukhee*, *jahan* and deceased person's family is partially purified. This ritual is called *du benkeyegu*. The eldest female member of the *jahan*'s families collects the cow's milk and the *gushi* grass from the *mhyay macha* to sprinkle in their respective houses in order to purify the house and to avoid spirit visiting their houses. Only after sprinkling this milk, the *jahan* members are supposed to cook food in their house for that day.

The ritual celebrated on the twelfth day from the death is called as *ghasu*, and on this day, *mhyay macha* who attends for *kuu panegu* (a ritual process believed to free the relatives from death pollution partially) return to their homes and bring items which are

⁸⁶Until a boy is celebrated his *kyata pooja* he is not supposed to use blade or shave his head. He no needs to follow the death pollution as well.

⁸⁷One of the villager said that the culture permits them to wear white or black clothes during the period of death pollution, he prefers to wear black as white indicates more of a happiness than sad during the mourning period.

mentioned on the day of *locha*. Nevertheless, they add another item called *haku musya* to the above mentioned items. The *mhyay macha*'s mother-in-law can also bring the *khu* (gift), and have a feast. Those who were unable to attend the funeral rites can also attend the feast.

The ritual observed after 45 days from the death is called as *latya*. All the *jahan* members gather to offer *pinda* for the dead person. On this day, the *mhyay macha* has to bring *khu* as same as they bring the items on the *locha* day. However, in addition to that they have to bring *musya* (white peas) and *bhuit* (a kind of pea). In earlier days, this *khu* has to be a cooked food, but now days the *mhyay macha* brings the raw one.

The death ritual observed after six months is called as *kul*. This ritual is organized in a small manner. If in case the feast followed by the ritual is organized in grand manner, then the *mhyay macha* brings fruits as a gift to their natal family and it is not mandatory on the part of *mhyay macha* to bring *khu* on this day.

The last death related ritual is called *dhakilla*, celebrated after one year from the death. The *mhyay macha* brings the *khu* as mentioned above during the *lathaya*, but this time they should add two eggs and also clothes for the natal family members. The cost of the clothes varies with the degree of closeness of the relationship. The clothes which the *mhyay macha* have to give to the brothers in the natal family should be given through the *gubhaju*. The receiver of clothes has to give money to *gubhaju* as a *dakshina* in return of handing over the clothes from his *mhyay macha*.

The gifts, either in the form of cooked or raw food items, and clothes given by the married out daughters to the natal house over the period of one year from the death is another such example of how the obligations of Newars binding both the descent and consanguineous kin members.

Death Pollution:

The period of death pollution is called *du mau*: or *chipa*. The days of death pollution varies from relative to relative as the degree of relationship also varies. The *mhyay macha*

who went to *depa* during the funeral procession has to observe the *chipa* for twelve days. The other *mhyay macha* and the husbands and sons of *mhyay macha* have to observe the *chipa* for four days. Nevertheless, the in-laws of *mhyay macha* do not come under this *chipa* although they live together as a joint family. Within this four or twelve days, those who are going through this *chipa* are not supposed to put red *sindhur*, or perform *pooja* either in the house or in the temple, and should not eat items such as tomato, *myay* (*dal*), *haku musya*, betel nut, pan, brinjal, *dushi* (barley), meat, egg, *kolacha* (similar to *dal*), and *aila* which is distilled from *dushi*. In addition, they are not supposed to fry anything in the oil, and if they need to add oil in the food items then the oil should be added after all other items have been added. The informants have stressed on the point that, they are also prohibited from frying something on a pan especially which includes frying with oil. If they have to add oil in the cooking item, they are free to add after all the ingredients are added but ingredients are not supposed to be added to the oil; it is strictly prohibited during the period of death pollution for four or twelve days. The *mhyay macha* family has to observe the above said things for a period of 4 days, the *mhyay macha*, *kya macha*, and the family where death has happened, *jahans* and *phuki* members for twelve days. The above mentioned food items are considered as *khu* food which is a symbol of happiness and auspiciousness. Therefore, the family and other relatives who are mourning the dead should not eat or do things as mentioned above. The men would not wear *tupuli*, as *tupuli* represents auspiciousness and happiness. Those who have the obligation to observe the death pollution are not supposed to plaster their house for 7 days and after seven days, they can plaster the house. These members are not supposed to give any gifts to others during a period of 45 days. Therefore, to avoid this, generally friends would not extend an invitation to those people for 45 days. If someone unknowingly invites them, the family avoids attending the auspicious function. After 45 days, they are free to go to the feast and take the *khu* as well. The *kya macha* who is obliged to follow this death pollution for a period of one year can take the *kosa* (marriage gifts) after 45 days, but they cannot take any *khu* in this one year also. Those who follow the death pollution for one year wear white or black⁸⁸ clothes. The sons and wife (in case of death of husband),

⁸⁸ Mostly the people wear white, but in one case the informant was wearing black, when enquired why, he

husband (in case of death of wife) should wear white/black clothes. If the feast is fixed early and any one in the family happens to die, they should cancel the feast if the feast happens to be before twelve days of the death. If it is after twelve days they can carry on with the feast as the feast preparations are highly time consuming and expensive. They should do it on the 13th day if they want to organize the feast otherwise they have to wait for one year.

Until 45 days, the wife or husband would not eat curd or milk. The sons should follow these dietary restrictions of not eating curd in case of father's death and not eating milk in case of mother's death. Once they wear white or black clothes, they are considered *chipa*, and they would not go to temples and other *sas poojas*. Pan and betel nut are not supposed to be eaten as it gives red colour, and red symbolises the happiness and auspiciousness. They are not supposed to apply the red *sindhur* also. After 45 days, they can wear black and yellow but not the red. They are not supposed to wear *kokha*, which is worn around the neck during auspicious functions as a symbol of joy. Actually, they are not supposed to eat *dushi* and brinjal for one year, but now a days the dietary restriction of brinjal and *dushi* are followed only for 45 days.

Feast and Gift Exchange:

Food is an important aspect of culture, it is not just an aspect to suppress the metabolic activity called hunger, and through aspects of food, one can understand the social organization of the community he/she is studying. Food is also an important aspect why the primitive man might have come up with existing social institutions such as family, kinship, and marriage and so on. In the context of Newars, the food plays a crucial role understanding the social organization. Without understanding food and other social values associated with them, one cannot understand the social organization of the Newar community.

opined that white symbolises a kind of happiness to him so he prefer to wear black which is actually mourning colour.

Newars social organization revolves around the food. Each festival the Newar tradition dictates its practitioners to eat something or the other, which is season specific. The Newars conduct their feast in a lavish way. Some of the informants opined that the typical Newar feast should comprise of 94 cuisines in it. The feast should importantly comprise of meat of the buffalo and alcoholic beverages. Based on the consumption of meat of the buffalo and alcoholic beverages, the adjacent communities always have an inferior approach to look at the Newars.

Organizing Feast:

Organizing feast in itself can be perceived as another tool to understand the social organization among Newars. Feast which is referred as *bhoye* in Newari is organized for all types of life cycle rituals and post major festivities for the *mhyay macha*. The greatness of the feast depends on how many people were invited for the feast. A poor man can organize a *bhoye* for only his *jahans* (*depcha guthi* members at least one from the family) or an economically well off family can invite huge number of guests and make it a grandeur event. Generally, the huge feast will be equipped to accommodate more than 2000 people; a considerable small feast can accommodate more than 1000 people. Organizing feast is a big group activity. The family, which wishes to organize feast, has to start its preparation nearly six months earlier than the desired date of celebrating the life cycle ritual. Preparation of *aila, to:* and *ka to:* will need several days and the greatness of feast will also depend on the quality and taste of the alcoholic beverages. When the day of feast is approaching, the family has to decide whom they are going to select as *bhalins*. A team of one to six members who are experts in the traditional Newari *bhoye* cuisines will be selected as *bhalins* and among these *bhalins* one person will be selected as *mu bhalin*. The head of the household will have an influential word in deciding who is going to be the *bhalins* for the feast. Generally, the *bhalins* will be selected based on their skill in cooking, and if possible a relative or *jahan* member who can cook is preferred over non-relatives. If there is no relative who can cook then they will prefer someone who is from their own part of the village i.e., *koyelachi* or *choyelachi*. If it is rare to find someone from their part of the village, the

bhalin who is from the other part of the village can also be selected. If the feast is very small, only one *bhalin* (he will be the *mu bhalin*) can be selected. If the feast is of average size three *bhalins* (among these three, one *mu bhalin* will be selected) are needed, and if the feast is of very large size six *bhalin* (among these six, one *mu bhalin* will be selected) are needed. One or two days before the feast the *bhoye-bhalin pa:* (*pa:*-guests) is organized by house which is organizing the feast to discuss what items will be required for making the cuisines. The family will tell their estimated number of guests whom they are planning to call for *bhoye*. The *bhalins* who are experts in making the analysis, what and how much in quantity the item is needed, will discuss this as a part of *bhoye-bhalin pa:*. *Bhalins* are also requested to taste the *aila* and other alcoholic beverages to check whether it is made up to the mark of the feast expectations. A small feast will be organized in honour of the guests for their time and the services, which they are going to render in the feast. On the *bhoye* day, the *bhalins* are responsible for taking care of the cooked items and see whether the items are sufficient for the coming guests. The *bhalins* (especially *mu bhalin*) is responsible for the cooked food to be preserved in a separate room and he is expected to not to allow youngsters and small children into the room where the food is preserved. This room in the *guthi chhen* (which is commonly hired by the families who are celebrating the feast) also contains the *guthi's* god where the *bhalins* offer food first even before tasting the food. In addition to the *bhalins* appointed formally by the families who are celebrating the life cycle ritual, there will be *bhalins* (mainly to assist in serving the food for the guests) who are mostly friends and family members who serve the guests with cuisines in the *bhoye*. They are referred as *kacha bhalin* (*kacha* meaning branch). After the *bhoye*, the family which organized it has to call for another post *bhoye-bhalin pa:*, on this day the *bhalins* (*mu bhalin*) will be presented food and clothes as a thanks giving for the services rendered by them for the *bhoye*. Along with the *mu bhalin* the *kacha bhalin* will also be invited (who are generally adults and middle aged people who helped in the feast to serve the cuisines for the guest) for food but the clothes will not be given to them.

The *bhalins* for the *guthi* feast is selected turn wise as per the number of the household representing the *guthi*. As same as every year *pala* changes, the *bhalin pala*

also changes, along with some assistant *bhalins* to help him out to cook and serve the food. Some other *guthis* conveniently make provisions to accommodate one senior and one junior *guthiyar* who can train and who should be trained to be a *bhalin*.

One of the main functions of the *guthi* is to organize the communal feast for its members from the economic sources the *guthi* has. Now days the *guthi* had lost most of its land and the *guthi* feasts are organized by equal contribution from its members. When cooked for a big group, it always costs cheaper and large number of items can be cooked. During the *jatara*, 5-8 days of feast is organized by the *guthis*, where the food served cannot possibly be eaten by single person when he sits for the feast, the *guthiyars* are allowed to carry the food items to the feast. During the ritual feast near the *pingal*, it has been observed that, the *guthiyar* often come with carriers to take the food which is excess as the items are more and the food should be distributed equally among all the *guthiyars*. At least twice in a month, every individual is invited for a feast either by his friends or by the *jahans* or the *guthi* who may also organize the feast. In this way, it is ensured that all the people get food even though it is twice in a month. One of the old informants recalled how hard it was in those days to get good nutritious food. In addition, another informant added, the agriculture would not give as much yield it is giving now a days. Another informant added that the food now-a-days are good, and availability is in abundant although the population has increased enormously. The transport and infrastructure have made it possible for the food to arrive from every part of Nepal. Another woman informant mentioned that they (the married out daughters) used to wait for a festival in order to taste meat. The poverty and lack of good agricultural products (relativity to the modern day context) and other business opportunities and lack of meat, the people had to wait until the big festivals happen. The natal house of every woman will call their *mhyay macha* for the feast in which the natal family had to serve meat. Another informant had said that, when they organize the feast for their *mhyay macha*, they had to go to Patan to buy the meat, as meat was not available within the village. The lack of infrastructure and commuting facilities to the valley made the valley vulnerable for food availability. The food production of the village may not have been sufficient for sustenance and they might have needed an external support. The lack of business and modern opportunities to earn

the livelihood in different means can also be a reason for the shortage of food. It is generally an agreed view from the informants that the food availability in those days was very less and having good food by the family was possible only when they are organizing feast for their *mhyay macha* or when the *guthi* organizes the feast.

Because of the above reasons, the Newars generally greet⁸⁹ each other by asking ‘*ja ne dhuna?*’ which means ‘did you have your food?’ at morning and night. In the afternoon, they greet by asking ‘*baji ne dhuna?*’ If yes, the other person will reply ‘*dhuna.*’ If no, they will say ‘*manayani.*’ The people, who have experienced lack of food as a major problem in the past might have come up with this practice of greeting each other to make a point to enquire, at least in theory about the other person’s situations in the matter of having food.

Because of the historical experiences, the Newars place a high value on food. Moreover, currently the organizing of a feast in a grand way has become a yardstick to measure the economic status of a person. However, if a poor person cannot organize a grand feast, he should seek permission from the *thakali* of his *depcha* and is expected to organize the feast at least for one person from the family in his *depcha*. Though the history of food shortage and other factors are there, the Newar culture trained its people to share the food, which they obtain. As a result of the tradition, the people who can afford to distribute any food items will come to the streets with *halmula* or any popped grains and it will be commonly seen that every time one or the other person will be distributing some eatables for others randomly during the small festivities. On the birthdays of their sons, it is common for mothers to share *dahu baji* (beaten rice with yoghurt). On the day of *saparu* festival, the families who have lost their dearest one in that year are supposed to distribute *kegu* (small peas) to the onlookers. It is believed that by doing so, they will prosper more and command social respect. A person’s greatness is measured in the terms of how much he/she is willing to share the food. One of the

⁸⁹ ‘*Jwojalapa*’ is a formal greeting term in the Newars. However, it is a recent elite introduction in the village, only educated and youngsters who are part of youth organization will greet each other by ‘*jwojalapa*’. Other than ‘*ja ne dhuna?*’ is the laymen term for greeting each other.

informants narrated, how a guest is supposed to be respected in Newari culture. He said ‘in our days if a guest comes and he is a person who deserves to be respected, the household is expected to offer him the fine quality of *aila* and a piece of meat and omelette had to be made and offered to him as a sign of respect. Moreover, if the person smokes tobacco the household had to arrange *hookah* or give him cigarettes. That is considered as the ultimate respect one can show to the guest’. It has also been observed that the individuals organize small feasts⁹⁰ for their very close friends this serve as additional social grouping apart from the already established social institutions of which they are members.

In recent days, the people in the process of keeping up with social expectations are being caught in the debt traps in order to organize these feasts. Lot of young informants opined that if one is unable to organize the feast in a grand, he should not be taking the pain of organizing it for the sake of others. It is always appreciated if the person can organize a grand feast if he is capable of doing that. Another young informant opined that the society always expects grand feast from a person who is unable to organize one, but appreciates a rich person if he is not organizing the feast in a grand manner for his simplicity. There is a Nepali saying, which says ‘Chhetri *bigryo mojie*, Newar *bigryo bhojle*’, which means, a Chhetri will be ruined/destroyed by lust and Newar will be ruined/destroyed by the feast. It is generally perceived by Newars and other adjacent communities that Newars spend high amount on their food and especially when it comes to show their status by organizing feasts.

⁹⁰ The co-tenant of mine (whom I was depending for some dal or curry for the dinner in exchange of the groceries) used to extend invitation for me as well along with his friends. He used to organize such small feasts at least once in a month, where very close friends of my co tenant are invited (sometimes these male friends used to come with their wives too). My co-tenant used to serve them fine quality of *aila* or any liquor which is not homemade and cook chicken. These feasts will last for three to four hours. co-tenant also informed that he also in return gets invitation in his friends’ houses for the dinner where sometimes he go with his wife, sometimes he go alone, and they maintain this close friends dinner parties regularly as a social gathering and he also mentioned that friends sometimes are the source of network for the business he does.

Gift Exchange:

The gift is generally referred as '*khu*' in Newari. The gift exchange among Newars can be broadly classified into three categories based on the occasion in which gifts are given. The gifts given during any of the life cycle rituals for those who conduct the feast, secondly the gifts given during marriage to the bride, and thirdly, the gifts carried by the *mhyay macha* during one long year of death pollution observed by the families who had lost their members.

Except during the marriage feasts where the bride is gifted with several household items required to start a new house, the gifts generally given during the other life cycle rituals and death rituals are food and clothing. The food items such as fried fish, fried egg (or uncooked egg) small quantity of *aila* (locally distilled alcohol) and a piece of meat makes the gift a good omen which is commonly referred as a *sagan*. These items are presented to the others in a style where the giver holds the brass cup with left hand and fried egg and fish with the right hand and offers it to the receiver by keeping the right hand on top of the left hand so that person who receives in the opposite direction, receives *aila* with left hand and egg and fish with right hand. These five items makes five 'M' words as mentioned by Doniger (2009). She explains the five Ms as, *matsya* (fish), *mamsa* (meat), *madya* (alcohol), *mudra* (hand posture) and *maithuna* (a symbol of sexual intercourse represented by egg). Along with this, applying yogurt on the forehead is also considered as offering *sagan* among the Newars. This yogurt is gifted to the person celebrating the life cycle ritual, which indeed can be used to serve in the on-going feast.

Apart from the ritual gifts, the common gifts are beaten rice (*baji*) and piece of unstitched cloth or the money in hand or the ritual cloth, this is garlanded to the person who wishes to show respect. These are common gifts mostly given and received by the Newars in the Thecho village. When asked what will they do with the gifts they receive, the informants replied that most of the *baji* they receive will be used for the on-going feast and the clothes they receive are used either to stitch clothes to their size or the same received piece of cloth is used to given to others. The reciprocity of gift exchange in the form of food and clothing supports the argument discussed earlier that lack of good food

production and availability of less resources may have lead the people to adopt customs which allows them to keep reciprocating the main basic items such as food and clothing.

Mhyay Macha among the Newars:

Women have a special role in the social organization among the Newars. They act as a bridge between consanguine and affinal relations of a kin group. The married out daughters are respected and affectionately invited for all the feasts. Though she is married she always has a special position and should be treated with respect by her natal family. Nepali writes ‘with regard to the respect due from children, while the son is expected to pay obeisance so much as to place his head on the feet⁹¹ of his parents, the position of a daughter is different: she is given a differential treatment on higher plane. Thus unmarried daughters⁹² are never allowed to touch the feet of either of the parents or of the other elders. While greeting her elders, she has simply to say *Bhagiyati*’ (1965, p. 273). Newars practice patriliney when it comes to pass the position, property, or name of the family or caste name. However, the aspect of patriarchy is very obfuscatory through the observation within the village. The Newars give important to elders⁹³. When they mention about the head of the household, the elder might be of from any gender. Taking decisions and running the family affairs or monitoring the expenses of the house construction or the feast expenses is done by who is good at managing the things irrespective of their age and gender. In the context of domestic violence between husband and wife, one of the informant opined ‘whoever is strong in beating others will show the dominance in the family⁹⁴’. The typical stereotype of patriarchal society where the

⁹¹ As a mark of respect, the Youngers are expected to touch their head to the knees of the elders. It is mentioned elsewhere about how the newly joined *guthiyars* are supposed to touch all the elders’ knees to show his obeisance.

⁹² Though some of the informants have said that, even unmarried daughters are allowed to touch the feet of the parents. It is never been observed during the fieldwork. Some of the informants said that, they are equal to *kumari* goddess; hence, it will be inappropriate to make them touch the feet of the elders. This also shows the respect the women have in the Newar society.

⁹³ Not only the family, the Newar society itself can be to some extent called as society of Gerontocracy (a decision making process or rule by the group of people who are significantly elder than the adult population in that given society).

⁹⁴ Though this was said as a joke, no such quarrels were observed or informed during the field study. Nonetheless, husband and wife fighting each other are common.

women are subjugated and viewed merely as the objects of sex and reproduction and treated as a secondary citizens by not giving freedom to the women in the decision making process, not allowing women to talk to others freely, women once married out perceived as outsiders and expected to maintain distance relations are not observed within the Newars of this village.

The group of married-out daughters and their spouses and their descendants including the grand children are commonly referred as *mhyay macha* (*mhyay* meaning daughter and *macha*⁹⁵ child, or small). All those who come under this group is considered as one group and classified as *mhyay macha*. Similarly, the sons and their spouses and their descendants are referred as *kya macha* (*kya* meaning son). The married-in daughters are referred as *bahu macha* (*bahu*, meaning daughter-in-law). The group of married out daughters, who are called *mhyay macha*, always have an importance in the natal family. *Mhyay macha* also act as a link between the group related by blood and the group related by alliance. These *mhyay macha* were given adequate respect and often invited to the feasts organized in the natal house of the married-out daughters. This section tries to explore and analyse the relationship between the *mhyay macha* and their natal house (natal house here means the parents of the married out daughters and the brothers including their spouses and the children who take the parents position in the process of ‘development cycle’ of domestic group).

Obligation of the Natal Family towards the Mhyay Macha and Vice Versa:

The maternal uncle (MB) called as *paju* in Newari plays a key role in the life cycle rituals and also in the lives of his *bhincha* (ZS/ZD) (sometimes group of *bhinchas* are called as *bhincha khala*). Similarly, the paternal aunty (FZ) called *nini*, also plays a key role in the life cycle rituals of her brother’s children. In each life cycle ritual, the role of *nini* and *paju* are discussed above, in the kinship obligation section. Apart from their participation in the life cycle rituals of the *bhincha khala*, the children have a right to go to their *nini* or *paju* house on the holidays. It is often observed in the field study that the sons are sent to

⁹⁵ The elders often refer the children while calling them as ‘*macha thanawa*’ meaning child come here.

their *paju* house and the family receives their *bhincha* to spend the holidays. The *paju* shows a kind of love, which is not shown towards the son. The *bhincha* is freer in the *paju* house than in his own house. The kinship behaviour of the *bhincha* towards *paju* or *nini* is a playful relationship, whereas it is an avoidance relationship in general towards his father. Nepali writes that “he has to be loved and respected; he should never be scolded nor treated to harsh words. He must not be allowed to touch the feet of his mother’s brother” (1965, p. 280). It is not the obeisance which is expected from the *paju-bhincha* relationship but love and affection.

Apart from the obligation in participating and giving gifts to the *bhincha*’s life cycle rituals, the *mhyay macha* are given more importance during the invitation extended to the feast. The *mhyay macha* stands next in the line after the *jahans* to be called to the feast organized by any family. Feasting and gift exchange should be considered as an activity of ‘economic reciprocity’ determined by social obligation on part of the both natal house and the *mhyay macha*.

The *mhyay macha* has the obligation to bring the feast item during the house construction of their natal house. They will find out the date from neighbours when their natal family is planning to construct the roof of the new house. The *mhyay macha* has the obligation to take feast and help them in the heavy work demanded for such work. It is also the obligation of the natal house to do the same when the *mhyay macha* is constructing their house. The *mhyay macha* is also obliged to participate in the agricultural works when the natal house is going to the rice plantation and harvest. The natal house informs that they are going to the rice plantation or harvest, and the *mhyay macha* will come to help their natal house, and the natal house has to provide them decent feast with meat. The natal house also has the obligation when the *mhyay macha* is going to rice plantation and harvest. The both families just have to inform each other and this invitation is often determined by a lack of workforce. While organizing any life cycle rituals, the *mhyay macha* or the natal house takes an interest in extending help to each other in the feast organizing and serving and post feast works and all.

Mhyay macha has to be specially invited for *nakhatya* (*nakha* is festival and *thya* is an invitation). For any major festival such as *Indra jatara*, *mathaya (saparu)*, village *jatara* and *dashain*, the *mhyay macha* has to be invited to every major festival. On an average, every family has to invite their *mhyay macha* for five festivals within a week's time of the completion of the festival. One of the old informant while recalling how in her young age, they have to wait for the *nakhatya* to have a meat item as a part of the food. She also adds, the brothers or the natal house have the obligation to provide decent food to the *mhyay macha*. Since availability of meat within village is not so easy, the brothers have to go to Patan and buy meat for the *nakhatya*. The economic opportunity for earning the livelihood for the people was minimal, and the women could not demand meat in regular food in the husband's house. However, the brothers have this obligation to feed sisters with meat and sisters used to look forward for having a good feast during the *nakhatya*. Generally, those who have a big group of *mhyay macha*, may have to organize a feast for nearly 60-80 people. Her natal family will invite the married out daughters. Often the husbands may or may not join the *nakhatya* but the children and the married-out daughters will join the feast. Not only for the *nakhatya*, has the natal family also had the obligation to invite the *mhyay macha* whenever they organize feast in their house even for being the *guthi's pala*. One of the *guthiyar* opined that this is one of the reasons why *pala: ta:* becomes so hard for small *guthis*, as they not only have the obligation to organize the feast for the *guthiyars* but also have to call the *mhyay macha* for the feast. This often involves huge amount of money to organize the feast and it gets worse if the *guthi* does not have any economic support.

The *mhyay macha* comes with feast items during the *mayya khwa soyegu*, 'seeing the mother's face' (Newar Mother's day), *abuya khwa soyegu*, 'seeing the father's face' (Newar Father's day) and *khija pooja* (worshipping the brother). On these three festivals, if the married out daughter is coming for the first time after her marriage, she arranges the feast in a grand way to offer food to her mother on *mayya khwa soyegu*, to her father on *abuya khwa soyegu* and to worship brother for his long life and prosperity on the *khija pooja*. After the first time of her marriage the feast might be of less grandeur but nonetheless the married out daughter comes to her natal house to offer food and worship

her mother, father and brothers. The worshipping of brother by the sisters stands as an outstanding practice to emphasise the relationship between the brother and sister in the Newari kinship and culture. Worshipping the brother is called as *khija pooja*, *khija* generally means younger brother but all brothers are worshiped by the sisters. Especially the worshipping of brother takes place in a grand way with many items to feast on the first *khija pooja* of the newly married out daughter. The husband's family on receiving the food items⁹⁶ and other *pooja* items on the *mha: pooja* (which is celebrated the day before the *khija pooja*) counts how many plates have been sent and what are the items and how many eggs have been sent, so that he can send more or equal number of items in order to command the social respect in the in-law's house. It has been perceived by the villagers recently that more lavish and more the number of items served, the respect you command from others. In this particular case, the groom's family make sure that they are not getting low in sending any of the items along with the bride when she goes to worship her brothers in her natal house. The feast preparations start from morning. Once every item is prepared and the *pooja* items are bought they should be taken by the sister from her in-law's house to natal house to worship her brother.

Not only the recently married girls come to their natal house to worship their brother but also all the married girls do come to their natal house with the feast items and *pooja* items to worship their brother. When asked why they are worshipping their brothers the informants have narrated the following story. 'Once there lived a brother and a sister, who are very affectionate with each other. But when the time of his brother is up and it is time for him to move to the next world, the Yama (the god of death) had sent his servants to bring his soul from his body to the next world. But feeling sad for the fact that she has to part with her brother in this life, the sister wanted to beg and pray *yama dut* and save her brother's life. So when these *yama dut*⁹⁷ had come she begged them not to

⁹⁶ Sending the food items and the ritual items, which are used to celebrate along with big fancy garland to be adorned by newlywed son-in-law on the day of *mha: pooja*, is an obligatory for the natal families of the bride for the newly wed daughter.

⁹⁷ Nepali (1965, p. 383) mentions the story in a different manner, "among the Newars, in this worship, the elder brother is regarded as Yamaraj the god of death and the younger one as Chitragupta, Yama's

take her brother as she cannot imagine the life without her brother. But reluctantly the *yama dut* refused her request of not taking her brother's soul. As a response the sister decided to trick, she requested the *yama dut* that since it is the last day of her brother, they should grant her permission to worship and offer feast for the *yama dut* and her brother, after which they could take her brother. Without knowing what they are promising the *yama dut* had given her boon saying that they would not take her brother unless she finishes her worship to her brother and he finishes eating his food. On getting this boon the sister started preparing to worship her brother and simultaneously she started preparing food for all of them. She brought the items such as walnut, *toshi* (belongs to citrus species which is used to make pickles, and which looks alike when it is fresh and dry) and a special flower which is violet in colour which look similar when it is fresh and when it is dry, and were included in the worshipping items. She starts the *pooja*, keep all the *pooja* items in front of her brother and the *yama dut*. She does this *pooja* through the night. Getting vexed with the delay, the *yama dut* force her to finish the *pooja* fast but she reminds them of their boon to her and she continues her *pooja* very slow and she gifts him the walnut and *toshi* and makes him wear the garland made up of the violet flower and tells him that the *pooja* should be considered complete only when he eats this walnut and *toshi* and when the flowers in his garland wither away after getting dry when she ends the *pooja* and give them food. Not knowing that they have been tricked the *yama dut* wait for the walnut and *toshi* to get dry and the flowers to wither away which never happens as the walnut looks same when it is fresh and dry as same as the *toshi* and the violet flowers. The walnut is also hard to break which the brother pretends that he is unable to break it because of its hardness and therefore, escapes death. That is how the death of her brother is postponed with the bravery and intelligence of her sister. Newars believe that this is the reason why the brother and sister relationship is very important in the Newari culture. They are meant to protect each other in the hardships and share their joy and prosperity. The relationship between brother and sister can be observed in one's life time. The obligations brother has to fulfill in his sister's

assistant. If the brothers themselves were being treated as Yamaraj and Chitragupta, it is strange that it should be necessary to wish for their long life".

children life and vice-versa in fact frames the structure of kinship between the two different groups cemented by the married out daughter.

In the month of *thachala*, the Newari festival called *sithinakha* or *mhyay macha nakha* is celebrated. They cook an item called *wo:* with green gram, black gram and different types of grams such as *mu*, *mayay*, *musu*, *ka:su*, *rahar*. The Number of grains can also be used based on the economic status of the family. The grains are grinded and kept for one day for fermentation and they make this *wo:* in a circular shape which looks similar to the south Indian dish *pessarattu*. Some people make this *wo:* even steamed like a south Indian dish *idli*. It is believed that they have to celebrate this festival to eat this dish. It is believed that eating this item gives them strength to work in their paddy fields. They believe that the dish has to be folded and eaten and it symbolically represents the folded back of the human while working in the field, and they believe that by eating so they will not get back pain after working in the fields. On this festival the newly married out daughters (as well as general *mhyay macha*) are invited back to their natal home during this celebration. When asked why the festival is named as *mhyay macha nakha*, one of the informant has narrated the following story: ‘once during the *mhyay macha nakha*, one of the newly married out daughter is supposed to cook this item for the rest of the family members in her husband’s house. As they were living in the joint family she needed to work more on making this item. The more she made, the more people in the house started eating and it continued till the end of the day. Being frustrated with the work for the in-laws, she fell on the pan and died’. Hence, girl’s parents usually believe that it is very important to invite their daughter to this celebration and especially if she is married out newly. Once she has given birth to a child they consider that she will be fine in her in-law’s house. Apart from this belief, eating these items give them good nutritious food as it is made in a very healthy way.

The *mhyay macha* and the natal house does not really part from each other. This might be the reason why Newars in the village have preferred to marry out their daughters within the nearest vicinity possible. The following table shows the details of

married-out daughters in different geographical setting within the district and within the valley (see table 27).

Table 27: Number of Married out Daughters within and out of the Valley from Thecho

Place	<i>Gopali</i>	<i>Maharjan</i>	<i>Mali</i>	<i>Napit</i>	<i>Shahi</i>	<i>Kapali</i>	Total
Lalitpur							
BadiGoan/Burme		14					14
Bhangla Mukhi		01					01
Bulu		14					14
Bungamati		06	09		01		16
Champi					01		01
ChapaGoan		39			01	01	41
Dhaphakhel		07	05				12
Ghabhal		01	01				2
Godavari		01					01
Gwarko		01					01
Harsidhi		09					09
Himadol		02		01			03
Khokhana		20					20
Lele		02	01				03
Lubu		02	01	01		01	05
Patan		22	04		03		29
PianGoan			01				01
Pulchowki		01					01
SanaGoan		03				01	04
Sanepa		01					01
Sidhipur		03					03
Sunakothi		60	01				61
Thecho	01	313	58		02		374
Tikka Bhairav		01					01

Kathmandu							
Dhallu					01		01
Dhankot	04						04
Kalimati			01				01
Kathmandu		15	04				19
Narayanthan						01	01
Pharphing		02		01			03
Bhakthpur							
Bhakthpur		04					04
Timmi		01		01	03	03	08
Kirtipur							
Kirtipur		07	02		01		10
Other than these three places							
America		02					02
Bhapal		01					01
Butwol					01		01
Dharan					01		01
Delhi			01				01
Hetowda			01				01
Out of valley		09					09
Pangae		01					01
Sankwae						01	01
Sindhupalchowk						01	01
Sincha		01					01
TOTAL	05	566	90	04	15	09	689

The Lalitpur district has 618 married out daughters from Thecho, followed by Kathmandu district having 29 married out daughters; Bhaktapur district has 12 married out daughters and Kirtipur has 10 married out daughters from Thecho. Other than these three districts, 20 married out daughters are situated in the places out of the valley, Hetedo, Delhi and so on.

Sister, Ritual, Feast, and Gift Exchange is an integral part of Newars. These four variables were interconnected which cannot be understood in isolation. The ritual dictates which kin member has what obligations to follow, and the ritual also specifies how the sister (married out daughters) has certain obligation towards their natal family, and vice versa. Any ritual is followed by the feast, either small or great feast, where the exchange of food and gifts happen, making these four components of Newari culture very important in understanding the social organization in total. Each member as dictated by their culture follows the norms; in exchanging either service or materials in the form of gift to each other. The 'delayed reciprocity' of the gifts ensures that norms are followed; interaction takes place while exchanging the gifts. The married out daughter cementing the bond between their natal family and the family they are married into plays a key role in the Newar kinship structure as. As Mauss (1966), points out gift giving is not merely economic activity but it is part of social obligations reflecting or expressing society's underlying social structure. The gift giving takes place in Newars during many occasions. A kin member choosing to cease the relationship with another kin member simply avoids attending the feast organized by the latter and stops giving gifts. The gift giving and exchanging the resources in the form of organizing feast shows the underlying principle of social organization of the Newars of Thecho village.

CHAPTER V

GUTHI ORGANIZATION AND OTHER GROUP FORMATIONS IN THE CHO

The fight with nature for survival might have led to human interdependence. That may have been the reason for formation of groups, which in turn led to the formation of a society itself. Fox states, “all primates developed society as a weapon in the struggle for survival...in the larger groups, everyone is to some extent everyone else’s responsibility” (1967, p. 29). Traditional institutions, such as family, marriage, kinship, and caste, are prominent examples for this. The groups once formed, the members interact and the interactions will give rise to repeated observed patterns, and these patterns emerge as a social norm leading, these groups to institutionalize themselves. Though these institutions are subjected to change from time to time, one or the other form of structure continues to exist against the odds posed by modernization. The continuity is the result of such groups having high values and the necessity to sustain them, no matter how they change their structure and function on a day-to-day basis.

Different societies form different groups, which are unique given their culture. The group formation among the Newar is not the first of its kind. Lowie (1966) explains different kinds of sodalities, such as feasting societies of Omaha Indians, the Chinese have cooperative loan societies, merchant and craft guilds, associations for visiting the sick, watching the crops, praying for the dead, making pilgrimages to their sacred mountains, maintaining the village temple etc., He further gives us examples of different sodalities, such as men’s societies, secret societies barring the other gender or non members from participating in it, exclusive clubs (Ibo men’s club excludes slaves as well as women), age classes for bachelors and spinsters, economic sodalities to help each other in the trade and merchandis, etc., One can boil down to the argument by saying each and every human being who lives in a society is a member of one or more groups. The sodalities help to address the issues which other traditional, institutionalized groups, such as family, kinship and caste, failed to address. It is more like what Mallinowski

(1969) explains, 'The need determines the function'. Culture determines the kind of social institutions that are feasible in a society. It further depends on historical, social and geographical factors that a society experiences.

Anthropologists and sociologists who are interested in understanding social organization of any community find it hard to abstain from studying, evident and explicit social groupings. Evans-Pritchard (1956) studied Nuer and Malinowski (1922) the Trobriand Islanders, it was evident that the anthropologist had no choice but to focus on traditional social institutions formed based on kinship ties that were prevalent in the society. However, in the changing context, anthropology does not provide enough apparatus to understand other group formations that are not based on kinship ties in the context of Newars understanding *guthi* poses a challenge. Robin Fox quotes 'blood, as the adage has it, is thicker than water' (1967, p. 15). So far, anthropologists perceived blood as an important factor to study, but they failed to an extent to recognize the importance of water along with it. Water may not be as important as blood. Nonetheless, water is essential to understand a society as a whole. It should be noted that it is never only the kinship that helped societies to survive. Along with kinship ties, a strong presence of non-kinship ties is also instrumental in societies' survival. Robert Parkin says, 'The development of phenomena such as the fragmentation of parental roles through new reproductive technologies and same-sex succession through adoption raises the possibility of a society in which relationships need no longer be defined at all in ways that make explicit reference to kinship. Of a society which, therefore, does not need to rely on conventional procreative methods for its continuity. Although an organization forward exclusively in this way would be an innovation, however, human society has a long history of relationship formed in other ways than kinship, names through informal associations or networks and formal contractual obligations these, of course, are alternatives' (1997, p. 128-129). It is not just alternatives to kinship or family institutions, but some communities tend to form certain social institutions that will serve as additional institutions to the existing ones. As per people's need, new social institutions emerge and continue to survive over a period of time when the groups formed are institutionalized and become part of a culture.

The Newar society poses such a challenge for an anthropologist to understand the *guthi* system (which is an institutionalized non-kinship group formation). In the anthropological literature, there are very few works on the non-kinship-based groups. The theories of anthropology may be inadequate to describe, analyse, and understand a group formation, which is not kinship-based⁹⁸ but institutionalized such as *guthis*.

Guthi:

Guthi (a group formation) is a unique social and cultural factor that can also be considered as an additional social institution of the Newars in Kathmandu valley (see also Quigley, 1985). Nepali (1965) opines that the term '*guthi*', might have originated from the Sanskrit term '*gosthi*'. Levy & Rajopadhyaya write that, Newar society has miscellaneous associations of people formed for various special reasons called *guthi*. The word is derived from Sanskrit term *gosthi*, meaning 'assembly, company, fellowship'. D.R. Regmi cites inscriptions from 'licchavi' period suggesting some of the early functions of these *gosthi*. Some groups were formed for the purpose of providing drinking water to travelers, some for the maintenance of water conduits, and others were given the responsibility of maintenance of temples and palaces. The early inscriptions also refer to state donating agricultural land to support the *guthi* materially. Such land is called "*guthi* land" and is one of the fundamental kinds of land tenure in Nepal (1992, p. 140). Before discussing the structure and function of the *guthi*, it is important to understand group formations in Thecho. The groups are formed for different purposes. Each member of this group will have certain responsibilities and obligations to fulfil while abiding by the rules put in place by a majority of the members of the group. Each group will have a purpose and a particular role to play in the larger social organization. In addition to this, each group will act as a socializing agent for its new members. The role-players can change, but the roles continue.

⁹⁸ If one considers caste as an extension of kinship, the *guthis* can also be termed as kinship based social institutions. The *guthi* comprises mostly of single caste. However, in Thecho there are few *guthis*, which have members from *Maharajans* and *Malis*. Moreover, considering all the castes members as extended kinship is not quite feasible in the context of Thecho.

The number of members varies from one *guthi* to another, but the function and the structure of the *guthi* remain the same. The larger the group, the bigger the responsibilities a *guthi* will have and more number of people sharing the work burden through division of labour. Here in the Thecho village, the *guthi* affiliates geographically to either the lower part (*koye*) or upper part (*choye*). The *guthi* will have names based on the roles they play. Naming is derived from historical significance or can be named after the god/goddess, for which the *guthi* has an essential role to play in worshipping.

Most of these *guthis* are formed by the members who are not linked through kinship but by caste and geographical affiliation. In the context of Thecho village, each caste groups have their own *guthis* with members from the same caste. Out of seven main *guthis* in Thecho, six *guthis* belong to *Maharjans* and one for *Malis* caste group. As the *Maharjans* are numerically dominant, they have six main *guthis*. Interestingly, other small *guthis* in *koyelachi* (see table 29) are formed by the members of two caste groups (*Maharjans* and *Malis*) which are formed to fulfil the certain obligations during the *Indra jatara* and village *jatara*. In another instance, the *pula sa: guthi* in *koyelachi* (see table 33) comprises *Maharjan* and *Mali* caste group people. Though it is observed that, in most of the cases the members of the *guthi* belong to the same caste, however, there are instances where members of *guthi* are also from two different caste groups. Therefore, it can be stated that, the functional needs (such as installing the goddess during *Indra jatara* etc.,) drive the formation and sustenance of these groups.

Raj guthi:

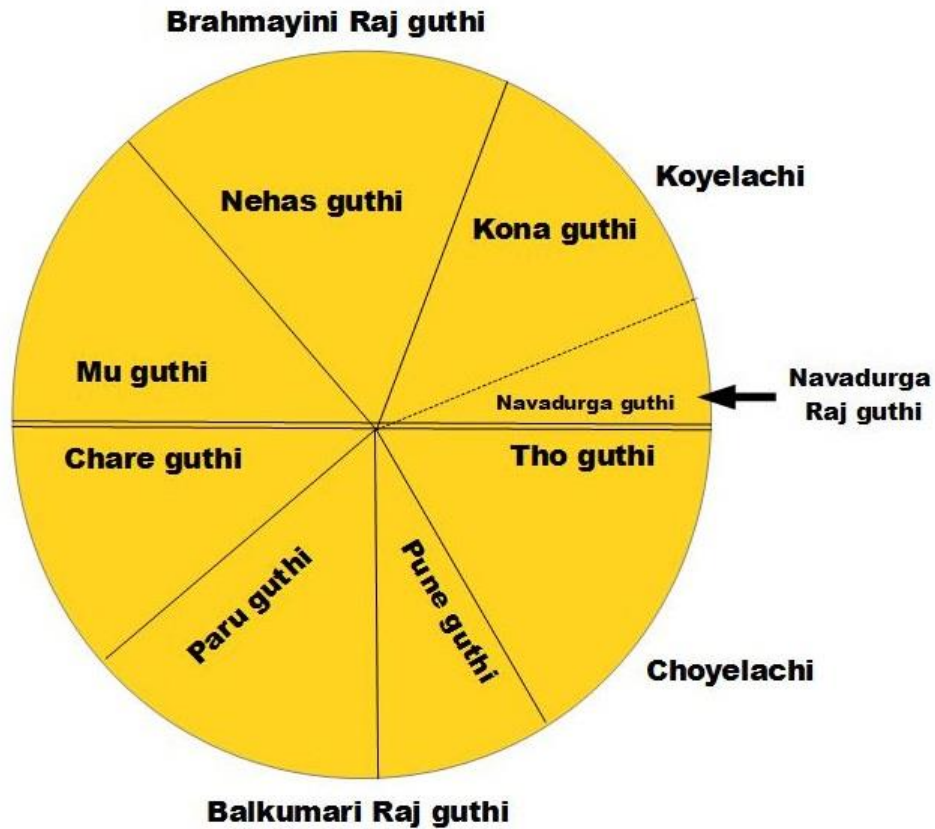
There are three *raj guthis* in Thecho village. *Brahmayini raj guthi*, *Balkumari raj guthi* and *Navadurga raj guthi* (see figure 7). The *rajguthis* are named after certain goddess of that locality. *Brahmayini raj guthi* belongs to *koyelachi* where *Brahmayini* temple (*dyo chhen*) is situated. The primary *guthis* under this *raj guthi* (*mul guthi*, *nehas guthi* and *kona guthi*) are responsible for organizing village *jatara* (carnival) for *Brahmayini*.

Balkumari raj guthi is situated in *choyelachi* where *Balkumari* temple is located. The primary *guthis* under this *raj guthi* (*pune guthi*, *charhe guthi*, *paru guthi* and *ta*

guthi) has the responsibility of organizing the village *jatara* for this goddess. The Navadugra *raj guthi* has the task of worshipping Navadurga and performing mask dance on stipulated days of a year.

The *guthis* under this *raj guthis* are the main ones in Thecho. There are seven main *guthis* in Thecho (three in *koyelachi* and four in *choyelachi*) that can be considered as main *guthis* (see table 28). These *guthis* have significant responsibilities in religious, social, and political spheres. These are vested with the responsibility of organizing the village *jatara* every year for goddess Brahmayini and Balkumari. Each *guthi* takes turn in organising the *jatara* and maintaining the *dyo chhen* (temple of the goddess) for a period of one year (from *jatara* to *jatara*). Along with the religious function, another important responsibility is these *guthis* have to cremate the dead in families that come under their jurisdiction. All the families of Newars will be affiliated to one or the other *guthi* unless the respective *guthi* has excommunicated a particular family. Once excommunicated, that family will not be accepted by any other *guthi* and in this way, a *guthi* also exercises social control over individuals. These *guthis* also have the obligation of organizing a feast for its members during the *jatara*. The number of feasts held depends on the resources that each *guthi* has and is also based on the decision taken by the *guthiyars* of the *guthi*.

Figure 7: Raj guthis and Main guthis in Thecho



Religious: Organizing the jatara and maintaining the deyo chey

Social: Cremating the dead from the families who comes under the jurisdiction of the guthis respectively

Social control: The guthi possess the right to excommunicate its members in case of not abiding the rules of the guthi

Economic: The guthi controls lands and generates income sources for its members

Political: Takes decisions and indulges in maintains of infrastructure for the benefit of village

Table 28: Details of the Main guthis in Thecho

Name of the <i>guthi</i>	No. of <i>guthiyars</i>		No. of Majos	No. of <i>Bhalin pala</i>	No. of other executive bodies	No of Days the feast has to be organized	Economic Resources	Contributions made for the feast last year	No. of <i>Thakalis</i> in the <i>guthi</i>	Caste of the <i>guthiyars</i>
	Then	Now								
koyelachi (Brahmayini Raj <i>guthi</i> and Navadurga Raj <i>guthi</i>)										
Gwa	6		Merged with Mu <i>guthi</i> , as there are very less members, in the recent past the <i>Gwa guthis</i> were sitting along with the <i>Maharjans</i> in the Feast conducted during the <i>jatara</i>							Gopali
Mul	104	99	4	2	Not active	7	25 ropanis of land, <i>guthi</i> office is given for rent for feasts, and fine amount	La pa and extra amount has to be shared by <i>guthiyars</i>	8	Maharjan
Nehas	108	105	4	2	Not active	7+1(dy o khala)	Have lands and <i>guthi</i> office is given for rent for feasts, and fine amount	La pa and extra amount has to be shared by <i>guthiyars</i>	8	Maharjan
Kona	More than the present	115 (including Navadurga <i>guthi</i>)	4	2	Not active	7 days	Have lands and <i>guthi</i> office is given for rent for feasts, and fine amount	La pa and extra amount has to be shared by <i>guthiyars</i>	8	Mali
choyelachi (Balkumari Raj <i>guthi</i>)										
Pune	30	28	4	2	Not active	7 days	Have land, <i>guthi</i> building and fine amount	Has to share the feast expenditures	5	Maharjan

<i>Paru</i>	80	58	4	2	Not active	7 days	Have land, <i>guthi</i> building and fine amount	Has to share the feast expenditures	5	<i>Maharjan</i>	
<i>Charhe</i>	42	37	3+1	<i>pala</i> relatives will help for organizing the feast	Not active	7 days +every month	Have property, <i>guthi</i> office is given for rent and fine amount	Has to share the feast expenditures	5	<i>Maharjan</i>	
<i>Tho</i>	110	92	4	8	Not active	7 days+ 1 days feast	Have property, <i>guthi</i> office is given for rent and fine amount	<i>guthi</i> property' will take care of the feast expenses	5	<i>Maharjan</i>	
Main <i>guthis</i> related to <i>Napit</i> , <i>Shahi</i> and <i>Kapali</i>											
<i>Napit guthi</i>	Less than the present	16	As the members are less, they will take the decisions and do action collectively			2-3 days	Do not have much property; the feast has to be shared among the <i>guthiyars</i> . The <i>guthi</i> meetings and		3	<i>Napit</i>	
<i>Bishnu Devi guthi</i>	18+10		The <i>guthi</i> does not have property or a <i>guthi chhen</i> , they built with tents while organizing the feast, they claimed that they have limited money and they are saving the money for emergency purposes. The <i>guthis</i> has some vessels as a property to cook for the feast							<i>Shahi</i>	
<i>Silchar he Shiva rathri guthi</i>	12 (4 are from chapagaon)		The <i>guthi</i> does not have property or a <i>guthi chhen</i> , the meetings and feast will be conducted in the <i>pala</i> house. The <i>guthi</i> has the shovel as one of the <i>guthi</i> item.							<i>Kapali</i>	

Membership in the Main Guthi:

Getting membership in the *guthi* is based on inheritance. It is expected of the eldest son to take the position of his father in *guthi*. If the eldest son refuses to take the *guthiyar*-ship, the chance will be given to the sons who are next in line. In one of the cases in the study, the eldest son changed his religion⁹⁹ and was not allowed to enter the *guthi* and the son second in line declined to take the membership. In such cases where no son is interested in taking up the membership, the family is ousted from the jurisdiction of the *guthi*. If there is a death in that family, the responsibility of cremating the body will not be on the *guthi*. If two or more sons in the family want to join *guthi* after their father's

⁹⁹See the following section for more information how a person loses his *guthi* membership.

demise, they are allowed to do so. However, the additional member should serve as a *pala*, after three years from the year of joining the *guthi*. On the first *jatara* of his joining, the new person should touch the knees of each person who is elder to him during the feast. The act is considered as initiation into the *guthi* for that new member. There are cases where the newly joined members reconsider their decision and quit the *guthi*. They are allowed to do so only when a representative of the family is still left, which ideally will be the eldest son.

When asked whether a stranger (who is a non-Newar) can join any *guthi* if he starts living in the village, informants responded in the negative. It is not possible that an additional member is allowed into the community unless that person's father or relatives are members of the *guthi*. Therefore, *guthi* membership is only open to the families who are under the jurisdiction of the *guthi*. Nonetheless, there was an instance where one *guthi* gave membership to complete strangers in the past, which cannot be dated. The *nehas guthi* has given membership to few members in the past who are believed to be migrants¹⁰⁰ to this village and the group is called non- *dyo khala*¹⁰¹ (not the gods/goddesses or assistants of the gods/goddesses of the 'mask dancers') or *mhyay macha guthiyar*. It is also believed that this group of people are sons of the married daughters, who came back to the village and settled there, as there was no one to cremate their dead in those families. In that case, the *nehas guthi*, going by a majority decision had incorporated the migrant families into the *guthi*. They were given equal respect as *guthiyars* except in two situations. One is on the day of village feast organized by Navadurga *guthi* once in twelve years, where first respect is offered to the *nehas guthi* members, as they are believed to be the original mask dancers of the Navadurga.

¹⁰⁰The whole village is considered to be recent settlement compared with adjacent Sunakoti and Chapagaon. The villagers often say that their ancestors might have come from sunakoti, lubu and other places as this land is feasible to settle down. And another informants went to the extent of saying that they are royal descendants from Kirtipur, when Pridhvi Narayana Shah attacked Kirtipur as a military conquest to the valley, the villagers who were then residents of the Kirtipur is believed to have migrated to this place called Thecho and started settling down.

¹⁰¹ *dyo khala* (*dyo* meaning gods/goddesses, *khala* meaning group) the group within the *nehas guthi* who are considered to be the original mask dancers and the assistant mask dancers (*Pomi*). The other members who are not original mask dancers are considered to be the Non-*dyo khala*.

However, the group of people considered the *mhyay macha guthiyar* will not be allowed to sit as per the order of their age. They should sit for the feast only after the *dyo khala*. In the second instance, only the *dyo khala* will sit for the feast on the day of *lakhun charhe*, as they are considered to be the original *guthiyars*. These give us a clear idea that if majority of the *guthiyars* agree, it is possible to incorporate outsiders into the *guthi*, as there are no cases in the recent past that show *guthiyars* out rightly saying that it is not feasible to entertain complete strangers as *guthiyars*.

Pala ta:

Pa in Newari means turns; *pala* is a person who bears the turn or set bearer. All the members of the *guthi* should take up *pala: ta:* as per their turn in the family. For instance, if a person dies right after his turn to become a *pala*, his son who takes up membership in his father's place need not serve as a *pala* until his family's turn comes. In a group of 100, it is sometimes possible that people will not get the chance to act as *pala* at all. Next person in the line to become *pala* will be informed three years in advance of his becoming *pala: ta:*. Moreover, he will be made an assistant to the *pala* in handling the affairs of the *guthi*. *pala: ta:* changes from *jatara* to *jatara*. A *pala* can be considered a secretary of the group. He has the responsibility of informing each and every *guthiyar* if there is a meeting, or any death in the families that come under the jurisdiction of the *guthi* (in *koyelachi*¹⁰²). Maintaining accounts of the *guthi* expenditure and keeping record of people who are not fulfilling the assigned tasks is also one of the primary responsibilities of the *guthipala*. Maintaining of *guthi* property and sacred items (see plate 5), offering regular prayers with utmost devotion to the sacred items of the *guthi* is also *pala's* responsibility. In case of *koyelachi* the *gyopala* (the *pala* of the *guthi* which is supposed to organize the *jatara* is considered the *gyopala*) will have an additional responsibility of offering prayers to the goddess Brahmayini in *dyo chhen* twice a day. *Pala* plays a critical role in *jatara* arrangements. He should be able to buy all the necessary items and delegate the work to other members for the feast. The *pala* runs the

¹⁰² The functioning of the *shi guthi* (death related group within the *guthis*) in *koyelachi* varies from *choyelachi*. See also, the following section in this chapter.

guthi with the help of other members who can be considered as office-bearers and with the advice of the *thakali puin*.

It is mandatory for every *guthiyar* to take the *pala: ta:* when his turn comes, and there is no way one can escape this. Moreover, the *pala: ta:* is perceived as a fortune. One of the informant who served as *pala* a few years ago said ‘after becoming the *pala*, I was able to focus on my business without any hurdles. In fact, the blessings of the goddess were upon our family, my children got married and grandchildren were born, I managed to buy property and in my business I made profit all because of the blessings of the Brahmayini’.

No instances were found where the members sought exemption from being *guthiyars*. However, in the case of *mul guthi*, the *guthiyars* themselves decided that they will not give *pala: ta:* to one particular *guthiyar*, who was next in line for the *pala-ta:*. One such instance is when the *guthiyar* is considered a wrong person; who was earning through thieving. The *guthiyar* was caught red-handed several times, and people even beat him up to teach him a lesson. Even after being beaten up, he was reluctant to change his behaviour, following which his brother disowned him and proclaimed that he has no relationship with him anymore. His wife also deserted him for bringing disgrace to the family by indulging in thieving and not working to earn a livelihood. As per the rules, he happens to become the *pala*, but the *majos* and *thakalis* took this issue seriously and discussed this matter thoroughly, and decided that giving *pala: ta:* to him is like giving a thief the key to *guthi* property. However, the tradition says that *pala: ta:* cannot be excused, and *guthiyars* decided that by taking some amount or land, one can seek exemption from the responsibility and thereby convinced the other *guthiyars* to agree for this proposal; after which, the next person in line will take the *pala: ta:*.

The *guthiyar* in question happens to cultivate the *guthi* land for tenancy¹⁰³, and when the Land Reforms Act was enacted, the *guthi* gave half of the land to him as per law. So the *guthi* proposed to take that land and free him from the responsibility of *pala:*

¹⁰³His father used to cultivate in the *guthi* land as tenant and he got that as an inheritance.

ta:. The *guthi* suggested that two lakh be given to him against the land cultivated by him. However, he was not ready to agree to this proposal, and wanted to be the *pala*. But *guthiyars* were not willing to give the *pala: ta:* to him, knowing that the *guthi* vessels and other property will be under the responsibility of the *pala* and he might sell them. Then the *guthiyars* proposed another plan; that money will be deposited in the cooperative for the land being cultivated by the person. The interest rate provided for that amount can be withdrawn by the person which will be a source of income till he lives. When he passes away, the deposited money will be taken back by the *guthi*. The person in question also was tempted by this offer as it gives him a stable source of income every month. The *guthi* deposited money and gave him permission to withdraw the interest. After a few months, the *guthiyar* went to the cooperative bank where the money was deposited and started creating trouble saying that, it was his money that they should allow him to withdraw how much ever he wishes to, but as the *guthi* had the money in its name, the cooperative bank declined to process his request. Irrate over this as he in an inebriated condition, went to the *guthi* and started abusing the *guthiyars* for cheating him and taking away the land from him. The *guthiyars* felt insulted, and they decided unanimously that he should be expelled from the *guthi* and his money given back to him. The *guthi* issued a notice of his expulsion, and they excommunicated him from the society as well. Now the *guthi* does not have the obligation to cremate him or his family members along with his patrilineal descents.

Thakalis and their Role in the Guthi:

Thakalis are the eldest among the *guthiyars*. They enjoy special privileges in many aspects. They are exempted from certain duties, such as attending funeral rites of the *guthi* members, or work during the cleaning of canals (though they can supervise). Age - related problems and body weakness are the reasons for exemption from certain duties. Nonetheless, the *pala: ta:* will not be exempted if any *thakali* has to take it up.

The *guthiyars* are expected to give respect to the *thakalis*, and are not allowed to use disrespectful words while addressing them. The *thakalis'* permission and advice is sought in decision-making. It is also a cultural practice among the Newars to respect their

elders by allowing them to sit first in the row during a feast; the *guthi* feast follows the same tradition. The *thakalis* alone can carry the *guthi* sacred items either from the *guthi chhen* to the *pingal* (during *jatara* for worshipping) or from *guthi chhen* to the *pala* house (after the *jatara* during the transfer of *pala: ta:* from one house to another). Even during any death, the *pala* should not touch the *shi phanga* ¹⁰⁴, one of the *thakali* should come, offer prayers and give the *shi phanga* to the *pala* from the *guthi* items, and only then the *pala* will take the *shi phanga* to the house where the death occurred.

The number of *thakalis* ¹⁰⁵ for the *guthi* varies from one *guthi* to the other, based on the size of the community. If a person becomes *thakali* for the first time within the *guthi*, during his first *jatara* as a *thakali*, the *mhyay macha* will bring food (or a particular item of sweet) for all the *guthiyars* to be served at the feast, in order to celebrate his promotion to the *thakali* position.

The elders are respected in the Newari culture. The celebration of *janku* to mark their attainment of age is one such example of how the elders are respected. This practice also determines the behaviour of the elders as they are also not expected to behave irresponsibly. They should guide youngsters and advise them to run the society peacefully. Nonetheless, one of the *guthiyars* of a small *guthi* explained that, once a *thakali* took the *falcha* land and refused to hand it over to the *guthi*. *Thakali* was paying the nominal amount as a tenancy, which was indeed burdensome for running the *guthi*. However, the *guthiyars* were unable to ask the *thakali* to give the land back owing to the dictates of culture that expected them to treat elders with reverence.

Selection of Majos:

An advisory body called *majos* (*guthis* with more number of *guthiyars* generally have four members as *majos*, and the *guthis* with less number of *guthiyars* have three members as *majos*) will be selected democratically by the *guthiyars* from among the *guthi*

¹⁰⁴A sacred cloth used to cover the dead body during the funeral procession, and this *shi phanga* is maintained by the *guthi* and taken care by the *pala*

¹⁰⁵The bigger *guthi* such as *mu*, *Nehas* and *kuna guthi* have eight members as *thakalis*, and the other small *guthis* have five or three eldest *guthiyars* as the *thakalis*.

members. These *majos* will be chosen based on their honesty, intelligence in handling certain affairs, their social behaviour, and active participation in *guthi* activities. Sometimes age and persons of certain education (as they are expected to maintain the accounts of *guthi* expenditure) are preferred to be the *majos* of the *guthi*. Once the *guthiyars* decide who the *majos* will be, the *majos* themselves will ask the permission of other *guthiyars*, who will often agree to it by saying ‘*jewu*¹⁰⁶’ (okay). The person who is selected will not have a choice but to act as a *majo*. He can continue as a *majo* for as long as he wants unless he proposes to be relieved from that post and the *guthiyars* have to agree to that. In case a majority of *guthiyars* feel that there is no other alternative to him to serve as a *majo*, the person will not have a choice but to continue as a *majo*.

The *majos* are well respected in the *guthi* and society. The *pala* seeks their advice before conveying any decision to the *thakalis* to be proposed for acceptance from other *guthiyars*. Some *guthis* prefer to select young, active *guthiyar* as a *majo*, in order to teach the affairs of the *guthi* to youngsters. One such young *majo* was congratulated and well respected by his friends and society for his achievement, since becoming a *majo* at a young age is rare.

The *majos* also help the *pala* in arrangements for the feast. They have the responsibility of buying water -buffalo to sacrifice during the *jatara* and other meat (goat, sheep or chicken) if necessary. *Majos* often have to share the expenses of buying meat and the *guthi* will pay back after collecting the contributions from the *guthiyars*. After the *pala*, the *majos* should give more time to the *guthi*.

Executive Body of the Guthi:

Apart from the advisory body, *thakalis*, there is another group within the *guthi* that can be considered as an executive body. This body is vested with the responsibility of the feast during *jatara* and other days when the feast is organized. The *pala* head is the executive body of the *guthi*. In the recent past, the executive body is more active, and it comprises

¹⁰⁶ In case of they are not okay with the candidature of a person being discussed, they can say ‘*majewu*’ to show their disagreement.

the following: *Mesyayepala* (the group within the *guthi*, that is responsible for buying water-buffalo to sacrifice or its meat for the feast). The number of *mesyayepala* varies according to the requirement of the *guthi*. *Phaisyayepala* (the group within the *guthi* responsible for buying sheep for sacrifice or its meat for the feast). Similarly, there is another four -member group called *dukcha syaye pala*¹⁰⁷ whose responsibility is to buy goats for sacrifice or for the feast in the case of *nehas guthi*. These *mesyaye*, *phaisyaye*, and *dukcha syaye palas* are expected to purchase meat with their money, and the *guthi* will pay them back after receiving contributions from each *guthiyar*. However, those who act as *mesyayepala*, *phaisyayepala*, and *dukcha syaye pala* often face issues in terms of money as it is an expensive affair to be carried out and some of the *guthiyars* say they sometimes do not have enough amount to pay for buying water-buffalo, sheep or goat for feast although they get back their money after the total expenditure is shared among the *guthiyars*. Therefore, the *majos*, take up the responsibility of *mesyayepala*, *phaisyayepala*, and *dukcha syaye pala*, and there are no such positions in the *guthis* right now.

The other group called *bhalins* (responsible for cooking and serving food during the feast) will help the *pala* in preparing the food. Each *guthiyar* will hold this position as per their turn. In the case of *nehas guthi*, one person will act as a *bhalin* (cook) every year for the feast and another person as his assistant is called *kacha bhalin*. The responsibility of *bhalin* will be taken up turn wise by the *guthiyars*. But the *kacha bhalin* will be selected by the *majos* and *thakalis*, and it is done based on his cooking skills. For instance, if the *bhalin* is an expert cook, the *kacha bhalin* has less expertise than the *bhalin* so that he can learn from *bhalin*. However, as nowadays everyone has good cooking skills, and some members might not agree to be selected as *kachabhalin* repeatedly. Given this, the *majos*, with the approval of all the *guthiyars*, decided that every year two persons would take the responsibility of *bhalin* (without differentiating who is *mu bhalin* and who is *kacha bhalin*) turn wise, without fail. To help the *bhalins* every year, one group will act as a *jajwepala* (responsible for cutting vegetables, meat,

¹⁰⁷The *nehas guthi* never had the tradition of sacrificing the sheep instead, they sacrifice goat and consume goat for the feast.

and grinding spices for the feast). If any member of the respective group is absent when his turn comes, a fine levied on him by the *bhalin*. The fine amount decided immediately by the *guthiyars* present there and the *bhalin* and *jajwepala* group alone will use it for organizing picnics.

In the case of *mu guthi* and *kona guthi* and other small *guthis*, the system varies slightly. With *mu guthi*, each *pyue*¹⁰⁸ takes up the responsibility of helping the *bhalins* for preparing food for the feast. The functioning of each *guthi* varies as per the requirement and with the approval of the majority of its members. In case of *mu guthi*, if it is *jyo pala*, there will be additional *to: twe pa* (six to eight members). These *to: twe pa* are supposed to brew rice-beer and if it is not tasty then a majority of the *guthiyars* especially *majos*, and *thakalis* opine that the beer is not good. The *twe pa* will be levied four mana of rice as fine, this is to ensure that the *guthiyars* brew the beer with utmost care, the *to: twe pa* do brew the beer carefully in order to avoid social embarrassment.

The other *guthis* in *choyelachi* which is not as big as the three *guthis* in *koyelachi*, manage to cook food as per their tradition. Each and every *guthi* with their own rules and regulations can be considered as a separate entity, when it comes to taking decisions pertaining to their *guthi* but not the whole village. The decisions pertaining to the whole village, such as changes in organizing the *jatara* or anything to do with infrastructural duties, should be decided collectively by all the other *guthis* involved.

Cremation Responsibilities:

As mentioned earlier, one of the primary responsibility of the main *guthis* is to cremate the dead of the families that come under the purview of their respective *guthis*. The functioning of cremating the dead by the *guthi* varies from *koyelachi* to *choyelachi*. In *koyelachi*, the main three *guthis* will take the responsibility of cremating the dead, whereas, in *choyelachi*, there are two different *guthis* called *mhasu khwa* and *hyanmu khwa* with ten members in each *guthi* who take the responsibility. These ten members

¹⁰⁸ *Pyue* is a group within the main *guthi*.

may or may not be a *guthiyar* in the other four main *guthis* in *choyelachi*. However, their families are associated with one or the other four *guthis* in *choyelachi*.

Koyelachi:

In each *guthi* in the *koyelachi*, *guthiyars* again are sub-divided into four groups, namely, *jata pyue*¹⁰⁹, *maila pyue*, *saila pyue* and *kancha pyue*. Based on their age, they belong to each cluster. Sometimes the younger ones are placed in all the four *pyue* in order to share the work burden of elder people in the *guthi*. The responsibility of staying until the body is incinerated assigned turn wise to each *pyue*. Each group has to arrange everything during the death in families who come under the purview of their respective *guthis*. Turn wise, each group will take the responsibility for each death. In case of death, all the *guthiyars* or at least the representatives of the *guthiyars*' family are expected to attend cremation, failing to do so, they would be levied a fine of Rs. 150 (or as per the daily wage in labour market), if the absentee belongs to the group which is not responsible. If the absentee belongs to the group that has to arrange the funeral, he has to pay double the amount as fine. This amount changes from time to time every year. During cremation, the group that is responsible for it, should stay until the body incinerates, the other *guthiyars* leave right after the pyre is set on fire. The *pala* will maintain a record of who all attended. He calls all the *guthiyars* by their names and takes attendance in the cremation ground itself. The three groups that are not responsible for cremation arrangements can leave right after the attendance is taken. The first eight elders or *thakalis* are exempted from such duties, and will not be levied fine for not attending the cremation.

In order to meet the expenses of cremation, the *guthi* collects a payment from all the families under their jurisdiction. Each year, the *guthiyars* pay for about 50-60 kilograms of wood, as storing timber is a problem. The *guthiyars* collect the equivalent amount and buy wood when it is necessary. Women, unmarried sons and married ones too living with their father (*dojas*) are exempted from paying for the wood or money for

¹⁰⁹ All the members within the age group of 60 or above considered as one *pyue*, they are placed in the *jata pyue*. The members within the age group of 50-60 placed in *maila pyue*. Some *guthis* prefer to have the mixed up age group in this *pyue* in order make the *pyue* more functional.

the *guthi*. The married sons who are separated from their father who is a *guthiyar* (*piyanci*) should pay for the *guthi* either in wood or in money as decided by the *guthi*.

The *guthiyar* should pay every year, but for the *dojas*, they have to pay once in their lifetime when they attain 16-17 years of age. Once the sons separate from their father and establish their own family, they will be considered as *piyanci*, and they have to pay certain decided amount to the *guthi* every year. It is mandatory on part of the *guthiyars* and the *piyanci* to pay this even when there is no death in their families.

The *pala* will have a special cloth called *shi phanga* or *dyo panga* used for covering the dead during funeral procession, and this cloth will be saved for the next time. It is *pala*'s responsibility to inform every *guthiyar* about any death among the *guthiyars*. The families where the death happens should invite people from the *guthi* (at least the *pala*, the eight important people who carry the body and other material relevant for cremation) for the feast on the 12th day of the death. It is also the responsibility of *mu: guthi* to cremate the body of a stranger in the village¹¹⁰.

Choyelachi:

The responsibility of cremating the dead varies from *koyelachi* to *choyelachi*. In *koyelachi*, it is taken care by the respective *guthis* of the dead person. However, in the *choyelachi* there are two *goan guthis* with ten members each to take the cremation responsibilities. These two *goan guthis* work independently without any intervention from the four main *guthis* in *choyelachi*. All the families in *choyelachi* will affiliate themselves with one of the main *guthis* as well as one of the *goan guthis*. The two *guthis* are called *mhasu khwa*¹¹¹ (yellow faced) and *hyanmu khwa* (red faced).

¹¹⁰The informants have skipped into serious argument in between the interview about which *guthi* should cremate if the researcher happens to die in the village.

¹¹¹ When asked what is the reason for naming the *guthis* in this manner, the informants said that, some people's face look yellow and some others look red; hence, the ancestors might have named the *guthis* after this physical features of people.

Losing Membership:

As it is already mentioned, the *guthi* is a closed group where entry is only for families associated with that particular *guthi*. The *guthi* holds all the rights to cancel any membership if it sees it fit to do so. A *guthiyar* will lose his membership if he happens to change his religion. In one of the instances a *guthiyar* who stopped eating meat (because he performed *satyanaryan vrata*), quit the *guthi* eventually, as he was unable to participate in any of the *guthi* activity¹¹².

If the *guthiyar* dies without leaving any heir to inherit his position within the *guthi* and there is no male representative to take up the position, then the *guthiyars* number comes down. But the *guthi* will still have the obligation to cremate the dead in that particular family. If sons refuse to take their father's position, the family's *guthi* membership will be cancelled. If sons or the *guthiyars* migrate without informing the *guthi* and do not attend *guthi* activities for three years, the *guthi* membership will be cancelled. If a *guthiyar* dies at a very young age and leaves a young male child as his heir, the *guthi* withholds the membership until the child comes of age. If the member disobeys the *guthi* rules and does not abide by the social norms by not taking up certain *guthi* responsibilities, then he will lose his membership. The expulsion letter¹¹³ is pasted all around the village and given to the newspapers too.

Functions of the Main Guthis in Thecho:

Social Control:

The *guthis* hold social control over members, to maintain order in the society. Individuals who do not abide by the norms of the *guthi* or its culture will receive warnings from the *guthi*. The ultimate warning is of being expelled from the *guthi*. The expulsion means his

¹¹² Eating meat and having alcohol at least for the ritual purpose is considered as one of important ritual of the *guthi* gatherings or feasts. Hence, those who started abstaining from eating meat or drinking alcohol eventually lose their membership. Those who have changed to Christianity also abstain from eating meat and drinking alcohol.

¹¹³See the appendix V for the expulsion letter pasted Balkumari *raj guthi* in Thecho during the field study. (the names have been removed for maintaining the confidentiality of the person who had expelled from the *guthi*)

family including all his patrilineal descent will not have any *guthiyars*¹¹⁴ to cremate their dead in that family. As *guthis* are closed groups, no other *guthi* will accept him as a *guthiyar*. The traditional way of social control has been threatened by the modern practice of taking the dead body to Pasupathinath temple at Kathmandu. It is considered that taking the dead to incinerate at Pasupathinath temple will give credit in the afterlife of the dead person. In the recent past, due to lack of financial support, most people depended on the *guthis* to cremate their dead. However, opening up of economic opportunities for many and with vehicles available to carry the body, traditional practices are in jeopardy.

The *guthi* as a group always ensures that the social order is maintained. It takes decision based on majority votes within the *guthi*. Each *guthi* can be considered as small autonomous pockets within the village. If a person has to be controlled, the other *guthiyars* will approach the *guthi* to which the person is affiliated to for reminding him about the expected behaviour in the society.

Equality is maintained when it comes to allocation of *guthi* responsibilities or while sharing the contribution for the feast or the other expenses. Being a *guthiyar* and acting within the *guthi* rules ensures the person social respect. One of the informants says that a *guthiyar* who always abstains from work called by the *guthi* will face the wrath of the *guthiyars* in the form of high amount of fine. The fine levied on the absentee *guthiyars* will be calculated during the conclusion of the village *jatara*. If any *guthiyar* is not in a position to pay, he can pay in the coming year but with interest.

Religious Function of the Main Guthis:

One of the primary responsibilities of the *guthis* is to organize the village *jatara* for Brahmayini and Balkumari goddesses in *koyelachi* and *choyelachi*, respectively. This

¹¹⁴ A rich family can be able to manage to cremate the dead, either by managing the resources in the village or by the taking the dead body to the Pasupathinath. However, the social embarrassment of cremating your dead without the support of *guthi* is high. The poor family finds it hard to manage the resources for cremating the dead.

takes place every year. The three *guthis* in *koyelachi* get their turn to organize the *jatara* for Brahmayini and the four *guthis* in *choyelachi* to organize the *jatara* for Balkumari¹¹⁵.

Mask Dance by the Navadurga Guthi:

One of the important religious functions of the Navadurga *guthi* is to perform mask dance. The *guthi* has the members from the *Mali* caste group. The *guthi* with the membership of 35 people is unique that, these members are allowed to retire and the members can be selected by the other *guthiyars*. This is the privilege given for the *guthiyars* as they grow old they may not perform the mask dance. The *guthi* performs mask dance in front of the Navadurga twice in a year. This *guthi* is also responsible for conducting *barah baras mela* which happens once in twelve years. These *guthi* members are automatically the members of *kuna guthi*, which is also *guthi* of *Mali* caste group. However, the *kuna guthi* members are not allowed to sit for the feast organized by the Navadurga *guthiyars*. The mask dance is performed during the village *jatara* also.

Charhe Pooja:

Charhe is the day that comes before *ammai* or no moon day. As there was no calendar at that time, and keeping track of no moon day and full moon day is important to Newars, the practice of informing the villagers about the ensuing no moon day might have originated. It is believed that one should not take a head bath unless any one of his/her parents is dead on the day of *ammai*. One of the main *guthis* in *choyelachi* is specially ordained to perform this *charhe pooja*. Unlike *koyelachi*, where the three main *guthis* take turn to perform the *pooja* every month on the day of *charhe*, in *choyelachi*, the responsibility lies with *charhe guthi* alone. They will go around the village in a stipulated *charhe* track.

¹¹⁵ The details of the celebration held for six days are given in the appendix II

Old *charhe* track (see map14):

Lachi- *pingal- pacho* (*chaswae*)- diagonally they cut across the *sikha chhen* - entrance of *mandha flacha* or *manda pukhu*- to directly *salcha* via *kacha- salcha* shortcut to *pacho falcha- pacho falcht* to *lachi*.

New *Charhe* Track (see map 13):

Choye lachi- pingal- pacho (*chaswae*)- *laizol kutuzol mid street- kutuzol flacha- khacha falcha- pkhushi falcha- dyo kowe- lachi*¹¹⁶.

Maintenance Responsibility of the Main Guthis:

The *guthis*, as mentioned above, not only have religious and social/cultural obligations, but also has the responsibility to maintain the roads, canals, common resting places and temples. The main *guthis* who have enough financial resource and work force are assigned jobs such as maintaining the traditional roads (that differentiates the old part of the village from the new). *Mu: guthi* is responsible for maintaining roads from *lachi* to *nakhu khula*, and *kona guthi* from *nehas falcha* to health post and *nehas guthi* from *nehas falcha* to Dhoorikhel road. The *paru guthi* in *choyelachi* is vested with the responsibility of maintaining roads that are used for carrying dead bodies. This *guthi* is also vested with the task of taking care of the road from *papas* to *tanne*.

Cleaning the canal from Tikka Bhairav to Thecho village, as it brings water to ponds in the village, is another major maintenance work carried out by the *guthis* in the Thecho. For this, all the *guthis* from *koyelachi* and *choyelachi* will decide a date and communicate it to all the other *guthiyars*. Nearly 593 persons will gather at one place and divide the distance of the canal according to the number of *guthiyars* the *guthi* has. All the *guthiyars* are supposed to get their own *tarkari* (which can be munched with *baji*) and *guthi pala* has to arrange for the *baji*. This way, no one has to spend money on lunch. Moreover, the canal can be cleaned in a day with huge work force. Cleaning canal is

¹¹⁶*Koyelachi* has separate track (see map 15) covering the old part of the *koyelachi*. The above mentioned track covers the old part of the *choyelachi*.

organized just before the village *jatara* so that water fills the pond behind the Brahmayini temple. During the *jatara*, the pond has to be refilled and that water will be used by the *dyuo pala* for cleaning the temple and other items used for the fete.

Mu guthi and *ta: guthi* are assigned the task of replacing the log to help villagers and others cross the stream. These two *guthis* also place the log at two different places of the stream. As in the olden days, the log had to be replaced every year when the stream used to be full. *Ta: guthi* takes care of the log near *deepa* and this work will be carried out on the day of Lakshmi *pooja*. On *sithi nakha* day, they are supposed to remove the wooden plank from the river and bring it to *nasa falcha* in the *lachi*. Later, when the *falcha* near *deepa* was constructed, they started keeping the log in the *depa falcha* itself until Lakshmi *pooja* where the old one has to be replaced. The *falcha* near *deepa* was constructed by all the *guthiyars* in Thecho, as cremating the dead was becoming a problem if someone dies during monsoon.

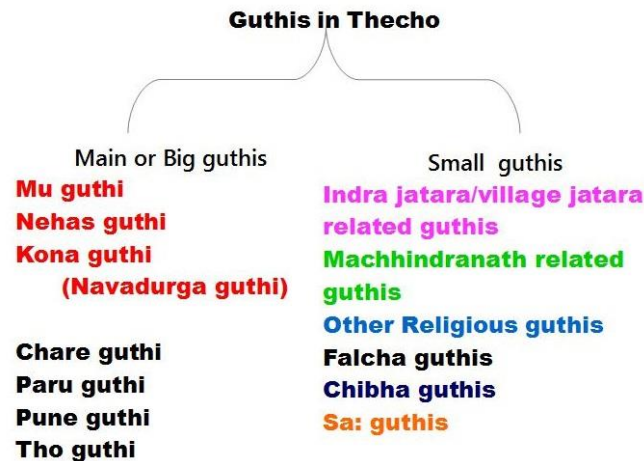
Apart from the infrastructural responsibilities, the *guthis* also clean ponds in the village and maintain the *falchas*. The *falcha* is a public place either maintained by the main *guthi* or by the small *guthi*. The *falcha* is used by the elders to sit and take rest and it is often used for storing straw and grains. This *falchas* also often house the Bhairav or *hata dyo* during the *jatara* and Indra *jatara* period. It is also believed that each *falcha* has its own god who has to be worshipped and maintained regularly.

Small Guthis in Thecho:

Apart from the seven main *guthis* in Thecho, there are small *guthis* functioning exclusively for worshipping the god/goddess during Indra *jatara* and village *jatara*. Another set of small *guthis* are dedicated to worship Machhindranath or Bunga *dyo* and fulfilling certain obligations. Another set of small *guthis* is exclusively for worshipping and maintaining the Buddhist structures constructed by the elders of the village called *chibha*, who call themselves as *chibha guthis*. Other small *guthis* are formed for maintaining the common property *falcha*. There are other small *guthis* called *sa: guthis*,

formed to generate livelihood opportunity or to meet the day-to-day oil consumption requirement (See figure 8).

Figure 8: Broad Category of Guthis in Thecho



Small Guthis Related to Indra Jatara and Village Jatara:

Worshipping Indra is one of the important cultural aspect among the Newars. Traditional belief has it that Indra in disguise had come to take *Parijath* flowers at his mother's request. He was arrested by the gardeners of the king and imprisoned and the Indra has to wait for the trial in court, as the king was in his hunting trip. After hearing the news, the furious mother of Indra summoned the Bhairavas to go to Earth and fight with the captors of her son and bring him back.

The king, who realised that the prisoner was Indra himself, freed him and apologised for the ignorance of his gardeners. He also requested him to stay for a week to enjoy his hospitality. Indra agreed and along with the Bhairavas, he stayed in the kingdom for a week to enjoy the festival that lasted for a week. After the festivities, the overwhelmed Indra granted a boon to the valley dwellers that he would come down every year to participate in the festival and bless them with rain and prosperity.

Every Newar settlement celebrates the Indra *jatara*, including in Thecho. Poles are erected for each god/goddess a week before and on the day of the *jatara*, the

gods/goddess on the poles are offered lamps and garlands and the *guthis* responsible for providing lamps and garlands will distribute *samaybaji* and *to*: for the onlookers.

It is the responsibility of the seven main *guthis* in Thecho to organize the village *jatara*. However, the other obligations such as putting up of shelter which is called *elan*, sacrificing a rooster or any other animal for the goddess, or arranging for the fire for light and warmth and so on are vested on the small *guthis* (see table 29) (see plate 6).

Table 29: Details of Guthis Related to Indra Jatara and Village Jatara

No.	Name of the <i>guthi</i>	<i>guthiyars</i> in the past	<i>guthiyars</i> during the study	Caste of the <i>guthiyars</i>	Source of income	Feast should be organized		Contribution for the last feast	Main Responsibility of the <i>guthi</i>	Having land in the past	Having the Land during the study
						The n	No w				
koyelachi											
1.	Kishi <i>guthi</i>	5	4	Maharjan	Money in cooperative		One day	Nil	Establishing the pole and worshipping the Kishi	Yes	No
2.	Indra-Akash Bairav	More than the present	11	Maharjan	Money in cooperative		One day	Nil	Establishing the pole and worshipping the Indra	Yes	No
3.	Indraini <i>guthi</i>	2	2	Maharjan	Money with one of the <i>guthiyar</i>		One day	Nil	Erecting the pole and worshipping the god	Yes	No
4.	Mata <i>guthi</i>	More than present	6	Maharjan	Money in cooperative		One day	If needed	Provide lamp for the god/goddess on the day of Indra <i>jatara</i>	Yes	No
5.	Mu dyo <i>guthi</i>	12	7	Maharjan	No money		One day	1000 rupees	Erect the pole and worship the god and distribute the <i>samaybaji</i>	Yes	No
6.	Kishi dyo/ <i>chhoyal a Khu dyo</i>	2	4	Maharjan	Have land		One day	Nil	Erect the pole and worship the god	Yes	Yes
7.	Hata dyo <i>guthi</i>	4	3	Maharjan	Money in cooperative		One day	Money has to be contributed	Bring the god to the <i>lachi</i> and worshipping it	Yes	No
8.	Gañdyo <i>guthi</i>	5	4	One Maharjan and three Mali	Have land		Two days	200 rupees	Bring the Ganesh to the <i>lachi</i> and offer prayers and take it back	Yes	yes

9.	<i>Hata dyo guthi</i>	5	4	<i>Mali</i>	Land and money in cooperative		One day	100 rupees	Keep the <i>hata dyo</i> at the cross roads	Yes	Yes
10.	<i>Hatadyo/Same ni dyo</i>	11(7 mali caste)	9(five Mali caste)	<i>Maharjan and Mali</i>	No money		two days	2 thousand	Installing the goddess and distributing to:	Yes	No
11.	<i>Gosi guthi</i>	5	3	<i>Maharjan</i>	3,000 in cooperative		One day	<i>pala</i> should take care	Arranging firewood for the fire during the Navadurga mask dance during the <i>jatara</i>	Yes	No
12.	<i>Elan guthi/goshi guthi (In lachi)</i>	7	7	<i>Maharjan</i>	Have land		Three days	400-500 rupees	Put <i>elan</i> (ritual shelter) to the goddess and built fire to keep the place warm and bright	Yes	Yes
13.	<i>Elan guthi (Soora Kuti pathi)</i>	7	1	<i>Maharjan</i>	Have land		No	No	Put <i>elan</i> to the Brahmayini at the <i>soora kuti pathi</i> and sacrifice a rooster for the goddess	Yes	Yes
Choyelachi											
14.	<i>dyo Kanegu guthi (Functioning)</i>	12	10	<i>Maharjan</i>	Has land	3 days	3 days	1700 rupees	Inviting the gods/goddess for the <i>jatara</i> , offer rooster as a sacrifice at the <i>pingal</i>	Yes	Yes
15.	<i>Birma guthi (Functioning)</i>	5	2	<i>Maharjan</i>	No source of income	2 days	1 day	<i>pala</i> will take care	Distribute <i>samaybaji</i> , offer rooster as sacrifice one for Ganesh and another for Balkumari	Yes	No
16.	<i>nouga guthi (Not Functioning)</i>	-	2	<i>Maharjan</i>	No source of income	No	No	No	They have to contribute for the buffalo, and distribute <i>samaybaji</i>	Yes	No
17.	<i>Hata dyo guthi (Functioning)</i>	More than the present	9	Women belonging to <i>Maharjan</i>	Has land and money	3 days	2 days	No	They have to put the <i>hata dyo</i> during the Indra <i>jatara</i> and the village <i>jatara</i>	Yes	Yes
18.	<i>Gana dyo guthi (Functioning)</i>	11	5	<i>Maharjan</i>	No source	-	1 day	500 rupees	They have to cover the Ganesh with <i>Innya</i> in the Balkumari <i>lachi</i> during the village <i>jatara</i>	Yes	No

19.	<i>Byacha guthi</i> (Not Functioning)	-	4	<i>Maharjan</i>	No source	-	-	-	Earlier they used to play a part in the village <i>jatara</i> but the <i>guthi</i> ceased to function	Yes	No
20.	<i>Choolu guthi/ Mata guthi</i> (Functioning)	-	4	<i>Maharjan</i>	Money in cooperative	2 days	2 days	Not necessary	They used to contribute 1/4 th share for buying the buffalo and also they have to distribute <i>samaybaji</i>	Yes	No
21.	<i>Goshi guthi</i> (Functioning)	8-10	3	<i>Maharjan</i>	No source of income	2 Days	2 days	<i>pala</i> will bear the expenses	They have to build fire on the <i>lachi</i> to keep the place warm and bright all night	Yes	No
22.	<i>Choolu guthi</i> (Not Functioning)	7	5	<i>Maharjan</i>	No source of income	Three days	2 days	The <i>guthiyars</i> had to share	Earlier they have to contribute 1/4 th share for buying the buffalo and also had to distribute <i>samaybaji</i>	Yes	No
23.	<i>Lagan Gu:</i> (Not functioning)	-	-	<i>Maharjan</i>	-	-	-	-	Contribute for the meat of the buffalo and distribute the <i>samaybaji</i> .	Yes	No
24.	<i>Bhamecha guthi</i> (Functioning)	7	7	<i>Maharjan</i>	Have lands	6 days	3 days	1510 rupees was contributed	They have to plaster the place where the palanquin of the goddess will be kept, and also they have distribute the <i>samaybaji</i>	Yes	Yes
25.	<i>Sala guthi</i> (Not functioning)	13	-	<i>Maharjan</i>	No	-	-	-	They have to prepare <i>ta: kha:</i> and on the <i>ammai</i> day they have to offer <i>pinda</i> to the dead, and also contribute a share for the buffalo during Indra <i>jatara</i>	Yes	No
26.	<i>Kutamali dyo</i> (not Functioning)	-	-	<i>Maharjan</i>	No	No	No	-	Earlier had to build podium and offer lamps to the god/goddess	Yes	No
27.	<i>Goora Gu</i> (not Functioning)	-	-	<i>Maharjan</i>	No	No	No	-	They have to worship the <i>burra mahadyo</i> who increases the yield of the paddy	Yes	No

Guthis for Machhindranath:

Machhindranath¹¹⁷ is a god believed to be responsible for bringing rain. People of Thecho worship Machhindranath with utmost respect as most of them depend on agriculture for livelihood. For worshipping him, they have formed many *saalu guthis*. *Saalu* is the first day of the *bikran sambat* month and on that day of every month this *guthis* will go to the temple either in Bungamati or in Patan for worshipping Machhindranath. The god's idol will be kept in Patan for six months, and people from Lalitpur/Patan will conduct a *jatara*, after which the God will be taken to Bungamati where he will be worshipped for the next six months. He will later be brought to Patan for the rest of the six months and this cycle continues. When the God's idol is shifted from the Bungamati to Patan, four *guthis* named *dyo la swa guthi* (means seeing the way for the God) from Thecho has to go to Bungamati in a procession till Patan. Moreover, after they return, they will have a feast on the same day.

Dyo La Swa Guthi:

There are a total of four *guthis* identified during the fieldwork who are considered to be *dyo la swa guthi*. Thirty two members who serve as joshis at Machhindranath temple (who fixes the auspicious time for shifting of god from Bungamati to Patan or vice versa) turn wise, will take the responsibility of fixing the time and communicating the same with the *dyo la swa guthis* in Thecho as well as other villages who have such *guthis*. On the appointed date, the four *guthis* go to Bungamati and accompany the god until Patan. After six months, the god will be brought in a procession to Bungamati. It is only while going from Bungamati to Patan that these *guthis* have to make sure that the way is clear of thorns and bushes. The structure and the responsibility vested with these four *guthis* remain the same, but the way the money should be contributed for the feast and some other decisions are taken by the *guthis* differently. These four *guthis* also have the *saalu guthi*, which has the task of worshipping Machhindranath on the first day of every month.

¹¹⁷ Machhindranath's sex has been discussed by the Nepali (1965, p. 319) but fieldwork shows that the informants are clear that he is male god, but Nepali argues that it might be of a female goddess

Saalu Guthis:

There are nine *saalu guthis*¹¹⁸ (four among these also act as *dyo la swa guthis*) in Thecho, which are formed for this religious purpose. Every month, the *pala: ta:* changes in these *guthis*. The *pala* has to go to the Bungamati or Patan (wherever the Machhindranath is placed) after collecting the *pooja* plates from other *guthiyars*. He will be accompanied by either ex *pala* or the next *pala* to go to the temples for worshipping. On his return in the afternoon, the *pala* house should arrange for the feast for other members (*saalu guthi* in *subha nani* stopped going every month and instead they go twice a year, after the *guthiyars*' collective decision). Based on the *guthiyars*' understanding, each *guthi* has its way of contributing to the feast. Some *guthis* agreed upon the *pala* bearing the expenses (with the help of ex *pala* or the next *pala*) or the *guthiyars* contribute money every month while having the feast. It is prohibited to take food home while having the monthly feast; the members can have how much ever they want within the *pala* house. A majority of the *guthis* has either lost thier land or sold it after the Lands Act (1964) and deposited that money in a bank, while some *guthis* function purely on the contribution of the *guthiyars*. The number of *guthiyars* has been coming down fast due to lack of an income source. In addition, their responsibility demands time every month. Some *guthiyars* opined that the *guthi* still manages to continue as it is directly related to worshipping the Machhindranath (see table 30).

¹¹⁸ See appendix VII for more details on Machhindranath story.

Table 30: Details of Saalu Guthis

No.	Elder person or geographical location of the <i>guthi</i>	<i>guthi</i> years in the past	<i>guthiyars</i> during the study	Caste of the <i>guthiyars</i>	Contribution for the last feast	Having land in the past	Having the Land during the study	Financial support
1.	Ram Baktha	12	6	<i>Maharjan</i>	200-300 on annual feast.	Yes	No	Have money in cooperative after selling the land
2.	Chakra Bahadur/ <i>Subha nani</i>	9	6	<i>Maharjan</i>	Not necessary	Yes	No	30-40 thousand is in bank
3.	Ratna bahadur/ Kusiko tole	7	Reached to 14 and came down to 10	<i>Maharjan</i>	50 rupees while having the monthly feast	Yes	No	They have some money in the bank
4.	Budhi Bahadur	17	6	<i>Maharjan</i>	100 while having monthly feast	Yes	Yes	No money
5.	Theej Bahadur	15	11	<i>Maharjan</i>	Not necessary	Yes	Yes (tenancy ceased to come)	Have some money which is enough for the feast expenses
6.	Dharam Bahadur	14	10	<i>Maharjan</i>	50 rupees on the monthly feast	Yes	Yes	No money
7.	<i>koyelachi</i>	17	10	<i>Maharjan</i>	<i>Pala</i> and <i>ex-pala</i> will take care of the feast expenses	Yes	Yes	No money
8.	<i>Choyelachi</i>	Not sure	9	<i>Maharjan</i>	<i>Pala</i> has to bear the expenses <i>ex-pala</i> will give 100 rupees	Yes	Yes	No money
9.	<i>Ta: Nani (koyelachi)</i>	18	6	<i>Mali</i>	<i>Pala</i> , <i>ex-pala</i> and next <i>pala</i> have to bear the expenses of the feast	Yes	No	No money

Falcha Guthi:

Falcha is a traditional small shelter, used by the public, which also has a god/goddess inside it. The *falchas* on a main road are constructed mainly to accommodate travellers and passers-by of Thecho village. The *falchas* in the interior part of the Thecho are built primarily to accommodate villagers on their gatherings, while some *falchas* are used for

temporarily storing straw or agricultural products. Some other *falchas* are constructed mainly for keeping the gods and goddesses during the *jatara*. They need constant maintenance, and for that *guthis* are formed and lands are allocated to *guthiyars* to generate income from the land and use it for maintaining the *falcha*. *Falchas* in the Thecho has different *guthis* that are commonly referred to as *falcha guthi*. Some *falchas* are taken care of by the residents of that particular locality and some by the *Raj guthis*. There are a total of 22 *falchas* in the Thecho, (8 in *koyelachi* and 14 in *choyelachi*). Among the eight *falchas* in *koyelachi*, two are taken care of by the residents who use it the most, and major *guthis* take care of 4 *falchas*. One *falcha* has *guthi*, but it is inactive, and even the *falcha* is also in ruins. Only one *falcha guthi* is actively functioning during the study. Among 14 *falchas* in *choyelachi*, five are taken care of by the Balkumari *raj guthi*. Nine *falcha guthis* are functioning to take care of the respective *falchas*.

The *guthis* that take care of the *falchas* have other responsibilities such as offering a sacrifice for the Brahmayini or Balkumari when the goddess comes out of the *dyo chhen* during village *jatara*. The *guthiyars* take up the responsibility of being *pala* each year and fulfil the responsibilities vested with the *guthi* (see table 31) (see plate 8).

Table 31: Details of Falcha Guthis

No.	Name of the <i>guthi</i>	<i>guthiyars</i> in the past	<i>guthiyars</i> during the study	Caste of the <i>guthiyars</i>	Source of income	Feast should be organized for	Having land in the past	Having the Land during the study
<i>koyelachi</i>								
1.	<i>Laskuti falcha</i>	Does not have <i>guthi</i> , the residents of this <i>tole</i> had contributed money and labour when this <i>falcha</i> needed to renovated. And one of the cooperative called <i>Mahila jagaran samithi</i> had assisted them financially for this renovation.						
2.	<i>Gwa: Nani falcha</i>	This <i>falcha</i> does not have any <i>guthi</i> , one family had taken the responsibility of taking care of the <i>falcha</i> . This family offers prayers to the idol in the <i>falcha</i> referred as <i>falcha devata</i> . This <i>falcha</i> was also renovated with the help of the residents of this <i>tole</i> and from the financial help from the <i>mahila jagaran samithi</i> financial cooperative.						
3.	<i>Missa falcha</i>	The <i>falcha</i> had been named after women, <i>missa</i> in Newari means women, it is believed that the women uses this <i>falcha</i> more than men so it is named after women. Moreover, the three <i>guthis</i> in <i>koyelachi</i> had taken care of this <i>falcha</i> .						
4.	<i>Nikhwa falcha</i>	The <i>falcha</i> is in ruins, and the <i>guthi</i> ceased to function some twenty years ago. When they used to have <i>guthi</i> the <i>guthiyar</i> number was four. Losing of the property was cited as a main reason for the collapse of the <i>guthi</i> .						
5.	<i>Pukushi falcha</i>	It is believed that, this <i>falcha</i> had <i>guthi</i> once but as the <i>guthi</i> ceased to function, the <i>kona guthi</i> (one among the three major <i>guthis</i> in <i>koyelachi</i>) had taken over the responsibility of maintaining this <i>falcha</i> . This <i>falcha</i> had been built with cement brick and it used by the						

		passengers who are waiting for vehicles.						
6.	<i>Nehas falcha</i>	In the entrance of <i>nehas tole</i> , there are two <i>falchas</i> , these two <i>falchas</i> are supposed to be taken care by the <i>nehasguthi</i> (one among the three major <i>guthis</i> in <i>koyelachi</i>)						
7.	<i>Mandha falcha/ sora kuti falcha</i>	16	7	<i>Maharjan</i>	have 4 <i>ropanis</i> of land	twice a year	yes	Yes
<i>choyelachi</i>								
8.	<i>Sata falcha guthi</i>	8	4	<i>Maharjan</i>	Have shops which were rented out and have some money in cooperative	Twice a year	Yes	No
9.	<i>Aapa falcha/ the falcha covered with mud tiles</i>	-	3	<i>Maharjan</i>	Have 25 thousand rupees in cooperative	Once in a year	Yes	No
10	<i>Jasta falcha/ the falcha covered with Metal sheets</i>	6	5	<i>Maharjan</i>	Have 3-4 <i>ropanis</i> of land	Thrice a year	Yes	Yes
11	<i>falchas at the entrance of kacha tole</i>	Out of four <i>falchas</i> , three <i>falchas</i> at the entrance of the <i>kacha tole</i> should be taken care by the <i>Balkumari Raj guthi</i> (i.e., four <i>guthis</i> in <i>choyelachi</i>). Another <i>falcha guthi</i> which is also a <i>chibha guthi</i> ¹¹⁹						
12	<i>Kutujol Falcha guthi</i>	6	3	<i>Maharjan</i>	One lakh rupees in Bank	Once in a year	Yes	Yes
13	<i>Naso falcha</i>	This <i>falcha</i> is situated in the temple complex of the <i>Balkumari mandir</i> , this <i>falcha</i> has a significant role the village rituals. This <i>falcha</i> should be taken care by the <i>Balkumari Raj guthi</i> (i.e., four <i>guthis</i> in <i>choyelachi</i>)						
14	<i>Chayakho falcha</i>	-	10	<i>Maharjan</i>	Has four <i>ropanis</i> of land	7 times a year	Yes	Yes
15	<i>Pa Cha: falcha</i>	12	4	<i>Maharjan</i>	Four <i>ropanis</i> of land	Thrice in a year	Yes	Yes
16	<i>Sarswathi falcha</i>	11	10	<i>Maharjan</i>	Two and half <i>ropani</i> of land	Thrice a year	Yes	Yes
17	<i>Laizol falcha</i>	6	3	<i>Maharjan</i>	No income	Twice in a year	Yes	No
18	<i>Ta: nani Falcha guthi</i>	6	5	<i>Maharjan</i>	No income	Twice in a year	Yes	No
19	<i>Garo falcha</i>	This <i>falcha</i> is referred as <i>garo</i> because it was not maintained properly and it is in ruins. This <i>falcha</i> is situated in the <i>choyelachi</i> right next to the <i>naso falcha</i> . This study was unable to trace the <i>guthiyars</i> but some informant opined that, the <i>guthi</i> should be taken care by the <i>Balkumari Raj guthi</i> (i.e., four <i>guthis</i> in <i>choyelachi</i>).						

¹¹⁹Eleven *chibha guthis* also acts as a *falcha guthis*.

Chibha Guthi:

Chibha is a Buddhist *stupa* with Buddha's idol on all four sides of it. *Chibhas* were constructed by a single person believing that they will be blessed with a son, and only one *chibha* had been built in the memory of the dead. Although constructing a *chibha* in memory of dead persons is a practice among Sherpa community, one Newar family had adopted this). The *chibha* is mainly constructed by those who do not have sons. This practice is a clear indication that the Newars desire to have sons, but that does not mean they mistreat girl children. Once they have a son, they do not mind having girl children. Levy & Rajopadhyaya opines that, the high status of Newar Women, when compared conventional Hindu communities somewhere else in the Himalayas and north India, is apparent not just with regard to marriage and separation, yet in an extensive variety of aspects of social and religious life. Sons, however maybe marginally preferred to daughters, particularly on account of first-born, are not accorded the exaggerated significance found in most Hindu communities. There is no evidence of female infanticide, either now or in the past and the birth of a daughter is not at all lamented (1992, p. 113). Their culture preaches that they need to have a son for continuation of their tradition. One such attempt to have a son is to construct a *chibha* hoping that the God will grant them a son. There are a total of 13 *chibhas* in the Thecho. Among them, two does not have *guthis* but a single family taking care of them. The other 11 *chibhas* have 12 *guthis*. It is believed that a person who constructs the *chibha* in the hope of getting a son, will ask his/her, *jahans*/relatives/friends to be part of the *guthi* and he/she will also donate land to financially support the *guthi*. Moreover, this *guthi* will also be vested with the responsibility of maintaining and offering prayers to the *chibha*. These *guthis*, on the day of *katin punhi* (the *punhi* after *dasahain*), will apply oil to the *chibha* and provide lamp and distribute *samaybaji* to people in that locality. The villagers take part in a procession with green twigs shouting '*jyagdum pagdum dyo bhagwan*', a rhyming word in praise of Buddha on the day of *katin punhi*. It is also believed that the villagers from both the lower and upper part used to indulge in mock fight when they encounter each other during this procession, after which go in their way shouting '*jyagdum pagdum dyo bhagwan*'. This practice was not observed during the study. Some

guthis distribute rice beer along with *samaybaji* while some *guthis* deem it inappropriate to distribute alcohol. In these *guthis*, the *pala: ta:* changes every year during this *katin punhi* after the feast (see table 32) (see plate 9).

Table 32: Details of Chibha Guthis

No.	Name of the <i>guthi</i>	<i>guthiyars</i> in the past	<i>guthiyars</i> during the study	Caste of the <i>guthiyars</i>	Source of income	Feast should be organized for	Having land in the past	Having the Land during the study
<i>koyelachi</i>								
1.	Pukushi <i>Chibha guthi</i>	12	7	<i>Mali</i>	12 <i>annas</i> of land	two days	Had more land than what is there	Yes
2.	Damga Nani <i>chibha guthi</i>	16	16	<i>Maharjan</i>	No property	One day	No lands	No
3.	<i>Koyelachi chibha guthi</i> (A)	17	4	<i>Maharjan</i>	Had lands and money but now no	One day	Yes	No
4.	<i>Koyelachi chibha guthi</i> (B)	3	2	<i>Maharjan</i>	No income	One days	Yes	No
5.	Gwa <i>nani chibha guthi</i>	6	4	<i>Maharjan</i>	Has money 2.15 lakhs in bank	One day	Yes	No
6.	Dharmasthali <i>chibha guthi</i>	3	2	<i>Maharjan</i>	No income	Two days	Yes	No
7.	Ta: Nani <i>chibha guthi</i>	11	4	<i>Mali</i>	No income	One day	Yes	No
8.	Sikha <i>chhen chibha</i>	There is no <i>guthi</i> to take care of this <i>chibha</i> , the family which believes that their ancestors had constructed this <i>chibha</i> are taking care of it.						
<i>choyelachi</i>								
9.	Malligaon <i>chibha guthi</i>	-	Single family	<i>Maharjan</i>	No income	One day	Yes	No
10.	Chardam <i>chibha guthi</i>	16	2	<i>Maharjan</i>	No income	Twice	Yes	No
11.	<i>kacha Tole chibha guthi</i>	10-12	3	<i>Maharjan</i>	No income	Once	Yes (sold for renovation)	No
12.	Ta: Nani <i>chibha guthi</i>	-	15	<i>Maharjans</i>	Land	Twice in a year	Yes	No
13.	<i>choyelachi chibha guthi</i>	12	8	<i>Maharjan</i>	9 <i>pathi</i> of land and 20 thousand rupees	Once	Yes	Yes
14.	Jali pati <i>chibha</i>	This is the only <i>chibha</i> in the village which has been constructed on the memory of dead, this is a practice of other communities in Nepal to construct <i>chibha</i> on the memory of their dead people.						

During the field study, the villagers from other villages had come to Thecho for *chibha khawa* meaning ‘come to take the *chibha*’. The villagers who want to build a new *chibha* has to go around the villages for this *chibha khawa*, as they believe that the *chibha* in its new form will not have any powers. It is believed that by doing *chibha khawa*, power from the old *chibhas* could be transferred to the new one, making the stone a god. However, the social reasons for *chibha khawa* are evident. The massive procession of villagers from the other village has come to Thecho. This helps to maintain the inter-village social network. The relatives in Thecho eagerly wait to meet the people who come to *chibha khawa*, and one of the informants said that marriage alliances are formed if the villagers like any girl or boy in the procession. The villagers, who take part in the procession, wear traditional attire, play musical instruments, and go around all the *chibhas* in Thecho. The people who come for *chibha khawa* will distribute *baji*, biscuit, and other food items. This can be understood as re-distribution of food among two or more villages.

Sa: Guthi:

Sa: guthi was formed in the olden days for allowing the members to extract oil from mustard. As establishing the machinery individually for extracting mustard oil was a costly affair, people came together and mobilized some money to start this *sa: guthis*. Nonetheless, the availability of the other oils like groundnut oil, soya bean oil, and sunflower oil nowadays in ready-to-use form would have been a major reason for this *guthis* to lose their purpose. One of the informants shared that ‘the importance of the *sa: guthis* has come down, so the *guthiyars* felt it was appropriate to stop extracting oil in the traditional way’. Traditionally, the members who were making use of this *sa: guthis* to extract oil did not use it for their personal consumption, but sold it to generate income/livelihood. The villagers used to get mustard from other farmers in the adjacent villages and extract oil through manual labour and sell it to the other villagers either for money or for other goods that they cannot produce. This village traditionally is famous

for oil selling and *poskyañ*¹²⁰-making. During the field study, it was observed that many people depended on oil sale (oil extracted with the help of modern machinery). Though the importance of *sa: guthis* dwindled over time, the *guthiyars*, who are members, are still united, although their core purpose has become irrelevant now. The buildings are now hired for setting up shops and by carpet weaving industry, etc.,. It is believed that there were only three *sa: guthis*, in each part (lower and upper) of the village. Later, when the demand for the oil went up, the other *sa: guthis* were formed. To differentiate between the new ones and the old, people started calling them *nu: (new) sa: guthis*. The old *sa: guthis* are referred to as *pula (old) sa: guthis*. However, interestingly, even after the purpose of forming *sa: guthis* became irrelevant, membership is on the rise. Some of the senior *guthiyars* opine that as the primary responsibility vested with the *sa: guthis*, is only to organize the feast once in a year, with the income generated out of the rend received against the *guthi* building. The income through this source is high which is the reason for growing membership¹²¹. In addition, as membership is open to the heirs of the *guthiyars*, once they are separated from joint family, the divided sons are showing interest in joining the *guthi*. The *guthiyars* cannot deny membership for the heirs of the *guthiyars*. The *sa: guthis* have turned from oil producer to mere rent-seekers against the *guthi* building which is been used for the commercial purpose (see table 33).

Table 33: Details of Sa: Guthis

No.	Name of the <i>guthi</i>	<i>guthiyars</i> in the past	<i>guthiyars</i> during the study	Caste of the <i>guthiyars</i>	Source of income	Feast should be organized for
<i>Koyelachi</i>						
1.	<i>Lachi Sa: guthi</i>	95	85	<i>Maharjan</i>	The building of the <i>Sa guthi</i> was rented to carpet industry	Once in a year
2.	<i>Nu: Sa: guthi</i>	The <i>guthi</i> was merged with <i>Navadurga guthi</i> , when the functioning of the <i>sa: guthi</i> was ceased.				
3.	<i>Pula Sa: guthi</i>	-	60	<i>Maharjan + Mali</i>	The machinery was sold for two lakhs and the land was leased out for carpet	Twice in a year

¹²⁰ Poskyañ is a sweet made up of milk. Thecho is known for making this sweets.

¹²¹As the other *guthis* who have the bigger responsibilities and does not have income source are experiencing the decrease in membership.

					industry	
choyelachi						
4.	<i>Pukushi Sa: guthi</i>	71	101	<i>Maharjan</i>	The building of the Sa: <i>guthi</i> was converted into shops and were rented out	Once in a year
5.	<i>Kasi guru Sa: guthi</i>	41	64	<i>Maharjan</i>	The building of the Sa: <i>guthi</i> was converted into shops, the money for construction of shops were contributed by <i>guthiyars</i> and were rented out	Once in a year
6.	<i>Salcha Pula Sa: guthi:</i>	50	50	<i>Maharjan</i>	The building of the Sa: <i>guthi</i> was converted into shops, the money for construction of shops were contributed by <i>guthiyars</i> and were rented out it earns 3 thousand per month	Once in a year <i>guthiyar</i> had to contribute 400 rupees for feast.
7.	<i>Salcha Nu Sa: guthi:</i>	74	57	<i>Maharjan</i>	sa: <i>guthi</i> building has been rented out for the rice mill and they are getting 20 K per year	Once in a year <i>guthiyar</i> had to contribute 400 rupees for feast.
8.	<i>Kutujol Sa: guthi:</i>	30	56	<i>Maharjan</i>	Sa <i>guthi</i> has a building which has been rented out	Once in a year/ <i>guthiyar</i> had to contribute 400 rupees for feast.
9.	<i>choyelachi Sa: guthi:</i>	Less than the present	94	<i>Maharjan</i>	Sa <i>guthi</i> building has been rented out and it is generating income of 24 thousand per annum	Once in a year/ <i>guthiyar</i> had to contribute 700 rupees for feast.
10.	<i>Laizol Sa: guthi:</i>	-	18	<i>Maharjan</i>	One lakh in bank which is the only source of income	Once in a year they have feast and expenses should be contributed by the members
11.	<i>Manda Sa: guthi:</i>	68	105	<i>Maharjan</i>	The land has been leased out and the contractor had built shops and he is paying 10 thousand for the <i>guthi</i> and after 15 years they <i>guthi</i> gets the building for themselves and other shop was rented out which gives them 35 thousand	Once in a year the feast will be organized

Small Religious Guthis that are not related to Indra Jatara and Village Jatara:

Apart from the *guthis* explained above, there are some other small *guthis*, which are not related to Indra *jatara* or village *jatara*. These *guthis* were formed to fulfil the religious obligation vested on them (see table 34).

Table 34: Small Religious Guthis that are not related to Indra Jatara and Village Jatara

No.	Name of the <i>guthi</i>	<i>guthiyars</i> in the past	<i>guthiyars</i> during the study	Caste of the <i>guthi</i> <i>yars</i>	Source of income	Feast should be organized for	Contribution for the last feast	Main responsibility of the <i>guthi</i>	Having land in the past	Having the Land during the study
<i>koye lachi</i>										
	<i>Gaṇḍyo guthi</i>	6	4	<i>Mah arjan</i>	No source	One day	<i>La: Pa</i> and shared the expenses	Taking care of the <i>Gaṇḍyo</i> temple and offering prayers to the Ganesh	Yes	No
	<i>Kache Punhi guthi</i>	11	2	<i>Mah arjan</i>	20,000 rupees in the cooperative	No feast	<i>pala</i> will arrange for distributing the <i>samayba ji</i>	Erect the <i>nara dyo</i> pole and worship the god for whole month	Yes	No
<i>Choyelachi</i>										
	<i>Nara dyo guthi</i> (Functioning)	16	13	<i>Mah arjan</i>	35,000 in cooperative	-	1 day	Every month the <i>guthiyars</i> will contribute 200 rupees	Taking care of the statue of <i>nara dyo</i>	Yes
	<i>Marro Astami guthi</i> (Functioning)	12	7	<i>guthiyars</i> are from different villages	Money in the cooperative	3 days	3 days	If necessary	Go to the Bajra Barahi and worship the goddess on the day of <i>marro astami</i> (next <i>astami</i> after <i>bai tikka</i>)	Yes
	<i>guthiyar</i> was unable to recall the name of the <i>guthi</i>	The <i>guthiyars</i> are from different villages (two from Thecho, one for Chapagaon and one from Badigaon), this <i>guthi</i> has the responsibility of going to Bajra Barahi on <i>chaitra punhi</i> to worship the goddess and also they have to take care of a <i>falcha</i> in Bajra Barahi temple premises.								

Other Group Formations in Thecho:

Khala:

Khala is a group whose membership is based on voluntary participation. Its membership is not necessarily through inheritance. Nonetheless, some members can join after their father's demise to continue the family tradition. Apart from the difference in membership

pattern, *khala* is also a group that fulfils almost all the responsibilities as that of the *guthi*. Its good example is of its musical associations. Situated in a particular area, they teach how to play musical instruments for the members who associate themselves with the musical association¹²² and to other villagers who show interest in learning how to play the instruments.

The *depcha guthi* is often referred to as *depcha khala* or *degu dyo khala*, as it is socially accepted that the clan (*depcha*) breaks up for many reasons¹²³. It is a voluntary decision of the *depcha* members to decide whether to go along with others to worship the *degu dyo*. As the *depcha guthi* is voluntary in nature, it is often interchangeably called *depcha khala*.

Music for Newars is not only amusement, but also a mark of celebration and cultural identity (see also Rana, 1990; Sharma & Wegner, 1995; Tingey, 1995). Children are encouraged to learn any of the musical instruments by joining the *khalas*. There are twelve registered musical associations called *khalas*, under the supervision of the *Thecho baja khala samrakshana samithi*. Apart from these twelve, there is one more un-registered female musical organization. Both the new and old people who associate themselves with the *khalas* participate in the procession for almost all the village festivals. It was observed during the study that people who affiliate themselves with the *baja khala* show interest in participating in the procession with that particular *baja khala*, than with the other groups.

Each association focuses on specific instruments to teach and to play in the village procession. The *baja khalas* were believed to be started by economically well-off families in the olden days. Some of the families who are not economically sound are still

¹²²The group which has the obligation to worship a clan goddess and also the members are linked by common ancestry are sometimes called as *depcha guthi* or *depcha khala*. This is called so because, the *depcha guthi* tend to break when they grow bigger in size or when they have conflicts between their members. Or any particular family might decide that they do not want to go along with the other families to worship their clan goddess. They have the freedom to offer prayers individually, which makes the participation of the family a voluntary so some people refer this group as *depcha khala* and as all the members by birth becomes the members of this group (by inheritance) this group is called as *depcha guthi*.

¹²³ See chapter III for detailed description.

trying to maintain this *baja khalas*. The head of the musical association, who manages the affairs of the *khala*, is referred to as *khaji*. When the *baja khalas* feel that they need to recruit more people in the *khala*, they call for a teaching session where those who want to learn playing the instrument which that *khala* is specialized in can enrol themselves in the class. The class lasts for five months or more, based on the instrument that the students learn. The elders who are good at playing the instrument will act as gurus, and those who play well but are not good enough to become gurus will assist the gurus in teaching the children. Generally, children within the locality join, and that is may be because it is in the same *tole* or their father is associated with it. Sometimes, it maybe because of the pride those members feel being associated with the *khala*. However, there are instances where difference of opinion crops up. In one such incident, a particular *baja khala* emphasised on learning *dhimme* (a big drum), but one student wanted to learn *basuri* (flute). Therefore, he went ahead and enrolled himself in another *baja khala* situated in some other locality.

Once the *baja khala* gives a call for class, people who are interested will approach the *khaji* and express interest in learning to play the instrument. Students are expected to come with a *kisili* (meaning small mud lid used to light an oil lamp for ritual purpose) that comprises *kishaliñ* (meaning items required to be kept in the *kisili* for worshipping the god before learning music). The *kisili* is kept at the *khala chhen* every day till the classes are over. The students learn the musical instruments only after worshipping the *kisili*. The gurus will be offered *guru pa* during classes. It is given either by a group of students or by a single student, who will call the guru to their house to treat him with food. On completion of the class, the students provide *bettle* (a white cloth which is a mark of respect gifted to anyone) to show respect and thank the guru. This student continues to respect the guru, even during routine encounters¹²⁴ in the streets. This method of socialization for children is effective as they learn by seeing their elders how to respect their master.

¹²⁴It has been observed during the fieldwork that the old teachers were greeted and shown respect in the form of offering tea and other items the guru might want. Once a guru always stays a guru and commands respect from the students and other villagers as well.

Every student should offer four kinds of prayers to *nasadyo*¹²⁵ (the god of music, dance, and drama). The prayers offered to the *nasadyo arekshama pooja*, *ba pooja*, *khu pooja* and *pirnew pooja*. *Kshama pooja* is considered the first one done by the students before learning any musical instrument. The *ba* (indicates half) *pooja* is done after completing first half of the classes. The *khu pooja* is believed to be done when students finish or attend $\frac{3}{4}$ th of the classes while *khu pooja*¹²⁶ has to be done by stealing a rooster from the neighbour's house. If they are unable to do it, they should at least steal a rooster from their own house and conduct the *pooja*. It is believed that if one steals from his neighbour's house, he will learn the instrument much better. *Pirnew pooja* is done at end of the classes. Unless this *pooja* is done, students who are learning instruments are not supposed to play music outside the classroom. After the *pirnew pooja*, they are free to play music anywhere. If the master feels that students have done well in learning a musical instrument, he will take them in a procession to show their talent to the villagers. If not, with the end of the *pirnew pooja*, they can simply conclude the class. Most of the people believe that unless one is committed to finishing the musical classes, he should not enrol himself for the same. Otherwise, those who discontinue the class tend to get mentally disturbed. This might be a belief developed in order to inculcate fear among people so that they stay committed.

People who learn musical instruments at a *baja khala* will naturally become the members of the group and continue to be its members their entire lifetime (see plate 7). Often these are the groups that even the students' fathers and uncles associate themselves with and learned playing instruments from. The members have to take part in the procession taken out as part of village festival when called by the group. The *baja khalas* take part in the procession by playing musical instruments. Each year, one *baja khala* will take the responsibility of organizing the *mataya* (a village carnival held on the next day of *saparu*). The other *baja khalas* compete to win a trophy in a competition that expects the *baja khalas* to be innovative. The subjects generally are preserving culture, political

¹²⁵Who is equivalent to Nataraj (the god of music and dance in south India)

¹²⁶ Thieving generally is considered as most unacceptable behaviour in Newar community. A person who is seeking his livelihood by thieving is often looked down and he is not respected socially.

satire on current Nepal politics, people claiming to re-establish the Newar rule for Newar people, awareness on social issues and others. Whenever the members are summoned to participate in the procession, it is expected that *khajji* provide *samaybaji* for the members, but it is not mandatory.

Once a year, on *godda jatara* day, all the *baja khalas* go for *sas pooja* to any nearest religious place (a religious picnic). The members are expected to contribute for the feast in the form of *lasa*, which includes one egg, two *mana* of *baji*, and *pooja* plate for worshipping the god/goddess. The meat expenses for the feast should be borne by all the members of the group. The *khajji* will take the responsibility of organizing the feast for which every member works, either cooking or serving, and they spend the whole day enjoying the picnic. The members contribute if the musical instruments to be mended. If it involves more money, then they seek the help of Village Developmental Committee or the Thecho *Bajja khala samrakshana samithi*.

While explaining the importance of music, one of the informants said ‘what is life and celebration without music’ and the villagers consider learning one or the other musical instrument as a symbol of respect. Children who are good at playing instruments are appreciated and praised. It is also observed that almost all the households have one or the other musical instruments. It is a matter of pride for the Newars to play musical instruments in the social sphere.

The *baja khalas* though vary from *guthi* in its membership pattern reflects the social organization of the society. The members recruit the new members (mostly children) teach them music along with how one should respect the art of music and the master who is teaching it. The new members are expected to answer the *baja khalas* call in the future during the musical procession. Once in a year the *khajji* takes the initiative to organize *sas pooja* to keep the group intact (see table 35).

Table 35: Details of Khalas or Musical Associations in Thecho

1.	Name of the Musical association	Localit y or ward	Mem bers in the past	Memb ers during the study	Caste groups allowed	Main instrume nt thought	No. of gurus in the associat ion	No. of musical instruments	Classes organiz ed so far
<i>Choyelachi</i>									
2.	Malligaon Dapa <i>khala</i> :	Ward I <i>Choyel achi</i>	Less than the prese nt	100	Though there is no prohibition for others, so far only malligaon people showed interest	Khin	6 gurus	2 khin, 2 dhas, 2 bushya, 1 tha and 2 kalmulcha	Three classes
3.	Malligaon Dhime <i>khala</i> :	Ward I <i>Choyel achi</i>	Less than the prese nt	107	Only people from jayapu community	Dhimme	2 gurus and three assistant gurus	7 dhimme and 4 bhushya	Three classes
4.	Ta: Nani Basuri <i>khala</i> :	Ward II <i>Choyel achi</i>	45	90	All caste groups but during study only maharjan caste group students were seen	Basuri and Khin	Guru has been hired from the Kathma ndu	2 khin, 1 madal, 45 basuri, 1 harmonimu m, 1 babucha and one taa	4 classes for basuri and 2 classes for Khin
5.	Nuche Dapa <i>khala</i> :	Ward II <i>Choyel achi</i>	More than 100	71	All caste groups are allowed	Khin	Three gurus	Khin, dah, dhan, dholak Babbhucha, ta and Basuri	Not mentio ned
6.	Kutujol Basuri <i>khala</i> :	Ward III <i>Choyel achi</i>	30-32	50	All caste groups are allowed	Basuri	Two gurus	10 basuri, 2 khen, 1 dholak, 1 ta and 1 bhabucha	Five classes
7.	Khaacha Dhime <i>khala</i> :	Ward III <i>Choyel achi</i>	15-20	80	All caste groups are allowed	Dhimme	Two gurus	4 dhimme and 2 bhushya	Three classes
8.	Sikhache Dapa <i>khala</i> :	Ward IV <i>choyela chi</i>	More than the prese nt	30-40	All the caste groups are allowed	Basuri and khin	4-5 gurus	10-12 Basuri, 3 khin, 4 dha, 1 bhushya and 1 ta.	Three classes
<i>koyelachi</i>									
9.	Brahmayini Basuri <i>khala</i> :/ Mankha <i>khala</i> :	Ward V <i>koyelac hi</i>	Not sure	More than 100	All caste groups are allowed. <i>Mali</i> caste group active participation is observed	Basuri	Four gurus	Unable to tell	Five classes

10.	Saraswathi Dhime <i>khala</i> :	Ward IV <i>koyelac hi</i>	27 mem bers	50-60 memb ers	All the caste groups	Dhimme	2 gurus from maali caste	4 dhimme and 2 bhushya	Three classes
11.	Kushiko Basuri <i>khala</i> :	Ward IV <i>koyelac hi</i>	More than the prese nt	30-35	All the caste groups	Basuri	5 gurus for basuri one for khin and one for harmon ium and one for Tabala	40 basuri, 3 khin, 3 harmonium, 5 pairs of tabala, 1 dholak, 3 madal, 2 ta, 2 jaali, 1 dhaa and bhushya	Unable to recall
12.	Navadurga Dhime <i>khala</i> : ¹²⁷	Ward VI <i>koyelac hi</i>	4-5	22	Only <i>Mali</i> caste groups are allowed	Dhimme	One guru	2 dhimmes and 2 bhushya	Two classes
13.	Neché Twa: Dapa <i>khala</i> :	Ward VII <i>koyelac hi</i>	42	45	All the caste groups are allowed	Khin	Two gurus	3 khin, and four Ta	Five classes
14.	Thecho Messa Dhimme <i>khala</i> (not registered and denied to be part of organizing the Mathaya because of lack of human resources)	Ward VI <i>koyelac hi</i>	10	10	All the members are from <i>Mali</i> caste group	Dhimme	Two gurus	2 dhimmes and 1 Bhusha	One class

Bhajan Mandals:

Apart from *guthis* and musical associations, the village also has *bhajan mandals*¹²⁸. Membership is open for everyone who can play musical instruments and sing. However, people prefer to join particular *bhajan mandals* over the others. These preferences maybe determined by the locality of the *bhajan mandal* or on friends and relatives' association with a particular *bhajan mandal*. They either gather every day or once in a week to spend some time, and the members contribute money or bring milk and sugar to make tea and distribute snacks and tea after the *bhajan*. The establishment of the *bhajan mandal* or

¹²⁷This musical association belongs to *Mali* caste and rest of the associations belongs to *Maharjans* caste in Thecho

¹²⁸ See also (Pradhan, Jnanamala Bhajan Khalah (A Movement for Building up the Newar Society), 1997)

buying musical instruments was done by collecting money from the villagers. Some *bhajan mandals* have a place, but its members are not active. Some become active occasionally on a particular festival.

Kosh:

Kosh is like the *khala* in its membership pattern, but its function is economic in nature. If someone refers to a group as *kosh*, it is understood that they are referring to the group where its members contribute money to save it over a period and use it after a stipulated time. A majority of the group members decide what to do with the money or sometimes the money is even used for any emergency purpose.

The *kosh* might have been formed to meet the financial necessities of people, especially in case of emergencies. Moreover, this way saving money inculcates in them the habit of saving little by little for future use, while it also helps in taking care of their huge expenses. The *kosh* can be formed by any person by taking initiative and asking friends or kin to join. There is a traditional *kosh* in the village, which has been running from time immemorial. Some other groups that lose their main purpose tend to take the shape of the *kosh* in order to keep the members intact and continue to maintain the social network. In the village where fieldwork was done, there were many *Koshs*. This study has taken the sample among these *koshs*; the sample selected through purposive sampling method for understanding the structure and function of this economic group (see table 36).

The *kosh* is generally formed¹²⁹ by a group of members from a particular sex, with a person, who is considered as *kosh adhiyaksha*, taking the responsibility of maintaining accounts and collecting money. He also organizes feast (if the group has the tradition of organizing the feast). Each *kosh* has its own agreement of how much money to be saved by every member a month. Generally, the money should be paid to the *kosh*

¹²⁹In one of the cases, *sa: guthi* who decided to sell all the traditional oil extracting equipments and distribute the money among the members, decided to start a *kosh*, so that the members will meet once in a year to have feast and also one economic activity will be replaced by another.

adhiyaksha on the first day of the (*bikram sambat*) month, failing to do so, they have to pay late fee of Rs. 10-20. The members, in case of emergency, will get a loan at low interest rates. Outsiders can also get loans, but one of the *kosh* members should vouch for the outsider, and he will have to pay interest a little higher than the *kosh* member does. Based on mutual agreement among the *kosh* members, they can either go for *sas pooja* once in a year or organize a feast in the *kosh adhiyaksha*'s house. The *kosh adhiyaksha*'s household generally gets two shares of food in addition to the share with others, one for the members who helped in preparing for the feast and another for utensils used for cooking. This apart, every member gets an equal share and this is also the day when the *kosh* members go through the accounts maintained by the *kosh adhiyaksha* to ensure transparency in maintaining the accounts. The amount left after the feast will be calculated and on mutual agreement, some amount in cash will be kept with the *kosh adhiyaksha* as reserve money to be used in any emergency and the rest of the money will be split among the members equally. The money can also be used for any other collective purpose such as buying agricultural tools or depositing the money in cooperatives for higher returns or women *kosh* buy jewellery or bronze vessels or *pooja* vessels for household purpose, after the completion of an agreed period of 2-5 years.

The traditional system of *kosh* had inspired youngsters to follow suite, save money, and become entrepreneurs. This way of saving leads to saving of a huge amount, and it would not be a burden for individuals as they save relatively less amount every month. One such group called *dochhi* (thousand) provides us a good case study. Six years ago, three friends came together and decided to start a *kosh* by contributing Rs. 100 a month. Later, another person joined the group, but had to leave as he was going abroad to work. In his position, another friend decided to join. The four friends kept running the *kosh* and later, a fifth person joined the group by paying Rs. 4,800/- as his share till then as other four members had already saved Rs. 4, 800/- each.

Later the *kosh* members decided that they should contribute a little more and the money was increased to Rs. 500 and its members increased to seven. These seven members decided that they need to start another *kosh* and agreed that the money to be

contributed should be increased to Rs. 1,000/-. This continued for some time, and the two different *kosh* were merged forming a new group with nine members and Rs. 2,000 as contribution a month. One among all the nine took the responsibility of collecting the money and maintaining the account. The members have to make sure that they pay on the first day of the month failing to do so they have to pay extra charge. When the savings became a large amount, the members decided that they need to invest it in some financial venture, and came up with the idea of starting a function hall, which they named DG party palace. As Newars have the tradition of organizing feasts, they decided that this would be a good idea to invest their money as people increasingly started feeling that they need a spacious and luxurious place to organize the feast than the existing *guthi chhen*. The nine friends¹³⁰ with the share of three lakh rupees per person (until then) invested in the function hall and began work on that during the field study. All the nine divided the work, took the responsibility turn wise of supervising the work on the construction site. Every Saturday, everyone used to work. The group was named *dochhi*, means ‘thousand’, as this group started contributing Rs. 1,000/- every month. One of the group members said that they were setting an example for the Thecho youth for doing something innovative and to improve their entrepreneurship skills. When asked what motivated them to form this group, another member said that the nine members were childhood friends, and as they grew up, everyone got married. Due to work pressure, they used to spend less time with each other. Therefore, they decided to start such a venture that will bring them all together to spend some time together even when there were some economic benefits involved in it.

Youngsters coming together and forming this kind of a group also has its flip side. The *kosh*s are traditional, and they are not only guided by the economic function, but involves the social function too. The members cannot defy the rules set by the group. But one of the youngsters’ group that had formed to save money for river rafting had issues with one or two members, as all of them were employed in service sector. Some have holidays on Sunday while some do not. But the group members who agreed upon a

¹³⁰ From different caste groups.

particular Sunday to go for river rafting continued with the plan without two members taking part in it. The two members asked thier money back as they were unable to make it to the river rafting, but the group denied thier demand. But the traditional *kosh*s never give any scope for problems as their rules are very clear. They decide on which day they should conduct the *sas pooja* and when to hold the feast. If any member is unable to make it to the feast, he/she can send any person in his/her place. And accounts are also maintained with transparency. If there are any conflict over the accounts, they dissolve the group instead of fighting over it. As the traditional *kosh* has a reputation, its members will be careful not to spoil its image.

The emergence of formal banking sectors and financial cooperatives are challenging the traditional *kosh*, but in spite of this, villagers continue to run the *kosh* as being its members in which even their ancestors were members is a matter of pride. In addition, it is a chance for keeping their traditional way of social networking alive.

Table 36: Details of Kosh in Thecho

No.	Name of the <i>kosh</i>	Gender of the members	Total number of persons	Amount to be collected	Having feast/going to picnic	the money used for
1.	<i>Karya Binayak kosh</i>	Women	9	200/ month	They go to <i>karya binayak</i> temple to offer prayer and have feast there	Once the agreed time comes, the either buy jewellery or bronze utensils for the household purpose.
2.	<i>Pasa kosh</i>	Men	9	1000/month	They go to picnic for Bajra barahi and have feast there	The <i>kosh</i> is run mainly support the other member financially when they are in need. At the end all the members get the equal share of the money
3.	Khacha Tole <i>kosh</i> (Babu Khaji)	Men	11	200/month	They will have feast in the <i>kosh adhyaksha</i> house	They save the money to be kept as a reserve in case of emergency for any of its members.
4.	<i>Amma kosh</i>	Women	8	200/month	Once in a year they go to the <i>sas pooja</i>	Earlier they made Dhaki (<i>pooja</i> Plate) with the money they had saved and now they are planning to make jewellery with the money they are saving.
5.	<i>Pamagaon kosh</i>	Women	13	200/month	They do not organize the feast or go for the <i>sas pooja</i>	Members decided that they will split the money among the members after completion of saving the three years.

6.	<i>nehas Tole kosh</i>	Women	19	100/month	They do not organize the feast or go for <i>sas pooj</i>	They has the agreement the money should be split after two years and based on the mutual agreement they might make some jewellery
7.	Kacha Tole (Shyamlal <i>baje</i>)	Men	13	200/month	They organize feast once in a year	Money is saved mainly to support the members in the case of emergency.

Jhar Goo:

This is a group formed to exchange human labour for the members associated with the group. This group was formed 25 years ago, and it became inactive in the recent past. It had 9 members to help with the farm work in each other's field. Irrespective of how much land a person holds in a group, all the members should work in each other's field when work has to be done. Every year, one person will take the responsibility of the *pala: ta:*. He will act as a convenor and he should make sure that every member is informed of any work to be done in the other member's field and he should organize a feast. Once in a year, the members will have a feast, during the feast, the *pala: ta:* changes. The person who has more land will keep a piece of land as a source of income for the *jhar goo*, but in case the *jhar goo* had to be dissolved, the one who contributed the land will get back the land for himself or for his heirs. An informant said that the *jhar goo* became inactive as the next generation got several other opportunities to earn their livelihood. In addition, people's thinking process changed, and they say 'no one wants to work together like we did in those days'. Though this *jhar goo* has ceased to function, its members decided to form a *kosh* out of this. It was observed during the fieldwork that it is hard to find agricultural labour. Though the *jhar goos* are not active, they still exchange labour, especially among women. In one of the cases, a male informant who runs a cloth shop has minimum involvement in agriculture work while his wife handles farm work. This woman informed that she needs to go and help her neighbour in the field as she had rendered her services earlier. They both exchange labour and the one who extends help gets food from the other as a mark of respect for their effort.

Pucha:

This is a group formed by people voluntarily in order to achieve some goal set for a short term. This group is modern in nature. The old *guthis* or traditional groups might have been an inspiration for this modern group to emerge, experiment and establish itself as a group. This group mainly comprises youngsters who are culturally aware and are trying to conduct programmes through which they can educate others about the Newar culture and its identity, which the members of this group believe has been threatened by acculturation and modernization. The Navadurga *dhimme khala* (one among the twelve musical associations in Thecho) members, while responding, had called themselves *pucha*. *Ha pa pucha* is another such case study collected during the fieldwork.

Ha Pa: Pucha:

The one who steers and motivates people while standing on the Machhindranath chariot being pulled in Patan is considered the *ha pa*:. In general, it means a leader or a guide. *Pucha* simply means a group. This is a voluntary association formed by youngsters in 1120 (NS)¹³¹, who feel that the Newari identity should be preserved. For which they feel they should educate other villagers regarding their own culture. The members of this group actively participate in programmes decided to be conducted in the meetings of this group, and they seek help from elders who are aware of Newari traditions and others who can give innovative ideas and keep the group active. The president of this group said that youngsters need to be educated, and the group's membership should be increased. Currently, there are 16-20 members who are active, and this group has eleven members executive committee. It organized several programmes during the field study, like the *parchalit lipi* script classes. They have organized competitions on the day of Lakshmi *pooja*. This group had come up with a new idea to celebrate New Year 1134 (NS). During the study, they made *chibha* using bricks and placed lamps all around it to celebrate the 'Nepal *sambat* New Year' which is followed by the Newars. The president

¹³¹ See second chapter (Ethnographic profile) for the Nepal *sambat*, Bikram *sambat* and Gregorian calendar details.

of this group informed that they also tried to collect information regarding the village *jatara* in order to document it. They used to organize a quiz competition by inviting teams from other villages on the topic of Newari language and culture. They also used to organize cultural shows. Now they have stopped organizing such programmes as they lack financial support and human resource. They have encouraged people from the village to participate in *prachilith* Nepal *lipi* classes. Moreover, students who do not get a chance to learn Newari in schools show special interest in learning their mother tongue. This group comprises members from both parts of the village; they are brought onto same platform not due to geographical affiliation but because of the cause for preserving their language and culture. This group was highly respected by the other villagers for its efforts to keep alive the tradition of the Newars.

Drawing inspiration from the traditional group, youth try to form new groups for fulfilling different needs, such as organizing football matches for villagers. Another group was formed for honouring the elders who celebrated *janku* on every full moon day while some others are formed for business ventures or for discussing the development of the village. A few examples are discussed below to understand these neo-group formations in Thecho and the issues related to it.

Two Stars Club:

This club was formed in 2047-2048 BS¹³². This is to encourage sports and other cultural activities among youth in Thecho. More than 100 members associate themselves with the club. An informant said that ‘Thecho newa deep club’ was associated with the communist party, and Balkumari *yuva samuhu* was merged with two star clubs whose members are associated with Nepali congress party. Earlier, it was the ‘Thecho newa deep club’, which was taking interest in the activities, but some people, had a conflict with the members, so they formed this club. The modern youth club was mainly focuses on attracting youth by organizing sports events. The organizers affiliate themselves with political parties that sometimes causes drift among its members.

¹³² See second chapter for the more details on calendar.

Jetha Nagarik Samman:

On every full moon day, this group organizes a programme to honour all the elders in Thecho. The group also invites Buddhist monks to address this group. This group was formed in 2066 BS *magh punhi*. The group members thought that they would feed elders for one year on every full moon day before stopping the practice. However, other villagers followed this initiative. People have come up with innovative ideas to celebrate this. Some families, instead of organizing feast in a grand way and celebrate the life cycle rituals such as *brath bandha*, second *janku*, and birthday of their family members; they come to this organization, feed the elderly persons, and honour them by gifting the items which they can make use.

The elders participate in this dress up in their finest and attend the function with enthusiasm as it gives them an opportunity to meet their friends and villagers of their age. Even people appreciate the initiatives and take part actively to contribute. Every month, one or the other family or group of families come forward to contribute for organizing the function.

Group Formed to Discuss Village Development:

During the study, the village was announced as a part of urban municipality. According to this status, the village would get funds for development. Nevertheless, some youngsters showed dissatisfaction over the functioning of political leaders who had been elected to the village development committee. After a few meetings, the group had problems with inefficient work or other members' lack of interest in attending frequent meetings owing to their busy schedule. The neo-groups, who have not yet been traditionalised, often tend to dissolve when its members are still in a budding stage. Sometimes, the objective of forming a group may not be practical enough or the members may get demotivated with other members' attitude towards certain issues. They would not have a binding factor to show commitment as if the traditional *guthis* do in Thecho. Often, people who are young make a business venture and suffer from lack of coordination and cooperation.

Challenges Faced by the Guthi in Modern Context:

The Newars are the original inhabitants of the valley, and Shah kings, who are outsiders, had conquered the valley for it being prosperous. The Newars were sidelined politically, militarily, bureaucratically and were confined to business and agriculture. The Shah Kings providing them less governance may have led Newars to come together and form these *guthis* and other groups to have self-governance. These *guthis* literally run the society, by taking care of infrastructure such as maintaining the traditional roads, cleaning canal keeping log across the river for villagers to cross, taking care of the common resting places and other common resources. They functioned as a group owning land and ensuring that everyone gets equal economic opportunity within the caste. Social policing was part of their society to control the members and make them abide by customary laws and rules formed by them. Every *guthi* functions like a small autonomous group with their own rules, ensuring that they cope with the modern times and at the same time, maintaining the traditional aspect of the *guthi* and its culture. Every *guthi* is an example of coexistence of traditionality and modernity. It is a best example of how a society can be run without the help of the state and through the mechanism of the cooperative system adopted by people in a society.

Apart from political reasons, a few of the informants said that the Newars also experienced shortage of food twenty years ago and women had to wait for festivals to eat meat that used to be provided by their natal house by inviting them to the feast. With the farm production being less, and the import of food products almost impossible, through these *guthis* the Newars would have adopted the practice of sharing food in the form of feast. The elders who formed these *guthis* were aware that without an income source, it is impossible to bind people together as *guthi*, so they donated or allocated a piece of land as an income source to a *guthi*. Every *guthi* or a group will have a feast at least once a year and the food is allowed to be taken home. In this way, the *guthi* ensured that at least small amount of food is re-distributed among its members.

Another interesting factor is treating everyone as equal. Everyone has the right to vote and raise his or her voice, if he/she disapproves of something. They also try to

maintain transparency in its economical transactions. When it comes to responsibilities assigned to the *guthiyars*, they follow it without any bias. The absentees in the meetings or for works called by the *guthi* will be levied a fine amount based on the daily wage labour charges. The religious sanctification associated with the *guthi* adds a religious colour and gives more value to the importance of the *guthi* among the Newars. Apart from this, being *guthiyar* is a matter of social respect and vice-versa.

However, the *guthi* is also subjected to changes owing to the changing times. Levy & Rajopadhyaya says that, a large variety of *guthi* groups existed in the recent past. Older informants could name twenty to thirty *guthis*. But the list seems to be quickly diminishing as the government took over some of their functions or the government Acts has led to *guthis* losing their lands, and others disappeared with modernization (1992, p. 141). The main challenges faced by the *guthi* are modernity, and the rise of individuality. In addition, changing perception about dignity, morality and social honour among youngsters have threatened their culture. Several economic opportunities opening up for younger generations now has minimised the necessity of depending on a group to meet the socio-economic needs. As people can now afford funeral expenses of their dead and ‘mortuary-van’ being available today, *guthi*’s functioning in the Newari society is under threat. Earlier, excommunicating or not cremating the dead was the weapon the *guthi* used to employ to enforce social control over its members, which it cannot do now.

Apart from these factors, the state, with its laws, has also contributed to the dilution of *guthi*’s importance. The elderly generation who formed these *guthis* is aware that no group will survive without economic support. Therefore, they had donated and allotted lands to the *guthis* to generate income for the sustenance of the *guthi*. However, the state with its two laws¹³³ has caused damage to the *guthis* more than modernity. Land (Survey and Measurement) Act, 2019 (1963 AD), was enacted to survey lands and provide documents for the same. Prior to this Act, the villagers did not have any documents for their land. When this Act was enacted, the *Naapi* or surveyor started

¹³³See also Land (Survey and Measurement) Act, 2019 (1963 AD), The Lands Act, 2021 (1964 AD) and the *guthi* Corporation Act, 2033 (1976 AD).

measuring lands in Thecho too. The tenants (a *guthiyar* or a non-*guthiyar*) cultivating in the *guthi* land had created documents in their name. This discrepancy had taken place with or without the knowledge of the tenant. The tenants cultivating the *guthi* land used to give agreed tenancy to the *guthi* and it used to get income prior to the land (Survey and Measurement) Act, 2019 (1963 AD). This law, in fact, had created chaos in the community, made people greedy, as Kathmandu was a capital valley and everyone was aware of the land value. When the government decided to distribute land documents, everyone seized the opportunity to get *guthi* land for themselves. The law also specifies that if a landowner who is unable to provide any evidence that he/she owns the land, in the form of registration and payment of land revenue, he/she may approach the survey team and it shall paste a notice at main places in the village. Any villager who has objection to issuing the land title to that particular person who claims the land as his/her's can approach the officials. Not being aware of the Act and its provisions might have been the reasons for the *guthis* and villagers to lose the land. The *guthiyars*, who were unable to predict the consequences of this Act, showed negligence in getting or claiming the land titles for the *guthi*. As a result, the *guthis* had to lose their land. The *guthiyars* who had made the land documents on their name claimed that their ancestors had donated the land in order to help the *guthi* function.

Another Act called Lands Act, 2021 (1964 AD), was another deathblow to *guthi*'s economic source. The Land Act had a ceiling on the land and through fourth amendment to the Act in 1996¹³⁴, it gave tenancy rights, which says the tenants who are cultivating the land will get half the share in the land. That resulted in *guthis* losing half of the land in their possession. The government clearly mentions in the Act that the tenancy rights will not be applicable to tenants cultivating government land. They should have added the

¹³⁴In the Kathmandu post, Jagat Basne while writing the article called 'Feudalism is alive and well' states that, "The People's Movement of 1990 reintroduced multi-party democracy to the Kingdom of Nepal, bringing new hope. In 1996, amendments to the original land Act stipulated that any tenant farmer who had cultivated a piece of land continuously and was registered as a tenant in the landlord's land certificate, would be given the right of tenancy and the right to receive half the land they farmed. As a majority of the tenants were unregistered, landlords reacted predictably by evicting them from their land and refusing to grant secure tenancy contracts".

guthi land under this category to save *guthis*, because *guthi* as a ‘group’ owns the land (not any individual). The Act should have exempted the *guthi*-owned land from tenancy rights as it fulfils the purpose of the land reforms Act.

Because of the two Acts and the challenges posed by modernity, the *guthi* as a system is on the downward spiral. However, the *guthiyars* were and are trying their best to keep their tradition alive in spite of not having any economic backup. Participating in social activities and maintaining their own family has become a burden for any individual. Elders in the *guthi* also started accepting the changing perceptions.

The *guthi* associations and other group formations resemble the formal way of organizing the groups within the norms prescribed by the culture. The norms dictate the obligations, and the people who are being part of these formal voluntary groups respected by the society and value is placed on such perceptions. Members contribute for the feast expenses and get equal share from the feast organized by the *guthi*. The *guthi* by its nature tries to minimise the impact of power exercised on each other and maintains equality among its members. The exchange of respect and resources allows its members to form a network, which goes even beyond their kinship networks.

The phenomena of group formations among the Newars can be considered as a unique phenomenon, as they managed to institutionalize the groups. Groups are vested with different responsibilities, which the members try to fulfil. The value placed upon the *guthis* and other group formations acts as an inspirational source for the members to continue these groups in the midst of challenges they are facing. Different groups with their own autonomy to function acts as self-governing bodies of the village.

CHAPTER VI

CASTE SYSTEM AMONG THE NEWARS

Caste, which is referred as *jati* among the Newars of Thecho village, is another predominant social unit, which helps people to organize themselves. This (caste) social unit tries to show favouritism to its own group and goes to the extent of showing sanctified discrimination and exploitation for the group which is not their own. This phenomenon seems to be quite natural in almost all societies though they have been manifesting in different forms. Nevertheless, it is almost certain that each society has its own kind of '*selfing*' and the '*othering*' as per their own understandings, based on their own reasons.

Newars in the Kathmandu valley is perceived to be one among the ethnic communities of Nepal who have further divided themselves into different *jatis*. The caste name used as suffix for an individual gives away one's caste identity (which sometimes may act as a factor to get benefits out of it and sometimes acts as a factor for others to show antagonism as well). The caste names of the Newars such as *Tamarkar* (who work with the bronze and other metals), *Chitrakar* (the artist who are ritually considered to be the painters of the masks used by traditional mask dancers), *Shrestha* (who was considered to be in high positions during the Malla dynasty), *Maharjans* (one of the sub groups of *Jyapu*, who are considered to be peasants), *Mali* (who are considered to be gardeners) are indications of what occupation they follow and intertwined with the concepts of purity and pollution affiliated to them which determine their status in the social hierarchy. One can only speculate how this divisions might have come but people and scholars believe that Jayasthithi Malla (a famous *Malla* dynasty king before Shah Dynasty) often attributed for his various laws to bring order in the system (Levy & Rajopadhyaya, 1992, p. 42-45) (Sharma, 1977). However, most of the people in the village also believe that it is only after the Shah Kings' invasions and their introduction of Brahmins into the valley in order to preach Hinduism instead of Buddhism had made the caste system more rigorous, as the earlier stratification (Buddhism) is believed to be not as exploitative as the current caste system.

This chapter mainly deals with, understanding different caste groups in Thecho and how ‘dominant castes’ (Srinivas, 1987) exercise their power and authority over non-dominant castes. In the context of Thecho, *Maharjans* can be considered as dominant caste group. As Srinivas (1987), explains, *Maharajans* are numerically, economically and politically dominant caste group in Thecho. Though *Gopalis* are ritually superior in their status but they are numerically negligible when compared with the *Maharajans*. This chapter also looks into how the lower caste tries to defy the imposition of authority over them by the dominant caste, how the changing contexts is leading ways to the new form of social organization among the villagers. This chapter will give us a complete picture of the social organization of the Thecho village in total.

Different Caste Groups in Thecho Village:

The study village comprises caste groups such as *Gopalis*, *Maharjans*, *Malis*, *Napit*, *Shahi* and *Kapali* (see table 37). However, several other caste groups can be found in and around the valley but this village has only the above mentioned caste groups. As this village is believed to be formed by different people who had migrated from different villages, it is often cited as a reason why they do not have other caste groups like the other villages.

Jyapu or Maharjans:

Lalitpur district is famous for the peasant group known as *Jyapus*. *Jyapu* caste can also be further divided into sub-castes namely *Maharjans*, *Dangole*, *Singh* etc., (intermarrying among these sub-castes is permitted) who are considered as peasants and whose traditional occupation is to cultivate the land. Among all the above mentioned six caste groups in Thecho village, *Maharjans* population constitute 79.86% of the total population making them numerically, politically and economically dominant caste group in the village.

Gopali or Gwali:

Gopalis also reside in Thecho and they are considered as the ritually upper caste than the *Maharjans*. *Gopalis* are traditional cow herders and believed to be the descendants of the Gopal Bankshi dynasty (the first dynasty to establish the Kingdom in the valley). Though they are considered as ritually higher than the *Maharjans*, the *Gopalis* do not have any kind of space to claim their superiority in the presence of mammoth population of *Maharjans* in the village. Instead, they claim their status as equal to the *Maharjans*. The *guthi* of *Gopalis* was annexed with one of the *guthis* of *Maharjans* by merging the *guthi* property of *Gopalis*. As the population of *Gopalis* is very less, it is becoming tough to mobilize the resources either to use for cremating the dead or to mobilize the human resource to carry out the cremation. *Gopalis* used to sit along with the *Maharjans* while having the feast during the village *jatara* symbolising the equal caste status. Nonetheless, during the study, the *Gopalis* were sitting in a separate line for feasting, as they no more wish to sit along with the *Maharjans* as they had issues with the *guthis*, but still the *Maharjans guthi* is vested with the responsibility for cremating the dead in the families of *Gopalis*. The popular belief says that the temples in the village is constructed by the three sisters who belonged to the *Gopali* caste group. The three temples namely Brahmayini, Balkumari and *pingal* are considered to be built by *Gopalis* by most of the villagers. Whereas the *charhe guthiyars* in the *choyelachi* (upper part of the village) denounce this belief and they claim that, the *charhe guthi* is the one who had built the Balkumari temple traditionally. The *charhe guthiyar* also reveals that, the *Gopali* sisters had built three temples in Thecho namely, Brahmayini, Ganesh temple and *pingal* but not the Balkumari temple. One of the factors to determine the status of the caste group is that the ability of the caste group to organize the village *jatara* or any kind of village ritual or the caste group's ability to maintain the temple.

Table 37: Caste wise Population Details

Castes	Male	Female	Total	Total No. of HH	Percentage
<i>Gopali</i>	8	12	20	4	0.53%
<i>Maharjan</i>	1499	1484	2983	526	79.86%
<i>Maali</i>	290	296	586	104	15.68%
<i>Napit</i>	11	16	27	6	0.72%
<i>Shahi</i>	41	36	77	12	2.06%
<i>Kapali</i>	22	20	42	8	1.12%
Total	1871	1864	3735	660	100 ¹³⁵ %

Ghate or Malis, or Malakar:

Next to *Gopalis* and *Maharjans*, the *Malis* or *Malakar* come in the caste hierarchy of the village. They are also referred to as *Ghate* in Newari. The traditional caste occupations of the *Malis* are considered gardeners or horticulturalist. *Malis* caste group is considered as ‘*Ja challe majew*’ according to the *Maharjans* and *Gopalis*, which indicates that the *Maharjans* are prohibited from having cooked food from the *Malis*¹³⁶. On the other hand, they can accept water from this caste group. They also organize the village *jatara* for the Brahmayini goddess in the lower part of Thecho as per their turn once in every three years. The other two years *Maharjans* get the chance to organize the village *jatara*. The *Malis* have been given the responsibility of organizing the Navadurga *jatara* and perform the mask dance in the village¹³⁷. It is also believed that, the responsibility of organizing the Navadurga mask dance was the responsibility of the *Maharjans* (particularly of the *nehas guthi* members) before one of the women (who is also a daughter of *nehas guthiyar*) cursed the *Maharjans* in agony of losing her husband as she mistook that *nehas guthiyars* had sacrificed her husband (to the Navadurga goddess) who had come to visit

¹³⁵ 99.97% making it to the round figure it has been mentioned as 100%

¹³⁶ However, this phenomenon of accepting the food and water restriction has been not observed by the younger generations, defying the traditional practices. This might be the result of modernization and education, which is creating awareness to treat the other human beings equally, but not by judging them by their caste. However, the caste discrimination in several forms has been manifested in the social organization; taints of it can also be observed among the youngsters no matter how hard they try to defy the traditional restrictions on treating the other caste groups.

¹³⁷ See also fifth chapter for detailed description of this aspect.

her maternal house. The myth also says that when the *shimba* (one of the Mask dancers) enters the *nehas guthi chhen* on a particular day, the *Maharjans* will get the privilege back to organize the Navadurga mask dance.

The myth of transferring the right to organize the Navadurga *jatara* and mask dance from *Maharjans* to *Malis* can be understood from the point of view of ‘Sanskritization’. Organizing a religious event is one of the main criteria for the caste group to claim a higher status within the caste hierarchy. The *Malis* who are constantly in struggle with the *Maharjans* to achieve the social status (as the *Maharjans* are the dominant caste within the Thecho) might have seized the opportunity for organizing the Navadurga *jatara*. One of the informants also opined that the *Maharjans* might have transferred the right to organize the Navadurga *jatara* to the *Malis* because it is a very hectic job one has to perform. In past, the number of mask dances that should be organized in a year were much more than the current situations thereby making the people involving in the mask dance to sacrifice all their work and to undergo the strict dietary and other restrictions, which further makes any one who practices this mask dance a hectic job. So the *Maharjans* who are smart may have felt easy and convenient to transfer the right to organize the Navadurga *jatara* to *Malis* so that they can escape organizing the mask dance. *Malis* who are waiting for a chance to organize the religious event in the village, as it is one of the privileges of the upper caste might have seized the opportunity to elevate their status in the caste hierarchy.

It is also been observed that most of the people mock the Navadurga dance in different occasions which is not in the case with other gods or goddess’ religious events. The mockery they enact might be a tool to impose the authority of the dominant caste over the caste groups who are struggling to elevate their social status through imitation. The mockery symbolises the social construct that though the *Malis* get the opportunity to organize the Navadurga *jatara*, but they will be constantly subjected to the mockery. They use this instrument to constantly remind them that they are lower than the dominant caste.

Nau or Napit:

Nau or *Napit* comes next in the social hierarchy followed by *Malis* in the village. The *Nau* or *Napit* are traditionally barbers. *Napit* are considered as ‘*La challe majew*’ (accepting water is not permitted) community, where the upper caste denies to drink water in the *Napit* houses. The *Napit* continues their traditional caste occupation till date (see plate 10). Each *Napit* family will have a set of *Maharajan*, *Gopali* and *Mali* houses who invite them to render their services during the life cycle rituals, where the services of the barbers are generally and ritually needed. The *Napit* are allowed to enter upstairs of the houses since the head shaving and other pre-ritual preparations generally take place at the upstairs. Though the persons from the *Nau* caste groups who are between the age group of 35-45 and above practice their traditional caste occupation, the youth are not showing interest to take up their traditional occupation as source to earn their livelihood. The people who are practicing the barbering occupation go to the *Maharajan* or *Mali* households only during the life cycle rituals in their houses to shave and render other services. On the normal days, the *Maharjans* has to approach the shops run by the *Napit* community to have haircut or shaving. *Nauni* has to come there to cut the nails of all the girls sitting in the *barha*. Paddy and money will be given as a fee for the services of *Nauni*. During *kyata pooja*, *Nau* and *Nauni* will come to render their services of cutting the hair and nails and applying the red anti-septic lotion, which also acts as decoration for the girl’s legs, and they will get clothes, money, and food for their services. The *Napit* plays a key role in fulfilling the ritual obligations of the *Maharjans* and *Malis* as they are mandated to offer *pinda* for the dead ancestors while organizing any life cycle rituals. In order to do so, the one who is offering the *pinda* should shave his head and for that, *Nau* will be invited to come and render the services. *Nauni* will come with her traditional nail cutter and apply the red *sindhur* to the legs of the bride. Applying the red *sindhur* is considered as one of the important part of the ritual. Because it is believed that it will purify the person mere by touching the nails with the traditional nail cutter, and applying the red *sindhur* is perceived to be adding beauty to the feet for those who are celebrating the life cycle ritual. The youngsters from this community show tendency to give up their traditional caste occupations. However, the families still render their ritual services to the

upper caste people in the village may be because of their position in the social hierarchy and also their caste occupation serves as a means of earning their livelihood.

Nai or Shahi or Kashai:

Nai or *Shahi* comes next to the *Napit* in the caste hierarchy within the village. *Nai* traditionally practices the occupation of butchering the animals either for the ritual purpose or for day-to-day consumption of meat. In addition to rendering the services of butchering animals, they also play a key role in the life cycle rituals of *Maharjans* and *Malis*. They generally render the butchering services for the feast organized by the *Maharjans* and *Malis* apart from playing the traditional musical instruments during the death procession and other rituals. During birth, the *Kashai* women have to cut the umbilical cord. The family has to provide the coin, which she has to place at the naval button of the child and cut the umbilical cord. She also has to keep the umbilical cord in *dalcha* and throw in front of the *bailaju dyo chhen*. For her services, the family will give her oil and *baji* as a payment. *Nai* caste people are allowed until the *Maathan kotha* of the *Maharjans* and *Malis* house. Five years ago, *Nai* stopped coming to play the *Nai kheen* (*Kashai* traditional instrument). *Nai* are considered as ‘*La Challe Majew*’ (accepting water is not permitted) by the upper caste in the village.

Jugi or Kapali or Kusle:

Jugi (*Kapali/Kusle*) who are considered as the ‘*La challe majew*’ (water is not accepted) caste group by the *Maharjans* and other upper caste groups in Thecho. *Jugis* are considered as untouchable castes who are traditionally assigned with the job of playing music for the village rituals and other life cycle ritual. They are expected to live by depending on the alms given by the higher caste for the services rendered by the *jugis*. *Jugi* caste group people are allowed only until *chheli kotha* of the *Maharjans* and *Malis* house. *Jugis* are in the lowest level of caste hierarchical ladder in the village. Quite surprisingly, the *Jugis* who are considered as the lowest caste in Thecho, have their households in midst of the *Maharjans* and that too in the centre of the temple complexes. Some of the informants have opined that the first prayer of the day should be performed

in the temples while the *Jugi* play their traditional caste musical instrument. Therefore, the higher caste might have allowed the *Jugis* to stay in the midst of the *Maharajan* households.

Jugi has to take the *chaswae* clothes during the death of the person. On the 12th day they have to come and take the clothes of the dead person but they are not coming now-a-days. On the day of *sripanchami*, *Kapali* caste group has to blow the *sannai* (*mal fyuta*, *kapali* traditional instrument for music). He has to go to every temple, every *majos* house, and *dware* (head of the village before Panchayat system). It is believed that herbivores animals and mosquitoes and other insects in the house feel happy and laugh with joy as their season has come where they can have good food either in the form of sucking the blood or they can breed more. This blowing of *sannai* by the *Kapali* indicates the change of season on the day of *Sripanchami*. It is popularly said in the Newari/Nepali that *Kashai* have to go to kill the animal and do sin, and *Kapali* will go to do the dharma (tradition).

Hiring Priest for the Ritual Services:

People believe that, they should be hiring only *Gubhaju* who is a Buddhist priest to perform the life cycle rituals in their families. In case of non-availability of the Buddhist priest, they may hire a Brahmin, which is a very rare case. As there are no priestly caste residing in Thecho, the people of the village generally hire the priests from the adjacent village called Chapagaon. The priestly services are requested mostly for the death related ritual or while offering the *pinda*. In one of the instance, the priest was hired for two days. The first day, priest helped the head of the household to offer *pinda* for their ancestors. As he is celebrating his *janku* and it is mandatory to offer *pinda* for the ancestors when there is good ritual in the family. The priest who is also appointed for the second day failed to come and help the household to perform the *janku* ritual. The family members with the help of the eldest members of the *depcha guthi* had managed to finish the ritual related to *janku* for the old couple. In another life cycle rituals such as *anna prassann*, *barha kunegu*, *kyata pooja* are majorly celebrated with the help of eldest member of the *depcha guthi* without hiring the priest for conducting the rituals. The main

important life cycle rituals where the priestly services from the *Gubhaju* or *Brahmin* is hired are death related rituals and marriage. There are other instances where the *Maharajan* caste person who is believed to have well read and popular among the villagers as *baidya* also acts as a priest for the life cycle rituals. It is quite natural to see the life cycle rituals performed with or without the help of priestly caste.

Imitation and Resistance:

In order to elevate their caste hierarchy, the caste groups in Thecho follow two paths. One is imitating the dominant caste and second is defying the traditional caste calls, which are non-economical in addition to that of demeaning in nature. The first way of trying to elevate their status is possible for those castes, which fits into the category as explained by Srinivas (1966) in the ‘sanskritization’ process. The *Mali* caste group is one that fits exactly into the category of the caste, which can elevate their status through imitating the dominant caste. The *Malis* who are ritually or as prescribed by the tradition considered as inferiors to the *Maharjans*. *Malis* are very well aware that they are not numerically, economically and politically as strong as *Maharjans*. However, they can claim their equal status if they manage to organize the village level ritual that is *jatara* for the goddess. Organizing this village *jatara*, which demands considerable human and economic resource, can only be organized by the *Maharjans* and *Malis*. *Malis* who are already not in so vulnerable position when compared with the other three caste groups, which are in lower rung of the society, find their way in claiming the equal status on par with the *Maharjans*¹³⁸. During the study, the *Malis* try to compete in showing their wealth or show off how they managed to marry the girl from *Maharjan* caste or show that they are more generous in distributing the food or any other eatables during the *magh* month *bhajan* procession¹³⁹. Eventually, the *Maharjans* also accepted the *Malis* as

¹³⁸ See the early description in the *Malis* section in this same chapter.

¹³⁹ During the month of *magh*, the villagers especially from the lower part organize this *bhajan* procession. People sing the songs praising the gods and goddess and go around the village. During this procession, the villagers who want to offer some snacks and tea for the people who participate in this procession may provide by approaching the organizers in advance. During this, the *Mali* caste families also come forward to offer snacks such as bread, tea, *aila* and cigarettes for the people who participate in the procession. However, the *Mali* caste people try to do it with grandeur showing that they can do it on par with the

equals, at least partially. In Thecho, we can see that the *Malis* and *Maharjans* being part of a same *guthi*, running the *sa guthis* together, participating in the village rituals together. However, the inter-caste marriage between *Maharjans* and *Malis* is not accepted among the *Maharjans*. In case of an inter caste marriage between *Maharjans* and *Mali*, it is more acceptable than that of a *Maharjan* marrying any of the other three caste groups within the village. Though the *Malis* feel that they have been experiencing the oppression from the *Maharjans*, they will also follow the lines of *Maharjans* towards the other caste groups in Thecho who are considered as lower than *Malis*.

The lower castes have realised that in the battle for equality they will never be able to attain the political, numerical, religious, and economic strength of the dominant caste in the Thecho. They are trying to defy the caste discrimination by not attending the 'traditional caste calls'. Such as the *shahi*, caste group has stopped playing *Nai khi* during the death procession. The *Kapali* caste group has stopped attending to collect food in post death rituals and stopped playing the musical instrument for the village rituals or for the life cycle rituals of individuals. The *guthis* of these two caste groups took this decision unanimously and started following this as a resistance to the caste discrimination in the Thecho village. However, in one of the cases from the *Kapali* caste group, one family has not abided by their *guthi's* decision and they are continuing to go to take the food in post death ritual and go to play musical instrument during *depcha* of the *Maharjans*. This particular family was ex-communicated, as they did not abide by the *guthi* rules and decisions. Hence, the *guthi* will not have any obligation to help the family in case of any death in the family to bury their dead. When asked why does this family does not want to abide the *guthi* rules? Why should they risk the wrath of the *guthi* and excommunication? That too for attending the traditional caste occupation, which is demeaning in nature. The informant from the *Kapali* caste replied that, the family is in a

Maharjans. Every year one family will take the responsibility of organizing the post procession snacks preparation responsibility for the people who have participated in the procession. During the study, the *Mali* caste people have the opportunity to prepare the snacks for the people every day who have participated in the procession. Getting this opportunity is a great privilege and it is believed that the family will get the blessing of the god for doing this service for the people who are participating in the *bhajan* procession.

very poor condition and they do not have any other means of earning their livelihood. However, the *guthi*, which is the apex body for our caste in this village, will not tolerate such actions, which defies the *guthi* authority. Therefore, they are not left with any choice but to ex-communicate them. If they did not do that, the other families may have also followed that lead and would have continued to practice the traditional caste calls, which will also question the authority of the *guthi* as a collective body.

Traditional Economic Capital and Modern Social Capital:

The vicious caste system, which is discriminatory in each aspect such as treating the lower caste with indecency and giving the lower caste people a secondary citizen status in the society, might have been possible by discriminating the lower caste economically. It might be one of the root causes for personification of this caste inequality in all aspects political, ritual, and social in the village. This led the dominant caste to dictate and exercise their power over the other lower caste. The lower caste who do not want to subjugate to the dominate caste, put up a resistance. However, at the end, the lack of control over the means of production is leading them to subjugate and carry forward their social resistance in whatsoever means they can in the day-to-day life. The lower caste groups do not own the land as much as the ‘dominant caste’ i.e., *Maharjans* in the village. The control of means of production (land) gave an upper hand to the *Maharjans* to establish the society where they place themselves on the top of the social ladder either by accumulating wealth (through controlling the means of production) or through benefitting their own caste people. It is also popularly believed that in the modern context, where the means of production has changed drastically from land to several opportunities opening in the form of industries and service sectors, the caste system loses its relevance and the lower caste are also given equal opportunity in the modern context. However, the caste taints are unavoidable in the form of the ‘social capital’/ ‘cultural capital’, even in these modern opportunities. Ursula Sharma rightly points out, ‘Caste has not gone away but has been transformed. It has less to do than formerly with ritual relationships and is more evidently another dimension of competition for different kinds of resources in a modern capitalist society with large agrarian base’ (2002, p. 74).

The *Maharjans* who successfully have discriminated the other lower caste from accessing the economic resources traditionally have even succeeded in capturing the modern capitalist mode of economy. The already established social capital through caste has come in handy for the business that *Maharjans* started in the village. The study village is based on multiple economic options. The economic options ranges from agriculture to business to office work and so on. Starting their own business (including opening up of shops) is an ideal form economic option Newars seek. The shops vary from eateries to grocery shops to beauty parlours to different kind of materials, which are necessary for the villagers. All these shops are owned by the *Maharjans* and very small number of shops by *Malis*. Except the shops, which sell meat (which are owned by the *Shahi* caste groups) and shops that render the services of barbering and owned by the *Napit* caste groups. *Maharjans* who saw that the selling meat is a profitable venture started to sell chicken. However, selling meat of the buffalo was left to the *Shahi* as the ritual status of the *Maharjans* does not allow them to sell meat of the buffalo. When asked how come they sell the meat (even of chicken) which was traditionally the caste occupation of *Shahi*', one of the *Maharjan* who runs a chicken shop replied, 'when the business is profitable and when I know that the people I know will come to me to buy the meat why should not I open the chicken shop. It is the only business which gives high profit with less investment'. There are more than 8 chicken shops run by the *Maharjans* in the village. Though there are no explicit restriction on opening up such shops, the person who started this for the first time has earned the nick name called 'small *Shahi*' from his friends and neighbours. *Maharjans* who have natural advantage with the established social capital (social network) try to take over whatsoever opportunity comes along with the modernization.

As the three lower castes are considered as '*La chale majew*', these caste groups do not own any shops at all. Moreover, to run the shops those sell the grocery one needs high economic capital and most importantly great social capital in order to run the shops. Even if all the same caste persons support his/her business, he/she would not be able to sustain the business, as the lower caste population is considerably low.

Social Resistance and Status of the Caste in the Social Hierarchical Ladder:

The high degree of social resistance has been observed from the lower castes that are in the lower rank of the hierarchical ladder. The *Malis* who are traditionally horticulturalists, do not have any significance in the current scenario within the village as they take up the job of the peasants and other occupations such as carpenter, shop keeper, owner of the carpet making industry and manufacturing the bronze sculptures and so on. Their fight and social resistance is just to achieve the equal status with the *Maharjans* in the village. The *Nau/ Napit* who are traditionally barbers whose main job is to render their services by going to the upper caste persons' house. However, the practice has been modernized and took another dimension by opening up the saloon shops where the people who wanted haircut or shaving should approach the *Napit*. Even then, the *Napit* still continues to go to the houses of the upper caste in case of any life cycle rituals such as offering *pinda* by the eldest male member of the family during the life cycle rituals or *barha kunegu* or death rituals where the male members of the *jahan* are expected to shave their head. When compared with the other lower caste, the *Napit* caste was given permission to enter the house's top floor, which is generally used for taking bath or, because of the space constraints, to accommodate the relatives and friends. The families prefer to celebrate the ritual aspects on the top floor of the house where *Napit* is allowed to come and perform his services against a decent payment in cash and kind. The treatment of the *Napit* is done with some dignity when compared with the *Shahi* and *Kapali* caste. The traditional caste occupation is providing them to earn their livelihood hence they continue to practice it, though the youngsters are trying to venture into the modern job opportunities, which can be achieved through education.

On the other hand, *Shahis* and *Kapalis*, who were looked down because of their ritual status in the caste system, show high degree of the social resistance. The *Shahis* are a butchering community, whose traditional caste occupation dictates them to render their services of butchering during the village rituals or any life cycle rituals, and to provide the musical services during the death funeral of the upper caste. The *Shahis*, though render their services during the village rituals, demand money for their services, which

was not the case earlier. *Shahis* also help the individual families when they are conducting their life cycle rituals and sacrificing the water buffalo for religious as well as consumption purpose, but the services will be rendered only against the payment. *Shahis* also runs the meat shops where they sell meat of the buffalo and meat of the chicken which serve them as the main source of livelihood and through these meat shops, they are doing quite good economically. *Kapali* who are at the lower rung of the society, are considered as ritually impure and expected to collect the clothes of deceased in case of death in the upper caste family. They should also come to eat food on the day of *nayanbhu* in the deceased person's family and should render the musical services for the upper caste when they go for worshipping the *kuldeeptha* on the day of *depcha*. The *Kapali guthi* has decided that they will not do these practices, which are dictated by the tradition and the upper caste, and so they stopped going to the upper caste families to take food on the day of *nayanbhu*. In addition, they also stopped to render musical services on the day of *depcha* and stopped playing their caste musical instrument even in the temples as a resistance against caste discrimination. However, there is still one family from the *Kapali* caste (as mentioned earlier in this chapter) who still goes to the upper caste to take food on the day of *nayanbhu* and renders the musical services while they go for worshipping their *kuldeeptha*, and this family has been excommunicated by the *Kapali guthi*.

As a part of the resistance towards the caste hegemony the lower caste decides to give up certain traditional caste calls which are demeaning in nature and do not provide any means for earning their livelihood. The *Shahi* caste group decided to stick to this traditional caste call of butchering the animals for ritual and consumption purpose because they can earn decent amount through this. They have decided not to participate in the death procession of the upper caste with their *Shahi* caste musical instrument because it is demeaning their caste and does not give them good money for the efforts they put up. Similarly, the *Kapali* who does not have any specific occupation prescribed by the tradition that can provide money for their survival, hence, they decided to stop all the activities as demanded by the traditional caste call in the village. On the other hand, the *Napit* caste group who chose to still follow their traditional caste occupation that is

barbering, also attends the houses of the upper caste during any life cycle rituals in their houses. This phenomenon can be understood as, the caste groups, which have experienced the caste oppression to the highest degree in spite of being part of the traditional caste system, which dictates without the participation of all the caste groups the established norms, can no longer continue in the same manner. In return, all they get is inhumane treatment and looking down approach by the upper caste. Through the means of not allowing the lower caste to enter the upper part of their houses, not accepting even the drinking water from the lower caste, and treating them as highly pollutant for the jobs they do, and this has led them to give up the traditional caste calls. It is also evident that the caste group, which has experienced more oppression, has showed the highest degree of resistance towards the caste hegemony. Hence, it can also be said that the degree of oppression a caste experiences is directly proportional to the degree of resistance (or the aspiration to elevate their status if not at least to escape from the oppression) that they show towards the caste hegemony.

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 \text{The degree of} & & \text{Degree of resistance} \\
 \text{oppression a caste} & \propto & \text{the caste shows} \\
 \text{experiences} & & \text{towards caste} \\
 & & \text{hegemony}
 \end{array}$$

Naming as a Medium to Combat the Caste Hierarchy:

Every caste in the village has two or more names, such as *Gwalis* have the name *Gopalis*, *Jyapus* have the name *Maharjans*, *Malis* have the name *Malakar*, *Nau* have the name *Napit*, *Nai* has the name *Shahi*, and *Jugi* have the name *Kapali*. The first name indicate, the caste names in Newari, and the later name in Nepali. People from the lower caste perceive that the upper caste uses Newari caste name to address the lower caste in the demeaning way. Therefore, they naturally prefer to be addressed with the Nepali names. *Nau*, *Nai* and *Jugi* insist on calling them with the name of *Napit*, *Shahi* and *Kapali*, respectively. However, the upper caste still uses the Newari names to refer the lower caste.

Maharjans address the *Shahi* as *Kasahi*, which means the one with hard heart, as they will sacrifice the animals for their living. Nevertheless, the *Kasahi* will never accept to be called as *Kasahi* and they insist on calling them as *Shahi*. Similarly, the *Jugi* caste person wants to be called as *Kapali* and *Nau* caste person as *Napit*. This can be understood as the resistance shown by the lower caste towards the looking down approach of the ‘dominant caste’. The resistance is shown with whatsoever the medium they can use such as, not following the traditional caste calls and stopping to responding to the names used by the upper caste to refer them.

On the other hand, the *Gopalis*, *Maharjans* use their caste titles as suffix to their names with a lot of pride. The name *Maharjan* might be of recent phenomena but the old people want to be known by their caste name *Jyapu* that is Newari form of referring themselves as peasants. *Maharjans* and *Gopalis* feel pride in mentioning their caste title along with their names. This is so because their caste names indicate dominant caste titles in the village, and using their caste names as the suffix will act as a factor of gaining social Capital, which indeed helps them to build and accumulate the economic capital. *Malis*, who are again looked down by the *Maharjans* and *Gopalis*, are questioning the whole nature of the lower status of their caste and they would like to use their names as proudly as the *Maharjans* or *Gopalis* use. As the Newar society is patrilineal in nature, any married out daughter is expected to accept her husband’s caste name as her caste name. However, through social media it has been observed that the *Mali* caste girls who happen to marry the *Maharjan* caste boys refuse to change their Caste name from *Mali* to *Maharjan*. In some cases the girls keeps her caste name and adds her husband caste name. This phenomenon can be understood as *Malis* putting forward their resistance towards the *Maharjans* notion of looking the *Mali* caste as lower and the *Malis* defying that notion and proudly trying to say that they are *Malis*. This may be because of the reason that they are not very low and did not experience the oppression as much as the castes that are at the lower rung. It is also possible that they have the means to fight the caste oppression, and to some extent, they manage to succeed in elevating their caste status in the eyes of *Maharjans* or *Gopalis*.

Adding the caste name as suffix is another mechanism by which upper castes differentiate their own caste members from the others. The old stone inscriptions¹⁴⁰ in Thecho that are laid during the establishment of the *falcha guthis* or temples show that there were no caste names as suffix for the main names. This might be the phenomena started may be after the Shah Kings conquest and introduction of the Brahmin community into the valley.

The educated youth or the ones who believe that they should not be using the caste title as suffix to their names simply uses the term 'Thechomi' meaning people of Thecho. The others from the other villages will easily identify him/her as the person belonging to Thecho.

Employing Different Forms of Resistance:

In the fight for equal status, the immediate rival of the *Maharjans* are *Malis*. The *Malis* as mentioned above employ whatsoever method available in their possession to fight for equal status on par with *Maharjans*. In this desperate account, the *Malis* caste men have taken another step seriously considering themselves as *Baidyo* or *bairis*. *Baidyo* or *bairi* are men who possess special powers to heal a health ailment caused either by the bad spirits or because of their stars not favouring them. The art of being *baidyo* or *bairi* can be learnt by being a disciple of the master who is already a well-established *baidyo*. Even simply claiming that they possess the knowledge of being a *baidyo* or *bairi* might also suffice since most of the informants agreed that it is believing in self and proclaiming one's self as *bairi* rather than the formal way of training. When compared to the *Maharjans* there are lot of *baidhyas* or *bairi* in the *Malis* caste. During the household survey, when asked until which class her husband or a male family member has studied. The *Mali* caste women reply, that their husband or the male member of the family has studied which is sufficient to become *baidhya* or *bairi*. These *bairis* are visited by the people who are facing problems in their life because of their health ailments or may be

¹⁴⁰ See appendix VI for the translation and analysis of old stone inscriptions in Thecho village.

because of their professional life. The *bairis* will be able to solve the problem through some ritual or simple offerings to the offended gods/goddesses.

The lower castes in Thecho, who resist the upper caste hegemony, by leaving out certain demeaning practices as defined by the upper caste, also try their best to elevate their social status and as part of it, they try to imitate the upper caste in certain cases such as, celebrating the *guthi* feast as much grandly as they can. The *guthis* of *Nau*, *Nai* and *Jugi* do not have any properties to run the *guthi*. The feast expenses of the *guthi* (organized once in a year) should be shared among the *guthiyars*. In the process of imitation and the urge to achieve the recognition, these caste group *guthis* try to organize *guthi* feast in grandeur resulting to a heavy financial burden for the *guthiyar*.

Though each caste has its own day to celebrate the *kuldeeptha* worship. The *Malis* and *Maharjans* celebrate it on the same day. Following the lead, one *Nai* caste person also started worshipping his clan goddess on the same day when the *Maharjans* and *Malis* celebrate their *depcha*. Some of the villagers with a mockery say that it is just a process of imitating the upper caste. However, this can also be understood as another strategy to receive the upper caste recognition and may be an attempt to decrease the stereotypes associated with the lower caste if not at the current situation but eventually in the later generations.

In another instance, one of the *Nai* caste members who has been brought up in Assam until his teenage and came to his native village Thecho was unable to cope with the caste discrimination persisting in the village. He started questioning and resisting in all possible way, and has informed how the upper caste treated him and his caste members over the years. He informed that his caste members were not even allowed to buy or eat something in the eateries run by the *Maharjans* and *Malis* and they were looked down and tormented because of their caste. He also informed that there was ‘double glass¹⁴¹’ system, which he fought against in one incident and refused to take tea in the other glass and stopped going to that teashop from then onwards. In another

¹⁴¹ The shopkeepers use a separate glass to serve the lower caste in order to avoid the pollution.

instance, where his women family members went to fetch water in the public tap were harassed by the upper caste men saying they should not come there to get water. The informant questioned this and even had fight with the upper caste person who had harassed his family members. When the meat prices are high outside village in the Patan area, the informant who also runs meat shop (which sells meat of the buffalo), also decided to increase the price of the meat which caused havoc in the village. The upper caste villagers had advised him not to increase the price and warned him that he is being too greedy and they will stop buying meat from his shop. Nonetheless, the informant went ahead and started charging the same amount as per the town area and the village elders had made an announcement in the village that no one should buy meat from his shop. This announcement had impact on his business for few months but later some of the upper caste members who also sympathised with him and tended to show disrespect to their elders, started buying meat from his shop and gradually the ban on buying meat from his shop faded away. The informant also mentioned that he has left his family and went to learn some martial arts even though he had small children to take care, because he had feared that his life is at stake for his behaviour towards the upper caste. He thought learning martial arts might help to face if there are any physical attacks on him. When asked, was he attacked physically by the upper caste? The informant said no. The informant is not alone in trying out to learn martial arts to fight the caste discrimination. Another person from *Jugi* caste group also informed that he has been trained in the martial arts. Getting themselves trained to face any physical attacks in the life must have come from their experiences of discrimination they faced all along their life.

Another person from lower caste had married¹⁴² a woman from the *Maharjan* caste through elopement. The woman has informed that her parents had arranged a marriage against her wish and she insisted on postponing the marriage until his brother comes from abroad. However, her parents were reluctant and wanted to arrange the marriage as soon as possible. She sought help from her brother's friend who advised to run away for few days and she can come back after few days and by that time their family

¹⁴² See Appendix III for the details of inter-caste, inter-community marriages and about divorce, widowhood and remarriage among the Newars of Thecho village.

members will give up on her marriage. She also heeded for the advice and decided to run away with her brother's friend (who belongs to the lower caste than she does). When they ran away, her brother's friend expressed his love towards her, she, though did not have much feelings, thought, it will be best thing to do to escape the marriage. She came back to the village along with him after four days. According to the elopement marriage rule, if a couple successfully ran away and came back after four days they are considered husband and wife. Though her family do not accept her back on her return, the couple started living together. During the fieldwork, it has been observed that the person from the lower caste who married *Maharjan* caste female stopped practicing his traditional occupation that is barbering whereas all his age group cousins do still practice their caste occupation. He is a driver in the local transport and he actively participates in distributing the *halmula* during the festivals to the others in the village. His wife generally distributes the *halmula* and people do accept it from them. He was seen spending time mostly with the other *Maharjan* caste persons in the *falcha* either playing cards or smoking and also actively participating in the feast and helping the family to serve the food and all which is unusual thing to observe.

Oral Narrations Vs Printed Narrations:

The history of any section or society, which has been passed from one generation to another generation orally, has been replaced with the printed history. This has resulted in the manipulation of the oral history, which was persisting among the communities. In the wake of social movements and political movements happening, it is not only the upper caste who come together to gain the numerical strength which they already possess, but also the lower castes who want to fight the hegemonic practices of the upper caste. The caste associations once formed take up immediately to rewrite their history, which has been believed popularly. This is demeaning in nature as most of the times it is narrated by the upper caste to impose the discrimination on the lower castes. As part of the rewriting the history, the lower caste associations often opt for elevating their caste status interlinking themselves with the gods who are worshipped with utmost respect, or a mythology which will in fact elevates their caste status and erase the stereotypes

associated with their caste groups if not immediately but at least in the coming generations.

When asked about the history of their caste from the *Kapali* informants, they asked to refer the book published by their caste association. One of the informants has narrated a glimpse of it that has been mentioned in the book. The *Kapalis* are descendants of the lord Shiva himself who is of the *Kapalika* sect. The story of the *Kapalika* sect goes like this, ‘the Vishnu and Brahma who were fighting each other over who is great, Shiva intervened and told them that he is greater than both of them and challenged that no one had found his either beginning or the ending in the form of *linga*. Taking the challenge, Vishnu and Brahma decided to find the ending and beginning of Shiva and started the journey. After spending thousands of years in the journey, Vishnu was unable to reach the ending (top) part of the Shiva *linga*. He returned to Shiva, confessed, and agreed that Shiva is greater than both of them are. Brahma on the other hand was reluctant to accept his defeat, returned back and lied to Shiva that he had found his beginning (bottom/starting) part of his Shiva *linga*. Shiva got furious over this lie of Brahma and severed one of Brahma’s head and roamed with that skull making it a begging bowl spreading the message what happens to those who try to deceive him. The sect who worships this form of Shiva, are known as Goraknath or *Kapalika* considered as the descendants of Shiva himself.’ Taking the lead from this written story in the book published by the *Kapali* caste association, the *Jugi*, which also means begging community, refused to be referred as *Jugi* by other communities and instead prefer the term *Kapali* that they can trace back to the lord Shiva himself as mentioned in the above story.

Another informant from *Shahi* caste group also explained that, how they got the name *Shahi*. The popular story states that Newars in earlier days did not use to consume meat of the buffalo. Once a king who was on his conquest campaign faced a situation where he was unable to feed his army as all the animals were destroyed by the war. The only animal left was water buffalo. With the permission of his royal goddess, king decided to sacrifice a buffalo to the goddess and feed the meat to the army in order to

save himself and his army from starving to death. However, no one came forward to sacrifice the buffalo, as it is a demeaning and sinful act to kill a living being. Then the king ordered his men to go on a search and find a person who is facing east and defecating (in the pretext that only lower caste person will face east and defecate, as his knowledge does not allow him to do better, as it is sinful to defecate while facing east). The king's men who went on a search had found a person who was facing east and defecating and brought him to the king. The king ordered him to sacrifice the buffalo and assigned the job of sacrificing the buffalo as their caste occupation from then onwards. However, the informant has narrated a story as published in the book by their caste association according to which they are actually descendants of the royal family, one of the sons of the king. Once when the kingdom was suffering from famine and the royal priest had advised the king to sacrifice a buffalo to the goddess in order to please her hoping that the famine might be over and people can live happily. However, until then the kingdom did not have the practice of sacrificing the buffalo for the goddess and so no one came forward to do that sinful act. On the command of the king, his own youngest son came forward and sacrificed the buffalo for the goddess, in order to save his kingdom and to obey his father's command. The informant also further explained that '*sajan sahi*' means the ones who obey. From then onwards, the descendants of the youngest prince who had obeyed his father's commands and sacrificed the buffalo, had become *Shahis* and started following the occupation of butchering. The informant also added that, earlier their caste had high ritual value as without their caste presence, no ritual would take place, and thus they played a key role in sacrificing the animal for the wellbeing of the people. In the due course of time, people started looking down at the occupation, as it is a sinful act to kill an animal though people love to eat the meat, which is self-contradicting.

The two stories which have been published by their respective caste associations, have framed the story in that way the caste history or the mythology will lead them to trace their origins to either the gods or the royal families which general public admires. The oral stories of the origin of the caste were not able to be recollected by the people in the village, as the published stories dominate the oral narrations.

The Guthis Related to Other Caste Groups:

Napit Guthi:

This *guthi* belongs to the *Napit* caste group¹⁴³, which is also called as *Nao* in Newari. There are 16 *guthiyars* in this *guthi*. This *guthi* has formed with the inter-village relations of the same caste and this *guthi* has four families from Thecho and another four from Harasiddhi (adjacent village). Every male member of these eight families will become *guthiyars* immediately after they have celebrated their *kyata pooja*¹⁴⁴. Every year irrespective of their age, they need to take the *pala: ta:* as per their joining number¹⁴⁵. Sometimes consequently, a single family might also end up in getting *pala: ta:*. Children of 5 years are also allowed to become *guthiyars* in this *guthi*. The Top eldest member will be considered as *thakali* and there will be two *bhalins* (the members who are supposed to become future *pala* will serve as *bhalins*). After the four days of the *Bala chaturdasi* or *bala charhe*, they will have their *guthi* feast and the *pala: ta:* changes on this day. There are no properties for this *guthi*. Last year each *guthiyar* had to contribute 1400 rupees for organizing the feast. As all the families are poor households within the caste group, the *guthi* decided to give 2000 rupees for the family because if there is a death in the family it is to ensure that the family members will have enough money to organize the death rituals correctly. The *guthiyar* informs that there were two deaths in this year and they need to give 4000 rupees in total from the *guthi* to the families where the death has occurred. The family who has lost their member should see to that they arrange money for the funeral rites and for cremating the dead¹⁴⁶. There is no *dyo phanga* system in this

¹⁴³ Chapter V, titled '*guthi* organizations and other group formations' discusses only with the *guthis* of *Maharajans* and *Malis*. However, the other caste groups in Thecho also have *guthis* and it has been discussed here in brief.

¹⁴⁴ It should be noted that, the *Maharjans* and *Malis*' *guthi* membership is only for the eldest son in the place of his father, after his father's demise. Maybe among the *Napit* caste group, as there are very less number families, they kept a rule that every boy who had celebrated *kyata pooja* should join the *guthi* as *guthiyars*. It also emphasis on how each and every *guthi* acts as an independent body in taking decisions pertaining the internal affairs making each *guthi* unique in its own way.

¹⁴⁵ In the *guthis* of *Maharjans* and *Malis*, every family will have a number, according to that the *Pala: ta:* changes, but here every member will have a number and the *Pala: ta:* changes as per the number of the individual.

¹⁴⁶ In the case of *Maharjans* and *Mali* caste group *guthis*, the funeral expenses are borne by the *guthi*.

caste group. If any *guthiyar*, who is above 16 years old, is absent for the responsibility of cremating the dead, the *guthi* levies a fine of 500 rupees. Changing religion will make them ineligible for being *guthiyar*, and henceforth, it will not be the responsibility of the *guthi* to cremate the dead members of the converted family. If any *guthiyar* marries a girl from the lower caste than the *Napit*¹⁴⁷, he will not be allowed to enter the *guthi*. Generally the *guthi* meetings will happen in the *thakalis* house and it is not mandatory¹⁴⁸ on the part of *guthiyars* to attend the meetings. The *pala* will pass the information regarding the meeting. Though it is allowed not to participate in the general meetings, but *guthiyars* are not exempted from participating in the death ritual.

Bishnu Devi Guthi:

There are two *guthis* with the same name in this *Shahi* caste group. One *guthi* has eighteen members as *guthiyars* and other ten members are considered as another *guthi*. Immediately after the marriage, each male member will become the *guthiyar*¹⁴⁹. One son in the family will be exempted from joining the *guthi* even after the marriage and on his father's demise, he has to take the position of his father and enter the *guthi* as *guthiyar*. In this way, the *guthi* ensures that the number does not decrease and, in fact, keeps increasing. In the *guthi* feast organized every year, the *thakali* have to drink from mud pot and he will pass it to the other *guthiyars* to share the drink¹⁵⁰. This *guthi* does not have any property. All that they have is big vessels to cook for the *guthi* feast. Earlier they had 9000 rupees but the *guthiyars* decided that they need to have money for emergency purposes and also for the functioning of the *guthi*. Therefore, they happened to save one-lakh rupees. The *guthi* feast will occur for four days, first day is considered as *Bali gu*., second *chhoyala bhu*, third day *mu: bhu* (animal sacrifice has to be given to the

¹⁴⁷ The caste groups such as *Shahi*, *Kapali* and *pore* are considered as lower than the *Napit*

¹⁴⁸ The *guthi* having less members and they have to dedicate more time for earning their livelihood might be the reason for having this rule of not mandatory for attending the meeting.

¹⁴⁹ Note the difference in the membership pattern in *Maharjan*, *Mali* and *Napit* caste against the membership pattern of the *Shahi* caste *guthi*.

¹⁵⁰ Same practice has been observed among the *Maharjan* and *Mali* caste groups, but the *Kola* (bowl) the upper caste uses is believed to be human skull embedded with bronze metal coating to conceal it. Alternatively, simply bronze metal bowl, which is considered as one of the important religious item of the *guthi*.

chief goddess) and *baya bhu* (change of the *pala*). The informant said that the *gothra* of the *Shahi* is '*raj puthra khayap sajan Shahi gothra*' which in general means the one who 'obeys'. The *guthiyar* also claims that they were descendents of a prince who has obeyed his father and took the responsibility of butchering the animal for religious purpose while the other sons of the kind disobeyed their father's dictate. *Guthi* will buy the wood necessary for the cremation of the members of the *guthi*. All the *guthiyars* should attend the funeral rites of the members who come under the purview of this *guthi*. They go to worship the *kuldeeptha* on the same day as the *Maharjans* and *Mali* do¹⁵¹. The informant also informs that around 20-25 years ago they had stopped attending their traditional caste duties for the other caste members in the village because in spite of rendering their services as commanded by their caste obligations, they were facing discrimination and social exploitation.

Silcharhe Shiva Rathri Guthi:

This *guthi* belongs to the *Kapali/Jugi* caste group. They are considered to be the lowest caste group living in Thecho. They believe that they have descended from lord Shiva himself in the form of Goraknath. They believe that their dead cannot be burned or incinerated but they need to be buried. In this *guthi*, there are twelve members, and among the twelve members, four members belong to Chapagaon (adjacent village). The *guthi pala* will conduct the Shiva *rathri*. Shiva *rathri* is the major festival for this caste group to celebrate. However, this caste group is socially not allowed to participate in the Shiva *ratri* celebrations done by the higher caste groups in Thecho in the village level. During Shiva *ratri* after worshipping and having the feast, the *pala: ta:* of the *guthi* changes from one *guthiyar* to the other. The *guthi* property or the religious materials, which belong to the *guthi*, will be taken to the next *pala's* house as a procession after the feast on the day of Shiva *rathri*. On next day of the festival, they will calculate the expenses incurred by the *guthi* either for the feast or for the *guthi* functioning in general. The share of contributions will be decided on the same day, and they will hand over the

¹⁵¹ This might be because of the 'sanskritization' process.

accounts to the next *pala* to maintain it for the next year. The informant opines that there were only 5-6 members in the *guthi*, later the number has increased to twenty and then it came down to twelve. The *guthiyars* died without an heir, and some *guthiyars* was expelled, as they were not ready to abide by the *guthi* decisions. The *guthi* had decided not to go to the *nyanbhu*¹⁵² nearly 25 years ago, but some of the *guthiyars* did not take the decision seriously and they started going to the *nyanbhu*. As these *guthiyars* did not abide the *guthi* decisions, they have been expelled from the *guthi*. The informant expresses his anguish on the caste discrimination saying ‘we are humans, we also have the same blood flowing in our veins as same as theirs. We are not allowed to enter into the top of the house, and we are treated as sub-humans by this upper caste. So we have decided not to go to the *nyanbhu*. However, one or two families are following the traditional obligation of our caste, so we have expelled them. Now the *guthi* does not have to take the responsibility of burying their dead in case of any death happens in the expelled members’ family’. They have *kuldeeptha* called Goraknath. On the day of the *bal chatur dasi* (15 days before the village *jatara*), they will go to worship their *kuldeeptha*. The informant also expressed that in the past unless they play the *sannai*, the Navadurga *jatara* cannot be celebrated. However, in the present, as they refuse to oblige their caste obligations, the *jatara* is taking place without their musical services.

Life Cycle Rituals among the Lower Caste Members in the Village:

When asked about the life cycle rituals of the lower castes, the informants have simply replied that as same as the *Maharjans*, they celebrate each life cycle rituals. Though they celebrate the life cycle rituals as same as the upper caste such as *Maharjans* and *Malis*, the celebrations will be within their circle without much pompous as the *Maharjans* and *Malis* do. They invite only their close associates who are generally from within their kin circle or their caste group. However, it is important to mention here about the death ritual

¹⁵² *Nyanbhu* is a practice, family where the death occurred has to offer food for the dead for seven days and the food is given to the *Jugi*. As this practice is considered as degraded and looked down by the higher caste in Thecho, the *Jugi* caste group (*guthi*) has decided not to attend this practice any more. However, the economic factor forced some of the families to still stick to this discriminatory practice and went to the *nyanbhu* practice, which resulted in gaining the wrath of the *guthi* and the *guthi* had to take a decision to expel the members who are not abiding by the *guthi* rules.

of the *Kapali* caste group, which stands different from the other caste groups in the village.

Death among the Kapali/Jugi:

If a person died in the *Kapali* families, first the family members should inform to the *pala* of the *shilachahre shivarathri guthi*. *Pala* informs the rest of the *guthiyars*. Those *guthiyars* who are unable to attend, are levied fine for being absent in the responsibility of the cremation. The family members have to inform the *mhyay macha*. If the *mhyay machas* are away and unable to reach within first five hours of the death, the *guthiyars* would not wait for them to arrive. They carry forward with the funeral procession. The dead body is prepared for its funeral by the *guthiyars*. The dead body has to be folded as soon as possible right after the death and should be arranged in the sitting position. Washing the face of the dead body and preparing are as same as the *Maharjan* caste¹⁵³. *Kachika*, the unused woollen, the stings of the woollen is used to tie the dead body in the three different places. No one is allowed to see while the *guthiyars* are preparing the dead body. The *guthiyar* opined that it might because seeing the dead body scare most of the people. The *guthi pala* brings the *dyo phanga* or *shi phanga*, which is used to cover the dead body while carrying it. *Po wa*: has to be brought by the married daughters by keeping it in *gacha*. *Chaswe* is performed only once unlike the *Maharjans* and *Malis* where it is performed twice. *Chaswe* is performed along with the funeral procession when they are carrying the dead body. The woman generally performs it; preferably, the eldest daughter-in-law in the family is supposed to go for this *chaswe*. However, in one case, a husband had performed, as he does not have anyone to carry the certain death ritual for his dead wife. The families who can afford to buy their own *dyo phanga* can gift it to the *guthi* after they have used for their dead person. Son-in-law has to carry the dead body, which should be carried in the sitting position. In case of no son-in-laws, the dead body can be carried by the *guthiyars*. One or two *guthiyars* go to the burial ground allotted for the *Kapali* people near to the Dhorikhel *funga*, in advance of the funeral procession and

¹⁵³ The informant himself said like this comparing the preparing the dead body as same as *Maharjans*.

start digging the grave. The dead body should be buried, but not burned or incinerated. The *guthiyars* felt that they are descendants of the goraknath, and that is why the fire should not be brought near to them and it is believed that the dead body would not catch fire. Once the grave has been dug by the *guthiyar*, who has gone in advance to the burial ground, the family members are informed about the same. Then the *guthiyars* start the funeral procession. The order of the procession is as follows: the person who sprinkles the coins and *po wa:* (who is a *guthiyar*), *mhyay macha* (however, those who did not celebrate the *braha kunegu* is not allowed to participate in the funeral procession), the son-in-law and other persons who are carrying the dead body, *kya macha* (those who did not celebrate *kyata pooja* are not supposed to participate in the funeral procession) and *Pasa Pi* (other friends). The *bahu macha*, who are considered to be the daughter-in-laws or the female affinal relatives are not allowed to participate in the funeral procession. On reaching the burial ground, the dead body is placed in the grave in the sitting position as same as they have carried throughout the funeral procession. Eldest son for the father and youngest son for mother have to offer the first piece of *goshi* (special kind of grass) into the grave, followed by the people who participated in the funeral procession offers soil. They need to offer water after burying the dead. For that, they will take water from the *budha pukhu*. The sons have the obligations to offer food for the dead for a period of seven days. From the day of death happened to the next seven days they need to go to the place where the dead body has been buried and offer food. Except meat, egg and black gram (*haku musya*), anything can be served as food while offering to the dead person for the seven days. The sons who went to offer food to the dead should not return unless any insect, animal, or bird has touched the food. If nothing is coming to have food, they have to catch an insect from the adjacent trees and make it touch the food offered to the dead and return back to their home. Unless the sons return from the burial ground, the women folk should not eat anything and should wait for their arrival.

The practice of incinerating the dead body among the higher castes can be understood from the point of view of geographical constrains. As the Newars dwell in the valley where the land availability is less and they need the land for agriculture and the construction of the house, the wood from the trees can be easily arranged and as it is

renewable. However, the earth where the dead has been buried might turn in to a place of sacred and hence not allowing the people to use the land for any other purpose will lead to shortage of usable land in the coming generations. Therefore, the Newars might have opted for incinerating their dead rather than burying. It is another interesting fact that, there is no caste group for cremating the dead among the Newars unlike the other Hindu communities. Hence, the job of cremating the dead has to be done by the same caste members, it is looked upon to participate in the death ritual, and the *shi guthi* members are respected for their service to their humankind.

Cremating the dead body comes with a price. Arranging for the wood and mobilizing the human force and money is a hectic job for the family, which has just lost its family members. The *guthis*, which were formed previously, take care of this arranging the wood and mobilizing the work force to carry out the death ritual. However, the practice of burying the dead by the *Kapali* can be understood from the point of view of economic constrains. The poverty of the *Kapali* caste groups might have forced them to opt for burying the dead rather than burning them. Dead body has to be buried by keeping it in the sitting posture also supports the argument, that Newars might have adopted to burning the dead to save the land and as an alternative to cheaper way of disposing their dead. The *Kapali* caste people when asked why they bury their dead instead of burning them replied that they belong to the *Kapalika* sect of worshipper who are direct descendants of Shiva and their bodies cannot be touched by fire. Hence, they cannot dispose their dead through burning and thus they opted the method of burying¹⁵⁴ their dead instead of burning them.

¹⁵⁴ During the village *jatara*, while the *pala-ship* changes it is been observed that, the *guthiyars* shift the religious *guthi* items to the new *pala* house. In this procession, the wood log is worshipped and also carried with the same reverence as god. This wood is displayed in front of the *Pala* house, which also helps to identify the *pala* house for the *guthi* members. And it is also believed that the worshipped wood should be used first for the upcoming death in the *guthi*, and it is considered as the dead body will be fortunate to get it burned with the help of worshipped wood. As same as the *Maharjans* and *Malis* displaying the wood, *Kapali* also displays shovel (which is used to dig grave) as their religious item during the *Shiva ratri*, while taking the religious items to the *Pala* house.

Changes in Caste System:

The oldsters still stick to the principle that they should follow the caste system and the concept of purity and pollution strictly in order to save their caste status and are of the opinion that the caste could not fade away that easily. One of the old informants felt, ‘now everyone feels like they are kings and forgetting their social obligations. There is no difference between any castes now-a-days. *Bhaun*, *chhettri* are not supposed to eat some things but they do eat forgetting their traditions’. The informant also felt that the foreigners are inferior to *pore*¹⁵⁵. The foreigners are out of caste system, so they were not allowed to enter the temples. Only *pore* cook food to them, and they are not allowed in the houses. After democracy, everyone is king or queen. The informant felt that monarchy was good and added that there used to be order and some kind of system but now-a-days there is no system and order at all.

Once the informant went to take money from *Nai* caste person to his house, who had taken a rooster from the informant, as the informant had poultry at those days. However, the family was organizing the Satyanarayana *pooja* and the wife of the person came with tea and *prasadam*. The informant has narrated the incident as, ‘I felt it unacceptable and I have walked off from the house, without taking the tea or *prasadam*’. Once he attended the feast where all the *Kasahi* people were sitting and eating, he felt it is not good. From then onwards he did not go to any feast or picnics. The informant being one of the *thakalis* in the *guthi* of the *choyelachi*, stopped attending the *guthi* feast as well stating that he stopped eating meat after listening to the Buddhist monks who come to preach in the village but chose to remain as an adamant believer of the caste system.

On the other hand, the youngsters are defying the caste preachings and making friendship with people from across the caste groups in the village. It is often observed that group of friends comprise of different caste groups. There are large numbers of cases where the boy and girl from different caste groups are getting married through the

¹⁵⁵ *Pore* is a caste group, which is not there in Thecho but it is situated in the Chapagoan, this caste group used to do the manual scavenging, and they need to clean the left over plates after the feast.

method of elopement. If the girl is from higher caste, the boy's family accepts them happily and show utmost respect in their family circles. However, the girl's family will not be able to accept her back because of her choice to marry the lower caste than their caste. There are two cases, which have been observed during the study in this village. In one case, the *Maharjan* boy had married the girl from *Mali* caste, though the family members of the boy showed their unhappiness in the initial stages of their marriage. Later they accepted her as one of the family members. In another case where the lower caste boy who had married a girl from the *Maharjan* caste, the girl's family had disowned her and stopped talking to her and inviting her for the feast, they conduct in their houses. However, the boy's family showed utmost respect to her as she stood against her family and caste members.

The caste which has been imbibed in the minds of the people and intertwined along with the social organization of the Newar society, plays a key role in establishing the social capital for the same caste person, and discriminates other caste person when it comes to the effective utilization of limited available resources or opportunities. The caste system survives based on association and disassociation. It gives an impression that those who perceive themselves to be dominant caste (*Maharjans*) (even though they will be perceived as the lower caste by the other upper caste in that society) inevitably show the tendencies to discriminate and exploit and exercise their power over the other lower caste. The caste group (*Malis*) which constantly fight for the equal status with the dominant caste fail to treat the other lower castes that are fighting for the better treatment in the society. As showing discrimination and maintaining the purity is one of the advert features of the upper caste or dominant caste, however in the struggle to claim the equal status, they do their best to show to the other lower caste that they are not equals. In addition, they are no better than the dominant caste when it comes to treating the other lower castes as a process of claiming upper caste status when compared with the lower caste, and claiming equal status with the dominant caste group.

The members of this social unit exhibit less of interaction or exchange with the other members who do not belong to their group. These interaction or exchange takes

place only when there is absolute necessary to engage them. The norms have been moulded to favour the dominant group to exercise their power over the other groups, and this has been sanctified socially in order to make the dominant group to benefit more at the cost of other groups. In the past, dominant caste could make the lower caste subjugate to the power by controlling the 'means of production' that is land. In the changing times, the lower castes getting relatively better opportunities made the dependency on the upper caste irrelevant and lower caste are challenging the sanctified social norms and abstaining themselves from indulging in the traditional caste occupations. The lower caste are either imitating the upper caste in order to command the same respect as the upper caste gets or they stopped practicing their caste occupation as dictated by the tradition, which are demeaning and unproductive in economic terms.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The study has been carried out among the Newars of Thecho village in Lalitpur district. The study was done in order to understand the social organization among the villagers. The study made an attempt to understand the social units such as family, kinship, *guthi* and caste system of the Thecho village. It is imperative to understand unique social unit called *guthi* among the Newars. *Guthis* are formed to fulfil several functions such as religious, social, economic, and taking care of the village infrastructure. *Guthis* are formed by the members of the same caste though there are exceptions for this where the two different caste groups came together to form the *guthis*. The institutionalized *guthis* are facing challenge in continuing to survive as they are facing threat from the lessening value on *guthis*, lack of financial support, and emergence of modern opportunities for the age-old traditions.

It has been argued and agreed by many scholars that, ‘human beings cannot live in isolation’. As a result, social interaction takes place between members of the society, giving rise to social relationships. The observed actions of these social relationships establish social order. The social order favours social actors to interact and form complex patterns giving rise to formation of social structure. The process of forming social structure from the roots of social interaction can be considered in total as social organization (Olsen, 1968).

Social organization should be considered as ‘dynamic process’ (Olsen, 1968). This comprises different social units (Olsen refers them as different forms of social organization) such as, family, kinship, marriage institutions, *guthis*, and other small group formations besides the caste system, village, and cultural zone and so on. The current study has argued only to the village level to understand the process of social organization.

Family that is considered as basic and the smallest social unit comprises people who are related immediately to each other. Family also serves as a model of the largest kin group, which comprises the consanguinal, and affinal relationship as the husband and wife are related through affinal relationship and the progeny of the couple are related through blood to each other. Family also serves many important functions in the society, such as fulfilling biological, social, and reproductive necessities of the society. One of the main functions the family is socialization of the children and making them ready as the next generation members of community in order to make sure the society continues.

It depends on the discretion of the observer to define family among the Newars of Thecho village. However, traditionally the group of people who cook and eat from the same hearth are considered a family. The recent phenomenon of breaking up the joint families to form nuclear families is on rise. The brothers, who divide property of their parents, stay together in the same household but cook separately, but also deny that they are separate families. Hence, one can understand the family among the Newars as either the place of living together or the group, which cooks and eats from the same hearth. However, it is evident that Newars help each other in all sorts of works, it is not just the family which is considered as corporate group, but also includes the neighbourhood even though neighbours are not related by kinship.

Within the family, each individual have certain roles to play and certain responsibilities to take care of. These roles and responsibilities were dictated by the society, which is situated in the particular historical and geographical set up. The division of labour among the family members is quite distinctive. Women in the family are expected to cook, fetch water, pray to the god, and help the husband in earning their livelihood. Men in the family are expected to earn the livelihood for the family, not to behave irresponsibly, take care of the family in a good manner, and take part in the *guthi*'s other social matters actively. Feministic way of understanding the division of labour would be to call the Newars patriarchal as the women were expected to carry out the domestic chores and men were given the space of social and political spheres. Even

though Newars are patriarchal¹⁵⁶, it has been observed that, the men and women quite often overstep the mark of division of labour and share the work. It will be highly impossible for men to handle the family along with the social responsibilities vested on them. Women's role in the family can be observed explicitly, and her contribution to help her husband to perform his roles socially can be reckoned implicitly.

The Newar family, which is residential group favours interaction among its members. The interaction leads to exchange of resources among its members as every member has the responsibility of taking care of other members. There would not be any clear-cut responsibilities to its members, however, the members are expected to share the resources and take care of each other. From the point of view of 'interaction and exchange theory', the family is a group, which facilitates the interaction and exchange between its members. As the power, theory explains, there might be subtle way of exercising power by one gender over the other, or by one set of age group over the other. However, this can be justified in the name of keeping the group intact.

Elders, who play the role of keeping the group solidarity and responsible for the continuation of the present generation into the next, are respected and worshiped in the Newari culture. Mere attaining the prescribed age of 77 years is considered as a mark to celebrate *janku* and show respect by the youngsters. The taboos attached to the widows will be no more applicable when they attain the age to celebrate *janku*, as attaining this age is considered to be elevating one's status to the godly status. The oldsters are not only respected, but also worshipped. The oldsters play a key role in the decision making process either in the family or in the *guthis*.

It is often the authority exercised by the elders, which keeps the married sons intact as one joint family. It is after the death of the elders generally the brothers part and become nuclear families. As informed by the villagers, formation of nuclear families has been a new trend in the village, which in fact is changing the way Newar social

¹⁵⁶This statement is not judgmental in nature. It is the respective social organizations prerogative to decide up on how their society would function.

organization has been functioning. The necessity of having joint families has been replaced with the other necessities created in the modern context. Agriculture, which requires as many hands as an individual gets in order to produce food, demanded the joint families to exist and survive. The modern jobs and business ventures are in fact posing challenge for the continuation of joint families. However, the breaking up of joint families and replacing them with the nuclear families should be understood as the social actor's attitudes and decisions are changing, which is paving way for the new kind of social organization to emerge.

Family cannot be understood in isolation, as it is interwoven immediately with the other families, which constitutes the kinship network. These kinship networks is formed mainly based on the descent relationship people share, with the feeling of same blood. Brothers who lived together, were separated as they had their own sons and grandsons are referred as *kawas* in Newari. Two or three *kawas* are considered as *phukis* (lineage). These *phukis* are nothing but group of families who were once related very closely but now they know by memory that they are related or may be sometimes they even demonstrate the relationship they share with the *phuki* members. Two or more *phukis* can be referred as *depcha guthi* (clan).

The *kawa*, *phuki* and *depcha guthi* members are often observed to be living in a cluster, sharing same *nani* (meaning courtyard) or a line of houses making it their own identity in the village. These kin members have several obligations to fulfil towards each other. The obligations include gift exchange, inviting each other for the feast organized by any of the member's house, sharing the work during feast organization, helping each other to find their livelihood opportunities (sharing the agricultural work), observing death pollution along with family of the deceased person and importantly maintaining the social order and socializing the younger generations.

The lineage and clan groups are extension of the family. Unlike the family, the interactions are formalised, the exchange (gift or services) between the members is made obligatory in order to keep the members intact, and value the essence of exchanging either resources or to render their human labour to each other. The social status of the

person has been placed on how good a person shares his resources to his kin members thereby making it a norm among the kin members.

The kin members come up with set of norms, which they wanted to follow in order to make the group sustain such as, all the clan members gathering in one place on the day of *depcha* (*kuldeeptha* worship). It is mandatory that all the members should attend the *pooja* and the feast following the *pooja*. Each house is represented by a male member in the meeting of the *depcha guthi* to decide the feast items and other matters related to the *kuldeeptha* worship. Those families and its members who go together to worship the *kuldeeptha* can be considered as single clan. Few families in the *depcha guthi* can break up with the existing *depcha guthi* and form their own *depcha guthi*. However, the goddess they have been worshipping will remain same. The newly formed *depcha guthi* ceases to worship the goddess and participate in the feast together with the old *depcha guthi*. The reasons for forming new *depcha guthis* and breaking up the existing *depcha guthis* have been argued in the preceding chapter of this thesis. The membership of the *kawa* and *phuki* are determined either by birth or through marrying into this group (for women).

It is very important for the people to have a wide range of kinship network but at the same time, the network should also serve its purpose. Failing to do so, the social actors may allow such groups to break free and form another groups in order to allow the members to reap benefits out of it. The larger *depcha guthi* means the less number of possibilities of finding marriage alliances, the more number of days of observing the pollution in case of any death, and the pollution includes not organizing feast (curtailing the family from maintaining the social network) and not worshipping gods in a grand way (leading to the psychological imbalance of the people). The flexibility of breaking up from the existing *depcha guthis* and forming new ones can also be understood from this point of view. It is the entitlement of the society to decide and frame certain social order through establishing social sanctions to meet the necessities of the social actors in that social environment.

In the process of furthering the social network, the social actors take aid from the institution of marriage. This socially approved institution helps meet many of the needs of the human beings. The marriage approves the sexual union of the male and female, and accepts the progeny out of the sexual union as an accepted member of the society, eligible for inheriting his father's position and property. It also brings two families, in fact, two kin groups together making the network enlarge, allowing the members to extend their help to each other whenever necessary. As it is very important to establish the marriage alliance with partners of 'equal' status, it is been desired by the Newars to find a suitable spouse for their offspring. These desirable characteristics often vary from one family to the other. Failing to marry a person with this social desirability does not affect the fabrication of the kinship system in particular and social organization in general. However, negative marriage rules, which prescribe whom one should not marry, are supposed to be followed to maintain the integrity of the already existing network. It is prohibited for the members among the Newars to marry a person who is related in anyway. However, a person can marry his brother's wife's sister or sister exchange may take place, if not at the same time, may be over the period of few years but this should happen within the same generation. The relationship should not be traceable from both the parent's side for seven generations. Marrying within the clan member (clan endogamy) is considered as incest. In addition, marrying out of caste (caste exogamy) is seen as not desirable.

The Newari girls are expected to celebrate '*barha kunegu*' an initiation ceremony from girlhood to the womanhood. This ritual symbolises her marriage with Narayana (Vishnu in the form of sun), while Shiva bears witness in the form of *bel* fruit. The Newar myth says that, this practice might have emerged in order to prevent the practice of '*sathi*' and saving the women from joining the husband's pyre. As they are married to Narayana (the immortal being), the Newari women can never be truly widow and no need of joining her husband's pyre upon his death. Newari women does not wear nose ring, and when enquired upon the reason behind this, one of the old aged informants replied that, 'the other communities who insist that their women wear nose ring signifies the patriarchal nature as only the untameable beasts such as yak or buffalo are forced to wear

the nose ring in order to control them. In the same manner the other community people think that women should be reminded that they are being under subjugation and hence they culturally make them wear the nose ring which our Newars never allow’.

The common thing about the arranged marriage or the marriage by elopement among the Newars is allowing the girl to stay at the groom’s place for four days. This practice has little value in the current scenario. However, the informants opined that it might be the practice emerged to give women more choice to observe and understand the house she is going to stay her rest of life. In addition, it is believed that if the girl upon staying in the groom’s house does not wish to continue, she might not return after going back to her natal house¹⁵⁷. However, this practice has been continued as mere ‘cultural survival’ in the current context.

Nepali (1965) argues that the Newars might be brought as soldiers by the Karnatic prince Nanyadeo in his army and conquered the valley and appointed his Generals to administer over the valley. Nepali (1965) further hints the reader that the term Newar might have derived from *Nayars*. Throughout his work, he asks the readers to draw parallels between the cultural traits of the *Nayars* of Kerala and the current cultural traits of the Newars. Assuming that his speculation is correct, the Newars (as Nepali speculates that they are *Nayars*, who were matriarchal society) who has been brought to the valley would have realised that, their kinship system has to be altered. Hence, they might have come up with the rule of marrying completely non-relatives (as against the south Indian kinship system) in order to make their social network wider. Nevertheless, the traits of matriarchy might have been inseparable and they might have come up with these practices which gives the women important role in the decision making process and the culture itself has been shaped in this desired manner. It is also important to note, that the Newar kinship system prescribes them to marry a person who is not related by kinship. Hence, the Newars prefer to give their daughters in marriage to the nearest places, which

¹⁵⁷This is not considered as desirable on the part of bride. In addition, the bride and groom are allowed to talk and understand each other before their marriage, which is unlikely as generation ago.

can be accessible within one hour of journey¹⁵⁸. The married out daughters are invited by her natal house for almost all the festivals. Organizing feasts with grandeur for the married out daughters are one of main responsibilities of the natal family. The married out daughters also share the work of their natal house in the agricultural season making it look like the married out daughters are not really out of the natal house. The close relationship and frequent interactions between the nephew/niece and *paju* (MB) or *nini* (FZ) also strengthens the above argument. Though the kinship system prescribes that they marry outside their relations, the kinship system also ensures that, there are close ties between those who actually care about the next generations in addition to the parents of the children.

As a society, 'in the larger groups, everyone is to some extent everyone else's responsibility' (Fox, 1967, p. 29). The social units such as family and kinship (consanguines and affine) have certain responsibilities to fulfil towards each other. These obligations take shape especially at the moment of undergoing life cycle rituals among the Newars. The family, which is celebrating the life cycle ritual, has the obligation to arrange a feast for the immediate kin members related both by blood and marriage. Especially, the married out daughter has to be invited along with her family, and she in return has certain obligations to fulfil from the position of *nini* (FZ) towards her *bincha* (nephew/niece). The married out daughters act as a link between the natal house and the alliance partners to continue this established social network. The kin in return have the obligation of playing their part either in the ritual process (as the culture dictates specific roles to be played by certain role players) and has the obligation of giving gifts, which are to be reciprocated in the future.

The gifts generally exchanged comprise of food items, cloths and some token amount of money. It can also be said that, the Newar's social organization revolves around sharing food with each other. Sharing food with others is often used as a yardstick to measure the social status of a person in the society. Historically Kathmandu valley

¹⁵⁸See chapter IV for details of the places where the married out daughters had been given in marriage.

having less accessibility to the outside world, and the production of food being at its minimum, might have made the Newars realize and come up with cultural practice of reciprocal exchange of food among each other to ensure the supply of food. It is common to see people coming up with *halmula* (fried grains) to distribute among the other members who are sitting at the *lachi* without any occasion. The family, which is observing death, has the obligation to distribute *kegu* (small peas) to the onlooker of the procession on *mataya* day. Families invite the participants of the *magh bhajan* (a month long procession) and share some special snacks, and offer them whatsoever they can according to their financial status. It is expected that mothers should distribute *dau baji* (yoghurt mixed with beaten rice) to the children in the street upon her children's birthday. Similarly, the families that are celebrating the life cycle rituals for their family members are expected to organize feast for their kin members. It is the responsibility of the natal families to invite their married out daughters for *nakharya*, a feast organized right after any major festival in the village. The married out daughter along with her husband and children are also given invitation by the natal house to participate in the feast, for some houses the number of people to be invited goes up to 60-100. After the death of the parents, it is the obligation of the sons to continue the responsibility towards their sister as their parents were supposed to do.

Apart from the other obligations vested on the *guthis*, another main responsibility includes organizing feast for its members for certain number of days as agreed collectively¹⁵⁹. Each *guthi* (both small and big *guthis* alike) in the village has to organize feast for its members. The *sa guthis* which had lost its purpose of establishing still continues to act only to organize feast to its members. The *kosh* (economic group formation) has the responsibility of organizing feast for its members at least once in a year. The *baja khalas* takes their members to picnic and organize feast on a stipulated day. As mentioned earlier the Newar's social organization revolves around feast and food ensuring that each individual is part of these food distribution processes. Feast in itself

¹⁵⁹The decision will be made based on the economic resources the *guthi* controls and the affordability of the *guthiyars* to share the expenses in case of expenditure being high.

acts as a platform favouring the social interaction and hence binding the individuals to the social relationships where they have certain roles to play as a social role player. Thus Newars survive as a group. As Fox observed, it will be right to point out that 'a 'kinless' man was at best a man without social position: at worst he was a dead man' (1967, p. 15).

As part of the Newar's social organization, *guthis* are specific social groupings along the family and kinship groups, as also reported for other communities. It is not new for societies to have additional social units, as they are formed based on the varying social environment. What is intriguing about the *guthi* associations among the Newars of Thecho village is that, the *guthis* are well organized with unwritten, tradition bound, social roles to be followed strictly. The well-established guidelines to finish the assigned jobs for each *guthis* are one of the admiring factors. Each *guthi* will have a turn bearer who is called *pala*, who can also be stated as secretary of that group. Each *guthi* will have its eldest members as guiding members for functioning of the *guthi*. The big *guthi* will have *majos* to assist and manage the *guthi* affairs. The *pala* will have an executive committee to run the *guthi* with specific job descriptions such as, buying sheep, goat, and buffalo for the feast to be organized, helping *pala* to prepare the feast and serving it to the members of the *guthi*, and helping *pala* to organize to cremate the dead among its members. Each *guthi* has some form of economic resources to run these voluntary groups, lessening the burden upon the *guthi* members. Each *guthi* can be considered as separate entity, when it comes to decision-making process, pertaining to the matters related their group. However, all the *guthis* combined make a huge social unit, with each *guthi* fulfilling the responsibilities vested on them. In most of the cases the members of the *guthi* belong to the same caste, however, there are instances where members of *guthi* are also from two different caste groups. Therefore, it can be stated that, the functional needs (such as installing the goddess during Indra *jatara* etc.,) drive the formation and sustenance of these groups rather than kinship.

The *guthis* can be broadly divided into small *guthis* and big *guthis* (in both lower and upper part of the village). Each *guthi* has its own name, its own responsibility to fulfil. Small *guthis* are formed for meeting the religious obligations. Based on the

functions these *guthis* perform, we can divide them into religious *guthis*, infrastructure-maintaining *guthis*, and economic oriented *guthis* (sa: *guthis*). The big *guthis* on the other hand has several responsibilities to take care compared to the small ones. All the families in the village come under one or the other seven big *guthis* in the village. There would not be any Newari family out of this *guthi* system. It is very important to be associated with any of these *guthis*, because, it is the *guthi* members who have to cremate the dead body in case of any death. This social responsibility of the *guthi* also acts as social controlling factor of its members. Apart from this social responsibility of cremating the death, the *guthis* also have the religious obligations, they have to organize village *jatara* (by taking turns among themselves) for the two goddesses in the two parts of the village. During village *jatara*, it is also the responsibility of the *guthis* to organize feasts for its members, where the members can also carry food back home, as it is not possible to eat all the food served in the feast by any single individual. *Guthis* also take care of the infrastructural facilities such as, maintaining *falchas* (the common resting places), maintaining the traditional brick road in the old part of the village, cleaning the canal, which brings water to the village *pukhus*, maintaining the temple and its properties by leasing out either to its members or to the outsiders. It also plays a key role in maintaining the social order required to keep the social structure intact. The members are socialized and get the social order imbibed as part of their culture. In this dynamic process, though the culture changes as per the context, the basic rules of social organization are maintained in order to continue the system.

Apart from the *guthi* associations, there are other voluntary groupings in the village. The major difference between the *guthis* and these voluntary group formations is that, the membership is truly voluntary for individuals, unlike the *guthi* where it is mandatory on part of the *guthiyar's* sons to take their father's position after him, thus making it hereditary. The other groupings are of several types, such as, the groups, which are called *baja khalas*, dedicated to teaching music to the next generations and keeping the knowledge of music alive. Other groups, such as *kosh* were formed to save money and meet the needs as decided by the members involved in it. Similarly, *jhar goo*, were formed to share the work in the agricultural fields of the members as finding human

labour to work in the field is very tough. Groups known as *pucha* were formed by youngsters to preserve and teach people about the Newari culture. There are many other small groups formed in the modern context to discuss the development of the village, or which are just as a business venture to start an organic farming initiative etc.

These *guthis* act as ‘small republics’ independently and combined as a large entity of state itself, taking care of its citizens as same as the state should be doing. Why the Newars might have formed these *guthis* is a question, which cannot be answered completely, except to provide some inferences on which lines the study can be continued further. Prithvinaryan Shah conquered the Kathmandu valley (Nepali, 1965), and subjugated Newars in their own homeland denying them entry into the bureaucracy, military or any of the administrative positions. All that might have left for the Newars as livelihood options is either becoming peasants or starting their own Business. Moreover, when a foreign oppressor is ruling the country, it is very important for the people to stay united to help each other. This might be one of the reasons, why the *guthis* started functioning more seriously¹⁶⁰. Assuming that, Shah Kings might not have given heed to the day-to-day necessities of the Newars and their settlements, the *guthis* might have started governing themselves by dividing the work among themselves, thereby becoming self-sufficient, without depending much on the State to take care of their daily needs. Or, the Newars who were under subjugation of the Shah Kings and Rana Prime Ministers, might have decided not to give much leverage for the State by depending on them for the daily necessities, and decided to govern themselves. As Scott (2010) gives us numerous examples, about how the indigenous communities who are living in plain areas tend to migrate to the hills where the State can not control them and bring them under the shadow of the State. Scott (2010) also points out what if the Great wall of china was built not to avoid conquerors but to prevent the people who want to escape the State from its taxation and so on. Whereas, the Newars who are original inhabitants of the prosperous valley, might have felt migrating to the other places is not a viable option, rather isolating

¹⁶⁰It is believed that, the *guthis* were there during the Malla period, as a process of decentralization of the administration.

themselves not geographically but from the clutches of the shadow of the government and might have come up with governing themselves with the help of well organized group formations called *guthis*. The above speculations were supported by the acts of the earlier Shah regimes. The State had established a board called ‘*Guthi Samrakshana Samithi*’ in order to preserve the *guthis*. But many of the informants opined that, it is not to preserve the *guthi* system but to make it systematically die, by cutting the funds, and bringing the *guthis* under its rule, snatching away the autonomy the *guthis* were enjoying. The king in the earlier days had role to play in the *guthi* functions, as the royal decree, the king used to send financial and other assistance required for the *guthis* functioning, but the system had been brought under the *guthi samsthan* which does not care to keep up the tradition and leading to demotivating the *guthis* to continue. Informants also complained that, no position in the *guthi samsthan* has been given to Newars. Other community people were appointed to handle this *guthi samsthan*. In another instance, the two major laws enacted by the monarchy had been the main reason for the downfall of this *guthi* organizations in the valley. The documentation of the land is a recent phenomenon, and the decision of surveying the land under ‘land survey act’ has resulted in either tenants registering the land on their names or the heirs of the land donors documenting on their names. Due to this, the *guthis* lost a major portion of the land that was controlled by them. Another act which gave deathblow to the *guthis* financial autonomy is ‘land tenancy act’, as granted right for the tenants to get half of the land they have been cultivating under the tenancy. Following this right, the tenants who are cultivating in the *guthi* lands started to claim half of the lands leading to the *guthis* to lose whatsoever left for them to manage the *guthi* associations. The notion of private ownership of the individual’s desire to take the land upon themselves might have been influenced by the rising land prices in the Kathmandu valley city. These laws which lack foresight for the *guthis*’ future, suggest that it might be the ‘grand agenda’ of the monarchy to bring down the autonomy of the *guthis* in the Newar society.

Newar social organization (*guthi* associations as an integral part) can also be understood as one of the examples of pluralistic societies. According to Olsen, “a completely pluralistic society would contain a vast proliferation of groups, associations,

and other organizations located between individuals and the national government (representing the total society). These intermediate organizations possess their own bases of power, and hence are relatively independent of the government” (1968, p. 318).

In spite of having these process of group formations, another interesting aspect to discuss about the Newars’ social organization is the nature of dividing people based on specific criteria. These are the criteria of opposition found among the Newar social system, the population of the village has been divided into two parts (the *koyelachi* and *choyelachi*). These two parts worship Brahmayini and Balkumari respectively as their main deities. It is also believed that, these two parts were constantly opposing each other until recent past. Another criterion of dividing the people is based on the age group they belong to. The whole population can be divided into *thakali* (elder) and *khokali* (younger), which are relative in nature. It is one of the important aspects among the Newar’s social organization which can be explicitly observed in each and every social sphere. The elders are given utmost respect and allowed to sit first in the feast, including the daily food consumption in their household. It is expected of the people to follow this order without fail, and if anyone seems to be not following it, they will be reminded then and there to correct their mistake. To some extent, Newar society can be considered as ‘gerontocracy’. Another criteria the Newars use to differentiate is the gender. The men and women are expected to take position in different lines during the feast, similarly women are not allowed strictly as *guthi* members in the main *guthis*. In case of an early death of the *guthiyar*, leaving very small son as heir, the *guthiyars* will withhold the position for the son to come to age, but never allow the women to take her husband’s position. In one way, the *guthis* can be considered as highly patriarchal not allowing any space for women. However, there are some small *guthis* (*saalu guthi*) which allow women as *guthiyars*. And there is another *guthi* which is completely represented by the women.

Another important criteria which the Newars use to segregate the people is the one based on caste system. This phenomena, whatsoever reasons might have been for its origin, took different shapes from the time of its origin. Caste system mainly functions,

based on association and disassociation principle. Those who consider themselves as equals associate by disassociating themselves from others. These nature of association and disassociation paves way for discriminating others in order to favour their own kind. In order to sustain the hierarchy, the social thought process had been shaped to create the notions of purity and pollution, based on the traditional caste occupation which certain caste groups follow. The nature of assigning certain kind of occupation to be performed by particular caste groups has also discriminated the lower caste groups from owning the source of 'means of production' leading to completely depending on the higher caste people for their survival. In order to earn their livelihood, they need to subjugate themselves and accept the hegemony enforced on them by the culture, and start living as a secondary citizens within the same community. In order to preserve the caste hierarchy, the caste endogamy is followed.

However, in the modern context there has been drastic changes in the source of 'means of production' which has opened doors for those caste groups which were denied the equal opportunities by the traditional caste system. In this context, the lower caste groups fight for equal rights which were denied by the traditional social system. This fight has been carried out in two ways. One is the process of imitation, and second is the process of resisting the upper caste hegemony.

The process of imitation can not be understood better without the help of 'sanskritization' concept. The lower caste as prescribed by M. N. Srinivas (1987) who are not so low in the hierarchy, tries to imitate the dominant caste in order to claim the equal status. In this case, it is not only the immediate lower caste group (than the dominant caste) which tries to imitate, but all the caste groups which are branded as lower castes follows the process of imitation in order to make an attempt to claim equal status within the society. This process of imitation, means, doing what the dominant caste has been doing in order to claim the upper caste status, and also not doing what the upper caste blames them or enforces them to do. This leads to the process of resistance. In this process, lower caste give up to follow their traditional caste calls. Opening up of new

opportunities in the modern context is freeing the lower caste from the clutches of upper caste economically, which otherwise in the earlier days is not possible.

Lower castes adopt many strategies in this fight for the right to equality. They deny to do the menial jobs as demanded by the upper caste, try to 'rewrite' the history or oral tradition on the origin of their caste, try to elevate their gods/goddesses to the higher level of appreciation. They also prefer to be called by Nepali names for their caste group rather than the Newari names used by the upper castes to address them in a derogatory manner.

These types of constant social resistance will lead to new kind of social organization. It should be observed that, when the time and space demands a change in any particular pattern, a collective decision is taken by the community which may not be explicitly stated, and the community might not be completely happy about the on going change, but the social actors are left with no choice but to accept the change, and mend the social order in order to incorporate the social pattern. It is only when the function it serves ceases, the social structure ceases, otherwise it will take new shape and form to keep the 'dynamic process' of social organization going.

Social organization among the Newars can be understood through studying multiple units which are fragmented at some levels and united at other levels. The family facilitates a small group of people to depend on each other for their survival and also it extends the social network in the form of kinship. The patrilineal kin members considered as lineage and clan fills the void where family can not. The kinship system is solidified through the reciprocal gifts and service exchanges. The kinship is further elaborated through marriage and cemented by the married out daughters, with specific responsibilities vested on both natal and affinal kin members towards each other. The family, marriage and kinship act as a support system for the individuals. However, just the individual needs does not make a human life complete. There are various other needs that has to be handled as a group. To address these needs, Newars come together to form groups which are institutionalized over the generations. These groups are called *guthis* (membership is through inheritance) and there are other group formations such as *khalas*,

kosh, pucha where membership is not through inheritance but voluntary. These groups address several needs in the society which are religious, social, political in nature; maintenance of the infrastructure, and exchanging the resources etc. In spite of facing challenges to continue these *guthis* and other group formations the Newars consider being part of the *guthi* as a matter of pride.

Like any other society, the Newar social organization also divides the human beings based on different criteria. The caste system is one such criterion that divides people. The different caste groups contribute to make the social organization complete. The notion of purity and pollution based on the traditional caste occupation has made the lower caste wanting to stop being part of the social organization. The emerging resistance against the dominant caste is paving way for changes in social organization.

To explore the resources available and to make use of them for their own benefits, humans associate and disassociate with/from different social groups. This association and disassociation of individuals with/from different social groups are determined by the resources available, the number of reciprocal exchange needed for them to survive, and the advantages of a particular group to exercise their power over the other groups to reap maximum benefits for themselves and so on. The association and disassociation of the people based on the needs can be considered as the key factor for the survival of social organization among the Newars in particular and other societies in general.

PLATES

Plate 1: left- Indigenous Measuring Jars; Right- Traditional Balance



Plate 2: T L- Bride Garlanding Groom; T C- Traditional Mirror Bearing Witness; T R- Nini of Bride & Sister of Groom Being Part Of The Ritual Process; B L- Groom's Sister Consoles The Crying Bride; B C- Bride's Brother Carrying The Bride; B R: Bridal Gift



***T= Top; B= Bottom; R= Right; C=Centre; L= Left**

Plate 3: T L: New Bride Being Introduced to The Depcha Guthi; T C, BR: Dewali Members Sitting for the Feast; TR, BL, BC: Degu Dyo



Plate 4: TL: Nini of the Boy Helping Him to Do the Kyata Pooja; TC: Pajus with Boy; TR: Dewali Thakali with the Boy; BL: Paju Presented With Thigh of the Sacrificed Buffalo; BC, BR: Janku Celebrations



Plate 5: Shifting of Main Guthi's Sacred Items and Other Items to the Next Pala House after the Village Jatara



Plate 6: Small Religious Guthis Related to the Village Jatara



Plate 7: Musical Associations Rendering their Musical Services (One of the Examples of Khala)



Plate 8: Falchas in Thecho Village



Plate 9: Chibhas in Thecho



Plate 10: TL, TC: Kapali Rendering their Musical Service; TR: Shahi Rendering their Butchering Services; BL, BR: Gubhaju Rendering their Priestly Services; BC: Nau Rendering his Barbering Services



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GLOSSARY

1. *Aalu* : Potato.
2. *Aana* : 1/16 the part of *ropani*.
3. *Abuya khwa soyegu* : Father's day celebration or going to see father's face.
4. *Achar* : Pickle.
5. *Aila* : Alcoholic beverage distilled out of fermented grains.
6. *Aitho* : Rice wine (fermented) which is black in colour.
7. *Alli alli* : Very little.
8. *Amavasa or Ammai* : No moon day.
9. *Anala* : Thirteenth month of the Nepal *sambat*.
10. *Angu* : Silver rings worn on fingers by the Newari women.
11. *Asar/Ashar* : Third month of the *Bikram sambat*.
12. *Ashoj* : Sixth month of the *Bikram sambat*.
13. *Astami* : Eighth and twenty third day of the month.
14. *Atha:* : Mud lid, which is used to cover the food served to the dead person.
15. *Ba pooja* : One of the *pooja* performed by the students who are learning music from *baja khalas*. This *pooja* is expected to perform when the students has finished their half course.
16. *Bachhala* : Seventh month of the Nepal *sambat*.
17. *Bachi* : Half of a month (15 days).
18. *Badegaun* : An adjacent village to Thecho.
19. *Baiga* : Is a part of kitchen which the Newars use for storing straw or firewood.
20. *Bairi or Baidya* : A male who is considered to possess the knowledge to suggest measures to heal the health ailments and other mistakes done by any individual. Equivalent to shaman.
21. *Baishak* : First month of *Bikram Sambat*.
22. *Baja khala samrakshan samittee* : Larger group formed to save the musical association in Thecho village.
23. *Baji ne Dhuna?* : Did you have your lunch?
24. *Baji/ chura* : Beaten rice or pressed rice.
25. *Bajrabarahi* : Temple in Chapagaon, which is very near to Thecho, where most of the people in the adjacent villages go for religious picnics.
26. *Bakala* : A variety of grain.

27. *Bakhole* : A storage place for the paddy.
28. *Balkumari* : One of the main goddesses in Thecho, associated with the protection of upper part of Thecho.
29. *Banda* : Cabbage.
30. *Barha kunegu* : An life cycle ritual mandatorily conducted for the Newari girls.
31. *Barhabarsa/Barhab arsha mela/Jhinnidaya mela* : One year long festival conducted once in twelve years for Navadurga by the Navadurga guthi in Thecho.
32. *Barmu/Brahmu* : Brahmins.
33. *Bel Bibah or Ihi* : Marriage of a Newari girl before her puberty with the sun in the presence of *bel* fruit (Bael or Aegle marmelos)
34. *Betali* : A piece of white cloth, which should be worn on the head by the boy or old person who is celebrating *janku* or *brathabandh* in order to emphasis on the point that they are the one who are undergoing the celebration.
35. *Betha Kotha* : A room where it is believed the parturition used to happen in the recent past.
36. *Bewla* : Work exchange between two individuals.
37. *Bhadra* : Fifth month of *Bikram sambat*.
38. *Bhahu Macha* : Group of daughter-in-laws.
39. *Bhailaju or bhairava* : One of the gods of Newari Pantheon, who is believed to protect the village in the absence of village goddesses during the *jatara* or any festivities.
40. *Bhajan* : Prayer songs sung by the people.
41. *Bhajanmandals* : A place where the people assemple and keep the musical instruments used for the *Bhajan*.
42. *Bhalin* : A traditional cook who is expert in Newari cuisines.
43. *Bhaliñ Pala* : A position in a group, served as a cook out of their turn.
44. *Bhamcha satawanegu* : Process of going and bringing the bride back to the groom house, on the eighth day of the marriage, after the bride's stay in her natal house for four days.
45. *Bhatti* : Basin, which they generally use for washing clothes or to carry grains.
46. *Bhau Macha* : Group of kin members who are considered as daughter-in-laws for the family.
47. *Bhimratharohan* : First *janku* after 77 years.
48. *Bhiñ Pu* : Traditional red beads worn as necklace by the Newari

	women.
49. <i>Bhinchha khala</i>	: Nephew/niece (<i>khala</i> meaning group).
50. <i>Bhin-dyo</i>	: God, who supposed to bring prosperity to the family, worshipped often in secrecy, represented by a round stone.
51. <i>Bhoj</i>	: Feast.
52. <i>Bhoomi pooja</i>	: The process of worshipping the earth before constructing house.
53. <i>Bhoye</i>	: Feast.
54. <i>Bhoye bhalin pa</i>	: Feast organized for the guests who has served as cooks and helpers in the feast.
55. <i>Bhutu</i>	: Hearth.
56. <i>Bicha wanegu</i>	: Friends and relatives going and expressing their condolences for the family who has lost their family member.
57. <i>Bikram Sambat</i>	: Calendar introduced by the Shah Kings in the valley in order to bring uniformity among the people to follow the calendar. It is believed that this calendar started from the date of ascendance of Bikram Aditya into the throne.
58. <i>Bital</i>	: A girl is called <i>bital</i> if she did not undergo the <i>ih</i> i, or <i>barha kunegu</i> ceremony, or if she happens to violate the norms of conducting the ritual, she is again considered as <i>bital</i> . It is suggested that <i>bital</i> girls are considered as <i>la chale maju</i> (accepting water from them is considered as unacceptable) and no one will prefer to marry the girl.
59. <i>Bokshi</i>	: A woman who is considered as master of witchcraft.
60. <i>Bombai Churra</i>	: Silver bangles.
61. <i>Booba</i>	: Peas, Horse Gram, Bengal gram and other grains which are popped.
62. <i>Brahmayini</i>	: One of the main goddesses in Thecho, associated with the protection of lower part of Thecho.
63. <i>Budha marga</i>	: A religious path of the Buddha followed by some Newars.
64. <i>Budhhajayanti</i>	: Birthday of the Buddha celebrated with reverence.
65. <i>Bungamati</i>	: An adjacent village, where the temple of Machhindranath is situated.
66. <i>Burramaha dya</i>	: A god worshipped by small <i>guthi</i> in <i>choyelachi</i> . It is believed that, by worshipping this god the yield of the paddy will increase.
67. <i>Cha cha</i>	: Small onions.

68. *Chadraratharohan* : Second *janku* celebrated when a person reached 83 years.
69. *Chait/Chaitra* : Twelfth month of the *Bikram sambat*.
70. *Chaitra punhi* : full moon day on the month of *chaitra*.
71. *Chaku* : Jaggery or sweet.
72. *Chaku ja nayegu* : Eating rice, which is made up of jaggery.
73. *Chaku-nakha-wanegu (yeugu)* : The process of maternal grandmother of the newly born child, coming to see the new born child and her daughter, with the feast items.
74. *Champi* : Adjacent village from Thecho. Many of the villagers believe that most of the families who are residing in Thecho right now might have migrated from Champi, as most of them had their *degu dyos* situated in Champi.
75. *Chapa* : A piece of cloth which should be given as a part of bridal gift.
76. *Chapagaon* : A village situated to the south of Thecho.
77. *Charhe* : Fourteenth and twenty-ninth day of the month.
78. *Chaswae* : Cross roads where the family members leave the clothes and other items of the dead person, right after their death.
79. *Chaula* : Sixth month of the Nepal *sambat*.
80. *Chauthi* : Fourth and Nineteenth day of a month.
81. *Chhamana* : (“*Chha*” is termed as one, actually it is *Chhi* but when attached to some unit it is called *Chha*) one *mana*.
82. *Chheli* : Ground floor of the house.
83. *Chheli Kotha* : A room in the ground floor of the house.
84. *Chhen* : House.
85. *Chhenchoy* : *Chhen* means house *choy* means upper.
86. *Chhoyala* : Barbequed meat of the buffalo has religious and dietary importance among the Newars.
87. *Chhoyala Bhoje/Bhu* : A feast organized with *Chhoyala* as important item, this is considered as mandatory ritual food offered during the meetings conducted before any festival, where the members are expected to take decision on how to celebrate the upcoming festival.
88. *Chhusya Musya nakha wanegu* : The process of relatives come with fried grains and popped corn to feed the girl who has been undergoing the *Barha kunegu* ritual.
89. *Chibha* : A *stupa* associated with Buddhism, generally constructed by the Newars in the hope of getting a son.

90. *Chibhakhawa* : People who construct new *Chibha* are supposed to go as a procession to the other villages to bring the powers of other *Chibhas* which are been worshipped by the people. Unless this process is done it is believed that the new *Chibha* is considered as powerless.
91. *Chilla* : Fifth month of the Nepal *sambat*.
92. *Chipa/ Du mau:* : Pollutant, a glass which is already used by others, or the phase of death mourning is also considered as *chipa*.
93. *Chirra or barley* : A place where they wash vessels and hands before and after eating meals.
94. *Chitrakar* : An caste group among Newars whose traditional occupation is to paint, mainly painting and renovating the masks of the Navadurga mask dancers.
95. *Chokabajin piya kaygu* : Taking out the evil eye laid up by other, by using the broken beaten rice, for the bride right after she arrives at the groom's house. Performed by mother-in-law of the newly wed bride.
96. *Chotte.* : A place where kitchen is situated in traditional Newari house
97. *Chowmein* : Noodles mostly prepared in the eateries in Thecho, which is liked by children, mostly consumed for lunch.
98. *Choye* : Upper part.
99. *Choyelachi* : (Balkumari) temple complex in upper part of Thecho.
100. *Chudidhar* : Modern dress culture of the women in Thecho.
101. *Churra* : Bangles.
102. *Daju-kija* : Brothers.
103. *Dakarmi* : The house contractor or the one who take the responsibility of organizing the labour and planning the house construction.
104. *Dakshina* : Small payment against the services rendered by priest or a barber during the life cycle rituals.
105. *Dama* : One of the musical instrument which used during the marriage procession.
106. *Dan* : One year.
107. *Daraj* : A cupboard to keep the brides clothes.
108. *Dashain/ Mohani* : Ten days celebrations where the last two days are celebrated in grandeur by Newars.

109. <i>Dashami</i>	: Tenth and twenty fifth day of a month.
110. <i>Dashi</i>	: One of the place in Thecho, which also believed to have many <i>degu dyos</i> .
111. <i>Dava cha</i>	: A kind of spoon used in the kitchen.
112. <i>Degu</i>	: Clan.
113. <i>Degudya</i>	: Clan goddess.
114. <i>Depa</i>	: Crematory ground.
115. <i>Devaratharohan</i>	: Third <i>janku</i> at the age of 88 years.
116. <i>Dewali guthi/khala</i> or <i>Depcha guthi/khala</i>	: <i>Guthi</i> formed by the relatives who are linked by blood and who believe that they are descendants of the same ancestor and goes together to offer prayers to their clan goddess. It is also referred as <i>khala</i> because some of the families who does not wish to go in group may also do so.
117. <i>Dhakilla</i>	: Death ritual celebrated after one year from the death of a person.
118. <i>Dhan swan</i>	: A flower which is considered as important for the marriage ritual.
119. <i>Dhaniya/Dhanucha</i>	: Coriander.
120. <i>Dhapakhel</i>	: One of the villages situated adjacent to Thecho.
121. <i>Dharmasthalipur</i>	: One of the old names for Thecho.
122. <i>Dhau</i>	: Curd.
123. <i>Dhau Sagan/Dhau Swokan</i>	: Curd offered as a part of <i>sagan</i> , and it is common practice to apply curd on the sides of forehead in order to wish anyone auspiciousness, especially during the life cycle rituals and during the gift exchange.
124. <i>Dhaubaji nakha wanegu</i>	: Mother of the newly conceived woman goes to her daughter's husband's house to feed her daughter <i>dhau baji</i> (curd with beaten rice).
125. <i>Dhuku kotha</i>	: Room where Newars store their grains and traditional pots and also considers this room as sacred as they keep <i>bhin dyo</i> also in this room.
126. <i>Dhun Chheli</i>	: Inner part of back gate of the house.
127. <i>Dhuna</i>	: Response to the question did you have you food, meaning 'yes I had my food'.
128. <i>Dilla</i>	: Ninth month of the Nepal <i>sambat</i> .
129. <i>Divyaratharohan</i>	: Fourth <i>janku</i> at the age of 99 years.
130. <i>Doja</i>	: Married sons continued to live with their father as a part of the joint family.
131. <i>Doli(nep.)/Doo(Ne</i>	: Palanquin or carrier made to carry newlywed bride. It is

w.)	considered as the richest form of marriage anyone can celebrate.
132. <i>Du benkeyegu</i>	: Partial purification ritual process conducted after the death in any family among the Newars.
133. <i>Dukcha Syaye Pala</i>	: The group of people who are responsible for buying goats for the sacrifice and also for the further consumption of meat. They get the responsibility turn wise within the bigger group.
134. <i>Dungri</i>	: Ear ring.
135. <i>Durukhel Phonga</i>	: Pond in the Durukhel.
136. <i>Dushi</i>	: Barley.
137. <i>Dutiya</i>	: Second and seventeenth day in a month.
138. <i>Dwadashi</i>	: Twelfth and twenty-seventh day in a month.
139. <i>Dware</i>	: Head of the village before panchayat system.
140. <i>Dya/choyyala Khun dya</i>	: A guardian god which is put up during <i>Indra jatara</i> , who believed to steal the <i>choyyala</i> and hence he is imprisoned. However, the <i>guthiyars</i> refute the popular story among the people.
141. <i>Dyo Chheñ</i>	: House of the gods and goddesses.
142. <i>Dyo ma</i>	: Women who is considered to have spiritual powers, who can heal and see the future.
143. <i>Dyo phanga/Shi phanga</i>	: Shroud maintained by each <i>guthi</i> , which has to be lend it to the deceased family to cover on the dead body, and the family is supposed to return the shroud carefully back to the <i>guthi</i> . Considered to have powers, worshipped and respected with reverence.
144. <i>Eh:</i>	: A Newari term for Kathmandu.
145. <i>Ekadashi</i>	: Eleventh and twenty-sixth day of the month.
146. <i>Escuss (new.)/ Eskulcha (nep.)</i>	: Choko/chayote.
147. <i>Falcha</i>	: A common resting place mainly constructed for the travelers and the villagers.
148. <i>Falgun/Fagun</i>	: Eleventh month of the <i>Bikram sambat</i> .
149. <i>Fashi</i>	: Post used to make <i>aila</i> .
150. <i>Ga</i>	: Second half of the month.
151. <i>Gacha</i>	: A white cloth worn by the women across their chest or wrapped around their waist.
152. <i>Gajar</i>	: Carrot.
153. <i>Ganesh</i>	: Elephant headed god in Hindu religion.

154. *Gathañmuga: and Kyaye macha nakha* : Festival celebrated right after the harvest, which is also believed to reduce the mosquitos and other insects, and also the sons are called to the house, and the parents arrange a special feast for the sons.
155. *Ghasu* : Twelfth day from the death of any individual in the Newari family.
156. *Ghou* : One hour.
157. *Goja* : Small *chibha* (conical shape) made out of white flour which represents *stupa*, and worshipped during marriage ritual and also while offering *pinda* for the dead ancestors.
158. *Gon* : The people of the *guthi* who are responsible for the cremation of the dead members of that particular group.
159. *Goñta* : The *guthiyars* who help to carry the dead body. It is also believed that the position is readily offered to the son-in-law of the dead person, if he wishes to carry he may do so.
160. *Gopali/ Gwalis* : one of the caste groups of Newars, who are considered as descendants of Gopal Bankshi dynasty, and their caste occupation is traditionally cattle rearing, but now a days most of them opted for the business.
161. *Gopcha* : A long handled ladle to take the water from pot.
162. *Goraknath* : Considered as master of Machhindranath /Karunamaya. He was taken in order to make the Machhindranath stand up so that the snakes which he has arrested under his lap would escape and cause rains.
163. *Gubhaju* : Male *Bajracharya* who renders his priestly services for the Newari families.
164. *Guhsi Ghyañ* : Grass which is commonly used during the ritual process.
165. *Gulla ammai* : No moon day in the month of *gulla*.
166. *Gundru* : fermented leafy vegetables, consumed along with meals, very common practice among the Nepalis.
167. *Guñla* : Tenth month of the Nepal *sambat*.
168. *Guruju* : A term generally used to refer to drivers of any vehicle.
169. *Gushi* : A variety of grass which has ritual significance in the Newari culture.
170. *Guthi* : An association formed for several reasons whose membership is through inheritance.
171. *Guthi chhen/ gu chhen* : A house associated with a *guthi*, which is used for conducting meetings and having feast, often even rented out for the villagers to organize feast.

172. <i>Gwa:Mwo: lipi;</i>	: One of the styles of Newari Script.
173. <i>Gwaye</i>	: Betel nut.
174. <i>Hakku Parshi</i>	: A traditional Newari dress which is red and black in colour, worn in the recent days occasionally by women.
175. <i>Haku musya</i>	: Black soya bean.
176. <i>Halmula</i>	: Popped grains which is generally distributed among the villagers at the <i>lachi</i> any members during occasions or sometimes simply. It is believed that once should distribute <i>halmula</i> occasionally. It is also consumed as snacks.
177. <i>Halu</i>	: Turmeric.
178. <i>Harasiddhi</i>	: An adjacent village to Thecho.
179. <i>Hom</i>	: A ritual fire built either during marriage or during the death purificatory ritual.
180. <i>Hukka</i>	: Traditional smoking apparatus, shared only with the same caste members.
181. <i>Hyañmu khwa</i>	: Red face, a <i>guthi</i> , which comprises ten people, and who takes care of the half.
182. <i>Indra Jatra</i>	: A day before full moon day, in the month of <i>yanla</i> , they celebrate a carnival for <i>Indra</i> in a big manner.
183. <i>Ja</i>	: Cooked rice.
184. <i>Ja Chale Maju</i>	: Cooked rice accepting is not okay.
185. <i>Ja nakegu/ macha janku/ Anna Prasanna</i>	: First feeding ceremony.
186. <i>Jaa: ne Dhuna?</i>	: Did you have your rice?
187. <i>Jaata</i>	: Horoscope.
188. <i>Jahans</i>	: Patrilineally linked immediate kin members in the clan.
189. <i>Jaista Nagarik Samman</i>	: A group formed in Thecho to facilitate and offer gifts and food for the people who have celebrated <i>Janku</i> , this celebration happens every month on the full moon day.
190. <i>Jajwepala</i>	: Responsible for cutting vegetables, meat, and grinding spices for the feast
191. <i>Jaki</i>	: Rice.
192. <i>Jala nhekan</i>	: Traditional mirror.
193. <i>Janakpur</i>	: One of the districts in Nepal.
194. <i>Janjati</i>	: Indigenous people.
195. <i>Janku</i>	: A life cycle ritual celebrated for the elders upon reaching 77 years of their age.

196. *Janni* : A kind of shawl but it is much longer than a shawl. The purpose of *janni* is to wrap any clothes such as *parsi*, etc. In addition, *janni* is also worn to support the waist from any pain occurs from lifting heavy weights as a part of daily work.
197. *Jatara* : Carnival celebrated for pantheon in order to please them.
198. *Jestha/Jeth* : Second month of *Bikram Sambat*.
199. *Jewu* : Okay/ agreed.
200. *Jhar Goo/ Jaku/ jakuti* : Group formed by the farmers to help with the agricultural work in each other's field of the group members.
201. *Joshi* : One of the caste groups among Newars, whose traditional caste occupation is to see the horoscope of the people, and fix auspicious time for the rituals to be celebrated.
202. *Jugi (Kapali/Kusle)* : One of the caste groups among Newars, whose traditional caste occupation is render their musical services in the temples with their *sannai*. Considered as very lower caste (un-touchability is practiced). The caste groups claims to be descendants of the *Kapalika* sect of Shiva.
203. *Jwajalapa* : Greeting each other in Newari, it is elite in manner; generally, the greeting is to ask whether they had their meals.
204. *Jyagdum Pagdum Dya Bhagwan* : A slogan sung in chores by the group of people during a procession.
205. *Jyapu* : One of the caste groups among Newars, whose traditional occupation is peasantry. There are four sub castes within *Jyapus*. They are considered as numerically high in number in Lalitpur district.
206. *Jyopala* : Turn bearer of a *guthi* whose responsibility is also to organize the villager *jatara*.
207. *Ka ka cha* : Bitter guard.
208. *Kaas* : Traditional coat.
209. *Kacha bhalin* : An assistant cook to the main cook.
210. *Kachhala* : First month of Nepal *sambat*.
211. *Kachika* : The un-used woolen, which is used to tie the dead body in three different places.
212. *Kadha* : Silk Cloth, which is presented to the guest and newly

	arrived friends and relatives as a gesture of showing their respect. Believed to be acculturated practice.
213. <i>Kaga Tupali</i>	: A black Nepal cap/ head wear which is considered as Newari traditional cap.
214. <i>Kamucha</i>	: A bamboo used as a balance to carry heavy items on shoulder.
215. <i>Kancha</i>	: The smallest.
216. <i>Karmanasa/Karma nasha</i>	: Name of the rivulet.
217. <i>Kartik</i>	: Seventh month of <i>bikram Sambat</i> .
218. <i>Karuwa</i>	: Water drinking pot which is made up of bronze.
219. <i>Kasain</i>	: One of the caste groups in Thecho, whose traditional occupation is butchering the animals for their living.
220. <i>Katto</i>	: Rice wine (fermented) which is yellow in colour.
221. <i>Kauli</i>	: Cauliflower.
222. <i>Kawa</i>	: A group of families who are considered as a direct descendants of the known male ancestor.
223. <i>Kebey</i>	: Kitchen garden.
224. <i>Kegu</i>	: Small peas.
225. <i>Khala</i>	: A group formed by the people, whose membership is voluntary in nature, and these <i>khala</i> have an objective to be filled. The only difference from the <i>guthi</i> is that the membership is not inheritance in nature.
226. <i>Khali</i>	: Silver anklet.
227. <i>Khals</i>	: Earthen pots generally used during the ritual process.
228. <i>Khasthi/Shasthi</i>	: Sixth and twenty first day of a month.
229. <i>Kho</i>	: Traditional Pots stored generally in <i>dukhu kotha</i>
230. <i>Khokana</i>	: Adjacent village to Thecho.
231. <i>Khol malcha</i>	: One of the musical instrument used during the marriage procession.
232. <i>Khola</i>	: Twelfth month of the Nepal <i>sambat</i> .
233. <i>Khu</i>	: Thieving.
234. <i>Khupooja</i>	: An offering to the <i>nasa dyo</i> , in the middle of the musical lessons organized by the <i>baja khalas</i> . It is believed that, the rooster offered during this <i>pooja</i> should be stolen, hence it is <i>khu pooja</i> .
235. <i>Khwopa</i>	: Newari Term for Bhaktapur.
236. <i>Kishi</i>	: Elephant.
237. <i>Kisili/Kishaliñ</i>	: Earthen bowl, which is used to light a lamp with the help

	of oil and wick.
238. <i>Kokali</i>	: Youngest member in a group.
239. <i>Kokha</i>	: White and red piece of clothes sliced in order to wear it as a garland for the people present during the celebrations of auspicious events. Symbol of good omen.
240. <i>Kolacha</i>	: A variety of pulse.
241. <i>Kori (pin)</i>	: A person (especially girl) having visible deformities for arms, may be caused because of leprosy. (pin indicates plural).
242. <i>Kosá</i>	: Gift (especially bridal gifts).
243. <i>Kosh</i>	: A small groups formed by the villagers in order to save money which will be re-distributed upon reaching the agreed time, the money can also be given as loans for both the members and outsiders.
244. <i>Koshadhyaksha</i>	: A person who is responsible for collecting money and keeping the accounts of the <i>kosh</i> . The annual feast will be organized generally in his/her house.
245. <i>Kosi/Koshi</i>	: Name of the river.
246. <i>Kowla</i>	: Fourth day of the <i>depcha pooja</i> , change of <i>pala: ta:</i> and concluding feast is organized.
247. <i>Koye</i>	: Lower part (Mostly referring to geography).
248. <i>Koyelachi</i>	: (Brahmayini) temple complex in lower part of Thecho.
249. <i>Krishna astami</i>	: Birthday of Lord Krishna which falls on <i>astami</i> of the month.
250. <i>Kshama pooja</i>	: An offering to the <i>nasa dyo</i> , who is a god of music and dance, done by the students before they learn any musical instrument.
251. <i>Kuimwo: lipi</i>	: one of the styles of Newari Script.
252. <i>Kul</i>	: Death ritual observed after six months from the death of an individual.
253. <i>Kuldeeptha pooja - Kuldevta pooja</i>	: Clan goddess worship.
254. <i>Kun panegu</i>	: One of the purificatory ritual believed to free the relatives from the death pollution partially.
255. <i>Kuppu</i>	: Newari term for Kirtipur district.
256. <i>Kutane</i>	: The male representative in the clan, who generally attends the meeting of the clan members, and also has the responsibility to pay money on behalf of the family members for the <i>depcha</i> feast which they have once in a

year in front of their *degu dyo*. Generally, the married out sons, who got their property divided formally in front of other clan members, will be considered as *kutane*. From then onwards they will also act as representatives.

257.Kya	: Son.
258.Kyan bhu	: Plates used for eating meals.
259.Kyata Pooja/ brathbandh	: Initiation ceremony celebrated for the boys in Newari culture. After this ceremony, the boys are accepted as fully-grown men into the society. Wearing of loincloth ceremony.
260.La	: One month.
261.La chale maju	: Water accepting is not okay.
262.Labha bhu/Labh bhu	: Feast organized at the end of the celebration of <i>dewali</i> , to ease the dietary restriction followed through the period of worshipping their <i>degu dyo</i> .
263.Lagankhel	: Nearest town area from the Thecho village.
264.Laiñ	: Radish.
265.Laka	: Shoes.
266.Lakha	: A ritual marriage gift or a traditional agreement between groom's side and bride's side agreeing to the marriage.
267.Lakha Bhwaye	: Giving the <i>lakha</i> .
268.Lakhuñ charhe	: <i>Charhe</i> where they worship <i>lakhun mahadev</i> , who is believed to be Shiva who is hiding in the <i>nani</i> . Celebrated with grandeur in <i>koyelachi</i> by the <i>nehas guthi</i> members.
269.Lami	: A go between, for a marriage.
270.Lapti	: Leaf.
271.Latya	: 45 th day from the death of an individual.
272.Lava	: Garlic.
273.Liku chhoya heu	: Elder brother carrying the bride till the <i>pekha lachi</i> to be sent off along with the groom.
274.Lithu Nhethu Chaykegu	: Exchange of money or gifts against the betel nuts during introduction of bride or groom.
275.Litomwo: lipi;	: One of the styles of Newari Script.
276.Locha	: Fourth day from the day of death in Newari family.
277.Lonma	: The stone used in kitchen for grinding.
278.Lumbini	: Birth place of Buddha.
279.Maata	: The second floor of the house.
280.Maathan kotha	: Living room, which is generally situated in the second

	floor of the traditional Newari House.
281. <i>Maaya khwa swoyegu</i>	: Newari mother's day, the married out daughters come with feast items to their natal house, worship their mother and offer her food brought from her in-laws house. First mother's day of the newly married out daughter is always expected to be celebrated in grandeur.
282. <i>Machabhu lahika wanegu</i>	: The process of mother going to bring her daughter who has delivered a child to her natal house from her in-laws house.
283. <i>machabu benkegu</i>	: The purificatory ritual conducted for the newly born child and the new mother.
284. <i>Machabu lahika chomha sata wanegu</i>	: The process of mother-in-law of the new mother should go and bring the daughter-in-law back to their home after she has stayed in the natal house for few days after giving birth.
285. <i>Machabu swa wanegu</i>	: The process of relatives coming and visiting the newly born child and the mother.
286. <i>Madya</i>	: Alcohol.
287. <i>Magh</i>	: Tenth month of the <i>bikram sambat</i> .
288. <i>Maghe Sañkranti or Ghya: Chaku Sañhlu</i>	: Beginning of <i>magh</i> procession and inviting the <i>mhyay macha</i> to give <i>chaku</i> .
289. <i>Maharjans</i>	: One of the caste groups in Thecho, who are considered to be dominant caste group, and practices agriculture as their caste occupation.
290. <i>Maila</i>	: Second in order.
291. <i>Maithna</i>	: A symbol of sexual intercourse.
292. <i>Majo</i>	: The elected body of 3-5 members within the <i>guthi</i> , who are considered as an advisory body to the executive body.
293. <i>Maka</i>	: Monkey.
294. <i>Maka shi</i>	: Ear ring which looks like monkey.
295. <i>Makmali Lakha</i>	: Traditional footwear, which is designed with embroidery and worn occasionally.
296. <i>Malakar/ Malis</i>	: One of the caste groups in Thecho, who are considered to be second largest group in population, and practices gardening as their caste occupation traditionally. But many has taken up different occupations.
297. <i>Malju</i>	: Mother's brother's wife (MBW).
298. <i>Malta</i>	: Chilli/ pepper.

299. <i>Mamsa</i>	: Meat.
300. <i>Mana</i>	: Two <i>aanas</i> of land.
301. <i>Manayani</i>	: A general response for the question, did you have you food? (no! I did not have).
302. <i>Mangsir</i>	: Eighth month of the <i>bikram sambat</i> .
303. <i>Matsya</i>	: Fish.
304. <i>May:</i>	: Green gram.
305. <i>Mayaoh</i>	: Cooked green gram.
306. <i>Mesyaye pala</i>	: The group within the <i>guthi</i> , that is responsible for buying water buffalo to sacrifice or its meat for the feast.
307. <i>Mhasu khwa</i>	: Yellow faced, one of the two <i>guthis</i> responsible for cremating the dead in the upper part of the village.
308. <i>Mhyay Macha</i>	: Group of married out daughters.
309. <i>Missa</i>	: Women.
310. <i>Moosu</i>	: Yellow/ orange colour pulses.
311. <i>Mu, mayay, musu, ka:su, rahar</i>	: Different kinds of grams used to make <i>Wo:</i> , which should be consumed during the <i>sithinakha</i> .
312. <i>Muchhen</i>	: Head of the household, who represents the house in the clan meetings.
313. <i>Mudra</i>	: Hand posture.
314. <i>Mukut/ Khawapaa:</i>	: Mask generally worn by the <i>Navadurga</i> dancer.
315. <i>Musa</i>	: Mice
316. <i>Musya</i>	: Soya bean
317. <i>Myay</i>	: A variety of pulse.
318. <i>Nagas</i>	: Snakes.
319. <i>Nakha</i>	: Festival.
320. <i>Nakhatya/Nakhtya</i>	: A feast organized for the married out daughters by the natal house right after any major festival.
321. <i>Nakinmwo: lipi</i>	: One of the styles of Newari Script.
322. <i>Nala</i>	: A local plant (agave) used to make a rope, which symbolizes gifting buffalo as part of bridal gift during the marriage.
323. <i>Nani</i>	: Courtyard, often used as address to refer to a group of families who are living in the same cluster.
324. <i>Nasadya</i>	: Considered as god of dance and music. Worshipped by the people who are about to learn music in the <i>baja khalas</i> .
325. <i>Nau/ Napit</i>	: Barber.

326. <i>Nauni</i>	: Barber's wife or female person of the <i>Nau</i> caste group.
327. <i>Navami</i>	: Ninth and twenty-fourth day of the month.
328. <i>Nayanbhu/</i> <i>Nhenhubu/Nhenbu</i>	: Food served on the seventh day to the <i>kapali</i> caste group person on the memory of dead person. It is considered as demeaning practice by the <i>Kapali</i> caste group, and they stopped practicing it.
329. <i>Nepal Bhasa</i>	: Newari language.
330. <i>Nepal sambat</i>	: Calendar followed by the Newars in memory of <i>Sankhadhar Sakhwa</i> .
331. <i>Nhi</i>	: One day.
332. <i>Ni paku</i>	: A small feast is organized as a part of marriage on both brides and grooms side.
333. <i>Nini</i>	: Father's sister (FZ).
334. <i>Nouga</i>	: A pit dug below the wooden stairs in the traditional houses, which is used to urinate and sprinkle ash from the hearth in order to prevent smell and indeed this ash is used as manure.
335. <i>Nya paku</i>	: Feast organized in a big manner, indicates five <i>pathis</i> of <i>baji</i> . Symbolizing a grand way of organizing feast for the marriage.
336. <i>Nyacha</i>	: Ear ring which looks like fish.
337. <i>Nyay khiñ/naya</i> <i>khiñ</i>	: Drum played by the butchering caste.
338. <i>Oucha</i>	: Boiled spinach and mustard leaves.
339. <i>Pa:shin</i>	: Witch.
340. <i>Pashi</i>	: Fruit.
341. <i>Paalu</i>	: Spicy.
342. <i>Pachhicha</i>	: Lettuce .
343. <i>Pachumwo: lipi;</i>	: One of the styles of Newari Script.
344. <i>Paisa</i>	: Four Dam of land.
345. <i>Paju</i>	: Mother's brother/father's sister's husband.
346. <i>Paju khala</i>	: Group of people are considered as <i>Pajus</i> or related to <i>paju</i> .
347. <i>Pajuku</i>	: Gifts given by the <i>Paju</i> , especially during the marriage of his nephew/niece.
348. <i>Pala</i>	: Turn bearer.
349. <i>Pala: Ta:</i>	: Turn of the <i>pala/ pala</i> ship.
350. <i>Palcha</i>	: Spinach.
351. <i>Palu</i>	: Ginger.

352. <i>Pan Chaa</i>	: Soil.
353. <i>Panchami</i>	: Fifth and twentieth day of the month.
354. <i>Panche baja</i>	: Five kind of musical instruments performed as a part of marriage procession.
355. <i>Panucha</i>	: A kind of spoon used to serve or stir the rice.
356. <i>Parbati</i>	: Wife of lord Shiva.
357. <i>Parijat flowers</i>	: Mythical flowers, which are believed to be available only in Kathmandu valley. Apparently, <i>Indra</i> came to pluck few to the valley and imprisoned by the gardeners of the king, his release from prison followed by <i>Indra jatara</i> .
358. <i>Paru</i>	: First day and sixteenth day of the month.
359. <i>Pasupati Nath</i>	: One of the main temples of Shiva, believed to be one of the important Shiva temple should be visited by the Shiva devotees.
360. <i>Pathakhola</i> (<i>Kataura</i>)	: A special bowl used during <i>guthi</i> gatherings to drink <i>Katto</i> by the <i>Thakalis</i> .
361. <i>Pathi</i>	: Measuring jar to measure grains and sometimes the land is also measured based on how many <i>pathis</i> of grains can be sowed.
362. <i>Peeta</i>	: The place where gods and goddess who protect the village from the evil spirits reside.
363. <i>Pekha lachi</i>	: Place which is situated in front of every house, offered worship daily by the women of the house.
364. <i>Pello musya</i>	: Big size soya bean.
365. <i>Pena wanegu</i> (<i>elope</i>)	: (literally coming after four days), the form of marriage through elopement is called <i>pena wanegu</i> .
366. <i>Penhu</i> <i>Chhoyeu/Penhi</i> <i>Chhoyeu</i>	: The process of going and dropping the newly wed bride in her natal house on the fourth day of the marriage by the groom's mother.
367. <i>Penni Chheli</i>	: Entrance part of the house.
368. <i>Penu locha wanegu</i> or <i>locha wanegu</i> .	: The process of married out daughters coming to their natal house on the fourth day of the death in the natal house, they come with food items to be given to their natal family.
369. <i>Phaisyayepala</i>	: The group within the <i>guthi</i> responsible for buying sheep for sacrifice or its meat for the feast.
370. <i>Phasi</i>	: Pumpkin.
371. <i>Phukis</i>	: Two are more <i>kawas</i> can be called <i>phuki</i> . The members

	of <i>phuki</i> believe that they are related by blood, but their ancestry cannot be traced back accurately.
372. <i>Pinda</i>	: Ritual offering of food for the dead ancestor.
373. <i>Pingal</i>	: A religious place (<i>shakthi peet</i>) which is believed to protect the village from the evils spirits. Mostly situated right next to the cemetery in all the surrounding villages, but Thecho is an exemption.
374. <i>Pirnew pooja</i>	: <i>Pooja</i> is done at the end of learning the music in <i>baja khala</i> , it is also believed that the students are allowed to perform music outside the class till they finish this <i>pooja</i> .
375. <i>Pisi wayegu</i>	: On the day of <i>astami</i> , the men and women start a procession which will last for one month, in this procession the women offer lamp and the men their musical services. People from different <i>toles</i> will have different track routes for this <i>pissi</i> .
376. <i>Pitambar dhoti</i>	: An yellow color cloth, worn during the ritual of offering <i>pinda</i> by the eldest male member in the family. He is not expected to wear any shirt while offering <i>pinda</i> to the three immediate dead ancestors.
377. <i>Piyanci</i>	: The married sons who are living separately as a nuclear family, and who are supposed to make a payment for the <i>guthi</i> against the services they do if case of any death in his family.
378. <i>Po wa:</i>	: One of the varieties of rice, which has ritual significance, and used especially during the death procession to sprinkle on the way.
379. <i>Pohela</i>	: Third Month of the Nepal <i>Sambat</i> .
380. <i>Poorni or punhi</i>	: Full moon day.
381. <i>Poskyañ</i>	: Sweet made out of milk, which is also a livelihood option for many families in Thecho.
382. <i>Pottu la</i>	: <i>la</i> means piece of cloth, and <i>pottu</i> is a jacket which Newari women wore as a top wear.
383. <i>Prachalit Nepal Lipi</i>	: One of the styles of script of Newari (Nepal <i>Bhasa</i>).
384. <i>Prasad</i>	: Item given to the people after offering to the gods/goddesses. Has a ritual significance and considered sacred.
385. <i>Pucha</i>	: A group formed mostly by the youngsters in order

	achieve short term goals and the membership is purely voluntary in nature.
386. <i>Pukhusi/ Pukhu</i>	: Pond.
387. <i>Punucha</i>	: Aloe vera.
388. <i>Push</i>	: Ninth month of the <i>Bikram sambat</i> .
389. <i>Putulan</i>	: A piece of cloth, which should be given as a part of bridal gift.
390. <i>Puyin'/Puin'</i>	: A small group within big group, where the members are expected to possess certain similarity.
391. <i>Pyaj</i>	: Onion.
392. <i>Rajma</i>	: Red coloured beans.
393. <i>Ram Toriyañ</i>	: Ladies finger.
394. <i>Ranjana lipi</i>	: One of the styles of writing Newari script, which is also considered as most used style.
395. <i>Ropani</i>	: One <i>ropani</i> is equal to 508.74 square meters of the land.
396. <i>Saalu</i>	: First day of <i>bikram sambat</i> month.
397. <i>Sachika</i>	: Traditional braiding ornament used to enhance the beauty of the hair of women.
398. <i>Sagarmatha</i>	: Mount Everest.
399. <i>Saila</i>	: Third in the order.
400. <i>Sajan Shahi</i>	: Another name of the <i>Shahi</i> caste groups.
401. <i>Sakal Daka</i>	: Multi-coloured <i>Tupali</i> worn on day-to-day basis by the Newars.
402. <i>Sakipa</i>	: A local plant used to make a rope, which symbolizes gifting goat as part of bridal gift during the marriage.
403. <i>Sakkhi</i>	: Elephant foot yam.
404. <i>Sakya/bajracharya</i>	: Buddhist family priest.
405. <i>Salicha</i>	: Earthen pot, which is used to light lamp with the help of oil and wick.
406. <i>Samalcha</i>	: Companion who accompanies newlywed bride to the groom's house for one-day right after her marriage.
407. <i>Samaybaji</i>	: Beaten rice with the combination of ginger, black soya beans, and a piece of meat, which is served as starter before a big feast, or as a <i>prasad</i> , food offered to the god and considered to be having ritual importance.
408. <i>Sambat</i>	: Calendar or era.
409. <i>Sannai</i>	: One of the musical instruments, it is the musical instrument of <i>Kapali</i> caste group.
410. <i>Sañra</i>	: Cupboard to keep clothes.

411. <i>Saptami</i>	: Seventh and Twenty second day of the month.
412. <i>Sasa</i>	: In-law (a prefix used to refer spouse's kin distinguishing one's own kin terms).
413. <i>Sasa Maa</i>	: Mother-in-law.
414. <i>Sasmaju</i>	: <i>Saraswoti</i> goddess.
415. <i>Saspooja</i>	: A religious picnic organized by <i>Kosh</i> and <i>Khalas</i> for their members in Thecho.
416. <i>Sathi</i>	: A practice of women joining pyre of the dead husband, in order to sacrifice her life, indicating she doesn't have a life to lead after her husband's death.
417. <i>Satyanarayan Vrata</i> or <i>Sanatan dharma</i>	: A <i>pooja</i> performed for god <i>satyanarayan</i> and the family takes a vow of abstaining from eating non-vegetarian food items. It is also called as accepting the <i>sanatan dharma</i> .
418. <i>Shahi</i>	: A caste group, who are considered as lower class, and whose traditional occupation is butchering.
419. <i>Shawun/Shrawan</i>	: Fourth month of the <i>Bikram Sambat</i> .
420. <i>Shimba</i>	: A loin (mostly outside the temples) who is considered as guardian of the temples and gods.
421. <i>Shrestha</i>	: One of the caste groups among Newars (considered as upper caste).
422. <i>Sika bhu</i>	: A small ritual aspect conducted as a part of feast, the topmost eight elders are given eight different parts of the billy goat's head in this ritual, to show respect and seek blessings from the eight topmost elders.
423. <i>Sikha</i>	: Silver chain, worn as necklace by the Newari women.
424. <i>Silah</i>	: Bed cover.
425. <i>Silla</i>	: Fourth month of the Nepal <i>Sambat</i> .
426. <i>Simi (White ones)</i>	: Beans.
427. <i>Sindhur</i>	: Vermilion.
428. <i>Sinha moo</i>	: An ritual item which represents male gender used during the marriage ritual, considered as pair to the <i>jala nhekan</i> .
429. <i>Sithinakha</i>	: Festival celebrated before the paddy transplantation.
430. <i>Sola musya</i>	: Small size soya bean.
431. <i>Soynaya dulli or</i> <i>degu dyo pooja</i>	: Clan goddess worship.
432. <i>Stupa</i>	: A religious structure related to Buddhism.
433. <i>Suku</i>	: A local plant used to make a rope, which symbolizes gifting sheep as part of bridal gift during the marriage.

434. <i>Sukunda</i>	: Water pot.
435. <i>Suriñ</i>	: Traditional bronze pot, which is used to serve <i>aila</i> .
436. <i>Suruwa</i>	: Is the lower garment to cover the leg, with lot of space allowing the free movement to stretch the legs. The part at the calf-muscle is tight in nature.
437. <i>Swayambar</i>	: Non-Newari form of marriage system currently adopted by the Newars.
438. <i>Ta: kha:</i>	: A jelly meat, which is in semi solid state, made up of meat, occasionally for the feast purpose, in generally consumed during winters as a part of daily meals.
439. <i>Tachhala</i>	: Eighth month of the Nepal <i>sambat</i> .
440. <i>Tañ pa</i>	: A pot used to store water of <i>aila</i> .
441. <i>Tapa la</i>	: Shirt (la means cloth).
442. <i>Teepa</i>	: A traditional pot for boiling water.
443. <i>Teyuyu</i>	: The braiding process of the <i>sachika</i> .
444. <i>Thachhen</i>	: Natal house as referred by the married women.
445. <i>Thakali</i>	: Eldest member in a group.
446. <i>Thakali nakin</i>	: Eldest female member of a group (often wife of the <i>thakali</i> will act as <i>thakali nakin</i>).
447. <i>Thalle</i>	: Up, generally used in house.
448. <i>Tashhi</i>	: Citron.
449. <i>Thay</i>	: Place.
450. <i>Thaya-choy</i>	: A place topographically situated in an elevated surface.
451. <i>Thechomi</i>	: citizens of the Thecho village are referred by others villagers.
452. <i>Thiñla</i>	: Second month of the Nepal <i>sambat</i> .
453. <i>Thissa</i>	: Ornaments worn by women.
454. <i>Thwo</i>	: First half of the month.
455. <i>Tikka</i>	: Sindhur/vermilion applied to the forehead, based on the occasion the color of the <i>tikka</i> changes. In the auspicious celebrations, it can be Red. During the death pollution, one is prohibited from wearing red <i>tikka</i> . In <i>mohini tikka</i> though it is auspicious celebration the <i>tikka</i> will be black in color.
456. <i>To: twe Pa</i>	: The <i>pala</i> in the <i>guthi</i> whose responsibility is to brew <i>to:</i> (rice beer) to all the <i>guthiyars</i> during the feast.
457. <i>Toles or Twah</i>	: Ward in the village.
458. <i>Too</i>	: Mustard.
459. <i>Toriyañ</i>	: Snake guard.

460. <i>Trayodashi</i>	: Thirteenth and twenty-eighth day in a month.
461. <i>Tritiya</i>	: Third and eighteenth day in a month.
462. <i>Tukri</i>	: Ear ring.
463. <i>Tupuli</i>	: Multicolour head wear which is traditionally worn by the men in Nepal.
464. <i>Tushi</i>	: Cucumber.
465. <i>Vanta</i>	: Brinjal.
466. <i>Wa</i>	: One week .
467. <i>Wa piyu or Sina jya</i>	: Paddy.
468. <i>Wa Pusa</i>	: Preparation for the paddy transplantation.
469. <i>Wamcha</i>	: One of the food item made by the married out daughters in their natal house to serve to the dead person.
470. <i>Wo</i>	: Paddy.
471. <i>Wo:</i>	: Item made with different grains should be eaten during <i>sithi nakha</i> .
472. <i>Wola</i>	: The red paddy.
473. <i>Wola baji</i>	: A beaten rice which is considered as tasty, and slightly red in color.
474. <i>Womcha</i> (<i>Wauncha</i>)	: A necessary item should be prepared by the married out daughters during <i>latya</i> , in their natal house, when they are observing death rituals.
475. <i>Yama dut</i>	: Servants of <i>yama</i> (lord of death) who come to take away the soul when a person has to die.
476. <i>Yela</i>	: <i>Newari</i> term for the Patan or Lalitpur.
477. <i>Yeñla</i>	: Eleventh month of the Nepal <i>sambat</i> .
478. <i>Yomari</i>	: Sesame with jaggery stuffed inside the rice flour and cooked in steam.
479. <i>Yomari Puñhi</i>	: Full moon day in the month of <i>Thinla</i> , where people celebrate by eating sweet item cooked through steam, stuffed with sesame and jaggery.
480. <i>Youtho</i>	: Rice wine (fermented) which is red in colour.

APPENDICES

Appendix I

Challenges Faced During the Study

Racial Difference:

This section of limitations has been written based on the research experiences encountered during fieldwork in the Thecho village. The first challenge was racial difference, especially the skin colour of researcher and the people where study was carried out. People who have fair skin perceived the researcher clearly as an outsider, as the skin colour of researcher is dark in nature. The people in village in the initial stages has miss-understood that the researcher belongs to the Madhesi community, a community which lives in Terai regions of Nepal and whose skin colour resembles the researchers skin colour. Madhesis are look down by the community where the research was carried out. In fact, the upper part of the village started calling the researcher as *hakku dai* which means black elder brother and small children within the village often teased the researcher by calling as *hakku*. Though these teasing and remarks on the skin colour of the researcher does not come in the way while collecting the data, but it surely had the implications for the people to differentiate the researcher as not one of them.

Xenophobia and Hatred towards the Bigger Nation:

Nepal, a sovereign country which is pictured cartographically as a small 'rock' stuck between two boulder nations India and China, is often perceived as tiny country by both adjacent countries. The Xenophobic characters of the Nepalese might have been developed in two ways. First, the individual's experience with Indian Nationals in day-to-day life might have led to the formation of general consciousness. The North Indian population, who generally migrate to the valley seeking different job opportunities such as barbers, fruit, and vegetable vendors and so on, has created a notion that, the Indians generally cheat and exploit others. The researcher has faced criticism from people because of nationality, in one of the incident, an old person has warned his friend who

was helping out with the interviews to not trust Indians much and they have the tendencies to cheat and get you into problems. In another incident where the local people were invited to come and visit the researcher's place of study that is Hyderabad, in India, the informants has said that, our grandfather has told to go where you want to but not to India as the people there cheat and be rude to you. Other informants who happened to visit India has narrated that their experiences are unpleasant and unhappy. On top of all these, the people who are migrants from the North India especially from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh are seen to do the business in an exploitative manner, when they sell vegetables or the fruits. In another incident, one person who claims to be from Uttar Pradesh has visited a household where women alone was present. That person insisted on talking to the male members of the family. When the lady asked him what is his purpose of visit as he is new to the locality and could not speak either Nepali or Newari, but very fluent in Hindi. He replied that he is from Uttar Pradesh, he came to Kathmandu with a truckload of bed sheets, but they have lost all the contacts with the person whom they are supposed to deliver the goods. As they ran out of the money, they decided to sell some of the bed sheets for their survival till they get in touch with the customer whom they are supposed to deliver the goods. However, he also insisted that he would not be dealing business issues with a woman. He said '*hamara jag pe aurath bahar aa ke dandha nahi karthi, eh Nepal me poora aurath ka raaj chal ra, aap aapka patni ko bullayi*', (women in my place never come out and deal with men even for business, in this place it looks like everything is run by women and you please call your husband so that I can deal with him). The woman got furious, asked him to leave the place, and vented out her frustration that, they do not want to deal with women here; in that case they should not have come here for business.

Secondly, either the historical, political, and economic reasons fabricated through media or though the general knowledge of people over the generations also has moulded xenophobic tendencies among the Nepalese towards Indian citizens. The general belief of people is that India is trying to control Nepal in all spheres such as politics and economic status of the country is a general reason for the Nepalese to hate India as a nation and its citizens. The Nepalese show the xenophobic tendencies while talking with any Indian

especially from the Northern part of the India. Apart from the personal interaction in the day-to-day life of people, the general national wide opinions, which are popular among the Nepalese, also play key role in shaping the thoughts of people and their approach to Indians. One of such nationwide opinion is that Nepali congress or the Nepal government is controlled by the Indian government, and it dictates the Nepali government's functioning. The treaty signed by the Government of East India Company and Nepal on March 4, 1816, which is Sugauli Treaty and Buddhi Narayan Shrestha expresses that Nepal lost almost one third of its territory on the east, south, and west. Most of Nepal citizens believe that as India gained Independence from British, the lands procured by the British from Nepal should also be given back to the Nepal. The important places such as Darjeeling, Sikkim, Dehradun and many parts of Bihar belonged to Nepal. Hence the Nepal has all the rights to get the land back, however, the mighty Indian government is not giving heed to this demand and in fact some of the political parties and educated youth are running campaign in the name of 'Greater Nepal' to create awareness among the masses. Another important issue Nepalese condemn is the appropriation of Indian State saying that Buddha was born in India. Nepalese see this as a political strategy of the Indian state to attract tourism and to take the credit of Buddha belonging to the India. The Nepalese believe that CBSE textbook of Indian Government, often educates their children that Buddha was born in India. On contrary to this, people in Nepal take this issue very seriously and they participate in the campaign called 'Buddha was born in Nepal'. The placards and banners were displayed in the soccer matches abroad by the Nepali citizens to get wide range of publicity for the campaign. Within the field study, the youth who are part of this campaign often asked the researcher Buddha was born in which country? As Nepal depends on India for most of its economic purpose and the day-to-day commodities, once during the fieldwork, the whole village was on havoc and every household was rushing to buy a salt packet. my co tenants has asked me to buy a salt packet on behalf of them as the shop keeper is rationing it out saying one packet for one house. When asked what is the reason for this havoc in the village? the villagers explained that, the truck drivers in India announced strike against the diesel price hike, and the necessary commodities will be dearer and it is better to buy the salt and other

items in advance in order to avoid paying huge amounts in coming days as per the inflated prices of goods. The villagers also explained another historical experience that once during the regime of prime minister Late Rajiv Gandhi, Nepal voted against India's permanent membership in the UN council and as exercise of teaching a lesson to the Nepal government, Rajiv Gandhi ordered not to allow trucks to enter Nepal for few days. As result, Nepal as a nation has to face the economic turmoil as the household items became dearer and salt¹⁶¹ was one such thing where people could not get easily and hence the shortage of salt has caused much havoc in the society.

These two above mentioned factors such as personal interaction of an individual and as well as general idea of India's mighty supremacy over the small state which is considered as injustice and helplessness of people and leaders as well, might have led to the formation of xenophobic nature and this also had helped to develop hatred on India and its citizens. Though this factor has affected the fieldwork little bit, with thorough rapport building with the villagers, the fieldwork was completed successfully.

Reflexivity of Researcher's Culture and the Studied Culture:

Most of the generalizations made from this study seem to be coming from the reflexivity of the researcher's own culture. Though the training in anthropology by institute was guided not to have any comparison with one's own society, the researcher could not help but compare some of progressive ideas of the community studied have when compared with the researcher's own society. The progressiveness of the community studied was perceived as, freedom the women enjoys in the society, either during the marriage or during the interaction of women with other male members in the society and based on several other observations in the field. Most of the times, the day-to-day experiences of the field has proved that the community's culture and understanding of the social issues, dealing with the problems they face along with others in the society, the group formations and the community's world view was compared with the researchers own society and the

¹⁶¹One should note that salt cannot be produced by Nepal as it is land locked and does not have source of salt production. And Newars as well as some of the Sherpa communities believed to involved themselves in the salt trade in the olden days and they used to buy salt from India and sell it over in the Nepal regions.

studied society. Though it is not acceptable among the anthropological circles, it could not be avoided. In fact, the community was more admired for their culture rather than researcher's society. There are lot of anthropologists who were criticized for their understanding of the studied communities, and for the terms, they have used to describe such as primitive, un-civilized, savage and so on. However, there are very limited studies, which proved what type of impact it shows to admire a community more than researcher's culture.

Awareness Level of the Community and the Researcher's Freedom at Stake:

It is very evident from different scholarly works that, the Newars were subjugated culturally, politically and socially by the shah kings who has conquered the valley by overthrowing the Malla dynasty. The Newars, who did not have choice of escaping, has managed to stay within the Kathmandu valley. However, the Newars faced the constant suppression from the Shah Kings and Rana prime minister. This might have made them to be aware of their own identity and perceiving their culture as greater than the other cultures. Even though if the culture belonged to the rulers of their nation. However, the influx of the acculturation cannot be avoided but the educated youth are more aware of their cultural traits and feel great about it in practicing it. Youth in the village run a group called *hapa pucha*, where they take efforts to organize and educate the people about the Newari culture and importance of preserving it. Along with this group members, and several other villagers has requested the thesis copy to know what has been mentioned in the thesis about them and their village. No matter how much a researcher likes the community he/she is carrying out fieldwork, one should not be hesitant to make note of the discriminatory and exploitative practices such as Caste system. Without mentioning this, work cannot be claimed as holistic study. The question arises is that, how do the villagers (upper caste informants) are going to take and understand the researcher stand on the Caste system?

Not Enough Data from the Lower Caste Groups:

In order to understand the social organization completely, it is very important to take an account of the lower caste version as well. In the study village, the population of the lower caste is minimal. The informants from the lower caste doesn't show much interest to talk to the researcher and those who agreed to give time for the interview, started comparing their life cycle rituals with the rituals conducted by the upper caste of the village, may be as a part of 'Sanskritization' process. Apart from this, the replacement of oral traditions with the written documents from the caste associations is also another factor, which was considered to be challenging.

Appendix II

Thecho Village Jatara

Thecho village *jatara* is one of the main festivals in village. It is believed that Brahamayini and Balkumari are sisters and they have to be given one-day time to talk to themselves, and enjoy their time in their maternal house, as they are busy protecting the village all the time by staying in their respective temples. So on this full moon day they will shift the goddesses to the *pingal*, which is considered as maternal house for both of them. When asked why you call *pingal* their maternal house and can we understand the temples as their affinal houses? Are they married? People do not have an answer for this; they frankly tell that they do not know. However, the villagers strongly believe that Brahamayini protects the *koyelachi* and Balkumari protects the *choyelachi*. It should be noted that each and every village in and around have only one god/goddess as the villager protectors, Sunakoti has Balkumari, Chapagaon has Bajrabarahi, Khokhana has Sikhali, Bungamati has Machhindranath and Badigaon has Swethbharahi. However, Thecho has two goddesses to protect the village. It is evident from the stories or myths in the village that the *koyelachi* was little older than *choyelachi*. Alternatively, *koyelachi* would not have accepted the *choyelachi* as their members and so they might have felt to have other goddess and might have come up with Balkumari. Henceforth Thecho has two goddesses

and the *jatara* is conducted every year for this goddesses. The *jatara* will last for 5 days, earlier it used to be of 7 days.

Once the full moon is approaching, one *guthi* in *choyelachi* which is called as *dyo kanegu guthi*, will go around the village on *dashami* day to inform the gods and goddesses of the village who are situated in different parts of the village that there is going to be *jatara* in the village and they should also participate and make the *jatara* a grand success. They will go with the *pooja* plate and offer *pooja* for idols around the village, with this the villagers can consider that the *jatara* had been started.

For the convenience of explanation, the functions of the *koyelachi* and *choyelachi* are divided separately on each day of the *jatara*.

Chhoyalabhu: First Day of the Jatara

Ho Maye Sya Gu

Koyelachi:

Koyelachi has three *guthis*, each year one *guthi* will take the turn to organize *jatara* and such turn will be called as *jyo pala*. The *jyo pala guthi* will have some responsibilities to take care, for instance, these *guthiyars* are the one who is responsible to carry the palanquin, and stay with the goddess in the night protecting no thieving will takes place. Apart from whoever is *jyo pala*, the three *guthis* need to sacrifice three buffalos for the Brahamayini. The same meat is used to prepare the feast in the coming day. To sacrifice this buffalo they will take the help from the butchering community. On the morning, the *guthiyars* along with the members from the *Shahi* caste group will indulge in sacrificing the buffalo. The buffalos will be clearly marked with piece of chalk to avoid the confusion between *guthiyars* on which buffalo belong to which *guthi*. Once the *guthiyars* decide it is time to sacrifice the buffalo, they will ask the *Shahi* caste group people to carry on with the sacrifice. People will tie the fore-legs and hind legs of the buffalo and with a hammer they hit the buffalo's head hard and they hit it again if they feel like it has to be numbed more. After that, they slit the throat and drain the blood. They pile the

wheat straw on the buffalo and burn it in order to burn the hair on the buffalo skin, it should be noted that no part of the sacrificial animal¹⁶² will go waste including the bones and skin which they will consume. After it is burnt enough to char the hair on the skin, they will mix water with the ash generated out of burning the straw, they will apply to the buffalo body, and they will shave/scratch the skin to peel off the outer layer. After that, the buffalo is cut and the meat is taken to the *guthi* to prepare the necessary items.

Choyelachi:

In the *choyelachi*, only one *Bhairav guthi* does the buffalo sacrifice in front of their *guthi chhen*. The sacrificial method is as same as the *koyelachi*.

On this day, all the *guthiyars* will have feast and discuss what arrangements should be made for the coming days and who should be assigned what type of job and every relevant matter will be thoroughly discussed. This day is considered as the beginning of the Thecho *Jatara*.

Second Day of the *jatara*

Dyo Kwo wayegu

Koyelachi:

The Brahamayini is considered as elder sister to Balkumari. So, it is mandatory that the Brahamayini should start first and go to the *pingal*, and then only the Balkumari will be taken to *pingal* in a palanquin. The palanquin will be brought down and the *jyo pala* will clean the palanquin and *thakali* of the *jyo pala guthi* will bring the Brahamayini and place it in the palanquin. After decorating the palanquin with the ornaments of goddess, they will bring the *ganedyo* which will accompany her till the end of the street and the *ganedyo* will take the responsibility of protecting the village territory assigned for the protection of the Brahamayini temporarily. After a small procession of the palanquin with the musical instruments, the youngsters of the *jyo pala guthi* will carry the palanquin with

¹⁶² Not only sacrificial animal, any animal slaughtered for meat they don't even waste the skin or bones.

great respect and devotion and take it around. The *koyelachi*, people will stand and gather in the *lachi* to see this festivity and they will cheer while the palanquin is taken around the *lachi*. The musical association and *khan baja* will be leading the palanquin procession, followed by the musical instruments and the *ganedyo* palanquin will be carried mostly by children. The youngsters from *jyo pala* will hold traditional torches to which they keep on adding oil in order to keep the fire on, earlier days as there was no electricity they might have used it as a source of light, but it became a practice of ‘cultural survival’. In addition, after going around in the *lachi* including the *chibha* in the *lachi*, the elders will guide them to take it to the *pingal*. The musical instruments will lead the way, *ganedyo* palanquin will be kept at *lachi*, and Brahamayini palanquin will be carried to the *pingal*. On their arrival at the *pingal* the *Khee baja* and other musical instruments will go around the *pingal* thrice and they stand and start playing the music awaiting the arrival of the goddess’ palanquin. On the arrival the members who are carrying the palanquin, they go around the *pingal* thrice and place the palanquin outside and remove the *gajuru* (on top of the palanquin) in order not to break it while placing the palanquin inside, they also remove the bamboos which are used to carry the palanquin. After that the goddess will be placed inside the *pingal* facing north on the side of the *pingal* main gods/goddesses.

Choyelachi:

The *Bhairav guthi* members have to bring the *Bhairav* idol from the *Bhairav guthi chhen* to the *choyelachi* and place it in the *nasa falcha*. This *Bhairav* and other *hatadyos* who will be kept in the *lachi* are believed to protect the territory which is the responsibility of the Balkumari, as she is going to the *pingal* to stay in maternal house and to chat with her elder sister. As the village might fall prey for the evil spirits, the *Bhairav* and *hatadyos* will take the responsibility of protecting the village in absence of the Balkumari temporarily. Before the palanquin or goddess idol is brought down the *jyo pala* will put up the *Elaan* as a ritual shelter for the goddess where they are going to keep the palanquin and decorate her. The *ganedyo guthi* in *choyelachi* will cover Ganesh in the temple with the *mukut*. Though the *guthiyars* say that the Ganesh will act as a protector

with the *mukut*, but since he is also given a relaxation along with the Balkumari from protecting the temple, and the job will temporarily taken over by the *Bhairav* and *hatadyo*.

Balkumari palanquin will be brought down by the *Bhairav guthi* members as this *guthi* has high number of man power, every year these *guthiyars* are assigned this job of bringing down the palanquin and cleaning it. Once the palanquin is ready, the *charhe guthi* mu *thakali* will bring down the goddess idol after offering a rooster as sacrifice and after placing the idol in the palanquin, the ornaments of the goddess which has been kept in the *jyo pala* house will be opened in front of everyone and they start washing the ornaments. They will decorate the ornaments to the goddess and they will decorate the palanquin with flowers and leaves to add colour and beauty to the palanquin. The musical associations come to the *lachi* to render their musical services for the procession. Once the palanquin is ready, they will carry the palanquin as procession and the youth from *jyo pala* and other youth in *choyelachi* will carry the palanquin, go around the *lachi* while the music has been played and the people gathered cheering, they will take the palanquin around the *lachi* several times before the procession starts to the *pingal*. On reaching *pingal* the palanquin carriers will take the palanquin around the *pingal* thrice, while the palanquin will be guided by the musical instruments. While placing the palanquin down, the people applause and cheer on their successful completion of the task without hurdles, and later the bamboos which were used to carry the palanquin are removed and they place the palanquin in the *pingal* right behind the *pingal* main gods/goddess.

The youngsters who are carrying the palanquin has been wearing a red apron with the Brahamayini *ma ki jai* or Balkumari *ma ki jai*, this is a new phenomenon may be adopted from the other villages. Similar kind of showing themselves as the palanquin carriers can be understood as the new identity establishment.

In case of any death in the village, the whole village will be halted and the family will be given one day time to finish all the death rituals, which they are supposed to finish within 12 days. It is believed that when the village is in *chipa* the *jatara* should not takes place. If any household is mourning their dead members, whom they had lost before a

week should come out of this *chipa* before the *jatara* commence by finishing all the death rituals they ought to do within this 12 days.

The Story behind Which Goddess Should Receive the First Offerings:

It is widely believed that, the *choyelachi* and *koyelachi* were constantly fighting each other in the olden days, and now also we can see the *koyelachi* people never associate themselves with the *choyelachi* people and vice versa. It is only during the village processions or when it comes to associating themselves they practice this, but they can marry from any part of the village unless it is not coming in conflict with the marriage rules. The geographical affiliation and the affiliation towards the goddess Balkumari for the *choyelachi* and Brahamayini for the *koyelachi* people are high. It is believed that during *jatara punhi*, these two sisters were allowed in isolation to talk and spend time and they will be taken back to their *dyo chhen* after the *punhi*. *Pingal* is considered as maternal house of these two goddesses. However, during *jatara* the Balkumari is always placed right behind the *pingal* (which is again series of stones which are considered as the *pingal dyo*), and Balkumari is placed facing west and Brahamayini is placed facing north. When asked why does, the *koye* goddess is placed in *choye* and *choye* goddess is placed in *koye*, the villagers who do not know the story behind this and generally answer that as this goddesses protect the two parts of the village which they belong to, on this day they are expected to bless the people from the opposite parts of the village. When asked the following question, why the sacrifice does is done to Balkumari and just blood is shown to the Brahamayini? Moreover, why does the first offering is given to the Balkumari but not the elder sister Brahamayini? The informants were unable to answer. Later only 90 year old informant has revealed the secret behind this practice during the *jatara*. The informant has narrated a story, that the *koyelachi* and *choyelachi* always used to fight, demanding that their goddess should get the first offering in the *jatara* and the place should be right behind the *pingal dyo*. The *koyelachi* people used to claim that the *pingal* was constructed by the *Gopali* sisters who belong to the *koyelachi* so the goddess of *koyelachi* should get the first preference in worshipping and the place behind the *pingal dyo*. In counter to that, the *choyelachi* people used to claim that the *pingal* is in

choyelachi so the first preference of worshipping should go to the *choyelachi* goddess. As the intensity of the fight reached its peaks, they decided to resolve this issue by approaching the king and decided that they will stick to the judgement of the king and abide by his words. The *koyelachi* people in huge numbers have reached the Hanumandhoka and *choyelachi* people though started in huge numbers they were lazy and dropped back in certain parts on the way to reach Hanumandhoka. The *koyelachi* people were certain that the king will be influenced by the numerical domination and the verdict will be given on their favour. After listening to the plea of these two groups, the king wanted to be on safe side as this involves his skills to resolve the issue and given a wrong judgement, he will be subjected to the wrath of the goddesses themselves. Therefore, the king came up with an idea to resolve this issue, and he ordered the workers to bring two pieces of sugar cane and hand it over to the two groups and said that whoever reaches the *pingal* first and tie it to the *pingal* their goddess will get the first preference of worshipping in the *jatara* henceforth. So the two groups were forced to enter the race, the two groups have started back to the village in a run, but as all the people from *koyelachi* have started together they started getting tired on the way, but the laziness showed by the *choyelachi* to reach the hanuman dhoka came in handy to the *choyelachi* people and they started handing over the piece of sugar cane which they are supposed to tie it to the *pingal* to the group of people who have stopped on the way and they took the race and passed it on to the other groups who stayed back on the way, so the *choyelachi* managed to win the race by tying the sugar cane to the *pingal* and henceforth the Balkumari is worshipped first in the *jatara* and her palanquin is placed right behind the *pingal dyo* and Brahamayini had to be put in the side of the *pingal dyo*. The king should have ordered them to take turns and worship the goddesses first on alternative *jataras*. In order to not to disappoint any group, the king has sowed the seed of hatred in between these two groups, and though the people were forced to social amnesia and forgot the reason for the hatred, they remembered the hatred well enough creating the rift between these two groups. The seven goats were offered by the *guthis* from *choyelachi*¹⁶³,

¹⁶³ It is again wrongly believed by the people of Thecho that the seven goats' sacrifice which is one of the main events in celebrating the *jatara* has been offered by the seven major *guthis*. Whereas, these seven

the *guthis* which has the obligation to offer a sacrifice are, *charhe gu*, *pune gu*, *paru gu*, *ta: gu*, *moosa gu* and *Hom Gu*.

Third Day of the Jatara

Pingale Soye Gu

After placing the palanquins in the *pingal*, the villagers light bonfires in their respective toles, in *lachis* and *pingal*, for the light and warmth. Some small *guthis* have the obligation to light the bonfire but some individuals who do not have obligation also will do it. The individual families who want to light the lamps in front of the goddesses after placing them in the *pingal* will come to the *pingal* and light the lamps.

After placing the palanquins in the *pingal*, the *palas* of the *jyo pala guthis* of the *koyelachi* and *choyelachi* should stay with the palanquins and goddesses as a guard, the *pala*' sons or grandsons may also stay to accompany the *pala*, they will light a bonfire in order to provide light and warmth from the coldness. In the morning who ever want to offer a sacrifice they will come with rooster and *pooja* plate to offer worship to the goddesses. The *hom* (ritual fire) will be built in front of the *pingal* and the representatives from *koyelachi* are the *jyo palas mu thakali* and the *choyelachi* is represented by the *acha*. The *guthis* such as *charhe gu*, *pune gu*, *paru gu*, *ta: gu*, *moosa gu* and *hom gu* should offer *nya bhali* (seven goat sacrifice), this is one of the main offering to the goddess Balkumari. The above mentioned *guthis* will sponsor one goat each to sacrifice, the *pala* who is responsible for sacrificing the goats will keep grains in the mouth of the goats and pour water as they should be made ritually pure, after that they will wait for the permission of the goat by shaking its head and body then the first one to shake will get sacrificed first. From the second goat the slitting of throat is done in front of the Balkumari (symbolically the sacrifice is for Balkumari) and the blood of little bit will also be offered to the Brahamayini. All the goats need to give permission before they get sacrificed. Some goats will not shake their head and give the permission so the people

sacrifices offered by the *guthis* in *choyelachi* itself.

have to wait. In the process of taking the permission, they will put grains or something else in the ears of the goat and pour water in it in order to make it shake its head and it will be understood as given permission to sacrifice.

Before commencement of the feast, the *manka khala* will come with the *lan: swa* (though this is a leaf it is considered as flower, *swa* in Newari means flower) and musical instruments. It is considered as this association should come with the offering of the *lan: swa* to the goddesses. The male members and teenagers will play the musical instruments and carry the *lan: swa* and the women will carry the *pooja* offerings and come as a procession to the *pingal*. They offer the *pooja* and *lan: swa* to the *pingal* and the palanquins of the goddesses.

Koyelachi:

The musical associations will offer the *pooja* for the *nasa dyo*, only one musical association has offered *pooja* during the field study. The members of musical association came with instruments and *pooja* items, the *pooja* items mainly comprise egg and rooster for sacrifice. The egg was little broken by the members and the yolk and albumen were kept in a bowl and empty eggshells were kept at the *nasa dyo*. They worshipped the *nasa dyo* by offering flowers and rice grains and also offering sacrifice of rooster. Then they started playing the musical instrument and they have accompanied the *kona guthi* feast procession. Three *guthis* in *koyelachi* will come with their own feast procession, which mainly consists of the traditional religious items and traditional brass pots, *pooja* plate to offer to the goddess, goats to sacrifice for the Brahamayini. Among the three, the first one to shake the head and give permission will be sacrificed first. Its head and intestines and legs will be thrown in the *hom* (ritual fire built in front of the *pingal*) which is supposed to be eaten by the *acha* who will be fasting from morning and will eat the meat from head and intestines to break his fast. The first sacrificed goat's blood will not be offered to the Brahamayini, The *guthi thakalis* will bring traditional religious items peculiar to the *guthi*, and the number of the traditional items varies from *guthi* to other. The *khan guthi* within the *guthi* will provide the musical services and lead them the feast procession to the *pingal*. All the *guthis* will have their musical instruments such as *kheen* and *ta ta*,

which are traditionally owned by all the *guthis*. On their arrival, the *guthiyars* will have feast. The *pala* and *mu bhalin* and *bhalins* will take the responsibility of preparing and bringing the food items and serving the feast for the *guthiyars*. The *pala*' *mhyay macha* has to prepare an extra dish or a sweet to offer to the each *guthiyar*. The *Nhesguthi mu thakalis* will be offered *to:* and it should not be seen by others, in order to cover the view for the outsiders the *guthiyars* will hold the bed-sheet or a big cloth around. The extra plates for the religious things will also be kept and the food items are also served equally to these extra plates meant for the religious items, gods and goddesses. The separate plate will be kept for all the *guthiyars* irrespective of whether they are present or not for the feast, the absentee plates should also be served with food items without any discrimination. The new *thakalis mhyay macha* will come with extra cuisine or sweet items to offer to the *guthiyars* and as a respect towards him on the occasion of their relative joining the *thakali* group. The feast will be a lot excess quantity, so generally all the members will take the feast home. The *mhyay macha* who brought food will be allowed to have the feast as they have taken pain to bring an item to make the feast rich and grand.

Choyelachi:

After the sacrifice of the seven goats, the *guthis* will assemble and sit in the allotted places for them. Each *guthi* has particular number of the *mu thakalis* who will sit in the order of their age wise. The feast will be served by the *guthi pala* and *bhalins*. Only *guthiyars* are allowed to participate in the feast in all the *guthis* except the *charhe guthi*. The unmarried sons and married but not separated sons can also participate in this *guthi* feast. This is the only *guthi*, which allows the sons and the grandsons to sit in the feast. This is because; the sons and grandsons will also help the *guthi* to render its responsibilities during the *charhe pala: ta:*. Therefore, the *guthiyars* thought that it is fit to allow them to participate in the feast and as it is only one day they allow them to participate, it is a symbol of honour.

After finishing the feast the *thakalis* of the *koyelachi guthis* will carry the religious items with care, a person will also help them to carry the items as they are old

and they might have got drunk with the liquor, which is of the ritual offering in the *guthi* feast. Since, the religious items should not be dropped down. the assistants will be there to take care of them while the procession heads back to the *lachi*.

Post festival festivity:

Koyelachi:

The youngsters prepare the palanquin by decorating it with *lan: swa* and the *khen baja* will lead the procession followed by the musical associations. The palanquin is carried to the *lachi* and placed it in the *laskuti falcha* where they have placed the Ganesh palanquin before Brahamayini goes to the *pingal*. The *thakalis* of the three *guthis* carrying the traditional religious items of the *guthi* will take that inside *guthi chhen*, after the *pala* wife has worshipped it. Before the *thakalis* reach the *guthi chhen*, the *guthi chhen* will be plastered with the cow dung in order to purify it. The *guthiyars* will offer garland with the popped rice, which made as a long necklaces a symbol of auspiciousness to all the *guthiyars* and *thakalis*. As the religious items have been exposed outside, to chase away the evil eye and spirits they perform this worship. In a kind, it resembles the worship done during the *ma pooja* and while receiving the new bride to the home for the first time. They offer lamp and a place for each religious item, which belongs to the *guthi*, and worship it with utmost devotion before it has been taken inside the *guthi chhen*. The *pala's* wife or mother will take away their evil spirits with the tradition-measuring jar. Other person assists the *pala's* wife by putting grains and flowers in this traditional measuring jar as she offers these rice (grains) and flowers for three times. During the third time the people around will ask her to dance and she will just turn around and offers this grains and flowers for the third time. After worshipping the traditional musical instruments and *khen baja* will provide its musical services during the religious items were taken inside.

Navadurga Procession:

Once the Brahamayini palanquin is placed in the *laskuti falcha*, and *guthiyars* take their religious items inside, the Navadurga *guthiyars* are ready for the procession they will

invite the *manka khala* for three times to come and render their musical services. Without *mankha khala* the Navadurga mask dancers are not supposed to come out so they extend their invitation for the *manka khala* to come and render their musical services. While the *mankha khala* and other musical associations provide their musical services, the Navadurga comes out, once they assemble in the Navadurga *dyo chhen nani* they will dance for some time, and then the procession starts out. When the procession comes out it is believed that no one should cross in front of them. Therefore, the villagers will stand on the road side to see these mask dancers and seek blessings from them by touching their hands to the foreheads. The mask dancers will be accompanied by the *pomis* who acts as a guide to the mask dancers. They will come as a procession till the place where the palanquin has been kept and the mask dancers who are god/goddesses will worship Brahamayini and go as a procession to the *choyelachi* in order to worship Balkumari.

After the Navadurga worships the Brahamayini, villagers will take the palanquin and go as a procession around the *koyelachi*. The villagers who want to offer sacrifice and the *guthis* who has to offer sacrifice will offer the *pooja* for the goddess. After a big procession of carrying palanquin, there are youth fighting for a chance to carry the palanquin. the villagers distributing, the *to:* and *aila* for the palanquin carriers and the viewers on the road, it is definitely a feast for eyes to see such carnival where people participate with joy and show full energy to be part of this carnival.

Choyelachi:

On the other hand, once the *koyelachi* palanquin was taken as procession to place it in the *laskuti falcha*, the *choyelachi* youngsters and *guthiyars* will start decorating the palanquin of the Balkumari goddess and they will start the procession the moment they get the news that the Brahamayini palanquin has reached the *laskuti falcha*. Unlike the Brahamayini palanquin where the going around the village will happen with a small gap after the *koyelachi guthi thakalis* take the religious items in to the *guthi chhen*, the procession to go around the village for the Balkumari starts from the *pingal*. The *guthis*, which are supposed to give the sacrifice for the Balkumari, will offer sacrifice at the respective places allotted for them mostly near the *falchas* by the *falcha guthis*. On reaching the

choyelachi, the palanquin will be carried around the *lachi* for several times before placing the goddess facing the temple.

The Navadurga gods/goddesses will come as procession after receiving *pooja* and offerings from the villagers and will reach the *choyelachi*. All the mask dancers will pass through the Balkumari palanquin and only Balkumari mask dancer will slightly raise his mask and touches the mask to the Balkumari idol, this particular part of the festival which is called ‘Balkumari seeking blessings from the Balkumari’ is viewed by the people with great anxiety. They cheer and play music during this moment. After this event, the Navadurga procession goes back to the *koyelachi*. By this time, the palanquin of the goddess Brahamayini would have reached the *koyelachi* and placed at the *lachi*. the goddess will be facing south i.e., the goddess will be facing opposite to the temple and also it is placed in this position as the Navadurga dancers have to dance in front of the Navadurga and Brahamayini.

By the time the Navadurga reaches the *koyelachi*, the small portable temple like structure will be ready to place the main goddess. Once the main goddess is placed, the *naikis* will offer flowers/grains and water each gods/goddesses including the musical instruments. A duck will be brought and sprinkled water and fed some grains for it and they will wait for the permission of the duck, and once the duck shakes its head and flapping its feather gives the permission, then the *naikis* will catch the duck, slit its throat, and offer the blood to the one of the mask dancer. The dancer literally drinks the blood oozing from the duck’s throat, once the blood is over the head will be completely cut off and placed in front of the main goddess. A buffalo is brought and its legs tied made its head forcefully bent and a *Shahi* caste person helps the *guthiyars* to sacrifice the buffalo. This sacrifice is specially known as *gaon* method of sacrificing. The buffalo’s skin on the neck is sliced off, and a large nerve is dragged out and after taking the nerve completely out but still attached to the buffalo, they cut the nerve in a small manner allowing the nerve to ooze the blood. The blood is sprinkled on the main goddess, and all the gods/goddesses are invited to taste the blood as an offering to them. The mask dancers literally drink the blood by raising their mask. After the sacrifice, the mask dancers take

their respective position and dance according to the music on their turn. After the dance, the mask dancers will disperse and go back to the *dyo chhen*.

The palanquin of the Brahamayini will be kept outside the temple in the *lachi*, waiting for the Navadurga dance to finish the next day. The *guthi pala* of the *jyo pala* will sit there as guard for the palanquin whole night, he will be accompanied by the sons and grandsons and his friends too. On the other hand, the *choyelachi* Balkumari palanquin will be carried from the place where the Balkumari mask dancer had taken blessings from the Balkumari and they will take it around the *lachi* for several times. The people of the *lachi* witness this palanquin carrying with great joy and enthusiasm, they place the palanquin in place where it has been plastered by the cow dung and protected by a *guthi*, from no one stepping on it. After sometime the youngsters will take the palanquin and carry it around the *lachi* for several times and finally they take the palanquin inside the temple and keep in the *falcha* right below the temple. The *thakalis* or *pala* will dissemble the palanquin, and bring the goddess and other gods/goddesses who were with the Balkumari throughout the procession and worshipping will be placed facing south without palanquin. The *mu thakalis* of the *jyo pala guthi* in the *choyelachi* will sit there, as guards, and the sons and grandsons will provide blankets and arrange straw for them to lean towards the wall and build fire for them in order to spear them the winter chillness.

Fourth day of the Jatara

Nihi Pheyka (Dance by Navadurga Mask Dancers)

Nya Pheyka:

A full day dance is called *nya pheyka*, and is performed by Navadurga mask dancers. It is believed that they should perform the dance whole night and whole day, but the mask dancers will take gap in the night and start the dance in morning. The *goshi guthis* build fire in order to keep the place warm for the goddess, as they dance with bear feet and it is peak winter season. These *goshi guthis* will also distribute *samaybaji* for the people in the *lachi*. Before the dance commences, people will light the lamps in front of goddess. The

dancers assemble and start dance, which has inner meaning. After performing dance whole day, the mask dancer will again disperse after sacrificing a buffalo for the goddess.

Taking the Brahamayini Goddess Upstairs:

Once the dancers disperse, the *jyopala* will extend the invitation to the *mankha khala* to come and render their musical services for taking the goddess and palanquin into the temple. On their invitation, the *mankha khala* will come with *sindhur* and their musical instruments. In the meantime, the members start dissembling the palanquin and the *pala* of the *jyo pala* will offer *sindhur* and flowers to the mu *thakalis* of all the three *guthis*. The *mankha khala* also offers *sindhur* and flowers to the mu *thakalis* as a symbol of request, and in the presence of the mu *thakalis* they will dissemble the palanquin and keep it in the bamboo basket. The *mankha khala* plays music for people who will dance with joy and they send the palanquin upper part with the help of bamboo to the upstairs of the temple. The goddess and other small gods/goddesses, who are kept at the palanquin, will be kept at the temple *falcha* on the place where it had been plastered with cow' dung. The *mankha khala* will apply *sindhur* to everyone in the *lachi* and with great amusement and cheering; they take the palanquin back to the temple. The goddess kept at the temple *falcha* will be washed out of the *sindhur*, which had been applied earlier. On taking back the goddess to sanctum sanctorum, they apply the *sindhur* again.

Nani pooja:

After sending the goddess to temple, it will be approximately 3 AM in the morning and the *guthiyars* will proceed to arrange for the *nani pooja*. *Nani* is a courtyard, worshipping this courtyard is peculiar to the *koyelachi*, in *koyelachi* the *nhesguthi* performs the *nani pooja* in secrecy. Mu: *guthi'* and *kona guthi'* *nani pooja* is open for the people who want to witness. People believe that the *nani pooja* is performed as it is the place where Shiva hid himself when a demon tried to place his hand on the Shiva' head after getting the boon from the Shiva that, whomsoever should incinerate if he happens to keep his hand on their head. By getting the boon from the Shiva, he wants to start with Shiva to check whether the boon is working or not, and in order to escape from him, Shiva hid himself in

the *nani*, so the *guthiyars* worship the Shiva on the occasion of *jatara*. Why *nani pooja* is celebrated only in *koyelachi* and why not in *choyelachi* is an unanswered question.

All the three *guthis* have particular *nani* for their *guthi chhen*, the *nanis* are plastered with cow dung, where they are going to place and worship the *guthi*' religious items. The *pooja* preparation is done by the *guthi pala*, and religious items should be carried and brought by the *mu: thakalis* of the *guthi*. In the case of *kona guthi* the items consists of *patha khola*, and *moosa*, were brought down by the *Mu thakalis* and placed there to worship and they sit by leaning to the wall. The *pala* and his wife offer *pooja* to these items and *nani* is also worshipped, and they have to offer *katto* for the *thakalis* in the *patha khola*, which is believed to be a human skull shielded with the metal. It is also believed that the year after the *baraha baras mela*, a *patha khola* will come from Navadurga *guthi* to *kona guthi* and the *kona guthi* will have it for one year and then return back to the Navadurga *guthi*. It is believed that the human sacrifice happens at *baraha baras mela*, that particular fresh human skull is used for this ritual process of offering *katto* for the *thakalis* in this bowl. *Nhesguthi nani pooja* happens in secrecy but the *guthiyar* had said that they will also offer *katto* to the *mu thakalis* but the *guthiyar* also told that they have many *patha kholas*, the offering of *katto* for the first time in the *guthi* is done by using many *patha kholas* and as the other *thakalis* should not know from which *patha khola* others have drank, they give this *katto* in absolute secrecy even between the *thakalis* by keeping a cloth in between them. But when the offering happens in the *nani* they will give with only one *patha khola*. To maintain the secrecy of the *nani pooja*, the *guthiyars* will ask the households in the *nani* to shut the door and not so see the *pooja* and two *guthiyars* will be posted as guards to see to that no stranger (non-*guthiyar*) comes through that way where this *nani pooja* is happening.

Mu guthi allows people to witness the *nani pooja*, the place where the *thakalis* sit and the *guthi* religious items should be kept will be plastered, and *suku cha* will be laid for the *thakalis* to sit. The *thakalis* will be given fire pots to save themselves from the cold as this happens in the early morning in the peak winter season. Once the place is plastered, while music of *khen baja* and traditional drum of the *guthi* is played, the

thakalis will come with these *guthi* religious items, and each *thakali* will be assigned with the responsibility of carrying the particular traditional item based on their seniority. The items mainly include *patha khola*, lamp, and the bag, which contains *shi phanga*. The items are kept on the place where it has been plastered with cow dung. The *pala* and other *guthiyars* including the wife of the *pala* and other women relatives of the *guthi* members will prepare the necessary arrangements for worshipping the religious items. Once the *pooja* is offered to the religious items, they will offer the respect to the *mu thakalis* of the *guthi*. Once the *pooja* process is over the *mu thakalis* will take back the items, which are considered as gods/goddesses safely as a procession into the *guthi chhen*, and the musical instruments of the *khan baja* of the *khan guthi* and other musical instruments of the *guthi* will be played as the procession goes to the *mu: guthi chhen*.

Fifth day of the Jatara

Bhailaju Nayeugu (Sending back Bhairav)

The festivity shifts from *koyelachi* to the *choyelachi*, *Bhairav guthi* plays a key role in this fifth day, the day is also called as *bhailaju jatara*. The coming *pala* will come up with a *pooja* plate for the *Bhairav*, the *guthiyars* will go to the *pala* house with the musical association to accompany him when he is coming with the *pooja* plate. The *ex-pala* (outgoing *pala*) will also bring the *pooja* plate to offer worship for the *bhailaju dyo*.

Once the *pala* came with *pooja* plate, the *guthiyars* will start to the *lachi* to worship the *bhailaju dyo* and send *Balkumari* back to the temple. Apart from the *Bhairav guthi* members, the *mankha khala* will also, come with its musical instruments to render their services during *Balkumari* is sent up to the temple. Unlike *koyelachi*, where the *jyo pala* has to extend his invitation for the *mankha khala* to come and render their services, in the case of *choyelachi* they no need to extend any invitation but the *mankha khala* will come voluntarily to render musical services while the goddess is taken back into the temple. On their arrival, they will offer *lan swa* to the *mu thakalis* who had sat whole night as guard for the goddess. Moreover, they start playing music and people join them by dancing and cheering. Other musical associations also come to *lachi* to participate in

the *jatara*. The women from *mankha khala* and *choyelachi* will come with *pooja* plate in traditional attire and offer prayers in the *choyelachi* to all the gods and goddesses. After a period while the *khan baja* is playing music, *mankha khala* applying *sindhur* and dancing and other musical associations playing the *dhemme* while people are dancing with joy, the goddess is taken inside temple. The *Bhairav* is taken as a procession in a palanquin as his job of acting as a protector in the absence of Balkumari is finished and he will be taken back to the *Bhairav guthi chhen*. The musical groups including *mankha khala* lead the procession. The flute played by teenagers is a centre of attraction for the procession, followed by the row of women in the traditional dress generally from the *Bhairav guthi*, who sprinkle the flowers and grains throughout the way as symbol of inviting the god back to the temple. The palanquin where *Bhairav* is kept is carried and followed by *mu thakalis* of the *bhairav guthi* and other *guthiyars* along with the villagers who are participating in the procession. On the arrival at the temple site, they will play music, dance with joy, cheer, sprinkle, and apply *sindhur* to each other, and then the *Bhairav* goddess is taken inside the temple. After this, the *mankha khala* will go as procession throughout the village by playing flute and other musical instruments.

Sixth day of the Jatara

Choyelachi:

On sixth day morning, in the presence of all the *majos* and *thakalis* of the four *guthis*, they sit and expose the Balkumari *raj guthi* properties and ornaments, and they will calculate the items and see if they are there as per the previous year. Once everything is correct, they will keep it in the box and lock it and the key will be given to the four *guthis*. And the box will be kept in the responsibility of the next *jyo pala guthi' pala* house. In case if something is missing the *jyo pala guthi* should take the responsibility of those missing items in deed, it will be the responsibility of the *guthi pala* in whose house the box had been kept for the whole year. The ex *jyo pala guthi* should arrange for making new item to replace the lost item.

Koyelachi:

The same above process of exposing and counting the items of the goddess will be done in the afternoon. After this, the *guthis* will go for shifting the *guthi* items from the outgoing *guthi pala* house to the new *guthi pala* house. The three *guthis* in *koyelachi* have different ways of organizing the procession of transferring the *guthi* items for the next *pala's* house. The three *guthi' mu thakalis* will bring the items from the respective *guthi chhens* and take it to the *nani* where they have done *nani pooja*. *Nhesguthi* allows this *nani pooja* to be seen by others whereas the first *nani pooja* was done in secrecy. The *nani* will be plastered with cow dung, the items brought by the *thakalis* will be placed on the plastered floor, and the women from the respective *guthis* will come in traditional attire, offer prayers to these items, and respect the *thakalis* by applying *sindhur* and offering flowers to them. Once the worshipping of items is over, the next *pala* house members will lay a cloth on the road as these items are very pure and has high ritual value and they believe that walking on the normal road will bring impurity to them. From *nani* to the next *pala* house the cloth is laid. The *thakalis* carrying the *guthi* items, and the other items such as barbeque fork (very big one), a big brass vessel, had to be carried by two other *guthiyars* from the *guthi*. *Mu: guthi* carries the *shi phanga*, unlike *mu: guthi* the other two *guthis* in *koyelachi* carry a piece of wood which had been split till half and small wood is kept to make it easy for hanging in front of the house of the *pala*. The wood is also worshipped by placing in the *nani* hole by the *nhesguthi* and *kona guthi*. However, the members of *mu: guthi* worship no wood.

Before they reach house of the *pala*, the members of the *pala's* house will plaster the courtyard of their house. On the arrival of the *guthiyars* with these items, they will be asked to be seated, and each and every item is worshipped and by using the traditional measuring jar, they offer grains and flowers three times on each and every item or on the *thakali* who is carrying it. After worshipping all the items, the *thakalis* will be guided upstairs and asked to put the items in the prayer room, *dhuku kota*. The place where the Newars generally keep their gods/goddesses and it is believed that the house has to offer lamp every day and they need to maintain purity while these items are there in their

house. The *guthi* items kept in the *dhuku kota* are not to be touched by any of the family member including *pala*. In case of any death within the *guthi* the *thakali* members have to come and give the *shi phanga* from the *guthi* items. One of the *guthiyar* felt that taking *palaship* and bringing these items to the house brings the prosperity. Another *guthiyar* had narrated a story, how one *pala* who had two houses had kept the items in house where they were not staying and how he used to neglect the ritual procedures. As a result, he was stuck with bad luck. Despite of being very wealthy, he came to the position of not even having enough money to eat. Then he consulted *bairi* and when *bairi* had told what mistake he did, he shifted to the house where these items have been kept. He worshipped them with utmost respect and devotion and then he was restored to his previous financial condition. It is popularly believed that taking *palaship* will change their lives, their long time sufferings will be relieved, and they will be so happy after taking the *palaship*. The *shi phanga*, which they have in house, should be considered as most important of all the *guthi* items. It is also believed that, it gives some signals whenever some death happens and whenever it is supposed to be used. Two informants have narrated their experiences with this particular *shi phanga*. Once *guthiyar*' wife had told that how this *shi phanga* used to flap though there was no air at all, and the family members were worried that why this sounds are coming. The next day morning, a family member of the death house came to inform about the death, then the *pala* family members felt that this is because the *shi phanga* was flapping on its own. Another informant told that unusual things happen when there is going to be a death incident within the *guthi*. When they were *pala*, the *to:* rice beer will never brew and fall out but whenever a death is about to happen and this *shi phanga* had to be brought out.

The *kona guthi* on the other hand take the *guthi* items without any cloth spread on the road while walking with the *guthi* items to the next *pala* house. On the arrival of the *thakalis*, the *pala*' house women had invited them by offering the *pooja* for this items and people generally ask this women who is doing *pooja* to dance and invite these items into the house with joy. The wood is hung in front of the house, the other *guthiyar* told that the wood will be used for the first death after the four days from that date. If someone dies before this four days this wood would not be used, and after four days the first death

gets the chance to be burned by using this wood, which is considered as lucky thing. Nevertheless, the *nhesguthi*, which also had the tradition of worshipping the wood, will burn the wood only after a year on the same day.

Appendix III

Inter-Caste and Inter-Community Marriage:

Newars are considered as an ethnic community. However, the Newars are again subdivided into different caste groups. One of the methods adopted for preserving caste purity by different caste groups is marrying within the caste. Traditionally, if anyone does inter-caste marriage and if the girl belongs to the lower caste, the progeny of such union not allowed entering into the *guthi*, resulting in excommunication of the offspring after the demise of the father who had inter-caste marriage. However, the modernity and education has its own influence on the perceptions of the inter-caste marriage in the modern days. The *guthis* are not following this rule of excommunicating the progeny of inter-caste marriage union. Though the endogamy is a method to preserve the caste purity, it is also a way to elevate ones social status if the man happens to marry upper caste group girl. Her parents do not accept the girls who happen to marry the lower caste boys in the village but she is well respected by the boy's family and caste (see table 38).

Inter-community marriages are also very rare (see table 39), as the Newars feel that their culture is unique and it is quite tough for someone to be adjusted into other cultures. However, the youth and educated feel that there should not be any such restrictions in the name of caste and community, if both the partners understand each other they should get married.

Table 38: Inter-Caste Marriage among the Study Area

Caste Group	Number of boys Married to	
	Lower caste girls	Higher caste girls
<i>Gopali</i>	-	-
<i>Maharjan</i>	3	7
<i>Mali</i>	-	12
<i>Napit</i>	-	-
<i>Shahi</i>	-	1
<i>Kapali</i>	-	1

Table 39: Inter-Community Marriage among the Study Area

Caste Group	Number of Inter-community Marriage
<i>Gopali</i>	-
<i>Maharjan</i>	11
<i>Mali</i>	09
<i>Napit</i>	-
<i>Shahi</i>	-
<i>Kapali</i>	01

Divorce, Widowhood and Remarriage:

Gopal Singh Nepali says the Newari women can divorce their husbands just by placing four betel nuts on the bed and walk away (1965). However, in the modern context, divorce is not desirable. If any couple wants to get a divorce, they are following the modern divorce procedures as prescribed by the Nepal legislature.

Widowhood followed by wife immolating herself on the pyre of the husband was handled by the Newars through the ritual called *barha kunegu* or *bel vivah*¹⁶⁴. This is where all the Newari girls should undergo a mock marriage with Narayana (Vishnu) in the form of the sun while Shiva bears witness in the form of *bel* fruit. Once the Newari girls are married to the sun that is immortal, the Newari girl can never become widow theoretically after marrying the mortal man as a husband. However once the woman lost her husband, she is prohibited from wearing red coloured dress and applying red *Sindhur*. In addition, she is expected to not to be active in auspicious ceremonies which takes place in the family. If she is too young and does not have children, she is relatively free to marry someone. However, the widowhood does not affect man as it does the woman. A man is free to marry and to be active in the auspicious function though he is a widower.

Women who are widows, who are subjected to such social restriction about participating in the auspicious rituals, wearing red dress, and applying red *Sindhur* will be relieved from the widowhood, the moment they celebrate their *janku*, an initiation

¹⁶⁴ See the section of *Barah Kuni* for detail mythology behind this practice of mock marriage.

ceremony marking, a person has crossed the 77 years of her age. The *janku* celebration elevates a person from human to god, and the gods cannot be affected by widowhood.

In Thecho, the certain male has two wives, and two men have practiced serial monogamy for more than four times. However, there are certain men who are separated from their wives after their marriage. If a woman likes some other man, and she elopes with him by leaving the husband and lives with him for four days, it is considered that the marriage is broken between both of them and woman is considered as wife of the other person.

Appendix IV

Necessary Things Required for Funeral Rites:

- Green or dried bamboo (*Nwo*)
- *Moosa* (Traditional lamp holder)
- *Chika Thala Thapa* (Traditional oil pot)
- 3 sun baked bricks (*Kachav Dapa*)
- *Gwali* (wheat straw) 2 bundles
- *Su* (Paddy straw) 3 bundles
- Small bamboo inner part which is called Thee:
- New or old mud pot (*Gop Cha*)
- *Tufi* (broom Stick) new one
- *Pajo* (two mud pots one for making fire out of the cow dung cakes and another for making *Pakha Ja*)
- *Pulicha* (bamboo mat)
- Cow Dung cakes and cow dung to plaster the place where the dead is body kept for rest before carrying forward to the crematory ground.

Necessary Items for the Rite on Ghassu or Twelfth Day:

- Three raw bricks or sun burnt bricks- *Kachyu Aapa*
- *Tacho* (a kind of wheat, generally the wheat is referred as chow, and they add prefix for this ta for this species)
- Sesam- *Hamo* (*Tachow* and *Hamo* combined one *Mana*)
- *Pooja Jwalla*
- *Jhaki*
- Flowers (*Sinnae Swa*)
- *Sinnha* (*Sindhur*) both turmeric and vermilion combined called as *Sinnha*
- *Dhoo Dhaae*- incense sticks and the rope made one (2 different types of incense sticks)
- Coins
- Butter (*Gyae*) small amount 50 Gms may be
- Thread (ritual thread) which is referred as *Jajanka*
- *Goja*- *Chibhas* made out of rice flour.
- *Tay*: - Popped paddy (husked popped paddy)
- *Astha Sugandha* (ready made available in shops)
- Rhino Meat (very tiny piece) *Gya Dayu* la.
- One *Salicha* of Cow milk (*Sa Dhuru*)
- One *Salicha* or water
- Water in a pot
- *Pal Swa* (lotus flower)

Appendix V

A notification of expulsion from shree Balkumari Mandir:

Shree Balkumari ma: ki jai

Nepal sambat 1133 yaela ga paru

Date: 2070/06/04

Notification of Expulsion

If any of the members of the Balkumari *raj guthi* dies, to cremate those dead bodies, *guthis* called *hyanmu khwa* and *mhasu khwa*, commonly called as *goan guthi*, having 10 members each were formed in the past in Thecho. Also the system of taking *pala* used to change in *yayya punhi*, and XXXXX *Maharjan* grandson of XXXXX *Maharjan*, son of XXXXX *Maharajan*, living in malligaon tole, ward no.1, did not take the *pala* as per the norm, so on the day of *yayya punhi* 1133 (third *asoj* 2070) the *majos* of four *guthis*, members of *mhasu khwa guthi* and the respected members of the society gathered together and concluded that XXXXX *Maharajan* and his generation has been expelled from the society. This notice is to notify all the people of Thecho that XXXXX *Maharjan* went against the tradition, so his sons, unmarried daughters, wife, grandchildren, great grandchildren will not be cremated in the coming days. They will also not to be allowed to enter any *guthi*, any social works, in the feast of 12 year Navadurga *jatara* and in any feast conducted in the society.

Shree Balkumari *mandhir*

Appendix VI

In Thecho, there are more than 20 stone inscriptions, which will give us an account of history of village and perception of religion, and caste. These inscriptions gives us an idea why the *guthis* had to be formed, who all were the initial *guthiyars*, how much land have been given for the *guthi* and how they tried to impose it as a rule to continue the obligations vested on them. For the purpose of the study, I have analysed 10 stone inscriptions written in Nepali by one of the Nepali scholar called Jivan Kumar Maharajan, for his degree, with the help of one of the key informant.

Stone Inscription I: (Found in the Taa Nani, in Mali Tole in koyelachi)

The stone inscription was dated back to 985 NS, it was laid on the date of *chaitra*, *Krishna panchami aithbar* (The Newari months are not mentioned) (on Sunday), and the stone inscription states that, in the name of Ganesh or in the praise of Ganesh, they have installed the inscription. This stone inscription says that it is in the memory of Lakshmi Sankar Babu (there is no mentioning of caste name, Babu is the suffix of the name and it does not indicate caste name), his son Pani Sena, his first wife Daya lakhmi veera Barya and his second wife ‘Lakshmi Veera Narasing’ and other family members were also mentioned. This stone inscription also states that they have donated land in Bhel daha (now Naga daha) 5, and in Dhangassi 5¹⁶⁵. It also mentions that on Indra *jatara* they need to conduct ‘*deva pooja*’ and they have to put (distribute?) one *pati baji*. For this purpose, the *guthi* have been formed with 3 members as *guthiyars*. It is also mentioned that they have to have feast on this day of *indra jatara*. In the end it is also mentioned that,

Tukisa (in this) *lobha moha* (in the desire of acquiring everything) *papa yayya madhu* (do not commit the sin) *papa yathasa naraka basa juyiva* (if you commit the sin your will go to hell) *toyya sakshi Chandra surya jula* (in the evidence of the *Chandra* and *surya*) *subha* (thanks).

¹⁶⁵ This 5 might indicate anas, roopanis or whatever the measuring system was at that particular time.

That is, in the last paragraph of the stone inscription it states that, ‘in the desire of acquiring everything don’t commit the sin, if you happen to commit sin by taking away the land or stealing any property of the *guthi* you will go to hell and let the *Surya* (sun) and *Chandra* (moon) bear witness for it, thank you’.

Stone Inscription II: Balkumari Temple Inscription:

This stone inscription have been laid in the year 790 NS, *margashira Sukla Purni Ma, Rohini Nakshatra*, this stone inscription has built on the occasion of keeping the *thoran* in the temple. The stone inscription also states the following names, *Thakali*, Gomya raj manisingh, gopi ram, Palika Mani Singh, Soku Badkam Ram, Mada Singh, Jayadev Pandav, Jathey Ram, Kasiram Kina Singh, Jugidev, Ram singh, Dev Singh and Kina singh. In addition, it also mentions dothali sulathi desai (probably place name), Ta wa *nani Kuli chhen staya ram*.

In Newari, it also mentions that ‘*Subha marthu sabadha subha, to toran chawa desai guthi nani dhana yayya mala*’.

Stone Inscription III: (Another Stone Inscription in Balkumari Temple)

This stone inscription mentions about the renovation or reconstruction of *falcha* of Balkumari temple in the year of 913 NS, *baiska Masa Sukla Paksha Aithbar* (Sunday), it states the names of places such as Thecho Desai, Amaliya Desai, Dhokala (Gate way). *Kwa thalaya yela desai* (came from?) Krishna Singh and some other names such as Anand Babu, Nayaka Madhava Babu are also mentioned, the *Dyo kwo falcha* repairing was done and this inscription was laid. The inscription also says that if you destroy the *falcha* you will get *pancha pap* (5 grave sins), and if someone reconstruct the temple they will get the *fal* (fruits of good deeds).

Stone Inscription IV: Chakwo Falcha

This stone inscription starts with unclear words such as *Duthali Surathi Grama*, and with names such as Bisdev Babu, Pratha Puthra, Baghiram Babu and Sathyadev Babu (might

be trying to say they all indulged in the construction of this *falcha*), the *falcha* facing the south in the *choyelachi* which is not referred as *chakwo falcha*. The stone inscription also says the *guthi* is formed and they have donated land for the *guthi*. In return the *guthiyars* have to give *samya baji* during *indra jatara* and they should also distribute *to:* and *sradha* (offering *pinda*) should also be conducted. It is also mentioned that the three *guthiyars* have to provide a sacrifice (Note that it states each *guthiyar* are supposed to give a sacrifice) and they have to light *mussa* and seven lamps has to be provided by the *guthiyar*. If the *falcha* need to be renovated, all the *guthiyars* should come together, fulfil the responsibility of renovating the *falcha*, and for the *guthiyars* have to contribute among themselves. And one *pati jaki* and some other items have to be given as a *dakshina* (rough translation), and other names like Man Singh, Poorna Singh, Jugi Kasi Ram, Poorna Dev, Dhana Ram. Dana ram, Bharna Singh, Basu Ram (it is unclear that whether these people should be given the donations on this day? Jugi name has been mentioned in this stone inscription). In the end it states that if they did not give or follow the responsibilities vested on them they will get the *pancha pap* (five grave sins, believed to be one should not commit) and if they do the responsibilities vested on them properly, they will get the *uttam punya*.

Stone Inscription V:

The respective stone inscription is about a *falcha* in Marregram (Malligaon) facing west, this stone inscription has been laid in the year 856 NS, *chaitra Krishna paksha*. It has been mentioned in the inscription that, this *falcha guthi* will get 2 *pati bajji*, *raku sakshi* (1), *jaki* two *pati*, *ghari kurra*, one *data* has to be given. The names such as Bagiram Babu, Madhav Babu, Dhama Singh Babu, Bisha Singh Babu, Asthi Singh Babu, Silamaha Babu are mentioned in this inscription. In addition, it is mentioned that the *guthi* should take the responsibility vested on them failing to fulfil the responsibility they will get the *pancha maha pap*. In the end of the inscription it has been mentioned that the land as a source of income have been given by the Bikha Babu and Dhanavathi Matha.

Stone Inscription VI:

The inscription is about the *chibha* in the *choyelachi* near to the Balkumari temple. This stone inscription was laid in the year 837 NS, this inscription is facing the north, and in this they have mentioned that the *guthi* should maintain and renovate this *chibha* from time to time and it is mentioned that the *budha stuthi* (praying or praising of the Budha) should be done.

Stone Inscription VII:

The stone inscription was laid in the year 823 NS, and it is about the placing the *thoran* of Ganesh and placing of Singhs (Shimba and Thumba).

Stone Inscription VIII:

This stone inscription was laid in the year 901 NS at *margasira sombwar* (Monday), the stone inscription states that this is about *Missa falcha* (situated in front of Brahmayini temple), they have renovated it with the joint venture of the Thapha family (Note: not the Newars but the *thapha* family, the name has been mentioned very clearly¹⁶⁶). The names such as Dhanju Babu, Dhana Babu, Mahadev Babu, Dayaratha Singh Babui, Nara *Chhen* Babu, Matya Sena Babu, Mahadeve Babu, Shivanadha Babu, Deva Ram, Vishnu Sankar Babu And Laxmi Ram are mentioned in this stone inscription (might be the names of the people who involved themselves in renovating this *falcha*).

Stone Inscription IX:

In this stone inscription the year 811 and 815 NS are mentioned. This stone inscription is about putting a tall stone (811) in front of the temple and placing a duck (815) on it. The names like Basuram Babu and his son Kishan Babu were mentioned. The things such as they have offered *gulla* dharma and *bajan* and offered *pooja* in the years 789 to 815 NS is also mentioned in this inscription.

¹⁶⁶ There are no thapha families living in the village currently.

Stone Inscription X:

This stone inscription was laid in the year of 844 NS, *jaista Krishna paksha, brihaspathi var* (Thursday). It is about the *falcha* and *chibha guthis* in the *kacha tole*. In this stone inscription, the names of Harikesh and Dhanthi (might be husband and wife), their son had donated land, and it says during the *yomari punhi* they have to distribute *samya baji*. First five lines are in Sanskrit language and rest of the lines in the Nepal *basha*. It is also mentioned that on the days of *jaistha Krishna paksha navami* and *badhra Krishna paksha ammami* the *guthi* have to do *pooja* for the *fali* and *chibha*. In the end of the inscriptions are the images of *pali swa* (lotus flower), the row of lotus flower and also the images of *chibha* and *jala nhekan* (Traditional bronze mirror). And in the end of the inscription it is mentioned that ‘*chintha maya kala pancha maha pathaka laka juroll, chintha yak ala uthama juroll, subha*’ which means if you are not bothered about the responsibility vested on you then you will get *pancha maha pap*, and if you happen to fulfil your responsibility then you will get best benefits’.

Appendix VII

Machhindranath/Karunamayya:

Gorakhnath is considered to be god, who is disciple to the Machhindranath (called by Hindus), Karunamayya (called by Buddhist). Once angry Gorakhnath, had kept the snakes under his thighs, which are supposed to bring rain and sat for meditation. As a result there was no rain in the valley for more than 12 years. The valley has suffered because of lack of water resources and it was in the verge of drought¹⁶⁷. The kings of the three kingdoms viz., Kanthipur, Lalitpur and Bhakthapur, decided that they need to find a solution and bring the rains back and save people from drought. They have approached a great *tantric* and he said this drought is because of the above mentioned reason. Moreover, we need to convince him to release the snakes so that the rains might come. The kings decided they need to send three envoys, Bhakthapur had sent a king, or warrior

¹⁶⁷ One should note that, Nepal is considered to be the second largest water resource available country in the world.

to fight the obstacles, Lalitpur had sent the *Jyapu*¹⁶⁸ called Lalit¹⁶⁹ *Jyapu* and Kanthipur had sent the great *tantric* who is known for his magical powers to handle the obstacles, which should be won by the tactics. However, the *tantric* knows that convincing him is not that easy job, so he has to think about a plan, which will convince him and release the snakes. Then he recalled Goraknath having a guru/master who is called Machhindranath or Karunamayya. Karunamayya is considered to be a very good person but he belongs to the demon family or the people who are considered as *rakshas*. However, when these three envoys approached and explained the situation and they requested him to come with them so that Goraknath by seeing his master will stand up out of respect and the snakes will be released. Machhindranath wanted to help people and he will show his willingness to come with them but the family of the Karunamayya, stops him and objects him from going on this endeavour. His mother stops him showing anger and affection and she says they are taking you away and you will never come back to us. Despite of his parents' command, Karunamayya decides to go with them. However, his mother who suspected that Karunamayya might go on this endeavour in the night, slept across the doorway. It is believed that you are not supposed to cross a person when they are sleeping across, and his mother was certain of his son that he would not cross her, so she was in deep sleep. Realising the trick of his mother, Karunamayya dares to cross her on top of her but he tries his best to avoid crossing over her, he will cross on top of her hair as a result Karunamayya will not have his toe in his leg. As they are *rakshas* they tried their best to stop Karunamayya going with humans, hence they were ready to attack them physically as well to stop him. As the *tantric* is aware of their power he wanted to counter their power with the mightier power than the *rakshas* possess, so he summons Shiva to send protection and Shiva sends him the Bhairavas, it is believed that the five different Bhairavas such as, Sethu Bhairav, Ratho Bhairav, Akash Bhairav and so on have originated like this. When the *rakshas* were handled by the Bhairavas, then Karunamayya had started the endeavour with the other three people, it is believed that they will face several obstacles which have to be handled with the magic and mighty muscle power and

¹⁶⁸ Traditionally *Jyapus* are palanquin bearers for the gods and higher caste people, in addition to their farming.

¹⁶⁹ It is believed that the Lalitpur got its name after this *Jyapu*.

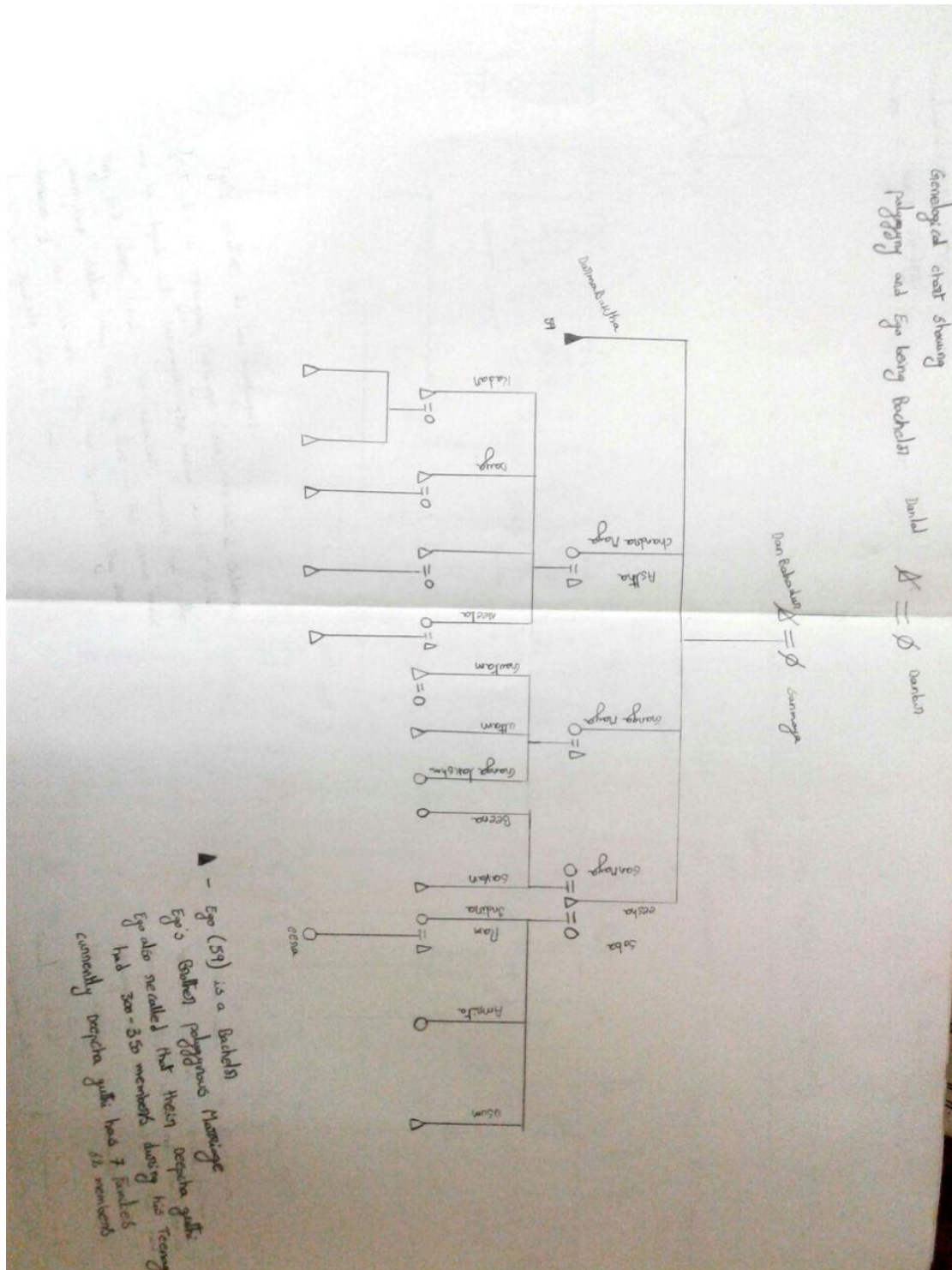
they will overcome all the obstacles and hurdles and they will reach the place where Goraknath is mediating, which is believed to be Assam state in India.

After sensing the presence of his master, Goraknath will come out of the meditation and as a symbol of respect; he will stand up forgetting that the snakes are under his thighs and greet his master. The snakes return to their position causing rains in the valley. Nevertheless, after that, the three envoys feel what if the same situation arises in the future and they plan to trick the Goraknath and Machhindranath to stay in the valley. With some trickery, they will make Machhindranath agree to stay in the valley and along with Goraknath. However, they transform themselves into idol forms, and they needed to be carried back to the valley. Once they started walking they are not supposed to keep the idols down for not more than two times and on the third time where they are put down they will install themselves on that place. Agreed for the conditions the three envoys carry the Goraknath and Machhindranath and start to walk towards valley. Now this three envoys fight among themselves where the temple should be built for these gods, in the end the king from Bhakthapur wins the argument and decides to take the gods forcefully to the Bhakthapur in order to bring rains and prosperity to Bhakthapur. However, the rest two feel the same for their own kingdoms. On their journey back, the *Jyapu* who has been assigned the job to carry the idols will keep the idols twice before reaching the valley saying they are so heavy and he need to take rest in order to continue the journey. On coming to Bungamati he keeps the idols for the third time stating the same reason, and saying he can't go any further because they are so heavy to carry, but he tricked the *tantric* and king in order to keep the gods in the Lalitpur. Then the kings of the three kingdoms want to solve the issue as there is nothing they can do as the gods installed themselves in that place. However, gods also mentioned that if the respect or worshipping us is not satisfactory we would move out to Bhakthapur. Keeping in mind about this, the *Jyapus* in the Lalitpur formed the *saalu guthis* and they come every month to worship the gods. King of Lalitpur orders the Bungamati people to keep the gods in their village for six months and other six months they need to be sent to the Lalitpur, so the gods will have two temples shuttled between these two temples once in every six months. After the six months stay in the Lalitpur, big carnival will take place and the

statue is taken to the Bungamati to be worshipped there in that temple for another six months. The Bhakthapur king agrees to the point that if Lalitpur people are unable to give proper worship such as not performing the annual ritual properly. In order to perform the *jatara* for the Machhindranath, they need to build chariot with the creepers, which will make them wet and entwine it around logs and it goes to the height of 20-30 feet, and same type of chariot in small is also built for the Goraknath. This chariot is not supposed to lean while dragging; people should pull the chariot before stipulated period or if they happen to drag the chariot on the direction of Bhakthapur then the gods will be taken by the Bhakthapur people. In Bhakthapur, they have built a temple and they have been keeping the temple empty waiting for Lalitpur people fail to keep their promises in the course of worshipping the gods and Bhakthapur people will get the chance to take the gods to their Bhakthapur and install them in this empty temple.

FIGURES

Figure 9: Genealogical Chart Showing Polygynous Marriage



[illegible]

Figure 11: Genealogical Chart showing families in Deepcha Guthi

