

## The Continuity of Marriage Ceremony of Bharsele Magar: A Study of Kathmandu Valley

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### Abstract

*This study related to marriage rituals of the Bharseli Magar of Kathmandu Valley consists of 92 households of Bharseli Magar of Kathmandu Valley, informant interview (KII) with 6 persons, and secondary data. The main aim of this article is to explain the socio-economic aspects and traditional marriage rituals of Bharseli Magars of Kathmandu Valley. There are 16 clans and 29 sub-clans of Magars included in the Bharseli Magars of Kathmandu Valley. Traditionally, the cross-cousin /Tin Ghare/ Odane marriage system has been practiced. The traditional marriage consists of Magani, Sodhani, Dulahi Bhitryaune, Theki khane, Dhogbhet, Janti Jane, Dulhan Farkaune, Saipata Tirne etc. Additionally, in traditional marriage rituals of the Bharseli Magars, the bread, pickle, wine, curd, meat of chicken, and goat are used as the food items. In traditional marriage rituals the Dhiungri, Madauri, Kantha, Dhungri, Hammel, Bulanki, Har, Chura, Pote, etc. ornaments have been used in Marriage rituals of Bharseli Magars of Kathmandu Valley. There is a practice of wearing, Kachhad, Daura, Bhangra (Gada), and cap of thread by Magar men and Blauj, Lungi, Ghalek, Saul, etc. by the Magar women during the marriage ceremony. The arrange marriage, love marriage, forced marriage, and theft marriage are traditionally practiced by the Bharseli Magars of Kathmandu Valley. The objective of this article is to explore the socio-cultural status and traditional marriage rituals of Bharseli Magars of Kathmandu Valley.*

**Keywords:** Gulmi Bharse, Cross-Cousin Marriage, Arrange Marriage, Love Marriage, Forced Marriage

### Background of the Study

The different clans and sub-clans of Bharseli Magars Budhathoki, Pun Shrish, Galami, etc. started to live in Bharse village of Gulmi before 10-12 generations. These clans and sub-clans first migrated from Sinja and Samakot of Western Nepal in to Rukum. After that, they were migrated to Baglung during Medieval period, these clans / sub-clans came into Bharse village of Gulmi. The some of the sub-clans of Bharseli Magars migrated from eastern Palpa, Syanja, and in a latest era from the Rukum (Shrish, 2065). The Bharseli Magars started to live in Bharse Gulmi 300 years ago. During that period, there were different

periods of social development. The major periods of the human development of Bharseli Magars are, before the petty state period, during the period of the petty state, during the period of mining, and from Gorkha recruitment to the present era (Shrish, 2065).

Bharseli Magars migrated to Kathmandu metropolitan city, Budhanilkantha municipality, Chandragiri municipality, Kritipur municipality, Tokha municipality, and Nagarjuna municipality of Kathmandu district. The Bharseli Magars are habitats of Dahachowk, Guruju Dhara, Baneshwor, Golphutar, Hattigauda, Maharaj Ganj, Bansbari, Dhapashi, Machhapokhari, Gongabu, Samakhushi, Panchadhara. Tyanglaphant, Koteswor, Machhegaun, Dakshinkali, Naikap of Kathmandu district. Bhainsepati, Bagdol, Dholahiti, Khumaltar, Nakhipot, Talchhikhel, Jwalakhel, Bhanimandal, Sanepa, Dhapakhel, Imadol, Thaib (Godawari Municipality, Mahalakshmi Municipality, Lalitpur Metropolitan city) of Lalitpur district (Field Survey, 2023). The Bharseli Magars which are habitat of the Kathmandu valley established Bharseli Magar Service society (now Bharseli Magar Society) (Constitution of Bharseli Magar Service Society, 2060). In this paper, researchers have aimed to find out migration and changes in marriage rituals of Bharseli Magars of Kathmandu valley.

The traditional marriage rituals of the Magars of Kathmandu Valley affiliated with Bharseli Magar Society consist of a ritual of Magani, payment of Saipata, Sodhani, eating of curd vessel (Theki), Dhogbhet, Dulhan Farkaune, and entering of a bride into bridegrooms home (Shrish, 2063, pp. 1-16). Traditionally, the rice and daal were demanded by the bride side and the bridegroom side brought the demanded amount of rice and dal. This research paper has studied the socio-cultural conditions and traditional rituals of Bharseli Magar of Kathmandu Valley.

### **Research Questions**

- What is the socio-cultural status of Bharseli Magar of Kathmandu Valley?
- What are marriage rituals of Bharseli Magar of Kathmandu Valley?

### **Literature Review**

#### ***Conceptual Review***

Marriage is a family institution. In another word, marriage is a restructure of the social structure. The social structure refers to the system of individuals regarding institutional relationships. Marriage brings change to existing family relationships. Especially, in most of society there is a change in the family of the bride. Marriage not only establishes a new relationship between husband and wife but also constructs an interrelationship between the

kinship/ relatives of the husband and wife and the relationship between kinship/relatives of society. Marriage is the major institution in Socio-cultural function. The Political, moral/ethical, and economic aspects of a social system always affect marriage. For human development, the family is required. In all of society, there is existence of family in any forms. The family is formed by the combination of the father, mother, and a minimum of one child. There are rituals of marriage in all of the society so, marriage is a part of the unit of the family (Budhathoki, 2023).

According to the Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, traditionally, Marriage is a legally recognized relationship between a mature male and a female that carries certain rights and obligations. Although in contemporary society marriage has been explained more liberally. According to recent Sociological surveys, marriage institutions have been decreasing in England and the United States of America (Scott and Marshal, 2009).

### **Research Method**

In this study, qualitative and quantitative methods i.e. mixed methods have been applied. This method is useful to describe and show the relationship between variables. It explores the relationship between economy and social practices including marriage ceremony. In these methods, mostly the primary data have been collected from the interview schedule and key Informant Interview (KII).

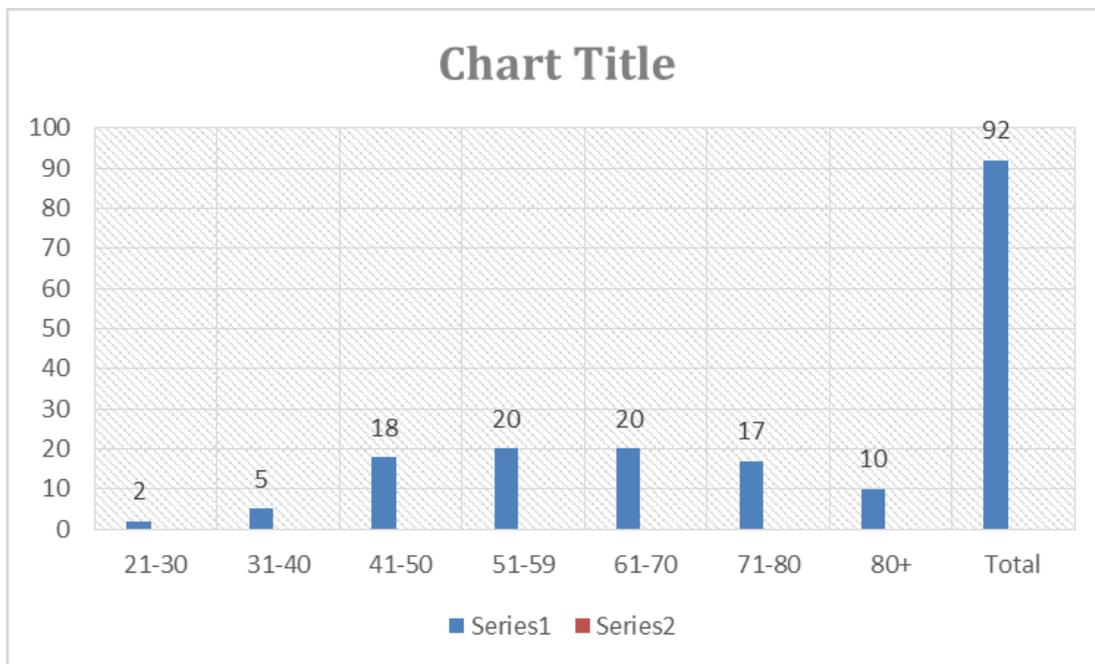
This article aims to explain about socio-cultural status and traditional marriage rituals of Bharseli magars of Kathmandu valley. Several scholars prepared research articles regarding these issues. The partial answers can be found on the basis of theses reading materials. So, it is relevant to collect statistics on the basis of primary and secondary sources. So, I have used both primary and secondary materials during preparing this article. The research methodology of this article is as follows.

### **Data Analysis**

The different subject matters separated on the basis of subject matters and sub-topics have to explain analyzed and made a conclusion. While analyzing subject matter researchers have tried to study along with previous theories and practices.

**Socio-Cultural Characteristics of Bharseli Magars of Kathmandu Valley**  
*Distribution of Respondents by Age*

**Figure: Age Group of Respondents**

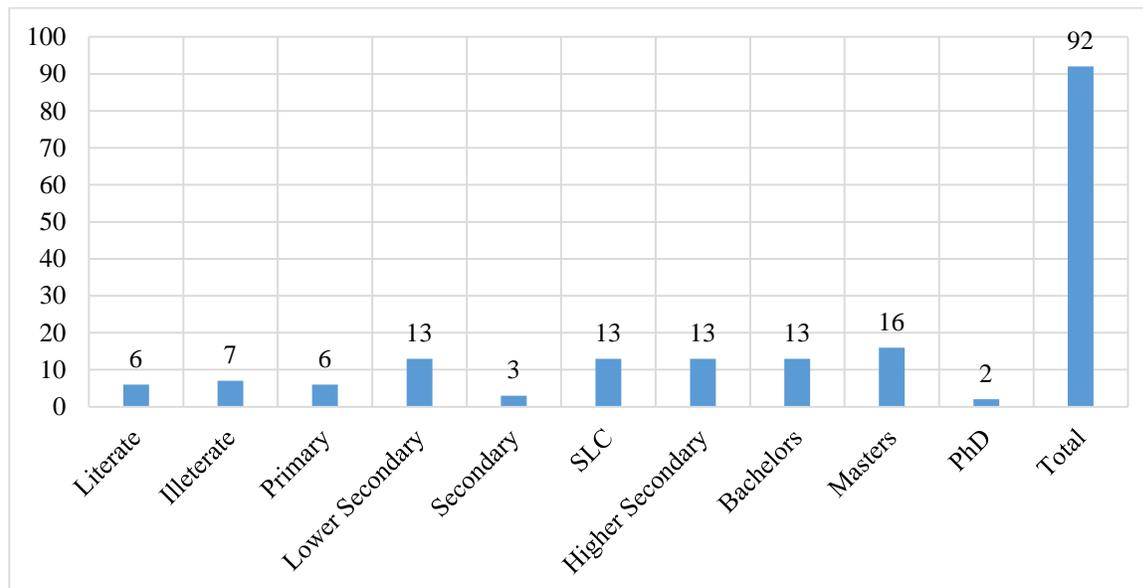


Source: Field Survey 2023 AD

The above table shows that the highest respondents of Bharseli Magars of Kathmandu Valley are of age between 51-59 and 61-70 i.e. 20/20. Similarly, the lowest respondents are of the age between 10-20 and 21-30 i.e. 1/ 1. In above table the respondents of the age group of 21-30 are 2.17 % percent, the age group of 31-40 are 3.43% percent, the age group of 41-50 are 19.56% percent, the age group of,51-60 are 21.73% percent, the age group 61-70 are 21.73% percent, the age group of 71-80 are 18.47% percent, and the age of above 80 years is are 10.86%.

### Educational Status of Respondents

Figure 4.1: Education Status of Respondents

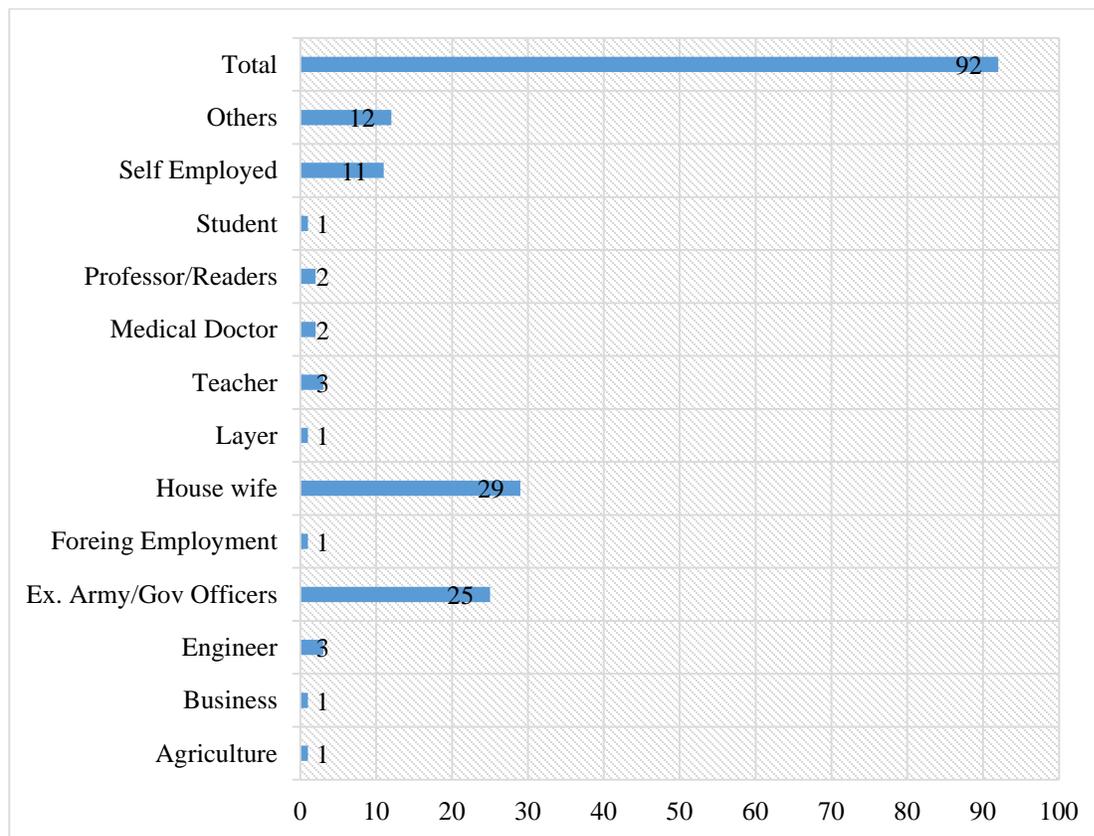


Source: Field Survey 2023 AD

According to the above figure, the most of the respondents of Bharseli Magars of Kathmandu Valley are literate and achieved higher education. Some of respondents have got the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. In the above data we find that , 6.52 % percent of respondents are literate, 7.60% percent respondents are illiterate, 6.52% percent of respondents have studied in primary level, 14.13 % percent of respondents have studied lower secondary level, 5.26 % percent of respondents have studied secondary level , 14.13 % percent of respondents have passed the SLC level, 14.13% percent respondents have passed the higher secondary(Plus two ) level , 14.13 % percent of respondents have passed Bachelor’s degree level , 17.39 % percent of respondents have passed the Master’s degree level 2.17% percent of respondents have completed Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) level among total 92 respondents.

### Occupation of the Respondents

Figure: Occupation of Respondents



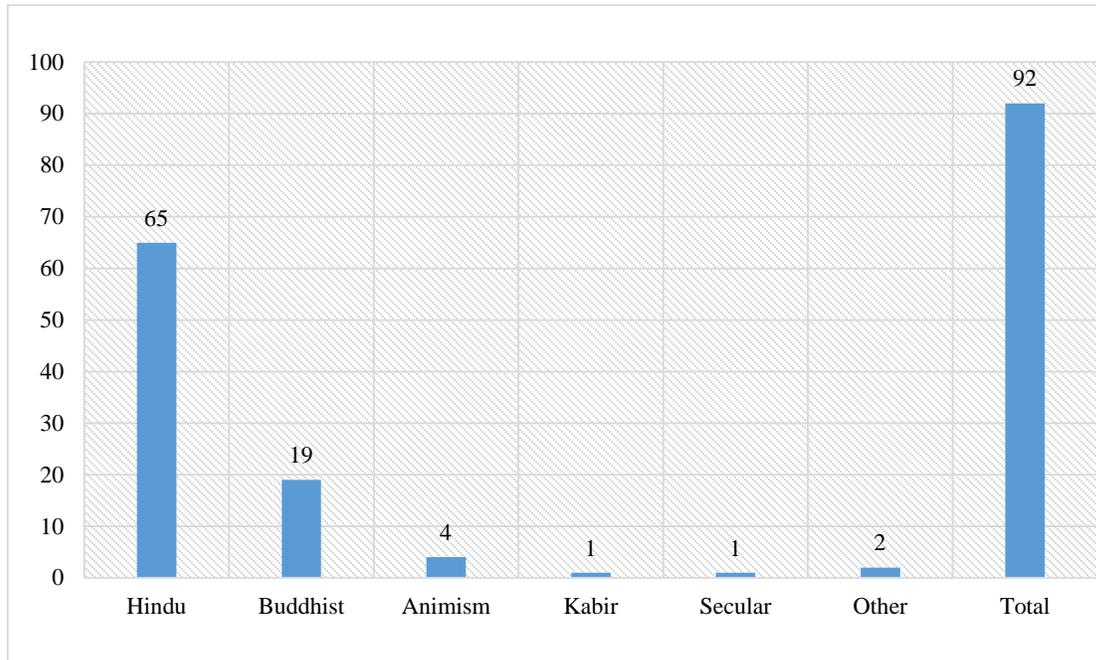
Source: Field Survey 2023 AD

This research has been conducted in Bharseli Magars of Kathmandu Valley. So, the number of respondents who have agriculture occupations are very low. Most of the respondents have their particular profession like the professor, medical doctor, engineer, lawyer, Business. The number of retired persons is also high. The Magar community of Kathmandu Valley who have migrated from Bharse, Gulmi are also mostly involved in Foreign Service. So, there are the high number of house wives. In above data , 1.08 % percent of respondents involved in agriculture occupation, 1.08 % percent of respondents involved in business, 3.26% percent of respondents are engineers, 25 % percent of respondents are retired army and retired government officilals, 1.08% percent of respondent are involved in foreign employment, 31.52% percent of respondents are house wife, 1.08 % percent of respondents are lawyer, 3.26 % percent of respondents are teacher, 2.17 % percent of respondents are

medical doctor, 2.17% percent of respondents are professors/readers, 1.08 % percent of respondents are student, 11.95% percent of respondents are self-employed and 13.04 % percent of respondents of Bharseli Magars of Kathmandu valley are involved in other services among total 92 respondents.

**Religious Beliefs of Respondents**

**Figure 4.2: Religious Beliefs of Respondents**



Source: Field Survey 2023 AD

At above figure, there is majority of respondents of Bharseli Magars of Kathmandu valley who follow Hindu religion i. e 65. The other respondents have followed Buddhist (19), Animism (4) Kabir (1), Secular (1) and others (2) respectively. Due to predominant Hindu religion some of Respondents follow Hindu marriage rituals. From above data, the 70.65 % percent of respondents are Hindu, 19% percent of respondents are Buddhist, 4.34% percent of respondents believe in animism, 1.08% percent of respondent believe in Kabir, 1.08% percent of respondent are secular and 2.17% percent of respondents believe in other religions.

## **Traditional Marriage Rituals of Bharseli Magar of Kathmandu Valley**

### **1. Types of Traditional Marriage Practice of Bharseli Magar of Kathmandu Valley**

The researcher attempts to know about the traditional marriage practice of Bharseli Magars of Kathmandu Valley. The forced marriage is completely terminated in Bharseli Magars of Kathmandu Valley. Traditionally the arranged marriage, forced marriage, theft marriage and love marriage were practiced by Bharseli Magars. The arranged marriage was mostly practiced. The arranged marriage was also performed after the love affairs of the girls and the boys. The girls and the boys chose their mates in social ceremonies, mela and parvas. So, they practiced love marriage (Budhathoki, 2024, Pp.37-50).

### **2. Traditional Arrange Marriage Practices**

Traditionally, there were cross-cousin/ Tinghare/ Odane marriage rituals in Bharseli Magars. If cross-cousin marriage is not performed there is the tradition of the marry with the girl recommended by their parents (Father, Mother, Sister, and brother) also practiced in Bharseli Magars. So, traditionally, the number of respondents whose marriage has been fixed by parents are more than number of respondents whose marriage are fixed by love affairs (Budhathoki, 2023, pp.37-50). The respondent No. 6 states, "There is a change in arranged marriage practice in Bharseli Magars. Traditionally, cross-cousin / Tin Ghare, Odane marriage ritual is predominantly practiced in the Bharse Village." Traditionally, there were cross-cousin/ Tinghare/ Odane marriage rituals in Bharseli Magars. If cross-cousin marriage is not performed there is the tradition of the marry with the girl recommended by their parents (Father, Mother, Sister, and brother) also practiced in Bharseli Magars

### **3. Decision of Traditional Marriage**

The study analyzes who decides about traditional marriage in their marriage. Based on interview with the Respondent no.5 *"There were rituals obtaining consent while performing the marriage of the Bharseli Magars. If the boy and girl fell in love during study and work in Nepal or a foreign country for finalizing marriage or deciding about the marriage the consent of the family members especially the consent of the parents or especially the consent of the father was compulsory. At that period, in Bharseli Magars, inter-caste marriage was also not allowed. If there were love affairs between the boy and girl of Bharseli Magars with other caste than Magars, then the parents especially the father do not allow to marriage with the girls/ boys if other caste and foreign citizens as well"*.. Traditionally, in Bharseli Magars there were rituals of deciding about marriage by parents. Due to the effect of a patriarchal society, most of marriages were decided by the father of the household.

#### 4. Role of Matchmaker / Kaliya to Decide Traditional Marriage

The matchmaker is the person who plays a role in arranging the marital conversation between the two sides, mostly an arranged marriage system. The Respondent No. 2 states *“Traditionally, in arranged marriage, love marriage and force marriage the role of matchmaker/kaliya was played by the Chelibeti/ Jwaichela of the bridegroom. The matchmaker / Kaliya has to play an important role in the Magani, Sodhani, Theki Khane, and Dhogbhet rituals of Bharseli Magars. During Magani and Sodhani the matchmaker/kaliya (Chelibeti/ Jwaichela) of the bridegroom goes to the bride’s home with taking food items of Koseli i.e. Wines, breads, eggs and Pickle. If the process has proceeded the negotiation of the bride and bridegroom side proceeded and the Sagun also eat during the negotiation. If the bride side does not accept to proceed with the process of Magani, the matchmaker/Kaliya has to return with Koseli. During the Theki Khane ritual the matchmaker also brought the wine, bread, pickle, and vessel filled with curd to the bride’s side. If the Theki Khane process proceeds the Saguns of Theki are accepted by the bride side but if the bride side does not accept the Sagun, the matchmaker has to return with Saguns. During Dhogbhet in the leadership of the matchmaker/ Kaliya the 3, 5 or 7 i.e an even number of the bridegroom side brought Theki (Vessel filled with curd), Sagun (Jand), bread, wine, pickle etc., one day before the day of Dhogbhet or in the morning of the day of Dhogbhet. During Dhogbhet, the matchmaker becomes the friend of the bridegroom.”* Traditionally, the matchmaker/ Kaliya also played a role in deciding the marriage of the boys and girls of Barseli Magars. Especially Matchmaker/ Kaliya was played a role from the side of the boy.

#### 5. Practices of Traditional Cross-Cousin Marriage

The Respondent No. 4 says *“The marriage rituals of any society have developed according to particular geography, ecology, and environment of that particular area. After migration, the original marriage rituals of May/ might not match the geography, ecology, and environment of that destination place. In other words, the marriage rituals of the Bharseli Magars i.e. cross-cousin / Tin Ghare / Odane marriage rituals developed according to the geography, ecology, and environment of the Bharse, Gulmi. In previous/past times, the villages were very small and the population was low. The Bharseli Magars migrated during the period of mining of metals. While migrating during the mining of metals, the clans, and sub-clans of the Bharseli Magars also migrated simultaneously. At that period, for appropriate conditions of marriage, three clans and sub-clans compulsorily lived in any places. At that time, the cross-cousin marriage was prioritized.”* The boy side

does not search for other girls for marriage if there is a daughter of the maternal uncle and the maternal uncle of the boy also give priority to the son of sisters or nephew for a marriage of their daughter. There was also the practiced of forced marriage to the daughter of the maternal uncle if she is liked by her son of maternal aunt /brother-in-Law/ Bhinaju. The daughter of maternal uncle was forcibly taking from Mela, Parva a, Ram Ramita and other social ceremonies of the village and they enter in to home to the daughter of maternal uncle by according to marriage rituals of Bharseli Magars (Shrish, 2063, Pp.1-16).

### **6. Process or Medium of Traditional Love Marriage Practices**

Based an interview with a Respondent No. 1, “Traditionally, the Bharseli Magars, have rituals of forced marriage and love marriage during social ceremonies i.e. Mela Parva, Ram Ramita and other social ceremonies.” Traditionally, there was the ritual of getting married through Mela Parva, and other social ceremonies with the consent of the parents of girls or without consent of the parents of girls.

### **7. Places of Traditional Marriage / Wedding Ceremony**

The Respondent No. 3 states “Traditionally, most of the Bharseli Magars organized their marriage ceremony in their houses. The houses are quite congested to perform wedding parties in Bharse village.” Traditionally Bharseli Magars organized marriage rituals/wedding ceremonies in their own houses and community houses.

From the research it can be concluded that, there was prioritized cross-cousin marriage, arrange marriage by Bharseli Magar of Kathmandu Valley. The basic objective of the study is to identify the socio-cultural status and traditional marriage rituals of the Bharseli Magars of Kathmandu Valley. This is the study of fulfilling the research objectives within limited sources and basic objectives. This study mainly focuses on the socio-cultural status and traditional marriage rituals of the Bharseli Magars of Kathmandu Valley.

### **Conclusion**

The Bharseli Magars of Kathmandu Valley still practice the traditional marriage rituals. The traditional rituals of Bharseli Magars of Kathmandu Valley are Magani, Sodhani, Dulahi Bhitryaune, Theki Khane, Dhogbhet, Dulhan Farkaune, etc. Traditionally, to establish a marriage relationship the boy’s side has to talk with the girl’s side. Traditionally, the meeting place of the boy side and the girl side was the house of the girl. During, Magani, Sodhani, Theki Lane, Bhatkure Lane, and Dulhan Farkaune rituals food items like wines, breads, pickles, eggs, fish, etc., were taken towards the girl’s side. Traditionally, the ring or chain is not provided to the bridegroom side during the Dhogbhet ritual. Traditionally, the

place of the marriage ceremony/ wedding party is generally the house of the bride and the bridegroom. The women of Bharseli Magar Society sang folk songs and dance as the symbol of Ratyauli. The ritual of Saipata Tirne practiced. The cross-cousin marriage practiced. Traditionally, there was a practice of polygamous marriage in Bharseli Magar society. However, there was practice of polygamy marriage. The practice of remarriage was practiced without or after the divorce or without or after the death of the husband and wife. The boys mostly performed second marriages without divorce and death of husband or wife. The most important traditional marriage ritual of Bharseli Magar is the cross-cousin/Tin Ghare / Odane clockwise marriage system within certain clans and sub-clans of the Magars of Bharse. There are 16 clans and 29 sub-clans of Bharseli Magars. the food items of marriage rituals of Bharseli Magars i.e. Magani, Sodhani, Theki Khane, Dulahi Bhitryaune, Dhogbhet, Dulhan Pharkaune etc., were traditional food item i. e. bread , pickle , local Wine, curd , meat of Chicken and Goat. The items of ornaments alsotraditional i.e Dhungree, madsauri, Kantha, Bunlanki, Pote etc. The decision of marriage is mostly taken by their parents. The place of the wedding party were homes.

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**Annex-1**  
**Key Informant Interview (KII)**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Time</b>
Bom Shrish Magar	Respondent 1	28 <sup>th</sup> August 2023	Lalitpur -4, Bagdol	3.30 PM
Krishana Bhadur Thapa Magar	Respondent 2	2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2023	Lalitpur-4, Bagdol	2.30 PM
Lal Kumari Budhathoki Magar	Respondent 3	4 <sup>th</sup> September 2023	Lalitpur-14, Khumaltar	1.30 PM
Min Shrees Magar	Respondent 4	5 September, 2023	Lalitpur-3, Pulchowk	11.00 AM
Nar Bahadur Budhathoki Magar	Respondent 5	6 <sup>th</sup> September 2023	Kathmandu -3, Bansbari	1.00 PM
Purna Bahadur Thapa Magar	Respondent 6	7 <sup>th</sup> September 2023	Lalitpur-18, Bhainsepati	8.30 AM

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