

## Reflection of Cultural Crisis in Bhutanese Nepali Diasporic Poetry

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### Abstract

This article has discussed how Bhutanese Nepali diasporic poetry has depicted cultural crises of the community settled in Europe, America and Oceania. Twenty one poems composed by Bhutanese Nepali diasporic poets from 2009 to 2019 have been selected through purposive sampling and their content analysis has been conducted with the focus on their themes. The study has found that the Bhutanese Nepali culture has been in crisis in the diaspora. The community is working to preserve it; but many socio-economic conditions do not favour them. They find problems in celebrating their festivals, eating their food, observing the rituals, using language, wearing traditional Nepali dress, and following their work pattern. With these difficulties and being in the minority marginal position in the host land, they find their identity in crisis resulting into emotional insecurity. It is believed that this article will contribute to the study of diasporic culture and the problems of the transnational migrant communities.

*Keywords:* Bhutanese Nepali diasporic community, crisis, culture, emotion, identity, diasporic poetry

### Introduction

Bhutanese Nepali Diaspora has been undergoing cultural crisis from the beginning of its formation. When the people of Nepali origin settled in Bhutan in a considerable number by the end of the nineteenth century, they had to work hard to continue the Hindu Nepali culture they had been accustomed with in Nepal. As they were settled in the southern plain of Bhutan, they did not have to be assimilated with the people of Tibetan origin who resided in northern Bhutan and ruled the whole nation. But slowly and gradually they had cultural confrontation with the ruling groups that were non-Hindu, non-Nepali. In the third quarter of the twentieth century, the one country one culture policy of the Bhutanese king highly impacted on the Nepali community there. The cultural crisis of the Bhutanese Nepali Diaspora started from that point of their history.

The cultural crisis grew into cultural clash; and finally about one hundred thousand Bhutanese citizens of Nepali origin were banished in the early 1990s. They had to stay in Nepal as refugees for about two decades before they were resettled in the West. The serious crises for

the preservation of their culture started in the refugee camps in eastern Nepal. Their culture i.e. the “shared and negotiated values and norms” (Gsir & Elsa, 2015, p. 7) did not get an appropriate atmosphere for its observance. Their cultural collective self that is made up of “shared beliefs, values, rituals and skills, as well as group membership determined by ethnicity, language, ideology” could not get the chance of fostering. Their ongoing self (personal memories, traits) and ‘the sensorimotor self’ (sense of agency, sense of embodiment)” (Prinz, 2019, p. 3) also got into troubles. When the question of their physical existence was the prominent issue of the time, the preservation and promotion of culture was a matter of secondary importance.

The situation continued even after they were settled in the West. The new atmosphere for adaptation and the marginalized position in a society that follows different mores created many hindrances in the observance of their culture. In this transnational moment of the globalized world “characterized by the hypermobility of cultures through migration and the virtual or material circulation of culturally different networks of meanings” (Gsir & Elsa, 2015, p. 25), the purity of any culture is pushed into crisis. Prinz (2019) claimed: “In a simple immigration game it is shown that immigrants may prefer to live rather in diaspora communities than to integrate into the host countries’ culture” (p. 1). They love to consume and use “cultural products and commodities associated with their country of origin”. It is primarily the case with their “food, clothes, various objects used on an everyday basis (dishes, carpets, cleaning items, bedding, napery, body products etc.), and also artistic products (music, movies, books, newspapers)” (Gsir & Elsa, 2015, p. 17). But all these are unavailable in the host land. And in case they are available, the social atmosphere in a new land may not support their uses. Such a condition also creates cultural crisis for the migrants.

Migration and diasporization are connected with the culture in the same level as they are connected with the issue of material existence. Prinz (2019) claimed that “migration is not only an economic issue, but also a social and a cultural one” (p. 2). As “diasporas are large agglomerations of people with very similar cultural and ethnic backgrounds who segregate themselves *on purpose*” [emphasis original] (p. 7), they are hyper-conscious about their culture and identity. They settle in a new land with certain cultural baggage or “a cultural capital which they may wish to maintain in some way” (Gsir & Elsa, 2015, p. 7). Such a baggage includes “a common moral culture” (Prinz, 2019, p. 4) and “the entire range of its activities, conceived as a more or less systematic whole” (Rader, 1947, p. 262) of the community. It also encompasses “a person’s religion, *r*, . . . language, *l*, and education or skills, *e*” (Prinz, 2019, p. 7). But in a new land, it is difficult to maintain all of these aspects resulting into the crisis of their culture.

Gsir and Elsa (2015) referred to A. Sayad (2014) to discuss the features of an immigrant culture that is “perceived through clothes, language, gesture, body hexis, food practices, religious practices, social system relations of migrants”. They argued that migrants’ often refer to “a deprived condition in which the manifestation of the culture of the country of origin was not necessarily valued and was even regarded with hostility because it was misunderstood”. In such a case,

the culture of migrants’ country of origin often acts as a dominated culture toward a dominating culture . . . because the country of origin occupies a “minority” position in relation to a “majority” one. Furthermore, the cultures of migrants’ country of origin also seek to take relational positions to each other, competing as migrants try to secure a proper status within society. (p. 17)

In such a use, culture “is analysed as one of the tools that both migrants and countries of origin resort to in order to maintain reciprocal ties after migration”. In this context, immigrants’ culture is observed on three levels: “the level of migrants’ everyday practices (including the use of the origin language); the policy level (pertaining to both diaspora and integration); and the association level (cultural centres in particular)” (Gsir & Elsa, 2015, p. 5). But as all these aspects cannot get a free play in diasporic set up, the diasporans’ culture is pushed into crisis.

Bhutanese Nepali Diaspora is an exemplary case of Nepali Diaspora. It has undergone all types of cultural crises discussed above. Moreover, there are plenty of literary creations that reflect these conditions and issues. Poetry is one of the literary genres that deal with such issues. So, this study intends to discuss how Bhutanese Nepali diasporic poetry reflects the cultural crisis of the community. In the analysis, this study has tried to answer the following research questions:

- What cultural crises of Bhutanese Nepali Diaspora are reflected in its poetry?
- Why are such crises created as shown in their poetic creations?

### **Method**

#### **Materials and Process**

This study is an analysis of the poems composed by Bhutanese Nepali diasporic poets living in Europe, America and Oceania. The poems are selected with purposive sampling method. The twenty one poems that were composed in the Bhutanese Nepali diaspora from 2009 to 2019 and have the theme connected with cultural aspects of their existence have been selected for interpretation. Analysis of the thematic content of the selected poems has been done. Every poem has not been discussed in details; instead, the theme of the poem is used to

support the argument of the article. And the lines that are rich in this connection have been freely translated by this researcher and used as quotations from the poems.

### **Migration and Cultural Crisis**

Cultural crisis of a diaspora is connected with its identity crisis. In this case, cultural identity is “a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as of ‘being’”. Both of the pre-existing condition of the migrant community and their aspiration to be established in the new land contribute to the creation of their crisis. Thus, their identity “belongs to the future as much to the past”; and it comes “from somewhere” with histories, personal and collective positions along with “the narratives of the past” (Hall, 2006, p. 435). Migrants’ “weak or deprived socio-economic position in the new society of residence” adds some negative effects. Similarly, they “may experience a social downgrade in comparison to the social position they had in the society of origin” (Gsir & Elsa, 2015, p. 25). It naturally makes them be emotional about the crisis.

Migrants’ socio-cultural kitbag also plays its role in the creation of such a crisis. Gsir & Elsa (2015) claimed that “migrants themselves refer to distinct and unchangeable values and norms” (p. 11). It adds to two types of crisis in their lives: survival or existential crisis and axiological or value crisis (Bidney 543). Once the migrants grow into a diaspora, there develop “parallel societies” (Prinz, 2019, p. 2): one, the mainstream society of the host land; and, the other, the diaspora that strives to continue as a different community there. Here comes the issue of ethno-nationality that takes ethnicity as “a common heritage shared by a particular group and will include history, language, rituals, preference for music and food.” (Bhugra, 2004, p. 133). It shows that they exist at two places at the same time: “first, where they come and second, where they now live” (Gsir & Elsa, 2015, p. 4). This creates division within the mentality of the community.

Such a mentality on the one hand and unfavourable cultural atmosphere on the other makes a diasporic society miserable. It leads to their existential crisis: “Crisis in the society occurs when the amount of misery, injustice and conflict is no longer reasonably well adjusted to the potentialities of” the society (Rader, 1947, p. 263). Such a period of adjustment is very swift; so crisis is natural in such a situation (p. 264). This condition leads to the contrast between “the potential and the actual, the ideal and the fact, the ‘ought’ and the ‘is,’ the ideological verbalization and the actual behavior” (p. 265). Thus, crisis of some kind seems to be natural in a growing diasporic society.

There are a number of factors that define cultural crisis. They primarily are “its causes, its formal structure, and its relation to human, natural, and technological resources”. And “[i]n

terms of form or organization, a crisis is a highly dynamic condition of disequilibrium” (Rader, 1947, p. 266). There is a chance of the loss of social health (p. 268):

When there is a grave disturbance of equilibrium, such that the various cultural factors develop at different rates and with slight coordination, there is a cultural crisis. Moreover, in such a dynamic state of disequilibrium, the future is uncertain and men are challenged by danger and opportunity. (Rader, 1947, p. 269)

It is necessary to find and evaluate “both internal and external causes” of such disequilibrium to find and analyze the causes, conditions and consequences of crisis.

### **Discussion**

This section has presented the analysis of the selected poems in terms of their theme of cultural crisis. It has used the idea that “[e]ach migrant abroad is potentially a cultural representative of the culture(s) of the country of origin through his/her daily behaviour and cultural consumptions” (Gsir & Elsa, 2015, p. 16). So the poets and their expressions are taken to be the representative case of the common feeling of the community. Gautam (2018) claimed that there is a crisis “for the first generation immigrants to go through challenges maintaining family traditions, language, and culture among their second generation children and grandchildren in the new country” (para. 9). Such cultural crises can be observed in the everyday activities and concern of the community:

The collective culture attributed to the “diversity” is often made more accessible not only through migrants’ daily performance of the practices linked to their country of origin (language, dress codes, food preparation, religious practices etc.), but also through the promotion of certain cultural activities (related to art products such as songs, theatre plays, music works, paintings etc.) whose access is often simpler and more affordable compared to the events of the mainstream society. (Gsir & Elsa, 2015, p. 18)

Adhikari (2018) in his poem summarizes the cultural crisis the Bhutanese Nepali diasporic community has been undergoing. The poem describes how the people of the community are lost in the mere materialistic gains. The poet argues that they have forgotten the eastern spirituality and so they have started searching for the joy in the night clubs, instead. He writes: “It is the time when the ritual, culture and language have been lost/But the people do not worry; instead, they feel happy and joyous/The talks between the grandparents and grandchildren have been lost” (ll. 5-7). As a result “the tree of disfigurement and absurdity has grown” (l. 9). The poet complains that the youths have forgotten their duties towards culture

and future at the same time. They are content with the immediate pleasure. Adhikari argues that there lies the reason behind the growth of cultural crisis. D. Siwa (2018) also expresses the similar concern: “In the foreign land and its new circumstance/The language and dress ups are uncared for and in confusion” (ll. 1-2). The cultural crises are observed in the use and desires regarding festivals, food, religion, dress ups, symbols, language, connectivity, work; and all of them affect the Bhutanese Nepali diasporic people’s emotion and identity.

### **Festivals and Food in Crisis**

The poets have expressed their concern with the lack of the mood of celebration of the festivals in the diasporic set ups. Dhakal (2010) remembers the exuberance of the festival of Tihar back in Bhutan. He cannot find the music of the *chyabrun* and the *madal*, the songs and dances in the *Deusi* with blessings, the fragrance and shine of the garlands woven with the fresh flowers of different types, and the beauty and cleanliness of the yard smeared green with fresh cow dung. Regmi (2010) also is nostalgic of these scenes and activities. In the same way, Khadka (2010) misses the *linge ping*, hectic preparations, worship of different gods and goddesses and lively celebration of the Dashain back in Bhutan. Now, in the West, they simply draw the picture of all these activities and explain them to their children with the hope that they would at least know their tradition though only in the theoretical terms. The shock of being away from these life promoting festivities is so deep that poet Gautam (2012) celebrates all the festivals in the dream. The Dashain and the Tihar have been mixed up in his dream.

Nepal (2014) shows, in his poem, how it is quite difficult to celebrate such festivals in the diaspora. They cannot celebrate the festivals with all the vigour and fun there. Instead, many of the Bhutanese Nepali diasporic people have to be content just in the memory of Nepali festivals: “We are rich in religion, culture and festivals/We are remembering it living at a little distance today” (ll. 1-2). So, on the day of Maghe Sankranti (the first day of the month of Magh, the tenth month as per the Nepali calendar), they remember their bath in the freezing cold water from a sacred river in Bhutan. After the bath, with their body trembling with the cold, they used to worship the god. But in the USA, they take bath in warm water and just remember the original rituals of the day back in their homeland. The case of celebrating many other festivals is the same. This description shows the growing crisis in the continuation of their tradition and culture in the diaspora.

Mishra (2009), a resettled journalist in the USA, expressed the similar emotional concern regarding the celebration of the festival of Dashain: “I have begun missing my parents and relatives back in camps. . . . Early in the morning today, I was a bit frustrated”. Then, he promised not to leave any stone unturned for “the protection and preservation of Hindu culture,

particularly those we Nepali-ethnic community practice” (para. 3). The crisis has also motivated the people committed for the preservation of their culture.

Another aspect of any culture closely connected with the festivals is food. The migrants have a sort of fear of contamination “in particular in the case of food” (Gsir & Elsa, 2015, p. 17) in the host land. Some poems on the Bhutanese Nepali Diaspora have seriously dealt with the crisis in regard with their food. In the West, they miss the food items they were habituated to eat in Bhutan and Nepal. They remember it mostly in connection with the festivals they celebrate. The beaten rice consumed in the Dashain as special food and the round holed bread in the Tihar are the food items they mostly miss. Gautam (2012), in his dream, finds the scene of the preparation of these food items in the festivals of the Dashain and the Tihar. But he finds the dough for the bread is not appropriate in the host land. As a result the bread of standard quality is not prepared. This situation results into the sadness in the face of Shobha didi, the cook.

This is a symbolic scene, too. It means that though the Bhutanese Nepali diasporans want to prepare the food and celebrate their festivals and protect the culture in the West, the situation there does not support them. The ‘dough’ here connotes the raw material or the basic condition of making something. If the raw material itself or the basic condition itself is not appropriate, the preparation of things or life cannot be done appropriately. Gautam writes:

I saw around  
 No round holed bread was prepared there  
 No garland was woven  
 Neither was the beaten rice prepared  
 Nor were the children happy  
 Nor did the flowers smile. (ll. 51-56)

Thus, this poem shows the disillusionment of the community in terms of the food items they love, but cannot prepare in the diaspora.

Rai (2015) remembers the food they used to take in Bhutan. In the marketplace, they used to enjoy *sekuwa* and millet beer. He misses that combination so much as it is not found in the host land. P. Siwa (2018) also shows the contrast between the two generations in terms of their preference regarding food. The Bhutan-born generation loves the traditional Bhutanese Nepali homemade food; whereas, their children born in the West prefer the readymade western food items such as pizza and burger. This contrast indicates the depleting love for the

traditional food; and with it the love for the traditional culture is also depleting. Such depletion further indicates the crisis in the preservation and continuation of the Bhutanese Nepali culture in the diaspora.

### **Religion in Crisis**

One major aspect of any cultural collective is its religion. Almost all of the Bhutanese Nepali diasporans are the Hindus. Their cultural mores are also based on Hinduism. Their festivals, food, dress ups and different symbols are also connected with this religion. For such religious practices, there is a need of social and environmental circumstances. The poets have lamented how it is difficult for the community to observe these practices in the diaspora.

Dahal (2009) expresses his worry about the lack of atmosphere to celebrate Hindu festivals in the USA. His poem deals with the day of *Saraswati Pooja*. In Hindu mythology, Saraswati is the goddess of knowledge and wisdom. Hindus celebrate *Saraswati Pooja* [Worship of Saraswati] on one auspicious day in the month of February. Back in Bhutan and Nepal, schools, colleges and other knowledge-resource related organizations celebrate this day with certain exuberance. Students and teachers have the photo of Saraswati hung on their walls of the study. So, from early morning of the day, they worship Saraswati from their homes to schools and colleges. But in the American Bhutanese Nepali Diaspora there is no availability of all these atmospheres for the worship. So, the speaker of Dahal's poem laments: "There is not a single photo of the Saraswati in my room/Where I would offer a bouquet of flower each morning/And pray" (l. 1-3). As a result, he forgets even the day of Saraswati Pooja or the Vasanta Panchami. But when he reaches to the river bed where the ducks fly, he remembers the vehicle of the Saraswati. Similarly, when he sees the white blooms of cotton plants, he remembers her clean white cloth. In the same way, when he meets a folk singer playing the *sarangi*, he remembers the music of Saraswati's *veena*. The poet becomes nostalgic, but cannot celebrate his favourite festival. His religious belief is in crisis.

Dhamala (2017) shows the contrast between his mother's worship of the god back in Bhutan and his worship in the West. His mother used to carry "plateful of red *akshata*/ Flower and eaves of faith/And water-pot of purity" (ll. 2-4) and used to go to the temple every morning to worship the god. She used to perform some specific activities to complete the daily worship. And finally, that would give her complete satisfaction. But in the Australia, there is no chance for him to complete all these rituals. They just have a photo of their favourite god at the maximum, no temple to visit for worship. They neither have enough space for worshipping the gods nor enough time nor necessary materials for the worship. They can simply respect the god



and go for work. It shows that their religious rituals are getting into crisis. It is a serious cultural crisis.

### **Dress and Symbols in Crisis**

Dress also marks culture and identity. The ‘Nepali *topi*’ [Nepali cap] and ‘*daura* and *suruwal*’ are two indispensable ingredients of Nepali dress code. Many poets in the Nepali Diaspora have used them as cultural symbols and Nepali identity markers. Bajgain (2013) describes the ‘Nepali *dhaka topi*’ as a symbol of Nepaliness. But sadly its use is depleting in the diaspora. So, the poet appeals the people around him not to compel him (symbolically the Nepali community) “to remove the Nepali topi” (l. 4) because removing it means removing Nepali identity. Instead, it is necessary to preserve it for the future generations. D. Siwa (2018) is also worried about the misuse of dress and the young generations’ disregard to the Nepali dress code:

Let’s not talk about the dress here

Every cloth has many holes all over

Big and small holes to expose the body

If asked why so, the answer is: ‘it is the fashion’. (ll. 6-9)

Such a situation is the result of the decreasing value of the Nepali dress among the youths in the Bhutanese Nepali Diaspora. It indicates the growing cultural crisis.

Niraula (2018) compares the dress up of the Bhutanese Nepali young ladies in the present day USA and dress ups of the ladies of the same age group in Bhutan a few decades back. Married young women back in Bhutan then used to fill their brow with vermilion, used to wear leg rings and bangles that produce music, long girdle, nose tops, the *pote* and other ornaments hung front from the neck. The poet claims that such a dress up was the cause of their beautiful appearance: “What beautiful fairies they used to look like!” (l. 13) in such cultural dress. But now in the West, the young ladies argue that it is disgraceful to put on the clothes that cover the whole body. Feeling irritated, the poet asks: “What type of prestige it is that grows when one is naked!” (l. 20). This shows how the traditional Bhutanese Nepali dress is in crisis in the diaspora.

Dress is also used in many Bhutanese Nepali poems as the symbols of the cultural identity. Dhimal (2009) uses his grandpa’s coat as a symbol of their identity. He describes the fate of an age old coat that “covered many suns and rains/That crossed many Springs” (ll. 28-29). It was a witness of the burning of their house i.e. the Bhutanese Nepali community. Even

when the house crumbled into pieces the coat was still there. But it was only the appearance: “It was just a coat/Its inner pockets were all empty” (ll. 27-35). The poet describes that finally, the coat falls on to the floor and gets deformed. Here, this coat symbolizes the distinct and continued Nepali identity even when they had to bear the brunt during their history of settlement, stay in and expulsion from Bhutan. By now the inner original content is missing; what remains now is only the appearance! Even the appearance has been deformed with the storm of expulsion and resettlement.

Bhanubhakta is one common symbol of Nepali linguistic and creative identity across the world of the people of Nepali origin including the Bhutanese Nepali Diaspora. His birthday is celebrated among the Nepalis all over the world to mark the value of Nepali language. Rayaka (2013) remembers his lost nation on the occasion of Bhanu Jayanti: “Bhanu, today, your birthday/Reminded me my nation snatched away from me” (ll. 1-2). It shows how language is a marker of national and cultural (ethno-cultural) identity. Rayaka mentions how every of Bhanu’s birthday reconnects the Bhutanese people to Bhutan and Nepal. They even take this opportunity to recommit for the fight against discriminations and injustices against them.

### **Language and Connectivity in Crisis**

Language is a marker of culture and identity of a community. Nepali is the common language among people of all ethnic and racial background in the Bhutanese Nepali community. Dhakal (2018) argues that the single powerful base for the protection of culture, ritual and Nepali ethnic identity is Nepali language. It is connected with the blood of the community. So, he stresses that it is necessary to transfer Nepali language to the new generations. But he expresses his worry on the fact that their mother tongue is getting the position of the second language in the USA. Considering this reality, the Bhutanese Nepali community is running language classes with the formation of curriculum, appointing volunteer teachers and encouraging parents to send their children to such schools.

Gautam (2018) presents the attitude of two generations towards Nepali language: “Parents want their children to speak Nepali while children want their parents to learn English. There is a power struggle” (para. 4). He stressed: “Preservation, promotion, and protection of Nepali language, culture and religion have become a burning issue for the resettled Bhutanese” (para. 1). These writers believe that culture “is manifested through the behaviours of individuals, one of which is the use of the language” and the language of the country of origin “is often associated with the domestic sphere of existence” in the diaspora (Gsir & Elsa, 2015,

p. 16). Gsir and Elsa (2015) described the common situation of the use of language in a diaspora:

the use of one of the languages of the country of origin by migrants or their descendants, is not neutral in interactions; when it occurs it reaffirms closeness (even if not exclusively) to a given culture. Mostly in the case of first generation migrants, these exchanges can also appear outside the domestic walls: at the workplace (in particular when migrants work in the import/export domain or in diplomatic missions); in other kinds of public places, such as shops, leisure places, religious institutions, or in schools, particularly in areas or neighbourhoods with an important concentration of co-ethnics. This happens when migrants find themselves interacting with people who share the same origin for personal, work or residence reasons. (p. 16)

Thus, language works as a principle means of connectivity. If the use of the language of the land of origin decreases, the connectivity among the people of the community naturally loosens.

Khaling (2009) expresses his discontent with the decrease in the use of Nepali among the members of the community. He writes: “In mechanic friction/Robust language thins into/Short, dwarf expression” (ll. 7-9). Even the subject matter of talk mostly is age, sex and location along with the exchange of nude pictures and stimulating expressions through the webcam. So, the poet is worried about the loss of pristine natural relation like that of the farmland in Bhutan. He questions: “Where would the chat culture/Take the new generation to?” (ll. 33-34). Siwa (2016) also expresses his concern related to the hybridization of Nepali in the USA. Their language needs brushing up to pure “Nepali form” (l. 9). They need to be made aware of the language their mothers speak. D. Siwa (2018) reports that she ordered her granddaughter to speak Nepali all the time because “their language has started to get spoilt” in the lack of its use (l. 13). The first generation of the Bhutanese Nepali diasporans in the West seem to have understood that “the dimension of communication plays a central role in every cultural process, since culture corresponds to human beings’ capacity to transmit messages, to communicate to others” (Gsir & Elsa, 2015, p. 11). So, they are worried about the crises in their language and connectivity.

Bajgain (2014) humorously presents the new means of connectivity in the diaspora and its effects. He thinks that the town has grown into the stage of disfigurement. The Western ladies have many boyfriends; a mother elopes in her old age; a father brags at the pub and goes mad only the next morning to know that his wife has left him. So, the poet thinks that many rights for the people have made them trackless. People prefer web-chats to face to face

discussion. All these activities have spoiled the Bhutanese Nepali youths, too. They have started giving birth to hybrid babies that do look like a monkey, not a man. The lives of many young Bhutanese Nepali girls have been spoiled. So, the modern day connectivity has also been the source of cultural crisis in the Bhutanese Nepali Diaspora.

### **Work Pattern in Crisis**

The next area of crisis related to culture of the Bhutanese Nepali Diaspora is the pattern of work. The traditional works they used to do back in Bhutan is not available in the diaspora. So, their love for the old jobs has been limited to nostalgia. Dhakal (2010) remembers how they used to enjoy their farm works in Bhutan:

Carrying the sickle in our hands  
 We collected golden ears of the crops  
 We sang the *rasiya* with the plantation sound  
 Erecting a central pillar  
 We harvested in Mangsir. (ll. 33-37)

But, the work culture in the USA is quite different. Khadka (2010) expresses her dissatisfaction:

Here, with the movement  
 Guided by watch hands  
 I am spending each moment  
 I am looking for a chance  
 To work for two more hours  
 To earn two more pence. (ll. 26-31)

This contrast shows the loss of traditional work culture in the diaspora.

Bhandari (2018) remembers their traditional works back in Bhutan and laments the loss of the same. These works include the use of wooden and stone mills at home, the wooden milking pot in the animal farm and many other works of the farmers. But now in the USA, all of them are just in their memory. What they have to do there is entirely different from what they did back in Bhutan.

### **Effects on Emotion and Identity**

The loss of many aspects of the Bhutanese Nepali culture has exerted severe effects on the emotion and identity of the people of the community in the diaspora. Dahal (2018) claimed that the lack of proper identity is one of the major subject matters of Bhutanese Nepali literature. This is a usual condition in a diaspora: “Besides effects on economic well-being, migration of people with distant cultural backgrounds may also have large effects on people’s cultural identity” (Prinz, 2019, p. 1). It is because “[o]n settling down in the new culture, their cultural identity is likely to change and that encourages a degree of belonging” (Bhugra, 2004, p. 129). As a result, diaspora identity enters into constant flux: “Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference” (Hall, 2006, p. 438). Bhutanese Nepali diasporic poetry gives expression to these realities as well.

Acharya (2009) asks: “Isn’t the firm faith and devotion/Of our ancestors/Going to be finished?” (ll. 3-5). He thinks that the people of the community have created such a situation with the use of their hypocrisy and the rush for the accumulation of wealth. He further believes that they would be able to protect their rites and continue their identity as the Bhutanese Nepali people if they realize its value in time. Being aware of the gradual loss of identity D. Siwa (2018) pleads: “The ethnic identity must be preserved here” (l. 4). The first generation migrants are emotionally attached to their Bhutanese Nepali identity; whereas, the later generations are not much worried about it.

Khadka (2010) finds herself emotionally empty in the festivals: “I don’t have/Happiness and joy” (ll. 3-4). She feels so because the delight of the festivals has been left back in the homeland itself. She is shocked at the loss of Nepali life style. It is because there is no community set up and works that resemble those back in Bhutan. Even on father’s death anniversary, there is not enough time to pray for the departed soul. It shows that they are losing Nepali life style, language, culture and identity. It makes them emotional. Regmi (2010) adds: “Nepali together we are, we must keep it [Tihar] alive/Promoted by Aryan-law in various walks of drive” (ll. 9-10). He warns: “Inner pompous shares indeed empty hand of a fall/If slipped as a bumble bee, remains nothing at all” (ll. 19-20). Their worry about the possible loss of identity is serious.

To summarize all discussion above it is appropriate to quote Koirala (2019) who satirically presents a picture of the degradation of the Bhutanese Nepali culture in the diaspora:

They have stopped singing *asare* songs and dancing the *Maruni*

They, instead, go to the disco and move their waists

People used to be content with black tea even in a marriage party

These days, they drink beer and put on mini-skirt even in a birthday party. (ll. 1-4)

These lines show how the Bhutanese Nepali Diaspora is losing its originality in terms of culture and tradition. Such a loss is connected with the loss of their identity as a distinct community in the world map. It is very difficult for the community to come out of this cultural crisis.

### **Conclusion**

Bhutanese Nepali diasporic poetry depicts the cultural crises the community has been undergoing from the time of their settlement in the West i.e. Europe, America and Oceania till now. Such crises are generally reflected in terms of their festivals, food, religion, dress up, symbols, work, art, music, language and connectivity. It is usual for any diaspora to face such crises and find the way out to adjust in the host land. Both internal and external causes exert disequilibrium in social health of the community in a strangers' land that ultimately results into both the survival and existential crisis and axiological or value crisis. Such crises have impacts on their identity and emotion along with the misery, injustice and conflict in everyday life. Their cultural future turns to be uncertain and they are challenged by danger and opportunity at the same time. The diasporic poets are sensitive in the issues of personal and collective identity and the human predicament and consequent emotional condition. So, their creations have been able to capture the predicament of the society. The transition between the beginning of the settlement and complete establishment in the host land is crucial in terms of such cultural crises and their adjustment for a bearable life in the diaspora.

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