

Published by

Nepal University Progressive Professors' Association

Prithvi Narayan Campus Committee

Tribhuvan University, Pokhara, Nepal

Email: progressiveprofessors@pncampus.edu.np

URL: www.pncampus.edu.np

Copyright Information:

Copyright 2024© The Author(s). This work is licensed under [Creative Commons Attribution-](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/)

[NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/)



Purkhyauli Thalo: Me and My Auto Ethnographical Study

Ram Prasad Subedi

Department of Educational Planning and Management

Prithvi Narayan Campus, Tribhuvan University

Email: ramsubedi1964@gmail.com

Article History: Submitted: 17 May 2023, Reviewed: 25 April 2024, Accepted: 27 July 2024

Abstract

The main purpose of this article is to connect my personal experience with social meaning. This article presents my personal experience as a story. In this auto ethnography knowledge production, I present myself and my own particular experience as an analytical narrative. Through this auto ethnography, I have once again connected with the world I lived in and the vivid experiences there through interaction. As a person is a social being, he learns social customs, values and conduct from the elders of the society and the person himself is the source of social information for him. I have taken as a source of information what I have learned directly from the society that brought me up, what I have seen and experienced and who I have interacted with. From the study area, I have received information from people who have lived in different places in the country and abroad through phone interactions and meetings. I have prepared this auto ethnography article by including the social experiences of my mother who raised me and her life stories as a source of information. People are bound by the customs of society. In this auto ethnography exploring social and its associated customs, it becomes apparent that certain rituals once imbued with significance by our ancestors may how impeded societal progress. While these rituals held meaning in their time, their contributed practice poses challenges to the advancement of our community. It seems that there is a need for change in the rituals that have been going on like that. There is a need for a progressive change in the traditions that are the hindrances to the development of such old societies. The conclusion of this article is that there is a need for progressive change in the old social injustices based on caste, gender and color.

Keywords: *Bhota culture, cast genealogy, kairan, untouchability.*

Introduction

Mero Karmagaon Biroubari, is a small place in the middle of the Parbat district spread over an area of 20,000 square meters at an altitude of about 1,200 meters

Purkhyauli Thalo: Me and My Auto Ethnographical Study

above sea level. About 200 years ago (estimated to be seven generations) Dharam Subedi came from Myagdi to Jhaklak in Parbat district and from Jhaklak to Chhamme in Limithana and from there to Biraubari i.e. Ward No. 8 of Thanarmoula. Aryans are believed to have come to India from the Indus Valley around 5000 years ago. Subedi came from Jalandhar in India to Subeda in Bajhang, Nepal. According to the mythological story, Devguru was transformed into Gautama, the son of Brihaspati, Bharadwaja and Donacharya from Gautama, Aswattha, the son of Dronacharya and his descendants in various lineages (Satyal, 2006). After that, the Subedi's came from India and settled in a place called Subeda in Bajhangam, so the name Subedi remained in some genealogies. It is also mentioned that the name Subedi remained because he could pronounce the Vedas well. Brahmsng to the culture scholar Gurung (2021), in the 15th century, the Aryas, especially the Brahms, took their mouths and fists to protect themselves from the Muslim invasion of India and went up to the mountains and reached Suweda. After that, they spent a few generations in the Rakhu of Myagdi from Suweda and moved around in search of a suitable place to live. The opinions of old ancestors and elders are found as evidence of the transmission. The name Subedi remained because he could pronounce the Vedas well.

Biraubari is not considered suitable from the point of view of commuting, farming, and living. The choice of ancestors at that time should be considered as a strange mystery in that place where water and food supply are not good for living and there are more inconveniences. I have the same assessment. Taking *Mathilla* (upper) and *Talla* (lower) as two layers in Biraubari, first there was not a lot of water in the upper layer. In the wintertime, one had to go to the Jukepani stream to get water, so it was a problem to bring only one gallon of water in the morning. A traditional saying was that in villages where there is a problem of water, there was a problem in getting a daughter-in-law after marrying a son. Therefore, it was a traditional tradition to look at water problems like this. This meant that it was difficult to get married in a place where there was a drinking water problem. However, new water streams have been distributed there now. I meant to say in the sense of choosing the place done by the ancestors.

Figure 1

Study area Biraubari



In Biraubari, the houses from *Bataghara* (house in road) below are called *talla thare* (house in below) and there were 12 houses. There were three houses in *Bataghara*, five houses in *Nayaghara* (new house), three houses in *Masaghara* (handle), one house in *Chaukali* (place where priest sit) and 12 houses. There was also scarcity of water. Although there were some facilities in the lower strata than the upper strata, but there were some facilities in the *Pandhera* (pond of water) well during the rains, but there were some facilities in the winter, there was only a queue of people in the well, so we had to wait for a long time.

The buckets used to carry water often leaked. Chuhi put either soil or ash from the house in the gagri and avoided it. The condition of Gagri who carried water was the same. New Gagri had a special honor for carrying water. In the house of such people, either Garduwa (Goddhuwa) had just got married or Lahure who had a good income was abroad. Later, to feed the cattle, cullo was dug from the source of Jukepani and brought through the cave river. The main objective of the study is to analyze cultural ethnography with self-experience i.e., auto ethnographical study of society.

Study Method

This study is based on qualitative methods, so in this study Qualitative approach is used to analyze data. According to Rajbhandari (2021, p. 76) qualitative research conducted on abstract qualitative topics such as human behavior, nature, character, tendency, social method, relationship and interaction, social and cultural value-recognition and belief. Similarly, Khanal (2012, p. 215), argues that qualitative research is used in academic fields. It is researched focusing on subjects such as individuals, society, and culture. Qualitative research believes that there is no single truth in social life. This research on the auto ethnography of my village based on genealogy has been carried forward by the use of qualitative research method and it is based on the process rather than the results.

Taking Biraubari as a base, the necessary data has been obtained by inquiring from my ancestors who lived there. The small village in the middle of the mountain district spread over an area of about 20,000 square meters at a height of about 1,200 meters above sea level, which has Thama in the east, *Wagguwa Kholo* in the west, *Ozhel Pakho* in the north and *Kavrobot* in the south. About 200 years ago (estimated to be seven generations) Dharam Subedi came from Maggadi to Jhaklak and from Jhaklak to Chhamme and from there came to Varirubari. There, with his own efforts, he dug up the barren Kharwari and made it suitable for habitation, hence its name is Virauvari. After all, how Dharam Subedi came to that place is a matter of speculation, research and investigation.

Most of the data sources here were studied by me and with necessary information from my mother. Now the elders of Biraubari and my classmates, wherever they went, contacted through various means, and collected data using various means. There were 10 informants who obtained data through inquiry in this way. Based on the information provided by them and my experience and observations, this research auto ethnography has been carried forward.

The main objective of the study is to analyze cultural ethnography with self-experience i.e., auto ethnographical study of society.

The Sociability of Thalo

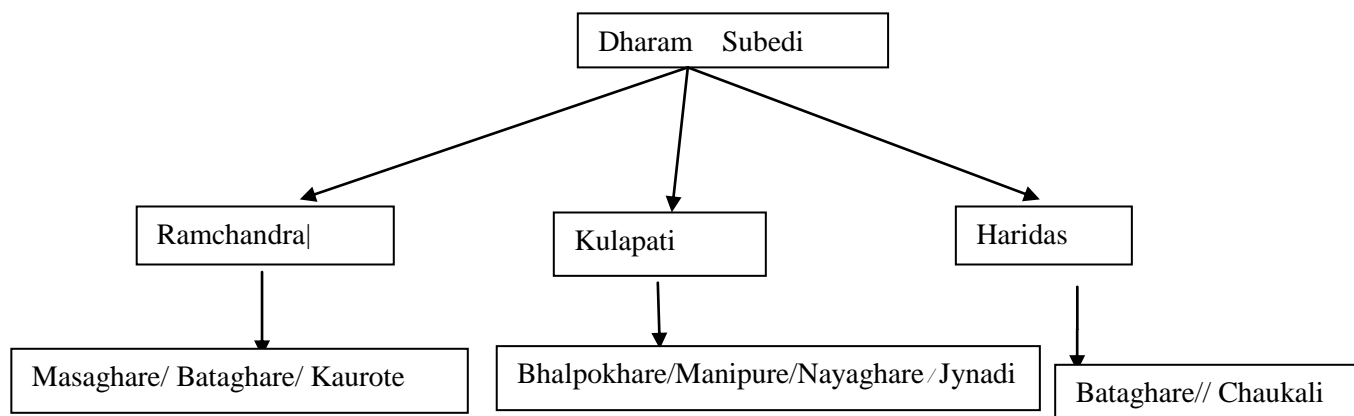
A place where people with the same lifestyle and behavior live is called society (Kamte, 1850, cited Sharma, 2012). Society is divided into geographical areas. Even the society of Biraubari is not very big and is bounded in a limited circle. The population is now few due to migration. Which was 'Gulzar' a few years ago. It depends on the behavior of the person who shows the way for the civilized development of society and its continuation. The behavior of the elders is followed by the younger ones. In the Gita (3, 21) God says –

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः। (Ydadacharati shreststatattadevetaro Janah)
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥३.२१॥ (Sa yatpramanakurute lokastdanuvarte)

What great people do; common people follow. At home, father and mother at school, head teacher should become a dignified person in the society. Bandura (1986) also says the same thing.

Figure 2

Geneology of Subedi



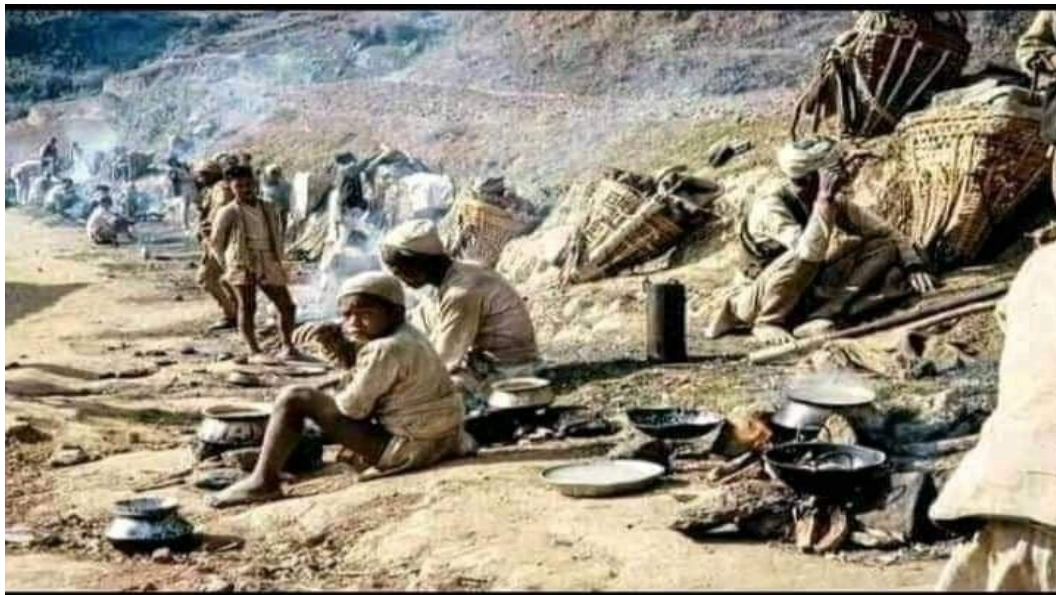
My Kairan

In terms of social behavior or personal habits, I think that what the elders taught me is not very meaningful in life. Perhaps many of them were my hereditary qualities. Getting angry quickly, fearing speaking in a crowded place due to lack of self-esteem etc. If I had been able to improve these qualities due to family reasons and the right environment, I would have been ahead of this stage of life. According to Bandura (1986), children are quick to follow the elders who show the way in the society, for example, when I was in a conscious state; I did not find the elders who showed me the way to be such examples. I was completely ignorant of my father's personal conduct. Maila Ba and Jetha Ba passed away before I was born. The other two were Saila and Kaila Ba and their behavior was not conducive to good social behavior. Saila Ba used to follow the forest, hay, and goats all his life, while the

other Kaihilaba spent most of his life in the lake, going to the barn by putting flour on a cloth and following the tails of the cattle. Both were illiterate but seemed to be full of knowledge. He used to nail his shoes on his feet and use soap and not take a bath. In this sense, there is more contact with nature. The body was only empty and empty. However, they had a local level of civility and politeness. It was different from what it is now. At that time, you could not get salt without voting.

Figure 3

On the way from Bhota



Even though there has been some change now, the village was poor in terms of sanitation at that time. No one had a toilet in their house. Roadsides, riverbanks, and forests were suitable places for ejection. Of course, the practice of defecating and urinating on the road is because nature likes to urinate. Our ancestors must have understood that flowers, roots, and leaves given by nature are useful for us.

There was sometimes pain in that way of life, that is - when going to school, when going to call for prayer and when going to offer tears, you had to walk by stepping on feces. I have already expressed drinking water in my self-examination. They had to put mud in the leaky hole and close the hole and bring water. Few people seemed to use soap for washing clothes and bathing. They used to cook the clothes in ash and beat them with a stick, and they used githa, cow dung etc. for bathing. There was hardly a person who did not feel tired and sore. But the angeri of the forest was used as a medicine.

The Condition of Women

The social condition of women was very poor. The custom of not drinking the husband's water and the wife not eating before the husband was seen and experienced until much later, which is still a tradition. Men and mothers-in-law were

violent towards wives and daughters-in-law. Even if the husband sat at the shop and gossiped till mid night, the wives would sit at home waiting for food. The husband and wife could not be heard talking to each other and they were shy to open in front of each other. Both used to go to the fields and fields carrying the head of manure. When they came back, the husband would come waving his hand, while the wife had to carry the 'doko' of the husband and bring it. As there were small houses and small houses where everyone slept, Mazeri, Ati, and courtyard were used. In this way, it was a sexist society. In the patriarchal society, women had to fight. At that time, most of the houses did not have matches and lighters, they had to go to someone else's house to get fire, so when the daughter-in-law went to get fire in another's house, she had to bring the fire only by carrying the man's clothes, if her granddaughter took fire, she was slandered as lazy. There was no machine for kutani and pisani, dhiki and jato were used. Beating and grinding had to be done before morning light. About the condition of women, my mother told me an incident, "One day, when I was wearing it, I saw my grandfather's flashlight on my head, because it was something I had never seen before, so when I took it in my hand, I pressed the switch to turn off the light, and then I splashed water and ran away saying that they would abuse me." Jethaba came and scolded her and turned off the light. Although this was a common occurrence, it gave an indication of the status of women at that time. Whatever was there, it took the next generation to continue the tradition. Here women were seen as a tool for use.

The law of that time did not prohibit second marriage, so it was customary to marry a second time if someone was not happy with his wife. If a daughter was born without a son, the second marriage was common. A man was exempted from second marriage, but if a woman married died, she had to wear white clothes and chant the name of the dead person for the rest of her life. If a widow got married, she would either be ostracized from society, or she would be removed from her caste and kept in a subsistence shelter near the village. The daughter-in-law should not show her hair to the brother-in-law, and if she had to bow to her mother-in-law and father-in-law, she should bow her head to the ground. Even when I went there a couple of years ago, I saw it in some places. When women were menstruating, they had to stay outside the village in someone else's house or in a katera. It was a kind of chaupadi custom. I have found it to be somewhat less now. If you don't touch it, it stays the same. My sisters' childhood was also like this.

Social Harmony and Caste Untouchability

At that time, there was a lot of violence due to caste, touch, and speed. It was not customary to enter the house without taking a quick shower after going outside. By doing this, I was prouder of what I did right than of what I did wrong. His ancestors used to take this work as pride. If he went to Damai's house and Kami's house for some work, he would quickly enter after coming back. The dishes eaten by Damai and Kami were taken outside after drying them quickly and taking them inside. It was not customary to eat what one cooked and the other ate during Bhojbhater. Many used to present themselves as 'Swampakya'. No one even ate what his wife cooked at home.

Women were oppressed. Dalits were discriminated against. Despite all this, the structure of the society was perfect in terms of harmony, reconciliation, and transactions with each other. If it was known that someone's house had been charmed, it was customary to ask to eat it, and it worked well. The social discipline of that time-maintained character restrictions and discipline. There was a custom of calling witches and dokhs by keeping a dhami. In this way, when the witches and dokhs were called, they used to accuse the person who got angry and cut off his rope. Widows and weak women in the village were also harassed on the accusation of witchcraft. Some used to call women witches when they were angry. Here, people were often called by names according to their external behavior, physical appearance, and work. Nowadays, names like Bander, Bange, Dhurmuse, which come from television serials, are used by almost everyone. This type of social culture was the structure of society at that time.

As it is said, 'after just one pillow, you feel pain', there used to be partial fights and even beatings due to people's quarrels. There were often quarrels in the village due to the grabbing of a small piece of land in Pandhera's pond and the forest of Gaulote, moving stones around in the mouth, due to which the conversation stopped. When some of them planted their fields, there was a quarrel when the water tank was not arranged, and when the brothers did not agree on the share, and they did not get the land and fohota as they had said. It is mentioned in Chanakya Niti (9,2):

परस्परस्य मर्माणि ये भाषन्ते नराऽधमाः । त एव विलयं यान्ति वल्मीकोदरसर्पवत् ॥

That's how those in the society who quarrel with each other by blaming each other, they are killed like a snake caught in a fireball. Quarrels give people temporary satisfaction but ultimately harm them physically and mentally.

Conclusion

I have started this self-examination myself and my personal life. Recently, I have paid attention to the physical, social, and cultural experiences, thoughts and feelings. I systematically use sociological introspection and sensory recall in an attempt to understand my life experiences. And I wrote my experience as a story. I am trying to understand my way of life. This is an analytical "narrative" of me in knowledge production and my "own" particular experience of producing knowledge. This story is a personal sociological introspection to understand my experience and the society I grew up in with the people there and the world they live in. This self-examination is the social reality of me and my society that guides me. The sources of information during knowledge creation are my own and the realities of the society that interacts with me. The person himself is a source of information. Here I have connected my story with the society that led me and made the reality of the society.

The society I grew up consist gender and racial discriminations. I have observed such customs have obstructed the social development process. There is a need for radical change in some of them. When the ancestors came to this village, he may have had his wife and daughters with him, but there is no mention of them anywhere in the genealogy. The branch of the genealogy tree of those whose sons were not

born has been broken; there is a need for research on such gender discrimination, so my conclusion is that women should also be accounted for in the genealogy.

References

- Adhikari, T.N. G. (2018). *Chanakya neeti*. Vidyarthi Pustak Bhandar.
- Bhattacharai, H. & Krishna B. G.C. (2012). *Advanced Psychology*. Jupiter Printers and Publishers House Pvt. Ltd.
- Dahal, R. (2014). *Swami bivekananda: Biography and philosophy*. Panch pokhari
- Ghimire, G. 'Vedmani' (2019). *Karmadarshan*. Nepal Prajyana Pratishtan.
- Gita Press, Gorakhpur (2018). *Srimad Bhagavad Gita (Shankarabhashya Hindi)*. Gita Press Gorakhpur –273005.
- Goyandaka, J. (2012). *Srimad Bhagavad Gita TaEvavivechani Hindi—Commentary*. Gita Press Gorakhpur—273005
- K.C., B. and Paudel. G. (2021). *Theory and practice of non-formal education*. Pinnacle Publications Pvt. Ltd.
- Khanal, P. (2011). *Educational research methodology*. Sunlight Publication.
- Koirala, B.P. (2000). *Afno katha*, Sajha prakashan.
- Kumar, V. (2015). *Khushi*. Fine Print Books.
- Pandey, M. (2006). (translator), *Mero kahani*. Asia Publications Pvt.
- Pandey, P. (2012). *Anugita (Nepali translation)*. Editor Tikaram Adhikari. Student Book Depository.
- Pant, O. (2012). *Seven upanishads*. Vidyarthi Pustak Bhandar.
- Paudyal, V.(2012). *Some gems of veda purana*. Sajha Publications.
- Prabhupada, S. (1997). *Srimad-bhagavadgita yatharupa*. Bhakti Vedanta Book Trust.
- Prabhupada, S. (2017). *One more chance*. Bhakti Vedanta Book.
- Prapannacharya, S. (2004). *What is in the vedas?* Common Publication. Publishing House.
- Rajbhandari, R. (2021). *Basic Research Method*. R. R. Publishers & Distributers.
- Ram Gita (nd). Mumbai Book Building.
- Ramsukhdas, S. (2010). *Srimad bhagavadgita sadhak—Sanjivani (with Appendix) Hindi Tika*. Gita Press - 273005.
- Sharma, C. & Nirmala Sharma (2012). *Philosophical and theological basis of education*. M.K. Publication.
- Sharma, N. (2021). *Ashtabakra gita*. Vidyarthi Pustak Bhandar translation. Author.
- Vashishtha, R. (2014). *Where is God and how to find him*. Student Book Depository.
- www.martinchautari.com
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dSyOU_TEDhA