



NORWEGIAN
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Feel the difference: What does it mean to be a Hindu from Nepal in Oslo, Norway?

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Abstract

This is an academic research project which thoroughly presents a comprehension about the extensive reality of the Nepalese Hindu migrants in Oslo, Norway. Qualitative research method has been chosen and employed for this research project. Prior to interview, an interview guide has been prepared to conduct the semi-structured interviews. Altogether, nineteen individuals have been interviewed to get their ideas on Hinduism in relation to perception, religious identity, and the reflection of migrant status. Significantly, the ideas and theories of Hinduism, migration, diaspora, and globalization have been applied to tackle the issues in the research project and produce a good thesis. However, the primary data will be used to analyze and come to a conclusion.

The project writing equally respects the other religions, cultures, and people including Hinduism itself. Moreover, it strictly follows the research ethics. Hinduism is defined as the oldest and flexible religion which does not necessarily demand any obligatory steps to follow and practice. Temple represents the identity of the Nepalese Hindu migrants, but there is not established any Nepali Hindu temple in Oslo. Even if there is no any Nepali Hindu temple in Oslo, it is still possible to learn and follow the religion digitally. Regarding the typologies, there are mentioned four kinds of Hindus which are noted as traditional, conservative, modern, and religious. In short, Hinduism believes in co-existence, equality, and philanthropy regardless of conservative beliefs. On the other side of the same coin, the Nepalese Hindus are marginalized, so that their religious identity has been threatened.

Keywords: Nepalese Hindu Migrants, Qualitative Research Method, Fieldwork, Interview, Ideas and Theories, *Veda*, Temple, *Puja*, *Namaste*, Caste System, Festivals, and Digital Hindus.

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Chapter One

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Research Project

The project is about the Nepalese Hindus living in Oslo, Norway. It will excavate their experiences, struggles, understanding, perspectives, religious identities, social practices, and cultural differences in Norway. To make this study more meaningful and reliable, I would like to introduce myself shortly. I am Mr. Keshab Puri from Sunsari, Nepal. I have been living in Norway for five years. I have already completed two Master's degrees from Nepal and Norway respectively. The first Master's degree is from the Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal and the second Master's degree is from the School of Mission and Theology, Stavanger, Norway. Currently, I am studying third Master's degree in Religion, Society and Global Issues at the Norwegian School of Theology, Oslo. Regarding my religious faith, I belong to Hindu religion. In Nepal, there are more than 80 percent people are Hindus. Officially, Nepal was a Hindu Kingdom until 14 January 2007. The Interim Constitution of Nepal has declared that Nepal is a secular state instead of a Hindu Kingdom. The Interim Constitution was promulgated on 15 January 2007 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_religion_in_Nepal). Personally, I follow Hindu rituals because I was born and grown up in a family which regards Hindu as the religion, tradition, and culture. I am liberal when it comes to the religion. I equally respect all the religions. Even if I myself am Hindu, I would like to go for a research and know more about the differences, perception, practices, typologies, and experiences of other Nepalese Hindus living in Oslo. While writing this thesis, I will use my general knowledge of Hinduism throughout the beginning to make the study more understanding and reliable.

The Nepalese Hindus living in Oslo are on different statuses, such as students, official workers, dependants, and PhD researchers. For many Hindus including me, it is not easy to be abroad in many contexts. While being abroad, people can get higher education, experience multicultural experiences, make international friends, and feel the religious differences. But at the same time, it can be assumed that they miss their homeland, families, friends, relatives, religious environment, and social as well as cultural practices. For most of the immigrants, it is always essential to feel and discuss about the issues like; who they are, where they come from, why they

are here, what their religion is, and what their purpose is to be abroad. Same is the case in the present context. I hereby try my level best to deal with the issues which are mentioned above in the project writing.

In my experience, Norway is a prosperous, beautiful, peaceful, and multicultural country in the world; wherein different nationalities, religious communities, and ethnic groups can easily live together. There is respect, mutual relationship, humanity, and cultural acceptance among the people in the society. Because of these good characteristics, there are many immigrants from many parts of the world. Nepalese nationals are also ones among those many who live in Norway as migrants. When I talk about the Nepalese people living in Oslo, they are considered the Hindus because there are some other Nepalese people too, who come from different religions, cultures, ethnicity, and backgrounds. However, my prime concern is the Nepalese Hindus living in Oslo, Norway.

Talking about Nepal, it is a naturally beautiful country where there is the highest peak of the world called Mt. Everest. There are approximately 30 million people in Nepal. Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam are the major religions in Nepal. Among them, Hinduism is the biggest religion. In the sense, Hindu people are large in number. As it is already mentioned, Nepal was a Hindu Kingdom before and it used to have the monarchy as the head of the country. As a fact, it was the one and only Hindu kingdom in the world. The Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal is a secular country now. Even if it is a secular country, the majority of the people are Hindus there in Nepal. Mostly, the government, government offices, and non-governmental organizations are either directly or indirectly run by the Hindus. So, there is obviously a favorable situation and religious environment for the Hindus in Nepal.

Definitely, there are many differences between Nepal and Norway among which the environment, geographical structure, social security system, religious freedom, socio-political situation, and multiculturalism are quickly noticed. Among many differences, my primary focus is on the religion and migration. To move on forward, I have chosen a topic for my Master's thesis which is as follows: "Feel the difference: What does it mean to be a Hindu from Nepal in Oslo, Norway?". In this respect, I will use the primary data to study, analyze, and come to a conclusion. As it is earlier mentioned, there is not any difficulty to be a Hindu and continue the religious practices and rituals in Nepal. Even if the country is declared the secular country, it

makes no difference for many Hindus and others either, in relation to their religious commitments and faiths. The Hindus follow their religion by respecting other religions, their followers, and cultures. In Nepal, Hindus and Muslims, Hindus and Christians, Hindus and Buddhists, and Hindus and others are easily assimilated with each other. The country has a history of people adjoining multiple religious faiths living in a cordial relation.

Reversely, the situation is not the same for the Nepalese Hindus in Norway because they are a few in number in Oslo, which makes them feel and regard themselves as a religious minority group. They do not have a Nepali Hindu *mandir* (temple) to practice their religion in Oslo. Likewise, there is no favorable religious environment either, which indeed helps to create a sort of difficult situation for them. Because of such a difficult situation, the religious identity of theirs is challenged now. So, the project writing will go through different steps such as preparing an interview guide, asking for the permission from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) to conduct the interviews, getting people as the informants, and doing fieldwork to find out their social status, struggle for the settlement, and feelings towards their religion as well as homeland.

1.2 Research Problem

Everyone who follows and practices Hinduism are called Hindus, but all the followers do not necessarily visit temples. Generally, Hinduism is regarded as a flexible religion having no any hard and fast rules to follow strictly. People define Hinduism on their own ways and practice it voluntarily these days in Nepal. In the Nepalese context, the people who practice the religion regularly, those who just claim to be Hindus without any practices at all, and those who practice it occasionally, are plainly called Hindus. Hinduism is practiced in many different ways in Nepal. As a general understanding, a Hindu needs to follow some essential steps, for instance, getting up early in the morning, taking a shower, visiting a *mandir* (temple), worshiping idols, and taking *tika* (a red mark on the forehead) and blessings from a *pujari* (priest). As a bitter truth, all the followers do not necessarily go for the above mentioned steps every time. Normally, a temple is the capital place to worship the gods and goddesses for Hindus. It is a holy place to visit and worship. So, almost all the Hindus know the importance of a temple and visit it time and again. Sometimes, the followers regard stones as the symbol of deities and worship them by even visiting the river banks. This is a belief among the Hindus in Nepal. In Hinduism, stones and river banks are also considered the holy symbols and places respectively. Even if there is a

Sri Lankan Hindu temple, there is not a Nepali Hindu temple in Oslo. As a fact, there is a more favorable situation for Hindus in Nepal and Christians in Norway. Since I am writing about the Nepalese Hindus living in Oslo, I prefer to focus on the research questions. The research questions are as follows:

1. How is Hinduism understood by the Nepalese migrants in Oslo, Norway?
2. How is Hinduism influenced by religious identity and how is their migrant status reflected in this issue?

With the help of above mentioned research questions, I will try my level best to study, evaluate, analyze, and come to the conclusion to answer the research questions. I will work harder to figure out how a Nepalese Hindu manages to survive religiously in Norway and what kind of differences he or she feels while being away from homeland. Regarding the materials, I will go for primary data to complete this project writing. Obviously, Norway is different from Nepal in many contexts, such as people, culture, religious community, immigration, multiculturalism, and geographical structure. Concerning the information, I will ask my respondents some simple but relevant questions to get their true feelings, perceptions, and experiences in the concerned issues. The questions will be based on respecting the human dignity, morality, and qualitative research methodology.

1.3 Methodological Approach

Methodology is normally regarded as the theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field of study. This part of my research includes a short description about the selection of research area, informants, method of data collection, data analyzing process, and theoretical prospects of research ethics. As a methodological approach, I will use the qualitative research method. For my research project, it suits the best in regard to materials and aim of the study. While using the qualitative research method, a researcher has to go back and forth between the different situations for getting the required information on the research problem. And I am well aware of the fact of going back and forth between the various situations in order to collect the necessary information.

While writing methodology, I will firstly write a short introduction about it. Then I will write about the importance of research. The main aim of focusing on the importance of research, is to

find out the fact which is either untold or hidden and that has not been explored yet. After this, I will write about research design where I will present a set of methods and procedures. After I write about research design, I will write about qualitative research method which concerns with words rather than numbers. Qualitative research method analyses data from fieldwork, interviews, and observations. But I will not go for observation, since I am allowed to conduct only interviews. Regarding the interviews, I will go to field with the open-ended questionnaires and employ them during the interviews. In my view, a researcher can figure out and understand the problems, experiences, different religious and social practices, challenges, and actualities of the people with the help of these kinds of questionnaires. Generally speaking, such kinds of interviews fall under the qualitative research method. Moreover, I will go for the individual interview. To justify and answer my research questions, I as a researcher will use the same information and knowledge whatever I learn from the fieldwork. This method is a primarily exploratory research having the aim to attain a perception of basic reasons and views. Similarly, I will explain about the method of data collection, semi-structured interviews, background information, interview questionnaires, sampling, reliability and validity of the research, ethical reflection, and the role of a researcher. As the connection of the subchapters, I write about the theoretical approach in the next subchapter.

1.4 Theoretical Approach

In the course of thesis writing, the ideas and theories of Hinduism, migration, diaspora, and globalization will be applied. Additionally, some other relevant theories will also be applied if need be. Since the research is all about Nepalese Hindus, the theory of Hinduism and migration will be more focused and concerned according to context. In my understanding, theory is regarded as the road map of the text without which, the text is almost incomplete particularly in research writings. Furthermore, theory is also known as conceptual tool. Generally, it is almost impossible to complete a thesis without applying a theory in the project writing. And even if a researcher produces a thesis without applying a theory, a reader cannot understand it in a very proper way. Therefore, theories do really matter in both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Regarding the research problem, theories by different scholars will be helpful and resourceful to tackle the issues in the project writing. I shall hereby look and analyze the thesis with the help of relevant theories.

Hinduism is often understood as a unified religion. In the context of Nepal, it is noticed that there are several internal divisions originated by caste, community, language, and geography. Hinduism is regarded as the oldest and flexible religion. "Hinduism is shaped by a way of thinking which seems to be primarily directed to the preservation of insights of the past. It is a living tradition" (Organ 1974, p. 16). Hinduism is more or less perceived as the way of life. The followers of this faith, are of different types. Some followers are traditionalist, some are conservative, some are modern, and some are religious. I will explain about the types of Hindus in chapter five called analysis on findings.

Migration is said to be a simple movement of people to settle in another place or country, usually across an administrative boundary. Migration is often caused by political, social, administrative, religious, and betterment issues. Migration can be temporary or permanent, and it may be voluntary or forced. Migration is not a new thing, it is known historically, that people have always had migratory lifestyles. It can easily be noticed that there are a lot of evidences that an individual or a group of people have moved from faraway lands to inhabit new places. For example, migrants from Asia has ended up in Europe, Australia, and United States of America over a period of time. There has been several big movements of people in the history of human beings, and all of which were caused by some particular events during those times (<http://eschooltoday.com/migration/what-is-migration.html>). As it is already mentioned, the migration is not caused only because of wars or movements of people, rather it is sometimes caused by a search for a betterment of the career as well. In the context, Nepalese Hindus are directly concerned with the betterment issues who are voluntary migrants. I will write more about migration theory, challenges of migration, opportunities of migration, and migration in Norway in theoretical discussion chapter.

Diaspora means to scatter in Greek, but today people use this term to describe a community of people who live outside their countries of origin or ancestry, but maintain active connections with it. As a fact, a diaspora includes both immigrants and their descendants. Immigrants are also known as migrants. Migrant people and their descendants frequently form a diasporic community in their host countries. Diasporic community usually remains in between regarding their past and present. As the members of a diasporic community, some people lose their attachment to their ancestral home country while others keep up a strong connection to a place

which their ancestors might have left generations ago. Noticeably, it seems that many diaspora groups are working to obtain a greater impact and raise a stronger voice in matters that directly or indirectly relate to their countries of origin (<http://www.diasporaalliance.org/what-is-a-diaspora/>). In this respect, Nepalese Hindus belong to such a diasporic community who raise their common voices in regard to identity issue.

The theory and idea of globalization is applied prudently in the text, which offers a cultural perspective on the social theory among the Nepalese Hindus in Oslo. The world does not change itself, but the worldviews get changed according to time and situations. On the basis of my general knowledge, I can say that the idea of globalization is not a latest idea in the present world. Globalization has a greater impact on the lives of people everywhere in the world. For example, some people think of themselves as the global citizens these days which is accompanied by the idea of globalization. This is twenty first century and the people are living in the age of globalization where there exist many different ethnicities, cultures, religions, languages, and traditions together in a same society. Most of the things and views are changeable in this world, so is the case in regard to culture. It is commonly said that cultures are continuously changing and these changes guide to changes in worldviews. In an every bigger society, there often exists more than one kind of competing worldviews. And every kind of worldview usually has a different cultural perspective on the society. Such a competing worldview can generate an idea of a non-territorial identity, for instance, it can be related with religious faith. Having a diasporic feeling and an idea of globalization, people can claim multiple identities in their lives, especially being abroad. Regarding the globalization theory, it seems hard to find out a concrete baseline. It is globally said that there is no globalization theorist so self-contained that his or her work truly offers a sufficient baseline by itself (Ampuja 2012, p. 10). Even if there is no any complete idea on globalization, it seems to have influenced the people to get many different kinds of worldviews in the present world.

Concentrating and concerning the Nepalese Hindus in Oslo, I will mention more about globalization theory in the theoretical discussion chapter. Moreover, I will mention and explain every single chapter accordingly in the later parts of the thesis.

1.5 Presentation Chapter

After I write about theoretical chapter, I will write about data presentation chapter which will be emphasized more and written carefully. Data presentation chapter is a key chapter where I will present the collected data as the primary source. It is clearly mentioned that the project is a case study of Nepalese Hindus in Oslo which solely depends on the interviews for the primary information. The informants belong to different caste, age, and profession who share their perception, experiences, feelings, and interest on the concerned issues. I will make different subchapters on different issues to get their views, for instance, religion as a belief in God, the role of a temple, religion in the public sphere, conversion and people in Oslo, greetings among the Nepalese Hindus, and relationship between the Nepalese caste system. Likewise, some more subtitles and subchapters will be written to make the data presentation chapter a well structured chapter.

1.6 Analysis Chapter

This analysis chapter is known as analysis on findings in the thesis. Analysis on findings is the outcome of the interviews. I as a researcher will examine the impact of Norwegian culture and non-Hindu religions in the life a Nepalese Hindu in Oslo. To do so, the date need to be discussed and analyzed on the basis of interviewees' understanding, perspectives, and experiences. And as a researcher, I will do the same. This chapter lets a reader know about the differences in practices. Further, it will tell more about what it means to be a Hindu in Oslo in terms of culture, religion, and freedom. Remarkably, the chapter tells more about the importance of a Nepali Hindu temple, digital Hindus, festivals in the Nepalese Hindu culture, and *puja* practices in the Norwegian context. Furthermore, the data will be discussed and analyzed with the help of applied theories and ideas of Hinduism, migration, diaspora, and globalization to get the findings on the research project.

After I write the data presentation chapter and discussion on findings chapter, I will write the conclusion chapter. The second chapter is about the methodological approaches. The methodology chapter deals with some essential tools including interview questionnaires.

Chapter Two

2. Methodology

2.1 Introduction

Methodology is oftentimes meant to show how the research questions are asked in the field. It is understood that methodology is accepted as the theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field of study. The following part of my research includes a brief description about the selection of research area and informants, method of data collection, theoretical prospects of research ethics, and data analyzing process. Abruptly speaking, I have chosen qualitative research method for my research project. And I am sure that it is what best suits to my research material and the purpose of the study. Further, I am well aware of the situation that while choosing and using a qualitative research method, a researcher has to go back and forth between different situations in order to acquire required information about the research problem.

2.2 The Importance of Research

Research is not just about collecting some information, but it has an important role in the social sciences and some other relevant studies too, which brings out the untold and unexpected views as the fact. "Research is not just a process of gathering information, as is sometimes suggested. Rather, it is about answering unanswered questions or creating that which does not currently exist" (Goddard and Melville 2001, p. 1). It is not only about collecting the data and presenting the preliminary result but also an act of disclosing the unknown facts. There are several subjects and contexts in the global society which need to be learnt sincerely for the betterment of the society. A good research always brings a good result answering the unanswered queries and helps a lot to create a harmony in the society. Several things human beings know now were discovered by some researchers earlier. In the sense, a good research is systematic which is planned, organized, and has a particular aim.

In general, research is not understood only as a set of skills but also a way of thinking. It usually concerns both skills and thinking equally. "The term social research denotes academic research on topics relating to questions relevant to the social scientific fields, such as sociology, human geography, social policy, politics, and criminology" (Bryman 2012, p. 4). It can be said that within the framework of thinking, one usually questions what he or she observes, makes an attempt to further explore, understand and explain the observations and draw conclusion to

enhance the practice skills. Furthermore, the skills of the researchers have a meaningful importance in all kinds of researches. As a learner, one develops the ability to ask himself or herself some questions such as: What is he or she doing? Why is he or she doing this? How is it affecting his or her respondents? How can he or she improve his or her work? As a practitioner, such questions simply come to the mind, and as a researcher one tries hard to answer those questions. However, my research is an academic activity and the major concern of it, is to trace the fact which is hidden and that has not been discovered yet.

2.3 Research Design

A research design is a set of methods and procedures which is used to collect and analyze the degree of variation stated in the research problem. It is mainly a framework which has been established to get answers to research questions. A research design normally provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data. And a choice of research design reflects decisions about the priority being given to a range of dimensions of the research process. Generally, a research design is a systematic plan to study a scientific problem which always tries to describe the types of study, research questionnaires, and hypotheses. Furthermore, every research method is simply a technique for collecting data which can involve a specific instrument, such as self-completion questionnaire or a structured interview, or participant observation whereby the researcher listens to and watches others (Bryman 2012, p. 46). It is mostly applicable for all types of methods. "Research design applies regardless of the particular methods that are used to collect data" (Vaus 2005, p. xvi). Simply, it provides a framework for data collection and analysis because of which, it is approved as a conceptual structure and on the basis of which, whole research is conducted confidentially.

The main concern of this thesis is to excavate the experiences, struggles, perspectives, religious identities, and cultural differences of the Nepalese Hindus living in Oslo. In this concern, I have mainly focused on the primary data to answer the research questions. Regarding the primary data, I have done field study in Oslo among the Nepalese Hindus. And concerning the primary data collection, I have used qualitative research method as a fundamental tool which is appropriate for explorative and descriptive studies that indeed helps to show the social world as it is in the reality. Among many interview methods, I have chosen semi-structured interview as the chief source for the primary data collection. Prioritizing the anonymity ethics, all the real

names of the informants have been replaced with the fictive names to secure the data and to respect their views as well as ideas on the concerned issues.

2.4 Qualitative Research Method

Qualitative research is a research strategy which often emphasizes words rather than limitation in the collection and analysis of data. Unlike quantitative research method, qualitative research tends to be concerned with words rather than numbers. As a strategy it is widely inductivist, constructionist and interpretivist, but qualitative researchers do not always assent three of these features (Bryman 2012, p. 380). Generally, qualitative research is justified in the following ways. It is said that qualitative research method analyses data from direct fieldwork observations, open-ended interviews and written documents. It is an active process which usually permits the researcher to procreate deeper understanding and sense of human behaviors. Further, this method emphasizes on why and how of decision making not precisely on what and where. "As identified with sociology, cultural anthropology and political science, among other disciplines, qualitative research has been seen to be naturalistic, ethnographic and participatory" (Kirk and Miller 1986, p. 9). However, both qualitative and quantitative research methods seem to be equally beneficial and useful to conduct the research in humanities and social sciences.

"In qualitative research, there is no such things as a format for the standard scientific paper" (Silverman 2011, p. 11). Regarding this method, it is often believed that a researcher usually goes for interpreting what he or she observes, hears and understands while working actively in the field. To answer and justify the research questions, the researcher uses the same whatever he or she saw, learnt, observed, and perceived during the field work. Qualitative research is both popular and preferred in social research projects. "Qualitative research is interested in how people differ in relation to a particular phenomenon, as much as it is in what they have in common" (King and Horrocks 2010, p. 27). Since the qualitative research focuses on the differences in a same phenomenon, I choose this method to apply in my research project which also focuses on the differences in the same phenomenon. The Nepalese Hindus are the sole concern in the context and I, as a researcher, would like to know how they differ in relation to the same religious practices abroad. Hinduism is their common religion, but they have different perceptions and practices on it, as the migrants in Oslo. I hereby believe that qualitative research is the best method to be applied in this thesis. Significantly, it is well perceived that the

qualitative research method is a chiefly exploratory research having the purpose to obtain an understanding of basic reasons and views. Therefore, I prefer to go for this method instead of quantitative research method that mainly depends on numerical data. This is why, qualitative research method is highly applicable to be applied in this thesis.

2.5 Method of Data Collection

Particularly, interviewing is regarded as one of the most important sources of data collection method in qualitative research method. "Interviewing can be an extremely important source of data; it may allow one to generate information that it would be very difficult, if not possible, to obtain otherwise-both about events described and about perspectives and discursive strategies" (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, p. 102). An accurate data collection method is always essential to keep up the integrity of research. However, data collection method is common to several fields including the study of physical and social sciences. A researcher usually puts up the social actualities by explaining and analyzing the social happenings. Essentially, interview is regarded as one of the primal tools to collect data which are indispensable for forthcoming analysis of contexts. A researcher needs to prioritize questionnaires, field studies, right informants, knowledge of the related field, general background of the interviewees, and effective participation in the field which are most essential to complete the interview process successfully. Most essentially, the researcher has to provide a clearer introduction about himself or herself before conducting the interview process. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), it has frequently been argued on both strategic and ethical grounds that every researcher should provide information him or her to those being studied. Collected data from the field work are taken as the evidences for the representation of the issues. Every researcher can use what respondents tell as proof about their perspectives, and probably about the larger cultures and sub-cultures to which they belong to. The knowledge of the perspectives and socio-cultural disposition will often form a significant element of the analysis (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, pp. 98-109). And as the researcher, I have chosen the semi-structured interview for this research project.

2.6 Semi-structured Interviews

For this research project, I have made the open-ended questionnaires and have employed them during the interviews to make my research meaningful, fruitful, useful, and successful. In my understanding, a researcher can easily find out and conceive the problems, experiences, religious and cultural practices cum differences, challenges, and actualities of the interviewees with the help of these sort of questions. This kind of interview falls under the qualitative research method and mostly followed while conducting survey research. In another words, this type of interview is also known as qualitative interview in the qualitative research method. Actually, the qualitative interview is often categorized in many ways, for instance, structured, unstructured, and semi-structured interviews. "Qualitative interview has become a prominent research method in the social sciences. Face-to-face conversation is an everyday occurrence and this has probably resulted in an assumption that interviewing is a preferred option because the researcher feels most at ease with this technique" (King and Horrocks 2010, p. 6). Qualitative interview in qualitative research is a preferred option which has an important influence in the social science. In the qualitative research method, face-to-face conversation is usually a most accepted and important form of technique to conduct an interview among the interviewees.

Basically, the main aim of the approach is to make sure that each and every interview can be conducted with the modified queries. That is why, I see there is a higher potentiality of getting new ideas as the answers in the semi-structured interviews. "There is a growing tendency for semi-structured and unstructured interviewing to be referred to collectively as in-depth interviews or as qualitative interviews" (Bryman 2012, p. 471). Semi-structured interviews are more often applied with a distinctly, open, and informal framework which drag both researcher and informant in two ways conversation. This type of interview is inherently fruitful for interviews to get an interview guide prepared, which is informal group of topics and questionnaires that an interviewer can ask in various ways with different participants suitably (Lindlof and Taylor 2010, p. 195).

Regarding the interview, I had prepared an interview guide with open-ended questions earlier to fieldwork since when it is possible to conduct semi-structured interviews. As the researcher, I have gone for the individual interview while doing field work and the prime target of it, was to

bring out the views and beliefs what the interviewees shared with me. Chiefly, 'how', 'what', and 'why' questions were asked in order to get a deeper perception about the circumstances, differences, experiences, and religious as well as cultural practices of the Nepalese Hindus living in Oslo, Norway. Since semi-structured interview is very helpful and useful to help out the research problems, the concept and relationship between the research problems and research questions are also easily accepted and understood.

On the other hand, the success of a qualitative interview is thoroughly concerned in every academic research project. "The success of a qualitative interview study is not just based on how well you ask questions and how skillfully you analyze the data. Rather, the decisions that you make at the very start of the research process, when you are designing your study, can have a major impact on its outcomes" (King and Horrocks 2010, p. 41). It is noticed that the success in qualitative interview does not rely only up on the interviewer either, rather it also depends on the decisions that a researcher makes in the very beginning of a research project. Consequently, it can be claimed that a prudent decision which is taken in the beginning of every academic research project, usually has a greater impact on its outcomes. Therefore, there is a very less probability of any research being unsuccessful, if it is decided very carefully and prudently in the very beginning of a research process.

2.6.1 Background Information

This sub-chapter presents the age group, gender, profession, academic level, and current status of the respondents. On behalf of the informants, the information is presented as a primary data as honestly and respectfully as possible. My informants are young, educated, and native speakers of Nepali language. They have different aims, motivations, statuses, and castes even if they follow the same religion and live in Oslo.

Regarding the education level, all the interviewees have at least completed Bachelor's degree from different universities in Nepal. Moreover, some of them have completed first Master's degree from Nepal and studying second Master's degree in Norway, some have already completed two Master's degrees from Nepal and Norway, and studying third Master's degree in Norway, some are working as the PhD researchers, and some are studying first Master's degree

in different universities and university colleges in Oslo. And in regard to status, some are on dependent statuses, some have full time job, some have part time job in different companies, and some are looking for jobs those who are on job seeking visa. Nineteen individuals have been interviewed. Among them, fourteen are males and five are females. Similarly, they are between 19 to 35 years old people. Even if all the informants are Hindus and follow the same religion, they practice it quite differently in a foreign land. And being in Oslo, they would like to be known as the Nepalese Hindus. None of them are converted Hindus. They believe in the same faith even if they come from different parts of Nepal and belong to different ethnicities and castes.

Comparatively, most of them used to be more involved in religious activities whenever they were in Nepal, but they are not that much involved in Oslo due to hectic schedule and lack of Nepalese Hindu temple in Oslo. In addition, they add that there are two Hindu temples to go and practice the daily rituals. One temple is located at Ammerud, Oslo and the other one is located at Slemstad, Røyken which is west of Oslo. The temple located at Ammerud is run by Sri Lankan Hindus and the temple located at Slemstad is run by Indian Hindus. Most of the Nepalese Hindus do not visit the Sri Lankan Hindu temple named Sivasubramaniyar Alayam located at Ammerud since they have quite different ways to worship the God and the other temple named Sanatan Mandir Sabha located at Slemstad is quite far from Oslo. They feel the difference in this context. They say that Hinduism is a flexible religion which does not necessarily demand any rigid practice strictly. According to them, it is not possible to follow the religion exactly the same what they used to do it in Nepal even if they would like to do the same in Oslo. Some of my informants used not to be so active in such religious activities in Nepal, but they would like to be active now in Oslo. But it is not that much easy for them to be so in Oslo even if they want to go for it dynamically. A few of them do not believe in such religious practices, but still they claim themselves as Hindus. Therefore, no any physical temples, statues, idols, images, and priests have importance in the lives of such Hindus. In the sense, both Nepal and Oslo, Norway are alike for them regarding the religion and religious identity.

The informants describe that Nepal is a beautiful country. It has a lot of natural beauties having Himalayas, hills, mountains, *Terai* (plain land), lakes, and waterfalls. Unfortunately, it is a land-locked country due to which Nepal has to depend on the neighbor countries for both export and import of daily goods since they have oceans in their countries. The country is richer in cultures,

languages, traditions, festivals, ethnicities, and religions. They speak different languages, wear different cultural dresses, make varieties of delicious foods, celebrate different festivals, follow different religions, and respect each other in the society. They would like to preserve and promote those lingual, religious, and cultural values even in a foreign land. This is the reason, they sometimes organize cultural programs and celebrate some major festivals together sharing happiness and dividing sorrows. They would like to speak Nepali language, wear Nepali dresses, cook Nepali foods, and listen to Nepali music wherever they gather. To make the research more reliable and understandable, I would like to present the interview questionnaires in the next sub-chapter.

2.6.2 Interview Questionnaires

Prior to interviews, I needed to have an interview guide that could be used to help me direct the conversation towards the issues I wanted to know about. Like other researchers, I also prepared an interview guide before conducting the interviews. My interview guide might differ from highly planned to comparatively general, but it surely shares some certain features. It helped me what to ask about, in what flow, how to put forward my questions, and how to put forward follow-ups. My interview guide is my data collection plan. Usually, the interview guide begins with the personal information such as name, age, sex, and profession. As the interviewer, I have also prepared the interview guide in the above mentioned way. "Often, the interview guide begins with questions that gather demographic information, such as, occupation, and educational background" (Magnusson and Marecek 2015, p. 56). Regarding the demographic questions, I have chosen to place them in the later part of my interview guide. Additionally, I have separated interview questionnaires into two steps. During the fieldwork, seventeen main interview questionnaires have been asked which are as follows:

Questionnaires

Culture, Hinduism and Nepal

1. Could you please give your short introduction including your sex and profession?
2. How do you understand Hinduism?
3. How do you practice your religion in public sphere?

4. Is temple a main center for worshipping the God? If yes, why?
5. How do you greet each other whenever you meet other Nepalese Hindus?
6. What is the importance of *Namaste* or *Namaskar* in Hindu culture?
7. As a Hindu, what festivals do you celebrate and why?
8. Do you believe in caste system? If yes, why?

Being in Oslo, Norway

9. What differences do you notice between Nepal and Norway in relation to culture and Hinduism?
10. How long have you been living in Oslo, Norway?
11. How did you use to follow Hinduism in Nepal?
12. Do you do *puja*? If yes, how and if not, why?
13. Are you happy as a Hindu or do you want to convert the religion?
14. What type of people do you usually meet in Oslo? For instance, religious, helpful, friendly, reserved, open-minded or social?
15. How do you present yourself whenever you meet other people from different religion and background?
16. As an immigrant, how do you find Oslo in terms of religion and freedom?
17. How do you find yourself as a Hindu minority in Oslo, Norway?

Thank you for your precious time and information!

As the researcher, I have been very careful while preparing the questionnaires for the interview. I have learnt what words and terms are acceptable among the members of the Nepalese Hindu community in Oslo. On the other side of the same coin, I am equally aware to avoid the expressions that are offensive to my informants or that might be criticized.

2.7 Sampling

In qualitative research method, the sampling of subject seems to have a noticeable importance and influence for doing the fieldwork. "The sampling of areas and then participants is a common strategy in qualitative research" (Bryman 2012, p. 417). Concerning the sampling method, I have chosen and applied the snowball sampling in this project. Alan Bryman (2012) writes:

Snowball sampling is a sampling technique in which the researcher samples initially a small group of people relevant to the research questions, and these sampled participants propose other participants who have had the experience or characteristics relevant to the research. These participants will then suggest others and so on (Bryman 2012, p. 424).

This is an undoubtedly useful technique that indeed helps to find and get a research subject through which a researcher can easily get the way to other relevant subjects. Regarding the usage of this method, the first one provides the necessary contact information of the second one and the second one gives the same sort of information of the third one, and third one provides the needed information of the fourth one. This process continues in snowball sampling process until a researcher stops himself or herself in finding the respondents to help and contribute the study.

Regarding the sampling respondents, I as a researcher have focused on the Nepalese Hindus who live in Oslo. Concerning the information of the informants, it was quite easy for me to approach the other informants since I already knew someone as a friend, which indeed reduced the difficulty and made easier to collect the information. During the interview, I was neither too unapproachable nor too close with the interviewees. In this way, I have treated all the interviewees to the same degree and have tried my level best to maintain the gap between the researcher and the respondents, as it needs to be in every research. Subsequently, all the informants are able to contribute in this particular study as the active participants.

2.8 Fieldwork and Field Notes

Fieldwork is a major source for the primary data collection. "Fieldwork is the moment when the researcher climbs down to everyday reality and finds out that the rules of academia are not necessarily the same as those of everyday life" (Blommaert and Jie 2010, p. 1). A researcher needs to acknowledge the everyday reality and climb down to it for an effective fieldwork. Finely, fieldwork is a collection of information which is chiefly conducted for receiving the primary data in qualitative research method. Generally, field research implicates informal interviews, collective discussions, self-analysis, direct observation, and participation in group. It is common for every new researcher to discover his or her own framework to acquire the research object. In relation to fieldwork, it has been done in Oslo, Norway. After having an approval letter from NSD (Norwegian Centre for Research Data), I began to contact the participants.

Out of nineteen interviews, five have been conducted in cafe, four have been conducted in park, and rest have been done in their own apartments. Preceding the interviews, I have asked for the permission by presenting the letter of assent, as it needs to be done by every researcher. Social media like Face book, Skype, Viber, and mobile phone as well as the regular contacts are the means to arrange the schedule and meet the person. Significantly, all the participations are voluntary. Regarding the time span, all the interviewees were given around one hour. Interestingly, almost all the informants were curious and interested to provide the information during the interview. But exceptionally, some of them seemed quite serious regarding the unsure residence permit and further career because of which they were unwilling to answer the interview questions.

Regarding the field notes, I have used pen, paper, and notebook to keep the actual record of the respondents' responses. In this regard, Alan Bryman (2012) argues:

Because of the frailties of human memory, ethnographers have to take notes based on their observations. These should be fairly detailed summary of events and behavior and the researcher's initial reflections on them. The notes need to specify key dimensions of whatever is observed or heard (Bryman 2012, p. 447).

Earlier to fieldwork, I had prepared an interview guide and used it as an essential framework to have the interview. Seventeen questions were included in the guide which were asked from general to specific. The interview questions were related to their both past and present practices, challenges of being a Hindu, different experiences, perception of the religion, conversion, festivals, caste system, greetings, and temple. Since all the participants are well educated, all the interviews have been conducted in English. It has really been worthier to have such a great opportunity and coincidence in order to gather information for the research project. Importantly, every interview follows the research ethics strictly. In my experience, all of them have tried their level best to answer the interview questions in the best possible ways.

Regarding the field study, I myself have enjoyed while doing this academic fieldwork. Again, snowball sampling method was really important and helpful to get the participants involved. Ultimately, the fieldwork has ended up with many new ideas, experiences, experiments, and hearty relations even if I had had a kind of fear, excitement, and optimism in the very beginning. Consequently, I have felt that they were sincere, friendly, and open during the interviews.

2.9 Reliability and Validity of the Research

The reliability of a research is centrally focused in all kinds of academic studies. "Reliability is concerned with the question of whether the results of a study are repeatable" (Bryman 2012, p. 46). The result of any research project should not be repeated by the same or any other researcher. This essence has been understood and applied sincerely. In the context, Kirk and Miller (1986) quotes, "We can never be absolutely sure that we understand all the idiosyncratic cultural implications of anything, but the sensitive, intelligent fieldworker armed with a good theoretical orientation and good rapport over a long period of time is the best check we can make" (Kirk and Miller 1986, p. 32). In the sense, a researcher needs to be well known about the research what he or she has intended for the ongoing research. While working on research, a researcher has to make sure that the study is reliable. And as a researcher, I have done the same.

"Validity is concerned with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research" (Bryman 2012, p. 47). Commonly, validity focuses on soundness, legitimacy, and applicability of a research theory along with exploration. Remarkably, trustworthiness and authenticity are two primary criteria for assessing qualitative study. And this trustworthiness is

made up of four criteria which are as follows: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Bryman 2012, p. 390). Precisely based on these four criteria, I believe to achieve trustworthiness for my project.

In this research project, I have emphasized on the major intention of my findings. It is therefore, I have tried my level best to explore something new in the project which is undiscovered before. And while doing so, I have perpetually asserted on the consequence and reliability on data throughout the interview. I have truthfully written the same what the respondents said during the fieldwork. While analyzing the data, I will logically as well as reliably explain and review whether the interpretation is correct or not. It is hereby I have always tried hard not to be biased.

2.10 Ethical Reflection

Research ethics simply concerns whether it is right to conduct the project or execute it depending on the issues. It obviously helps to organize a moral philosophy to conduct the research. Notably, the research needs to be of high quality. An incompetently conducted and designed research might not be an ethical one. It is very important that both researcher and informants are informed well of their role in the research. Confidentiality is another important factor in the research, which has to be raised all the times between the researcher and respondents. Likewise, anonymity is also an important factor in the research and it is really essential for the researcher to respect the concept and maintain anonymity when it is needed and wanted. Moreover, the involvement of all the research participants should be voluntary and any harm to participants must be avoided every time. Any research that is more or less likely to harm participant is surely regarded by most people as unacceptable (Bryman 2012, p. 135).

From the very beginning of the project, I have highly regarded the research ethics since I am well aware of the truth that the carelessness of research ethics brings down the dignity of a research project together with the researcher. Similarly, the notable qualities I have chosen in the research, are informed consent and anonymity of the respondents. And the real names of the participants have been replaced by the fictive names in order to protect their identities and respect the concept of the research ethics properly. Convincingly, all the participants involved in this research project have been assured that the collected data will be ruined after the completion of this thesis. Importantly, they have been ensured that no any other persons will have an access

to the collected data. More importantly, I have always tried my level best to respect their feelings, choices, rights, and personal freedom in each and every step. As the last part of the methodology chapter, I write about the role of a researcher in the next subchapter, which will give an insight of how the research needs to be done and how I have done it.

2.11 The Role of a Researcher

More generally speaking, the researcher in qualitative studies needs to describe himself or herself in the very beginning of the interview to conduct the research. Regarding the methodological choices, the role of a researcher matters a lot. The one who conducts a research is known as a researcher. Therefore, the researcher needs to be reliable and flexible to conduct the qualitative interview. "Flexibility is a key requirement in qualitative interviewing. The interviewer must be able to respond to issues that emerge in the course of the interview in order to explore the perspective of the participant on the topics under the investigation" (King and Horrocks 2010, p. 35). It is not easy to explore the perspectives of the respondents on any topics if he or she is rude and rigid. A researcher needs to have good human qualities to conduct and succeed the research on the targeted topics. Flexibility, availability, friendliness, impartiality, and clarity can be considered some of the good human qualities in the context. As a researcher, I believe that if a researcher is friendly and flexible he or she can handle any issues that emerge in the course of interview in order to get the perspectives of the informants on any topic.

Prior to interviews, I provided the required information about me to let the informants know who I am, what the research is about, and how long the interview continues. Personally speaking, I as a researcher did not have to face any difficulties and negative issues during the interview. As a result, I was simply able to get their ideas and perspectives on the concerned issues. In addition, I was aware of making very broad and vast questions for the interview since I have already studied about qualitative research method. "Questions that are very broad in scope are problematic because of the emphasis in qualitative research on understanding people's lives in context" (King and Horrocks 2010, p. 26). Having the knowledge from different sources, I had prepared seventeen questions to gain an understanding on the lives of the Nepalese Hindus in the Norwegian context. As a common feedback, the interviewees said that the interview questions were simple, clear, and easy to understand.

Concerning the fieldwork, I did this field study after I was accepted the researcher for my thesis. During the fieldwork, I did not go native, for instance, I neither became so involved in the Nepalese community nor an active member of the community. I have maintained the theoretical distance between them and me. Subjective perspective was my prime concern during the fieldwork. The better analysis on findings and standard conclusion of this qualitative research project will not only be a challenging job, but also a very important job for me. Now the third chapter will be about theoretical discussion where I will discuss the ideas and theories of Hinduism, migration, diaspora, and globalization.

Chapter Three

3. Theoretical Discussion

3.1 Introduction

Theory is often regarded as the most important part in thesis writing without which a researcher cannot produce a meaningful and complete text. "Theory lies at the core of what academics, including students, work with. It is one of the favorite objects and celebrated products of academic work" (Corvellec 2013, pp. 21-22). Normally, theories are regarded as the lens of the texts without which they become almost incomplete; particularly in research projects. "A theory is an explanation of the world around us. It provides a context through which we can incorporate what we consider to be facts and tells us how those facts fit together in a meaningful way" (Zahn, Brownstein and Jackson 2004, p. 1). In a simpler way, the role of a theory in the social sciences is to assist us describe and thereby perceive different social as well as cultural situations. Further, it can also be said that every theory is an explanation. "A theory can be an explanation for why two or more things are related to each other, or why something happens or does not happen. A theory helps us to make sense of the empirical evidence or facts of our experience and observation" (Zahn, Brownstein and Jackson 2004, p. 2). Theory has been very important in the academic writings. Further, it has been defined differently by the different scholars. Among many scholars Alan Bryman (2012) argues, "Theory is important to the social researcher because it provides a backcloth and rationale for the research that is being conducted. It also provides a framework within which social phenomena can be understood and the research findings can be interpreted" (Bryman 2012, p. 20).

On the other hand, theory needs to be understood as a social phenomenon. "To understand it as a social phenomenon, we construct a concept, a word or symbol that represents our conception of empirical reality. To be able to study theory, we have to be able to define it in such a way that it has meaning and can be measured empirically" (Zahn, Brownstein and Jackson 2004, pp. 3-4). It is generally said that a researcher can neither present a thesis nor a reader can understand it rightly without a proper use of right theory. Therefore, theories do matter in both text studies and field studies. To make the study meaningful and understandable, I hereby apply four theories written and followed by different scholars which are as follows: the theory of Hinduism,

migration, diaspora, and globalization. I hereby believe that these theories will help me to discuss and analyze the thesis in a proper way.

3.2 Hinduism

Hinduism is defined as a religion which is followed and practiced by millions of people throughout the world. It is more often defined as a way of life which is largely noticed in Nepal, India, and Mauritius. "To call Hinduism a religion raises the question, 'What is a religion?'. The term 'religion' is western in origin. It comes from Latin and originally meant the bond between people and their gods" (Knott 2016, p. 103). Having the Latin origin, the term religion has a greater importance and meaning in the lives of people in the world today. Religion is a kind of rope which connects people to their gods. To have the better understanding of Hinduism, it is important to know about the term religion. Regarding the term religion, it is mostly defined as a modern concept. "Actually, religion is a relatively modern concept. The ancient world had no word for what we are calling religion, partly because religion blended so intimately with the rest of life and did not contrast sharply with profane or ordinary life the way it does today" (Haught 1990, p. 2). The ancient world seems to have no any particular distinction between the life and religion rather it used to be taken as an inevitable part of life. Perhaps, religion used to be understood broadly not limiting only in religious activities in the ancient time. As the modern concept, religion is a common term which makes religious activities more visible and noticeable. In this respect, I need to be selective on Hinduism because I am not writing about other religious activities, for instance, Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism. This is why, Hinduism is the prime concern as the religion.

Hindu community is a result of several races and many cultures. It is needed to know this fact, to acknowledge the complexity of the Hindu society and religion. Actually, the term Hindu is derived from the River Sindhu. The River Sindhu is also known as the Indus. Historically, the Persians specified India as the land beyond the River Sindhu. Pointedly, Hinduism emerges to be a generic term meaning the religions of the people of India. Thus, the word Hinduism occurs from the name of the River Sindhu (the Indus). It is hereby believed that Hinduism has its original religious history there in the River Indus (Sen 1967, p. 17). Remarkably, it is noticed that there is a larger unity in Hinduism. Statistically, there is a huge percentage of Hindu people in India and Nepal. Unlike other world religions such as Christianity, Buddhism, or Islam

Hinduism does not have a founder. It is believed that Hinduism does not have its beginning point to prehistoric root. Moreover, it does not have a Bible or a Koran to which controversies can be indicated for resolution (Sen 1967, p. 7).

Hinduism is, in fact, a way of life which is regarded as a highly organized social and religious system. It is quite free from any dogmatic affirmations concerning the nature of God. The religion is not arrogant. Further, the Hindus regard their religion the *sanatan dharma* which literally means eternal law. This religion believes in diverse phenomena, for instance, the path of fairness, the cycle of births and deaths (Zaehner 1966, pp. 1-2). It has its particular philosophy, rituals, traditions, and beliefs. Moreover, Hinduism can be defined as an eternal truth which believes in diverse beliefs and traditions that ultimately includes *samsara* (it means the cycle of rebirth) and *karma* (it is frequently described in terms of right actions). As the diverse religion, Hinduism is followed differently by its followers. It can be defined and followed according to the wish of its followers. For instance, those who follow it by practicing the rituals regularly, those who follow it occasionally, and those who do not practice as such in their daily lives, are all called Hindus among the Hindu community. People can be called Hindus both by action and reflection. Since the religion does not compulsorily demand any authoritative practices at all, it is therefore said that Hinduism is a flexible religion.

3.2.1 Sacred Books

Hinduism seems to be enriched with the assistances made by lots of sages, philosophers, *pujaris* (priests), and followers since ancient time to present time today. Like other religions, Hinduism also has sacred books. Importantly, it does not have a single religious book like some other religions have. Actually, sacred books or religious texts are also known as holy scriptures in the context. Such religious texts are often considered to be central to their religious practices or set of beliefs. Religious texts might be used to contribute importance and purpose, evoke a deeper connection with almighty, transfer religious truths, promote devotional experience, encourage communal identity, and guide both personal and communal religious practices. Regarding the sacred books in Hinduism, *Veda* is the most important holy scripture. *Veda* is considered to be the most ancient scripture. Importantly, there are four *Vedas* in Hinduism which are as follows: the *Rig Veda*, *Sama Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, and *Atharva Veda* which are considered to be the primary texts of this religion (<http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/>).

According to religious thought, the *Vedas* are the major revelation within Hinduism and this is further attested by two of the terms by which they are again and again designated: *sruti*, meaning precisely hearing and hence intending the aspect of reception from an outside source, and *sabda*, meaning precisely word and in such a way intends rather the active exposing assistant. These two terms *sruti* and *sabda* are found to be used differently. *Sruti* is often applied directly to the *Vedas* themselves, while *sabda* aims to be reserved for *Brahmans* (members of the priestly class) as identical with the *Vedas*. In some other certain specific contexts, *sruti* is ordinarily contrasted with other religious texts, which are graded as *smrti*, precisely remembering but meaning more or less tradition. However, *sruti* is understood as revelation and *smrti* is understood as tradition in Hinduism. It is hereby considered that the *Veda* is the primary text in Hinduism which should be read by all the Hindus. Even if the *Veda* is considered the official scripture of Hinduism, this doctrine is not, in fact, read by the vast majority of Hindus, most of whom are the lower castes and all women who were in due course prohibited to read it (Brockington 1992, pp. 47-48). Such an inaccessibility might cause a reinterpretation of the doctrine.

3.2.2 Veda

Even though there are some other holy scriptures in Hinduism, the *Veda* is regarded the holiest scripture which is believed to be the major source of this faith. It is therefore accepted that the Hindu religion is based on the *Veda* like Christianity is based on the Bible. "The word *Veda* means wisdom, and is related to the English 'wit' and German 'wissen'. Wisdom in this instance means absolute, intuitive, and esoteric wisdom as distinguished from discursive knowledge, either rational or empirical" (Organ 1974, p. 56).

Again, the *Vedas* are comprised of four traditions: the *Rig Veda*, *Sama Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, and *Atharva Veda*. The *Vedas* mean wisdom texts which are a unified body of orally transmitted texts that is believed to be originated around 1500 BCE. The *Vedas* are heavily concerned with rituals and *yajnas* (it literally means offering in Hinduism to any kind of ritual done in front of a sacred fire) to appease gods and goddesses, which are generally performed by *brahmanas* (members of the priestly class). Particularly, *yajnas* have been a Vedic tradition in Hinduism. Moreover, the *Rig Veda*, *Sama Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, and *Atharva Veda* are each further divided into four classes of texts which are noted as the *Samhitas* (*mantras* and benedictions), *Brahmanas* (ceremonies and sacrifices), *Aranyakas* (forest wilderness), and *Upanisads* (sitting close to). As the

clarification, *mantra* naturally means sacred sound with or without literal meaning. The *Rig Veda* is the oldest of these four scriptures and is made up of ten books and 1,028 hymns. The *Rig Veda* is filled with metrical *mantras*, characterizations of, and myths about, *devas* (deities), prayers to the gods, and verses that apply to the imagined social world of the *Vedas*. Noticeably, the *Vedas* were composed in Sanskrit language which is regarded as the archetypal language (Sarma 2008, pp. 5-6). Historically, the most sacred language of the Hindus is Sanskrit which itself is an expansion and formalization of the additional ancient Vedic in which the *Vedas* were created. Sanskrit is believed to be an Indo-European language which is closely connected with the Iranian group of languages spoken throughout the first Persian Empire. Similarly, the Indo-Iranians happened to form an easterly group of the Indo-European people. After the formation, both Indians and Iranians declared themselves as *aryas* (Aryans). Later, the term Aryans indicated to denote noble or honorable in dissimilarity to the dominated populations (Zaehner 1966, p. 14). Actually, the term Aryan has been used to mean the race. Additionally, the term race represents a certain ethnic group of people. Commonly, the term Aryan has been used to represent a superior branch of humanity in Nepal.

3.2.3 A Belief in God

Unlike Christians and Muslims, Hindus seem to believe in several deities. In fact, it will be clearer when it is analyzed on the basis of worship. And within the context of worship, there is a tendency to look at Christianity as monotheistic and Hinduism as polytheistic. Behind this logic, it can be said that Christianity is judged at the level of its doctrinal formulations and Hinduism is judged by its day-to-day practice. Furthermore, if it is defined the deity as the highest principle of existence, the final reality, then a large number of Hindus are monotheists. In this sense, most Hindus believe in one absolute deity. Considerably, Hindus believe in one Supreme God. But the supreme God has many forms in religious practices who are generally known as minor deities (Brockington 1992, p. 1). There are several minor gods and goddesses in Hinduism. It is traditionally believed that there are deities in the sky, air, and earth. "There are three deities, according to the expounders of the *Vedas*: *Agni* whose place is on the earth; *Vayu* or Indra whose place is in the air; and *Surya* whose place is in the sky" (Wilkins 2003, p. 9). *Agni* is a Sanskrit word which means fire. And *Agni* primarily suggests the fire as a god. *Vayu* means air or wind which is one of the elements in Hindu religion. It is believed as the deity of life. *Surya* means Sun which also connotes the solar deity in Hinduism. In this way, many minor deities are uttered

and worshipped especially during rituals in Hinduism. However, the followers of this faith believe in the trinity of gods: Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. Brahma is known as the creator, Vishnu is known as the preserver, and Shiva is known as the destroyer. Subsequently, Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva are generally regarded as the Supreme God in this faith. Therefore, the followers or devotees typically have a firm belief in the Supreme God.

3.2.4 Puja as the Ritual Worship of God

Hinduism is usually called the oldest and popular religion in the world. It advises the eternal duties such as honesty, self discipline, tolerance, and respect among other people in the society. "This is a popular religion, not the religion of sacrificial priests nor philosophical seers. This is a religion that appeals to the heart rather than to the hand or head" (Organ 1974, p. 162). It arouses feelings to its followers while performing *puja*, visiting temple, and following the rituals both publicly and privately. In the sense, Hinduism is directly connected to the heart. The majority of Hindus believe to make the God happy and get blessings, peace, prosperity, and success through rituals such as *puja* and meditation.

Basically, *puja* is a common method of worship. It is also known as the ritual worship of God. Very often, it can be performed by anyone except those who have incurred impurity because of menstrual cycle or the demise of a family member. As a more common and catchy form of worship, *puja* is frequently practiced in almost every Hindu household either regularly or occasionally as required by tradition. Vividly, *puja* can either be a simple ritual worship or a complicated one, relying on the way it is performed. It is usually performed or conducted to get a way to God. The followers might have different motivations behind *puja* practices, but aim is the same and that is to make the God pleased. Someone can perform *puja* to triumph over a hardship, search for divine help, or make devotional service. However, for a large number of people, *puja* is a part of the daily religious practice (<http://www.hinduwebsite.com/puja.asp>).

On the other hand, *puja* is also considered as *seva* to God. *Seva* literally means service. In Hinduism, the term *seva* (service) is mostly understood on the basis of performing selfless service to God as an act of love and devotion. Actually, the traditional forms of worship (*puja*) performed within Hinduism is done purely for securing spiritual benefits and thus is believed to be motivated out of self-interest (Kumar 2013, p. 140). Nevertheless, *puja* is a service to God which is normally performed from the perspective of getting spiritual satisfaction. A large

number of Hindus primarily worship the deities every day. It can be conducted either every morning or every evening. After all, an idol is needed to be worshipped. Idol can be assumed a *murti* (statue of a deity) or image of a deity. While doing so, an idol is served as an honored deity. In this way, *puja* is prioritized and practiced as the ritual worship of God which requires incense, hymns, flowers, ghee, milk, uncooked rice, lights, priest, and devotees. There might occur variations according to local traditions and due to geographical distances, but the central idea is almost the same.

3.2.5 Caste System in Hinduism

The caste system divides Hindus into four major categories which are as follows: *Brahmins*, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaishyas*, and the *Shudras*. In the Hindu society, *Brahmins* are often known as priests, *Kshatriyas* as warriors and rulers, *Vaishyas* as farmers and merchants, and *Shudras* as unskilled workers. According to *sruti* (which is heard) tradition, the division of mankind falls into four classes. It is also believed that when cosmic man was sacrificed *Brahmins* were made from his mouth, *Kshatriyas* from his arms, *Vaishyas* from his thighs, and *Shudras* from his feet. Among these four types, *Brahmins* are regarded as the high caste and *Shudras* are treated as low caste. Furthermore, *Shudras* are defined as untouchables. In reality, there are different assumptions and theories behind this caste division which are based on religious beliefs, color pride, prejudice, trade guilds, professions, and vocations. Generally, caste represents two easily distinguishable systems of social structure: *varna* and *jati*. *Varna* is the Sanskrit word which means color. Color has long been associated with the four *varnas*: white with *Brahmins*, red with *Kshatriyas*, yellow with *Vaishyas*, and black with *Shudras*. It is more or less a way of identifying the moral virtue associated with each *varna*: white represents for wisdom, red for courage, yellow for desire for wealth, and black for physical activity. But this color consideration has not always succeeded in Hinduism. Again, *jati* is also a Sanskrit word which refers to a lot of groups that were at the very beginning fixed on by occupation. Currently, the word *jati* is used to denote subclasses based on occupational differences (Organ 1974, pp. 189-191). As a common fact, *jati* is always determined by birth in Hinduism. In the sense, *jati* means caste. However, the caste system is often understood as a complex social taboo and that is practiced by the Hindu society to differentiate people as high or low on the basis of birth.

The Hindu caste system has sometimes invited big problems in the community. It has aroused more passion, for and against, than most other aspects of Hinduism. Among the Hindu community, caste is discussed and brought forward to differentiate the people on the basis of their birth. On the one hand, there are those who are dissatisfied at the inequality it represents, but fail to look at the social system historically and reject to see the part this hierarchy has played in the history of the Hindu society. On the other hand, there are the Hindu orthodox, who reject to see that such caste divisions are elements of social importance with no fundamental importance to religion, and need to vanish as time and age demand. It seems that there are two opposite opinions in regard to caste system in Hinduism. At the same time, it is seen that some ancient Hindu scriptures do not accept caste divisions and some others do not debate them as anything very fundamental. In fact, caste divisions are truly against the basic Hindu doctrine (Sen 1967, p. 27). The caste system might have established out of the multi-racial and multi-cultural community in the society. Within the geographical boundaries of a country, many different ethnic people can be found and majority of the people might seem to be ethnically mixed.

Caste system should not be the means of judgment among the people. "The issue of purity and pollution is, indeed, closely tied in with the caste system" (Brockington 1992, p. 122). Even if it is not allowed to discriminate people on the basis of sex and caste, there sometimes occurs some extreme examples of discrimination in regard to sex and caste in Hinduism. For instance, those female who are in a menstruation period are deprived of worshipping the deities having the thought of they are impure during that period. The divide between the castes and impure groups are at the bottom of the hierarchy in the Hindu society (Whelpton 2015 p. 163). However, even high-caste women still often have to suffer in Nepal when they are menstruating. After the discussions about different aspects of Hinduism, now I would like to discuss about the customs and festivals in the next sub-chapter.

3.2.6 Customs and Festivals

Customs and traditions have always been a very important part of almost every religion and culture. The entire human civilization is nearly incomplete without customs and traditions. As Hinduism is the oldest and flexible religion, there are many customs and traditions. Some customs are so important for the people that sometimes they are ready to go through any difficult

situations for them. There are thousands of customs and traditions in Hinduism. But the customs and traditions differ from place to place and caste to caste. Many of them are common and some are different. When a Hindu meets another Hindu, they mostly greet each other by saying *Darshan*, *Pranam* and *Namaste* or *Namsakar*. They put their palms together while doing so. In Hindu custom and tradition, they are the respectful forms of greeting. Importantly, before the beginning of any good work and social and religious functions, Hindus usually worship Lord *Ganesh* (a deity) and chant *mantra* (a sacred syllable or verse):

वक्रतुंड महाकाया सुर्यकोटी समप्रभः

निर्विघ्न कुरु मे देव सर्वकार्येषु सर्वदाः

Vakratunda Mahakaya Suryakoti Samaprabha: Nirvighna Kurumdeva Sarvakayershu Sarvadha (<http://hinduismfacts.org/hindu-customs-and-traditions/>). Hindus do not wear footwear inside temples, Hindu shrines, and other holy places. No any Hindus are allowed to enter the temples after drinking alcohol and eating non-vegetarian foods.

Moreover, it is said that Hinduism is a product of several cultures which is clearly seen in the pattern of Hindu social customs and festivals. It is hard to give a complete list of all Hindu religious functions, for they differ from place to place and from community to community. Such functions or ceremonies can be presented into a number of groups. Some Hindus visit temple every day, some sometimes, some very rarely, and some never at all. Since Hinduism welcomes the various ways of reaching the Supreme God, no any special practice is mandatory for everyone. Hindus celebrate some annual and occasional festivals. The annual festivals endow special occasions for religious activity. Some of these festivals are connected with the worship of particular gods and goddesses. There are, for instance, the worship of *Lakshmi* (the goddess of wealth, prosperity and beauty), *Saraswati* (the goddess of education), and *Ganesh* (the god of wisdom and success). Some religious functions are directly connected with the stages of life. They are, for instance, *Nwaran* or *Namakaran* is the ceremony for naming a child, *annaprasana* is the weaning ceremony, *upanayana* or *vratibandha* is the ceremony at which an upper caste boy is introduced to the rights and duties of his caste and is provided a sacred thread as a symbol of his new birth, *vivaha* is the marriage ceremony and *shraddha* also spelled *sraddha* (respect) is

performed to express the heartfelt gratitude and thanks towards their deceased parents and ancestors. In addition, the practices differ according to cultural background, social status, caste, sex, age, and sect (Sen 1967, pp. 32-35). The above mentioned list might give some ideas of the types of Hindu ceremonies. Some Hindus limit themselves to only a few of them and some perform almost none. In this way, religious activities are performed at the different stages and contexts of life.

Concerning the Nepalese Hindus and their festivals, the most celebrated Nepalese annual festivals are *Teej*, *Dashain*, *Tihar* (it is also known as *Deepawali*), *Chhath*, *Maghe Sakranti* (it is also known as *Makar Sakranti*), *Maha Shivaratri*, *Holi*, and New Year. They are celebrated by the vast majority of Hindus in Nepal. For example, *Holi* is the festival of colors which usually falls either at the end of winter or at the beginning of spring season. Likewise, *Teej* is celebrated both in India and Nepal. It is mostly celebrated by married women wishing for good health and long lives of their husbands. In Nepal, it has a special meaning because on that day, all women except widows wear red *sari* (a female garment) and go to temple to pray to God *Shiva*. Additionally, most of the unmarried girls believe about the power of fasting, so they go for it with the belief that they may get good husbands as the goddess *Parvati* (the goddess of fertility, love and devotion) did when she prayed to God *Shiva*. People are happy to celebrate these festivals and they take an advantage of it to have fun. In Nepal, there are national holidays at *Dashain*, *Tihar* (*Deepawali*), *Chhath*, and New Year. Nepalese cuisine, language, dance, music, and religious activities are essential elements that help to impress culture in the hearts and minds of the new generations (Kumar 2013, pp. 38-41).

3.2.7 The Way of Understanding Hinduism in Norway

Hindu population has established temples and temple organizations in Oslo, Norway which has aroused the eagerness among the people. In the last twenty years, eight Hindu temples have been established in the biggest cities of Norway. Most of them serve around 12,000 Tamil Hindus from Sri Lanka living in Norway. One of the largest temples named Sivasubramaniyar Alayam was opened in 1998 in Oslo. The reason behind establishing these temples is to offer devotees the opportunity to participate in ritual practices and traditions according to their necessities. However, the temples are not only the place of worship but also the centers of Tamil culture and zones (Kumar 2013, p. 67). It is equally relevant to talk about the Nepalese Hindus in terms of

temple, practices, traditions, cultures, and comfort zones. Since there are some Sri Lankan temples in Norway, Tamil people feel easier to involve and practice their religion. Obviously, it will be easier to speak their native language, wear traditional dresses, listen to music, and continue their cultures if the people are gathered together from the same homeland in the temple abroad. The Nepalese Hindus can also regard temple as the comfort zone and center of Nepalese culture, if there is established a temple in Oslo. However, the temples are not only considered as the religious organizations but also the cultural organizations. The Nepalese people have established some secular organizations in Oslo such as Nepalese Students' Community in Oslo (NESCO), Non Resident Nepali Association National Coordination Council Norway (NRNA NCC Norway), Nepali School, and Helping Hands for Nepal Norway. And these organizations share some functions with the temples. Thus, a temple can be a center for non-Hindu Nepalese people too, in Oslo. However, the temple in Hinduism offers religious and cultural practices which is primarily believed the home of deities and religious place.

3.2.8 The Nepalese Perspective on Hinduism

Hinduism is the largest religion in Nepal. As the largest religion, there are different views and ways of understanding it. People are free to follow and define the religion in their own ways both in Nepal and abroad. It is not a state religion now but it was the state religion before. Even if it was the state religion before, people from other religions were free to follow and practice their religions in Nepal. However, Hinduism is often defined and practiced as the most liberal and flexible religion among the Nepalese people. Moreover, there are a number of festivals in the Nepalese Hindu practices to be celebrated. Through the festival celebrations, the Nepalese people believe to develop a stronger relationship with each other. The Nepalese Hindus can be classified as the traditional Hindus, conservative Hindus, modern Hindus, and religious Hindus depending on their thoughts and practices.

In the traditional Hinduism, demarcation between the sacred and profane is noticeably observed when it comes to toilets. As a consequence, one does not find toilets near a Hindu temple in Nepal because temple is considered a holy place. So, toilets are mostly built away from the temple area in Nepal. But building a toilet is prerequisite by city codes even in a temple abroad. Hindus are sometimes likely to modify the rules if they are disruptive with their daily lives. For instance, on the day of a lunar eclipse, a traditional Hindu is supposed to purify himself or

herself by taking a ritual bath in a river or at home when the eclipse is over. It is impractical for a devoted Hindu to see this ritual abroad because he or she might be at work or on the road. However, modifying a few rules to fit their daily lifestyles is more often accepted by the Nepalese Hindus (Kumar 2013, p. 37). Again concerning the tradition, if a close relative dies in Nepal, the surviving relatives have to notice funeral ritual for thirteen days by not eating salt and meat in their foods and avoiding sex. Nowadays, there are noticed some changes even in the traditional thoughts and practices according to time and situation.

3.3 Migration

The beginning and continuation of migration seems to have a very long history. "The history of migration begins with the origins of mankind in the Rift Valley in Africa, from where between about 1.5 million and 5000 BC Homo erectus and Homo sapiens spread initially into Europe and later into other continents" (Koser 2007, p. 1). Having a very long history, migration has affected almost all the countries and continents in the world now. Migration is mostly a collective action which can directly affect both old and new societies regarding the settlement issues, job issues, adjustment and attachment accordingly. "Migration is often a collective action, arising out of social, economic and political change and affecting the whole society in both sending and receiving areas" (Castles, Haas and Miller 2014, p. 25). Mostly, migration has an important impact in the lives of the human beings since it is regarded as an active as well as dynamic force in human lives. It frequently stands for both hopes and fears. It can make the migrants quite optimistic whenever they think of the better future abroad and at the same time it can make them so fearful whenever they think of uncertain future. "Migration raises high hopes and deep fears: hopes for the migrants themselves, for whom migration often embodies the promise of a better future. At the same time, migration can be a dangerous undertaking, and every year thousands die in attempts to cross borders" (Castles, Haas and Miller 2014, p. 55). Migration can bring both hope and fear according to the circumstances. Family, friends, and relatives are mostly left behind in ambiguity which can generate fear for them. It seems that both hope and fear remain side by side.

"Migration and religion are dynamic forces in human lives. Men and women who migrate to nearby communities or travel to distant lands have different motivations and access to resources that would allow them to leave their homelands in search of better opportunities" (Bonifacio and

Angeles 2010, p. 1). The continuous change in human nature is understood as a normal and natural process which is affected relying on time, circumstances, choices, and obligation. Normally, migration always takes place in a prosperous and well developed countries or places in the world. In my opinion, where there are more opportunities there are always higher competitions as well. People are always looking for a better opportunity in their lives to move on. This fact is mainly related to those who are in a normal condition and having a normal life style in the societies. In many cases, people do not always want to leave the home country just for making money and getting higher education in another country, but they are sometimes forced to leave the nation or place just to save their lives as well. This type of departure can be caused because of civil war, natural calamity, extreme poverty, and cholera, too. "Migration is inextricably linked with other important global issues, including development, poverty, and human rights" (Koser 2007, p. 1).

In the very beginning, no any departure or migration is blissful and desirable for many of us but it can generate happiness and success as well in the days to come. To achieve happiness, success, prestige, and prosperity one needs to have a great patience in a foreign land. However, almost all the migrant people need to compromise themselves with the language, society, atmosphere, culture, and system around them to be adjusted and settled properly. Moreover, migration is a global issue too. According to Khalid Koser (2007):

Migration is associated with significant global events - revolutions, wars, and the rise and fall of empires; that it is associated with significant change - economic expansion, nation-building, and political transformations, and that it is also associated with significant problems - conflict, persecution, and dispossession. Migration has mattered through history, and continues to matter today (Koser 2007, p. 4).

Migration is a global issue which has mattered via history and concerns strongly even today. So, it is associated with both significant changes and significant problems accordingly. Those who are migrated abroad more often go through hardships, excitement, hopes, fears, and identity crisis issues. Definitely, they miss their religious practices, cultural as well as traditional values, and homely environment while being abroad. And at the same time, it will be quite difficult for them to adopt the new culture, atmosphere, and social practices abroad.

Notably, migration and religion are active forces in human lives that they are not unchangeable. People leave their homeland with various motivations, for instance, to get higher and better education, to make money, to learn something new, to experience something different, to save life, and to live a prosperous life. In the sense, migration is not always desirable and it is not always forceful either. So, migration has been an important part of human beings on earth. It has a great sense and effect on human beings' lives and it concerns with the every single individual regardless of any particular country, race, religion, ethnicity, culture, sex, age, and social status. There are more international migrants today than before and the number is increasing every year in the world. Almost all the countries in the world seem to be affected due to migratory issues. Noticeably, since 1945 migration has led a growing cultural diversity and the formation of some new ethnic communities in many countries. And such communities are easily noticeable through the occurrence of various looking people speaking their own native languages, the development of ethnic neighborhoods, and the establishment of ethnic as well as cultural organizations (Castles, Haas and Miller 2014, p. 264). As a fact, migrants are not only the members of a poor and passive society but also they are the members of a dynamic and resourceful society. They can contribute remarkably in the development of the country or place wherever they are migrated. Actually, cultural diversities, inclusiveness, and varieties of languages are the beauty of a country.

On the other hand, all the migrations are not permanent. Those who are migrated abroad can go back to their homelands after a certain time period of their stay. Actually, the migration used to be permanent whenever some major movements took place over the last few centuries, but today temporary migration has become much more important. Even people who have lived abroad for a long time period of their lives, time after time have a 'dream to return' to the place of their birth. And it is now comparatively uncommon for people to migrate from one country to another and stay there for the rest of their lives (Koser 2007, p. 8).

3.3.1 Opportunities of Migration

Migration has actually become a never-ending and powerful feature of human history. It has certainly supported the growth of the world economy, and contributed to the development of nations and societies. Further, it has enriched many different cultures, traditions, and civilizations. As a fact, many migrants are already the members of the most dynamic and

entrepreneurial society who are ready to take the risk of leaving their homes in order to search and create contemporary opportunities for themselves and their children. These type of migrants usually have the capacity of creating new opportunities for themselves and others around them anywhere in the world. They can make the country financially strong, for instance, in the history of the United States economic growth, migrants have made a noticeable contribution. In the context, Kodak, Google, Hotmail, Yahoo, and Sun Microsoft were started or cofounded by migrants (Koser 2007, p. 10).

"For origin societies, the departure of people raises concern about the 'brain drain' on the one hand, but it also creates the hope that the money and knowledge migrants gather abroad can foster human and economic development" (Castles, Haas and Miller 2014, p. 1). Even if it is more often unacknowledged, international migration has an important role in national, regional, and global affairs. The money sent by the migrants to their families in the developing countries is regarded as a more significant source of income than the official foreign aid endowed by richer countries. Literally, the money sent by the migrants are also known as the remittance. And this remittance is one of the major sources of income in many developing countries. Likewise, in some certain developed countries, whole sectors of the economy and a number of public services have become extremely dependent on migrant workers. And it assumed that such type of dependency on the economy and public services would collapse almost truly overnight if their labor were moved back. Regarding the economy, the World Bank estimates that the migrant labor in the world earns around 20 trillion US dollars and the huge amount of this money is spent or invested in the countries where they work. In the same way, other studies indicate that around 15 million foreign-born workers in the USA increase more than 10 billion dollars to the US economy. It is hereby argued that the migrant labor has contributed notably to economic growth. Migrants are sometimes involved in high profile activities as well that the local people lack the skills to do. In fact, migrants and migration do not merely contribute to economic growth, but their impact is potentially most eagerly understood in the social and cultural spheres of life. Throughout the world, people of different national origins, who speak various languages, and who have different religions, rituals, and traditions come into an exceptional contact to each other. Because of these facts, most of the societies are recognized by some certain level of diversity today (Koser 2007, pp. 10-11).

3.3.2 Challenges of Migration

It will be unjustified if one says that migrants do not have any problems or challenges. Sometimes, the connection between migration and security is focused deeply. Especially after 9/11 the relationship between international migration and terrorism have been taken suspiciously. This type of perception has been intensified by more recent attacks in Brussels and Paris. Irregular migration in many different parts of the world, is sometimes regarded as a threat to national sovereignty and public security. Moreover, some host countries seem to be fearful about the irregular presence of migrant communities, particularly those with unknown cultures that are associated with extremism and violence (Koser 2007, p. 11).

People do not generally leave their homes to be refugees and strangers in a foreign land. Most of the migrants leave their homes because they have no any other option. In the context, refugees are also known as migrants. According to the statistic, in 2005 there were approximately 9 million refugees in the world. And these people were forced to flee their homes for fear of persecution. But some migrants are not still safe even after they arrive at their destination rather they sometimes find themselves exploited and their human rights are abused. They can be the victim of human trafficking and can be enslaved, frequently in the sex industry. Even in the working places, they might face sexual and physical abuse by their employers. More commonly, several migrants and their children face discrimination and prejudice, even many years after they settle abroad. Importantly, it might be very difficult for them to get a job to live themselves and make live their children abroad. More importantly, the migration of educated and skilled people reduces the ability of poor countries to provide indispensable services to the public. After they are migrated abroad as the educated and skilled manpower, the public investment in the education, training, and workshop of these people is really lost to the country (Koser 2007, p. 12).

3.3.3 Migration in Norway

Norway is a multicultural, prosperous, peaceful, and naturally beautiful country where many people from different religions, ethnic backgrounds live happily. Many people come to Norway having different aims and purposes, for instance, to get higher and better education, to work, to learn something new, and to save life from conflicts. There are conflicts going on in some countries in the world because of which thousands of people are forced to leave their homeland

to save their lives from danger. And whenever people come to a new place or country, they automatically bring their cultures, religions, nature, and traditions together with them which makes the new place a multicultural place, city or country. People do not always come to Norway as refugees or asylum seekers forcefully, instead people sometimes come to this country as migrants as well by their choice. Since Norway is a better place to live, study, and work; people from different parts of the world come and settle here like in other Western European countries. "Like other Western European countries, Norway is a culturally diverse nation state with a growing number of immigrants from different parts of the world. The increasing cultural diversity is a much-debated issue, in terms of both immigration and integration" (Gressgård 2010, pp. 5-6). People from different religions, cultures, backgrounds, ethnicities, and statuses make Norway a multicultural and multidimensional country. Even if the diversity is a much-debated issue in Norway, people are still migrating in different names and living there safely.

Regarding migration, no any departure is always forceful and painful rather it is sometimes voluntary and desirable as well. People normally leave their homelands and become refugees because of civil wars, extreme poverty, and painful struggle. "Migration, however, does not simply involve the act of moving to another place or being confined to certain moments of sojourn. It is a continuing process that intersects with the ways in which we view the world as shaped by our belief systems and our place in it" (Bonifacio and Angeles 2010, p. 1). Simply, migration denotes the act of moving physically from one place to another place. Further, people do not normally limit themselves physically only for certain time period in a new place but also they change their views to view the new place, atmosphere, culture, and system accordingly. And as the immigrants, they often happen to face a difficult situation and many challenges of settlement regarding the religious practices, establishment of social networks, and sense of community belonging.

There are many highly qualified migrants and students in most of the European countries including Norway. In the context of Norway, most of the non-Norwegian people are often regarded as low-skilled workers. However, the situation is not same every time because it can easily be noticed that the numbers of professionals, technicians, and other highly skilled personnel are increasing every year; and they are obviously known as migrants in the context. When highly educated and qualified people leave their homeland and stay abroad, this is a kind

of loss for the country where they come from. Further, such migrants are naturally addressed and noticed as brain drain in their native land. "This 'brain drain' can mean a serious loss of human capital in medicine, science, engineering, management and education, and be a major obstacle to development" (Castles, Haas and Miller 2014, p. 161). Truly speaking, brain drain is both a great loss and bonus. Those who are migrated as the highly educated and capable people and do not go back to the homeland that is a great loss for the country of their origin. And at the same time, those people who are migrated to the host country as the highly educated and capable people and live there forever that is a bonus for the host country. The host country can become more prosperous and developed if they are given the good opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills.

3.3.4 Hindu Migration in the Norwegian Context

Hindu migration includes the migrated Hindus and children born in Norway. In the present context, Hindu migration refers to the Nepalese Hindu migration in Oslo, Norway. Like Christians and Muslims, Hindus are also free to follow their religions in Norway. Occasionally, the Nepalese Hindus organize their religious and cultural events to celebrate in a group. There are many festivals and religious events in the Nepalese Hindu culture. As the part of the religion and culture, the Hindu migrants organize some religious and cultural events in Oslo. The Hindu community is not only the migrant community, but also the diasporic community in the context. This diasporic community regards temple as the center of religion and culture. The Hindu migrants time and again prioritize temple as the matter of recognition. Not only the religious events are organized in the temple, but also the marriage program is conducted there in the temple. With the different purposes and importance, the religious festivals are celebrated by the diasporic Hindu community abroad. "One aim of religious festivals in the diaspora is to recreate the atmosphere and sentiments of the country of origin. This strengthens identity and the solidarity of the group and for the individual it is often an important source of well-being" (Kumar 2013, p. 68). Being abroad, people miss the homely atmosphere. As a result, they would like to regain an emotional attachment and sentiment with their country of origin by different means such as, festivals, language, food, dress, and music.

Usually, the Hindu people celebrate religious festivals together in a group wherein, they wear cultural dresses, eat traditional foods, speak native language, listen to Nepali music, and dance.

Because of such activities, they can secure their identity and achieve the solidarity collectively. Even if an individual does not care about the identity and solidarity, he or she feels included and comfortable after attending such festivals and events. On a more general basis, it can be said that under the prevailing Norwegian law, the Nepalese Hindus are free to practice their religion and culture.

3.3.5 Functional Theory

Migration can be understood and viewed from the different perspectives. Migration is perceived as an inseparable part of development. Regarding the functional theory, different scholars define it differently. Functional theory consists of push and pull factors. Migration can be caused by many factors, for instance, economic, political, and academic. However, migration is determined by plus minus factors. In the book *The Age Of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World* Lee (1966) argues that "Migration decisions are determined by plus and minus factors in areas of origin and destination; intervening obstacles (such as distance, physical barriers, immigration laws, and so on); and personal factors" (Castles, Haas and Miller 2014, p. 28). People often decide to migrate by evaluating their situation and future career. While doing so, they are ready to move on by intervening physical barriers, immigration laws, and personal factors. These types of factors are referred to as push and pull factors.

The push-pull framework often includes the prime factors influencing migration decision making. The push-pull models recognize economic, environmental, and demographic factors that are taken for granted to push people out of places of origin and pull them into their destination places. It is firmly believed that push factors generally involve population growth, lack of financial opportunities and political suppression, while pull factors normally involve demand for labor power, availability of land, financial opportunities and political freedoms. However, its importance is sometimes narrow and it can be ambiguous. The push-pull factors have complexities describing return migration and the coincident happening of immigration (Castles, Haas and Miller 2014, pp. 28-29). Explicitly, there are some other causes of migration which can also affect the migration decision, for instance, international degree, work, and cultural exchange. In this regard, these factors can also be taken under the push pull framework which indeed includes those who were excluded from the earlier definition. Talking about the Nepalese Hindus and viewing them from this push-pull framework perspective, it is noticed that some of

them are living in Oslo to get their international degree, some to make money, and some to experience the differences. Therefore, the matter of advantages and disadvantages can also be the subject of interest in the context.

3.3.6 Migration as a Label

There are divisions in the migration status as well. Mostly, first generation of migration and second generation of migration are categorized in the host countries. The criteria for defining who is a migrant usually differ from country to country, the sole difference being between citizenship and birthplace or prior residence. If a person is born in the host country from the immigrant parents, this second generation can be classified as non-citizens on the blood rule and therefore can be counted as a part of the foreign or immigrant population, even if he or she himself or herself has not emigrated over there. In some conditions, immigrants are blamed as illegal immigrants if they do not have any legal documents or proof of travelling as a regular immigrant. Those who are labeled as illegal immigrants, they mostly go through hardships, sufferings, insecurity, and instability. Illegal status of migrants are the common product of structural forces rather than a natural state of being. Such type of irregular or illegal migration is more often caused by miserable economic condition, very few opportunities in the home countries, and too difficult processes for the legal entry in the countries of destination. However, migration is always important because of the way it shapes, re-shapes, and influences societies by making them more diverse, more complex, and more global (King 2012, p. 6).

3.4 Diaspora

The term diasporas is somehow relevant to mention and apply in the thesis. It is an appropriate term to be applied which is indeed interlinked in the present context. Actually, the word diaspora is almost everywhere. The term diaspora sounds quite popular and it is increasingly common in academic, political, and journalistic usage. Until some years ago, the word had a specific and restricted meaning, relating chiefly to the dispersal and exile of Jews. In the twentieth century, the meaning of the term slowly expanded to refer the involuntary dispersal of other populations as well. Further, it is noticed that since the 1980s, diaspora has grown remarkably to that point where it is now frequently applied to almost all kinds of migrants. And it can be problematic if the term diaspora is defined very rigidly. As a concept, it can produce some powerful insights

into the world, but it can also generate some powerful distortions relying on how this term is used and for what purpose (Kenny 2013, p. 1).

Even if the people come from the same land, culture, tradition, ethnicity, and religion; they are usually found in a diasporic community. "A diaspora is always liable to constitute one or several communities focusing on its specific historic and cultural characteristics" (Rafael and Sternberg 2009, p. 145). In this regard, people generally form one or several communities since they are associated by some common tie or occupation abroad. "Migrants use their intellectual, social, and political resources to construct identities that transcend physical and social boundaries, and they are rarely, particularly today, mere victims who are acted upon by the larger society" (Agnew 2005, p. 5). In the larger society, migrants mostly feel marginalized and prefer to construct the identities using their intellectual, social, and political resources. And to some extent, they feel alienated with the bigger society having the feeling of marginalization.

Similarly, post modernity and globalization are also important factors in this regard. It is usually said that a diasporic individual has double consciousness. In this respect, Vijay Agnew (2005) expresses his opinions:

The diasporic individual often has a double consciousness, a privileged knowledge and perspective that is consonant with post modernity and globalization. The dual or paradoxical nature of diasporic consciousness is one that is caught between 'here' and 'there', or between those who share roots, and is shaped through multilocality. The consciousness and identity of diasporic individuals may focus on their attachment to the symbols of their ethnicity, and they may continue to feel emotionally invested in the 'homeland'. (Agnew 2005, p. 14)

Being in a foreign land, immigrants can neither totally forget their past life nor can easily accept the new life, specially, in terms of rituals, practices, sense of belongingness, traditions, atmosphere, and social networks rather they mostly remain in between of both past and present life. Further, the term diaspora is sometimes defined quite differently. "Scholars who define a diaspora by its social consciousness refer to individuals who live in a variety of societies and

cultures and who emphasize their sense of belonging or exclusion, their states of mind, and their sense of identity" (Agnew 2005, p. 5). Those who choose or have to leave their native lands for a number of reasons including articulated labor and higher education are the diasporic subjects in the context. "Although the term diaspora is now popularly used to denote almost any migrant community, researchers stress that diaspora communities have particular features which set them apart from other migrant communities" (Castles, Haas and Miller 2014, p. 42). Even in a new land, these diasporic subjects can commonly develop ethnic or cultural minorities continuing the affiliations with their past history and forefathers. However, the term diaspora was not that much popular before the 1980s. "Since the 1980s, the term has proliferated to an extraordinary extent in both academic and popular usage, to cover migration of all kinds" (Kenny 2013, p. 9). Importantly, it is noticed that the term was limited earlier and that used to denote merely some certain community until the 1980s. Now, it is used in a wider sense which covers all kinds of migration everywhere.

"Diaspora, it has been said, represent 'the leading edge of globalization' because they are not merely minority communities; their members have moved around-that is, have emigrated from their native countries to other countries" (Alfonso, Kokot and Tölölyan 2004, p. 10). Diaspora is somehow perceived globally and related to globalization. In the sense, both are connected to each other respectively and accordingly. Immigrants more often miss their native lands, specially, in terms of family, festival, socio-cultural surroundings, and rituals but still they try hard to adjust themselves according to the new culture, system, intercultural communication, and atmosphere because they do not want to feel as if they are strangers in a new land. All in all, it can be said that the diasporic community frequently focuses on status and identity of its members. Diaspora additionally can give access to new cultural spaces regardless of any boundaries of homeland and host land. It might not be unfair to say that the identity issues along with a cultural representation of migrant people is the major concern. "Diaspora, for all its emphasis on identity as historically constructed rather than fixed, can in certain usages result in national history writ large, lumping together people of different character in different places simply because they or their ancestors happen to share a common point of origin" (Kenny 2013, p. 12).

Diaspora theory seems to focus more on the identity formation of migrants. Diasporic communities are not always entirely the minority communities in the context. Diaspora can clarify some aspects of human migration and adaptation. "Diaspora is most relevant when people migrate to several destinations, not just one" (Kenny 2013, p. 14). Simply, it seems that the term is preferred and practiced for several destinations. Diaspora is sometimes regarded as a powerful tool which can make distinctions between the migrant groups as well. "The idea of diaspora can reveal important variations, not just between migrant groups but also within these groups" (Kenny 2013, p. 16). Diaspora can be taken as an active term which can include both motivations and feelings.

Diaspora is mostly relevant to mention and apply when the respondents share their ideas and experiences focusing more on the identity issues. Identity, self-respect, self-preferred aims, and representation matter most in the daily lives of every single individual, particularly in the lives of migrant people. This identity issue is specially always important for the minority groups. "The concept of diaspora offers a way of explaining certain aspects of the migrant experience rather than a general theory of migration" (Kenny 2013, p. 33). It will help to reveal their perspectives on the concerned issues regarding the struggle, differences, acceptance, adaptation, and settlement. "Once migrants settle abroad, they develop new connections among themselves, with their homelands, with their new host lands, and with people from their background living in other communities abroad" (Kenny 2013, p. 39). It is hereby concerned and connected with migration. In the sense, they are interconnected. Diaspora has its own perspective on migration. "The idea of diaspora offers a powerful perspective on migration, based on the three interrelated dimensions of movement, connectivity, and return" (Kenny 2013, p. 105). Ultimately, it can be said that most of the conceptions of this term are particularly concerned with homelands. In this way, diaspora helps a lot to develop the better understanding of migration. "Diaspora is a powerful source of cultural and political mobilization, and it will become even more powerful as migrants and their descendants continue to forge links among themselves and with their homelands" (Kenny 2013, p. 109).

3.5 Globalization

The word 'globalization' is a catchy word of the present world. It is commonly believed that the word globalization emerged in the 1990s as the preferred term to enclose the multiplicity of

supranational forces that have established themselves on the contemporary world. Notably, it seems likely to continue in use and possibly in overuse, in the forthcoming days (Hopkins 2002, p. 1). Regarding the definition, scholars define globalization differently and to some extent, they disagree on its scale, impact, and policy outcomes. "Scholars not only hold different views with regard to proper definitions of globalization, they also disagree on its scale, causation, chronology, impact, trajectories, and policy outcomes" (Steger 2013, p. 11). In many different ways, many other scholars describe globalization freely and put their perspectives accordingly in the context.

On the contrary, the very influential notion of globalization is sometimes taken as the ghost of Americanization which haunts the rest of the world. "This influential notion of globalization as a steamroller flattening local, national, and regional scales also appeared as the spectre of 'Americanization' haunting the rest of the world" (Steger 2013, p. 1). According to Jan-Erik Lane (2008), "I believe these to be so serious that globalization will constitute the juggernaut of the twenty-first century, because it drives the energy environment conundrum" (Lane 2008, p. 1). Globalization is the juggernaut of the twenty-first century which tries to make the countries interdependent in relation to energy crisis and multicultural society. In this regard, Manfred B. Steger (2013) writes, "The buzzword 'globalization' exploded into the 'Roaring Nineties' because it captured the increasingly interdependent nature of social life on our planet" (Steger 2013, p. 1).

Importantly, religious and cultural globalization are prioritized in the project writing. "Cultural globalization refers to the intensification and expansion of cultural flows across the globe. Obviously, 'culture' is a very broad concept; it is frequently used to describe the whole of human experience" (Steger 2013, p. 74). Moreover, globalization is referred to processes which are often indicated as cultural which is concerned with the classification of meaning in the global sphere. The global sphere is necessarily essential for globalization, for instance, the prerequisite for the formation of local identities such as nation states, third and fourth worlds, religious activities, and ethnicities. Furthermore, there are a large number of socio-cultural processes that are instantly created in global system (Friedman 1994, p. 199). "The contemporary experience of living and acting across cultural borders means both the loss of traditional meanings and the creation of new symbolic expressions. Reconstructed feelings of belonging coexist in uneasy tension with a sense of placelessness" (Steger 2013, p. 80). When people are abroad they feel and

experience cultural borders which can mean both the loss and creation of its meanings. "In other words, the Rushdie affair exemplifies the point that globalization brings with it the relativisation of particularistic identities along with the relativisation and marginalization of religion as a mode of social communication" (Beyer 2000, p. 4). The cultural globalization sometimes seems to have contradictory effects as well. "In certain contexts, these flows might change traditional manifestations of national identity in the direction of a popular culture characterized by sameness; in others they might foster new expressions of cultural particularism; in still others they might encourage forms of cultural hybridity" (Steger 2013, p. 80). Even if one does not change the religion, the practices are naturally changed in a new land and environment. Any followers of any faith happen to make a new way of practising the rituals and understanding while being abroad. They do not exactly get the same things and environment abroad what they used to get back home. Nepalese Hindus are a religious minority group in Oslo and this is the main concern of the research project.

In a similar way, cultural globalization also has an impact on the research project. It is generally said that cultures are perpetually changing, and these changes more or less guide to changes in worldviews, which lean to change steadily because they are at the subconscious level. Moreover, even if the worldview change, the world does not change itself, but people live in a constantly different world after the transformation. Obviously, in a bigger societies there is not only one kind of worldview but rather there exists several competing worldviews. For example, the introduction of television and social media modify the way people look at reality by opening up worlds not seen before (Hiebert 2009, pp. 316-317). More importantly, it is said that the globalization has nurtured a dissociation of several notions of nationhood from existing states. It has increased a large number of other non-territorial constructions of identity, for example, related to religious faith, gender, and humankind as a whole. Generally speaking, globalization has provoked a pluralisation of identities with many different national and non-territorial structures of being and belonging (Scholte 2005, p. 5).

Actually, globalization has increased migration flows in many countries which brings religious and cultural affiliations together with the migrants. "Globalization has increased migration flows not only to traditional immigrant receiving countries such as Australia, Canada and the United States, but also to many industrialized countries and regional centers around the world"

(Bonifacio and Angeles 2010, p. 3). In the sense, it concerns with the Nepalese Hindus living in Oslo along with religious and cultural aspects of theirs. The next chapter will be the data presentation chapter where I will present the collected data sincerely.

Chapter Four

4. Data Presentation

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the qualitative data on "Feel the difference: What does it mean to be a Hindu from Nepal in Oslo, Norway?". The presented data are descriptive. The chief purpose of the study is to discover and analyze the situation of the Nepalese Hindus focusing on the socio-cultural and religious aspects accordingly.

The collected data are about the Nepalese Hindus living in Oslo, but still they do cover some more relevant and related research questions which have already been presented in the introductory chapter. I will present the collected data on the concerned issues under the sub-headings. I will present and explain how my informants define, experience, and practice their religion and culture being in Oslo. Further, the issues of identity, differences, and attachment will also be mentioned accordingly. Now, I present the belief of my informants in God.

4.2 Religion as a Belief in God

It is mostly said that religion is a belief in unseen God. And this unseen power is known as God in the Nepalese context. Further, it is also believed that God has power to control the human beings. My informants are theistic people who believe in such practices. All the informants hold a belief that there is a greater importance of religion in their daily lives. According to them, religion teaches us to be honest, hard-working, disciplined, wise, and optimistic in life. Therefore, they follow the religion freely and willingly. Obviously, my informants are Nepalese Hindus but they have an equal respect to the people of other religions. It is oftentimes said that every human being is unique and dignified, likewise every religion is also unique and dignified in itself. It is said that religion governs us through various ways like duties and responsibilities, perception, practices, morality, and sincerity.

In my understanding, the informants have a great respect and belief in God who is indeed unseen, but has a great effect in their lives. Generally, all the religions have their holy books which guide the followers while practicing the faiths of their interest. This is why, the followers of almost every religion depend on the holy scriptures to practice the religion in their daily lives. Concerning Hinduism in regard to practices, there are noticed some different ways to follow it. In this regard, every interviewee has understood Hinduism in his or her own way and defines it

accordingly. Respondents are free to speak up the views in relation to an understanding of Hinduism on their own words. Regarding the understanding of Hinduism, I have asked my respondent Binod and he replied this:

As I am a Hindu and I believe in this religion, its main doctrine is based on a firm belief in re-birth. Our body dies but our soul never dies, which is the main principle of Hinduism. Besides, there are many gods and goddesses in Hinduism. In addition, there is a concept of heaven and hell in this religion. So, if we are religious and walk on a right way being humble and disciplined, we can get re-birth after this life as well. And even if everybody does not get re-birth, he or she goes to heaven after the death. But if we are unjust and walk on a wrong way being dishonest and oppressive, we do not get re-birth after this life, instead we go to hell after the death.

In my same query, Bal Kumari came up with this view:

Hinduism is all about tolerance and cultural diversity, where truth is one and paths are many. It also provides a unique diversity of festivals and rituals. To me, it is the most liberal religion, however, it is somehow affected by superstition and caste system. Customs and traditions have always been the important parts of Hinduism.

In the same question, Binod and Bal Kumari have answered in their own ways. One believes in re-birth, therefore believes more in spiritual things. And the other one believes that Hinduism is the most liberal religion which does not have any hard and fast rule to follow it. Nevertheless, it has been pointed that this religion is affected by superstition and caste system among the Nepalese Hindus. It seems that cultural diversity, rituals, and festivals are really important for them.

4.3 The Role of a Temple

Temple is regarded as the most common and best place to worship the God among the Nepalese Hindus. The followers of this faith like to visit the temple time and again. Many of them think that temple is a holy place to be and worship. Many interviewees emphasized on the importance of a temple. Furthermore, they said that since their childhood they were taught to worship the God in a temple. So, temple has a greater effect in their lives. Particularly, they become happier and feel more welcoming to practice their religion, if they discover a Nepalese Hindu temple in

the city of Oslo. My question, Is temple a main center for worshipping the God?, If yes, why? was answered by Santushta:

Yes, temple is the main centre for worshipping the God because there are different kinds of monuments established in a temple. The devotees visit temple to worship the God since the monuments, images, statues, and idols are also known as the other forms of gods and goddess, and they are mostly found in a temple. The priest in the temple protects the purity of the God. Personally, I like to visit a Nepalese Hindu temple in the city, but there is no any Nepalese Hindu temple located in Oslo. I see there is a Sri Lankan Hindu temple located at Ammerud, Oslo and there is another Indian Hindu temple located at Slemstad, Røyken. Both of them are not so favorable for me to visit and worship because Sri Lankan Hindus have quite different ways to worship the God and the other one is quite far to visit and worship the God.

Even if many of my interviewees have a central idea on the importance of temple, they justify it in different ways. Among nineteen informants, Hemanta told his views:

Undoubtedly, the God is within the sacred and virtual heart. In this regard, the temple is your heart if it is sacred and virtual. A heart is that place wherein love, respect, justice, and equality can reside. In my view, a good heart is just like a temple. So, both good heart and temple are holy and alike for me. Nevertheless, Hindus regard temple as a main centre for worshipping the God, and so do I.

However, it seems that a temple lies at the centre for worshipping the God. An individual's heart is also regarded as a temple if it is good, sacred, and virtual. After all, they need a place to worship the God and this place is known as temple. So, temple has a greater impact in their lives.

4.4 Puja Practice in Hinduism

Puja means a way of worshipping the God in Hindu religion. As this religion is understood and defined personally in the project, there are some similarities and dissimilarities in regard to its practices. The followers might practice it differently due to the change of location and daily schedule. *puja* is an integral part in Hinduism. It can be performed both at a temple and at a home. If it is done at a temple, the priest conducts it and the devotees follow him. And if it is done at home, the parents usually conduct it and other members of the family follow them. To

perform *puja*, everyone including priest need to take a bath at first and cannot eat any salty food items except milk, milk tea, coffee, and fruits during the *puja* ritual. The situation gets changed itself whenever the people migrate in another place or country. And since the situation is changed the way of *puja* practices are also changed. Therefore, there occurs differences in such practices because of which the followers look for different ways to practice it outside the homeland. Many Hindus organize *puja* to make the God happy. They believe that God will listen to them and become happy after they finish *puja*. Regarding the *puja* practices in Oslo, I asked a question to my informants. In my question, Bange Bhujel answered:

Of course, I do puja but only on some occasions because there is no any Nepalese temple and Nepali pujari (priest) in the city. If there was a Nepali temple and priest I would do it frequently. The priest is the one who knows better to perform puja and the devotees feel more comfortable to follow him. But I do it digitally. I visit You Tube on my computer and play Gayatri Mantra (a kind of chant) then I listen to it and worship the images of God in my apartment. While doing so, I would like to burn an incense to let the God know about puja practice but I am afraid of doing so, because of fire alarm. I used to burn an incense when I was in Nepal. However, I feel spiritual, calm, and peaceful after I finish puja.

On the other hand, Shusma has a different understanding of *puja* practice. According to her:

I rarely do puja because of hectic schedule and unfavorable situation. I know it is a foreign country and I do not get the exact things what I need to practice my religion. I need to study and work because I need to survive in this expensive city. However, I do not believe that much in such practices but I do believe in God and sometimes like to visit a Hindu temple. Whenever I was in Nepal I used not to visit any temple but I want to visit a temple in Oslo now. And there is no any Nepali temple located in Oslo to visit and worship the deities.

Both informants came up with almost two different ideas regarding the *puja* practices. Bange Bhujel wants to perform it frequently if he finds a Nepalese Hindu temple in Oslo. And even if he does not find it, he does the *puja* practices with the help of You Tube videos. And Shusma does not believe that much in such practices but still claims herself a Hindu and believes in God.

Interestingly, she would like to visit a Nepalese temple in Oslo where there is no any Nepalese temple established. According to her, she did not use to visit the temples whenever she was in Nepal. It might be so because of the change in location and her mixed feelings.

4.5 Religion in a Public Sphere

Religion is practiced both publicly and privately in the society. The followers are happy whenever they can practice their religion freely both in a public sphere and private sphere. In most of the countries, religion is not something to hide rather it is something to practice openly as a right. Practicing the religion in a public sphere is not a problem unless it harms others in a society. The followers of all the religions usually follow their religions according the rules and regulations of the host countries. In a public sphere, people might have different feelings regarding the practices of religion, for instance, they might be nervous, excited, natural, emotional, and devotional. But in a private sphere, people mostly have a same kind of feeling and that is a natural feeling.

In the course of interview, I have asked my informants to hear their experience about the practice of religion publicly. In this context, Samundra spoke this view:

My religion is very simple. It teaches me to be kind, honest, confident, and respectful in life. So, I am down to earth and happy to learn from my religion. And my religion teaches me to be nice to everyone, smile to everyone, and appreciate those who have done a good job for the welfare of the society selflessly. I am always happy if I can help the needy and helpless people in a society. So, my religion is to work sincerely, help the helpless people, and appreciate the good things every time and everywhere. In this way, I practice my religion in a public sphere.

According to him, good human qualities are main concern of the query. With his views, it can be assumed that the selfless and egoless work is a real religion to practice in a public sphere. People need to know what the real religion is in a society. The practice of religion varies from person to person regardless of public sphere and private sphere.

On the contrary, Ram Chandra had an understanding that temple is built in a public land where many followers come to worship the God. To him, visiting temple and worshipping there is a public sphere activity. Therefore, he came up with this view:

Actually, temple is the most important place where Hindus come to worship the God. As a Hindu, I worship in a temple because I believe there is God in the temple. For me, it is a holy place. In a temple, there will be a donation box for those who want to help the helpless people. People put money voluntarily in that donation box and the collected money is spent to feed the orphans, street children, helpless people and to make some infrastructures for the school and hospitals in the name of God. So, I visit temple and donate some money voluntarily. And yes, I go to temple for the religious chant. The priest is expert in chanting and I follow him.

Based on his sayings, it can be said that human service is a main priority in life. Both interviewees have quite similar purposes regarding the practice of religion in a public sphere. Samundra involves himself directly to serve the people and he does not prioritize temple in this regard. But Ram Chandra prioritizes temple to serve the people and he helps indirectly by donating money. He believes that donated money will be spent in a needy area and he is happy to work for the humanity via temple.

4.5.1 Greetings Among the Nepalese Hindus

People often greet each other when they meet for the first time every day. They do it as a part of culture and civilization. But different religious people have different customs to greet each other even if they come from the same land. In the scene, Nepalese Hindus are the subject matter. It is important to know how they greet each other whenever they meet other fellow Hindus, why they do so, and what words they use to greet others. I was curious to know how they greet each other in a public sphere. Even more, I wanted to learn if they continue the same way of greeting or not in Oslo learnt from back home. I had such queries in my mind before approaching them. Later, I came to know that they have not changed the way to greet each other. It means they do the same what they used to do it in Nepal.

Regarding the greetings, Bange Bhujel shared this view:

Actually, it depends whom I meet. Greetings differ from elder people to younger people. When I meet younger people I greet saying hello bhai/bahini kasto cha timi lai? (hello younger brother/sister how are you?), sanchai chhau? (Are you fine?). When I meet senior or elder people I join my both palms and say Namaste then conversation goes

ahead. Namaste is the respected word to greet the people. And when I meet my friends I greet saying hello sathi ke chha yar timro khabar? (hello friend, what's up?). Greeting to my friend is always informal.

There are two type of greetings among the Nepalese Hindus. One is a formal greeting and the other one is informal greeting. *Namaste* or *Namaskar* is regarded as a formal greeting and 'Hi' or 'Hello' is informal greeting. However, greetings matter. They speak with the younger ones with love and care while they speak with the elder ones with respect. The way they greet people is quite different in nature.

In my same curiosity Niraj spoke this view:

I say Namaskar to the older people by putting both palms together when I meet them. It is a respected word, so I always like to respect the senior people. If I respect the people around me, they also respect, love, and care me. Since I am Hindu and I was born in a Hindu family, I have been taught to respect the elder people with the formal words like Namaste, Namaskar, Darshan, and Pranam. So, I choose any word among these four words while greeting the people. When I meet religious persons, I prefer to use the word Pranam as the greeting. Specifically, when I meet Sadhu/Santa (Holy persons) I say Pranam, bow my head, and touch their feet. I greet my friends and younger people informally, when I meet them around me.

Greetings vary from people to people. They respect the people depending on the age and status. *Namaste* is a catchy word to use and respect the people among the Nepalese Hindus wherever they are. The word and way of respecting people are not changed even if they live outside Nepal. Friends and younger people are usually greeted informally.

4.5.2 Being a Hindu in the Norwegian Public Sphere

Explicitly, there are some differences between Nepal and Norway regarding the geographical structure, climate, and people's thought. And this type of differences are regarded as normal and natural. Along with these kinds of differences, there are other kinds of difference as well. They are noted as religious differences, cultural differences, and behavioral differences. I have asked my informants to know about their feelings and views on the concerned issues. In this regard, Binod expressed this view:

Basically, there are vast differences between Hindu culture and Christian culture. Generally, Hindu people go to temple for worshipping the God and Norwegian Christian people go to church for practicing their religion. In my experience, Norwegian people greet saying hei, and Nepalese people greet saying namaste. In addition, Norwegian people are isolated and do not concern with others but Nepalese people do concern with others. Norway is a developed and prosperous country but I do not find the people giving importance to communalism.

In my same question, Sati Devi answered in this way:

In Nepal, most of the people are Hindu. And in Norway, most of the people are Christian. Therefore, these two countries have different cultures, customs, and traditions. As a Nepalese Hindu, I am happy to share my Hindu culture with Norwegian friends. Norwegian people are good at studying the various cultures and they emphasize the working culture which are good to learn from them. I like the Norwegian word sammarbeid because they more often use this word. But in Oslo, it is hard to find any Norwegian Hindu unless he or she is immigrant.

Sati Devi told her views according to her experience. Based on her experience, it can be said that Norwegian people like to exchange the cultures and they focus on cooperation. And she is also happy to share her culture and knowledge with them.

On the other hand, Hemanta put his views in a different way:

I have noticed a great variety between Nepal and Norway. In Nepal, cultures are followed collectively having a mutual respect and background. But in Norway, cultures are followed mostly by the individualistic mentality. I see the differences here. In Nepal, family bonding is found to be so strong along with a sense of togetherness among the family members, which cannot be noticed in a Norwegian family. Similarly, various cultural chanting and practices are performed greatly among the Nepalese Hindus, which is hardly found among the Norwegian people.

Hemanta shared his experience respecting both countries, religions, and cultures. In his eyes, there are much differences between the Nepalese culture and Norwegian culture. Both cultures

are totally different, and their identities are also totally different from each other, even if they live in the same country or same city.

4.5.3 Conversion and People in Oslo

Oslo is a multicultural city in Norway. There are people from different continents, religions, cultures, and backgrounds. One can find both theist and atheist people in the city. So, it will be unfair if one looks for only one type of people with the same race, religion, and culture. And I have come to know that people are well aware of this fact. But at the same time, every single individual has their own identity. The identity of the people need to be recognized by the governmental agencies and people living over there, but the situation might be quite different in the case of migrant people. Concerning their identity, I have interviewed the people about conversion and Hinduism in Oslo. Similarly, I have asked them if they think of converting the religion since they are a few in number. And at the same time, I have asked them about the type of people focusing on the cultural and behavioral aspects. Regarding the conversion, Samundra said this:

In my view, changing religion cannot change us. I have learnt to be brave, strong, confident, true to words, and diligent from my religion, culture, and society. So, I am fully convinced with my religion and culture. If I see some problems anywhere, I do not run away from the problems rather I try my level best to solve the problems, this is what, I have learnt from my religion and culture. So, I do not see any problem being a Hindu in Oslo but if I have some problems then I will look for the solution. But I will never convert my religion into any other religion to get rid of any difficulties. So, I am happy to be a Hindu.

In my same question Kushal Jee answered the following lines:

I am extremely happy as a Hindu. My religion is my identity in Oslo. My religion gives me an inspiration to move on. When people ask my introduction, I say that I am a Nepalese Hindu. And I have met some missionaries in Oslo who always ask me to convert the religion saying their religion is better one, but I politely reject their offer. Moreover, I feel proud to be a Hindu because I belong to that religion which believes in peace, equality, justice, and swadharma (own religion).

With their views, it can be said that they are happy and feel proud to be a Hindu even if they understand and define the religion quite differently. Hinduism seems to be their identity among many people from different backgrounds. As the migrants, identity issue might have been a strong factor in their lives in Oslo.

My another query concerned with the type of people has been answered by Deepa. She expressed her views like this:

At first, I felt that all the people in Oslo are reserved and unsocial. Particularly, I had such feelings after I was introduced with some Norwegian friends. They were good looking people but I did not find them welcoming. But later, when I became friend with them and shared the feelings, then they were friendly and social. So, I thought they need to be approached and talked frequently to be a good friend with them. Non-Norwegian friends are usually friendly because they including me are international people who share the same background.

In my same question, Sabina answered this:

I have mostly Nepalese friends in my friend circle although I live in Oslo. They are somewhat religious, friendly, social, and helpful than other friends in Oslo. In my experience, other people are not so social and helpful. But I prefer to say that other people are open-minded in talking. Norwegian people are shy and reserved in the beginning of the friendship. After they become friend then they are good, humble, gentle, and friendly. after that they migrant in Oslo. But I do not see them so religious.

Both informants have quite similar experiences regarding the people in Oslo. For both of them, Norwegian friends are quite unsocial in the beginning but later, they are also social, helpful, and friendly. They feel that Norwegian people are not so much religious. To get a good friend, one needs to be good at first. So, my informants might have understood this fact.

4.6 Festivals in Nepal

Every festival and culture are somehow related to a religion. Religion has either direct or indirect impact on the lives of people. Cultures and festivals are associated with religion. Nepal is a secular country now. And even if it is a secular country, there are a huge population of Hindu

people who celebrate many festivals in different parts of the country. And among many, some major festivals are *Teej, Dashain, Tihar (Deepawali), Chhath, Maghe Sakranti (Makar Sakranti), Maha Shivaratri, Holi, and New Year.*

As a researcher, I wanted to know whether they celebrate those festivals in Oslo. In the interview, I asked the importance of those festivals. As a reply Hemanta said this:

As a Hindu, I celebrate many festivals but I live in Oslo now, so I celebrate some selected festivals like, Dashain, Tihar, and Maghe Sakranti. These festivals endow the historical, cultural, religious, and ethical virtues for the welfare of human beings. It is possible to celebrate these festivals even in Oslo. I think every Hindu celebrates these festivals wherever they are. At Dashain, I receive blessings from my parents on phone and celebrate with seniors as well as friends in Oslo.

I learnt that they celebrate festivals freely, so they are happy to celebrate in Oslo. After I came to know that it is still possible to celebrate the festivals being abroad, I went to other informants to hear their experience. In the same regard, Sushma expressed her opinion:

As a Hindu, I celebrate Janai Purnima, Teej, Dashain, Tihar, Makar Sakranti (Maghe Sakranti), and Holi (also known as Fagu Purnima). I celebrate these festivals every year because my parents taught me to celebrate such festivals since my childhood. Now I enjoy to celebrate and I see the cultural importance of these festivals. For example, at Dashain, we receive Tika (red mark on forehead), blessings, and gifts mostly money. After I receive Tika and blessings I say Namaste to my parents and they touch my feet with their forehead in return. I visit my maternal uncle's home to receive Tika and blessings. We cook delicious food and eat together sitting with the family members.

It is noticed that there are many festivals to celebrate as a part of culture and religion. But it seems that all the festivals are not possible to celebrate abroad, but some major festivals are still possible to be celebrated. For instance, *Dashain* is celebrated as the greatest festival. And from the religious perspective, this festival is described as the victory of good over evil. At *Dashain*, people receive *Tika* (a red mark on the forehead) and blessings from the parents, relatives, and senior people. Moreover, the festivals like *Teej, Dashain, Tihar, Janai Purnima, and Maghe Sakranti* are often celebrated at a certain place not very publicly.

4.7 Relationship Between the Nepalese Caste System

In Nepal, there are more than one hundred castes and many ethnic communities. Nepal is a multicultural and multiethnic country. There are around 30 million population in Nepal. Different ethnic communities and castes have different customs and traditions. The major concern is caste system among the Nepalese Hindus. There is no any legal discrimination based on the caste system in the country, but some people still have a kind of conservative thoughts and they themselves think of being superior based on the caste system. Actually, caste is determined by birth. Caste is often understood from the perspective of high and low in the Nepalese Hindu society which creates a distinction between the people. *Brahmins* are often regarded as the high caste and *dalits* are regarded as the low caste. Caste and *dalit* systems are closely connected in the Nepalese context. "The settings of the most social and political evils in Nepal could be imputed to the pathology of caste and *dalits*, rooted deeply across the country" (Bhandari 2014, p. 112). It is frequently said that *dalits* are the by-products of caste system. In Nepal, even today some upper caste people still do not want to eat any food cooked by lower caste people. Such lower caste people are still stopped to go inside the temple by those so-called upper caste people in some parts of Nepal. As a true fact, both upper caste people and lower caste people are Hindus by religion. Considering this bitter fact, I asked my informant Santushta about the caste system and his understanding on this topic. I wanted to explore the ideas, experiences, and understanding of them whether they have the same kind of thought and behavior in Oslo. As a response, he expressed his opinion in this way:

Yes, I believe in caste system in Hinduism as it is an approach to divide the work in the society. But, it is wrongly practiced in the society to discriminate the presence of human being, which is not the actual intention of caste system in Hinduism. No one can be superior just by birth. People become renowned because of hard work, personality, education, and good behavior but some people discriminate other people saying you are lower caste people. And I do not like this discrimination. All the castes are equal and respected for me.

He believes in caste system but he does not tolerate the discrimination based on the birth. Among many Hindu people, there are still some extremists who try to divide and rule the people on the basis of birth. By his sayings, it can be said that there is a mutual relationship between the

Nepalese Hindus in Oslo. They do not have any problem regarding the birth. Those who are born in an upper caste family and those who are born in a lower caste family should not be treated and respected differently. The birth should not be the measure of judgment and respect. Everyone is equal by birth and needs to be behaved the same.

In a quite similar way, Barsha expressed her view differently:

Actually, I do not believe in caste system because for me Humanity is the most important religion above any caste or race. And I also believe that the division of caste system will only lead to an ultimate discrimination in the country which I am always against for. There should not be any discrimination in the name of caste. All of us are equal and should be treated equally. Furthermore, I believe that there are only two castes in the world, they are male and female.

Unlike others, Barsha believes that there are only two castes in the world and they are male and female. She does not accept the caste system because she thinks that it will bring inequality and discrimination in the society.

4.8 Religion, Freedom and Minority in Oslo

As it is already mentioned that Oslo is a multicultural city in Norway, there are obviously many different people who practice their religion and culture freely. There is no any restriction for any religion, race, age, and sex. It means there is a very good practice of Human Rights. Not only Norwegian people practice this freedom but also non-Norwegian people practice it as a right. My opinion becomes appropriate only after the interviewees share their experiences in the context. So, in regard to religion, freedom, and minority issue, I have interviewed the informants. Among many informants, Raju told his view in the following ways:

As an immigrant, I feel much freedom in Oslo. I can travel anywhere in the country without any obstruction. I can practice my religion freely even though there are a few Hindus. Religion is not an obligation. It is my choice. There is no any pressure to change my religion, so my religion is safe. Everyone has a right to have a religion and freedom. Norway is on the top of Human Development Index which is really a good thing for the people who live in this country. But I do not find any Nepali temple in the city to

practice my religion happily. Except this, I do not have any complaint and I do not feel bad as a Hindu minority in Oslo.

In my same question, Amar replied this:

As an immigrant, I am happy to live in Oslo. It is a beautiful and multicultural city. It is good in terms of freedom and religious practices, but we are a minority group and our religious festivals are not counted. I sometimes see that some missionaries try to change the religion of some migrant people by offering something needed for them. And I do not like this kind of exercise because Hindu people do not do like this. There are mixed culture and many immigrants in Oslo. Norway is a safe country to live in. I always feel secure to go anywhere at any time in Oslo. In my experience, no one hates no one on the basis of religion until now. I do not find a Nepali Hindu temple in the city.

Norway is often every year on the top ranking of Human Development Index in the world. It is a safe and prosperous country. And among other cities of Norway, Oslo is more multicultural and multi religious since there are many international people living as migrants. People have freedom to choose and practice the religion. Even if there are many people from different religious and ethnic backgrounds, people have lived peacefully. They have a kind of mutual relationship and respect to each other. All of them are free to exercise their freedom. Notably, one can see some mosques, churches, and a Sri Lankan Hindu temple in Oslo, but there is not found any Nepali Hindu temple. So, some people demand to establish a Nepali Hindu temple in Oslo because of which they think to be noticed officially. My informants are not happy with the activities of some missionaries, besides this, they are happy and feel secure to live in Oslo. Now, I will write the chapter five where I will discuss and analyze the data carefully and impartially.

Chapter Five

5. Analysis on Findings

5.1 Introduction

The idea of the chapter is to discuss and analyze the data which have already been presented in the fourth chapter. It will examine the impact of Norwegian culture and other religions in the life of a Nepali Hindu in Oslo, Norway. While doing so, the data will be discussed and analyzed on the basis of informants' perception, perspectives, and experiences. The answers from the interviewees clarify what it means to be a Hindu and how they feel the difference in regard to culture, religion, and freedom in Oslo. It convinces more when they share their opinions of not having a Nepalese Hindu temple to practice and continue their religion. Some of the Nepalese Hindus feel themselves as a minority group in the Norwegian public sphere. The Nepalese Hindus also want to practice and continue their religion in the Nepali Hindu temple, like the Sri Lankan and Indian Hindus do in Oslo. The long geographical distance between Nepal and Norway indeed makes the Nepalese Hindus think of the differences in some issues in the context.

5.2 Distance as a Fact

People feel changes in life according to time and situation. Time is more powerful than anyone else in the world. Time is the leader which lead the human beings. Human beings frequently feel the differences, ambivalence, challenges, and grab the opportunities according to the course of time and situation. People usually experience more challenges, struggles, difficulties, and freedom while being abroad. Since the geographical distance stands as a fact, they do not get the same society, feelings, atmosphere, and understanding as the migrants like in homeland which need to be understood well.

As the fact, there are clear distinction between Nepal and Oslo, Norway in relation to geographical structure, social security system, culture, religious practices, and common understanding. Because of these differences, people also have variations in thoughts and practices. Oslo is the biggest city having a huge number of population in comparison to other cities in Norway which has welcomed many different nationalities along with their distinct cultures, religions, customs, and traditions. Physically, migrants live in Oslo but mentally, they are always connected with the homeland in one or other way. They cannot ignore the distance fact and forget the current stay even if they want to live as if they are in their own countries.

Since Oslo is a multicultural and multinational city, there are diversities in several layers of everyday life. Generally, every person is compared and evaluated according to prevailing culture, social atmosphere, religious practices, ideologies, and activities. Additionally, geographical structure, political scenario, social life, and circumstances also cause an individual to have a different feeling and expression. In this respect, I prefer to disclose how the Nepalese Hindus are living in Oslo and what difference they point out.

As a common fact, temple is described as the holiest place to worship in Hindu religion, but there is no any Nepali Hindu temple in the city of Oslo, which is a challenging issue for many of the informants. Devotees often bring flowers, incense, fruits, milk, and money while visiting temple to worship. While worshipping, they put both palms together, stand without shoes/sandals, and bow their heads down to show the great respect towards God in the temple. As it is earlier mentioned, the devotees including the priest need to take a bath and cannot eat any salty food before performing *puja*. If there are some images, idols, and statues of the gods and goddesses in the temple, the devotees worship them as if they are the real gods and goddesses. As the migrants and being in a different situation, Nepalese Hindus manage to follow their faith via hymns, pictures, chanting, and You Tube videos. Particularly, how the Nepalese Hindus understand Hinduism and define it in a different environment are the key concerns of the text. Keeping a regular touch with non-Hindus, having a broader knowledge, getting frequent interaction, holding a diasporic thought, and living in a globalized world; the definition of the previous norms, behaviors, perception, and practices seem to get changed in their current lives.

Religion and culture exist side by side in people's life which need to be accepted and acknowledged. Religion and culture become more prominent when the followers preserve and promote with new ideas, experiences, enthusiasm, and perspectives. However, it seems that there is an identity crisis among the Hindu minorities in Oslo, so they are touched by it. Identity loss is regarded as a great loss in an individual's life. Culture has appeared in the frontline among the migrant people, especially among the Nepalese Hindus. They speak out for the cultural and religious recognition as their identity. Analyzing their sayings on the data presentation chapter, it can be said that they are able to practice their religion and culture even in the lack of a Nepali Hindu temple. The capability of maintaining check and balance between the various conditions

and geographical structure are appreciatory, which seem to have benefitted them to be adjusted in the Norwegian public sphere.

Again going back to the data presentation chapter, the issues of identity crisis seems to have two prime reasons. The first one is they do not find a Nepali Hindu temple and religious environment. And the second one is they themselves are in a few number which numerically make them feel as if they are the members of a religious minority group. After they do not get the similar situation like in Nepal, they change the way of worshipping the God and defining the religion. They try to define the religion in their own words which show that they do not have the same kind of conception among themselves. Nonetheless, Nepalese Hindus should be endowed a holy place to worship the gods and goddesses, as is the need in their faith wherein, they prefer to worship the images and idols of deities, meet the priest, and greet the fellow followers.

Temple is highly regarded and required for going through the rituals in Hinduism, like mosque and church in Islam and Christianity respectively. After all, Nepalese Hindus have also contributed to some extent to make Oslo a more multicultural, multi-religious, and multinational city in Norway which should be considered as an important effort.

5.3 Culture in General

Culture is something really important which has its own characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people that is often justified by language, religion, cuisine, civilization, behavior, music, and arts. It is noticed as the growth of a group identity and fostered by social patterns unique to the group (<http://www.livescience.com/21478-what-is-culture-definition-of-culture.html>). Culture has been defined differently by different scholars. It is unique in itself and differs from country to country, ethnicity to ethnicity, and religion to religion. It is something emotional as well which bring people together in a certain point. Some scholars say that culture is a way of life. "Culture is the way we live. It is the clothes we wear, the foods we eat, the languages we speak, the stories we tell, and the ways we celebrate. It is the way we show our imaginations through art, music, and writing. Culture is also about our roots" (Kalman 2009, p. 4). Culture seems to be simple without any written doctrine, but it is both simple and serious at the same time. Culture issue can be serious if someone outsider attacks intentionally and tries to undermine it then those who belong to a specific culture can defend it strongly. As long as every culture is respected and recognized, it is always simple and enrich the society outstandingly.

People from different countries and continents have a different way of living, different way of wearing clothes, different way of eating food, different way of speaking languages, and different way of celebrating festivals, which are simply named as culture. So, it is a matter of identity as well. Additionally, culture is associated with religion, for stance, Muslim woman herself uses burqa to cover her head and face in public. Further, a Nepalese Hindu married woman puts vermilion powder on the parting hair over the forehead, necklace round the neck, and bracelets at hands which are the symbols of marriage in Hindu culture.

5.4 Nepalese Hindu Culture

Nepal is a multicultural and multilingual country. There are different cultures, ethnic communities, and religious groups in Nepal. Different ethnic people speak their own mother tongues, wear ethnic cultural dresses, and make different varieties of food. The ethnic communities and religious groups are richer in cultures, traditions, and rituals in Nepal. Nepalese Hindu culture is focused and analyzed based on the data presentation chapter. It is globally accepted that wherever a person goes, he or she automatically carries his or her native language, culture, religion, tradition, and civilization. And so is the case in the context of the Nepalese Hindus living in Oslo. They are migrants and they are aware of their native language, culture, religion, and tradition. They have their own way of welcoming the guests, eating the food, celebrating the festivals, and greeting the people. Regarding the common understanding about the cultures Moti Lal shared this view:

As a guest, I can visit any family any day without pre-information in Nepal. They are always welcoming even if I do not inform them earlier while visiting as a guest. But it is uncommon to visit any Norwegian family without pre-information. Guests are given much priority and respect in the Nepalese culture and they are even forced to eat more food during lunch and dinner. In the Nepalese culture, people spontaneously gather to share the happiness and divide the sorrows. Neighbors are helpful in Nepal but I do not see such emotions and co-operation in Oslo. We believe in collectivism but Norwegians do not do so, it might be because of busy schedule. And as a Hindu, I do not eat beef because I worship cow as the symbol of goddess Lakshmi but Norwegian people eat beef. However, I notice that Norwegians do not interfere in other's work and decision which is good. I have met some Norwegians who are keen to learn a new language and culture

and I am very happy to teach them Nepali language, share the food and Nepalese culture with them.

Obviously, it is seen that there are cultural differences between Nepal and Oslo, Norway. As a Nepalese national he or she greets saying either 'Namaste' or 'Namaskar' but a Norwegian greets saying 'Hei' as they come from different religious and cultural backgrounds. Nepalese people have many festivals in Hindu culture, so they celebrate them with families, relatives, and friends. As they have learnt to celebrate such functions in a group, they might have been influenced to believe in collectivism. They have the habit of eating food with their hands as a cultural part. Moti Lal is physically in Oslo now but, to some extent, he thinks of himself as if he is in Nepal. It is further proved when he describes the way he used to visit the people and relatives as a guest and see the differences in the present context. He talks about the neighbor being helpful and kind in Nepal, but at the same time he experiences different types of neighbors in Oslo, which is true because Norwegians concern more on their own stuffs. The behavior, nature, thoughts, and perspectives of a person are often made depending on how a person is taught from the childhood and in what culture and religion, he or she has grown up.

The sayings of Moti Lal are the outcome of diasporic feelings. There is a sense of connectedness in his expression. It is a transnational connection which is motivated by the emotional attachment between Oslo and Nepal that is facilitated by mobile, internet, and social media. Especially, such connectedness is seen to be practiced more publicly among the ethnic communities in Oslo. The Nepalese Hindus live in Oslo practicing the Hindu culture and they have the feelings for Nepal which shows the connection to the nation, so the Nepalese Hindu culture cannot be taken out from them even if they migrate to other country. Diaspora can be perceived and explained on the basis of cultural orientation, place, and nationalism. It is hereby the concept is extravagantly expressive and the above mentioned example can contribute to the understanding of how the term diaspora fits in this thesis.

5.5 The Significance of Puja Practice

In Hinduism, *puja* is performed on many occasions and functions. It can include daily *puja* done in the home, in temple ceremonies, annual festivals, and some lifetime events such as at the birth of a baby and on a wedding. Moreover, people mostly do *puja* when they begin a new business, build a house or school, and establish a company. It is usually performed in home and at temples which differentiates certain stages of life, functions, and some festivals such as *Durga Puja* (*Durga* is regarded as the warrior goddess) and *Lakshmi Puja* (*Lakshmi* is regarded as the goddess of wealth and prosperity). *Puja* is not mandatory; it might be a daily routine for some Hindus, a periodic ritual for some Hindus, and occasional for other Hindus. In many temples, it can be performed in different times such as in the morning, in the afternoon, and in the evening and in some temples it might be occasional ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puja_\(Hinduism\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puja_(Hinduism))). *Puja* is a prayer ritual performed by Hindu devotees to revere and worship deities. Similarly, it is frequently performed to honor the memories of dead relatives as well.

5.6 Puja at Home

As it is earlier mentioned, *puja* can be performed at home, river bank, and temple according to time and situation to show a great respect towards gods and goddesses which is believed as an integral part of rituals in Hinduism. There might be some sort of differences regarding *puja* practices, but the gist is the same and that is to find out the way to deities. The followers need to take a bath to perform *puja* and they are not allowed to eat any salty food before it is finished. The followers bring some water from the rivers to offer to gods and goddesses both in the temple and in the home. A shrine is usually needed and it is mostly separated for *puja* in a home. "Almost every Hindu household has some sort of a prayer room decorated with appropriate images or idols or sacred symbols. People sit in front of the idol and read sacred verses (*mantras*) such as *gayatri mantras* or hymns. Flowers are offered with lighted lamps being waved ceremoniously in front of the idol or image" (Dogra and Dogra 2006, p. 16). Particularly, a prayer room is needed in the home to perform *puja* in a more religious and better way. The prayer room contains images, idols, and *murti* (an embodiment of a deity) of deities, so that the followers believe it as a holy place to worship in the home. More significantly, ॐ (Om) is the most sacred sound and icon in Hindu religion, which denotes God almighty who is indeed believed to have neither beginning nor end. Interestingly, Hinduism is practiced as a religion of freedom among the Nepalese Hindus in Oslo.

Basically, *puja* is mostly performed by the head of the family in a home and sometimes by parents together. Even if it is said that Hinduism advocates for religious tolerance and believes in equality, there is not the equal right for females. Particularly, at the time of menstruation period females are not allowed to perform and participate any *puja* practices because menstruation is regarded as a sign of impurity in Hinduism. So, it is a kind of discrimination against the females which can be said that it is a conservative thought. Nowadays, it can be noticed that the changes take place in the older thoughts and practices since the people are possibly being influenced by the global knowledge. Further, it is still almost impossible to get a female priest in this religion which might have been caused due to menstruation cycle. Besides this, there is always an important role of the females in *puja* practices who prepare the required ingredients to offer to deities, sing hymns, and light incense. To almost every single Hindu, *puja* signifies a righteous duty, every day ritual, and the best way to gratify the deities. Geographical distance and migrant status seem to create a boundary for the Nepalese Hindus to carry out the rituals at a deeper and proper level. As they are abroad, they need to understand the reality of not getting the same things and situation like in their homeland in regard to *puja* practices. It seems that many of them have accepted and conceived the underlying causes of changes in *puja* practices. However, it will be sensible if the Nepalese Hindus perform and continue *puja* at their homes or apartments respecting the situation which they have experienced and expressed in the interviews. Every society becomes emotionally stronger and culturally richer if every ethnic community and member of the society are committed to contribute from their sides.

5.7 Digital Hindus

Evaluating the rituals, *puja* practices, and perception of the Nepalese Hindus, it can be said that they are highly influenced by the globalization theory. Mobile phones, internet, Face book, Viber, You Tube, Google, and Skype have greater role in globalization age. People are up to date about news, happenings, developments, researches, inventions, socio-political scenario, and religious as well as cultural activities through social media, online news, and internet in the current world. Everyone including Nepalese Hindus can get instant information if something happens back in their homelands with the help of information technology and internet. People can see almost everything digitally sitting in a certain room in the age of globalization. In this respect, globalization has a strong influence on everyday life of common people. Widely speaking, globalization is understood as a process of international integration resulted from the

exchange of worldviews and other aspects of religion and culture. Based on the discussion, Nepalese Hindus can be named as digital Hindus since they use You Tube and Google to look for the pictures of the deities, hymns, ideas, and deeper understanding of Hinduism to practice and continue their religion according to the time and situation. As a result, such type of online activities and digital Hindus can bring increasing interconnectedness among the different religious minorities, cultures, and population in Oslo, Norway.

5.8 Summary of Data

Commonly, culture and religion create a distinction in the society. People mostly perceive those cultural and religious values as their social entities. They feel proud and dignified if they can go for these norms and values freely and frequently. It is generally said that every religion is unique and different from every other religion. So, every religion has its own culture and tradition as a different entity. In fact, culture and religion are two major factors which solely concern the identity of an individual. Every society creates the cultural norms and religious values which keep one apart from another. Naturally, an individual has more than a single identity according to time, location, social status, financial condition, and cultural as well as religious ties. For example, a Nepalese citizen working in a foreign bank and following Hindu religion is clearly known as a migrant Hindu. The outsiders can judge him or her on the basis of his or her nature and behavior which is shaped by the culture and religion, he or she practices in everyday life.

Those who do not come from Nepal and do not speak Nepali language, are obviously different from the Nepalese migrants even if they live in Oslo and share the same label as migrants. If one compares himself or herself with a Nepalese migrant in Oslo, he or she will clearly notice the difference in between them in terms of culture, tradition, and behavior. Being in a more multicultural city, a migrant Hindu should tolerate quite unfavorable situation and accept the differences. As the migrants, Nepalese Hindus might need to go through hardships, ambiguities, excitements, and successes in Oslo. Life is a kind of compromise for the human beings, so they should accept this reality, too. Apart from this, their current Hindu culture limits them as a religious minority group. As said by the informants, they notice some drawbacks in the everyday life like lack of a Nepali temple to visit and practice the rituals, coming under the minority group, overlooked by the governmental agencies, inadequacy of speaking the Norwegian language, difficulty of getting a part time job during the study, uncertainty of getting a skilled job

after the study, unavailability of shops to purchase some cultural and religious stuffs, and acceptance of the cultural differences, which consequently keep them aside and stop from being recognized. When people can freely share their feelings, sufferings, and happiness with one another in the society then there really exists fraternity, co-existence, mutual relationship, harmony, and co-operation. Understanding and proximity bring the people together and make them feel dignified and satisfied in the society as its responsible members. To make it more understandable, I would like to segregate the Nepalese Hindus in four types, which are as follows: traditional, conservative, modern, and religious Hindus.

5.8.1 Traditional Hindus

Regarding the traditional Hindus, I would like to talk about the traditional thoughts at first. As it is already presented in the data presentation chapter, there are various ways to adhere and practice the religion along with its culture. The followers believe, define, and practice their religion differently in Hinduism. Some of the interviewees say that Hinduism is the oldest and most liberal religion having a diversity of ideas on spirituality and traditions. Some of my informants believed in the traditional concepts of Hinduism. Some of them say that its main doctrine believes in re-birth and there is the sole concept of heaven and hell in Hinduism. They believe the concept of hell and heaven since they have heard it from their parents or ancestors. They firmly believe that they will go to heaven if they are right, honest, kind, and helpful. At the same time, they believe that they will go to hell if they are wrong, dishonest, and sinner. Therefore, they follow the religion as a human discipline and might transfer the same ideas on their children.

5.8.2 Conservative Hindus

Some of my informants are found traditionally conservative. They believe more on the older values than the present realities. For instance, they believe that the so-called lower caste people are untouchables, thereby they should not be treated equally and justly. In the past, the people from low caste were almost forbidden to touch the food of the high caste people and they were not allowed to enter into the temple either. They used to be dominated by the so-called high caste people in Nepal. Now it is punishable there in Nepal if someone discriminates or intends to discriminate on the basis of birth, sex, age, and color of the people. Furthermore, lower caste people used not to be accepted as a daughter in law or son in law if they were married to the upper caste people. Even if the situation is changed now, there still exist some extremists who try

to exploit the people having such conservative thoughts. Truly speaking, my informants are not that much conservative, but a few of them are still conservative in regard to females' menstruation cycle. Those informants still doubt in the biological processes which comes under the conservative thoughts. They think that those females should not be allowed to worship the deities when they are menstruating.

5.8.3 Modern Hindus

Modernity can be described as attaching new and contemporary, putting away the older norms and values. Some of my informants are modern Hindus who reject the so-called older thoughts. They believe in the present or recent happenings in terms of religion and culture. Those informants reject the conservative thoughts regarding the females' menstruation. Such informants believe that females' menstruation is a natural biological process. It is not the sign of impurity for them. They might have been conscious because of the medical knowledge. So, the concept of modernism is often used to reject the outdated ideas and traditions. In this context, modernity is intertwined with the values of equality, freedom, feminism, and democracy. Democracy is also thought to be the modern concept which inspires people to raise their voice against exploitation, inequality, and discrimination (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/pankaj-jain-phd/hinduism-and-modernity_b_910041.html). In addition, philanthropy, honesty, righteousness, and simplicity are considered the key points to some of my informants which signify modernity in Hinduism. As the modern Hindus, they believe in philanthropic activities and equality. In regard to modern ideas and knowledge, they focus more on generosity and fraternity.

5.8.4 Religious Hindus

Some of my informants are more religious. They are deeply moralistic and believe in the Hindu religion. They believe more on the religious activities and thoughts. Those type of Hindus believe more in *puja* practices and spiritual matter. They strongly believe in the existence of God. Further, they believe that they can easily reach the God by practicing *puja* and being religious. In addition, they have the firm belief that God is most powerful who controls the human beings. They primarily give importance to an idol while worshipping the deities. Idols are honored and worshipped as if they are the real deities especially by the religious Hindus. Comparatively, religious Hindus spend more time to practice the rituals. Those Hindus often listen to religious music or *bhajans* (any song with religious theme or spiritual ideas) and get inspired to perform *puja* practices. To be able to perform *puja*, the religious Hindus mostly

require incense, milk, flower, ghee, fruits, uncooked rice, and holy scripture. Even if there are found the Sri Lankan Hindu temple and Indian Hindu temple, the Nepalese Hindus do not find a Nepali Hindu temple in Oslo. All in all, many of the informants see the necessity of a Nepali Hindu temple in Oslo. As a common fact, almost all the informants celebrate the Nepalese festivals as an integral part of Hindu culture.

5.9 Data Conclusion

As a researcher, I will highlight the findings of this academic study. The Nepalese Hindus in Oslo have been the sole concern of this thesis writing. To figure out the richer and deeper understanding of their way of living, opportunities, challenges, motivations, and differences in religious as well as cultural practices, I have used the qualitative research method and gone for the field study. It is hereby declared that this analysis is based on the qualitative research method and fieldwork.

Based on the data presentation chapter, it can be said that those who follow the religion practically, those who belong to religion spiritually, and those who claim to be Hindus without practicing any rituals, are all known as Hindus in the Nepalese context in Oslo. It is not essential to visit a temple in Hinduism to be Hindus. But of course, temple has a greater importance to carry on rituals and practice the religion. Since there is no any Nepali Hindu temple in the city, there is a high demand of it among the Nepalese Hindus. Nepali Hindu temple stands for their emotional attachment, feelings, affinity, and identity in the context of Oslo. However, those minority groups manage to live a normal life keeping the religious and cultural values even without having a Nepali temple since they have learnt to adjust themselves in this multicultural and multinational city. After the data are discussed, I would like to use the word compromise with respect to the Nepalese Hindus. Being abroad, they seem to compromise with a various kind of situations to go on according to time. Even if they come from the same country and follow the same religion, the ways they practice the religion and define the religion are now changed in the context of Oslo. It is hereby assumed that they are strongly influenced by the ideas and theories of Hinduism, migration, diaspora, and globalization. Being abroad, they have learnt to live relying on themselves emphasizing the individual choices and feel no any inequalities between the people in nature and behavior.

To my respondents, Hindu religion along with its culture is a prime concern. The issue of identity has been focused and emphasized centrally. The common Nepalese culture, Hindu religion, tradition, language, cuisine, and festivals have attached and tightened them both emotionally and collectively. Importantly, it can be said that the interviewees have had various ideas and perceptions about the same religion and culture they follow. Further, they have defined that this religion is the most flexible religion which does not demand any rigid practices just to be Hindus. The gist of their statements is clear and that states the following idea: anyone can be a Hindu without even visiting a temple and following the rituals. Nevertheless, they solely focus on the importance and establishment of a Nepali Hindu temple in Oslo. Likewise, they raise a question of identity.

Generally, when people move to a new place there they need to adjust according to the time and situation. Everything is new unless it is tested and experienced. In the context, my informants are migrants in Oslo who are emotionally attached and affiliated to their homeland Nepal. As it is already mentioned that Oslo is a more multicultural city, there are certainly many different communities with different backgrounds such as, religious, cultural, lingual, and ethnic. Being in Oslo, the Nepalese Hindus try to follow their religion and culture same like in Nepal and at the same time, they try to adapt the non-Nepalese culture. In this respect, they can neither be absolutely Nepalese nor Norwegians at all. This is a kind of dilemma in their concrete identity. After all, they learn to be adjusted with a different social atmosphere, community, and culture in Oslo, Norway. However, it seems that some of them are used to the new situation and environment. Further, they see the strength in unity, harmony, co-existence, and mutual relationship among each other in the society. Eventually, I will write the conclusion of the thesis in the next chapter which is the final part of the research project.

Chapter Six

6. Conclusion

The research has thoroughly prioritized the Nepalese Hindu migrants living in Oslo. The research has traced the way they understand Hinduism, the significance of religious identity, and the reflection of their migrant status in the context. Necessarily, the research has gone through the perception, experiences, challenges, differences, and the current practices of the informants. In the sense, it has presented the relevant facts related to Nepal and Oslo in the concerned issues respectively.

The social, cultural, religious, and geographical differences between Nepal and Norway have also influenced the subject matter of the text because of which there are variations in life style, ritual practices, definitions, and interests among the informants. Being in Oslo, the Nepalese Hindu migrants have acquired, missed, struggled, and experienced different aspects of life. As an example, they have achieved what they had desired before, but at the same time, they have missed their family, friends, and religious environment. Likewise, they have struggled to settle down and remain religious in Oslo, but at the same time, they have experienced multiculturalism and segregation. Particularly, the students and their dependents are worried about the visa renewal process. According to them, visa renewal process sometimes takes quite a long time and it is not hundred percent sure if they get residence permit again, which often creates a problem for them to concentrate on the studies and continue the religion as it needs to be. Although this is not the case in every informant's life, it has somehow affected them to be religious abroad. After all, the Nepalese Hindu migrants have different aspirations, motivations, and learning being in the multicultural Oslo. However, they have also contributed to make Oslo more multi ethnic and multicultural capital city by introducing the distinct Nepalese Hindu culture and religion.

Concretely, Hinduism is the oldest and liberal religion which does not necessarily demand any obligatory practices at all, rather it offers various ways to follow. According to my respondents, it possible to follow the religion without even visiting a temple and being spiritually motivated. On the basis of their perceptions and experiences, the following ideas can be listed:

1. Hinduism believes in the co-existence, equality, humanity, philanthropy, righteousness, and mutual respect regardless of some conservative beliefs and traditional thoughts.

2. It is still possible to follow and practice the faith with the help of Google, You Tube channel and other social media. In regard to this, they get the required information, idea, hymns, and images of the deities in the internet.

3. After they are able to perform *puja* practices and follow their faith with the help of these digital techniques and technology, they can be called digital Hindus.

On the other hand, the Nepalese Hindus have noticed some challenges to remain religiously Hindus and protect their religious identity. They are different in terms of nationality, religion, culture, tradition, language, dresses, and ethnicity amongst others in Oslo, which have indeed given them a distinct identity. As the multicultural and multi ethnic city, Oslo has a number of people from different countries, religions, cultures, ethnicities, and other backgrounds. Among many different religious communities and nationalities, the Nepalese Hindus are also the ones. Regarding the same faith and its followers, there are found Sri Lankan Hindus and Indian Hindus. Moreover, they have established their own temples in two different places. For more information, *Sivasubramaniyar Alayam* is the Sri Lankan Hindu temple which is located at Ammerud, Oslo and *Sanatan Mandir Sabha* is an Indian Hindu temple which is located at Slemmestad, Røyken. Relatively, the Nepalese Hindus are distinct from the Sri Lankan Hindus and Indian Hindus even if they also belong to the same faith. Both communities are different from the Nepalese Hindu communities in terms of language, nationality, rituals, dresses, and foods. Therefore, the Nepalese Hindus prefer to have their own temple, wherein they can interact with each other in their native language, listen to Nepali *bhajans* (any song with religious theme or spiritual ideas), and share their sorrows and happiness. Overall, all of them are known as migrants in Oslo. This is why, all of them come under the same umbrella word and that is the Nepalese Hindus who, are in fact, a religious minority group. Actually, they are different from others because of their distinct nationality and religious faith. In Hinduism, a temple is often regarded as the holy place and center of worshipping the God, so that they have pointed out the importance and establishment of a Nepali Hindu temple in the city. Noticeably, the Nepalese Hindus have well understood the sense of group membership to this faith.

Literally, the Nepalese Hindus have been able to live in Oslo with many migrant people from different parts of the world. After they left their homeland to live in Oslo, they have faced some

difficulties and challenges. On the basis of the presented data, the following reflections of theirs can be listed:

1. Their annual festivals have not been noticed and prioritized.
2. There is not a Nepali Hindu temple to worship the gods and goddess.
3. They are marginalized, so that their Nepalese Hindu identity is somehow threatened amongst others in Oslo.

Literally, the Nepalese Hindus do not, in general, feel comfortable to visit the Sri Lankan Hindu temple and Indian Hindu temple due to different traditions, temple styles, rituals, language, and their close interdependence between the religion and ethnicity. Many aspects of both temples and traditions emerge external to the Nepalese Hindus. In the diasporic community, a temple often operates the home culture. After all, the consequence of all this in the Hindu diaspora in Oslo is that there are three segregated forms of Hinduism, the Sri Lankan Tamil Hinduism, Indian Hinduism, and the Nepalese Hinduism.

I hereby believe that the research project has justified the research problems in a proper way. Remarkably, the Nepalese Hindus have also contributed to make the society a better one even if they are a few in number. Every single individual and community can make a difference and bring a change in the society if they are approached and encouraged properly. Subsequently, I have believed that this research will give an insight, knowledge, and deeper understanding of the Nepalese Hinduism in the Norwegian context.

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