

Ghintang Ghisi Dance of Bhaktapur: A Cultural Tourism Product

Lok Nath Dulal, PhD.

Associate Prof. Department of Culture,
Padmakanya Multiple Campus, TU, Nepal

dulaloknath@gmail.com

Received: August 01, 2023; Revised & Accepted: September 06, 2023

©Copyright: Dulal (2023)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

Abstract

Bhaktapur is a world-renowned cultural tourism destination of Nepal that offers to tourists wonderful experience and encounter with tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Due to the high classes wonderful and alluring heritage every year large numbers of tourists have been paying their visit. From the cultural tourism perspective colorful *jatras*, heart-breathing music and dances are also recognized as the renowned sources of attraction. *Bhaktapur* has already established its fame as a destination of cultural capital that annually celebrates different festivals with performing music and dances on the special auspicious occasion. Rest of them, *Ghintang Ghisi* dance is also a renowned and an indigenous cultural identity and practice as well as an important tourism product of the destination. It is danced with holding sticks on the occasion of the *Gaijatra* festival in the month of *Bhadra*. Although this dance is still unexposed and explored as a significant cultural tourism product in the field of academia it is identified as its research gaps. It is needed to conduct research to recognize this dance as a prominent tourism product. Therefore, to address the research problems and gaps this paper has been prepared. It is based on primary and secondary data whereas qualitative approach, descriptive, analytical and exploratory research designs have been applied in this study. The required data and information have been collected during the field conducted in 2019 and 2022 by consulting with two key informants.

Keywords: Concept of dance, Ghintag Ghisi dance, performing style and performer, tourism product, using materials

Introduction

Geographically, *Bhaktapur* a smallest district of Nepal is elevated from 1,372 to 2,166 meters above the sea level. It is one of the oldest cities, founded by King *Ananda Deva* in 889 CE. It was the capital of the *Malla* Kingdom during 12th to 15th century CE King *Yakshya Malla* heavily fortified it (Dulal, 2019, p. 91). *Khopring, Khakampring, Makhopring, Khrupung, Bhaktagram, Bhaktapur, Bhaktpure, Bhaktapuri, Bhaktapuripattan, Bhaktapattan, Khwopa, Bhadagaon* are its locally known names through which *Bhaktapur* has been identified *Bhaktapur* has been identified throughout the ages (Dhaubanjari, 2068, pp. 197-200). Out of the ten World Heritage Sites of Nepal, *Bhaktapur Durbar Square* is known as an important one which was enlisted in the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 1979 (Dulal, 2019, p. 103). About the culture, traditions and touristic point of view Kunwar & Chand (2016, pp. 16-17) state that:

Bhaktapur is said to be the “living heritage” with a strong ‘sense of sacrality’, a strong ‘sense of community’, a strong ‘sense of historicity’ and a strong ‘sense of serenity’ where the residents understand the symbolic importance and also the importance of preservation of their heritage. It is known from different names like, ‘Living Cultural Heritage’, ‘Walking Museum’ and an ‘Open Museum’, ‘City of Devotees’, ‘City of Culture’, ‘Centre of *Newar* Culture’, ‘Durbar Square’, ‘Nepal’s Cultural Gem’ and ‘Nepal’s Cultural Capital’ in the world.

The kings of *Bhaktapur* during the medieval period were very enthusiastic about the promotion of music and dances. In the 18th century King *Ranjit Malla* of *Bhaktapur* presented his traditional dance of *Bhairavnath* with the King of *Kaski* (Kunwar, 2017, p. 402). For performing the music, dances and dramas they constructed *Dabalis* on the courtyard. Pieces of evidence of medieval period helped to suggest that they adorned themselves through different titles such as *Sangeetachandra, Gandharvavidhyaguru, Sangeetabhashkara*.

Besides it, several books regarding songs, dances and dramas were created by the kings of *Bhaktapur*. In this respect, we can mention the *Dashabataranrityam, Kunjabihari and haragauri bibaha* of the king *Jaggarjyotirmalla*; *Ashwomeghanatakam, Geetagovindam, Radhamalashree, Jaiminibharata* of King *Jitmitramalla*; *Ushaharana, Kanshabadyopakhyan, Ramayan, Mahabharat, Pashupati prardubhava* of king *Bhupatindramalla* and *Ushaharana, Krishnacharita, Indravijaya* and an estrangement song of the king *Ranjitmalla* (which created when he reached at *Chandragiri* hill, on the way of his journey to *Kashi*) as the important texts written for performing the dances and dramas in *Bhaktapur* during the medieval period (Dulal, 2019, p. 242).

Devi, Saptamatrika, Bhairav, Mahakali, Daitya and *Lakhe* religious dances were performed on the ceremonial days only. The rulers of the *Malla* period – *Pratap Malla, Siddhinarasingh Malla* and *Bhupatindra Malla*, particularly paid attention toward the ceremonial dances. During their rule the *dabalis* of Kathmandu, *Patan* and *Bhaktapur* were notable places of dances and dramas (Pandey, 2008, p. 196). Various cultural dances are also performed in *Bhaktapur* such as *Arati* dance, *Jyapu-Jyapuni* dance, *Dhimen Pyakhan, Bhairab, Astamatrika, Bhasmasur* dance, *Khya Pyakhan, Kumari* dance, *Bhuranjya* etc. (Kunwar & Chand, 2016, p. 18).

Among the several dances, *Ghintang Ghisi* is also a renowned and an indigenous cultural identity and practice of *Bhaktapur*. It is danced with holding sticks on the occasion of *Gaijatra*

the festival of cow on the month of *Bhadra*. By nature it is both dance and *jatra*, one of the typical and indigenous dance that cannot observe in practices elsewhere in Kathmandu Valley, associates with *Gaijatra* and also known as a part of this festival, it performs on the month of *Bhadra* i.e. October in English calendar which is pick season through the tourism point of view, one can observe typical demonstration process, other dances, dresses and ornaments, foods and drinks, beautiful and smiling faces of the people through it. Whatsoever, tourists get opportunities to observe dance and procession of *jatra* as well. Therefore, those tourists who keeps interest to observe, study and research, they have got plenty of opportunities through this dance in *Bhaktapur*

Thus, no doubt, from the perspectives of tourists and tourism, the *Ghintang Ghisi* dance and procession is to be taken as one of the important cultural tourism products of *Bhaktapur*. It can offer plenty of opportunities to the tourists. Therefore, *Bhaktapur* core can promote it as an important tourist-alluring cultural product, but, it has still not been properly successful in commoditization to it as an amazing tourism product in global tourism markets. The tourist's statistics of *Bhaktapur* indicate not full satisfactory situation of tourism, therefore, *Bhaktapur* should have done a lot of work in the field of tourism. Why it is happening in the field of tourism in *Bhaktapur*? Is a specific question and problem that is to be answered and addressed in this paper.

Statement of Problem

Nepal is a heterogeneous state on the basis of culture, tradition, norms, values and customs, religion, ethnicity and language. Culturally, it is one of the richest countries in the world. Because of its natural and cultural heritages, it has become a country of tourism paradise in the world. Most of the tourist destinations are located in urban areas. Among various sites, *Bhaktapur* is an important one. It possesses cultural, religious, archaeological, historical, artistic and architectural significance (Dulal, 2019, p. 9). Every season large numbers of tourists visit to observe its tangible and intangible cultural heritage including *Jatras* and festivals. In many ways, the study area has been beneficial to its people too. Many studies reveal that tourism is one of the major sources of foreign currency in Nepal and *Bhaktapur* as well.

In *Bhaktapur*, most of the studies on tourism are deeply concerned with macro level. Thus, specific studies of particular destinations and tourism products for the promotion of tourism are very necessary which are still very limited. Lack of proper and specific studies and research regarding *Ghintang Ghisi* dance several aspects associated with the promotion of tourism still remain unexplored. Hence, what is *Ghintang Ghisi*? How it is performed? And why it is considered one of the important tourism products of *Bhaktapur*? These are the research questions that inspired to researcher preparing this paper.

Objectives of the Study

This paper deals with the *Ghintang Ghisi* dance as an important tourism product of *Bhaktapur*. In this process researcher has included introduction of *Bhaktapur* as the tourism destination and the concept, origin and development, types and typology of dance, concept of tourism products in brief as the general objectives, whereas, to identify *Ghintang Ghisi* and explore its using materials and performing style and processes; and to evaluate this dance as an important cultural tourism product of *Bhaktapur* have been determined as the specific objectives of the paper.

Review of Literature

In this study for generating theoretical foundation the following literatures such as Rangacharya (1980) *The Indian Theater*, Iyer (1980) *Dance Drama of India and The East*, Gaston (1982) *Siva in Dance, Myth and Iconography*, Banerji (1985) *Art of Indian Dancing*, Levy (1992) *Mesocosm, Hinduism and the Organization of a Traditional Newar city in Nepal*, Parajuli (2063) *Nepalama Prachalit Nritya ra Nrityanatikaharu*, Regmi (2003) *A History of Music in Nepal with Special Reference to Classical Music during the Rana Period (1846-1950 A.D.)*, Tandukar (2067) *Bagamati anchalko lokageetabare ek jhalaka*, Pandey (2008) *Nepal Through the Ages*, Dhaubanjari (2068) *Kathmandau Upatyakaka Bastiharu* have been reviewed.

Likewise, the following literatures such as Vaidya & Shrestha (2002) *Bhaktapur Rajdarbar*, UNESCO (2003) *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003*, Widdess (2018) *Dapha Sacred Singing in a South Asian City music, performance and meaning in Bhaktapur, Nepal*, Kunwar & Chand (2016, pp. 1-39). *Natural disaster and heritage tourism: A study on the impacts of earthquake in Bhaktapur Nepal*, Dulal (2017, pp. 23-39) *Folk Dance an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Nepal: A Case Study of Ilam District*, (2019) *Cultural Tourism in Bhaktapur*. (2021, pp. 87-107). *Kha Me jatra of Bhaktapur: an intangible cultural heritage of Nepal*, (2022, pp. 1-22) *Prospects of Promoting Festival Tourism: A Case Study of Khame Jatra in Bhaktapur* has taken to be reviewed for obtaining the empirical knowledge.

Methodology

Cultural tourism with an illustration of *Ghinta Ghisi* dance is the main issue of this study. Therefore, more or less this study deals with the different aspects associated with the *Ghinta Ghisi* dance such as the demonstration process, performing style, performers and procession, using materials. These issues are understood as the matters of a qualitative nature. Thus, the qualitative data regarding *Ghinta Ghisi* dance has been used more than the quantitative one. Therefore, this study is based on a qualitative approach. It has explored and described *Ghinta Ghisi* dance as an important cultural tourism product of *Bhaktapur*, thus, it is also based on exploratory, analytical and descriptive research designs. The methods and procedures have been followed to answer the research questions and explore its objectives and generate valid data and information. Primary data and secondary information have been used in this study. By using observational and interview methods primary data have been explored from the field. For exploring primary data, structured interviews were taken with the key informants. Similarly, for generating required secondary information relevant chapters of the journals, books and sources of electronic versions have been reviewed in this study.

Conceptual Framework

To explore the opportunities of *Ghinta Ghisi* dance as an important cultural tourism product of *Bhaktapur* is the main aims of this paper. As per the requirements researcher has applied theoretical and empirical approaches during the study. The following conceptual framework has been applied for addressing the above mentioned research gaps and problems as well as fulfilling the determine objectives:

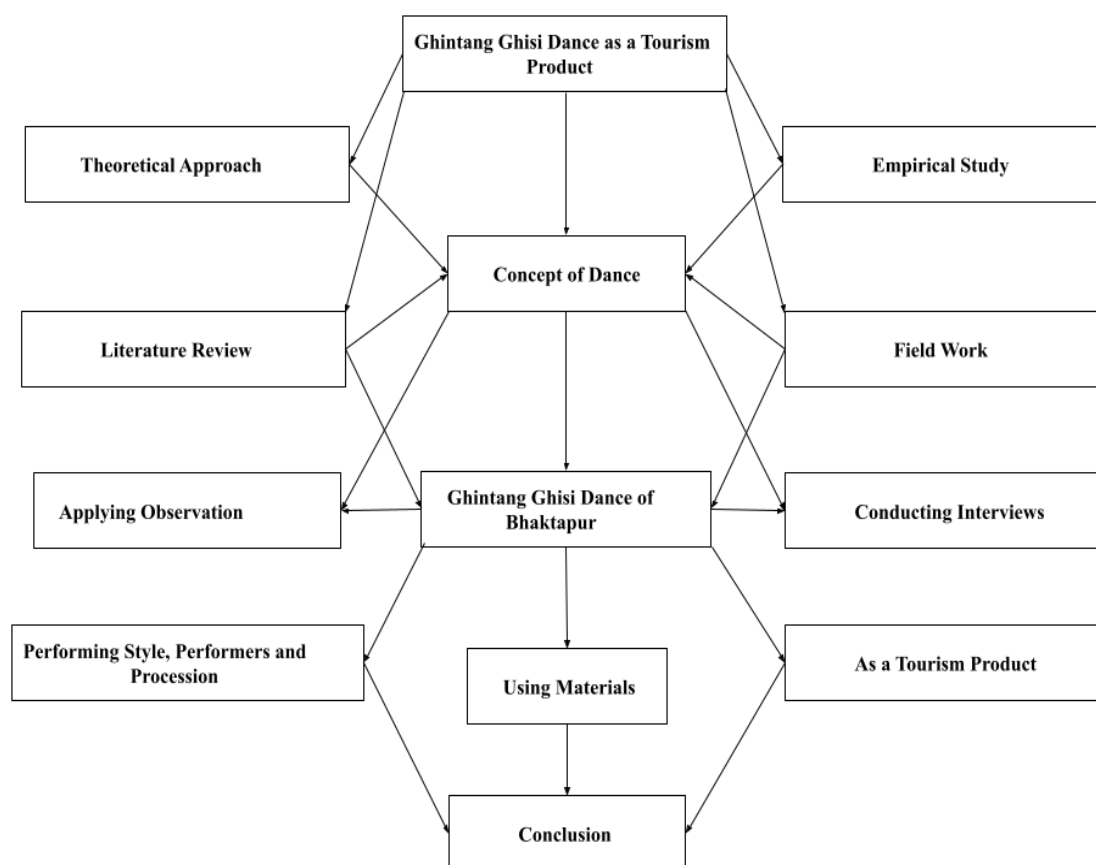


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

In this paper primary data and secondary information have been explored and analyzed for generating knowledge regarding the issues associated with *Ghinta Ghisi* dance such as demonstration process, performing style, performers and procession, using materials and *Ghinta Ghisi* as an important source of cultural tourism of *Bhaktapur*. During the study researcher has applied qualitative approach and descriptive, analytical and exploratory research designs as well.

Findings and Discussion

Basically, this paper is based on field study. Researcher has applied observation and an interview method for gathering primary data during the field survey. What is *Ghinta Ghisi* dance? When and how is it performed? Why the people of *Bhaktapur* demonstrate it? Why it is considered as a cultural tourism product of *Bhaktapur*? These are the major questions which have been asked to the local people during the field work. Similarly, during the field survey, the process, rites and rituals and participation of local and tourists have been observed. Finally, with calculating and comparing primary data explored from the field and secondary information generated by the literature review this paper has been prepared. The following are its major findings.

Concept of Dance

UNESCO classified the intangible cultural heritage in five different domains which are (a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; (b) performing arts; (c) social practices, rituals and festive events; (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; (e) traditional craftsmanship (UNESCO, 2003, p. 8). Dance is included within performing arts as per the classification of UNESCO.

The term *Nritya* has been derived from the Sanskrit root 'Nrit' with the suffix 'kta' (*Kyap*), which means dancing, gesturing, demonstrating the parts of the beautiful body (Dulal, 2017, p. 25). The word dance is being used to denote the term *Nritya* in Sanskrit (Parajuli, 2063, pp. 4-5). *Natya*, *Nritya* and *Nritya* are three terms frequently used to referring to the performing art in *Sanskrit* literatures. As mentioned in Sanskrit English dictionary *nritya* means dancing, acting, gesticulating, pantomime (Williams, 1993, p. 568).

Dance and drama in India are inseparable. The word *Natya* is a synonym for a *rupa* or *drishya-kavya* and points to its lyrical nature, throws further light on the point in accordance with the etymological meaning of this word which derived from the root *nat* (*nrit*) meaning to dance. *Monamahan Ghosh* draws a clear distinction between the words *nritya* and *nritya*. He says that dance which does not express mood (*bhava*) by means of *abhinaya* is called *nritya* and the dance which suggests flavor (*rasa*) and mood (*bhava*) is called *nritya* (Banerji, 1985, p. 20). Indian classical dance according to its nature or form is classified as the forms of *nritya* and *nritya*. *Nritya* is pure dancing, distinct from *nritya* which is interpretative in character having a set theme which is communicated through hand gestures and facial expressions. Again, according to quality or kind, it is distinguished at *tandava* (masculine and vigorous) and *lasya* i.e. graceful and tender (Iyer, 1980, p. 8). In this respect Banerji (1985, p. 7-8) ads that:

Dance is the rhythmic physical movement prompted by feeling and emotions. The rhythmic movement may be of any or all parts of the body in accordance with some scheme. Rhythmical movement is spontaneous in many animals and human beings. The peacock dance to the clouds, birds dance in a group, elephant dance in the jungle to please his mate, the bear and the snake dance to music or the letter when fascinating its prey; a 'dance macabre'. Every beast and human being dances to express its innermost passions. The date of reformed and polished dance in the history of India is rather controversial. Dance is an art came into existence with the growth of human society and civilization. It is also debatable which of the countries of the world was the most civilized and was the first to obtain this exalted position. But, undoubtedly, Indian civilization is very old and ancient if not the oldest. Hindu civilization can easily be dated before the creation of *Rigveda*. The historians are of opinion that *Rigveda* was composed before 1500 B.C. And mention has been made of dance and musical instruments such as *Mridanga*, *Vina*, *Bansi*, *Damaru*, etc. in *Rigveda*.

In *Rigveda*, there is rendering "*nrityamano amartah*" (5-33-6), "*martashchidhwo nritya rekmawaksya*" (8-20-22) or the soul of *Marutas* decorated with dance and ornaments (Luitel, 2063, p. 407 & 655). This evidence suggests that during the *Veidic* civilization dance was not practice as an art but also as an outburst of emotion (Dulal, 2017, p. 26). Besides Vedic literatures, the old Sanskrit texts such as *Nandikeshwora's Abhinaya Darpan*, *Bharata's Natyasastra*, *Sangita Ratnakar*, *Dananjaya's Dassharupa* etc also deal with dance in Indian subcontinent (Banerji, 1985, pp. 7-8). In this circumstance Gaston (1982, p. 6) says:

Dance is traditional Indian culture permeated all facts of life, but its outstanding function is given symbolic expression to abstract religious ideas. This is illustrated in the plastic art by the dancing figure of Siva and *Nataraja*, in which his dance represents

the cosmic cycle of creation and destruction. It is likely that dance was first practiced for the simple joy of movement or as a spontaneous manifestation of devotion before later becoming ritualized in the form of religious ceremonies. The resulted in the two main divisions of dance: the folk dance (*desi*) and the more complex and strictly codified classical dance (*marga*), the latter evolving from the former.

Marga and *desi* are the two major forms of *nritya*, classified on the basis of subject. The first one is composed of both music and dancing, it is said that it was performed by *Bharata* before *Mahadev*, and precious to that was sought by Brahma from *Mahadev*. The second i.e. *desi* is that which is in vogue amongst us and which is performed before kings by men for their entertainment. In this respect Banerji (1985, pp. 7-8) also classified dance as

On the basis of performing style *nritya* can also be classified into two kinds ‘*Tandava*’ and ‘*Lasya*’. *Tandava* has various movements of the eyes; eye- brows and hands chiming in with the sentiment of love. Having been first performed by *Tandu*, an attendant of Shiva, the dance is called *Tandava*. The *Lasya* dancing excites amour in the bosom of youth.

In the view of *Maxmuller* and *Harttel* folkdance is originated through the rites and rituals of Vedic traditions. Likewise, *Hari Prasad Shastri* is in opinion that the happiness of *Indradwoj* festival is the main cause of the origin of folkdance. Similarly, *Frezer* and other several sociologists believed that due to the performance of the religious ceremonies such as magic’s and totems helped to generate the concept of folkdance (Parajuli, 2063, pp. 8-9). The great benefit which the folk theatre derived from its association with the *Bhakti* Cult was to attain a place in the social life of the people (Rangacharya, 1980, p. 87). Regarding the origin of dance Banerji (1985, p. 1 & 9) again states that:

It is believed that the origin of Indian dance and music that the first sound (Nad), or more correctly, musical sound, was created by the *Damaru* (drum) of God Shiva, or dancing emanated from the cosmic movement of the same God. Shiva is the first dancer according to Hindu conception. A great motif in religion or art, any great symbol becomes all things to all men; age after age, it yields to men such treasure as they find in their own hearts: Shiva dance as handed down to the Hindu is becoming excellent and supremely beautiful.

Expressing happiness in the festivals, being greatly affectionate with natural beauty and natural phenomena, lamenting on the death, trying to escape from natural calamities, generating feeling of salvation through the devotional acts, and recreating are situational existed and practiced through sensational gestures of physical and spiritual life. These events and circumstances gradually resulted in the origination of folk dance (Dulal, 2017, p. 29). Most of the present political units located from Central Asia to Indonesia owe much of their cultural origin to the "*Bharat Barsha*". Therefore, the classical Indian music, a part of this great cultural heritage belongs to all and not to any specific country of South Asia (Regmi, 2003, p. 1). In this regard Regmi (2003, p. 145) further ads:

The *Natyasastra* of Bharat is the most important and authoritative treatise on Sanskrit dramaturgy which is recognized as the fifth Veda and open to all even the *sudras*. "*Anga Banga Kalinggascha Batsaschaibodha Magadha: Paundrha Nepalkaschaiva Antargira Bahirgira*" is the statements mentioned in the first authentic text of music of Bharat *Natyasastra*. On the basis of this statement, some scholar’s opinion that the prevailing of music in Nepal since ancient time.

There is lack of proper authentic evidences that can prove the antiquity of dance in the context of Nepal. Hence, it is a matter of uncertainty and under research. However, it is imagined that,

the history of origin of folk dance in Nepal is traced back till to the origin of human beings. It is believed that, Nepal is a recreational theatre of Lord Shiva and Goddess *Parvati*. The legends reveal that the folk dance originated from *Tandava* dance of lord Shiva, who brought it for the first time.

As mentioned in the Mythological sources, Lord Shiva is known as *Nateswor*. The *tandava* dance was ferocious and terrifying. To avoid the terror and in order to pacify the fear evoked by *tandava* dance, Goddess *Parvati*, consort of Lord Shiva generated *Lasya* dance. This dance is supposed to be the origin of all kinds of dance today that evoke the feelings of romanticism, sensation, pleasure and delight. These two kinds of dances are the platform of the origin of all forms of folkdances today (Parajuli, 2063, p. 8).

Various kinds of dances and music of Nepal have their own history, significance and symbolism. The representation of *Shivaganas*, *Bhiringi* and *Ganesh* in the act of dancing in the bottom of the *Uma- Maheshvar* reliefs of the *Lichchhavi* and *Thakuri* periods reveal that the history of Nepali dance and music is very old. The same evidence is provided by the representation of *Parvati* dancing in ecstasy before Shiva in the relief of *Kathesimbhu*, based on the *Kumarasambhava* of *Kalidasa* dated in the sixth century A.D. (Pandey, 2008, pp. 195-196). Regmi (2003, pp. 127-128) again mentions:

The wooden planks used in the temples of *Kathmandu* valley have pictures of instrument players carved on them. One prominent example of the artistic wooden carving is the pagoda style *Tundal* Devi temple located in Kathmandu's *Bishalnagar*. The fifteen wooden planks of the double-story temple are carved with portrayals of the divine musicians. Scholar has categorized them into *Gandharva*, *Kinnar* and *Bhusundi* groups. Those in human anatomy are *Gandharvas*, others with blend of animal and human anatomy are *Kinnars* and yet others with bird head and human body are *Bhusundis*. The wooden carvings of celestial beings playing musical instruments can be seen in numerous temples of Kathmandu valley. They are meant to decorate the temples and to inspire and enhance devotions of the temple-goers. Apart from the *Tundal* Devi temple referred above, one other such temple full of carved portrayals can be found in *Thimi*. The *pati* (gallery) built in front of *Bishnubeer* temple near the famous *Bal Kumari* temple is full of idols and sculptures of human and celestial beings playing different musical instruments. Such wooden, metal and stone carvings embedded in the walls and wooden planks of the temples displaying music and musical instruments require a separate research to explore them further and analyze their significance.

These events can be used to prove that the *Tandava* and *Lasya* dances were performed by Lord Shiva and Goddess *Parvati* respectively, for the first time in Nepal. Besides these evidences the available dancing images, the descriptions found in inscriptional records and the legends mentioned in the mythological literatures can also be helpful to prove that there was the existence of folkdance in Nepal from the very early (Dulal, 2017, pp. 30-31). In this regard Pandey (2008, p. 195) views that:

The age of the *Mallas* excels in the arts of music, dance and drama. The *Malla* kings wrote several lyrical songs which were sung from time in the theatres (*dabalis*) for the entertainment of the subject. The sculptures and paintings of the *Malla* period (*Nataraj* and *Bhairab* images and the *thanka* painting) contain ample evidences in favors of the art of dancing and music. The dances portrayed in the paintings are of ritualistic origin depicting the gods and goddesses and mortal beings dancing in tantric environment.

The date is the fifteenth day of the dark fortnight *Pausa* (December-January), in the year Nepal *Samvat* 784 (1664 AD), and the place is the temple of goddess *Taleju* in the royal palace of

Kathmandu. The king *Pratap Malla*, is performing an elaborate and costly ritual, in which his son is being weighed against jewels and silver, which will be presented to be goddess. The reason for this ritual is not known, but the occasion was judged sufficiently remarkable and important to be preserved for posterity by an anonymous artist, who detailed the date and circumstances in an inscription on his painting. This may be the earliest known visual representation of a *dapha* group (Widdess, 2018, pp. 31-32).

The tradition of dance and music is seemed still in practices in Nepal that cab observe among the different communities while performing rites and rituals and celebrating specific festivals. *Maruni Dance, Deusi, Bhailo, Dhama Naach, Khyali Naach (different communities), Lhosar Dance, Manirindu (Sherpa community), Gaura Nritya, Hudke Naach, Bhuwo Naach, Dyauda Nritya, Dholi Naach (Far Western Region), Kathaghorri Nritya, Jhijiya Nritya, Dhumara (tharu community), Raute Nritya (Raute community), Kaura Dance, Jhaure Naach, Ghatu Naach (Magar community), Sorathi Nritya, Rodi Naach (Gurung community), Chanchari Nritya (Mid Western & Far Western Region), Aashika Naach, Dhama Naach, Dholakiya Dance (Damai community), Lakhe Naach, Chariya Nritya, Astamatrika Nritya, Kartik Dance, Bhairav Dance (Newar community), Chandi Nritya, Chiling Naach, Kulung Naach (Rai community), Balan, Rataule (Bramin & chhetri community), Painseri, tappa Naach (Rapti & Bheri Zones), Togka Naach (Dhimal community), Dharma karma Nritya (Satar community), chyabrunng Naach, Dhan Naach (Limbu community), Karma Dharma Nritya (Jhangar community), Kariya jhumari Naach (Mithila region), Kurmi Naach (Jajarkot district) and so on are the popular Nepalese folkdances which is being practices in different ethnic groups and different parts of the country (Dulal, 2017, p. 31).*

Ghintang Ghisi Dance



Source: <https://www.spotlightnepal.com>, Gaijatra procession and performing Ghintang Ghisi dance

Gai-Jatra is also known as the festival of Cow. This festival focuses on families in bereavement. Every family who lost their relative in the past year participates in a procession with a cow or a young boy dressed as a cow. In *Bhaktapur*, *Gaijatra* procession is brought out in the streets on the basis of sex composition. The performer must be of the same sex as the dead family member. It is one of the most unique and indigenous feature of *Gaijatra* of *Bhaktapur* city (Dulal, 2019, p. 255).

The festival includes two elements in an intimate mixture, commemorations of death and carnival. The day's events and the inaugural procession of the previous afternoon introduce a period of related activities lasting until the eighth day of the fortnight. The day is locally called

Saparu or *Saya*. 'Sa' means cow and 'Paru' may derive from 'Parewa', the name of the first day of the lunar fortnight (Levy, 1992, p. 563). According to the *Newar* tradition on the 1st day of *Bhadra Krishna Pakshya* (dark fifteen days) this festival is celebrated. It is believed that by performing such festival the deceased person will easily get entry into heaven. On the previous day of the *Gaijatra* i.e. *srawan poornima* the festival begins from the *saparuchhen* (situated the palace complex) a house from where the *Gaijatra* starts (Vaidya & Shrestha, 2002, p. 108). *Bhaktapur* celebrates *Gaijatra* festival with more exciting and enjoying mode compared to other cities especially *Kathmandu* and *Patan*. *Bhaktapur* has own peculiarities in the process of its celebration. During the festival of *Gaijatra* hundreds of dances such as *Devi* dance, *Bhaila* dance, *Bandar* dance, *Gaichaa* dance, *Lusi* dance, *Fakdali* dance, *Nagacha* dance, *Lakhey* dance, *Natu (Mathu)* dance, *Jungali* dance, *Bhalu* dance, *Khincha* dance, *Khya* dance, *Kawacha* dance, *Hanuman* dance, *Mheka* dance, *Kijapuja*, *Kapayfeneya* dance, *Salan* dance, *Jhya-jhya* dance, *Ghintankisi* dance are performed in *Bhaktapur*. The *Taha-Macha* procession and the performing of *Ghintakisi* dance is still known as the important events which only found in *Bhaktapur* core (Dulal, 2019, p. 256).

During the *Gaijatra* festival one can observe the vibrant and the hypnotic *Ghintag Ghisi* dance and music there in *Bhaktapur* core. As per the information provided by the local people, it is known as an important cultural dance performed in the wake of a chariot pulling during the *Gaijatra* festival (Dulal, 2019, p. 257). *Gaijatra* festival celebrates in *Kathmandu*, *Patan* and other places where the *Newar* settlements are found but, one cannot observe the vibrant and the hypnotic *Ghintag Ghisi* dance and music there in those particular places except in *Bhaktapur* (Tandukar, 2067, p. 27). The term *Ghentan Ghessin* is said to refer onomatopoeically to the sound of a particular kind of drum beat (Levy, 1992, p. 446).

Performing Style, Performers and Procession



Sources: www.thelongestwayhome.com, performing Ghintang Ghisi dance with sticks
Most people get confused about the *Ghintang Ghisi* dance and monkey dance. Monkey dance, also known as *Makha pyakhan* is conducted by a few communities. The dance is also performed in *Gaijatra* festival. Despite holding on to the same day and using sticks as their dancing tool, these two dances are different from each other. Everyone can join any *Ghintang Ghisi* gang with a stick and a partner. All you need to do is follow the rhythm and hit each other stick at a point (<https://www.bhaktapur.com>).

As mentioned by local people *Ghintag Ghisi* is an important cultural dance performed in the wake of a chariot during the *Gaijatra* festival. It is performed in open streets for almost a week from the day of *Gaijatra* to *Krishnajanmastami* especially in *Bhaktapur* city. Beside it, many cultural programs are performed in this occasion. This procession goes to Durbar Square from every village like *Mahalaxmi* village, *Navadurga*, *Dynchen*, *Kaulachen tole*, *Taspaltole*, *Inacho tole*, *Golmadi tole*, *Sukudhoka*, *Taumadi tole*, *Bholachen tole*, *Nasamana tole*, *Dekhacha tole*, *Bharucha tole*, *Itachea tole*.

There is no limit of age for participation in this ceremony. Everyone such as children, teenagers, adults, senior citizens both male and female get an opportunity for participating in this dance according to their interests and joys. It performs a long queue with two persons in a row having sticks in their hand and hitting each other. The participants of the *Newar* community must wear their traditional costumes *Hakupatasi* including males during the performing of the dance.

According to a local informant, *Taha-Macha* is a chariot made of bamboo. During the day, a chariot locally known as *Taha-Macha* made of bamboo is circumambulated on the streets of the city. *Taha-Macha* is the symbol of dead people which is wrapped with cotton cloth usually *Hakupatasi* and simple sari types of cloth, where one can observe their photography hanging on the center part of the chariot. On this day, several *Taha-Machas* are brought out from the different *toles* which make every street busy with the chariots and the long processions of the participants. Each and every *Taha-Machas* keep own peculiar significance, but the *Taha-Macha* of *Lakolachhen tole* has its specific importance, because that has covered in straws, which is known as *Bhailya Dya*: i.e. *Bhairab* and succeeded by *Ajima* i.e. *Bhadrakali* made at *Khula* i.e. *Ajima Dyo*: *chhen* (Dulal, 2019, pp. 256-257).

Using Things and Materials

Taha-Macha is a chariot made of bamboo. *Hakupatasi* a traditional *Newar* women dress for women and simple sari types cloth for the men. Using sticks as their dancing tool. The teenagers hold a pair of sticks; wear traditional *Newari* attire with jewelers, and a footwear ornament full of small bells called *ghala* in this dance.

Chariot and small bamboo poles: Chariot is most essential thing for this dance which is locally called *Taha-Macha*. It is a chariot made by bamboo. The chariot is wrapped with cotton cloth usually *Hakupatasi* a traditional *Newar* women dress for women and simple sari types cloth for the men.

Sticks and straws: sticks are another important and most compulsion material for this dance. Participates and performers demonstrate their dance by using sticks as their dancing tool.

Foods and drinks: During the day, the people eat "*Quanty*" a mixture of 24 varieties of pulse which is also common in other parts of the nation.

Dresses and ornaments: *Hakupatasi* a traditional *Newar* women dress for women and simple sari types cloth for the men. They wear traditional *Newari* attire with Jewellery, and a footwear ornament full of small bells called *ghala* in this dance. During the dance bachelor boy dances around the markets wearing yellow cloth named "*Pheta*" on his head and cow-like boy and offer food and sweets bamboo pipe basket. He pretends of milking cow into bamboo pipe.

A Cultural Tourism Product



Sources: <https://www.alamy.com>, large number of tourists and local people observing Ghintag Ghisi dance

Bhaktapur is richest city for tangible and intangible cultural heritages such as historical, archeological, religious and secular monuments, traditional tools, utensils, technology and craftsmanship, folktales, music and dance, way of life, religious beliefs, costumes and customary laws, festivals and *jatras*, dress/ornaments, food and drink, dreams, pleasure and sorrows within its core. Regarding the heritage available in *Bhaktapur* core Dulal (2019, p. 194) further mentions that:

There are plenty of tangible and intangible cultural heritages such as fifty-five windows palace, lion gate, golden gate, *mulchowk*, art gallery, statue of king *Bhupatendra Malla*, *Nyatapole* temple, *Pashupati* temple, *Batsaladevi* temple, big bell, *Yakshwor Mahadev* temple, living culture, festivals, traditional musical instruments, dress and ornaments, ponds and *Pokhari* in *Bhaktapur* core especially in Durbar Square, *Taumadi* Square, *Dattatreya* Square and Pottery Square. In totality, it is believed that *Bhaktapur* holds 1 royal palace, 172 temples and monasteries, 77 water tanks, 172 pilgrims' shelters and 152 wells within its core. Among these, some had already lost their beautiful structure, some are living in very dangerous situation and remaining well preserved heritages are continuously presenting fantastic historical, cultural and architectural values of this city.

Due to these best quality and quantity tangible and intangible cultural heritages every year *Bhaktapur* hosts large number of tourists in its core. During the fiscal year 2072/073 BS and 2073/074 BS *Bhaktapur* received 95056 and 181350 total tourists from SAARC and non-SAARC countries respectively. *Bhaktapur* has been preserving several beautiful cultural tourism products of different test and experience which helps to attract the tourists with different purposes such as to observe art and architectural heritage, World Heritage Site, local culture and traditions, sightseeing, recreation and research and study of the heritages (Dulal, 2019, p. 291).

By nature this ceremony associated with both dance and *jatra* as well. On the one side it is a dance in which participants can perform their dance with sticks and also can watch it very closely. On the other, it is a *jatra* because it demonstrates on the streets of *Bhaktapur* core and

the procession goes to the Durbar Square from every village like *Mahalaxmi* village, *Navadurga*, *Dynchen*, *Kaulachen tole*, *Taspaltole*, *Inacho tole*, *Golmadi tole*, *Sukudhoka*, *Taumadi tole*, *Bholachen tole*, *Nasamana tole*, *Dekhacha tole*, *Bharucha tole*, *Itachea tole*. Whatsoever, tourists get opportunities to observe dance and procession of *jatra* as well.

Ghintang Ghisi is one of the typical and indigenous dance has been practicing from the earlier in *Bhaktapur* core. This type of festival cannot observe in practices elsewhere in Kathmandu Valley. *Ghintang Ghisi* is associates with *Gaijatra* and also known as a part of this festival. *Gaijatra* festival celebrates within the *Newar* community not only in Kathmandu Valley, but also other parts of the country. The *Gaijatra* of *Bhaktapur* core is seemed slightly distinct where one can observe the typical *Ghintang Ghisi* dance as well.

Ghintang Ghisi dance performs on the month of *Bhadra* i.e. October in English calendar which is pick season through the tourism point of view. This dance belongs to intangible cultural heritage category as defined and classified by UNESCO. Therefore, those tourists who keeps interest to observe, study and research, they have got plenty of opportunities through this dance in *Bhaktapur*. The dance can observe typical demonstration process. There is a long queue with two persons in a row having sticks in their hand and hitting each other.

Along with this dance, *Bhaktapur* also offers *Devi* dance, *Bhaila* dance, *Bandar* dance, *Gaichaa* dance, *Lusi* dance, *Fakdali* dance, *Nagacha* dance, *Lakhey* dance, *Natu (Mathu)* dance, *Jungali* dance, *Bhalu* dance, *Khincha* dance, *Khya* dance, *Kawacha* dance, *Hanuman* dance, *Mheka* dance, *Kijapuja*, *Kapayfeneya* dance, *Salan* dance, *Jhya- jhya* dance to the tourists. Tourists can observe dresses and ornaments, foods and drinks, beautiful and smiling faces of the people.

Afore mentioned aspects related with the specific dance are the tourist alluring cultural heritage and tourism products of the destination. No doubt, if properly develop and marketing to the above mentioned features associated with *Ghintang Ghisi* dance, it might be one of the amazing cultural tourism products of *Bhaktapur*. Therefore, *Ghintang Ghisi* dance is known as one of the most wonderful and important cultural tourism products of the destination.

Conclusion

UNESCO classified the intangible cultural heritage into five domains, among the five; dances are categorized under the performing arts. Nepal is an exceptional country for the researchers to study colorful and meaningful festivals and dances. As whole, Nepal performs several folk dances on the different occasions within a year as the national, regional, local and community level. This paper deals with *Ghintang Ghisi*, which is celebrated during the *Gai Jatra* festival especially in the *Newar* community of *Bhaktapur*.

Ghintang Ghisi is one of the important intangible cultural heritages and an indigenous identity of *Newar* people of *Bhaktapur*. *Taha-Macha*, *Hakupatasi*, sticks, *Newari* jewelers, and a footwear, chariot and small bamboo poles, sticks and straws, different types of Foods and Drinks are considered important things and materials for this dance. *Ghintang Ghisi* is one of the typical and indigenous dance has been practicing from the earlier in *Bhaktapur* core.

Therefore, those tourists who keeps interest to observe, study and research, they have got plenty of opportunities through this dance in *Bhaktapur*. It is an important tourist alluring cultural heritage and tourism products of the destination. No doubt, if properly develop and marketing it into global tourism market it might be one of the amazing cultural tourism products of *Bhaktapur*. Due to it separate unique identity, *Ghintang Ghisi* dance is known as one of the wonderful and important cultural tourism products of the destination.

Acknowledgements

Ghintang Ghisi dance of Bhaktapur: a cultural tourism product is a paper deals with the folk dance as an important cultural tourism of the destination. It is based on primary data and field survey approach. Researcher has frequently conducted field survey especially on the festival of *Gai jatra* for the primary data and information. In this occasion researcher has got valuable support and guidelines from different academician and local people such as *Siddhiv eer Karmacharya, Om Prakash Daubhadel*, therefore, researcher would like to express sincere acknowledgement to them.

References

- Banerji, P. (1985). *Art of Indian Dancing*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, Pvt. Ltd.
- Dhaubanjari, G. (2068). *Kathmandau Upatyakaka Bastihar*. Kathmandu: Shreemati Kalpana Shrestha.
- Dulal, L.N. (2017). Folk Dance an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Nepal: A Case Study of Ilam District. *International Journal for Social Development (ISDR)*. Ranchi: Institute for Social Development and Research. ISSN: 2320-9283, 5(1): 23-39.
- Dulal, L.N. (2019). *Cultural Tourism in Bhaktapur*. Kirtipur: Ph.D dissertation, submitted to the faculty of humanities and social sciences, Tribhuvan University, Nepalese History, Culture and Archaeology.
- Dulal, L.N. (2021). Kha Me jatra of Bhaktapur: an intangible cultural heritage of Nepal. *Literary Studies (A Peer Reviewed Research Journal of Language, Literature and Culture)*. Kathmandu: Literary Association of Nepal (LAN), Vol. 34: 87-107.
- Dulal, L.N. (2022). Prospects of Promoting Festival Tourism: A Case Study of Khame Jatra in Bhaktapur. *Nepalese Culture (A Peer- Reviewed Journal (Vol. XV- 67-85, 2022/10/10)*, Kathmandu: Central Department of Nepalese History, Culture and Archaeology, TU, ISSN: 2091- 1165, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/nc.v15i.48516>: pp. 1-22.
- Gaston, A.M. (1982). *Siva in Dance, Myth and Iconography*, Delhi: Oxford University Press (reprint).
- Iyer, K.B. (1980). *Dance Drama of India and The East*, Bombay: D.B. Taraporevala Sons & Co. Pvt. Ltd.
- Kunwar, R.R. (2017). *Tourists & tourism*, Kathmandu: Ganga Sen (Kunwar). Revised and Enlarged Edition.
- Kunwar, R.R. & Chand, U. (2016). Natural disaster and heritage tourism: A study on the impacts of earthquake in Bhaktapur Nepal. *Journal of tourism and hospitality education*. (6): 1-39.
- Levy, R. I. (1992). *Mesocosm, Hinduism and the Organization of a Traditional Newar city in Nepal*. New Delhi: Motilal Banarasi Dass Publishers.
- Luitel, T.P. (2063). *Rigved*, Kathmandu: Birdhyarathi Pustaka Bhandar, (translation).
- Pandey, R. N. (2008). *Nepal Through the Ages*. New Delhi: Adroit Publishers.
- Parajuli, M.L. (2063). *Nepalama Prachalit Nritya ra Nrityanatikaharu*, Lalitpur: Sajha Prakashan.
- Rangacharya, A. (1980). *The Indian Thertre*, New Delhi: National Book Trust, 2nd edition.
- Regmi, D.C. (2003). *A History of Music In Nepal with Special Reference to Classical Music during the Rana Period (1846-1950 A.D.)*, India: A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy to Faculty of Music & Fine Arts, University of Delhi.

Nepal Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (NJMR)

Vol. 6, No. 3, September 2023. Pages: 100-114

ISSN: 2645-8470 (Print), ISSN: 2705-4691 (Online)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/njmr.v6i3.59521>

- Tandukar, S. (2067). *Bagamati anchalko lokageetabare ek jhalaka*. Kathmandu: Sangeetataamrita prakashani samiti.
- UNESCO (2003). *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003*, Kathmandu: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Kathmandu Office.
- Vaidya, T.R. & Shrestha, P.L. (2002). *Bhaktapur Rajdarbar*. Kirtipur: C.N.A.S., T.U.
- Widdess, R. (2018). *Dapha Sacred Singing in a South Asian City music, performance and meaning in Bhaktapur, Nepal*. London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.
- Williams, M.M. (1993). *A Sanskrit- English Dictionary*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd.

<https://www.bhaktapur.com>, Traditional dances of Bhaktapur (retrieved: 29 Oct. 2022)

<https://www.alamy.com>, (retrieved: 29 Oct. 2022)

www.thelongestwayhome.com (retrieved: 29 Oct. 2022)

<https://www.spotlightnepal.com>, (retrieved: 29 Oct. 2022)