

Artistic Craftsmanship and Architectural Representation of Newar Rituals in the Heritages: Study of Krishna Mandir and Adinatha

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Abstract

Artistic-architectural craftsmanship in and around the Krishna Mandir in Patan and Adinath Temple in Chovar Kirtipur are based on myth making of the factual and fictional world representation of the history of art and artistic development. Arts, performances and activities of the god-goddesses carved in the statues and portraits reflected there in different positions are researchable. Erotic activities carved in the statues, tudals and roofs expose then activities of gods-goddesses that reflect the history of our ancestor's and the present ritual groups worship there on the statue with certain expectations as they believe that the honor of gods-goddesses is to fulfill their dreams and desires with their blessings. The objective of this article is to show the importance of historical arts and architectural craftsmanship-based activities that create the relationship among nature, religion and human-non human activities. To achieve the research goal, this study centers in ritual activities and artistic representation on the historical places of Adinath Temple in Kirtipur and Krishna Mandir at Patan in Nepal. This researcher applies Cultural and Environmental study methods through field visit applying interview-based technique. Finding of this paper is that the carving nature and carved portraits in and around Krishna Mandir and Adinath Temple are reflections of the socio-cultural activities connected with cultural history.

Keywords: Cultural history, craftsmanship, *jatra*, eroticism, representational arts.

Background of the Study:

Studies of arts, architecture and architectural craftsmanship have close relationships with socio-cultural activities. 'Culture and Literature' work relationally as a bridge to preserve the naturally and nationally practiced things. 'Arts, Culture and Craftmanship of Literary Representation' concern with the social practices and their impact's reflection on the historical developments from multiple practices to escape away from socio-cultural confusions created in the process of historical developments. The researcher has observed on concretization in and around the Krishna Mandir and Adinath Temple premises' arts, paintings and there he studied about Newar *Jatras*, *puja/path* and other ritual activities, in their homes and outsides in religious ceremonies to study cultural norms and values and their effect on environment.

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This study is based on self-administered questions asked to the Newar community people in around Krishna Mandir and Adinath Temple. Priests, disciples and religious followers' views on cultural practices of the past and changes that occur in the present time helps to understand the symbolic meanings of artistic crafts and *tantric* forces that people trust upon. This article aims to create a balance between the ecological environment and human activities from mere backbone of social and socio-cultural set up. The study questions on socio-cultural changes and continuation from pre-civilization period up to now and shows the possibilities for the changes. Man has studied this world from anthropocentric views and their atrocity on earth and animal started from the existence of human beings. Men believe that they are supreme and conscious among all the living beings and they have rights to control over the things around environment. This study foregrounds on arts, culture and changes in craftsmanship of the heritages.

Study of Human Activities on Ecological Environment in and around Adinath Temple and Krishna Mandir:

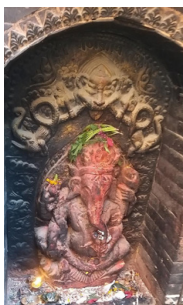
People practice different things in ecological environment for their benefits. Religious activities came almost together in Kathmandu Valley after Manjushree made it likely to live making outlet of water from Chobar, beneath Adinath Temple. Indraman Maharjan says, "Religious convictions of Kirtipur and Patan people started from Manjushree's time who cut the Kachhpal Parbat for the water outlet in Chobar that lies in south of Kirtipur Municipality and made the Kathmandu Valley likely to live connecting the administrative part with Patan" (Interview with Indraman, 25th Poush, 2079). From the very beginning of this systematic living of people in Kathmandu Valley they started constructing the temples, dewals, mut-mandirs and worshipping there which is exposed and continued in Krishna Mandir and Adinath Temple up to now that continuity reflects in the snapshots below.





Source: Snapshots taken by the researcher in front of Krishna Mandir from different positions on the day of *Maghe Sakranti* (Magh 1, 2079)

Krishna Mandir in Patan is an important religious-cultural temple for Newars in Kathmandu Valley (Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur) and it is also a place for worship of non-Newars in and out of the valley. Every morning, people go there and worship the gods and goddesses placing the flowers and offering/sounding *Namaste/Bhagawan saranam* singing the gongs and ringing the bells. Religious fanatics, in addition to their daily ritual activities, especially in *Maghi*, *Purnima*, *Shivaratri*, *Mangal Chaturthi* and other special occasions keep on fasting, worship the gods and goddesses, sing the hymns and pray in different ways. They believe that they can fulfill their dreams and desires by worshipping there. There are lots of scenes and written documents in the temple and around the temple premises for the researchers in addition to the oral histories.





Source: Snapshots taken by the researcher.

Researcher has observed the arts, architectural craftsmanship and historical-cultural things in Krishna Mandir, Patan and Adinath Temple, Chobar. He tried his best to understand the meanings and symbolic representations of the paintings. The study connects the religious convictions of historical truth in myth making of Krishna Mandir and Adinath Temple.

Like Krishna Mandir in Patan, Adinath Temple in Chovar Height is another important religious-cultural temple for Kirtipur Newars and other religious groups where the devotees come for worshipping from different places of Kirtipur and Sanepa, Lalitpur. Every morning, people go there and worship the gods and goddesses placing the flowers and offering/sounding *Namaste/Bhagawan saranam*. Religious fanatics, in addition to their daily ritual activities, especially in the month of Kartik keep on fasting, worship the gods and goddesses, sing the hymns and pray in different ways. They believe that they can fulfill their dreams and desires by worshipping there. There are lots of scenes and written documents in the temple and around the temple premises for the researchers in addition to the oral histories.





Source: Snapshots taken by the researcher in and around Adinath Temple in Chovar.

Adhinath Temple is a tall four-story building made up of oily bricks that have three roofs supported by woods and wooden or metal structured tudals carved with artistic instruments representing erotic activities of goddesses in different places of the temple designed in different shapes. The well carved wooden doors and windows represent the traditional arts and bring the study subjects to the students/ researchers of religious-cultural studies. The study of arts and literature helps to analyze the impact of socio-cultural studies and changes that brings in the present society. The roofs of the temple are covered with *Jhingati*, metals and bronze or copper plates in some of the places. Statues of gods and goddesses are designed and covered in many places with valuable copper, silver and bronze plates. Wooden carved writing and written documents in metal are much important for historical records. There is a tall cemented temple in front of the main temple that is designed and structured with erotic carving and paintings that have cultural connections for the study of arts and literature. In top of both the temples there are *Gajurs* and bronze and copper structured *toran* lowered down from the main temple. *Gajurs* in the temple are center for attraction to the tourists and religious people.

In relation to the importance of those religious and cultural places and socio-cultural practices of the Kirtipur Newars in the book *The Baghbhairav Dance of Kirtipur*, Prayagman Pradhan writes, “They took the mountains, rivers, ponds, spring-well, Himalayas, thundering, storming and all the natural and environmental things as gods and goddesses’ power and so they worship there with different kinds of puja-path” (*Kirtipurko*, 6). Even in the modern time those natural resources are taken as divine power. Among all the gods and goddesses Kirtipur Newars have a great trust on Baghbhairav and Adinath’s power and so in every rituals, jatra, puja-path and hymns programs they sing the hymns and religious songs of cultural groups. Newar people take lord Krishna and Adinath as saviors of all the living beings and the natural resources and so they worship to the God -goddesses in Krishna Mandir and in Adinath Temple. In some of the mythical descriptions’ men are

taken as god and women as goddess from the time of cultural and religious debates of Hinduism, Buddhism and others but the importance of Adinath and Krishna are equally great for both the Hindus and Buddha.

Cultural-religious groups are aware of their socio-cultural values, their impact in the society, and utilization of the time and nowadays they are scrutinizing their activities. *Gufa* girls were not allowed to look outside in the light or to visit any male member there” (Sambhu Ram Maharjan, interview). It is also believed as said by an old lady in Panga, Itagoal Kirtipur, Nani Chhori Maharjan:

... it is a traditional ritual for a Newari girl to marry the Sun . . . one of their unique traditional ritual is *Gufa*, when a girl of age between 12-14 years old has to stay in a dark room for twelve days before menstruation. Newari girl’s ritual, social and socio-cultural *karmakarya* begin only after they complete the *Gufa* process. *Gufa* is also known as *Surya Darshan*, a marriage with Sun on 12th day. *Gufa* is a round boat cave like place. (Nani Chhori Maharjan, interview)

On the one hand girls have to complete the hard process in *Gufa* sitting in the dark place for 12 days without eating delicious food and without visiting the male relatives in *Gufa* culture and in *BelBibaha* they have to do the puja- path, eat only the fruits and vegetable items and do *puja* on the previous day of this *BelBibaha* as the *Bel* is taken as a boy with whom the girl is going to marry. Symbolically it refers that marriage does not have only the sexual connection but it is a ritual practice and on the other hand Boys in *karmakarya* have to worship holy gods and goddess being kept them in hard restriction since the previous day of the *karmakarya* without eating the items prepared of buffalos and ducks. They eat only the fruits and vegetable items and simple food. Duck eggs are supposed to be loved by the Newari gods that are carved in different places.

Cultural Studies is important for decoding cultural oppression whereas American pop culture represents experience of power. Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham, England came strongly in 1963 with the views to study all the social and socio-cultural activities. British academician Herbert Richard Hoggart born 24 September 1918 started studying the society and social-activities from cultural perspective. His views are different from Marx’s ideology and class relations and Raymond William’s who followed the theoretical path of Roland Barthes, George Lukas and Michael Foucault. Merriam-Webster, America’s most-trusted online dictionary 2002 writes, “Semiotics is the study of signs and cultural studies that approaches all cultures” (54). Hemingway focuses on the function of language and meaning produced differently in linearity and syntactic relations. Therefore, Cultural Study studies about multiple aspects of the society and socio-cultural activities represented in craftsmanship.

On the basis of above studies key concepts of Cultural Studies are representation, materialism, non-reductionism, articulation, power exercise, popular culture, text and reader’s subjectivity and identity with an interpretation of the field drawing on theories and practices from a range of Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines that seeks to investigate the ways in which cultures produce and are produced. American Cultural

Studies: Introduction to Routledge published in February 4, 2016 writes, “Cultural Studies is exploring the central themes in Modern American Cultural Studies and it is discussing how these themes can be interpreted in American culture” (78). In relation to the arts, literature, culture and society-based activities and history women, ethnic people, *janjati* etc. are the unburied proofs to study and analyze the Arts, Craftmanship, Literature and the cultural connectivity. *Janjati* and women’s issues are not taken seriously in Nepal. A woman's life is viewed as no specific individual value. Therefore, it is indeed necessary to empower the women to change the whole status of women at all. To empower the women, first of all “. . . it is important to create awareness in the society in terms of code of behaviors towards women” (Jolly, 2009). The governmental perspective of qualitative change to make the package more viable is less effective without the mindset change of women that is possible to bring a change only through literary implementations in the society and the social looks.

Talking about Patan and Kirtipur’s arts, culture, literature and the cultural history, they were populated since the rule of Gopal Bamsi. Early residential of Kirtipur and Patan were Shrestha, Maharjan, Shakya, Nakarmi, Dulal, Kapali and they have some similarities and some differences in cultural arts, performances, activities etc. Kirtipur and Patan people have close attachment with the people living in other parts of the valley. Some of them were in attraction of Chanakya philosophy and Buddhism, too. Majority of the people from then society in Kirtipur and Patan follow Hinduism and craftsmanship also are based on the philosophy as Prayagman Pradhan writes:

Kirtipur and Patan’s attachment history is older than PashupatiNath’s history. Talking about PashupatiNath, cow farmers (*gopal*) of Kirtipur used to say that there was a cow named Bahuni with them which used to go there regularly and put on milk there. People eagerly wanted to know that why the cow goes there regularly. After a long they found that there was a place of religious value and named as Pashupati and built the PashupatiNath temple. There is a residential area in Kirtipur named Sagal whereas Sa means cow and Gal or Ga means the place to keep the cows. King Dhana Bajra started people keeping in the community in Sagal. There is a water collection centre named ‘Gopal Pokhari’ where King Dhana Bajra used to teach and convince people. Cow farmers used to sit together and discuss about different things there. (*Kirtipurko*, 2)

Talking about Patan and Kirtipur’s religious and socio-cultural history, in addition to Newars there are residential from Dulal, Kapali, Nakarmi communities, too who perform the cultural activities together with them. Patan and Kirtipur has a long history for rituals, cultural programs, political and socio-political study as writes Pradhan, “. . . there was a big stone below the *Chhithu Dhowaja* whereas Gorkha Captain Kalupandey was kept over the stone and chopped down there. Newars of Kirtipur spit there on the place upto now as a symbol of enmity” (*Kirtipurko*, 33). Many Newars do not believe on the saying that Kalu Pandey is a national hero who worked for the unification of Nepal and they say that he is a criminal who fought against innocent people and even cut their nose, too. It is better to investigate the historical clues and go through the historical records to find out the truth what is said and what is the bitter reality.

The differences between men and women construct two antithetical polar as superior men and inferior women among Newars in Kirtipur. This scheme includes dichotomies between rational/emotional, assertive/ passive, strong/weak, or public/private. These are strategic oppositions, which place “. . . men in the superior position of a hierarchy and women in the inferior position, as the second sex” (Best and Kellner, 1991). Wherever women are subordinated, and “. . . they seem to have recognized and protested that situation in some form” (Lerner, 1993). There is very little consent to be found, for example, in the fact that Flaubert’s encounter with an Egyptain courtesan produced a widely influential model of the oriental women “. . . she never spoke of herself, she never represented her emotions, presence, or history” (Said, 2001). Women felt excluded economically, socially and politically in the past but now days, there is a greater change because of an impact of literature.

Rubee Maharjan, a lecturer in Sahid Smarak College and a cultural specialist of Kirtipur Municipality, Ward no. 10, Bhariya Pukhusi, a member of the joint family including her mother- in-law, husband and two kids in response to the question based on socio-cultural activities asked for social survey writes:

In terms of my personal observation regarding the special attention to my community (Newar Community), I perceive a gradual change in both the consciousness and practices among the people. Beginning from the micro-level of social structure, that is family, I am acquainted with the liberty of the female members of my family that they are privileged to celebrate in recent times. Liberty and freedom used to be exercised by my mother and sister in law (in my husband’s family) were comparatively less than mine (as both a daughter and daughter-in law). Moreover, not a long time back but only almost two decades back, the economic and decision making responsibilities used to be solely dependent upon the male members of my family. (Rubee Maharjan, np.)

She identifies the community activities broadly whereas she finds gradual changes in socio cultural arena. She says that “. . . in the past there used to exist biasness and prejudice regarding caste, gender and religion” (Rubee, np.). Nowadays, there is a great change because of the educational level and a close relationship between the parents and the children. “Un-touchability is almost nill” (Rubee, np.) in her community. Inclusive voice of the male and female, honor of each-other’s identity and religious respect among all the religious groups relocates them under the same umbrella of unification. Significant number of Newars work as an agent to resist the propaganda rooted upon the cultural heritages. Nepal Bhasa based curriculum is essential to include in the school level courses to work as a bridge to make the cross from cultural barriers.

Theoretical and Methodological Application to the Study:

This study excavates on the environmental, social and socio-cultural problems lead by religious fanatics and socio-cultural hegemonies created by them. Literary application on social practices is working as a kind of transforming tool that makes a change in the society as well as in an individual’s life raising the major question on the ritual practices of

the society. Every step for the social and socio-cultural change takes time and it happens in Kirtipur and Patan, too. Defining the Cultural Studies, Stuart Hall in *The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power* writes, “Cultural Studies is an approach to studying culture that lies at the intersection between the Social Sciences, most notably sociology and the humanities. As a non-disciplinary study, Cultural Study draws ideas from diverse fields and academic traditions”(63). Stuart Hall’s principle in Cultural Studies is important for decoding cultural oppression whereas American pop culture represents experience of power.

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Talking about environmental aspects of Kirtipur and Patan heritages all the biotic and abiotic components combinations affect environment and ecology thrown around Krishna Mandir and Adinath Temple with the production of much garbage. In this regard environmentalist Greta Thunberg advocates, “If people knew that the scientists say that we have a five percent chance of meeting the Paris target, and if people knew what a nightmare scenario we will face if we don’t keep global warming below 2o C they wouldn’t need to ask me why I’m on school strike outside parliament” (No One. . .9-10). She hopes that people can change their actions in time to give up the ideas increasing global warming and reduce unnecessary carbon production.

Environmentalist Greta suggests for shifting the anthropocentric views to the biocentrism. Environmentalist Elizabeth Kolbert views that “the earth is first and it is important to save because the same earth is our savior” (*Under a White Sky*. . . 223). If we save the ecology and environment in a proper way we can guaranty for our long life. Earth and earthly things work in the form of ecological sphere to save us from all kinds of

possible dangers. Pure water, fresh air and the beautiful forest are the means for ecological balance. Environmentalists Peter Fiekowsky suggest us to “shift from anthropocentrism to the biocentrism rethinking about disastrous impact of industrialization, so-called modernization and bad environmental results that we are forced to face because of our wrong activities” (*Climate Restoration*. . . 103). Environmentalism is thus good to balance a relationship among biosphere, natural resources, human, ecology and bio-diversity for our healthy, happy and an active living.

Wilson doubts about the future of the new generation and writes, “global warming and climate change may affect on the future of teens” (*Climate Change* . . . 22). Even in the time of such critical situation to sustain to the living beings in this ecology and environment people are living happily with preservation and restoration of various natural resources like air, water, soil as well as forest is essential concerning with the land ethics. People are attacking to the natural resources for their own personal benefits and sometimes we have to face the dangers that overcome in our lives. About environmentalism and renew the face of earth as U.S. Bishop quotes G.M. Hopkins in *Renewing the Earth*, “We can proceed with hope because, as at the dawn of creation, so today the Holy Spirit breathes new life into all earth’s creatures. Today we pray with new conviction and concern for all God’s creation: Send forth thy Spirit, Lord, and renew the face of the earth” (*Environmental* . . . 482). Sustainable management of natural resources helps for eco-system and ecological balance as G.M. Hopkins in *God’s Grandeur* writes, “The world is charged with the grandeur of God. It will flame out, like shining from shook foil” (*The Heritage of Words* 69). According to the theism, earth and earthly things are believed to be gift of God and the God is always aware and busy to take care and save them. The God is responsible to protect its own creation in the shining form and so the environmentalists launch the supportive programs to save the natural, ecological and environmental beauties of arts and artistic creations. To save the environment is to save the human health with the cosmic presence.

Early in the beginning of human civilization, people began to walk in the forest through Himalayas, Hills, and Mountains and used to eat fresh fruits, foods and vegetables and they exercised or used the medicinal herbs for the health treatment as Bill McKibben in “The End of Nature” writes, “Almost every day, I hike up the hill out of my back door. Within a hundred yards the woods swallowed me up, and there is nothing to remind me of human society-no trash, no stumps, no fence . . .” (*Environmental* 261). People enjoyed the friendship with nature without any tension of the human society. Natural-environmental things taking human activities as the superior of all, innumerable human activities are against environmental protection, land ethics, natural principle and so we are compelled to face the present disastrous situation.

In the present, we have some challenges to face the environmental degradation and we can get succeed only through dust and smoke control, common preservation of the natural resources, conducting the natural resources preservation activities, environmental awareness campaigns and controlling the manufacturing industries that help to save the natural resources like natural beauties of Mountains, Himalayas and Islands. Planting the new forests, protection of animal species and natural things like wind and rivers with land

ethics saves us with the environment otherwise we must be ready and responsible to face the challenges as writes Stephen Crane in *The Open Boat*:

The wind had a voice as it came over the waves, and it was sadder than the end. There was a long, loud swishing astern of the boat, and a gleaming trail of phosphorescence, like blue flame, was furrowed on the black waters. It might have been made by a monstrous knife. Then there came a stillness, while the correspondent breathed with open mouth and looked at the sea. (*Environmental* 21)

Excessive increase of human population and exploitation of natural resources in rapid speed is the causes and consequences of natural disaster that misbalanced in eco-system and brought the ecological disaster.

This paper objectifies to make the Cultural studies of craftsmanship to know about Newar culture, rituals and traditions to find out the factors of civilization history that played a responsible role in socio-cultural change among Newar community people. Knowing the changing attitudes in the society with arts, literature and craftsmanship impact this researcher collects the reliable information from Newar community people in Kirtipur and Patan and so this study shapes the research in socio-cultural activities' observation, individual interviews, exploratory and investigative techniques. Researcher prepared questions to ask to the people of Newar community in Kirtipur and Patan to find out the socio-cultural impacts and social attitude towards Newar community and their relationships on nature, environment and environmental things. Qualitative and quantitative both the techniques are applied in mix-methods approach during the fieldwork, and depending on the need and purpose of the chapters data are taken from Newar community people and concerned authorities. References and records are collected organized, classified and analyzed in the research for the output authentication.

Result of the Study:

Craftmanship in Arts and Literature have different impacts in the society and one among them is on socio-cultural aspect in Patan and Kirtipur. Newari craftmanship in tudals, dewals and roofs of the temples have symbolic meanings. Performances in *Jatras*, *puja/path* and other ritual activities in their homes and outsides in religious places follow traditional methods in various communities but there are some changes in educated communities of Patan and Kirtipur. Researcher studied about the causes and consequences of environmental and cultural impacts that helped in crafting rituals and socio-cultural activities to find out the changes that brought. Study of Newari activities from birthday to name keeping, bel-marriage, *gufa* system, *jatra* and funeral ceremonies process of Patan and Kirtipur Newars who are really rich in continuing the arts and craftmanship that is the subject to research.

Conclusion:

Arts, literature and craftmanship bring awareness, self-satisfaction and teach us to live happily even in grave problem and help to change the human ideologies based on certain norms and values to preserve them in the ecological environment. In struggle

for existence of their cultural identity, society forced the authority to accept the rules in the steps to change. The social system, cultural values, and people rights preserved and protected by the state worked to make the state policy for the development of certain community. Talking about Patan and Kirtipur's craftsmanship carved in the temples and religious activities performed there reflect on socio-cultural history. There are lots of things to research and so this paper is based on concretization of the earth, carving everywhere in the places of historical importance and killing of the animals in the name of protecting religious practices. Arts and Literature knowledge helps to study the society and socio-cultural practices in craftsmanship.

Newars in Kirtipur and Patan practice for different kinds of craftsmanship. Arts, culture and craftsmanship of them are connected with cultural and environmental aspects in this study as key elements to study about society, social norms and values and socio-cultural practices. Activities of the people and representative craftsmanship kept in different places there and the things attached on the walls and placed in front of Krishna Mandir and Adinath Temple premises are historically and culturally important things that they represent the buried memories of unburied history. Among different theoretical aspects, this paper concerns with social and socio-cultural perspectives. It also studies of Anthropocene and human atrocity practiced on temples-religious places and other parts of the earth are studied with multidimensionality of the craftsmanship and carries out the possible answers with their symbolic connections. Issues of human activities in the name of religious practices in ecological environment of the Krishna Mandir and Adinath Temple premises are carved portraits based on historical believes.

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- Maharjan, Prem. Kirtipur, 5 Laxi
- Maharjan, Sanat. Kirtipur, 5 Nayabasti
- Maharjan, Shambhuram. Kirtipur 5, Nayabasti
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- Maharjan, Sunil. Kirtipur 10, Panga Dobato
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- Manandhar, Suchita. Kirtipur 10, Nayabazaar
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