

TEEJ- THE FESTIVAL OF WOMEN IN NEPAL: THE EVENT OF RELIGION AND RECREATION IN THE VERGE OF CHANGE

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Abstract: The main purpose of this study is to investigate different aspects of the Teej festival in which Hindu women observe fast, worship Lord Shiva, sing songs and perform dances. Modernization and ritual theories are deeply observed to analyze my research questions. The main leading questions are: what is the importance of Teej festival in Hindu women? How is it celebrated? How is this festival affected by modernization and globalization? How do young generations understand this festival? And how does this festival help to revitalize Hindu women in their culture? These questions will be addressed in this research-based paper. Teej is the traditional festival of one and only Nepali Hindu women. Teej has been based on religion and recreation but now it is in the verge of change. This recreational and religious festival has its own significance in the specific context of Nepali society and culture. Teej has an adaptive cultural system (of socially transmitted behavior patterns) that serve to relate Hindu as well as non-Hindu communities to their socio-natural settings. Teej is also the occasion for sending lavish gift inclusive of food, clothes and occasionally simple valuable ornaments to one's daughter's mother-in-law and her close relatives of husband's side during the first year after marriage. It is obligatory among the professed high caste Hindus- Brahman and Kshetri. Basically this traditional indigenous festival is a celebration of praying to the God Shiva, who is the creator of this world as specified in Hindu epic texts. Women in Nepal observe Teej for good health, prosperity and progress for their husband for married women whereas for the would be husband in the case of unmarried girls. Origin, history, importance and it's ritual values related to Teej festival is highly desired matter of discussion among the circles of men and women in Nepal.

Key words: Teej, traditional festival, Hindu women, recreation, change, religion, modernization, verge

1. INTRODUCTION

This traditional indigenous festival Teej is celebrated of praying to the God Shiva, who is the creator of this world as specified in the Hindu epic texts. Married women pray prosperity and progress for their husbands and unmarried girls worship expecting a good would be husband in their future life. Teej festival, its processes and Teej songs along with dances are gradually changing because of modernization and globalization. Audience and viewers can feel its music, sounds, lyrics, rhythms and ways of expression. Every, word, lyrics and dance movement has its own senses while performing songs and dances. This study is focused on how these songs and dances are influenced by modernization and globalization. It is observable and measurable, during the festival period that participants sing and dance in different ways like fast, slow and mixed. However, the important thing is that it is a way of finding out the use of words, lyrics and vocabulary to express their feelings, sentiments and interests they have and way of dances and their moves,

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their presentation including motions including dresses and ornaments that are found in Hindu society for millennia.

The *Teej* in Nepal celebrates female agency as well as more quotidian aspects of women's lives. Most importantly, Teej is associated with songs, dancing and singing. In the eastern part of Nepal, the song that accompanies the celebration of *Teej* is known as *Sangini*; for centuries. In other parts of Nepal, it is simply called *Teejé geet*. In this respect Khanal (2011) mentioned that in the social history of Nepal especially in the hilly region *Teej* songs has played the most central role in the emancipation of women. This festival gives us a deeper meaning in the society and culture of Nepal. In true sense, *Teej* becomes Nepali Hindu women and vice versa. It becomes an event that spans the lives of all Nepali women, not only the Hindu ones, thus linking the festival with the nation-building project. In the *Gorkhapatra Daily*, the editor writes:

The festivity ushered in by the Haritālikā Teej has carnivalized the ambience of the entire country. Unforgettable is the ever-swelling confluence of literature, music and art collectively created by women participating in Teej. It must be the uniqueness of Teej that it is not confined amongst Hindu women alone. Today, Teej has become intimate and indispensable for non-Hindu as well as for the Hindu women who would not celebrate it traditionally. Therefore, to describe this festival of pan-Nepali women as a festival of Hindu women would be a distortion.

The above statement supports that Teej is a very popular festival survived for centuries in Nepal.

2. FIELD METHODS

The field study was carried out in Ghorahi Bazaar, district headquarters, of Dang district and commercial center of the rest of the district of Rapti zone. Basically information was collected on the day of Teej festival of 2018 (Second week of the September 2018), when women were celebrating the festival in the Ghorahi Bazaar. Most of the villagers, mainly women, are from rural background but they migrated to Ghorahi after marriage. They are living more than half of life in Dang, Ghorahi and the rest in their native village. They have frequent visit from different villages to Ghorahi and vice versa. Most of the villagers have purchased house in Ghorahi bazaar. Some of them are scattered in and around the Ghorahi. My keen interest was to explore the changes taking place in the practice of Teej and its impact on the work and life of people who participate in this great festival.

The research study on which this paper is based on the exploratory cum descriptive research design. Qualitative approach was followed to collect the data. Data collection techniques were ranged from key informants interview, interview schedule, focus group discussion and participant observation. Most of the required

information was taken by interviewing with conversant, social and cultural women activists, knowledgeable persons including ritual performer, elders and different participants of the function. Including all around 50 women were selected as respondent for this research work because of easy access to both rural as well as urban settings. How do they adopt new cultural traits and what are the changes measured among them are mainly the theme of this research.

3. ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON TEEJ FESTIVAL

Teej as an adaptive cultural system of socially transmitted behavior patterns that serve to relate Hindu as well as non-Hindu communities to their socio-natural settings. These ways-of-life-of communities include technologies and modes of economic organization, settlement patterns, modes of social grouping and political organization, religious beliefs and practices, and so on. When cultures are viewed broadly as behavior systems characteristic of populations, extending and permuting somatic givens, whether we consider them to be patterns of or patterns (behavior is a secondary question. Culture is all those means whose forms are not under direct genetic control . . . which serve to adjust individuals and groups in their ecological communities (Binford II, 1968).

The role of anthropology is to visualize festivals such as Teej as religious ritual which functions as a foundation to maintain order in society, which is basically patriarchal, and where women cannot find out their clear role, and decision rights in household chores, production and even in reproduction. So, function of Teej (both materially, mentally or psychologically) is to reduce the gap between male (Father in law, Husband, brother in law and even son) as a patriarchal character manifestly, and female characters (mother-in law, sisters-in-law, daughter-in law) latently. So the combination of both fantastic as well as their forum for the expression of sentiments (laments, sorrows) ultimately helps to resolve tensions and anxieties in society. Anxieties between male and female in household affairs are ultimately reduced through Teej and it is assumed that it, to a larger scale, helps to resolve the problems of women in society.

Homans (1941) represents fairly the dominant line of anthropological thought concerning the functions of religious ritual. Ritual actions do not produce a practical result to the external world-that is one of the reasons why we call them ritual. But to make this statement is not to say that ritual has no function. Its function is not related to the world external to the society but to the internal constitution of the society. It gives the members of the society confidence, it dispels their anxieties, it disciplines their social organization.

Tylor (1871) defined culture more than 145 years ago as the “ complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society” (Tylor, 1871).

Culture is, therefore, a person as a whole. What a person believes and values, how s/he evaluates and judges, how s/he senses and responds all are a reflection of a culture. Berger and Luckmann (1966) explain that our understanding of the social world is shared understanding which is created and maintained through daily social interactions and communications. Socially constructed knowledge appears in the form of beliefs, shared values and social norms. Society, as a subjective reality, describes how our conception of reality originates from our interaction with social structures. Those concepts become a part of our reality through the process of objectification of the inventions. When these objective realities are institutionalized, they appear as a form of culture.

It is not surprising that religious discourses related to Teej reflected the reality of that time. For women of old generation or say 'traditional' version including many rural women at present, Teej marks an end of agricultural season, when overworked daughter-in-laws could finally go to their *Maiti* (Maternal home), eat, sing and dance to their heart's content. While conforming to patriarchal ideology, such as fasting for husband's long life and 'washing and drinking water from husband's feet', women could practice their agency within that constrained traditional space. Thus, Teej signifies the dialectical message to all; in on one hand it shows patriarchal domination in society and culture through religion. So, it proves men dominate women but, on the other hand, it also provides the opportunities for all women to share their feelings and resolves the fragile relations in domestic sphere. Contradictions between filiafocal practices and patrifocal practices in same and parallel in home also gives how Hindu traditional society is possible in order with enormous gap between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law win defense of patriarchal social context. Though Teej songs have been repeatedly dismissed as "lamentations of women against their husband and mother-in-law", close examination of these songs can help us conclude how political they are in their theme. Teej allowed women an opportunity to question the power imbalances of society based on gender. It may be hard to regard it as so at first. But we all know that Teej is not something that one celebrates in isolation. Women celebrate amongst one's family, kin and friends. The Teej celebrating in natal home usually signifies the filiafocal practice which is against the patrifocal in nature clarify that there are fragile, contradict (sacred and danger roles of women in different stages of their life), controversial, sacred, profane, danger and

worshipping roles of women / girls that are commonly practiced in both conservative orthodox Hindu society as well as in modern changing society, too. Thus, when masses of women question the authorities, power, inequalities and injustices at a particular time, Teej does not remain a cultural/religious festival alone, it transforms into a political force that is capable of transforming society as a whole.

4. ANTHROPOLOGY, MODERNIZATION AND TEEJ

In anthropology discipline modernization is considered an obligatory and indisputable factor in any dynamic society. It cannot only be analyzed through its negative impacts, but it has its positive impacts, too. In the context of the Hindu society its impacts could be measured in different ways. For example, media and technology are the strongest influencing factors, which have attracted Hindu women and girls towards Westerns fashion and Western culture.

Modernization theory will be applied on the Hindu women's great festival-Teej. Critically this theory observes its impacts on Hindu women and their festival Teej; religion, recreation, music, lyrics and dances. The study also compares and contrasts between modernity, tradition, cultural, ritual and recreations perspective in the Hindu women. In society measuring the impact of modernization is possible with many approaches. It brings the clash between traditional values and modern development.

According to Østerud, 'At a more abstract level modernization means, for short, emancipation and adaptability' (Østerud, 1993). In a developing nation just like Nepal, people freely adopt or experience the impacts of modernization in different ways; for example, changing their personality, occupation, lifestyle and traditional values. While comparing modernization impacts on the Hindu patriarchal traditional culture mostly young generations are adopting Western fashion through Western media, technology and the Internet. Through the influence of western culture especially younger generations are on the way to forget their own mother tongue. Parents are also interested in teaching their children in English boarding schools so that it would be easy to get access to different fields in their future career. It is visible part of everyday life in culture of Hindu women. How it brings the unity, harmony, equality and syncretism among the fragile women's relation in Hindu society will also be interpreted for example between sacred sister and danger wives, between sacred mother-in-law and dangerous daughter-in-law in the Hindu community. It is an example of how traditional Hindu society turns towards the modern, which helps to make the society equal through different factors like education, economics and standard of living.

For development of any traditional society change is a must. So it leads the traditional society towards the modern development process through different

factors such as economic growth, modern technology and scientific development. It can also bring equality to the society. To measure the level of modernization, first, we have to look what types of changes that occur in traditional values and how it is displaced through the modernization. Let's look, for example, at how the foundations of Hindu orthodox values are getting changed through modernization, how it brings the society into inequality, disparity, and disintegrations in ways that should be analyzed.

5. TEEJ AND PANCHAMI: RITUAL, RECREATIONS AND CRITICAL COMMENTARY

Teej- Rishi Panchami complex consists of two closely related festivals of fast observing and ritual purification in which a woman ensures long life to her husband and purifies herself of the possible sin of having touched a man during her menstrual period. It is particularly concerned with official women, women in patrifocal and especially sexual role as wife. The Teej- Rishi Panchami complex expresses this dangerous and potentially divisive power of women and their sexuality. It also attempts, through myth and ritual, to reintegrate that power into the structures of family and kinship, which threatens.

As following Lynn Bennett Teej-Rishi Panchami is actually comprised of two separate festivals, on the third (Teej) and the fifth day (Panchami) of the bright half of Bhadra (August- September). As mentioned earlier, Teej is meant to ensure the long life of one's husband, while Rishi Panchami is meant to purify women from the possible sin of having touched a man during their menstrual period. But as Bista (1967) noted, Nepalis think of the two as a single event, because they are both exclusively of women related religious affairs (Bennett, 2002).

Teej is also the occasion for lavish gift of food and clothes to one's daughter's mother-in-law during the first year after marriage. During the first year, the bride usually stays in her husband's *ghar* (home) for Teej, but in subsequent years there is always a subtle tug-of-war between maternal home (*maita*) and husband's house (*ghar*) during this period of heavy agricultural work (ibid). On the day of Teej itself, women reenact the famous fasting of the goddess Parvati, who performed austerities to obtain Shiva as her husband. This story is part of the traditional *Puranic* corpus of the Saivite mythology. The Nepali version with which village women are most familiar appears in the Swasthani Vrata Katha (Bennett, 2002).

Because of this focus on the public rituals, the literature leaves us with the impression that Teej and Rishi Panchami reaffirm patrilineal principles and that the women happily perform the rituals for the benefit of their present, past, or future husbands and for redemption from the sin of menstruation. Teej is thus presented as a ritual that reinforces the gender relations of Hindu religious ideology and helps produce women who willingly and compliantly accept the constraints of this patriarchal system.

Teej is far more complex and multi vocal than this. Portraying the rituals and texts as unchanging entities misrepresents the festival and obscures the dynamics that make it a forum for an increasingly strident social and political commentary. Present interpretations also overlook the participation in Teej of people other than Brahmin and Chhetri women. Part of the problem is that Teej songs have been left out of consideration in the literature—authors simply mention that women sing as they dance. What little commentary exists on the characteristics of Teej songs describes them, without supporting evidence, as the “innombrables chansons d’amour du folklore nepalais” (Bouillier, 1982 quoted by Debra Skinner, Dorothy Holland and G.B. Adhikari, 1994). This lack of attention to the songs is unfortunate, because our research into their content and into the socio-historical context of their creation and performance reveal that they are neither love songs, thematic complements to the dancing, nor songs of sexuality and eroticism. Nor are the vast majority of them religious songs of devotion congruent with the austere rites of fasting and ritual bathing. Most of the examples we have collected are, in fact, songs of social and political commentary. This type of critical Teej song has been used for many years to call into question the very gender ideology that the women’s ritual observances are thought to be endorsed.

Thus women are doing something very interesting in Teej. On the one hand, they are performing rituals that endorse the ideology of male privilege. While on the other hand, they are raising voices through the lyrics that they compose each year; a critical commentary on gender relations and on the wider political situation that has dominated them both as females and as poor villagers. The content and tone of the compositions are, in other words, incongruent with the rituals that bracket their performance. Recently composed Teej songs based on this tradition of critical commentary and increasingly call for political action. Urban-based political and feminist groups have recognized this genre, which finds its fullest development and expression in rural Nepal, as a promising medium for demanding equal rights for women and the poor.

Teej songs are created in a variety of ways. In one mode of production, predominant in the past and still in existence today, verses are composed primarily by groups of young unmarried and married women at work in the fields during the day or at their nightly gatherings prior to the festival. One woman suggests an idea for a song, and then she and the others in the group think about it individually for a few days. The group later collaborates in joining (*jerne*) or piecing together (*gasne*) the words and lines of each stanza. They may pick out (*tipnu*) lines they have heard before in other songs and use them again. They go over the verses several times, substituting words or rhymes to make the song smooth and flowing, to fill it out, and to unify its theme. Until recently, songs produced by this method were preserved only in memory since the members of the groups were illiterate (Skinner et.al, 1994).

As Srivastava notes for women's songs in North India (1991), Teej songs in either their oral or written versions should not be thought of as fixed texts. Authorship is not emphasized nor is the composer acknowledged during the performance. Singers are free to alter songs by changing lines or adding novel verses. Teej songs are thus always in process. They may differ slightly in content from one practice session to another and may vary greatly from one year to the next. Even the songs taken from print are subject to change as groups omit, revise, and add lines to fit their emotional mood or political orientation.

6. MYTHICAL HISTORY

A celebration for women with a Hindu flavor, during which married women ask for "a happy marriage", when unmarried women pray to get "the man of their dreams" and to "live happily ever after together". The holiday is also an occasion for the gentler sex to demand "greater rights and freedoms", to protest against the government or against social injustice, corruption, and abuse in the country. All the women of Nepal observe fast from sunrise to sunset, intoning hymns and songs- dressed in red and ornamented with opulent jewelry- in front of the temples and images of the god Shiva, in a mix of tradition and modernity, of submission to their men together with demands for greater power for the "Gentler sex".

In Hindu Mythology, it is believed that Goddess Parvati and Lord Shiva were united on this day. For this Parvati had to endure penance. It is believed that she took 108 births on earth before Lord Shiva accepted her as his wife. Since then, this day is considered to be an auspicious day and it is supposed that whosoever remembers her on this day will be blessed with a happy married life and all her desires will be fulfilled.

This festival is a symbol of dedication of goddess Parvati for Lord Shiva. Even today, women commemorate this mythological event by observing a '*Nirjala Vrata*' (fasting without drinking of water) for their husband's well-being and long life. This festival also helps in strengthening the bond between couples. This festival also welcomes the advent of Monsoon season. This festival signifies symbol of happiness and joy in a married life. On this day, women dress up, like newlyweds, in colors basically red, yellow and green and try to look their best to allure their husbands. Some of the women prefer to wear their bridal attire provided by their own husband on the auspicious occasion of their wedding. They wear colorful glass bangles too, which are assumed the symbols of good luck (Saubhagya).

Each day has its own significance, starting with the first that is called *Dar Khane Din*, on which the ladies enjoy a feast prepared by the their own close kin, and friends. The second day is the fasting day and the third is for offering prayers to the deity. The holy custom of fasting is synonymous to the Teej festival, which is a tribute to the penance that Goddess Parvati had to go through for 100 years before Lord Shiva accepted her as his wife. The married ladies observe fast- they

neither drink water, nor take food for the entire day.

According to the Hindu myth taken up in the Nepalese tradition, the festival of Teej represents the sacrifices carried out by goddess *Parvati* in order to marry the lord Shiva and have a happy conjugal life. Lord Shiva therefore ultimately symbolizes all of the men of the country, while the women who follow the example and actions of *Parvati* can obtain “long life, good health, and well mannered husbands, who respect them and know how to make them happy”. On the Teej day all of the Nepali Hindu women in the country, during the days of this fast, go on pilgrimage to the temple of the god Shiva and intone songs to forget the sufferings caused by fasting; at sunset, a brief prayer interrupts their mortifications, and then they are permitted to eat and drink fruits, water, milk and curd as well.

Although unmarried girls are still single, and confess that “family is of utmost importance”, and they pray to the god for “the husband who will be part of it”. Even famous face in Nepal, is asking for a husband “full of creativity and adventurous”, while a 65-year-old woman is praying that “my fasting will endow my husband long life and prosperity”. Out of this with the rest is newly married or just married, who says “I don’t believe in the feast”, but nevertheless wants to participate because it is “an integral part of Nepalese culture and society”.

7. CHANGES ON TEEJ AND TEEJ ASSOCIATES

As David Dressler and Donald Carns explain “Cultural change is the modification or discontinuance of existing ‘tried’ and ‘tested’ procedures transmitted to us from the culture of the past, as well as the introduction of new procedures” (David Dressler and Donald Carns, quoted by Rao, 2004). Supporting this argument that Teej and other associated festivals are also ‘tested’ and ‘tried’ among the Nepali Hindu women. Now a day ritual values of Teej is changing. The values are being replaced by modernization process that is assumed as the demand of changing time. Exposure, education, improved economic condition, impact of different social medias are the responsible factors for changing the value systems.

Globalization is a borderless concept of interaction and integration of goods, knowledge, services, culture, and people. This process creates interdependence and interconnectedness. Therefore, it is the most spread out, discussed, and even debatable subject in the contemporary world. Cultural Globalization, one of the facets of globalization, refers to “the emergence of a specific set of values and beliefs that are largely shared around the planet” (Castells, 2009). Globalization must be understood, in short, as a process of mutual imbrications (Inda and Rosaldo 2002). The impact of globalization on culture may also be seen as a blend of the heterogeneous and homogenous, or a type of “globalization”, mixture of global and local. Globalization can be understood as a development of hybrid cultures at the local level, as foreign cultures reach local soil, such as in the creation of fusion cuisine or music. The impact of globalization on Teej related activities can

be observed on various fronts; songs, music, dances, language, dress, ornaments, food, and drinks.

8. CHANGES IN SONGS AND DANCES

Teej songs and dances are central to time and context. The focus of this title means while changes in time and context ultimately changes the forms and patterns of Teej songs and dances. It is assumed that singers play the role of messengers and transmitters of messages, news, emotions, sentiments and fantasy, etc. that were and are the prevailed in society. As discussed earlier the performance of Teej songs and dances represent the conditions, situations, emotions, feelings, status, relationship of different socio-cultural elements, etc. of Nepali society and culture. The functions of these Teej songs and dances on one hand; are for creating socio-cultural awareness among and between genders, create awareness to establish harmonic society and express their response to their exploitations, subordinations and oppressions by men and patriarchy. On other hand, those songs and dances help to recreate entertainment in the world of women as a specific ritual festival with an ardent sense of freedom, and forum for dialogue, too.

The Teej songs and dances, through time and context contribute to a collective understanding of culture and locality in a very different way from the psychological, religious, emotional, etc. dimensions in non-material cultural parts and economy, politics, social structure, practices, etc. as material cultural parts. But, in micro analysis, what individual feels, does and interprets resembles the overall, i.e. feelings, emotions, sentiments that, as individuals' feeling represent the society and culture. I have found that Teej songs cover beauties of women, which are universal; at the same time, oppressions, subordinations and exploitations of women in patriarchal society and culture. Teej songs deal with control on mobility and sexuality of women as well as contemporary socio-cultural events and milieu. However, I have also found instances where the Teej songs take up current political themes and incidents more directly in their songs. Yet, most often, these songs are formed as a narrative of a specific course of events as well as a general socio-cultural and political commentary. Except these, Teej songs are now days advocating various socio-cultural and political issues with difference approach, equity based approach and rights based approach about their access, opportunity and equality in various sectors.

Various socio-political and economic changes motivate the changes in value system, life pattern, status and position of women. Such changes are described here with the help of the contents of lyrics in Teej songs. It was argued that male representations of female sexuality provide patterns that fit into the accepted structure of behavior, beliefs that provide a source of permissible metaphors through which people think about themselves; standards for behavior, and exemplars learned from the anonymous pressure of ascribe social mythology.

There are various positive changes that can be seen in Teej but some dark sides are also parallelly visible. With due positive lens, some kind of vulgarity in dances, songs, videos and dress patterns also could be seen. It ultimately promotes indiscipline, cultural lags, vulgarity and immoral activities like crimes, etc. But it does not mean all changes that must be analyzed through the negative lens in a society. There are so many positive symptoms for creating a future gender- balanced and just society in Nepal.

9. CHANGES IN RITUAL PROCESSES

Teej is a socio-religious culture that strengthens the social relationship between its bonds culturally. It is also a thread that helps women to weave their memories into their life history. Recollecting my own observation of Teej, majority of unmarried girls from my home never observed fast before their marriage. Few of my friends and my sisters started to fast in Teej since early their teenage. They were teased mercilessly for their perseverance and patience to continue fasting year after year. It is still debatable what prompted them: religious faith or desire for a good life partner, perhaps both. But probing deeper, one can argue that many new generation women who are educated and have strong career goals, Teej creates a delicate balance for both married or unmarried women providing their own feelings, aspirations with their goals attaching both material and spiritual bonds dialectically. It also provides the merit making believes in modern context for their sinful and unknown demerits related with their impure menstrual blood.

Teej is perhaps new generation Nepali women's way of proving that, though they are embracing modern lifestyles and values, they are still "good daughters" and "good wives" like their mother, albeit different. As fasting in Teej requires certain qualities that are synonymous with image of good daughter and wife in Nepal: spirituality, patience, devotion and endurance. However, both fasting or non-fasting all women take part in the all recreation, fantasy and fun aspect of Teej such as, dancing, eating, dressing, make up, gathering and most importantly visiting the Mahadeva temples which is the most crucial aspect of the fast-overving women.

But now days, it is radically changing. Women have shortened the ritual of worshipping (Puja) and widened the trend of gathering and recreational activities. Similarly, the base and infrastructure of society, economic base, agencies for regulating the society and social norms and values are changing day by day and ultimately these factors after the mode of celebration of Teej, a holy festival of Nepali women.

10. CHANGES IN DRESS PATTERNS AND ORNAMENTS

A group of women who are celebrating Teej by dancing and singing, among them I found a newly married woman who expressed her feelings about Teej as follows:

I am a Hindu woman and follow Hindu culture and rules precisely. I cannot resist Teej any longer. I started fasting, soon after my marriage, with the enthusiasm that came as a newly married woman. With scrutinizing gaze of society that is constantly watching for any slips or falls that newly married woman makes. I could not help but give in. As, for newly married women, fasting in Teej becomes a means to express their marital happiness, which may not always exist. Over the years, I have come to embrace Teej as an important part of my life. It has become a strong medium for me to express love to my husband and to strengthen the bond between my mother and friends. I always cherish receiving *Churapote* (glass bangles and beads) from my relatives and equally relish giving back something similar. Though this is an expensive practice and may even be seen as meaningless charade on surface level, this circular exchange of gifts helps to maintain close tie amongst women, relatives and friends.

Now there are so many fashion houses, boutiques, retail shops, wholesaler, and shopping malls with huge opportunities for purchasing dresses and ornaments in various religious rituals. There are unlimited varieties of choices for women based on the quality and quantity in Teej festival. Sparkling bangles and Bindis, women singing and dancing in odd places and times of the day in neighborhood, images of women in red sari are taking place over Facebook timeline. Ask anyone about Teej, they are sure to have very passionate opinions about it: men or women, follower or non- follower. Some are passionately against it, some are enthusiastically supporting it. Coming into age in the 1990s at the height of feminist movement in Nepal, many so- called modern Nepali women share an uncomfortable relationship with Teej. When seen from feminist angle of vision, religious discourses dictate women to worship Lord Shiva for long life of their husband; Teej seems the worst remnant of patriarchal society.

Now- a- days all these processes and attitudes are changing day by day. Dress patterns along with ornaments are also changing at present. Women used to wear gold made ornaments in past but these days the use of diamond, gold plated, stones made ornaments are also in use. So material cultural components are changing day by day because of the purchasing power of women, decision-making power, authorities, their empowerment along with their economic rights and opportunities that collectively force to change the past scenario.

11. CHANGES IN FOOD AND GATHERING

Modern Nepali women do not always agree with all practices and ideology related to Teej. But they celebrate it, every year, with continued resistance and acceptance. Thus, the practices, rituals and ideologies surrounding Teej are gradually changing. At present, fasting may no longer mean being complete "*Nirahar*" (without eating fruits and food) and "*Nirjala*" (without drinking water). Each family these days

have their own idea about the nature of fast: is it total fasting without food and water whole day, is it drinking water only, is it having a bowl of fruits and milk soon after the visit to temple or worship in the home? Thus, Teej should not be as much of a charade for women, like it seems to be. Similarly, what comprises of *Dar* is also changing. Though self-proclaimed protectors of pure Nepali culture argue that women should stick to traditional *Dar*: rice cooked in ghee, rice pudding, sweets and yoghurt. But doesn't the choice of food change with time? *Dar* in its true essence simply meant something delicious that may not always be part of the regular meal. Another meaning was to have something sustaining that would enable women to observe fasting whole day long on the morrow.

So, it is not surprising that in some of the *Dar* program and "Teej party", these days, one will find continental foods and even wine. Most significant of all, practice of "drinking water from husband's feet" is changing, too. Observing my own Jeii's (mother) life course, she remembered that it used to be an important ritual that was performed everyday soon after her marriage. After several years, it was limited to major festivities. Then, it was limited once in a year in occurrence, in Teej. Now days, it is found that it is amusing to see whole spectacle of this ritual amongst in all parents. Although my Jeii (mother) followed my father, pretending to want to "wash and drink water from feet" my father pretended to move away repeatedly saying that there is "no need" but it was really a moment of honor to my father. The ritual still continues in form of this mock performance that continues every year much to the amusement of grandchildren. Though, few remaining generation of chauvinist men still may have sadistic pleasure of having their wives drink water from their feet, it is believed that new generation men find it more comforting to be treated as normal mortal men rather than godlike figures whose feet need to be worshiped to prove that they are superior

This is how, it is not a matter of surprise, regarding Teej if you see group of modern women: some with empty stomach, some with half-filled stomach, some with bright red sari, some with *Kurta, Tops*, some married and some unmarried, some with long hair and some with short hair raising a commotion in the middle of the street singing and dancing with abandon with one hand full of bangles and the other with watch and I-phone because society and culture are not static but passing through the dynamic phenomena.

12. FACTORS FOR CHANGES

Social anthropological studies of women have persistently divided into two camps over whether or not sexual asymmetry is universal. One side argued that Western constructs blind us from seeing egalitarianism in unfamiliar contexts and that we encountered hierarchical relations only in the historical context of privatized ownership. The other side argues that we should look for sexual inequality in all its forms, for sexual difference everywhere contributes to socially constituted

differences. Feminist theory is created dialogically, in the sense that all the positions in the debate constitute its base. The pluralism that characterizes both anthropology and feminist scholarship would seem to have touched them mutual ground at several points. And here is the contrast with natural science: not simply that within such scholarly practice one finds diverse 'schools' (also true in science) but also that their premises are by their nature constructed competitively in relation to one another.

There is in anthropological inquiry, a long tradition of breaking with the past, so that theoretical generations tend to be short-lived. Experience was also an explicit topic of feminist inquiry. The well-argued radical view was that feminist theory is 'experimental', in the sense that its first step is consciousness rising. In transmuted form, a number of feminist anthropologists emphasize the significance of experience. Feminist anthropology that explored 'the nature of self' in the fieldwork situation: ethnography as 'intellectual autobiography'. Yet the focus on similar issues in general ethnographic writing had proceeded as a quite independent radical development, without regard for the feminist contribution. The anthropologist's aim is to grasp 'lived experience' through perceptions of the body; a new anthropology of ritual experience' is heralded in a collection of essays on ignition rites.

The increasing cost of living, privatization of services, demanding quality of life and consumerism are a few factors that have created a forced situation for urban couples to make more money. Along with more career oriented opportunities for women in 'dynamic' 'globalized' economy there is also a compulsion for couples to earn together to manage household across various strata of society.

Opening global market for working, labor migration, and flow of remittance positively impacts on the economic condition of the society, but lack of clear cut policies to use such remittance, lack of state's clear cut policies also helps to use remittance in the capitalist finished commodities, unproductive accessories, and expensive feast and festival. Obviously, Teej is not free from this, so economic factor also plays important role for changing Teej in totality.

The era of globalization has accelerated the pace of migration in the last Fifteen years. The trend of outsourcing and supply of cheap labor mainly from Asian labor market to advanced countries like America, Europe, South Korea and Australia has been increased. Subedi's empirical figure, that was done in 2011 shows that in comparison to men's migration women's migration has increased in the developed countries and more for skilled jobs. Similarly out of total female migration, 47 percent are for job and 15 percent are for higher studies. Comparatively far larger proportions of female have made Europe, Americas, other countries and the Pacific as their destination than that of male. One, out of five, female has gone to West Asia while the corresponding proportion is two out of every five among male (Subedi, 2011). Composition of migration in Nepalese context is one of the major factors for such changes. Usually, the migrated husband sends remittance in the name of his wife or in his wife's account because of the signatory problem or also because

of the joint family context in Nepal where all property must be shared among the stakeholders. If immigrants send remittance in his wife's account, some amounts can be hidden from their family and that his wife can save silently. That hidden money she uses for making gold, which she can tell for all as the gift from natal home. Similarly, a woman who has financial authority and free from husband's direct control can also have well decisive power and she is free than who lives in joint family. All these factors are also very fluently acting for such changes.

Growing nuclear family also helps to change the context and content of the overall Teej festival. Changes in occupation, migration towards urban setting, lack of facilities, lack of infrastructures, etc. are decisive factors for changing rituals including Teej directly and all these context help to change all socio-cultural contexts indirectly.

The development of media technology has blurred the boundary between the private and the public by providing new opportunities for self-expression and communication. New social networking sites have made wider virtual communities for Nepalese girls/women. There are many social sites available. Among them Facebook is the most popular in all age groups. Most of the college- going girls are concerned about likes and comments got in the uploaded picture on Face-book. It has become a means of individual's judgment by counting likes and comments. On the other hand, women are considered modernized who are active in online forums like Facebook and Twitter. The given comments on uploaded Facebook show that Nepali people want to see the woman in the way the Hindu tradition has portrayed her. It is found from the empirical study that a girl gets more 'likes' and positive comments if she uploads a picture with traditional dress than a modern sleeveless shirt. A person by keeping the world in hand (using high tech mobile set with number of apps) comments 'this is not for you' if a female columnist uploads a picture wearing half pant. Facebook has become most effective social media. It has not only been established as a means of communication and updating individual status but also one of the effective means of searching life- partner. People who use public transportation enjoy *Lok dohori* (duet folk songs) made on Facebook. Most of them depict love affairs through Facebook. Such changes on media technology have a massive influence on the mode of festive celebration including Teej in our contemporary society.

13. CONCLUSIONS

Teej in Hindu society and culture is changing day by day. Generally, social, economic, political, developmental and many other factors are acting for such changes in cultures in general and Teej in particular. Nepalese society especially Kathmandu and its adjacent rural as well as urban communities are in the situation of verge of collapse in traditional nature of cultural traits, customs, and characters because of global, local and national development and changes on overall and

integrative developmental approaches. Mainly, the shift of agro-based to remittance - based national economy, opened our access to the global world, development of technology, and mass communication which are the key and determining factors for transformation of festival celebrating pattern.

In this regard, the changes in Teej and its associates- material aspects like dress patterns, food habits, cosmetics, etc. and non-material aspects like fasting trends, worshipping, rituals, attitudes, norms etc. are also changing. Both push as well as pull factors are, were and what will be the values, norms, processes, procedures, and significance of both material and non-material cultural components associated with Teej festival.

In the context of Nepal, many Teej related values and practices are continued by the women who participate in it. On the other side, changes have been also become inevitable component to this festivals celebrated within the dynamic framework of Nepali society and culture.

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