

THE SCHOOL OF MISSION AND THEOLOGY (MHS)



**MIXED MARRIAGES: HINDU-CHRISTIAN COUPLES IN NORWEGIAN
CONTEXT**

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ABBREVIATION

NSD	Norwegian Social Science Data Services
ISKCON	International Society for Krishna's Consciousness
NRN	Non Resident Nepali
NCEA	National Council for Family Affairs

ABSTRACT

This qualitative research is an attempt to explore the burning issue of inter religious marriage among Nepalese and Norwegian (Hindu and Christian). The marriages of such couples were possible because most of the informants were students in different universities in Norway. The research would analyse the situation some-religious, social and cultural issues and processes of such married couples.

This thesis is based on the qualitative technique which follows interview (semi-structured and structured). This research found that despite the difference in religious and cultural values; the families have found the middle path which can be called the path of compromise as the resolution of such conflict. Nepalese men and women who were married to Norwegian are settled happily for five to fifteen years in Norway. The research explores the situation of children as well and their situation on being children of mixed married couple. It also viewed the cultural competence of Nepalese spouse in Norway. Those Nepalese spouses are familiar with linguistic, cultural and religious celebration of their husband/wife.

CHAPTER I

1. INTRODUCTON

1.1. Marriage

Marriage is the process in which two people agree to live together and share their feelings, emotions etc. It is also an important step in which they give birth to their offspring to continue their generation. The definition of marriage got changed in course of time. Traditionally, it is taken as the union between two opposite sexes. But in this modern world, marriage got its sense and meaning differently. Marriage has different definitions in today's world. It is not only the union between two opposite sexes but also with the same sexes. However, they do not continue their generation with the same sex marriage. Among other countries, have America and Norway passed the law to marry the same sex marriage. The researcher tries to explore the marriage based on the two different religious groups in the context of Norway. Due to the globalization, modern means of transportation and development the world is a narrow home. People of one place can easily go to another place easily. They migrate from one place to another in search of better opportunity of education, job, security etc. While they migrate from one place to another, they encounter with different groups of religious people. Following different religions does not mean that they are the human of different planet. They share common emotions and feelings as all humans do. Those human feeling lead to maintain some sort of relation between the opposite sexes which in course of time can be changed into the marriage relation. The researcher's focus is on the couples who are married to a person from a different religious group, and thus probably broaden the pathway to those who are thinking of maintaining such a relationship. The world is a narrow place to live in whereas the people's thoughts explore the unlimited possibilities in which they can live their life happily. The growing trend of inter-religious marriage is also the possibility that can foster a homogenous society. Though, it has its own good qualities as well as difficulties. In order to resolve the difficulties the family should negotiate and compromise for a smooth running of the family.

Inter cultural marriage is gaining the popularity. The charm of marrying a different religious partner is growing whereas at the same time, the divorce rate too is increasing due to conflicts and misunderstandings it arises in such families.

Many researches of mixed marriage are carried out in different context and nationalities of people but being a Hindu, the researcher tries to explore the situation of Nepalese Hindu married to Norwegian Christian family.

The researcher is trying to observe the life style of differently religious married couple. Religious harmony and cultural adaption is the focal of this research. For that purpose the researcher has chosen six couple who are married to Christian and Hindu and vice-versa. Religious identity is a serious issue and burning issue in the world. Researcher is proud to be a Hindu who believes in religious tolerance and co-operation. This research is more focused on the cultural part than the religious part because of the difficulties found the religious part and more susceptible or problematic. People, in this modern world, are still not like to open minded in the name of religion.

This qualitative research would deal with cultural adoption in term of food, language, dress, social behaviour and also religious part. At first, the researcher has chosen the couple who were married between Nepali and Norwegian and have taken consent to take a short interview. I have clearly stated the topics of research – mixed marriage between Christian and Hindu couple in Norway. During the research I have found some couples in Norway. During the research I have found some of couple are converted to the host country religion- Christian and I have inquired the before and after thought of conversion. As the research proceed, it become more interesting and the couples were more familiar to me. Some of the family offered me lunch and I accepted their proposal. To get the actual data, I tried to make the nearness to the targeted families. As I am Hindu, I tried to be less biased to the respondent and the responses which are presented in the research. One of the spouses of the each family is Hindu. Being a Hindu I tried less to impose my subjective interpretation in this research. Researcher has tried to maintain the distance between the respondent and himself .The researcher tried to project the objective interpretation of the answers provided by the informants as far as possible. In case of matching views with the researcher that would be only the consequence of the result.

1.2. Research Question

Every researcher -starts with some inquiries or questions which gets proper solution at the end. This ethnographic survey would analyze the social and personal life of Hindu-Christian couples. The research question which rose is:

1. What are the advantage and disadvantage of mixed marriage?

2. How do the mixed marriage couple appropriate their social, religious and cultural life in context to Norway?

The aim of this research is to find cultural /religious homogeneity in Norway. Norway too is untouched by the globalization. I mean say that people of different cultural and religious background live in Norway. The different cultural and religious group mixes in share each other religious rituals. I have seen mosque and exist in Norway. My intention here is that many religious groups live with their religious faiths in Norway. It also aims to overview the misunderstanding created due to religion? The vital thing to deal with is to ask this research is how the couple appropriate themselves to a different cultural, religious and social life of the different religious partner in Diasporas.

1.3. Culture and Religious Overview of Nepal

Nepal is a mountainous country with multi-culture, multi-religion and diverse natural environment. It is democratic country and has got religious freedom to each citizen. After 2008, Nepal is declared as a secular state. Before that period it is Hindu country which has monarchy. King is taken as the form of lord by the citizen. Because of the globalization and modernization different new religion are introduced in Nepal. Religion: There are ten types of religion categories reported in the census. The following table shows the religious distribution of the population in Nepal.

Table 1. Nepalese Demographics by Religion

S.NO	RELIGION	TOTAL NUMBERS	PERCENT
1	Hinduism	21 551 492	81.3
2	Buddhism	2 396 099	9
3	Islam	1 162 370	4.4
4	Kirat	807 169	3.1
5	Christianity	375 699	1.4
6	Prakriti	121 982	0.5
7	Bon	13 006	
8	Jainism	3 214	
9	Bahai	1 283	
10	Sikhism	609	

Source: National Planning and housing Census 2011¹

Religion and culture are interrelated things. One religious ritual which is followed by one religious group is not the same as another ritual undertaken by another religious group. With this diversity in unity, Nepal is gaining its identity in the world. Despite of religious difference, the cultural differences of the people are united and work together to make Nepal a common home. The food, dress, language and the social behaviour are the expression of the unique culture and identity. The main profession of Nepalese is agriculture. More than 80 % of Nepalese are engaged in agriculture. Though, it is landlocked country with most of the country is covered by hills. The major food of every Nepali is rice, lentil and vegetables. Prodig² made up of millet with the pickle is the food of hilly village of Nepal. Nepal is a multi-ethnic country with a variety of culture followed by different communities. Different caste systems among the people are divided on the basis of the work by Malla king. However, they are misinterpreted as low caste and high caste. Those distinctions cause conflict among people. However, there are different foods cooked of different occasion. For instance: people cut goat for meat in their main festival-Dashain³. Many goats are sacrificed in the name of God. Flock of sheep and goats were brought from Tibet and China to celebrate the carnival festival. Besides, Tihar is the festival of light, it is celebrated among Hindu community which is celebrated for five days and different animals are worshipped. Crow which is known as messenger. Ox which is celebrated for the animal which helps the farmer to plant crops in the field. Similarly, cow is celebrated as the goddess Laxmi and finally sister puts 'tika' to brother and vice versa for long life.

1.4. Scope and Limitation of My Study

I have seen different researches are carried out for mixed marriage but I have dealt especially with Nepalese and Norwegian Christian families. Berkley centre has published the report of advantage and disadvantage of Hindu and Christian marriage in USA. The distinction is that Indian and Nepalese Hindu have some variance. My research will focus on the advantage and disadvantage of mixed marriage in a Norwegian context. This research would be helpful for the researcher who is interested in mixed couples and the cultural adoption in a different

¹ (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011)

² millet flour is cooked in water

³ Main Festival of Hindu

culture. This research might be helpful for cultural anthropologist and sociologists who are learning the behaviour of people. Besides, different researches are carried out in inter faith marriage between two religious families. Marriage before few decade and now gain a significant difference. Before there is a closed society and people marry within their society and people, but the global effect blur the national, religious, social boundaries and open up a possibility of worldwide affairs of marriage.

1.5. Research Design and Organization of My Thesis

The vital issue raised here in my thesis is social, religious and cultural life of mixed married couple. My research has focused on how the couple would appropriate their life in the foreign land. I would base my thesis on the primary and secondary data. For primary data, I would take direct interview with the informant and for the secondary data I would rely on journals, articles, books and different published material related to my thesis. I have met 3 couple in Stavanger and 3 couples in Oslo and took interview with them. Beside I have connected people in other parts of Norway through Skype and face book. I have met the chairperson of NRN Mr. Suraj Thapa who has connected me to different Nepali people who are married to a Christian (both man and woman).I have taken individual interview with those couples.

To come to the conclusion, I have divided my research in different chapters. This qualitative research starts with an introduction and background as chapter 1. I start the 2nd chapter with the literature review and theoretical framework which I am going to use in this research. The selection of informants has taken place through the snowball method and I have taking interviews (semi-structured, structured) to collect the primary data is mention in third chapter. Similarly, the fourth chapter starts with the data presentation to look at the issue and view of the interviewee and analyses the data with theoretical perspective mention in 2nd chapter. Likewise, the fifth chapter with the discussion and at last the research would come up with some sort of conclusion and finding with some suggestion to the people whom are looking for inter-religious people.

CHAPTER II

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many researches are carried out regarding the cross cultural marriage, interfaith marriage and transnational marriage but not the sufficient work has been published to clarify the issue. In the other hand the culture and religious part within the same religion is different because of the context and locality. Berkley's Centre has published the report on the Hindu-American and Christian-American marriage but mine is different in the sense that one of the spouse is brought up in Hindu culture in Nepal. My concern here is the local flavour of religion is seen in the informant whom the researcher has tried in this research. Similarly, Tiffany G. Renalds has published a master thesis in 'Communication in intercultural marriages: managing cultural differences and conflict for marital satisfaction' who emphasize on internal and external factor impact the effectiveness of communication between spouses in intercultural marriages the most. Besides, Yulia Pashchuk has written a master thesis on 'Intercultural marriages in Norway: Norwegian-Ukrainian Case'. Unfortunately, the researcher has not found any research carried out between the Nepali Hindu and Christian Norwegian married relation. The researcher tries to give the local Nepalese flavour in a Norwegian context. The Nepalese-Norwegian couple and life in Norway is the concern of the researcher. Though, mixed marriage and transnational marriage is common in today's world. But it is good to make such relations, or otherwise, we should stop maintaining such relations; this is the key issue in this research. Dugan Romano in this reference indicates this kind of marriage as:

Inter-religious marriage may present a valuable asset for communication and understanding in our multi-cultural society; or they may contribute to the dissolution of cultural and religious identity. They may nourish a new form of spirituality but at the cost of traditional structure.⁴

Though, mixed marriage and transnational marriage is common in today's world. But it is good to make such relation or should we stop in maintaining such relations? This is the key issue in this research. There are different occasions and instances where these kinds of inter-religious marriage are possible in this globalized world. By globalized world, the researcher is narrowing down the concept of world which is far and cut across the geographical or

⁴ (Romano, 2008, p. 101)

territorial boundaries. Today due to the communication and different means, the world has become a common home and the people can travel all over the world. The purpose of travelling may differ but it is a normal human tendency these days. Citing Dugan Romano view in this regard:

Many young people, who today are so much a part of global world, working, studying and marrying abroad, find that although they don't practice their religious faith their religion is a part of the cultural identity they want to hang on to. The rites customs, and special days associated with religion remain important to them as a part of their heredity.⁵

Dugan asserts the possibility of travelling and inter-religious marriage with the emphasis on customs and rites, which are realized in their practice of religious culture. Though, they may migrate to other countries they practice the religious ritual within their community or among their national people who hold the same religious view. The researcher being Hindu observed the festivals celebrated by the Nepalese community in Stavanger and Oslo. Among those transnational Hindu there are a few Nepali spouses who have a Norwegian spouse. The researcher can feel and internalized the religious identity of those Nepalese spouses who are eager to participate on that occasion. Though they do not have any temple and society to manifest their religious practice, they join this gathering on Hindu religious festival, Dashain shows their hold on the Hindu religious identity.

2.1. Theoretical Perspective

In order to find the global change, one has to deal with the social, cultural, religious and scientific changes. One nation is not a single nation in term of culture, but mixture of many due to migration, internet and media. Society is in the verge of changing. None of the society is autonomous. They are the mixture of many social groups and newly formed group. As I begun to think of the research questions I would have stuck which theory is appropriate or which rule is appropriate for my research. Then I made more study in some texts related to the topics which would assist me to draw the hypothesis. I found two relevant theories-the theory of inter-cultural competence and the theory of cultural hybridity relevant for the couples. Beside these theories, the researcher has found conversion as an important theoretical tool for this research. Hybridity, though it is a botanical term which mixes two

⁵ (Romano, 2008, p. 102)

species to form the new one, is a term that is widely used in anthropology and sociology. Generally, it asserts the mixing of culture, religion, race and so on which form new form with having the trace of both. The researcher chooses this theory because the two religious groups are maintaining the marriage relation. This is an obvious fact that the interaction will bring the traits of both religious groups though the context can dominate one over the other. The theory on hybridity is found relevant in this research because Norway has multi-cultural society where these mixed married couple live in dual situation-culture of origin and Norway. It helps to acknowledge and respect the other culture and appropriate oneself in the different cultural practices than the own. To imagine one singular culture is foolishness in today's world. The wide spread of technology and opportunity seeking tendencies accelerates the human of different religious, cultural community to migrate and maybe even assimilate to different situations and practices.

It is the mixture of two different cultures, the in-between position maintained by the mixed marriage couple that can be addressed by the theory that focus on hybridity which creates in between position of the couple. Another theory I found appropriate in this conversation is the One by Guo-Ming Chen and William J. Starosta (1996) who define inter-cultural competence as “the ability to negotiate cultural meanings and to execute appropriately effective communication behaviours that recognize the interacting multiple identities in a specific environment:”

Further, they propose a model that includes three perspectives:

- Affective and intercultural sensitivity - to acknowledge and respect cultural differences.
- Cognitive or intercultural awareness - self awareness of one's own personal cultural identity and understanding how cultures vary.
- Behavioural or intercultural adroitness - message skills, knowledge of appropriate self disclosure, behavioural flexibility, interaction management and social skills.⁶

I would also use the Gramsci's term -“Cultural Hegemony” as the theory of my research. However, it is derogatory term which connotes negativity. It is something that should be accepted forcefully. In another sense, it could also be said ‘might is right’. In this theory the

⁶ (Jandt, 2010, p. 53)

rule class set up certain rules which should be followed by the ruling class. In other words, it is a situation in which the ruling class choose to follow the ruled one. I choose this theory because in some contexts the marriage based migrant chose to hegemonic cultural adaption in which they convert to Christianity or some cultural and social adaption and follow the native religion and culture.

2.2. Inter-Cultural Competence in the Migrated Spouse

In order to adopt with the environment (social, cultural and religious), s/he has to transform herself or himself in the surrounding in the one hand and in the other hand the couple should also be concern about the personal cultural identity. S/he cannot give up totally his personal identity in order to dissolve in the new society. The trace or some marks are still shown in his/her behaviour. The society where s/he is born and grows has penetrated in his deep psychology. Intercultural communication is “(...) development of skill that transforms one from a mono-cultural person in multi-culture person.”⁷ Fred E. Jandt is defining communication as an element of culture borrowed from Belay, Chen and Starosta and states that the multicultural person is one who respects cultures and has and has tolerance of difference (Belay 1993; Chen &Starosta, 1996). Chen (1989, 1990) for example identifies four skill areas: personality strength, communication skills, psychological adjustment and cultural awareness. By personality traits that affect intercultural communication are self concept, self disclosure, self monitoring, and social relaxation. Similarly, he has mentioned about the communication skills, psychological adjustment and cultural awareness.

In a diasporic situation one has to handle the above situation that “diasporas are culturally and politically reflexive and experimental; they encompass internal arguments of identity about who ‘we’ are and where we are going.” Further,Pnina Werbner maintains that “diasporas are full of division and dissent. [...] At the same time they recognise collective responsibilities, not only to the home country but to co-ethics in far-flung place.”⁸

Here, Werbner stresses the diasporic people who have double responsibility of cultural and political stances; towards the home country and the migrated land. Their sense of responsibility and the institutionalization of the diasporic Hindu who are in the foreign land can be seen.

⁷ (Jandt, 2010, p. 54)

⁸ (Werbner, 2004, p. 896)

My informants, in every individual couple (male or female), are from Nepal and maintains a marriage relation with the Norwegian Christian spouse, I have chosen this theory on intercultural competence in order to view the situation of the informant of how they appropriate in a situation which is completely different from the motherland. I have tried to deal with the various social, religious, linguistic, dress, dietary issues that are not familiar with the spouse whose motherland is Nepal. And I would also keep eyes on the spouse after being married to a Nepalese spouse. I have observed their perception of mixed marriage and its effect in family life because of the cultural, religious and other difference, which is found in them. My informants are mostly students and have resided here for couple of years before they married to his/her spouse. But at the same time, some of the informants are here due to marriage based migration. I mean to state here that the informants got married with Norwegian spouse and only s/he entered in this territory. S/he has got no cultural awareness about Norway before being married. The interesting thing is that some of the informants have travelled to Nepal where they met and wished for conjugal life. My informants have children and are living with ease with the family. I have not found any line of dissatisfaction during the years. Some informant maintained 15 years and more marriage relation and have kids studying in school in Norway.

2.3. Culturally In-between or Hybrid Culture

Hybrid is a botanical term used for mixing of two species to form new forms of plants. It is an issue of debate in the late 19th century or in the beginning of the 20th century. Due to globalization and modernization, the world has become a common home and people are scattered to different parts of the world and mixed up with the people of different cultures. As a result a new culture is born out of the two having some trace of the both which is what we meant by 'hybridity'. Homi K. Bhabha states the position of hybridity in the aftermath of colonial rule in India. He states that there arises a position of in-betweenness between the colonizers and the colonized. The colonizer tries to impose their own culture but affected by the colonized culture and thus form the new culture which is neither of the colonizer nor of the colonized. He writes, "The social articulation of difference from the minority perspective is a complex, ongoing negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation."⁹

⁹ (Bhabha, 1994, p. 2)

The ruling class always tries to establish their rule by suppressing the minorities but the differences between them and minorities is in the continual process of changing and negotiating which form the new identity of cultural hybridity in the successive generation.

Bhabha further states that:

It is only when we understand that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in this contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation, that we begin to understand why hierarchical claims to the inherent originality or 'purity' of cultures are untenable, even before we resort to empirical historical instances that demonstrate their hybridity.¹⁰

If we see the history it is also the product of the contradictory and ambivalence between two cultures. Hence, culture is always in the process and an ongoing negotiation between the two conflicting classes-the ruled and the ruling ones; between the minority and the majority etc.

Due to the globalization, people are migrating to different places carrying their own culture and influence from the local culture. Not only that their influence became a part of the new culture. Kebab which is Turkish dish has become a part of Norwegian dish.

In my research, I have chosen hybridity as the theoretical frame work because the spouse who is migrated to Norway with marriage based migration has his/her cultural identities of the motherland and cannot come out totally from the past cultural .Though they are in the minority but still seeking their identity and affects the majority class.. These cultural traits can also be seen in their offspring. The informant visits the motherland once in couple of year and spent few months there. While living there, the children learn the culture of father/mother in their motherland. Difference in religion makes difference in the culture and way of celebration.

2.4. Conversion to Christianity

During my research, I have found that some of the couples have been converted. When do they convert is still mysterious. Some said that I was Christian before marriage. I asked them whether they are Christian by birth. But in response they said, 'no'. Most of the couples they are more or less inclined toward Christianity. Among my respondents some couples are converted to Christianity. I asked a couple what did make her on the move to change the religion. In response she said that "all the religions are good but I like Christianity because

¹⁰ (Bhabha, 1994, p. 37)

my husband explain about the Christianity which I like and that convinced me to be Christian". I raised another question to her, "What are the things that impress you most?" In response she said that the ten commandments of Christianity impress her most and drive her to convert to Christianity. The lady also replied that "the society where I live is Christian and all are caring and good people which add more to me to be Christian". I further inquired her that other members in her motherland are Hindu, "did that make any difference in you?" She replied that "yes, of course, they are Hindu but I have nothing to say to them, it is my choice to be Christian and they also have no complaint about me to be a Christian. I got love equally from them all, before and after I was converted."

By her conversation above the researcher came to know that one of the reasons behind the conversion from one religion to another is that the belief and behaviour of the group that has the different religious faith. The lady is now in the society of Christian people which impress her much. The factor observed by the researcher is that the religious adaptation took place willingly for the intercultural competence. The lady is in Norway and her husband is Christian which adds more to convert her. People convert due to many reasons: social, economic etc. Social reason is more influential for this informant. She has to adapt to the Christian society and more or less influence by the religious rituals. After the renaissance, there is rapid growth of Christian people all over world.

In this regard, Lewis Rambo has mentioned the condition of conversion as the following:

Conversion take place (1) when a person is connected to relationship in religious community; (2) When rituals are enacted that foster experience and action consonant with religious mandates and goal; (3) When rhetoric of system of interpretation of life is transformed into religious frame of reference; (4) When a person's role of sense of place and purpose is enacted and guided by religious sensibilities and structures.¹¹

Religious conversion is done by the informants of this research by following the 1st category, when a person is connected to relationships in a religious community. The interviewee is in a married relation with the Norwegian spouse, which is the reason for her conversion.

On the contrary, one of the interviewees who is married to a Norwegian lady, stressed that he is impressed by the religious sensibilities of the place. He is also impressed by the Christian Norwegians which is a reason for him to convert. Kamal Dhakal cited Wingate's notion of

¹¹ (Rambo, 2012, p. 34)

conversion, which can be categorized in different aspects, namely religious/theological, social / cultural, personal / psychological, or political / economic / institutional.¹² Literature of conversion holds the above perspectives.

Conversion is an ongoing phenomenon. People's thoughts, ideas get changed over time. The context, social environment, economy, relationships are the reasons for people to convert. The society, family relations and the context are more convincing reasons for conversion. The researcher's interviewees are converted due to the familial and social environment of Norway.

¹² (Dhakal, p. 23)

CHAPTER III

3. METHODOLOGY

This research follows qualitative approach to deal with the issues raised in the research question. I would base my research on primary and secondary data. Primary data are collected through interviews and secondary data by reading some books. I visited different informants' house and took shelter at night and took the interview. I did not mention about the project that day. I knew the family from at least one year, so it would not have been any problem to start to take the interview. But before I started to talk with them in the interview form, I mentioned my project and assured the confidentiality of the data. I also tried to capture the cultural practices of the family. I tried the variance of the women responsibilities here in Norway and there in Nepal.

3.1. Collection of Primary Data

I introduced myself as a student from Nepal and was also telling them that I was doing research in mixed marriage and its consequences. While choosing the informants, I took help from one of the senior brothers who have been living here for a long time. After I got to know about the families who were living in a mixed marriage, I started to make a call and ask their consent. Some of the couples softly rejected my project. That is to say, they did not directly reject but delayed and at last they did not answer my phone. Any way I have found some couples at a distance place who became informants and for them it is not possible to meet face to face but I have managed to make Skype interviews. I also found it a challenging for collecting data for my research because the people are not open about the topic of religion.

Similarly, I have read some thesis, articles, journals and some books about mixed marriages, which I really found helpful for tracing my way in this alien land that is not yet known to me. The entire primary and secondary source would be helpful for drawing a conclusion of my research.

3.2. Why Qualitative Research?

This research is based on the society and social phenomenon. It is not about how much or how many but it is more focused on the subjective or logical framework. We cannot say how much or how many people think. The way people think and take the life style pattern cannot be judged in terms of quantity. Whereas qualitative research helps to define some subject not

in term of quantity but in general qualitative need of the people. According to Bruce Lawrence,

Qualitative research seeks answer to the question by examining on various social setting and the individual who inhabit these settings. Qualitative researchers, then are most interested in how human arrange themselves and their setting and how inhabitant of these setting make sense of their surrounding through symbols, rituals, social structures social rule and so forth.¹³

Further, Lawrence maintains that,

Qualitative research first involves studying meaning of people's lives, under real world condition. People will be performing in their everyday roles or have expressed themselves through their own diaries, journals, writing, and even photography-entirely independent of any research inquiry.¹⁴

Yin states the other reasons to use qualitative research is that it differs because of its ability to represent the view and perspectives of the participants of the study. He similarly states that it might attempt to explain social process. Lastly, he infers saying that "qualitative research strives to collect, integrate, and present data from variety of sources of evidence as a part of any given study."¹⁵

Scientific researches that deals with empirical data and transform it into the conclusion or in other words, it is an objective interpretation of the collected data. But in social research, one needs to interpret the cultural artefact which is only possible through the qualitative approach. In other word, the ethnographic projection of the collected data for the conclusion of the research question. Ethnography and qualitative research are synonymous word.

3.3. Targeted Group

This research would keep eye on six couples, basically for data collection through the means of interview (semi-structured and structured). On the other hand, I have based my research in direct observation of the behaviour and social life. I have taken shelter in their home and observed their activities. I have chosen open-ended question for the semi-structured interview

¹³ (Berg, 2001, pp. 6-7)

¹⁴ (Yin, 2011, p. 8)

¹⁵ Ibid

and desiring to get some descriptive answers. Some questions are structured and direct which answered in yes and no. Firstly, the researcher begins with some general questions about the native land to the one of the spouse who motherland is Nepal to create environment and nearness in order to get closer and familiar with the interviewee. The researcher begins with questions like: 'Where are you originally from in Nepal? How many members are there in your family? What is the occupation of your family? What is your religious background of your family? Are there Christian nearby your neighbourhood? When do you first meet your husband? How is your experience in the first meeting? Do you think I will marry this man/woman?' These are the general questions which are asked to all the interviewees. This helped the interviewer to get closer and help to maintain a relation to the Nepali spouse, namely, that she is talking to not to a stranger but to her own brother from Nepal.

3.4. Data Collection

Data collection is the important part and primary thing to do in research. Yin in his book granted source of Wikipedia and define data as: “‘Data’ refers to a collection of organized information, usually the result of experience, observation, experiment. This may consist of numbers, words, or images, particularly as measurements or observations of a set of variables.”¹⁶

According to him a researcher should gather information in a organized way through different procedure such as observation, experience and experiment. Yin categorizes data collection methods as: interview and conversing, observing, collecting, feeling.

While collecting the data, I need to be aware and selective to get the targeted population. I have known some of the couple before the research and some couple are gathered through the snow ball approach. I ask the mobile number and called them. I mentioned the purpose of my research and also told them that they can withdraw their participation at any time without any reason. Along with it I mention the confidentiality of the data presented by them. In all these, I followed the rules of ethics as a researcher. Protection of data and confidentiality of the data is maintained and all the data are protected in the researcher Personal computer. All the data are omitted after 30th June 2015 according to the agreement with NSD.

¹⁶ (Yin, 2011, p. 130)

3.4.1. Semi-Structured Interview

In doing qualitative research, one needs to collect the primary data. Interview is one of the sources of collecting data. Structured interview are direct and less time consuming whereas semi-structure interview are open-ended and desire long and descriptive answer. Semi-structured interview are more time consuming but can come up with some insightful findings which can carry out the research in more advance way and can be more knowledgeable and informative.

In qualitative research, the interviews usually assume a conversational mode .In a single interview this mode can continue for an extended period, such as 2 hours. The goal is to encourage participants to have the time and opportunity to reconstruct their own experience and reality in their own words.¹⁷

My quest of research is about the religious mixture in couple which is a serious issue. Therefore I make a roundabout question to know their view. During my research I came to know that if I made questions about the religion people hardly try to answer. Some of the informant which I tried to involve rejected to my proposal saying I am very busy and cannot manage the time. I guess that the intended meaning is that they don't want to participate in the interview because it might cause problem in the life, job etc.

3.4.2. Structured Interviews

I had prepared 18 questions for the couples to answer and the couples answered the questions. But some of the couples had left some questions untouched because they did not want to answer my question. I did not force them. Structured interviews are carefully prepared questions and I asked in a formal manner without the dual conversation. Generally, it is taken for poll or survey. However, my research begins with some basic structured questions, which lay the foundation for semi-structured interview.

3.4.3. Secondary Data

In order to give a conceptual framework, I relay my research on the foundation of secondary data too. I thought the primary data are not sufficient so for deep study and come up with some concrete knowledge, I have used some journal, article and report published officially. I have chosen some book for my research as a secondary data. A fellow report published by

¹⁷ Ibid

Berkley's centre for Religion, peace and world affair, George Town University, Washington DC; USA, has really been the foundation of my research. Besides, I have consulted different internet sources as the secondary source. Dispersion of Hindus around the world is according to Steven Vertovec in the chapter "Transformation of Hinduism":

Encyclopaedia Britannica online suggests there are 761,689,000 Hindu spread across 144 countries. This amounts to 12.8 per cent of the world's population of around 6 billion. Enumerating by world religion, Encyclopaedia lists 755,500,000 Hindu in Asia, 2,411,000 in Africa, 1,382,000 in Europe, 785,000 in Latin America and 345,000 in Oceania.¹⁸

Vertovec notes that the dispersion of Hindus worldwide is due to different reasons which were to establish the business enterprises or the some colonial administrators were sent to Burma and East Africa. Not only that, many Hindus, especially Indian, migrated for labour scheme were sent to different countries like Burma, Malaysia.

Hinduism varies according to the localities among the diasporic people. It varies in different spheres of inquiry, their density, multiplicity, longevity and span of ties, whether in term of village or neighbourhood, ritual activity, marriage, economic transaction or patronage; kinship and domestic structures and roles (including women's roles and sibling duties); priests' roles and religious bureaucracies; voluntary associations; political movements and factions.¹⁹

3.5. Reliability and Validity of My Research

Mostly, reliability is done in the quantitative research but it is also use for qualitative research too. Nahid Golafshani in report argues that "A good qualitative study can help us understand a situation that would otherwise be enigmatic or confusing."²⁰ So the purpose of the research is to understand the confusing situation connected to mixed marriages, trying to find nuances of their situation. However, reliability is not test in the qualitative research, but still the researcher should be honest to provide his/her data. Validity in research is the reflection of conclusion in an accurate way. Yin states this as: 'A valid study is one that has properly collected and interpreted its data, so that the conclusions accurately reflect and represent the

¹⁸ (Vertovec, *The Hindu Diaspora: Comparative Patterns*, 2000, p. 14)

¹⁹ (Vertovec, *Transnationalism and Identity*, 2001, pp. 23-24)

²⁰ (Golafshani, 2003, pp. 597-607)

real world (or laboratory) that was studied'.²¹ According to him the data which was presented should be interpreted in such a way that reflect and represent the real world. In my research I would try to present the informants' exact saying in order to implement the established theory to come to conclusion. I would try my best not to stick to any ideology, religious and national ideas dominating the occurrence of the answer of the informant. In other word, there should not be any bias and preconceived ideas which would be imposed on the research. The local inferences should be the foundation of my research.

3.6. Data Analysis

Data analysis is the important part of the research. Data collected through the primary and secondary resources are raw and need interpretation. It consists of five phases:

The first analytic phase, compiling data into a formal data base, calls for the careful and method organizing of the original data. The second phase, disassembling the data in the database, can involve a formal coding procedure but does not need to. The third, reassembling, is less mechanical and benefits from a researcher's insightfulness in seeing emerging patterns²²

A good researcher tries of extract important elements from the raw data and reach to the conclusion. Primary data is gathered through different means like direct interview or Skype recordings are transcription and this information is interpreted by using different theoretical framework. In doing so, I highlight the important part and answers which goes with my research questions and tries to interpret through different theoretical tools. Researches about mixed marriage are carried out in different contexts. Berkley's centre has published report on similar mixed marriage issue but the context and nationality is different. It has carried out research on Indian Hindus and American Christians. The context and nationality make difference in for instance religious ceremony. The way Indian Hindus and Nepali Hindus follow religion is a bit different in terms of localization of religion.

3.7. Research Ethics

The researcher has a moral and social responsibility. He has to maintain and build the relationship with the person who he is doing the research. In this regard David Silverman

²¹ (Yin, 2011, p. 78)

²² (Yin, 2011, p. 176)

borrowing Amir Marvasti's quote in his book *Quantitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice* as:

The researcher enters a relationship with those she or he studies. The ethics of social research have to do with the nature of the researcher's responsibilities in this relationship. Or the things that should not be done regarding the people being observed and written about. This is not significantly different from what we do in other relationships. We try to be polite, treat people with respect, and don't do or say anything that will harm them. Good manners are a good beginning but the actual research scenarios may require guidelines that go beyond common courtesy.²³

Research ethics is the moral code that the researcher has to follow. In every field there should be discipline in order to avoid an accident. In case of research, the researcher has to be careful about the consequences that can be resulted through the research; some issues are so vulnerable that they might cause strong reactions. Similarly, the researcher should follow some rule before conducting the research. S/he should ask for the consent in order to get information from the informant. S/he should know whether the informant is willing to participate in the research. S/he should clarify the purpose of the research or in other word disclosure of the research topics and about the research which s/he is going to conduct. Deception should not be entertained by any informant. Besides, the informed consent should maintain the confidentiality of the resources that he gathers from the informant. The researcher should not at any reason open the case in front of others which might harass the informant. Mostly the name of the informants should not be mentioned; instead they are given certain symbolic names, which we call anonymity in research term. The researcher should understand the level of discomfort from the informant. If the informant feels uneasy, the researcher's ethical duty is to stop giving any pressure to them. If the informant is willing to discontinue, they should get a chance to stop. The researcher cannot impose any kind of blame on the informant.

3.8. My Role as a Researcher

My chosen topic is interesting but contains a lot of challenges while I was doing research. In the beginning, I thought that it is pretty easy to deal with the people whom I scanned to take an interview with. Later on, one after another I felt something is missing and still lacking

²³ (Silverman, 2006, p. 36)

some technique to draw my conclusion. As the matter of chosen issues is related to the religious mixing between Hindus and Christians I found people not open in this matter. I had many questions in my mind hoping that they would be happy to answer. Was it the authentic question to ask to them? Where should I begin? Was it possible to meet them again for the same issue? Would they meet me again? Did I miss the important question? Then, I realized that something should be changed in order to get proper answers. Then, begin to switch to culture in place of religion. I found the informants were not feeling comfortable if I raised the issue of religion directly .They were happy to talk about the culture. Culture in a broad sense hides religion and thousands of questions that could be asked. Society defines the social norms or culture. One thing might be formal to one culture but the same thing might be an offence in another culture. I thought of beginning with food culture, dress, behaviour and attitude and carry on my questions in an informal and relaxing way. The informants were happy to talk two hours about these issues and answered during long hours.

CHAPTER IV

4. DATA PRESENTATION

I am going to present the data taken from interview in this chapter. I would analyse the answers given by my informants. My focus in this chapter would be how it was to marry a spouse in a foreign land. My research would come up with some ideas about the situation of mixed married couples and the way to cope of with the differences. Not only that, I would also study what is the difference that can be realized in the offspring of such a couple. This chapter would analyze what the informant said and try to discuss why they said so. I would also share their age, gender, education level and religious background and how long they have been married and so on.

Table 2 Informant details

Age	No of Informants	Graduate	Non-Graduate
20-25	2	2	-
25-30	4	2	2
30-35	4	4	-
35+	2	2	-

4.1. Background Information

I have chosen a few couples from Stavanger and few spouses from Oslo and Trondheim. In this sampling qualitative research, I have chosen six different Nepalese spouses married to a Christian from Norway and Germany. Since, I promised to put their name secret, I would mention their fictious name at any place of my research. Regarding the education attainment, most of the informants are graduated from Norway. Some of the informants are here for student visa and fell in love with a Norwegian or another Christian lady, who in course of time changed into a marriage relationship. Besides it, some of the couples met when they were visiting in Nepal. The couple age ranged 20-50 years. The informant couples lived here more than 2 years. Some of the couples have two children. The children go to school and are

studying in different classes. They know about Nepal and can speak few Nepali words and I am happy to hear from them. Some of the children of the informants have been to Nepal more than five times and stayed short term of a week to two months. Most of my respondent lived here from five to ten years in Norway. They have children who attend kindergarten or schools. The children are happy to see me as the maternal uncle and try to come near me. I asked them, “do you know Nepali language?” They uttered some words randomly which show they have at least a sense of their mother’s language of birth. I asked some general knowledge about Nepal, “where is the highest mountain of the world falls?” They replied without hesitation and I asked the children about Nepal. They told me some general information like, “Nepal is between India and China. There are many rivers in Nepal. There are many temples in Nepal.” They told me about the greeting in Nepali, called Namaste.

4.2. Marriage and Culture

4.2.1. Transnational Marriage in Nepalese Society

According to the Wikipedia, it defines marriage as a socially or ritually recognized union or legal contract between spouses that establishes rights and obligations between them, between them and their children, and between them and their in-laws.²⁴ It is not only the bond of the individual member to another individual but also with the social and cultural bonding between the families. Steven Vertovec in his article mentioned the socio-cultural effect of transnationalism. He expressed his view as,

The literature on transnationalism generally underscores the fact that large numbers of people now live in social worlds that are stretched between, or dually located in, physical places and communities in two or more nation-states. Ulf Hannerz (1996), for instance, discusses people who live in diverse ‘habitats of meaning’ that are not territorially restricted. The experiences gathered in these multiple habitats accumulate to comprise people’s cultural repertoires, which in turn influence the construction of identity or indeed multiple identities”²⁵.

The people migrated from one territory carries the cultural identity of his/her homeland and the cultural practice of the migrated land which mixes and form multiple identities of the

²⁴ (William A. Haviland, 2008, p. 204)

²⁵ (Vertovec, Transnationalism and Identity, 2001, p. 578)

people. Marriage based migration which is also a kind of transnationalism, carries the same seed of multiple identities.

According to Majupurias, marriage is done for two purposes:

Marriage serves two significant purposes in human society. First, it is a means for regulating and governing relationship between two sexes. Secondly, it also provides a sanction according to which the relation of the offspring to the community is determined. The former one has great importance while the social function of marriage has been largely ignored so far as its moral value is concerned.²⁶

According to Majupurias, marriage is done to fulfil two important purpose of life. It serves to maintain social order and moral purpose of life. The families of the wife and families of the husband should be bound together with the relationship. In this regards Katharine Charsley define transnational marriage as:

Transnational marriage, the relationship of particular geographical localities with transnational social space of marriage and migration and the ‘Cartographies of desire’, which together may make marriage to a particular person in a particular location more or less desirable.²⁷

There is transnational marriage between Nepal and Indian borderline families who lives in the lower belt of Nepal which is also known as Terai. According to Ramayan²⁸, Lord Ram who is from Ayodhya, a place in India, married to Sita who is from Janakpur, Nepal. The cultural and religious semblance made it happen so. In case of cultural and religious difference it is a bit problematic. Because of the difference, one has make adjustment in knowing or learning other culture. Transnational marriage is not a big issue these days. It happens in every country and which is made possible due to globalization and wide use of internet technology.

While bi-national marriages, the intergenerational dynamics of socio-cultural change, and the formation of multi- and trans-cultural identities are growing realities in an increasingly globalised world, research on immigration and the social incorporation or

²⁶ (Majupuria, 2009, p. 15)

²⁷ (Charsley, 2012, p. 205)

²⁸ Hindu religious book

accommodation of immigrants is rarely accompanied by treatment of the internal dynamics of inter-ethnic relations.²⁹

The social media is responsible for the occurrence of transnational marriage. Transnational marriage with similar culture is possible but with different religious and culture is challenging and takes more time to adopt in the social cultural life in the new place where the spouse has to migrate.

4.2.2. Hindu Identities in Transnational Mixed Marriage

Being Hindu in a transnational mixed marriage is a challenging work in the society where the majority is following the Christianity. Hinduism, which is spread widely the south-east Asia, is a democratic religion. It is also called a philosophical religion. “The Hindu philosophy, beliefs, codes of conduct and other social and cultural practices come from a wide and varied collection of scriptures and philosophical and religious literature”³⁰. It is more based on moral principles of life. It is the religion which is mostly followed by the people of Nepal and India.

The identity of the women is linked with the male figure of the family and the woman got it surname with the man-the woman surname got changed with the marriage. Nepal and India has the major place for the growth of the religion. Maya Warriar in his book guide to Hinduism mentions the position and the role of the woman as: “Hindu women, in a traditional context, derived their identity from the male authority figures in their lives. This was usually the woman’s father before her marriage, her husband after her marriage, and her sons in her old age.”³¹ But in a mixed marriage the relation of power and responsibility is blurred and the woman in Europe shared the equality responsibility. Some few followers are found in south-east Asia. It is believed to be the world oldest religion. There are many deities in Hinduism but only the three gods are taken to rule the world. Bhrahma, who is known as creator, Bishnu is known for the saviour and Shiva for the destroyer. Hinduism believes in idol worship. Worship God and Goddess in the form of idol and pray for wish fulfilment is done in the temple. However, different people have given different interpretation for the religious

²⁹ (Gracia, 2006, p. 404)

³⁰ (Government of Western Australia, Department of Local Government, Office of Multicultural Interests, 2012, pp. 1-8)

³¹ (Warriar, 2006, pp. 1-21)

scripture but the essence of the religion is to 'do good and find good'. Steven Vertovec sees the regional differences in the language and states that, "(...) language differences, regional histories and provincial customs throughout India combine to produce highly localized religious understandings and practices."³²

Type and form of Hindu religion varies due to religion and locality. The majority of Indian and Nepalese people follow Hinduism, which has varieties of the ways in how the religion is being practiced. But the essence and the god and goddess they follow are same. Despite the regional and local colour Hinduism in transnational marriage follow the culture and tradition from their homeland. Referring to Robin Cohen's point of cyber space which has blurred the geographical territories through the wide use of modern technology and cyber space, Vertovec asserts the point in the lines:

Transnational bonds no longer have to be cemented by migration or by exclusive territorial claims. In the age of cyberspace, a diaspora can, to some degree, be held together or re-created through the mind, through the cultural artefacts and through shared imagination.³³

For instance Nepalese Hindu even though married with Norwegian spouse, participates in the gathering and rituals which are celebrated according to the Hindu calendar. This shows that the context and practice does not stop them from celebrating their religious festivals even though they are far away from motherland. The spirit of creating their identity in this foreign land shows their faith towards their religion. They create the imaginary home by celebrating their religious rituals. The sense and meaning of marriage is to them as they are in their homeland.

Marriage, in Hindu society is a divine pairing of a couple for many births. As Hinduism believe in after life and also the rebirth. It is believed that human being takes birth many times. That is the reason, the couple prayed for pairing each other for seven births on this earth.

³² (Bhabha, 1994, p. 31)

³³ (Vertovec, *The Hindu Diaspora: Comparative Patterns*, 2000, p. 147)

4.2.3. Marriage, Love and Religious Values

Marriage is a strong bond that keeps two lives as one. The foundation of marriage either it is arranged or love marriage depends on the love and faith toward each other. If the interest and choice vary then it creates a distance and thus leads to family separation. Contrary to it, the differences are solved through the compromise. The couple of mixed marriage should have sense of respecting each other view for better life. In this research my concern is what happens to the families who have difference in term of religious and culture. I asked my informants about how they feel being couple of different religion. They replied that the main thing that make us closer and help to co-ordinate each other is our love. Until we love each other, nothing is a barrier for us. Of course they might be some problem in social adaptability but I do not think it make any problem in the individual life. In my view, love is the strong bond which is beyond any barrier. The researcher asked questions about how they celebrate religious ritual. In reply one of the respondents, Bishnu said, “We followed both the religious ritual –that of the Christian and that of Hindu.”

In a report presented by Berkley’s Center, it is mentioned some challenges in mixed married couple like the following: “Hindus in interreligious marriages must reconcile the importance of preserving their traditions, culture, and identity with the need to accommodate and respect their partners’ Christian beliefs.”³⁴The Hindu spouse should have the role of preserving dual responsibility that is by maintaining his /her identity as well as the spouse’s identity.

A woman in Stavanger said: “We participate in the Hindu religious ritual with Nepali in Stavanger and we participate in Christmas and Easter as a family and friend gathering in our house and celebrate among the friend and family.” The coincidence of the marriage and the love and respect to each other is the secret of our happy family life despite the religious and cultural difference.

4.2.4. Marriage: A Divine Union

Marriage is the important part of every human life. Marriage is a union between two people of opposite sex. It is not only union between two people but also families and cultures. In case of mixed marriage between two faiths, it is the union between two faiths too. Human is born alone but when s/he is tied with different relations. He has moral, social, religious responsibility as a member of a certain social group. Human is social animal. S/ he is

³⁴ (Arora, et al., 2008, p. 31)

connected with the people around the society. S/he has different role and responsibility as a member. This responsibility continues until his/her death. Marriage, which is important part of human life, is also followed differently in different religion or culture. The researcher here in this research is trying to deal with the couples who have different religious backgrounds. As mentioned above, different religious group has different marriage custom and rituals. The researcher asked the following questions to the informants about the marriage, “Where do you get married? Which religious tradition did you follow? Do you think the different in religion can bring problem in your life?”

In response to the above question, Sabitri replied that:

We married in a church. We follow the Christian way of marriage because I should follow the religious tradition of the host country where my husband lives and follows, which is Christianity. She further added that if my husband married me in Nepal, then I think he has to follow Hindu religious tradition of marriage because majority of my family members were Hindu and they prefer Hindu marriage system.

Another informant Sushila said they were married in a court. Though, it is neither Christian way nor Hindu. It is the legal way to accompany each other. She also added,

We generally have no debate in term of religion. I participate in the ceremony of my Husband and so does he. I attain the Nepalese function in Stavanger with Nepali with my husband. It refreshes my past memory and feels me as if I am in the home land. I have two children they are baptize in Christian tradition. They know both religious culture of me and my husband. As they live in Norway, they are more inclined towards Christianity.

The woman also said:

It is not the religion that makes us together, it is love that brings us together and we are now in the relation of husband and wife. Faith is important for all but I think, unless there is true love between us, there is no such barrier which breaks our relation. When I was married, I have some difficulties with the culture and tradition but now everything is enjoying and friendly to me.

I asked her Christian husband if it did make any difference in their marriage because of the marrying non-Christian lady. He replied blushing with joy and said:

I don't think so. I am satisfied with her and we love each other and I am his 'Shiva'³⁵ and she is my 'Parvati'³⁶. For me, if anyone tries to stop someone from doing anything then there is quarrel and misunderstanding but we enjoy freedom of practicing our religion. That is to say she is happy to participate in Nepalese religious festivals and I accompany her and when I celebrate Christmas with my friends and family, she accompany me. This is how we passed 15 years of marriage.

From the above replies from the respondents, the researcher found out that the couple follow the Christian tradition or Hindu tradition, it does not make any difference in their life but the only thing that is important is the love and co-operation of the family. Despite the religious and cultural variance the respondent are living beautiful days together for 5-15 years respectively. In some couples the religious tradition is significant and they follow the tradition where they are marrying. A Christian spouse in Norway prefers the Christian way of marrying. Whereas some couples want to go to court and give their marriage legality.

4.3. Spirituality versus Religiosity

Today, the world is moving in a chaotic order. Many missiles, bombs and weapons are made to destroy each other. There is need of spiritual or religious faith in order to maintain law and order in the universe. The modern civilization has made a tremendous development in the field of science and technology but even then people are quarrelling and disturbing world order. This is all because human themselves tries to prove the victorious and tyrannical because of the progress gained. The religiosity and spiritual faith is fading away from the life of modern human. They wanted gain more wealth and power in order to prove other community or group inferior.

More or less, these words sound similar but it has some differences to them.

Spirituality is the faith or belief in principle whereas religiosity is following the faith and doing all the practices in the manner the religion said. Religious priest who strictly follow the religious rule and principle but spiritual people have faith in god but not necessarily do what is good according to religion.³⁷

³⁵ Hindu God

³⁶ Hindu Goddess

³⁷ (Casey, 2009, pp. 1-7)

Spirituality is broader term which can combine those who are atheists but still believe in some supernatural power beyond oneself. In my opinion, spirituality is more practical than religiosity. Worship god and chanting mantra³⁸ and tika³⁹ makes the man religiously sound but not spirituality sound. The researcher's focus is with the identity of Hindus in Norway when married to Christian spouse. Though, there are a few temples where they can practice the religiosity but they can be spiritual by following the religious essence in their life. In regard to religiosity, I asked Krishna Prasad, who is married to a Norwegian about the religiosity of his. He told me that, "There is no temple and religious group in Stavanger where I can go and pray". And he stressed on the spirituality where he can follow the religious themes in action. I always do good work and follow the essence of religion."

However, it is the difference of religiosity between the couples; this plays a role in the following religious practices but the middle way is to be spiritual and follow the essence of religion. Mostly, Hindu worship images of deities and pray for the fulfilment of the work which s/he is going to do. Similarly, they utter hymns of different gods and goddesses. The informant stresses the lack of temple where he can follow his religious ceremonies. Another informant Bal Gopal said that:

The Idols are the symbols of God which represents and warn us to bad things. The Idol helps us to maintain the concentration and faith toward the God. I feel solace in the shelter of God which is known as temple. I believe that imaging god and worshipping is better than going in temple and worship the idol which is the representation of God.

As the informant shows frustration of not having a temple where he can express his faith and surrender in front of God in time of difficulties. In India and Nepal religious concern of Hindu people are the same. Steven Vertovec emphasizes the importance of temple as: "In India, the category 'Hindu temple' refers to 'a vast range of institutions'. [...] It basically denotes a structure housing an image of a deity – an image in turn which serves as a kind of receptacle into which deity's power or presence is manifest itself."⁴⁰ The sense of having a temple is very important for Hindu followers which give power to execute the belief toward the deities and make belief in gaining supernatural power in times of difficulties. In most of

³⁸ Some speeches in the name of God

³⁹ Vermillion put on forehead after the religious ceremony is over

⁴⁰ (Vertovec, *The Hindu Diaspora: Comparative Patterns*, 2000, p. 125)

the Bollywood movies and serial drama broadcasted by Indian television which shows the importance of the temple in times of difficulties in the families. They beg help from the idols, which are sometimes established in their home. The power of gods is in creating supernatural force which would ease the situation. On the other hand the importance of temple is to concentrate and rise the faith in God through the meditation. Steven Vertovec further adds: "Temples larger than a single room are usually constructed so as to set off, as one enters, concentric zones of increasing purity and sanctity culminating the innermost, the garbagraha or 'womb chamber' where the power of the deity is believed to be present."⁴¹ It is believed that the focus on deities is possible only in a shrine in the presence of an idol, which creates a faith in the psychology of the devotee.

Hindu identity has taken dual shape in Norway, one group of people agree that we should have religiosity and should have shrine to follow our religious practice but at the same time the other group has a bit different view, which focuses on essence of religion not the physical representation of god. Both the groups who are married to Christian spouse have some sort of religious identity which exists for the period ranging from five to fifteen years of their successful marriage. Another view of Hinduism expressed by Kim Knott referred by Steven Vertovec as:

For some people [Hinduism] has the status of a 'compartment', or one of a number of aspects of life. Many Hindus in Leeds are only too aware that their religion is one amongst others. Not only are there indigenous faiths, generally grouped together by Hindus as 'Christian' but there is also other south Asian faiths.... In this country Hinduism is just one minority faith among others. An awareness of religious pluralism has affected the way Hindus think about themselves and their faith. Some are beginning to think that Hinduism as many people do Christianity, something to be remembered [only] during large festivals and at births and marriages and deaths.⁴²

Kim Knott focuses on the trend of Hindus where they are in minority. The Hindu people cannot follow all the rituals of Hinduism in the place where there are only minority groups. For example Nepalese in Stavanger follows only two important religious festivals, Dashain and Tihar. This shows that they have faith in their religion but the context and the society matters in following all the religious rituals. They follow only the main Hindu religious

⁴¹ (Vertovec, *The Hindu Diaspora: Comparative Patterns*, 2000)

⁴² (Vertovec, *The Hindu Diaspora: Comparative Patterns*, 2000, p. 34)

festivals; not all the Hindu religious calendar which includes many religious festivals, Shivaratri, Ramnavami, Makarsranti, etc. Similarly, Steven Vertovec views Nina Glick Schiller et.al and states the dual identity of transmigrants as, “Within their complex web of social relations, transmigrants draw upon and create fluid and multiple identities grounded both in their society of origin and in the host countries.”⁴³ In this regard Vertovec asserts the point that the transmigrant people are stick to the migrated culture where as they preserve the culture of their origin. This to and fro produces and reproduces Hindus as a new cultural identity. Thus the formation of new cultural identity is a form of mixed type or hybridized form. Taking reference of Vertovec who mentioned, “the production of such hybrid cultural phenomena and ‘new ethnicities’ is especially to be found among diasporic youth whose primary socialization has taken place with the cross-currents of differing cultural fields.” Thus, this new form of socialization builds a sense of respect to the other culture as well as the migrants’ own culture which is also called the cosmopolitan culture. Today’s world is narrowing and the youths are gaining a more cosmopolitan view.

4.4. Disallowing of Some Dietary Rules in Hinduism

There arise some conflicts in food and diet rule among couples who are a Christian and a Hindu. Christianity believes in one god but Hinduism has many deities. Different animals are also worshipped in different occasions. Hindus worship the ‘Cow’ as the goddess. Cow in ‘Satyayuga⁴⁴’ and was known as ‘Kamedhenu’ which means ‘wish goddess’. In Dwaparyuga⁴⁵ Lord Krishna who is a cowherd and protects the cow which symbolizes the importance of the Cow in Hindu mythology. Eating beef is strictly prohibited in Hinduism whereas beef meat is eaten by Christian people without any restriction. In this regard, I asked a Hindu spouse how they take this issue of dietary. Krishna Prasad, one of the informants replied:

Food is not the matter of conflict in my family. We have good sense of understanding in this matter. I don’t prefer beef but if she has to have, she prepares for herself and I prepare for me on that particular day. In regard to the children, they like beef and I have no comment in their food. I think it is the matter of their choice. I was brought up in Hindu society with all my parents following Hinduism who taught me that

⁴³ (Vertovec, *The Hindu Diaspora: Comparative Patterns*, 2000, p. 148)

⁴⁴ The period of truth according to Hindu mythology

⁴⁵ One period in Hindu mythology

eating beef is sin, so that culture runs in my vein which is the truth for me because I had practiced such habit since birth.

There are certain dissimilarities in mixed marriage which may cause conflicts and finally break up in the married life but the informant chosen in this research are co-operative in this matter which is the key of their successful married life. Similarly, pork is also prohibited in Hinduism. The choice of individual is given full freedom and priority in the respondent family. I have found the freedom in the family in the choice of food. As the researcher assume that if the couple debates and impose the superior of one food culture over another than there may arouse conflict but it is not found in any couple which I have selected to interview. Another significant thing is that the spouse of the Hindu woman respects other religion and they offer the researcher the dinner that day and which contains no beef meats. The husband asked if the researcher could eat beef but the researcher told him that he is Hindu and is sorry to have the beef. Then the husband cooked the chicken meat instead.

Another informant Ram Chandra opines that:

Though I am vegetarian, I believe that there are only two classes of people in the world either vegetarian or non vegetarian. Meat is meat whether it is of goat or cow. In both condition animals are sacrificed. If you desired for vegetarian then don't eat meat otherwise eat what you get in which country or place.

In this mixed marriage different spouses carry their different views about the dietary rule. Some of the fundamental Hindus have strict attitude toward the religious issues whereas some are modern in the sense they adopt with the localities where they live but none of the informant expressed their view in eating beef which shows the religious culture implanted since their childhood are still in their mind. Their identities are Hindu who worshipped the cow as the goddess mother. "Many Hindus practise vegetarianism and avoid all meat, poultry and seafood. While some Hindus may consume meat, observant Hindus will avoid beef out of respect for the cow and others may avoid pork and some shellfish. Hindus practise a form of vegetarianism that precludes the eating of eggs."⁴⁶ However, consumptions of food for Hindu people are categorizes into two level-vegetarian and non-vegetarian. Some strict or orthodox Hindu even avoids Garlic and ginger. But the non-vegetarian can eat meat expect pork, beef and shellfish. Hindu people are divided into different group on the basis of

⁴⁶ (The Inter faith Network for the U.K, 2013)

worshipping gods and goddesses. Om Shanti/Bhrama Kumar and Kumari, one of the group of Hinduism who follows lord Shiva strictly prohibited non-vegetarian food. Not only that they divided food as ‘sattvic⁴⁷’, ‘Rajasic⁴⁸’ and ‘Tamasic⁴⁹’. According to their belief meat, egg and even garlic and onion are intoxicating food which makes the human dull and laziness.⁵⁰

Though food may or may not be the cause of conflict in the family especially Hindu and Christian. Having different religious faith and culture means there are some varieties of foods which are different to them. The question that the researcher tried to raise is: “Is there any restriction of food in Hinduism or Christianity?” The researcher found some restriction in food habit of Hindu which is they strictly prohibit beef and pork. This issue further leads to investigate more in order how the family resolve this matter. He found that not any of the Christian married Hindu spouse have eaten beef and pork and members of family have own choice of food. Besides, the Nepalese spouses who are married to a Norwegian, have their own peculiar taste of Nepalese food, which they prefer to have during the vacations and weekends. The spicy food and other Nepalese culinary food are cooked at home and the spouse is happy to serve it to the other family members in that time. Rice, curry, pickle are main Nepalese food.



Picture 1



Picture 2

The first picture shows the popular Nepali dish which contains rice pudding, spinach and pickle, where as the other picture is the Nepali and Indian common vegetarian food names as ‘samosha⁵¹’. The above pictures are collected from the informant on request. Both the

⁴⁷ Food prepared in the remembrance of god and free of meat and dairy product

⁴⁸ Contains spice and meat

⁴⁹ Food containing meat and dairy product

⁵⁰ (Naraine, 2015, pp. 1-8)

⁵¹ Triangular food made up of flour, potatoes and spices and fried in hot oil.

pictures are the vegetarian food of Hindu people in Nepal. They are free to choose their own food. The co-operation and co-ordination lead them to successful married life despite the difference in culture and religion.

4.5. Cultural Inclination of Children Towards their Mother

Out of six couples four couples have children. The Nepali mother's children learn the culture of mother whereas they are taught Norwegian culture in the 'barnehage'. There is no doubt in saying that the home is the place and mother is the teacher for cultural transmission of the children. Steven Vertovec in his book mentions that the children's cultural traits in Britain can be described as the following: 'It might be said that the foremost environment for cultural transmission in any social group is the domestic sphere, and this is no different concerning 'religious nurture' among British Hindus.'⁵² The point here is that, the religious inclination of the mother affects the upbringing of the children.

In Norway the child mixes the Norwegian and sometimes with their mother's culture. The informant who is the mother here had passed 20-25 years in Nepal. She is used to the culture of Nepal. However, after her marriage she lived here and is now able to adopt in the Norwegian culture. But the past memories and learning is shown in some of the behaviour which the children are interested in and wanted to learn. The children are confused and sometimes they mix up both Norwegian and Nepali culture. Bishnu Kumari, one of the informants said that:

My child tries to learn my mother tongue and I teach the story of Hindu mythology and they are interested in the story. I tell them about the Hindu god and goddess. Sometimes they ask me about my mother tongue and I translate some words and they pronounce in a funny way. I travel to Nepal with my child every second year and they hear the language spoken there and are very curious to learn the language. I live in Oslo where we have special gatherings on different Nepalese cultural and religious festival. My children are happy to talk to the Nepalese in Nepali language. It sounds odd but interesting.

Despite the linguistic hybridity, another informant Radhika opines that her children are brought up in Norway and have no sense of her mother tongue because she had lived there for years and visited rarely to the mother land. She further replied,

⁵² (Vertovec, *The Hindu Diaspora: Comparative Patterns*, 2000, p. 94)

My children have never been to Nepal. After my children are born, neither I have visited Nepal nor have any contact with Nepalese people whom I can talk with Nepali language. My children are small enough to ask and know about my motherland as well. The place where I live is filled with all Norwegian people and the school they study have all Norwegian friend .So they are used to with Norwegian language.

The children of some informants show the hybrid situation. In this multicultural society, the mixed married couples' children' mixing languages and the cultural tone is visible in some of the informants whom the researcher has investigated. It is obvious that if one culture encounters with another culture, there is always the possibility of mixing of some influencing things which are what we call neither foreign nor original or native. All countries of the world have some influence of other cultures and languages. Some of the countries of the world have many official languages, which show that those countries are multicultural and multilingual society. For example, the official language of Canada is both French and English. It is the result of colonial rule of French, which is still dominant in the linguistic appearance of Canadian people. However, bilingualism is the assets resulted from the colonization. Similar to the fact that hybridity of linguistic occurs in mixed married couple as in colonial rule affects the local linguistic pattern. Though bilingual and hybridity are different term, the researcher focus is on the switching of one language to another when one speaks which is hybrid situation of the speaker. Steven Vertovec asserts that the linguistic pattern in migrant Indian Hindu contexts is relevant in this point. He writes, "Due to linguistic changes in the earliest years of their presence in the Caribbean, Indo-Caribbeans' use of Hindi is limited, and their pronunciation of Indian personal names is distinctive."⁵³ The researcher's concern here is that the spouse who is married to a Norwegian person has some inclination toward the Norwegian language which has affected the use of his/her mother tongue. The language pronunciation is similar to that of Norwegian which their children learnt from the mother/father.

4.6. A Sense of Security to the Women and their Offspring

In the context of the social and familial life, Bishnu Maya, one of the informants has responded: "The Norwegian Christian spouses as well as government are more trust worthy

⁵³ (Vertovec, *The Hindu Diaspora: Comparative Patterns*, 2000, p. 117)

and I felt security for woman and children for the future life. However, it is my personal feeling but I think the husband are loyal and carry the equal responsibility in child rearing.”

Social security and caring husbands are desired by every woman. In this type of mixed marriage one of the respondents said the same, which is the key of successful marriage. Contrary to the above view another informant Radhika opines that:

My husband takes care of me but I feel lack of emotional attachment like the people of Nepalese society where I am brought up. My husband takes me to hospital when I am sick but he did attend to me when I feel weak in time of sickness. He goes to work and give me less time.

From the above two views we know the cultural difference which makes some misconception about the expression of love. The sense of caring is felt when someone frequently attend the sick people in Eastern culture but the Eastern believe that it is medicine that can cure the sick not the emotional attachment. On the other hand, they have a very busy schedule which hampers to their familial care as well as the culture where they are brought up.

Cultural differences leads to misunderstanding in the family. Eastern culture and Eastern culture has differences in term of family care and emotional attachment. However, people are human and has got human sentiment either they are of Eastern or the Eastern background. One of the informants found that her Norwegian husband is caring and felt security whereas the other woman said that she lacked emotional attachment in time of sickness which shows some difference in culture between the Eastern Hindu and Eastern Christian especially Norwegian.

4.7. Child Rearing and Schooling

Child rearing and schooling is important part of every family. Do their children get equality education which can better their life? Is government responsible for the education? Does the cultural variation of parents make any difference to the children? What is the situation of children in their school? Do they find multicultural friends? During this period many multinational companies are established in Norway which hired people from all over the world. Due to this reason, many people from the globe have established themselves in Norway and made it as a common home. Especially skilled manpower that the government has given permanent resident to live here, live with their families and children. For those foreign people, whose children have to study in Norway in different socio-cultural

environment than their homeland? As a result, Norwegian schools are filled with students of different national or cultural background. My concern here is that Norwegian schools too have multicultural pupils where they can learn each other culture. Norway too is untouched by the global effect of migration which made it a multicultural country. My point is that when a culture is encountered with another then there is chance of affecting one another culture. As a result, there is a hybridized or mixed culture in the families and children who are migrated in Norway. On one side, they carry their culture in their head and at the same time they are affected by the Norwegian culture.

Let us talk about the food they prefer to eat. At home their mother cooked their cultural dish but at 'barnehage' they are provided with Norwegian dishes. As the child grows s/he is practiced in both the dishes and neither the single dish, Norwegian nor the national dishes influence him fully which creates the hybrid situation in the child. By national dishes, I mean the dish from the country, from where they have migrated. For instance, people migrating from Turkey like to have Turkish food at home but at office and school they are provided with the Norwegian dishes, bread butter, coffee etc. Similarly, the dress, language and other social factors encounter with local and foreign tradition in Norway. Some Muslims have the culture of wearing 'burka'⁵⁴ which is seldom seen among them in Norway.

Another facet of children cultural development is questionable. Do the children who are born in Norway with the mixed married couple have the same cultural inclination towards the both cultures, mother's culture and father's culture? Referring to Steven Vertovec's notion here, he said that: "(...) many Hindu youngsters are confused because they lack an adequate conceptual framework within which to set their practical knowledge and experience in such a way that they can make sense of Hinduism both to themselves and to outsiders."⁵⁵ This sort of dilemma is prevalent in the children who are born in a different cultural and religious environment than the mother's/father's religious background. However, there are some institutions which provide the Hindu religious upbringing for children in Britian diasporic Hindu communities. But in case of Norway, very few steps are taken in order to preserve the religious identities of the Hindus.

Another significant reason might be because of low number of Hindu population in Norway. Steven Vertovec added something in this regard as the children grows up with the community

⁵⁴ Veil that covers women's face in for instance the Afghan and Saudi-Arabaian tradition

⁵⁵ (Vertovec, *The Hindu Diaspora: Comparative Patterns*, 2000, p. 102)

which is completely different from the homeland of the one of the parents. He says that “diaspora identities are producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference”.⁵⁶ The children who are brought up in a different community will learn the trend of the community with their parents’ identity in their head. For example the Nepalese spouse children know the tradition of his/her parents because of the upbringing but at the same time s/he is entrapped by the local culture where s/he survives. Thus they form a new hybrid culture. Vertovec further claims the production of hybrid cultural phenomenon in the children of diasporic Hindu. He said, “the production of such hybrid cultural phenomenon and ‘anew ethnicities’ is especially to be found among youth whose primary socialization has taken place with the cross current of differing cultural field”⁵⁷

Despite the situation that can arouse the conflict in family of inter religious/cultural marriage, Dugan Romano has a different view, he says, “Cultural different values do not always mean conflicting values, and many children of bicultural parents have benefitted from expose to both system.”⁵⁸ In this regard my informants’ children carry potential of both Eastern and Western communities and cultures. Eastern culture is more family-based on emotional attachment with the members and living together in a family. But the Western families have a more individualistic and perhaps mechanical life. The people enjoy their personal freedom and might be less concerned with the other members of the family. Though the researcher is from an Eastern country and has experience the life of the Eastern/European people since 2 years. Not only that the researcher found the interviewee children more open and broad minded in terms of cultural artefacts. The sense of respect of other cultures can be seen in the children because of the environment at home; the father respects the culture of the mother and vice-versa. Similarly, some cultural traditions in mixed marriages are the same but some are not. If it is different, then the child rearing is also affected. In this regard Dugan expresses his view as: “Some cultures (Latin, American, Asian, Middle East and European) adhere to more authoritarian methods) based on patriarchal system while others (American, Anglo, Scandinavian, Polynesian etc are generally more lenient and permissive.”⁵⁹ Borrowing the view of Romano the researcher concentrated on the south-Asian culture especially Nepal, and these are following the trend of patriarchy where the male or the father is head of the family and plays a vital role in decision making of any kind. The father should approve the decision of the children.

⁵⁶ (Vertovec, *The Hindu Diaspora: Comparative Patterns*, 2000, p. 154)

⁵⁷ (Vertovec, *The Hindu Diaspora: Comparative Patterns*, 2000, p. 154)

⁵⁸ (Romano, 2008, p. 112)

⁵⁹ (Romano, 2008, p. 113)

In this research, the Nepalese spouse is married with Norwegian (Scandinavian) spouse who permit the individual to make their own decision. Situation has changed overtime and the context is different in different places, so do the Norwegian context and Nepali context. The Scandinavian culture of permissive of the one of the spouse and the Nepali culture of the other spouse interacts and forms a dialectic culture in the children. The children who are raised in-between the both cultural trend are affected by both cultures. The children are interfered sometimes but at the other time they are given freedom of their choice.

In terms of child rearing, Dugan has categorized the alternative in three different choices: “When styles of inter family relating are culturally different, couples usually choose one of three courses: (1) they may follow the customs of lands, (2) they may adopt the style of one partner, or (3) both parents may adhere to their own style.”⁶⁰ These three possibilities are relevant to this research. Some couples follow the first category and go to the cultural practice of Norway where as in some of the pertinent issue their individual choice is dominant which sticks to the third point mention above. The children are more attached and emotive who are cared by a Nepalese mother married to Norwegian where as Norwegian mother who is married to Nepali has more independent type of cultural practice.

4.8. Social Acceptance of Couples in Mixed Marriage

Marriage is the union between two persons not only two single ones, but marriage joins two families. In regard to this I have asked a question to my informant, “does your family accept your marriage easily?” Krishna Prasad who is married to Norwegian-Christian lady and has children with her replied:

Before, it is difficult for our family to accept the relation because none of the family members has married to a foreign lady and beside that the lady is non-Hindu. It is difficult to convince them but later, they cannot live in our relation to be accepted but still my grandfather and grandmother are against the relation.

He further added that the cause of conflict according to them is that Christian people eat beef and Hindu worship the cow as the goddess. “I feel the change has occurred in course of time because the modern generation easily accept the relation whereas the traditional people especially of the grandparent generation are following the traditional beliefs which cannot be changed with the change in world view.”

⁶⁰ (Romano, 2008, p. 116)

As the researcher sees that the changes in the generation views about the marriage in the successive generation, which make the adoptability easier for the mixed marriage couple. Ancient people's opinion contradicts with modern points of view. The narrowness about the marriage is blurring and people enjoy the marriage freedom in the age of scientific discoveries and following the path of scientifically proven things rather than superstitious belief.

CHAPTER V

5. DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the researcher would describe and discuss the data presented in fifth chapter. What is the significant of the data? What are the answers given by the informants? And I also want to discuss about the findings of the research which was carried out. What type of religious identity does the Nepalese spouse who is married to Norwegian carry? Are they familiar with Norwegian culture? How long does it take them to learn the foreign culture? Regarding the religious issue, the informants hold the different identity from their childhood. One who is Christian and the other who is Hindu by birth and following the parental religion encounter each other after their marriage.

Religion is an important part of human life. It shapes the human behaviour. All the religion of the world teaches to do good things. But the deities and the way they follow are different. One and same religion has also the different flavour in term of difference in local, regional and national. The researcher here tries to deal with the two inter-religious persons in a couple and the way they live their life. What are the areas of conflict? How do they find the solution for the smooth living of the family and so on?

5.1. Religious Tolerance in Inter-religious Married Couples' Children

Religious tolerance is the term that meant giving equal respect to all religions. According to Chelsea Bhajan, he found his informant in mixed marriage responding that: Individual raised in an inter-religious household seem more open-minded and accepting of other religions and plural society of Indonesia. They are also more willing to engage in multiple traditions, marry someone of different religion and expose their future children to different aspects of more than one religion.⁶¹ The sense of respect to all the other religion is the good aspect which the researcher saw in the mixed married couple and their offspring. Religious riot and war which is the one of the cause of today's world can be resolved by inter-religious marriage. The openness and broad mentality is developed and sense of brotherhood can be built in the families which relates to the different religious group and families. The world is a common home and everybody should respect each other faith which can be found in the inter-religious

⁶¹ (Bhajan, 2014, pp. 19-20)

marriage. The religious homogeneity in this multicultural society is foundation of peace in the world. In regard to the religious matter, one of the interviewee replied:

My husband joins the ritual in dashain⁶² with my Nepalese people in Stavanger and I support him in Christmas and arrange the feast during the occasion. There is no hard and fast rule and strict religious rule applied in the family. But my children are small and they don't know about the religion. They follow the ritual of both spouses. When they grew of they have their own choice of following any religion.

The religious freedom and openness is cultivated in the inter-religious marriage. The researcher found the homogeneous religiosity in the inter-religious married couple while visiting their home at different times. They are happy to celebrate each other religious festival. The respect of religious belief of each other is the key of successful marriage. The couples have maintained the healthy familial environment by respecting each other culture and religious ritual. The relational bond and longevity depends on the mutual co-operation and better understanding of each-other feelings. Today's world is changeable-in the sense that everything is changeable and we should accept the change. The strict and orthodox families are ruining their life in the name of religion and culture. The mixed married couple should accept this fact of changeability of world view in this multicultural society. Despite having no religious shire of Hinduism, the spouse manages to practice the main rituals and festival of Hindu. This sort of consciousness of the identity can be seen in the mixed married spouse who is having Hindu religious faith.

5.2. Marriage in Hinduism

5.2.1. Religious Aspects

Religion plays a vital role in every human life. Being a social being a human belong to any religious community which makes the basic foundation to view at the things of the world. His view depends on the religious or social community where he lives now. The person who pretends to be an atheist has also got some spiritual belief or faith to hold his/her life. Without any faith or belief human might live a chaotic life because there is no barrier or discipline to follow. As it is often said that discipline guides the human action, without it the human being might turn violent and animalistic. There are many religions introduced in this world and

⁶² Hindu religious festival

every religious group claimed that their religion is superior. But the essence of every religion is the same. As the way is different for following the religious belief, they have also their own practice of the rituals. Marriage, which is taken as a important ritual, has its own peculiar style in Hinduism.

Marriage in Hinduism is a sacred relationship. It is both an obligatory duty (Dharma) and Samskara (Sacrament). (...) It is an essential aspect of the four ashramas (brahmacharya⁶³, grihastha, Vanaprastha and sanyasa and the four aims (purusharthas of human life, namely dharma, artha (wealth), kama (sensual) pleasure and Moksha (salvation)).⁶⁴

According to Hinduism to obtain salvation or 'Moksha' one has to go through the four ashramas of life. Marriage is important to continue the generation. 'Grihastha jivan', which is also known as the familial life, begins with the marriage. Marriage is for both purposes, to continue the generation and to obtain moksha/salvation. Marriage makes the human responsible as well in the family and society in whole. According to Hinduism, marriage was there in the time of 'satyayuga⁶⁵'. Different Gods are married to Goddesses. Referring back to the mythical period and the age of God there used to be such marriage relations.

⁶³ Brahmacharya is the practice of celibacy as a student, grihastha is the life as a householder, vanprastha is life of a forest from active duty and sanyasa is life of renunciation.

⁶⁴ (The Hindu Marriage , past and present, 2015)

⁶⁵ Age of God



Source: The Ritz Carlton, Washington DC⁶⁶

⁶⁶ (Alswang, 2010)

In the above photograph a Hindu boy married a Christian lady in Washington DC according to the Hindu religious tradition. Both the husband and wife wear garlands and we can also see ‘lagangatho’⁶⁷ Beside that we can see the priest who is performing the religious activities. Ganesha who is taken as the deities of Hindu is at the side of the marriage photograph. According to Hinduism, before starting any ‘Puja’⁶⁸ we should pray lord Ganesh for the succession of any Puja. According to the Hinduism marriage is done in the presence of priest and follows the religious ritual of establishing Mandap⁶⁹ and worshipping fire remember all the deities. The important part of Hindu marriage is ‘Kanya daan’⁷⁰, which is done at the end. The person who performs kanyadaan places the right palm of the groom on the right palm of the bride.(...)The person who performs kanyadaan announces that he gives away this virgin who is attired in gorgeous wedding –robes, appearing like Lakshmi (the Goddess of Wealth). He does this in the presence of Brahman, fire and other deities as witnesses.⁷¹

5.2.2. Social Aspects of marriage

Marriage is not only linked with the individual life but also related to the social life of the people. Human being is social animal. Without the society, human identity is unimaginable. To be the part of the society, one has to follow the rule of the society. Society consists of people of similar faith, ideas and religious values. But today’s people are making their own group in a mixed society and form their identical group to share their happening in the daily life. Marriage, which is important part of human life, has some connection with the moral and social values of the people. In the name of religion different groups quarrel and sometime they hate and attack the group who is following different religious belief. The social code or morality differs from society to society. The non-Christian man/woman, who is from the south-East, has normally his/her own cultural code.

In this research the transnational marriage with the non-Hindu is challenging for the informant in a double sense. In one sense s/he has to face the national culture in Europe and

⁶⁷ The tie symbolizing the strong married relation and hoping to continue for seven birth

⁶⁸ Religious function

⁶⁹ A place made to perform religious activities for marriage where fire is burnt in the centre and priest tell the participating perform to do the activities by reading marriage process in Hinduism

⁷⁰ marrying virg in daughter

⁷¹ (Majupuria, 2009, pp. 65-66)

at the same time she has to understand and adopt in Christian community. The cultural openness and way the woman are treated are not normal to the Eastern society. The dress code and life of the Norwegian woman especially is unusual who are from the south-east, especially from Nepal. As mentioned above Hindu followed a different ritual of marriage and performs 'Puja'⁷² in the religious ceremony and in which the priest recited mantras. Hindus believe that the ritual of marriage is performed before the god that is 'fire' is sacred holy and god fire will punish the betrayal in those relation- either husband or wife. Another aspect of marriage is linked with family in general and society as a whole. Those mixed marriages should be accepted by the family as well as the society. Family could be convinced but hard to convince the whole social group. In question to one of the interviewees he expressed the disappointment in this regard as he mentioned the older generation of her family and that some orthodox people have different opinions in the question about mixed marriage. The social view of Hindus toward the practice of marrying the other religious group, Christian, is yet to be changed. However the new generation people have changed the view in this regard. New generations are open to the society of Christian as expressed in these lines:

Across the board, Hindus widely expressed their feeling of being fairly comfortable with Christianity, most people having had experience of being within Christian contexts of worship on a regular basis at school or through social activities. Many went to services, sang in choir, celebrated festivals and raised their children in Christian churches or schools, and almost everyone reported that they fundamentally felt comfortable in their own faith while engaging with Christian life and worship.⁷³

The openness in their behaviour shows that the modern Hindu youth are favouring the contextual religious tradition without leaving their own religious belief. They send their children to the Christian school and participate in the religious ceremonies and church function. This shows the attitude of modern Hindu youths toward the other religious group. On the other hand the other minority thinks that they have internal pressure to change their religious belief while participating in the Christian ceremonies and functions which shows their narrow-mindedness toward the other religious group. In this regard the researcher came up with questions in his mind that 'can Christian be the friend of Hindu or vice versa?' There is not wrong to participate in the neighbourhood or friends' ritual ceremonies which are not

⁷² Worship

⁷³ (Frazier, 2011, p. 15)

necessarily giving any pressure to change the religious view. The narrow-minded is shown in some reports when questioned about participating in Christian religious function as, “when asked, few reported that they felt pressured to become Christian when doing so.”⁷⁴

5.3. Christian View of Marriage

To date back to the myth God has created Eve because Adam felt lonely in the garden. This mythical story is the starting point of relation between man and woman. Marriage is important part in human life whether it is Hindu, Christian or of any religion. The only difference is that it follows different rituals and practices. Unlike Hinduism, Christians perform the ritual of marriage in church in the presence of the priest. They make a certain vow to live together. According to Christianity,

Marriage is a covenant and sacrament that signifies the union between Christ and the church. The marriage takes place between a consenting man and woman, and is blessed by an authorized minister or priest, according to ecclesiastical rituals. The purpose of this marriage is to give birth to children and raise them, in addition to the lifelong living together between the husband and wife through the sharing of rights and obligations and for better or worse.⁷⁵

Marriage is a sacred relation which establishes the union between a man and a woman. It is also for some churches considered as a relation between Christ and the couple. In one of the myths of Christianity, God Created Adam in his image and out of the ribs of it he created Eve, so that the generation of human beings could be continued. So the relation of man and woman is established since the beginning of the history. Later, different groups made their own ritual for marriage. According to which the group performs their religious activities and rituals for marriages.

⁷⁴ (Frazier, 2011, p. 15)

⁷⁵ (NCFA, 2007)

CHAPTER VI

6. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Every research concluded with the findings, which are followed by different procedure. In this research too, the researcher uses the qualitative research method to explore the situation of the mixed married couple. The researcher has focused on social, religious and cultural aspect of the mixed married couple-Hindu and Christian- in Norwegian.

6.1. Hindu Identity in Transnational Marriage

Despite the transnational border and married with Christian, Hindu people have still faith in the deities of Hinduism and they also follow the religious rituals with the Nepalese living in Stavanger and Oslo especially in 'Dashain and Tihar'⁷⁶. Though, there are only some temples for Hindus in Norway and none in Stavanger. The religious ceremony and daily rituals are performed by the Hindu spouse in his/her home. The ritual manifestation of Hindu shows the deep conscious rootedness of faith in the interviewee. Though there are very few Hindus in Norway, their psychological manifestation and celebration show the hold in Hindu affinity towards their religious faith in this transnational society. In spite of the fact that there are only few temples in Oslo who are built by Sri-Lankan Hindu people, Hindu sanatan Mandir and Sanatan mandir Sabha located in Drammen and Slemmestad respectively are some temples existed in Norway. Besides this, some organizations are active in the spread of Hinduism or Hindu consciousness. Vishwa Hindu Parisad and ISKCON are registered Hindu organizations in Norway.

6.2. Religious Aspect and Mixed Marriage

Religion plays an important role in marriage. Some of the couple have performed the marriage in church whereas some of the couples performed in court. All the marriages are conducted in Norway, so they follow the rituals of marriage according to Christian or secular traditions. The place and the context make the spouse to perform Christian religious activities in Norway. The researcher points here to the interesting view that in case of mixed marriage, the couple's native land makes difference in performing religious activities.

⁷⁶ Important festivals of Hindu see accessed on 5th April 2015.

6.3. Social Aspects of Mixed Marriage Couples

Society plays an important role in the marriage. The society where they live has certain moral codes, which are shaped by the religious traditions and world views. The Hindu spouse which is away from the native land has to accept the moral, ethical and social order of the society where s/he has to live the rest of his/her life. The couples that the researcher met with lived in Norway and they follow the Norwegian culture and code of the society. At the same time, they have the memory and learning of their homeland. This situation makes the hybrid character in the spouse as well as the children. The spouse gets in connection with the families far away from home through the internet and visited the motherland once in every two years which refreshes the relationship with the spouse relatives and family. Though, the old grandparents are against the marriage, the couples are somehow accepted the grandchildren and shower the love towards them. The spouses made their home as Norway is openly accepted by the society there and live a better life with the love of their spouse. Norway is developed country with the rich multicultural people, where their married are accepted heartily. Their relationship flourished and nurture with the love and caring with the societal acceptance, social security for their children and encouraged the way the live a married life.

6.4. Dietary Issues in Mixed Married Couples

Food is necessary for every human. However, some restrictions are made on the basis of religion. Hindu people are prohibited from beef and pork. This issue is accepted by the spouse and the research found the compromise and freedom of food habits of the spouse. Despite the differences, the conflicts are resolved according to the freewill of the spouse. Children born out of two different religious spouses were given the freedom of choice of any religion as well as likes and dislikes of food they wanted to eat.

6.5. Cultural Inclination of Children Toward the Mother

The children born out of a Hindu-Christian couple in Norway are more inclined toward the Christianity due to social context and the religious background of father/mother but the children are also interested to learn the mother/father culture of Nepal, which the researcher found in the research. The children of such couples show the inclination toward Hindu religion in the religious festival celebrated in Stavanger among Nepalese Hindu people living there.

CHAPTER VII

7. LIMITATIONS

7.1. Limitation of the Study

Every research has its own limitation and scope. This research has some limitation. This research is carried out for the fulfilment of master's thesis in Global Studies (MSG). It follows the qualitative approach for the study. This research is based on the field report, direct observation and secondary data, articles in journals and books, etc. This research follows the interviews processed by the researcher through different perspectives and analytical skills. It is assumed that this research would be really helpful for the people who are willing to marry an inter-religious partner and to resolve the conflicts that can occur during their life time. The interviewees were married for ten years or more, and they might show the secret of the successful marriage.

The research also explores the dynamics and potentiality of mixed married in the globally narrow world. The researcher being Hindu tries his best to avoid biasness in the presented research. However, unknowingly there might occur some influence in the outcomes of the result. The similar research has made the scope of the research open to field of enquiries in the topics which the researcher has chosen. This research is believed to broaden its enquiries.

7.2. Suggestions

The research came up with some insight for mixed married couple to deal with some area of conflict regarding the socio-religious practice, which is different for one of the spouses when s/he comes from a different religious and cultural background. The couple can maintain their relation unless there arises an unresolved problem. The best way to deal with this problem is to allow the freedom and enjoy each other's happiness in the way they deal. Every conflict has some solution which needs not to be overlooked. Compromise and freedom for individual choice should be maintained unless it causes direct harm to the individual. The society is changing and we should also change our world view and be open minded in this issue raised in the studies. We should not follow the orthodox way in order to create problem to him/her in the marriage system. It hampers the social and religious life of people. It is believed that nothing in this world is rigid which cannot undergo change. Likewise, the religious

orthodoxy should not be applied in the behaviour of today's modern human. Today's human beings desire change and newness in the system of marriage too. This is the age of globalization of worldly affairs. All the countries of the world are our common home and so are the religion and religious groups. The narrowness, limitedness and restriction should not be the character of today's human. Thus, the focus of this research is to maintain the mixed marriage which is built in the foundation of love and care without being narrow minded individual who cannot cross the boundaries created by own religious and cultural group. However, fortunately, all the interviewees are living sound life ranging five to fifteen years of the married life. But mostly it is heard that the mixed marriages have more disadvantages than advantages which is untrue in this research. Though, the researcher came up with the conclusion that not all the mixed marriages are faulty and has chances of breaking. The researcher suggests that mixed marriages are success even and unless there is love. The level of conflict or misunderstanding is created due to the different religious rituals and ceremonies but which is not the problem that cannot be solved. If there is a better understanding between the families, those areas of difference do no longer exist. The researcher however does not pinpoint that mixed marriage is neither good nor bad. It is the individual difference that can cause conflict and the difference can be solved making compromise from either side.

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