THE SCHOOL OF MISSION AND THEOLOGY (MHS)

THESIS TOPIC:

CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY AT THE WORKPLACE:

EXPERIENCES BY SOME NEPALESE EMPLOYEES IN NORWAY

THESIS FOR:

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DEDICATION

For my Husband Surya, for everything

ABSTRACT

Through the use of individual interviewing and thematic analysis, this study seeks to research how Nepalese employees working in Norway have experience their job at the workplace in multi cultural and religious environment. From the thematic analysis of focus individual data emerged on their experiences at the workplace on the five themes , which concerned about culture, religious and spiritual, tradition, intercultural communication, and friends relationship.

Most of positive and less negative feeling, perspective, and experiences seemed to characterize data. Although the participation seemed to mostly discuss on their positive experiences at their workplace but in the other hand the most problem for them is not cultural and religious at the workplace but is language. Living in diversity no have any problem for them and moreover living in diversity at the workplace help them to learn more and know more about other workplace diversity. The most considered that, without knowledge of Norwegian language to live in Norwegian workplace is difficult for Nepalese employees to understand what other Norwegian employees think and do so it is important for them to learn and have good skill of Norwegian language.

Key words: Cultural, Religious, Diversity, Intercultural Communication, Relationship

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1.1 Background of the Study

1.1.1   *Cultural Diversity in Globalization*

Globalizations today allow people living together. Many countries in the world are having mixture of cultures, traditions, religious, ethnics, and identities by refugees, asylum, immigrants and other groups who have moved from their home countries to other countries. Therefore, these all of mixtures can make people in social have different perspectives, conflicts and problems.

Globalization is the process by which businesses or any other organizations develop international influence or start operating on an international scale. The evolving globalization requires and enables that people having diverse cultures, beliefs and backgrounds interact each other more than before. These days, organizations need people from diverse backgrounds as their employees (or labors) in order to have their presence and influence on international market, and in order to have more creative ideas. However the diversity of labor in the workplace has become an important issue to manage (Mazur 2010, 5).

These days, European workplaces are experiencing major transformations due to the cultural diversity of those living, working and being educated within up coming from their host country to European country. When this is said, the cultural diversity at workplace in Norway is also interesting to watch. These days, Norway is experiencing more and more immigrations and an increasing immigrant workforce. Nepalese immigrants are one example, and they are also the focus of this thesis. Like in all other European countries with market economy, Norwegian companies have started to pay more attention to cultural diversity at the workplace. For example, Norwegian companies

are now discussing problems of communication in the workplace, problems which can be perceived as being rooted in the cultural diversity of their company, in order to understand how to solve this problem (Aakervik et.al, 2006, 48).

For example, figure one (Website, 2012) illustrates what may happen during a meeting in a culturally diverse environment. The picture shows that the problem of misunderstanding can happen easily if the employees do not have knowledge about how to communicate within a culturally diverse group.

Figure 1: Diversity in the workplace

DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE

In today's fast-paced work environment, diversity among co-workers is one of the most exciting - and challenging - aspects of the office dynamic.

Understanding is key, and this brochure, presented as an educational "comic strip," will educate you, the worker, about diversity and understanding.

This is an example of a BLACK MAN. They are very much like you or I, except they steal cars.

OOGA BOOGA WHERE THE WHITE WOMEN AT

BLIMEY GUVNA PLEASE GIVE ME ONE UP THE SHITTER

MATH IS HARD

NONG NONG BONG DONG FONG

In a multicultural office, there is much room for misunderstanding. So it is best to listen carefully, as different people and cultures have different styles of speaking.

It's also best to take extra time when explaining complicated ideas to women, as they are dumb and can't do anything right.

During meetings, it is essential that you make absolute sure that each of your coworkers understands what you are saying. As such, you must ask that they wait until after the presentation before they ask such questions as "Hey boss, I wants some watermelon!" or "Ay caramba! Let us eat the tacos!" Discourage such outbursts by reminding them that you have the number of their parole officer.

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Source: Photo by Google http://www.sixsixfive.com/320.html

In line with this illustration, I would like to argue that in multicultural workplace misunderstanding might occur due to different cultures and style of speaking. Based on this background and motivation, under this thesis I am interested to study about intercultural communication at the workplace of Nepalese employees in Norway. In fact in side at the workplace diversity can have more problem than communication. There are many different cultural dimensions that can play a role at the workplace. In this thesis, the researcher focuses on the study and analysis of the following the dimensions; culture, religious, communication and language, and relationship and challenge.

1.1.2   Nepalese Hindu Employees in Norway

Nepal is a country of rich geography and has several cultures practices. Nepal is the birthplace of Buddha and origin of Hinduism and thus by many considered a holy, beautiful place that is beautiful. Hindus will often say that Hinduism is not so much a religion for them, but Hinduism is the way of life of Hindus (Flood 1996, I). Hinduism in globalization is the kind of religion that has wide appeal and alongside with other world religions such as Christian, Islam, and Buddhism. Moreover, in the eyes of Westerner and Hindus diaspora communities, Hinduism is a religion belonging only for non-western cultures and religions only (Flood 1996, 265).

Since the last century, Hindus have been spread to other parts of the world through a process of migration. One of the reasons for this is that the British exported labour in order to build railways and after that there are many places of Hindu diaspora all around the world (Flood 1996, 266). According to one report, there are about 893 of Nepalese immigrants in Norway as of 1ˢᵗ January 2011 (Statistics Norway, 2011).

Hinduism is the major religion among Nepalese immigrants in Nepal and in Norway. But in their workplace in Norway, Nepalese people are a minority group and Hinduism is therefore being a minority religion due to the fact that the largest religion in Norway is Christianity. It is thus possible that issues or problems related to cultural and religious diversity between majority and minority groups in Norwegian workforces emerge.

The above mentioned background and the case of Nepalese workers in Norway triggered my motivation and interest to do research and analysis regarding the problem of cultural and religious diversity between majority and minority groups at Norwegian workplace, especially in the case of Nepalese Hindu employees in Norway. The researcher cannot find any previous study (and research) in this area – research about cultural and religious diversity at workplace of Nepalese employees in Norway. That means that this research might be the first one towards this particular minority group.

1.2 Objectives and Research Questions of the Study

Globalization today allows people to live in a multi-cultural society. Therefore the management of cultural diversity at the workplace is an important topic for many organizations due to the fact that there are more and more migrant workers around.[1] (Aakervik et.al, 2006, 16).

Before 1970's, Norway had only experienced small-scale immigration. Basically they connected with other country only with regard to trade and shipping (Aakervik et.al, 2006, 16). But today Norway has become more multicultural than it was before due to the coming of immigrants from all around the world. After the discovery of the oil and gas, Norwegian labor market has also attracted international labors due to the good income and attractive job market (Lindholm, Eidsvåg & Sveen 2004, 777). Moreover, an increasing number of migrant worker is coming to Norway, so the country, and its workplaces, has gradually become more. Because of this, in 1999 Norway established a foundation called *"Stiftelsen Mangfold i Arbeidslivet (MiA)"* (Aakervik et.al, 2006, 15). This foundation is a non-profit organization whose aim to develop for a private and public business in order to advance equal opportunities for all employees. This foundation has several projects and works on conflict management training, managing diversity training, language and vocational training and also on recruitment and qualification based on diversity (Aakervik et.al, 2006, 15).

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[1] Migrant Worker- an economic migrant is a person who voluntarily leaves his or her country of origin (often for economic reason). (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/)

After looking form this foundation's research, this thesis also interesting to analyzing about what the problem of employees at the diversity workplace by considers with the case of Nepalese immigrants in Norway. The research will be focused on the impact of cultural and religious diversity in a workplace. Therefore, the aims and objectives of this thesis are to highlight and study the following issues;

- How Nepalese employees feel and think about cultural and religious diversity at their workplace
- How they interact with other employees in the workplace environment.
- How the Hindu religion (as a minority religion) plays a role in their life in workplace
- Do Nepalese employees has experience any religious discrimination at the workplace
- How religious discrimination may affect Nepalese employees in their workplaces in Norway

Furthermore, to study the case of Nepalese employees in Western society appears significant as they are from entirely different eastern collectivist society and not from the western individualist culture. Some of the social, culture, and tradition patterns at the workplace might be strange for them and others might be inspiring. For example, how do inspiring social and cultural patterns at the workplace contribute to recreate new social norm at the workplace for them? How do they judge those things and adopt them in their daily life at the workplace in their own way? Responding to this all aspects might create a new social reality for other Nepalese employees in future who's come to work in Norway or even other country.

In addition, a study of the case of Nepalese employees in Norway is interesting and enlightening for two reasons. First, Nepalese employees have two experiences as employees in Nepal and Norway. What do they experience as an employee in Nepal and Norway? How do they posit themselves and how are they being positioned in different places having different cultural, tradition, religion, and society at the workplace. Second,

they have resettled for their job in Norway, one of the most developed countries in the world, which have high technologies, high education level, and living status. It is important to know how they are adapting and managing their own social- cultural situation and religion at the workplace. Therefore, the main purpose of the study is to identify and explore "The impact of cultural and religious diversity at the workplace" of Nepalese employees in Norway with focus on their Norwegian workplace experiences.

The research is carried out using case studies in some chosen workplaces. The following research questions are formulated.

- How does cultural and religious diversity affect Nepalese employees in Norway in their workplace?
- Do they experience religious discrimination and if so, how does it impact their spiritual belief and work performance in their workplace?
- To what extent, and it what ways do cultural and religious diversity create misunderstanding, communication breakdown and problems in the interaction process?

1.3 Methodologies

1.3.1 Research Methodology

The research method used to carry out this study is focus on individual interviews where there is the interaction between the participants as important as the discussion of the topic. It further involves organized discussion with a selection of individuals, who were interviewed to gain information about their opinions and experiences of a topic. This method is particularly suited for a researcher interested in obtaining several perspectives about the same topic (Morgan, 1998; Gibbs, 1997).

Location where case of study was conducted is shown in Figure 2 below. +

Figure 2: Location Map of Trondheim in Norway where the Study was carried out

Source: Google Map

The analytical method chosen for this study have done a thematic analysis. This enable the researcher to work thematically with qualitative data collected through the focus group interviews. A naturalistic qualitative research approach is used to understand phenomenon in content specific settings where research does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon. This refers to a research about persons' feelings, emotions, attitude and perspectives, worked and lived experiences, and behavior that can be reflected in one's daily life, institutions and organizations (Patton 2002).

Hence, a research of this thesis mainly requires recoding of Nepalese employees with their daily actions, reactions, attitudes, behaviors, feeling, and practice in they diversity of their workplace environment. The primary source of data is interviews and participant's observation. The participants' observation under this research, the research not done at the Nepalese employees' workplace but observed in Nepalese party, ceremony, and festivals. The record was about their routine days but the researcher try to focus on a way of life at their workplace and an observer to whom someone can describes the experience of their life at the Norwegian workplace. Sets of open-ended questionnaires were used to collect qualitative data.

The qualitative and quantitative methods have different logic and strengths; they are not simply doing the same things differently. The qualitative and quantitative used to address different themes, requirement, and questions. The main strength of qualitative method applies inductive approach that focuses on specific situation and people and its emphasis goes on words rather than number (Maxwell 2005).

The qualitative studies have five major proposes that Maxwell (2005) have mentioned and they are suitable for;

- Understanding the meaning
- Understanding the particular context
- Identifying unanticipated phenomenon influences and generated new-grounded theories
- Understanding the processes by witch events and actions take place
- Developing causal explanation

Therefore, this thesis requires qualitative methods for study and explores the cultural and religious diversity at the workplace.

Qualitative research takes into account the facts that are found in specific content settings. It does not consist of pre assumptions. The importance of qualitative methodologies is to see the social world which is constructed through the interaction of cultural, economic, social and political processes, but do not seek what can be measured. This methodology is a proper way to understand lived experience, interpret the understanding, and share meaning of people's everyday social worlds and realities (Limb and Dwyer, 2001).

1.3.2 Research Design

Research design is the way to arrange ideas for collection and analysis of data. It is the way of using proper and specific methods in a manner that is relevant to the specific research issue. Moreover, it is the conceptual structure within which the research is conducted. According to Bryman (2008, 31), a research design is the method to provide a framework for the collection and analysis of data. A tentative field study plan is attached in appendix 1.

As mentioned earlier, this study is mainly based on interviews but data is gathered from the primary and secondary sources. The primary data sources are from the individuals through in-depth interviews: face-to-face, telephone and Skype interview. The secondary data were collected through literature reviews that are related to the study. As the effective way of using the literature, the perspective of Becker & Richards is followed (2007, 141) where he said

> *"Scholars must say something new while connecting what they say to what's already been said, and this must be done in such a way that people will understand the point"*.

Further, I looked at websites and try to find some previous field studies on similar topics. Specifics about the data sources, methods and their justification regarding to the three research questions are enclosed to appendix 2

1.3.3 Data Collection Methods

Qualitative research is based in the assumption that persons construct social reality in the form of meanings and interpretations. It is also used to gain insight into people's attitudes, behaviors, value systems, concerns, motivations, aspirations, culture or lifestyles. Focus groups, in-depth interviews, context observation, narrations, life history among the many formal approaches that are used, but qualitative research also involves the analysis of any unstructured material, or reports. The selection of suitable methods depends on the purpose of the study. Considering the research questions of this thesis, the researcher has applied open-ended interviews and observation as primary qualitative data collection methods.

Open Ended Interview

Since the research objects are the experiences of Nepalese employees in their workplace, in-depth interviewing allows us to gain knowledge about their impact of culture and religious diversity in their workplace, as it is the main purpose is to collect the interviewee's point of view. This is gives insight us to know on what interviewees see relevant and important for them. The qualitative research interview seeks to describe the meaning of central themes in the life world of the subject. The main task in interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say (Kvale 1996).

The interviews are primarily based on the conversations of the impact of their life at their workplace due to divers of culture and religious. The researcher has controlled the focus areas and limit of the conversations with the interviewees having different types of job. Therefore, if the interviewees not understand the questions it is possible for the researcher to explain the questions until the interviewees understand the questions. There were six man and four women for the in-depth interviews. The list of the respondents with their code, job position, age and sex is given in the appendix 3. Informants were coded, and all the names were changed to keep anonymous.

The open-ended interview consists with the set of open-ended questions that prepared cautiously and pre-arranged in advance. The interviewer used to ask the same questions

to each respondent following the same words and the sequence because it is useful for the interviewer to get the same information from each interview. Anyhow is the interviewer not understand the questions or the meaning the researcher will explain at first. After interviewers understand the questions or meaning than the researcher will repeat the questions again It is an effective way to collect qualitative data when there is time constraint for participant observation. If the interviewee does not understand the question or the meaning of questions, for example the meaning of spirituality, the researcher explained that word at first and after the interviewees understand then the researcher repeated the question again.

Focusing on the main research objectives, around 17 questions were prepared as an interview guide. The interview guide was thematically divided according to four main categories of questions as following; all the respondents were asked about this main category questions;

- Background information.
- Information about workplace.
- Perspectives on religion and spiritual belief in workplace.
- Interaction, communication, and relationship in workplace.

Direct questions were connected to how they think and live in diversity in Norway and how they constructing their life at Norwegian workplaces in diversity environment in Norway. During interview if respondents were already addressed the answer during the explanation that related or connected with other question, the question were removed out at the time of interviewing. The interview guide was pretested and modified accordingly, and is attached in the appendix 4. Inform letter to explain guide line and objective of this study was send it by mail to the interviewees before start to interview which is attached appendix 5.

A warm up meeting was set before each real interview. Time and place of the interviews were set up at the time of warm up meeting in most of the cases and the few were

appointed through phone calls (and Skype). The interviews typically lasted for about one and a half hour, but in some cases it took less than one hour. Due to their less knowledge about the understanding of religious, cultural and spiritual terms, their answers used to be so short sometimes. In these cases, terms and concepts in the questions were first explained including how they can potentially be used religious, cultural and spiritual terms in a workplace. After explanation, they found it easy to answer and they did answer more. However, in some cases it took two up to two and half hour due to the fact that they wanted to talk more and they explain more about their experiences of their problems at the workplace to which the researcher did not intend to interrupt. During the interview the researcher did not experience any serious any misunderstanding due to the fact that interviewees and the researcher mainly used English language and sometimes Nepali to communicate with each other.

The informal conversational interviews had also occurred spontaneously in the course of case study. The topics and the wording of questions were not pre-determined and the questions emerged from the immediate context were asked. An unstructured format allows respondents to talk about a topic of their own "frame of reference". That means this also make the interviews where interviewer can get a greater understanding of the interviewees' point of view (Kitchin and Tate 2000, 215).

Usually, the Nepalese employees could be met around Trondheim. They live around Moholt and Nardo areas and where interviews are conducted. Sometime informal conversations tool place around shopping center, groceries and etc. During the interviews and informal conversations, various topics were discussed for example regarding the increasing prices at the grocery, their experiences of daily life, their personal opinion about the working experience in Norway, their problem of finding jobs, their relationships with Norwegian friends, their problem of Norwegian language skills.

Observation
Observation is the inductive method of data collection. This inductive method involves looking and listening very carefully to discover particular information about the subjects'

behavior. It requires that the researcher becomes a participant in the situation, patterns, culture and context being observed. The role of observer as a participant is to collect data, note, and store the observed data and analyze them. The observations are the ways to assume natural phenomena of interviews. Therefore, it demands longer time; it can take a month or more than that for intensive work. Usually, the observational data consists of detailed information about the context and subjects, which provide deeper and richer understanding of the issues (Kitchin and Tate 2000, 220).

The different thing between interview and observation is that interviews are self-reports of participants about their experiences, opinions and feelings. On the other hand the observations rely on the observer's ability to interpret what is happening and why it is happening. The main advantage of the observation is its directness. The researcher watches what participate do and listen to what they say rather than asking about their experiences, feelings and views (Kitchin and Tate, 2000).

According to the Dewalt and Dewalt´s (2002) perspective, observation is a tool of gathering data on the explicit and tacit aspects of people's life routines and their culture. Moreover Spradley (1980) says that explicit culture is a part of what we know, "a level of knowledge people can communicate about with relative ease" (Dewalt and Dewalt 2002, 1). In contrast, tacit aspects of culture are outside of our awareness, knowledge and consciousness. For example, in Nepalese culture when women get married other Nepalese used to call that women as "Bhauju" which mean they are respected that person even they are same age or if somebody touches us that mean she/he is too close with us.

Patton (2002) says that our cultures shape what we see, our socialization patterns form how we look at (perceive) the world, and our value systems tell us how to interpret what is around us. Therefore, as Patton explains, a disciplined training and rigorous preparations on observational methods are needed for the researchers to conduct scientific inquiry. It is also true that different people see the events differently. What people see and make an idea about events depends on their interests, knowledge, backgrounds and cultural setting.

In this thesis, the researcher used both participants with the respondent of interview and participant observation at their event to collect the qualitative information. At the beginning, a researcher always participated with their event, culture, and even informal party. In this ways a researcher gets chance to meet a lot of Nepalese employees in Trondheim and observe their behavior and their activity. Regular meeting made us close to each other than it is easier for a researcher to focus of participant observation. This relation also helped a researcher later to gain more information during the interviews with interviewees later.

Although a topic in this thesis is focused about workplace but participant observation under this study did not take part directly participant's workplace due to the fact that it is difficult for get access for the researcher to their workplace. As the solution to get the data, the researcher used chances to observe participants at Nepalese event, party and ceremony. This observation helped the researcher to get data of their daily activities, rituals, worship, traditions, spiritual belief, interactions with community, and perspective towards Norwegian workplace. Moreover, this observation is used use to help the researcher to get more data about their perspective and attitude what they think and feel in their Norwegian workplace environment even not indirect but at least gain some more information.

Observation of Nepalese culture and religious was started from the middle of December 2011. But my interest about the impact of diversity in workplace in Norway (in terms of Nepalese employees) originates long before my arrival to Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) as an exchange student. I was more attentive to know about the impact and issue of diversity at their workplace situation from the beginning of my arrival in Norway, September 2007.

Moreover, the connection with the Nepalese society became easier basically from two reasons; first Nepalese language is my third language; second I am fairly familiar with the Nepalese culture, tradition. Also, Hindu religion (their religion) and Buddhism (my religion) are not so far from each other. This helped me to be close, familiar and

communicate better with my interviewees. One aspect is similarity of Hinduism and Buddhism, and the other aspect is my familiarity with Nepali language, together became powerful means to be close and familiar with each other with interviewees. Similarly, values of beliefs and practice of religious, culture, and tradition where a person's sentiments attached were also attracting us to be close to each other. One of the respondents explained to me in my first visit to her showing empathy as:

> *"...some of our rites and rituals were the same to the Buddhists, we used*
> *to pray some God together or even belief with the same thing for example*
> *I also go the Buddhist temple to pray Buddha even I am Hindus..."*

I also found some problem during observation. For example, sometimes the observation was conducted in party so the interviewee was not so much interesting and serious to talk and answer about their problem at the workplace. The researcher tried to solve this problem by making the conversation in general like we both talk as normal topic and then try to focus on the areas that the researcher world like to know but in the same time not make the interviewees feel difficult with the topic. This way helped the researcher so much to get chance to talk more and get more information from Nepalese employees with their problem at the workplace and more information with their culture, religion, tradition.

1.3.4 Secondary Data Source

Secondary data are the data that were developed for other purposes than the particular issue of the researcher. The secondary data can be in both of quantitative and qualitative method. The quantitative data can be obtained from census, various forms of electronic devices, electronic statistics, social survey, and so on.

In this study, the governmental websites of Norway, Nepalese society in Trondheim website, government website of Nepal, related books, and journal papers have been used as secondary data sources to take the additional information for example present status, and the problem of culture diversity at the workplace of minority employee. Similarly,

previous studies on various cases regarding the issues of the impact of culture and religious diversity at the workplace have been reviewed to gain insights for both methodological and theoretical purposes. Country maps have been taken from the Google map. Journal papers on ethnicity and nationalism, and identity issues have been reviewed to get an insight into knowledge on the cultural and religious diversity at the workplace case.

1.3.5 Fieldwork

In the qualitative fieldwork there is no straightforward rules and special methods. Each new research can discover him/herself what is required to fulfill the research objectives. As Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, 20) stated that "ethnographic research cannot be programmed, that its practice is replete with the unexpected". The fieldwork for this thesis was conducted to take primary qualitative data.

It was held in Trondheim, Norway from middle of December 2011 to middle of February 2012. The data collection tools (notebook, pen, paper, mobile tape records) were applied to collect the qualitative data. The duration of each of interview was from one hour to one and half hours. The personal information from the interviews is not (and will not be) used in other purposes and it will not be distributed without their approval. This was clearly informed in the letter of information handed out to the interviewees.

For the interviews, I prepared an interview guide in advance and used it as a guideline. I was also flexible in rephrasing questions when necessary. I took note and used tape recorder for each individual interview. After each interview, I re-checked my notes by re-playing recorded the tape records to make sure that all information I noted down was correct. But the some interviewee did not like tape recorder; so I had make only notes during an interview. In-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted after the fieldwork approval from NSD Bergen at the middle of December 2011. Because of tight schedule of weekdays, even weekends were used for in-dept interviews. Interviews were ended at the middle of February 2012.

Some interviews were conducted over a phone. It was easier for both of us (I and interviewees) to arrange and manage time in the busy schedule. Some respondents were busy with their research in lab at the office and other integration programs for example meeting in office, language classes and other daily practical things. In weekends, they intended to enjoy themselves organizing get together or spending time with family members. Some weekends they had been asked to join integration programs organized by Nepalese Society in Trondheim. Sometimes I engaged their get together program for observation.

I also found some problems while conducting phone interviews. Sometimes respondents were not able to talk (properly) on the phone or I can contact them in time due to technical problems such as low battery in mobile, no signal reception and so on. When that happened, I asked for new schedule using phone or by email. Moreover, due to the fact that talking over the phone we could not be able to see face to face, this did not make any big problem with misunderstanding during interview but in some cases the respondents could not hear the questions properly or could not understand the question. In such cases, I just explained them and than they did answer in more detail.

1.3.6 Sampling method and Field Notes

The criteria of sampling method were mainly focused on Nepalese employees in Norway and belief in Hindus religious only. At first, Nepalese employees in Trondheim were contacted to whom I was familiar before. They gave me preliminary information about the information of other person who has been employees in NTNU and other companies in Trondheim and a phone number of relatively active one. By this way I reached to the others employees in Trondheim and Oslo.

All the interviewed data were written on the notebook. Some of the key points of observation as well as in-depth interview were noted down in the different sheet of a paper that was elaborated at the same day after back to home. From various reasons tape recorder became useful. For example, in many cases, tape record became useful to re-check in notebook either it is correct information or not. In some cases, when an

interviewee is aware that conversation is being recorded, they became more conscious and seemed more scared or worried and sometimes this influenced their fluent way of responding. It might be because of fear that given information may be used wrongly. Sometimes, when the conversation went long, the recorder was unable to record because of memory limitation. The observation was focused on the subject areas of research questions. Some of the key information and important arguments were noted down which were elaborated later at the soonest time of possible. The secondary data had been taken to provide important background information.

1.3.7 Situatedness

Being partially situated within Nepalese culture and language, I got significant benefits during the interviews and observations. I participate and celebrated with their culture and tradition often. Furthermore, I can speak some Nepali language as well. I personally knew most of the interviewees before and we are friends to each other. Because of all these reasons, they felt confident that their information (given during interviews) will be not be disclosed without their permission.

They were more open to me for every question during the interview, so I assume that they did provide plenty of information openly and honestly. Most of them did accept my request for interview easily and this helped me to get started my interview process in time. Because of some language, cultural and religions matching, we understand each other easily during interviews. They provided good cooperation and there were no problem to manage or rescheduling interview times.

Should the situation be different, I may not get chance to interview them easily like this due to their busy schedule or other reasons. Furthermore, they may feel difficult to open and give enough (or plenty of) information for each interview question. Some misunderstanding and cooperation issues may have risen as well.

1.3.8 Data Analysis

The purpose of qualitative research is to seek the understanding from the respondent's perspective. An analysis of the data engages with the interpretation of the meanings of people's behavior, practices and actions. According to the Hammersley and Atkinson (2007,3) perspective "analysis of data involves interpretation of meanings, functions, and consequences of human actions and institutional practices, and how these are implicated in local, and perhaps also wider, contexts".

Data analysis and interpretation are required to convey order and understanding. Data analysis therefore requires creativity, discipline, and a systematic approach. Data analysis process can move back and forth between every step at anytime. Some basic fundamental steps that every researcher has to consider during the data analysis are: first the researcher must understand the quality of the data by repeatedly repeating it, and second the researcher has to identify a few key questions that she or he wants her or his analysis to answer. The analysis depends on the purpose of the evaluation and how the researcher uses the results (Taylar-Powell and Renner 2003).

Therefore, it is important to focus on how all individuals or groups responded to each question and how the answers maintained consistencies and differences. Moreover, it is important to explore the connections and relationships between questions. The researcher has to identify themes or patterns, for example ideas, concepts, and behaviors that she or he has to organize the information into coherent categories. The researcher has to identify the patterns and connections within and between categories. The researcher can create lager categories, relatively important themes, and relationships between two or more theme (Taylar-Powell and Renner 2003).

Results of data analysis are mentioned as summaries in this thesis. Each interview is used to review again to ensure uniformity, accuracy and consistency. While analyzing the data collected for this thesis, I read (several times) all the notes taken during interviews and only transcribe relevant sections of data from the correct note. I tried to present findings based on critical investigation of all data and not withhold any data in an effort to

influence my findings. The analysis has been done in subthemes of the study and later be added up together to get a general view of the study and make conclusions.

1.3.9 Research Reliability and Validity

Reliability is the assurance that the research is factual enough to be trusted for qualitative research. According to Kirk and Miller (1986, 41-42), meaning of reliability is the degree to which a measurement remains the same in the repeated actions; the stability of a measurement over time; and the similarity of measurements within a given time period. And validity refers to "you are observing, identifying, or measuring what you say you are" (Mason 1996 in Bryman 2008, 376). But it is quite stranger for the result, conclusions and inferences. As in qualitative research, it indicates that the research is sound enough, well grounded, justifiable and logically ordered.

According to perspective of Kitchin and Tate (2000), validity concerns about the soundness, legitimacy and relevance of a research theory and its investigation. The Interdependency between reliability and validity is "there can be no validity without reliability; a demonstration of the former is sufficient to establish the latter" (Lincoln and Guba 1985, 316). Bryman (2008) present alternative criteria for evaluating qualitative research between reliability and validity, they are *trustworthiness* and *authenticity*.

The trustworthiness means that the research is carried out according to the canons of good practice and the findings correctly represent the studied world. The latter concept is related to respondent's validation. It is a process whereby researcher provides the people to whom he/she has conducted with an account of his/her findings. Therefore, to make the study trustworthy the researcher should consider with credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

To explain this four consider, First, Credibility, and internal validity ensures that the researcher has studied what he or she has actually intended. This is the way to answers the question of how congruent are the findings with reality? They suggest researchers to

apply following provisions to have confidence that the researcher has accurately recorded the phenomena under scrutiny. Second, transferability, external validity is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations. Third, addressing the issue of reliability, dependability means if the work were repeated, in the same context, with the same methods and with the same participants, similar results would be obtained. Applying overlapping methods can enrich dependability, for example, focus group and individual interview can be applied for the same issue. Dependability entails that findings are consistent and could be repeated. And the last, conformability is concerned with a degree of neutrality. It invokes that findings of a study are shaped by respondents but not by the researchers' bias, motivation or interest.

In this study, all of the four mentioned criteria are used as a combination of multiple methods to reduce the risk of systematic biases due to a specific method. For the qualitative data collection interviews, observations, photography, and government and other websites have been used to support and check one another's validity. Similarly, in this thesis the researcher guarantee that the provided information about respondents' personal and other sensitive issues will not be publicized in the future. The closeness with the respondents has also made me to reach the reality.

Chapter Two

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL APPROACHES

2.1 Previous Research

The study and research on the impact of cultural and religious diversity at the workplace has been increasing with the rapid growth of globalization. Many studies can be found which discuss different kinds of diversity due to migration. Mostly researches focus on attitude, psychological, practice, equal, discrimination, intercultural communication, relationship, and belief of migration worker. Some of them cover the areas of culture and religious problem at diversity workplace and some focus on effect about discrimination of religious of migration worker.

For example, Gellor (2003) concentrate on equality of human right, religious freedom and religions discrimination at the workplace such as will organization have accommodate for the employees or not , will organization have protected for the right of employees by law or not(Rollins 2007, 1). Guidroz, Kotrba and Denison (2005-2009); and many other studies focus on how to do management and create the best practice for the employees at the diversity workplace.

Relating to the practice of cultural diversity at the workplace Mazur presents concepts of diversity and what are important dimensions of diversity. This study, Mazur (2010) keeps into account about why all the dimensions have influence for the employees and organization; and comparative analysis about how cultural diversity became homogeneity at the workplace. Mazur presents how dimensions of diversity have positive and negative effects on organizations, and gives examples on the basic of the review of features specific for orthodox and catholic culture. The phenomenon of orthodox group and catholic group presented about the differences of their believers, value and attitudes. This differences characteristic will be visible in companies operating in culturally diverse regions. Moreover, this research of Mazur shows that the research of cultural diversity

brings high value and benefit to organizations by creating a competitive edge and increasing work productivity. Moreover, the managers and supervisors on workplaces maintain that the diversity must be learned and that they must teach themselves and others in their organizations how to work in a multicultural environment. The population in some countries is increasing while in other countries it is decreasing. The labors are migrating from one country to another and therefore from one culture to another. This suggests that workplaces are consisting of more and more diverse employees. Managing and valuing cultural diversity at workspace may improve productivity and may result competitive advantages to a company (Mazur 2010, 5).

As this research is looking at Nepalese Hindus inside Christianity society, a related research about encounter between Hinduism and Christianity has been found that in the work of Marianne C.Qvortup Fibiger's *Multireligiousity Meets Theology: The Sri Lankan Tamil in Denmark.* This previous research explores how a Hindu denominator Srilankan Tamil constructs one's Hinduism in Christian community of Denmark. She finds that both denominators co-exist peacefully respecting each other. Nevertheless, this peaceful coexistence gives birth to different identity. Hindus are successful in maintaining the purity of Hinduism but simultaneously they respect Christianity too. (Fibiger 2003, 110-111).

The study on *"religious freedom and religious discrimination and the workplace"* which is done by Vickers (2008) gives an idea on how to protect their religion interest and how to solve their discrimination of religion at the workplace. This study presents that the freedom of employees might not be considered for organization but if the organization understand employees' religion and allow with their right of religion this will help employees have employment equality (religion and belief) and decreasing the problem of discrimination religion inside workplace also.

2.2 Cultural and Religious Diversity in the Workplace

Today, the diversity at workplace not only brings the obvious of differences of gender, race, and national origin, but also brings differences in religion and religious practices to

the workers in company. Regarding the issues of cultural and religious practices, Adam Geller (2003) of *The Salt Lake Tribune* asks, "Do employees have to accommodate these employees' religious needs or wants? Do employees have the right to practice their faith in the workplace? Are their right protected by law? The answer to all of the above is yes but not necessarily" (Rollins 2007, 1). According to Hillman (2004), for years Christians have often tried to deal and compromise with their faith while at work. And now a day there are many companies that deal with religion in their workplaces than ever before (Rollins 2007, 3).

Cultural and religious diversity in a workplace are important factors in businesses that organizations have to give attention. Some researchers say that in an international business organization, managers need to know and understand the culture or sub-culture of their foreign employees. It can be useful for the managers to work and understand their foreign employees and therefore avoid misunderstandings. The perspective of managers in international business, those who have work experiences with foreign employees, is that they should understand and acknowledge their employees' differences, such as their culture profiles and cultural environment as it can help the organization to have success in business (Punnett 2009, 47-48).

Moreover, the organizations should not overlook the cultural and religious background of their international employees since culture and religion is one part of human life and encounter. Generally, religious belief and values motivate human actions. Religion makes people have relationship to each other such as influencing their family, community, economy and political life. Religion is an important type of social life and the social dimension of life is an important part of religion (McGuire 2002, 1).

2.3 Dimensions of Diversity

To make a connection with people from around the world is just one dimension of people but in fact there also have issues like motivating people, structuring project and developing strategy. When employees have to work in multicultural environment the

question of how to understand these cultural differences at their workplace it may come to their mind.

Table1. Dimensions of Diversity

Primary dimensions	Secondary dimensions	Tertiary dimensions
• Race	• Religion	• Beliefs
• Ethnicity	• Culture	• Assumptions
• Gender	• Sexual orientation	• Perceptions
• Age	• Thinking style	• Attitudes
• Disability	• Geographic origin	• Feelings
	• Family status	• Values
	• Lifestyle	• Group norms
	• Economic status	
	• Political orientation	
	• Work experience	
	• Education	
	• Language	
	• Nationality	

Source: Mazur 2006, 7

Based on O'Reilly, Williams, & Barsade (1998, 186) perspective, diversity is a phenomenon create by a group member of people who's has different social identities and characteristic living in the same society (Mazur 2006, 5). Loden and Rosener (1991) define two dimensions of diversity. The primary dimension of diversity has primary influences on the identities of the people for example gender, ethnicity, race, sexual
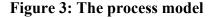
25

orientation, age and mental or physical abilities and characteristics. The secondary dimension of diversity is less visible and has variable influences on personal identities for example educational background, geographic location, religion, mother language, family status, work style and experience, military experience, organization role and level, income and communication style which can impact of our self-esteem and self meaning in life (Mazur 2010, 6).
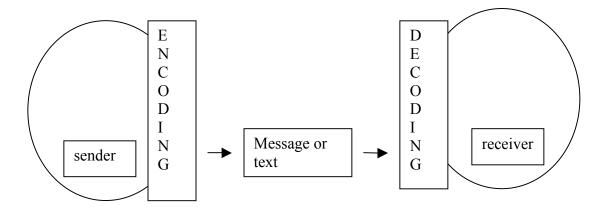
Covering all dimensions of cultural diversity is not the scope of this thesis. In this thesis, the researcher has study on primary and secondary dimensions. The primary dimension, the author focus on ethnicity and the secondary dimension the author focus with religion, mother language, work style and experience, and communication. The primary ethnicity dimension shapes our basic self-image as well as our fundamental worldviews. The secondary are exerting more variable influence on personal identity and add more subtle richness to the primary dimensions of diversity. These are listed in the Table 1 above.

2.4 Communications and Interaction Process

When international employees work with multicultural environment, communication and performance of interaction process plays a vital role. As the employees are from different cultures and religions, they can have different perspectives of worldviews. This intercultural communication may lead to misunderstanding among the employees in a workplace and this misunderstanding can affect the work progress and eventually may make problems in the business.

For example in the Master research of Mei Ying Ng (2009), she presented that Norwegian language skill are important for immigration workforce in Norway. Most of international worker considered that if they have poor Norwegian language skills it might be a bigger problem for them to find a job or even communication at their workplace. For example, one of these research respondents said, when you speak Norwegian and if your pronunciation in not correct, then your meaning can change in other ways and your communication might be misunderstanding. Misunderstanding can go to both ways; they do not understand you and you do not understand them.

Regarding the problem of intercultural communication, one study has said that if there is a common goal of intercultural communication then one is able to communicate effectively without distortions. But, the problem of communication is not the only communication but also a technical matter. Even when you transmit the original correctly, it is dependent on the receiver context and cultural background to assign meaning and received message. He or she might assign a different meaning than was intended by the sender. This is an all too common experience and source of frustration both for sender and receiver (Dahl 2003, 12). Figure 3 shows the communication process model between sender and receiver

Figure 3: The process model

Source: Dahl 2003, 12.

Dahl (1999, 59) has described that; one of the main difficulties in intercultural communication is that meanings are assigned to words, signs and events or actions by people with different backgrounds. Within a particular social or cultural group this means that the members will assign more or less the same meaning to the same event and utterances, thus facilitating a meaningful communication with in the group.

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2.5 Human Relationship in a Multicultural Context

More recently, culture is seen to include implicit and symbolic meaning. Culture sets rules and guidelines that inform society about the ways in which to experience and behave in the world. However, these rules can change or transmit over the time. That means that culture is complex and not static (Swartz and Rohleder 2008, 541). In a multicultural workplace consisting of employees from different countries and cultures, each employee may have different perspective of experiencing, understanding and behaving in the surrounding world. This may impact the human relationship among the employees in a workplace.

To be in a friendship with other employees in multicultural and diverse workplace might sometime be difficult for some employees due to different of cultural and religious perspective and practice. There are many theories which discuss friendship and explain the friendship relation and how it is formed. One theory of Wright (1984) emphasizes that friendship is a unique and important type of interpersonal relationship. It has a voluntary character and is characterized by a personalistic relationship. Further, it focuses on how individuals come to know and treat each other as whole persons, rather than simply role occupants (Adams 2005, 948).

Barnett and Lee (2002) have described that in an intercultural friendship there are differences and challenges. The differences are characterized between individuals' cultures and these differences bring unique rewards of intercultural friendship. These individuals' differences in cultural values or languages overcome enduring stereotypes. They gain unique cultural knowledge, broaden their perspectives and even break the stereotypes. The challenges are mainly due to the different meaning systems that individuals may have.

Different meaning systems increase the potential for misunderstanding, uncertainty, frustration and conflict when people exchange information (Adams 2005, 948). According to this, the problem of misunderstanding can broadly distribute representations about "enemyship". Wiseman and Duck (1995) have described that enemyship is a

personal relationship of hatred and malice and in which one person looked at another person as a hostile person or opposed to a policy. This person is one who actively tries to do damage, she or he acts like an opponent or creates downfalls. However, these constructions of reality will not happen with normal people in normal circumstances, especially not among friends or other intimate spaces (Adams 2005, 948).

Chapter Three

DATA PRESENTATION

In this chapter, qualitative data on "cultural and religious diversity at the workplace" of Nepalese employees in Norway are presented in descriptive way. As the main propose of this study is to illuminate their impact at the Norwegian workplace through as anthropological perspectives, the descriptive way and of as anthropological accounts helps us to reach to understanding the situation of cultural and religious diversity at the workplace of the world.

The presented data is about the Nepalese employees in Norwegian workplace and the presented data covers a number of the related research questions, which were presented in the introductory chapter: like what are their cultural and religious, how their life and the workplace different between Nepal and Norway, What is their problem at the Norwegian workplace and how they solve the problem, how they adapt their life at the new social like Norwegian workplace, and how they make friends relationship with Norwegian at the workplace and so forth.

3.1 Background Information

Most the Nepalese employees whom I interviewed have done their university degree (Bachelors and Masters). Some of them are working as PhD research fellows; some are working as Engineers and some as Teachers in Schools in Trondheim. Most of them are located in Trondheim and only one woman whom I interviewed is working in Oslo.

All of them are Hindus and most of them do also believe in Buddhist religion. They said even though they officially belong to Hinduism, they used to pray Buddhist God as well. They explained that there is not much difference between Hinduism and Buddhism in Nepal. However they think that other religions are quite different to theirs. Teaching and beliefs of both Hinduism and Buddhism religions are quite same for them. This

explanation gave me some surprise when I asked them what similarities they see between Hinduism and Buddhism are. One of respondents said, for example, *in both Hinduism and Buddhism we pray same God called "Laxami" – a god of money and gives good luck for them in their life*.

According to the interviewees Nepal is a country of rich cultures, traditions, and festivals, and they did participate in the festivals also in Norway if they had a chance. Nevertheless, all of them described themselves as a not so much religious person. This was confirmed in my observations. I saw that they used to celebrate their culture program only if culture program important festival for Nepalese community in Norway. In their daily life they are not so much engaged to religious activities – may be due to their busy time or some other reasons.

Even though some have been living abroad for a long time, they still very much respect their culture and tradition. Nepal has a lot of ethnic groups and castes, for example some of interviewees come from *Brahmin* family and some come from *Chhetri*, and some from *Gurung*. When I asked them how people could recognize who come from which ethnic groups or caste, their answers surprised me, as well. They said it is not easy to recognize who come from which ethnic groups or caste until that person tells them. And they explained that castes are just the symbols of Nepalese people for telling level either where you from hi, middle, or low. And in the other hand, castes are just the way to spread Nepalese ethnic gropes. Figure 4 shows Nepalese dressed from different castes while they were performing some cultural events in Trondheim, Norway. Cultural dresses is one of the main parts of their identify, even at their workplace.

Nepal has a lot of festivals as a part of their cultures and traditions. Some interviewees said if they stay at their home country they used to participate with their festivals often, but after arriving in Norway they get less chances to participate due to various difficulties: no temples or difficult to go to temples (if any), and limitation of time for example to take leave from work and go to celebration. NP 7 mentioned that

"I use to participated almost all of my festivals and traditions but after I arrived in Norway I have chance to go to the temple and pray God only one time in a year."

Figure 4: Dress culture from different casts

Photo: Field data 2012

3.2 Participation in religious and spiritual activities

It is a quite surprise for the researcher at this topic hence when the researcher asking about how often they participation of their religious and spiritual activity, after interview, most of the interviewees has answered quite same. Most of respondents said that, in Nepal they always used to participate in their religious and culture activities, but after they had settled in Norway this participation seems to decrease. This is not because they

forgot their religion, but because they did not get the chance to participate as often as when they stayed in Nepal.

They sometimes participate in religious activities like visiting temples or praying to God, because they understand it as a way to uplift one's self-confidence. They feel more confident once when they pray to God. NP 2 mentioned

> *"I am not a regular follower of religious and spiritual activities but follow some must activities. For example in Hindu culture, we have to take bath in early in the morning and invoke Gayatri mantra. However, I used to take bath but do not invoke mantra and I don't hold a scared thread Janai."*

Figure 5: Integration religious activity: Dashin Festival in Norway at 2011

Photo: Observed data 2011

Most of the respondents said that they even not have a temple to go to pray to their God as in Nepal, but in Norway there also are some good temples where they can go some time for special occasions. Data according to answers of interviewees and also from their observation by the researcher, most of Nepalese employees in Norway celebrate at their festivals and other cultural functions without affecting their work life. Nepalese community in Trondheim manages most of their events at Moholt ICOT. In figure 5 at above shows about Dashin party, Nepalese society in Norway always used to arrange this party every year due to this is a big festival in Nepal.

Dashin is a festival they celebrate like a new year where elder used to put "red tikka" and feed some fruit for the young people and bless for their good luck in present and future. Nepalese in Norway used to pray them God such as "Vishnu God" or "Laxami God" at their home for bless good luck for themselves and for family. Some interviewees also mentioned that they have asked their colleagues to participate in some of her cultural events and the result she felt was mix- some liked while others now. Overall, it was a nice experience and helped her to make their friendship better at workplace.

All the interviewees said that they are not regularly following religious and spiritual activities because of their limited of their free time and some because of negative attitude of their religious activity. For example from some of interviewees perspective said that, sometimes these activities rank people and dominate people from one case to another cases. So, that means that these types of activities do not make any sense for them. But anyhow for other person, they do not celebrate because they don't have time to participate and they use alternative methods just to feel good For example, NP 8 mentioned

> *"I don't usually go to temple in a regular basis although I go to both Hindu and Buddhist temples occasionally. About spiritual activities, I do listen to some spiritual songs sometimes and that help me to feel better if I fell not so good with something."*

3.3 Perspectives of Nepalese in Context

For them, Nepal is a very beautiful country from several perspectives such as nature, culture, heritage, and architecture to name a few. The majority of people in Nepal follow Hindu religion, though others also exist. Most of the cultural activities are tied to the Hindu festivals and are governed by the Hindu practices such as *Dashin*, *Tihar,* and *Teej* festivals which are celebrated with family members. From my observations by participating in *Dashin*, *Tihar,* and *Teej* festivals in Trondheim, it was amazing to see that celebrating these festivals is not only for showing their respect to their religions and cultures but also somehow this opens up the ways to make most of Nepalese people visit each other, be more close and be like family with each other. Some said these types of events helps them not to feel lonely and feel like you are in your own community and this has positive impact in their workplace and work-like. For example they can talk to colleagues and show pictures about these events they their informal meetings and gathering such as lunch times in their office in Norway.

There are several ethnic groups in Nepal and there could be some differences in practices from one such group to another. Most of respondents explained that the positive thing about Hindu religion and its customs are that it teaches one to be polite, disciplined and honest.

Their religion also respects certain animals such as dog, cow and bulls. Some of the respondents have some negative feelings about Hindu religion about its animal sacrifice tradition. While many claim that sacrifice is not exactly a demand by religion itself, many people practice it on the name of god and culture. They find it appalling and inhumane. So far, they satisfied with the culture and tradition and happy being Hindu people. One interviewee as a as assistant teacher and she is vegetarian since born, she responded

> *"I really don't like when I saw other people have to kill animal I feel this is inhumane and my family also think the same that's the reason why we do not eat any meat but I do understand that is because of our culture so we have to accept it."*

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Some of those traditions are created to dominate so called low caste people by so called high caste people. Most of them said these behaviours / superstitions should be changed. Both Hindu and Buddhist religion in Nepal especially in Kathmandu is mixed. Most people follow both religions. Most of the interviewees told that they don't follow any cast system among Nepalese (employees and students) in Norway. They are somehow influences by equality system and structure they have seen in their Norwegian workplace and society.

Most of the festivals in Nepal are not only religious festival for them but also are the times when all the family members gathered to celebrate together; it is a good time and moment for them. Therefore it is good to be a big family. In this regards, respondent NP9 explained

> *"In Nepal people use to live as a big family and take care of each other,*
> *so parents take care of kids and kids after grown up take care of parents.*
> *Its good most of the times and but one bad thing is people want son*
> *instead of daughter due to religious belief".*

However, some said that the situation is changing compared to earlier times but still it is there. It is sometimes a way helping to keep the society male dominated.

3.4 Stay with diversity of cultures, religions, and traditions

All of Nepal employees find it comfortable to live in a place that has diversity in cultures, religions and traditions. NP 2, who was working in a multinational company with diverse peoples, explained that

> *"Living and working in diversity helps me to understand the lifestyle of*
> *those people and also how lifestyle is somehow governed by the religion*
> *and its practices and also vice-versa."*

Most of the interviewees said that they feel loneliness when they don't get a chance to celebrate their own festivals and Norwegian people don't celebrate the festivals that Nepalese celebrate. Sometimes they feel uncomfortable, as they do not have (or do not get) holidays from their work at the time of their festivals where they used to have holidays back in Nepal. Another feeling is that sometime the extremist people in the religious groups tend to act stupidly in the name of religions and that makes them feel uncomfortable. But their solution is just try to understand and compromise with those thing.

Even though they do not feel good that they did not get a chance to celebrate their own festivals, some Nepalese employees in Norwegian workplace said that they adapted their life to enjoy Norwegian celebrated festivals such as celebrated Christmas days or go to visit Olav Church in Trondheim or participating in 17th may parade and so forth. Some of respondent said at my workplace during Easter and Christmas Eve Norwegian people in office always enjoy their life, company used to have dinner/party and have some gift for the employees and this also make them happy and feel good. So, to construct their life at diversity culture, religious, and tradition is no problem for them. In summary, according to observation and interviewed data, most of they Nepalese employees seem to be quite positive to stay at diversity culture, religious, and tradition in Norwegian workplaces.

3.5 Problems at the workplace

At the workplace in Nepal, Nepalese employees are majority group but in Norway they became minority groups at the workplace. Most of Nepalese employees in Norway have job same as the job they had in Nepal so most of them feel happy with their job. However, when they work in Norway, there is a multi-national environment in their workplace and most of people whom they work with are from different parts of the globe. An interviewee who works as a programmer said as following.

> *"In Nepal I do not have any foreigner employees but in Norway in my*
> *office mainly people are Norwegian but they also many foreigner*

employees from abroad most form Europe and very few from other Asian countries and I don't have any feel uncomfortable to work with them".

All of the Nepalese employees mainly interact with other employees through emails and phone. Most of Nepalese employees in Norway said that they had no problem working with people in home country but however, in Norway sometimes they have problem in communicating things, but this is not always due to culture and tradition but mainly due to language problems. In nutshell, all of them have positive perspective to have diversity in workplace.

> *"When I started to work in Norway first time, I feel uncomfortable and a bit sad when other employees complained or comment me in direct words that words make me hurt. But after I understand about the life style, culture and tradition of Norwegian people I do understand and I also adapted to use with myself. When I have some opinion or idea I will tell them in direct ways and I realize that the good thing to not keep inside"*.
> NP8 added.

Some of them no have work experience in other countries except in Nepal before coming to Norway. There are positive images for Nepalese employees in their work place in Norway. Most respondents said that here in Norway, they can have a definite working style and they follow it as strictly as possible. They also have social activities now and then. So they would say the environment at workplace is very good, positive and productive.

Almost all of Nepalese employees have colleagues from European countries and all of them mainly follow Christianity. Nevertheless, they haven't had any problems working with them because during the work they use English language for communication. They feel and understand that people in Norway are not racist and do not hesitate in speaking English language.

3.6 Religious and spiritual beliefs at workplace

By religion all the interviewees are Hindu. They follow the religious festivals and used to believe that religion in a way divides people. But surprisingly, they do not find any signs that religions are dividing employees in their workplaces. They feel comfortable with other employees having different religion and so do others at their workplace.

Most of them think that humanity is the best religion. Moreover most of them also like Buddhist teachings. They find them encouraging and practical. Somehow they have belief in religions and spiritual but all of them are not blind supporters for religious or spiritual activities. They don't think about spirituality in most of the activities at workplaces. Many of them even do not know the meaning of it. When I explained the meaning of spiritual belief in workplaces one of the interviewees (NP6) started to explain as following.

> *"As I'm a Dentist I always think during when I work I suppose to be careful and honest with patient because if I do not be careful the patient may be get more hurt and that's not good, it is can call spiritual belief?"*

It can be said that most of the (interviewed) Nepalese employees don't have effects of religions and spiritual beliefs at their workplace. In their opinion, it is good to have good mixture of people from different diversity at workplace. All of them have quite same opinion regarding the importance of religious and spiritual beliefs in workplace. NP 5 mentioned that

> *"Due to the nature of my work, religion and spiritual beliefs are not important or relevant at all. However, I very interested about the religion. For me, religious and spiritual belief does not affect my work"*.

All Nepalese employees in Norway do not have any problems with their job or in a workplace due to spiritual and religion reasons. They even did not use their religion and spiritual belief to help them to find any solution or to improve the situation at workplace.

Moreover, they did not feel or experience before (or at the present) any religious discrimination in their workplace. They did not feel any discrimination based on their race either. Most of their colleagues at their workplaces are from Norway. Although they are religious, Nepalese employees found them open to other religions and they don't feel so much uncomfortable.

3.7 Understanding of interaction at workplace

All Nepalese employees know and aware that language is a powerful mean of interaction. Some of them frequently said that language was becoming barrier for them to be close to Norwegian colleagues at their workplace. Because of this reason they try to learn and practice Norwegian language.

All Nepalese employees (who where interviewed) can speak *basic* Norwegian language. They use two languages i.e. English and Norwegian in their workplace. But the main language is English for their communication. Sometimes, they try to speak Norwegian, but communication goes towards misunderstanding and they switch to English. Anyhow they know that knowledge of Norwegian language is also very important due to the fact that most of the information, websites and some documents in their workplace are in Norwegian. They think that the language they use at their workplace is not making any problems to them as their supervisors and friends can use both English and Norwegian. However sometimes because of different pronunciations and dialects, they have to repeat the conversation couple of times to make correct understanding. Although they can communicate they cannot understand typical expressions like jokes as a part of their social life in workplace. NP 3 Mentioned

> *"I have to supervise students from first year at University who prefer Norwegian language for communication and I don't understand Norwegian language. So, I use English and when the students are discussing in a group, they use Norwegian language. That makes me little bit uncomfortable".*

Chapter Four

DISCUSSION

4.1 Ethnoscapes

The uneven impact of cultural and religious at the workplace can be seen in the Nepalese Hindus employees of their "diversity" in Norway. Because of the flows of new knowledge and interaction with the new norms, values, environment, and society, some of the previous notion has seems to be changed but not all. The social capital acquired in their homeland has not all lost its meaning and significance. Moreover, the culture, tradition, and religious patterns are celebrated in organized and collective way even when they are far a way from their homeland. According to Appadurai (2001) he has argued that, it is because of motion of objects we live. These objects include knowledge, ideas and ideologies, people, values and norms, goods and images, and messages, technologies and techniques. According form the data presentation, Nepalese employees can adapt to their life in the Norwegian society, Norwegian culture and tradition. The positive of their orientation and adaptation of culture between Nepalese culture and Norwegian culture used to help them to stay in Norwegian society and environment easy.

According to the data presentation from chapter 3, the issues or concerns regarding cultural problems at workplace of Nepalese Hindus employees in Norway were found to have three main reasons. First, Nepalese employees don't have enough time to celebrate their religious rituals and festival every culture due to their tight schedule. Second, staying in Norway it is difficult to find a Hindu temple easily or take leave from office to go to celebrate every cultural festival and tradition. Third, they somewhat enjoy and are comfortable to celebrate Norwegian culture and tradition and not feel negative about participating in it. Even though Nepalese Hindus do not get chance to celebrate all the festivals, they do remember their culture inside their mind. Based on this it can be said or described that Nepalese employee in Norway are some sort of "Ethnoscapes".

Appadurai (2008, 52) described the concept of "Ethnoscapes" relating peoples waves to other country. He means that Ethnoscapes is about the people from their landscapes shifting to the world in which they want to live such as immigrants, refugees, employees, or other moving groups. Ethnoscapes are "the landscapes of group identity" and they are in particular no longer bound to certain territorial locations. Another scholar Puri says that it is difficult to separate ethnicity and national identity since both are understood as a form of solidarity shared culture and shared descent. Ethnicity is some kind of peoples (groups) identity based on shared cultural belief and practices such as language, history, and religions (Ojeili&Hayden 2006, 155-156).

However, is this true for all? This is a difficult question to answer. This does not only happen with Nepalese employees in Norway, but also happened in other countries. These are some cases in the literature where people in second, third or so forth generations slowly diminish the continuousness and practices of their original identity. Some groups may even forget or may not take it seriously as their ancestors. For example, some new-modern Chinese in oversea hold and practice with their new identity and do not think it is necessary to follow their own original culture (Ong 2008, 173).

The phenomenon of social development of Nepalese in Norway is positive attitude. They have adapted and construct their life in the new society, but this does not mean (based on the collected data) that they will forget or not follow their own original culture. As they experience a freedom to participate in every culture Nepalese employees do not have so many problems staying in a diverse culture workplace in Norway. That they can organize their life to join Norwegian culture and festival is a good illustrative example of that.

Regarding cultural homogeneity and diversity at the workplace, Earley and Mosakowski (2000) said that when the members stay together such as in the workplace it is possible that they will have a tendency to communicate with each other more often and in a greater variety of ways. They share their worldviews and a unified culture resulting from attachment to the group and its shared perceptions; this will make cultural homogeneity in groups even when the members are from different cultural pattern (Mazur 2010, 8).

Moreover according to the theory of Williams and O'Reilly (1998) it can be said that, cultural homogeneity management helps to decrease emotional conflict and increase the level of satisfaction for the groups (Mazur 2010, 8). This seems to be the case in the case of Nepalese employees working in Norway.
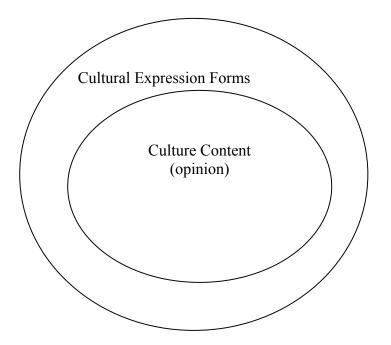
4.2 Cultural Diversity

The author has mentioned in the previous chapters about the diverse Nepalese culture. Nepal is the country of rich culture and mix with many traditions due to differences of ethnic groups. There are many ethnics groups in Nepal and spread the culture pattern can practice by different "caste". For example, there are many Nepalese in Norway came from *Brahmin, Chhetri*, *Newari* and *Gurung* cast, three of this cast quite majority groups in Norway. These differences of "caste" make Nepalese employees, among themselves, having different culture patterns and practices due to the fact that people coming from different cast will have some different belief and activities. For example, in Norway or even Nepal people who are *Newari* cast has their own language when they were in *Newar* groups at the workplace or even outside of workplace in Norway or even Nepal they usually prefer to speak *Newar* language because these make them to remember their *Newari* culture and the other hand this help them to get close relationship and comfortable to speak.

There are many scholars who tried to come up with the universal definition of the term *culture*. Cultural is about human thoughts, emotions, the meanings you assign to express forms, experiences and behavior. According to Dahl and Habert (1986), cultural and communication model is some kind of model that people have in culture, in their mind of the reality and for the action. But this model is not very clear about some distinction between cultural content and cultural expression forms. If one wants to get deeper and more thoroughly into the culture, she or he must have to understand the culture content behind the expression forms. This is expressed in Figure 6

Hofstede (1991) claimed that, culture is a group of people that will influence a lifetime of thought and processes, behavior, and actions. Culture is an ingrained behavioral influence

that affects the way collective groups approach, evaluate, and negotiate opportunities for international business. There are many countries, religions, cultures, ethnics, identities and traditions in global world (Johansen 2009, 13).

Figure 6: Description of culture

Cultural Expression Forms

Culture Content
(opinion)

Source: Dahl and Habert 1986

It is seen that Nepalese employees have positive perspective to live multi-cultural not even in their general life but also included with their workplace. Most of them have good attitude to live or works with people who come from different diverse culture. To live or work with diversity help them to gain more knowledge about how to work with multicultural group. Moreover, some said Norwegian employees at the workplace have good attitude, are polite, and open mind for other culture and due to this Nepalese employees feel comfortable to work with them. It may be due to the reason that Norway

is a country of diverse culture and many international Norwegian companies have knowledge on how to manage employees from different culture to work together as well.

4.3 Discrimination, Religious and Spiritual Belief

The issue of ethnicity-based discrimination on employment is also the one issue that can be found between majority and minority groups in Norwegian workforces especially with non-western immigrant's who try to find a job in the Norwegian workforce. This has been much-debated topic on media. For example from an article published in Aftenposten with the Mohamed case, he was a newly graduated master degree of NTNU and had had problem to get a job due to discrimination of ethnicity (Mei Ying Ng 2009, 1)

> *"I even went around to several relevant companies, such as Tine Meierier with CV, educational certificate and application. I asked to work there for free to get experience. But I never heard from anyone. When I called them again, they would say that hey did not have capacity. (...) Maybe I did not get interviews or feedback because I have different name. I don't know (Thorgrimsen 2008, July 21)."*

This case gives indication that Norwegian companies may not be normally looking for the peoples with minority background. The reason may be that they often do not have enough knowledge to handle the problem of discrimination at the workplace and also that the employees similarly may favor to work with the people from the same ethnic (Mei Ying Ng 2009, 39).

But it is surprising for the researcher under this study, no problems were found regarding the issue of discrimination of Nepalese employees. On the one hand there was found to be positive attitudes of Nepalese employees towards their workplace, no one demanded more advantages from the company such as weekends to celebrate their own festival, or to wear their traditional dress at the workplace like sari or cap, or a place to pray to God. They seem to understand where they live and how to adapt their culture with other

cultures. On the other hand, Norwegian workplaces seem to be fostering equality for the humanity, and the problems of discrimination at the workplace seem decreasing.

Equality for religion and belief has been made available for protection as employee's regulations 2003 in Norway as the development of the common law. Moreover in 1998, under the human right, public employers must respect and protect their employees (Vickers 25, 2008). Nepalese employees in Norway seem to be enjoying religious freedom at workplace and that is not creating any problems for their job at their workplace. According of Vickers (43, 2008), not everyone has a religious worldview, but in fact with those who is so much religious person it is important for them even being religious at the workplace.

Most of the Nepalese employees that the researcher had interviewed and observed did not understand so much about the difference between religion and spirituality. For them religion is the way to make people belief and spirituality is the way to have good practice according from the religion. For example when they get angry or upset with their supervisor or friends at the workplace, based on their religion they use the spiritual belief that they have to forgive them, otherwise their anger will not make them have good life. Forgiveness is the way that people transform from their negative felling to positive feeling. Thinking and feeling positively create the opportunity for the forgiving person and make a good relationship in their work and workplace (Thompson and Shahen 2002,405).

4.4 Intercultural Communication and Friendship at the Workplace
The meaning of "friend" is used to describe from a wide variety to relationships until from casual acquaintances to extremely close relationship. There is a considerable difference among individuals in the extent to which they have friends and the degree of closeness within these relationships (Hartup, 1966). Not only the communication but also friendship of Nepalese employees with other colleagues at their workplace is heavily affected by Norwegian language. Most of the Nepalese employees know and aware that Norwegian language is important for them at their workplace. Without Norwegian

language they have experienced difficulties to communicate with others at times. All Nepalese employees know that if they want to make close friendship or relationship with Norwegian employees at their workplace, the best way to start to that they suppose to know how to speak Norwegian language.

Duck & Pittman (1994) described that the relationships do not exist outside the partner involved but are social phenomena compounded in partner's interaction. At the same time, partner's perceptions of their relationship influence their communication with one another. This concept says that the communicative conceptualization indicates that relationship development is a communicative process (Sias et, al 2004). From the research of Sias and Cahill (1988), it can be said that communication between friends became increasing broad, frequent, and intimate, and decreasingly cautious, as the friendships grew closer. However, communication may function differently in the context of intercultural friendship development such as in different culture are often grounded in different language. Differences in language can provide barriers to the broad communication and shared understanding (Gareis, 2000).

Adam (2005, 951) has defined culture as explicit and implicit patterns of historically derived and selected ideas and their embodiment in institutions, practices, and artifacts. Sometimes culture defines the relation in friendship and the phenomena of their contact in diverse workplace are minimal due to fact that different people in different ways conceive of their relationship, the dimensions of friendship. The meaning of closed friends can across a variety of dimensions as descried in the studies of French, Pidada, and Victor (2005, 306). First, intimacy and disclosure provide one index of closeness. A second indicator of closeness is reliable alliance, which is the belief that friends can be depended upon for loyalty and emotional support. Third is longevity of relationship. Close relationship might be expected to take longer to develop, but once formed, last longer than relationships that are less close. Nepalese employees in Norway find it difficult to make close friendship but some are aware that it will take long time to that happen or to construct such friendship as they are in different cultural settings.

CONCLUSION

The research in this thesis is conducted within the context of Nepalese employees who were working in Norway as a minority group in their workplace. The research objectives were to explore how Nepalese employees feel and think about cultural and religious diversity in their workplace, how they interact with other employees in workplace environment, how Hindu religion (as a minority religion) plays a role in their life in workplace, and to what extent and how religious discrimination may affect Nepalese employees in their workplaces in Norway,

In order to fulfill the above-mentioned research objectives the following research questions were formulated: (1)

- How does cultural and religious diversity affect Nepalese employees in Norway in their workplace?
- Does religious discrimination give impact on their spiritual belief and work performance in their workplace?
- How does cultural and religious diversity make them have misunderstanding, communication breakdown and problems in the interaction process?

The research method used in this thesis is based on individual interviews. Set of questionnaires are carefully prepared and approved from NSD Norway. Interviews are considered as interaction between the participants and researcher where various topics are discussed. Data is also collected in by direct observation of participants at different of their cultural and other events. Data analysis is done based on the theoretical background on: Cultural and Religious Diversity in the Workplace, Religious and spiritual beliefs, Dimensions of Diversity, Communications and Interaction Process, and Human Relationship in a Multicultural Context. Data is summarized in chapter 3 and discussed in chapter 4 of this thesis.

The main finding and answer under this study the way of life at the Norwegian workplace of Nepalese employees are positive. Living in multi-cultural, religious, and society has not been change their original culture pattern from they host country. In other side, they aspect of working in multi cultural are good experiences from Nepalese employees in Norway. Even culture and religious patterns between Nepalese and Norwegian practice are different of their belief and their daily life but at the workplace culture and religious has not been effective and negative impact for them. Norwegian language is influenced for Nepalese employees as without this it is quest difficult for living in Norwegian society. But in opposite side, at the workplace Norwegian language not make Nepalese employees has problem because of almost Norwegian can speak English. Anyhow, for make friends relationship Norwegian language is quite influenced for Nepalese due to without unknown this language relationship might go slow.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Tentative Field Study Plan

	Description	50	51	52	1	2	3	4	5	6
		weeks 2011 until 2012								
1	Secondary Data Collection	■	■							
2	Observation	■	■	■						
3	In- depth face to face interview	■	■	■	■					
4	Telephone Interview (Skype)		■	■	■	■				
5	Draft Field Report Submission							■		
6	Final Field Report Submission									■

Appendix 2: Data Collection Methods and Justification

Research Question	Data Sources and Methods	Justification
1) How does cultural and religious diversity affect Nepalese employees in Norway in their workplace?	• Literature review including some theories on it	• Literature review on how cultural and religious diversity affect Nepalese employees in their workplace, hybridization gives theoretical understanding of their multiculturalism in their workplace
	• Secondary data analysis of others findings	• Secondary data analysis opens up the most important factors that could influence on the process of new cultural and religious affect with employees which might be similar to Nepalese employees case in Norway
	• In-depth interview • Observation	• In-depth interviews and Observation develop an understanding on people's interaction and communication with other employees at workplace.
2) Does religious discrimination give impact on their spiritual belief and work performance in their workplace?	• In-depth interview • Observation • Literature review	• In-depth interview and Observation reveal the inside understanding of their attitude and perspectives about discrimination and spiritual belief of Nepalese employees • Some ethnographic literature gives an understanding of ways of manifestation of beliefs, values and

		norms
		• Both reveal the influential factors that could play a role to manifest the social behaviors at workplace and so on.
3) How does cultural and religious diversity make them have misunderstanding, communication breakdown and problems in the interaction process?	• In-depth interview • Literature review	• Literature review and in-depth interview gives an understanding of importance of their communication, integration, and negotiation of Nepalese employees in Norway.

Appendix 3: The List of Respondents with Code

Code	Job Position	Age	Sex	Address (State/Commune)
NP1	Programmer	25-30	Male	Sør Trondelag, Trondheim
NP2	PhD Researcher (Computer)	30-35	Male	Sør Trondelag, Trondheim
NP3	PhD Researcher (Biology)	30-35	Male	Sør Trondelag, Trondheim
NP4	PhD Researcher (Hydropower)	30-35	Male	Sør Trondelag, Trondheim
NP5	PhD Researcher (Physics)	40-45	Male	Sør Trondelag, Trondheim
NP6	Dentist	30-35	Male	Sør Trondelag, Trondheim
NP7	PhD Researcher (Environment)	25-30	Female	Oslo
NP8	Electronics Engineer	25-30	Female	Sør Trondelag, Trondheim
NP9	Teacher	35-40	Female	Sør Trondelag, Trondheim
NP10	Teacher Assistant	25-30	Female	Sør Trondelag, Trondheim

Appendix 4: Questionnaires

Section 1: Background Information

1.   Can you briefly describe yourself, home country, religion, culture and tradition?

2.   How often do you participate in religious and spiritual activities? Explain me how and why? Do you have routine days?

3.   Can you tell me your perspectives (positives and negatives) about your home country, religion, culture and tradition? and give me the reason why?

4.   Do you feel comfortable or uncomfortable to live in a diversity of cultures, religions, and traditions? What aspects do you feel comfortable and what aspects do you feel uncomfortable with?

Section 2: Information about Workplace

5.   Can you please describe your job, your company, your friends, and problem (if any) at workplace in your home country and in Norway?

6.   Can you give details about and describe your workplace environment? Do you like it or not, and why?

7.   Do you have a work experience in other countries than your home country and Norway? If yes, how do you compare that workplace with your workplace in your home country and in Norway?

8.   Do you have a supervisor or colleagues from different countries, cultures, traditions, and religions in your workplace at Norway? Are you in minority or majority groups? Tell me how you feel or do you have any problem when you work with them?

Section 3: Perspectives on Religion and Spiritual Belief

9.   Do you have a religious or spiritual belief; give me the reasons why or why not?

10.   What you think about the impacts or effects of religious and spiritual beliefs at workplace?

11.   Are your religious and spiritual beliefs important in your work and workplace, tell me why or why not? If yes, tell me also how they are important?

12.   If you have had any problems with your job or in a workplace, do your religion and spiritual belief help you to find a solution or to improve the situation? If yes, can you tell how it helped?

13.   Have you felt or experienced, before or at the present, any religious discrimination in your workplace? If yes, can you please describe what sort of and how you respond or responded to this discrimination problem?

Section 4: Interaction, Communication, and Relationship in Workplace

14.   How many languages do you use at your workplace? How do you interact, communicate, and make relationship with your friends and/or supervisor in the workplace?

15.   Do you feel comfortable to work with your friends in a workplace if they are from a different religion, culture, or tradition than yours? Please tell me why or why not.

16.   Do you think that the language you use in your communication creates a problem when you communicate with your colleagues or supervisor in a workplace?

17.   Do you have any experiences when the communication language created misunderstandings in a workplace? If yes, how did you solve the problem and how did it affect your relationship with them?

Appendix 5: Additional information about my research:

Research Topic: Cultural and Religious Diversity in the Workplace: Experiences by some Nepalese employees in Norway

School: The School of Mission and Theology (MHS), Stavanger, Norway

Additional Information

Purpose of Research

The purpose of this research is to explore how the religious discrimination may affect Nepalese employees in their workplaces in Norway, how Nepalese employees feel and think about cultural and religious diversity in their workplace, and how they interact with other employees in workplace environment. In other words, it is to know how Hindu religion plays a role in their workplace in Norway.

How the interview will be conducted.
I will schedule a suitable time with you (the participant) to conduct face-to-face or Skype based interview. As a participant, you will be asked a set of questions related to the study. You may answer all questions based on your personal experience, perception and viewpoint.

Duration of Participation
The interview will take from one hour to one and half hours.

Benefits to the Individual
There may be no direct personal benefit from your participation but the knowledge received will be of value to Nepalese employees and Norwegian employees in future.

Confidentiality

Your anonymity will be maintained during data analysis and publication/presentation of results by any or all of the following means: (1) You will be assigned a number as *identity* and your name will not be recorded. (2) I will save the data file and the audio recordings by your *identify* number, <u>not</u> by your name. (3) No one else will view collected data in detail. (4) Any recordings or files will be stored in a secured location that can be accessed only by myself.

The School of Mission and Theology has approved the procedures of this study.

Voluntary Nature of Participation
You participation in this research will be voluntary. You can withdraw your participation at anytime during the process without penalty.

Please do not hesitate to contact me directly should you require any additional information.

Kind Regards
Sutthasinee Kathayat (FON)

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