

















































































































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](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.

## 7. Bibliography

Agnew, Vijay (Ed. 2005). *Diaspora, Memory and Identity: A Search for Home*. Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press.

Alfonso, Carolin, Kokot, Waltraud and Tölölyan, Khachig (Eds. 2004). *Diaspora, Identity and Religion: New Directions in Theory and Research*. New York: Routledge.

Ampuja, Marko (2012). *Theorizing Globalization: A Critique of the Mediatization of Social Theory*. The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden.

Beyer, Peter (2000). *Religion and Globalization* (Reprinted). London, Thousand Oaks, and New Delhi: SAGE Publications.

Bhandari, Surendra (2014). *Self-Determination and Constitution Making in Nepal: Constituent Assembly, Inclusion and Ethnic Federalism*. Singapore, New York and London: Springer.

Blommaert, Jan and Jie, Dong (2010). *Ethnography Fieldwork, A Beginner's Guide*. London: Channel View Publications Ltd.

Bonifacio, Glenda Tibe and Angeles, Vivienne, SM (Eds. 2010). *Gender, Religion, And Migration: Pathways of Integration*. New York and Toronto: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Brockington, John (1992). *Hinduism and Christianity*. London: The Macmillan Press Ltd.

Bryman, Alan (2012). *Social Research Methods* (Fourth Edition). New York: Oxford University Press.

Castles, Stephen, Haas Hein De, and Miller, Mark J. (2014). *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World* (Fifth Edition). London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Corvellec, Herve (Ed. 2013). *What is Theory? Answers from the Social and Cultural Sciences*. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press.

Dogra, Ramesh Chander and Dogra, Urmila (2006). *Let's Know Hinduism, The Oldest Religion of Infinite Adaptability and Diversity* (Second Edition). New Delhi: Star Publications Pvt. Ltd.

Friedman, Jonathan (1994). *Cultural Identity and Global Process*. London, California and New Delhi: SAGE Publications.

Goddard, Wayne and Melville, Stuart (2001). *Research Methodology, An Introduction* (Second Edition). Cape Town: Juta and Co. Ltd.

Gressgård, Randi (2010). *Multicultural Dialogue, Dilemmas, Paradoxes, Conflicts*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.

- Hammersley, Martyn and Atkinson, Paul (2007). *Ethnography Principles in Practices* (Third Edition). London and New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.
- Haight, John F. (1990). *What Is Religion?: An Introduction*. New York and New Jersey: Paulist Press.
- Hiebert, Paul G. (2009). *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change* (Second Print). The USA: Baker Publishing Group.
- Hopkins, A. G. (Ed. 2002). *Globalization in World History*. London and New York: W. W. Norton and Company.
- Kalman, Bobbie (2009). *What is Culture?*. Ontario and New York: Crabtree Publishing Company.
- Kenny, Kevin (2013). *Diaspora: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- King, Nigel and Horrocks, Christine (2010). *Interviews In Qualitative Research*. London, California, New Delhi and Singapore: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- King, Russell (2012). *Theories and Typologies of Migration: An Overview and A Primer*. Sweden: Malmo University.
- Kirk, Jerome and Miller, Marc L. (1986). *Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Knott, Kim (2016). *Hinduism: A Very Short Introduction* (Second Edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Koser, Khalid (2007). *International Migration: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kumar Pratap P. (Ed. 2013). *Contemporary Hinduism*. Durham and Bristol: Acumen Publishing Limited.
- Lane, Jan Erik (2008). *Globalization: The Juggernaut of the 21st Century*. Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company.
- Lindlof, Thomas R. and Taylor, Bryan C. (2010). *Qualitative Communication Research Methods* (Third Edition). California: SAGE Publications.
- Magnusson, Eva and Marecek, Jeanne (2015). *Doing Interview-Based Qualitative Research: A Learner's Guide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Organ, Troy Wilson (1974). *Hinduism: Its Historical Development*. New York: Barron's Educational Series, Inc.

Rafael, Eliezer Ben and Sternberg, Yitzhak (Eds. 2009). *Transnationalism: Diasporas and the Advent of a New (Dis)Order*. The Netherlands: Brill.

Sarma, Deepak (Ed. 2008). *Hinduism: A Reader*. Malden, Oxford and Victoria: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Scholte, Jan Aart (2005). *Globalization a Critical Introduction* (Second Edition). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Sen, K. M. (1967). *Hinduism: The World's Oldest Faith* (Reprinted). Middlesex, Baltimore and Victoria: Penguin Books Ltd.

Silverman, David (Ed. 2011). *Qualitative Research* (Third Edition). London, California, New Delhi, and Singapore: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Steger, Manfred B. (2013). *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction* (Third Edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Vaus, David de. (2005). *Research Design in Social Research* (Reprinted). London, California, and New Delhi: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Whelpton, John (2015). *A History of Nepal* (Reprinted). Delhi: Cambridge University Press.

Wilkins, W. J. (2003). *Hindu Gods and Goddesses*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc.

Zaehner, R. C. (1966). *Hinduism* (Second Edition). London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Zahn, Margaret A, Brownstein, Henry H. and Jackson, Shelly L. (Eds. 2004). *Violence: From Theory to Research*. London and New York: Rutledge Taylor and Francis Group.



### **7.1 Website Sources:**

<http://eschooltoday.com/migration/what-is-migration.html> - Internet accessed on 17/04/2017.

<http://hinduismfacts.org/hindu-customs-and-traditions/> - Internet accessed on 07/05/2017.

<http://www.diasporaalliance.org/what-is-a-diaspora/> - Internet accessed on 18/04/2017.

<http://www.hinduwebsite.com/puja.asp> - Internet accessed on 06/05/2017.

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/pankaj-jain-phd/hinduism-and-modernity\\_b\\_910041.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/pankaj-jain-phd/hinduism-and-modernity_b_910041.html) - Internet accessed on 13/05/2017.

<http://www.livescience.com/21478-what-is-culture-definition-of-culture.html> - Internet accessed on 21/03/ 2017.

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/> - Internet accessed on 03/05/2017.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom\\_of\\_religion\\_in\\_Nepal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_religion_in_Nepal)) - Internet accessed on 10/04/2017.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puja\\_\(Hinduism\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puja_(Hinduism)) - Internet accessed on 21/03/2017.