

Hanuman Dance: A cultural identity of Newar in Baglung

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Abstract

The performative dimension of a cultural dance encompasses various elements such as body movements, gestures, facial expressions, costumes, music, and storytelling, all of which come together to convey meaning, emotion, and cultural identity. It's not just about the physical movements but also about the expression of values, beliefs, and traditions within a community and society. This research analyses the performative dimension of Hanuman dance as a cultural performance among Newar community of Baglung. This dance, in Baglung, has been promoted, preserved and performed by Newar people. They have long-term impact of their own traditional rituals and they have not avoided the culture especially based on their caste and ethnicity. They perform various kinds of dances and dance dramas which are an important part of their cultural and ritual practices. These performances are the key elements in introducing the culture of the community and they are remaining as the chief sources of their cultural heritage. Among various kinds of cultural folk performances that are traditionally adopted in the community Hanuman dance, Nagnagini dance, Voteshelo dance, Jogi dance, Lakhe dance and Ropain dance are widely popular in Dhawalagiri region. Every ritual performance does have its own cultural aesthetic and this aesthetic can be exposed through the means of performance. Cultural dance as performance is a display of social or cultural activities and the representation of community activity. Thus, this paper attempts to analyze Hanuman Dance as a cultural performance as cultural performances are vibrant showcases of tradition, rhythm, and religion, often reflecting the rich heritage and customs of a particular community or region. From the graceful movements of ballet to the energetic steps of Hanuman dance, each performance offers a unique glimpse into the cultural identity of it's' performers. The wholesale analysis of the dance performance will be carried out in the light of Richard Schechner's concept of "Ritual and Performance", "Fundamental of Performance Studies", Victor Turner's "Liminality and Communitas", "Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow and Ritual", Abhi Subedi's "Nepali Theatre as I See It", and M. Certeau's "Walking in the City" etc. The tentative conclusion at which the analysis will arrive is that The Hanuman Dance not only entertains the audiences and participants but also preserves and promotes cultural identity and social harmony.

Keywords: Cultural performance, hanuman dance, ritual, beats, Newari people

Introduction

Hanuman dance holds immense significance as it reflects the traditions, beliefs, and values of a community or society. It serves as a means of preserving cultural heritage, fostering social cohesion, and expressing cultural identity. This dance carries symbolic meanings related to spirituality, rites of passage, storytelling and celebration. It has been providing a platform for cultural and artistic expression and has been a source of pride, unity and harmony for individuals within a community.

Hanuman dance has been performing at different fairs and festivals in Newar community of Baglung. It was initiated in Bhaktapur at first and was brought to Baglung along with the arrival of Newar People in Baglung before around 275 years ago. There are various causes for the displacement of Newari people from their original land. Among them the main cause was the search for livelihood. The arrival of Newar in Baglung for the first time was from Vadgaun, Lalitpur. Dhanjusingh and Chhatrasingh Malla, the eldest brother Dhanjusingha Malla arrived in

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1768 B.S. Then after in 1773 B.S. Beerkrishna Shrestha and in 1885 B.S. Ratnashingha arrived in Baglung.) As Prem Chhota has said “and then in 1826 B.S. King Prithvi Narayan Shah attacked on Vadgaun and Newari people were compelled to leave their original place” (68). Then they dispersed in different places of Nepal such as Janakpur, Biratnagar, Ilam, Jhapa, Butwal, Palpa, Pokhara, Dang, Doti, Baglung, Parbat (kusma), and Myagdi (Beni) etc. In this way, the ethnic Newari people of Baglung were migrated from Vadgaun (Khwopa) to Balgung in 1763, 1768, 1785, 1826, 1862, 1850, 1893, B.S. respectively. In this way, Newari people dispersed in many parts of the country, created the settlement and developed the marketplaces. They also brought their own original culture with them. It is believed that when the Newars came to Baglung, migrated from Vadgaun for the first time because of several causes, the situation in Baglung was also worse. Social disorder was pervasive. To pacify such situation people began to search the places in order to fix such type of monument of Hanuman. People found the monument of Hanuman on that huge rock. People produced the place to fix their cultural identity.

Hanuman dance’ is a kind of dance performance preserved and performed by the Newar youths in Baglung, Western part of Nepal as their cultural and ritual identity. Newar community is one of the major ethnic communities in Nepal, and these people have their own unique cultural practices. Newari people are very rich in cultural heritage and most of the cultural practices in Newar community concern to reflect the socio-cultural aspects of their life like birth, death, marriage rituals etc.

In the beginning, these people used to perform Hanuman Dance in the month of Vadra in every three years but later they began to perform in the intervals of five, seven and eleven years. According to their assumption, there must be an odd number of years to initiate the performance. It is regarded as appropriate that the dance can be shown twice a week, especially on Saturday and Tuesday. In some exceptional cases the dance can be shown on Thursday as well. Hanuman Dance is a social and cultural performance that helps in asserting the cultural heritage of these ethnic people. The dance is based on the legendary story of Ramayana. Chhota (2068 B.S.) in this connection has said:

The story revolves around the heroic character of Ramchandra. According to the story God Ramchandra’s wife Sita was abducted by the king of Lanka, Rawana while Ramchandra, sita and Laxman were in the life of forest due to their internal family clash. While Sita was abducted Ramchandra was

depressed. At the very time Sita was rescued by the Hanuman, the son of Anjani (Bayu). The performances of Hanuman Dance are exclusively based on the journey of Hanuman while crossing the seas and defeating the king of Lanka to rescue Sita. The Hanuman Dance has been composed according to the spirit of different dance performance of Hanuman. This traditional dance performance represents the different dance form of Hanuman. It is believed that the entreaty and adoration of Hanuman definitely evokes power among the performers. (pp. 66-67)

Hanuman, the Hindu deity known for his devotion, strength, and agility, is often depicted in religious ceremonies, stories, and performances. This dance aids in culturally unite the youths and develops a sense of cooperation and unity. This dance has become the cultural identity of Newari people. The steps of Hanuman dance can win the heart of the audience and win the emotional expression of their sentiment they lead the performance into the mode of spiritual dimensions representing the diverse forms of Hanuman.

Literature Reviews

Many scholars have studied the culture of Newari people in diverse localities all over the country. Among the scholarships, most of them are concerned with observing the socio-cultural and ritual practices in Newari community in the western part of Nepal. In the process of describing various kinds of cultural performances in Newari community, the researchers have also talked about the popular Hanuman dance of Baglung. Literati Chhota (2068 B.S.) views:

Among the traditional folk dances of Baglung, Hanuman Dance is regarded as one of the main folk dance. At first, the Newari people had come here from Bhaktapur and Vadgaun and from that time onwards they began to perform this type of dance as their cultural identity. In the beginning, these people performed Hanuman Dance in the month of Vadra every three years but later they began to perform in the intervals of five, seven and eleven years. Once, this dance was performed in thirteen years as well. According to their assumption, there must be an odd number of years to initiate the performance. To preserve, promote and institutionalized this dance an institution named “Council for Hanuman Dance Conservation” had been established in 2046 B.S. Since that time, this dance has been conducted under the patronship and supervision of this institution (Chhot, 2068 B.S., p. 52).

According to him the role of Hanuman dance in the context of Baglung is very significant. It is the main dance to preserve folk dance pattern. The pioneers of this dance are Newari people of Baglung who had migrated from Vadgaun to Baglung and brought their unique performance with them. They institutionalized this dance culturally and socially thus to preserve the cultural identity.

Shrestha (2075) views “religious and cultural dances aim at providing entertainment to us and at the same time they present important events and trends of the society. There we find the religious influence as well” (p. 5). These sorts of dance encompass the religious influence along with the cultural unity, strength and entertainment.

Cultural dance performances hold significant meaning and value in societies around the world. These performances are often deeply rooted in the history, traditions, and values of a particular culture, and they serve multiple purposes, including the preservation of Culture Cultural dance performances are a means of preserving and transmitting cultural heritage from one generation to another. They often embody stories, rituals, beliefs, and customs that are integral to a community's identity. Celebration, many cultural dance performances are associated with celebrations and festivals, such as religious ceremonies, harvest festivals, or national holidays. These performances serve as a way for communities to come together and celebrate their shared heritage and values. Ganeshram Lachhi in his article *Newari Sanskritima Lekhanach*, published in *Madhupark* has significantly valued the cultural dance as the expression of unity and cultural prosperity in the society. Culture is divided into two types: tangible and intangible. Physical cultural heritages like temples, gumbas, churches etc. come under tangible culture whereas dances, music, festivals, rituals, jatras etc. which we can't touch, are intangible culture. The government has brought different plans and a policy to protect tangible culture where as nothing is done to protect intangible culture (Shrestha, 2075). It's the responsibility of government and concerned society to protect and conserve both tangible and intangible culture. In this connection participating in cultural dance performances fosters a sense of belonging and unity among community members. Through shared movements, rhythms, and expressions, individuals develop a sense of camaraderie and solidarity. Cultural dance serves as a powerful means of expressing cultural identity and pride. Through dance, individuals can express their emotions, histories, and aspirations, reinforcing their sense of belonging to a particular cultural group.

Similarly, in connection of this Hanuman dance, Literati Shrestha (2063 B.S.) Views:

This Hanuman Dance should not be taken only religious and spiritual way. Especially, the dance inspires youths to remain socially revered, devout and supportive. This dance evokes a kind of strength and power in the body of the participants and helps to remain physically healthy. In the performance of Hanuman youth's participants keep themselves reverent and cooperative. Cooperating and participating in this dance is regarded as spiritually and socially significant. The dance develops a sense of mutual relationship. This dance demonstrates our unique identity and we must promote, conserve and linger on it forever. It is the property of Nepali culture (p. 63). Different theorists and scholars have contributed valuable insights into understanding the cultural dimensions of dance performance, including its ritualistic, communicative, and identity-affirming aspects within various cultural contexts (p. 00).

Methodology

The present researcher attempts to analyze Hanuman Dance as a creative practice of cultural performance in Newari people in Baglung. The wholesale analysis of the dance performance will be carried out in the light of Richard Schechner's concept of “Ritual and Performance”, “Fundamental of Performance Studies”, Victor Turner's “Liminality and Communitas”, “Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow and Ritual”, Abhi Subedi's “Nepali Theatre as I see It”, and M. Certeau's “Walking in the City” etc. Direct observation of the dance performance in Baglung area as the primary sources and as secondary sources, I studied the documents, news articles, books published about this dance and direct conversations with the aging people of Newar community of Baglung. The tentative conclusion at which the analysis will arrive is that The Hanuman Dance not only entertains the audiences and participants but also preserves and promotes the cultural identity and social harmony for the cultural prosperity of society.

Theoretical Framework

Performance studies offer a rich theoretical framework for the analysis of cultural dances, allowing scholars to explore the multifaceted aspects of these performances beyond just their aesthetic qualities. Performance studies emphasize the embodied nature of cultural practices, including dance. Scholars examine how dancers use their bodies to express cultural meanings, beliefs, and values through movement. This includes analyzing gestures, postures, facial expressions, and bodily techniques within

the context of the cultural dance form. Cultural dances often play a crucial role in the construction and negotiation of identity. Performance studies provide a framework for understanding how individuals and communities perform identity through dance, including aspects such as gender, ethnicity, nationality, and social status. Scholars may explore how dancers enact and negotiate various identities through their performance choices and interactions with audiences. It is an interdisciplinary field that studies the performative dimensions of cultural performances as a tool. It encompasses the systematic study of the diverse events and activities having cultural significance. Richard Schechner, Peggy Phelan, Dwight Conquergood, Victor Turner, Abhi Subedi, Michel de Certeau etc. have significantly contributed to the field of performance studies. Every movement in space has a special significance and meaning. Certeau (1925–1986) was a French Jesuit scholar, cultural theorist, and historian known for his interdisciplinary approach to understanding culture, society, and everyday life. His work has had a significant influence on fields such as cultural performance. In this connection Michel de Certeau indicates “Linking acts and footsteps, opening meanings and directions, these words operate in the name of an emptying-out and wearing-away of their primary role. They become the liberated spaces that can be occupied” (p. 341). The act of walking becomes a means through which individuals engage with and reinterpret the city. Certeau suggests that walking is not merely a physical act but also a cultural and political one, through which people assert their agency and challenge the structured order of the city. In this sense, walking in the city becomes a form of resistance against the dominant powers that shape urban environments. The agency of individuals in shaping and interpreting their urban surroundings, highlighting the creative ways in which people navigate and make meaning within the constraints of the built environment.

This theoretical background opens the new way to interpret and analyze the dance performance distinctively. As Turner (2008) views:

Liminal phenomena tend to be collective, concerned with calendrical, biological, and social-structural rhythms or with crises in social processes whether these result from internal adjustments or external adaptations or remedial measures. Thus, they appear at what may be called ‘natural ‘breaks’, natural disjunctions in the flow of natural and social processes. They are thus enforced by socio-cultural ‘necessity’ (pp. 226-227). the term "liminal" refers to the transitional stage between two distinct phases in a ritual or cultural process. Turner's work focused on

understanding the symbolic and transformative aspects of liminality within cultural performances. Liminality refers to a state of in-betweenness, where performers and participants experience a sense of being neither here nor there, often leading to transformative experiences. Overall, Turner's concept of liminal phenomena provides a valuable framework for understanding the transformative power of performances, rituals, and cultural practices in shaping individual and collective identities, meanings, and experiences. It highlights the liminal spaces as sites of creativity, experimentation, and social change within various cultural contexts. In this way, performance theories have abundant possibilities to study and research the diverse performative dimensions of society.

Critical Overview

During an hour of dancing the performers present themselves in such a motion that their performativity attracts the audiences and the audiences participate themselves whole heartedly in this process. Active participation of the audience in Hanuman dance performance helps to carry the dance into the creative frame. As Schechner (2002) claims “Performance occurs in many different instances and contexts and as many different kinds” (p. 12). All the events that the story carries in Hanuman dance are mostly close to the Hindu mythology of Ramayana. Chhota (2068 B.S.) further clarifies:

The central feature of Hanuman dance is a legend reminiscent of the Ramayana epic. According to the story, God Ramchandra’s wife Sita was abducted by the king of Lanka, Rawana while Ramchandra, Sita and Laxman were in the life of forest due to their internal family clash. While Sita was abducted Ramchandra was depressed. At the very time, Sita was rescued by the Hanuman, the son of Anjani (Bayu). The performances of Hanuman Dance are exclusively based on the journey of Hanuman while crossing the seas and defeating the king of Lanka. After defeating the Rawana and rescuing Sita Hanuman performed different sorts of dances and this Hanuman dance is taken as the prevue of dance in the image of Hanuman. The Hanuman Dance had been composed according to the spirit of different dance performance of Hanuman (p.66)

Hanuman dance can be performed on the road, chowks, in front of temple etc. by the youths of 16 years to 40 years. Women are not allowed to participate in this dance. During the performance, youths are selected by the Kaji. There must be 13 couple at least but sometime 15 couple

can also be participated. This means altogether 30 performers are needed for this dance performance.

The performers who are in the form of Hanuman to participate this dance need to have the following apparel.

Red short of crimson colour. Half paint of golden velvet. (chudarilagayako) Miniskirt of velvet cloths. Five fit long stick of simali wood and fur of maize to make the tail of performers. One and a half fit a long circular stick of wood. Ram tilak on the forehead of performers. The crown in the image of Hanuman on the head and Ghunghanda on the legs. Colourful garlands around the neck and numerical 10. If possible the image of Hanuman should be kept. These all things have their religious and cultural significance in their community.

The apparel they are festooned with has distinct performative values. While watching, the audiences internalize the cultural significance of the past where Hanuman used to show different forms of entertainment. As Subedi (2006) views "Heritage of theatre implies a transmission of dramaturgical and performative experiences from one generation to another. Dramatic heritage is thus the continuation of a culture of performance that is vibrant at a particular time and space" (p.18). In Hanuman dance also the process or beats of dancing, the overwhelming sound they produce, the steps they contest the circular stick of their hands with their fellow partner, and the dramatic acting they perform are almost similar to that of hundreds of years ago.

The performative patterns have been transmitted from generation to generation. When people watch this dance performance they feel as if they are living in the Treta Yuga or a past event has come to the surface in the present time. The dance performance with some sort of costume, style and ritualistic performance makes the audiences feel as if the history is repeated. Similarly, talking about the transformation of tradition, Vatsyayan (2005) views: "The flow of tradition may be compared to a double-reed flute. One reed is a perennial strain, a tonic, immutable trans-space and time; the other reed plays the tune of immediate space" (p. 40). Hanuman dance in Baglung, has got its long distance historical background. Moreover, the main spirit of its originality is continuing though being mingled with some immediate transformations that are unavoidable. Moreover, the performance of walking creates cultural mobility. The concept of walking and contesting the circular wooden stick overwhelmingly by each pair in Hanuman dance creates a kind of vibrant cultural performance. The performers in the form of Hanuman, the group of musicians and singers walk in their respective processions and so do the audiences watching. They make the frozen city a vibrant one. People

walk down from all sides of the hilly villages to the city and create a kind of communitas.

After being prepared in the form of Hanuman, they remain in the place called Akheda in pair. Among the performers, the pair who lead dance and the pair who stays at the back of the procession are regarded as the main Hanuman. From the beginning to the end of this dance performance Hanumans are supposed to obey the strict rule such as bathing every day and remaining in Bramacharya. They become like 'liminal entities'. As Turner (2008) views "liminal entities are neither here nor there, they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention and ceremonial" (p. 89). He further says:

"During the intervening "liminal" period, the characteristics of the ritual subject are ambiguous; he passes through a cultural realm that has few or no one of the attributes of the past coming state. Ritual subject is expected to behave by certain customary norms and ethical standards binding on incumbents of social positions in a system of such positions. (p. 89)

They fix their territory and within that territory, nobody is allowed to enter except them. After that musical artists begin to play the 'Dholhaya' tune which is supposed to evoke God. He further views: "the distinction between structure and communitas is not simply the familiar one between "secular" and "sacred", or that, for example between politics and religion. Certain fixed offices in tribal societies have many sacred attributes, indeed, every social position has some sacred characteristics" (Turner, 2008, p.165). The performers of hanuman dance should follow some sacred rituals while participating this dance performance assigned and arrayed by cultural law, custom, convention and ceremonial.

The Performances of Hanuman Dance

Nepal is recognized in the globe as a state with the varied cultural practices because there is the equanimity of various ethnic groups and their diverse social and cultural practices. These cultural practices of different ethnic groups are fixed in a social frame with their own varieties of different performance practices. As Schechner (2003) has said "Rituals are performative: they are acts done; and performances are ritualized: they are codified, repeatable actions" (p. 613). Hanuman Dance is divided into the ten segments (beats) and these ten segments (beats) have been performed gradually one after another while performing the dance. The dance begins with the step of 'Dholhaya'. In this step all the Hanumans should remain bowing down their body in sequence. Throughout this step they should remain in full discipline. The second step is the step of

offering 'Salute'. In this step, all Hanumans gradually stand up and offer the 'Salute' collectively. The third step is the step of six steps. In this step they contest their circular stick of their hands with their respective partner. They produce a type of musical sound while contesting their circular wooden stick in their hands and begin to dance. The fourth step is the step of eight steps. In this step, all the Hanumans shout and entertain profoundly. This step is supposed to be associated with the defeat of Rawana, the King of Lanka, by Hanuman.

The fifth step is the step of sixteen steps. These steps demonstrate glimpses of the preparation while attacking on the Kingdom of Rawana. The sixth step is the step of twelve steps. Twelve steps are played in this step. These steps demonstrate the strength and power of Hanuman before killing the Rawana in Lanka. The seventh step is played and the Hanumans stay on the circular form and they shout. The significance of these steps is supposed that Hanumans kept god Ram, Sita and Laxman at the center and celebrated the victory over Rawana. In the seventh step 24th steps is played because this is the celebration of Hanumans when the Rawana's brother, Bibishan took the throne of Lanka. The ninth step is the step of 'Turlingchhayasa'. In this step, the group of hymns sings different type of hymns in Newari language and the Hanumans show their dance interestingly by kneeling (bowing) down their knees. Similarly, the tenth step is played as the step of 'departure'. The step is played focusing on 'Takang Dhuntung Nale' / 'Nale Takang Dhuntung Nale' tune. In this way, the performers of Hanumana dance demonstrate their creative performance exclusively based on their traditional culture and identity. As Schechner (2008) views:

In every culture either entertainment or efficacy is dominant, but the situation is never static: one rises while the other declines. The changes in the relationship between entertainment and efficacy are part of the overall pattern of social change. Performance is more than a mirror of social change, however; it participates in the complex process that *creates* change (p. 624).

This Hanuman dance generates both entertainment and efficacy among the people of society. During the hour of dancing the performers present themselves in such a motion that their performativity attracts the audience and the audiences participate themselves wholeheartedly in this process. Active participation of the audiences in Hanuman dance performance helps to carry the dance into creative frame. Ritual is conducted with certain purpose. "The dance is grounded on a legend reminiscent of the Ramayana epic. The victory of Hanuman over Rawana

while rescuing Sita is taken as the victory of virtue over vice" (Schechner, 2008; p. 66). So, the dance produces irresistible ethos as well as the moral efficacy among the audiences. In ritual performances audiences also go through certain transformations. Audiences are not also the ordinary audiences these audiences are also transformed audiences. They also go through the process of "liminality". The performers, time, place are transformed. The performers are special people for creating efficacy. They are substantial people. The place for ritual is invented place.

As a particular kind of performance, ritual emphasizes the efficacy over entertainment and adherence to tradition over technical virtuosity. Religious or sacred rituals express or enact belief, connecting the participant to a spiritual power. Victor Turner (2008) regards ritual, as the mechanism of redress in confliction society, and in his assumption, there is an essential relation of rituals to religious beliefs and symbols. Turner views "rituals as the performances of stereotyped activities that are well set in any certain ethnic culture in sequence" (p. 81). Defining the performances of rituals, he further says, "Rituals is a stereotyped sequence of activities involving gestures words and objects performed in a sequestered place and designed to influence preternatural entities of forces on behalf of the actor's goals and interests" (p. 83) In his description of ritual performance, Victor Turner emphasizes the liminal or in-between statuses of the ritual subject because in his understanding ritual can lead to the feeling of a social bound between participants. A ritual always concerned with framing the specific performative events more closely with sacred or devotional rites, and in the frame of performance, it functions less as a context for the actions than as a momentary transformation of them.

The performance is a skillful personal behave in different aspects of social life being guided by a particular culture in particular situation. People in any society are their own cultural agents transforming that situation by acting on and acting in them or by performing them Dramatic language is performance, which may articulate body, gesture, sign etc. for evoking meaning.

There are seven steps of Hymns. The group of hymns sings it at the time of Hanuman dance performance. These hymns are sung in Newari language. A step is mentioned below (Chhota, 2068, B.S.):

Hymn-1

Shree guru ganeshjimarana!!

Shree raga ramvayana!! !!

Aadisaiamreetka se charanasewadhaya !! !!

Salajpaddmsasirvum la the ta ya !!

Bhawaniyaanugyana ram yen salhaya
 Mahan mayapataksangedayanasayaya !!2!!
 Peetayaaagyana ram banabijyaka !!
 Rakshasanaharyaangawasitadewiphuk !!2!!
 Kala tayabirahana ram Sanbyakual !!
 Aameeli:si. Na. ya. Na sakhoveen

These types of hymns in Newari language enhance the additional beauty of this dance. Hymns are based on the prayer of God Ramchandra and the strength of Hanuman. These hymns express the different forms of Hanuman and his powerful performances.

The stunning monument of Hanuman had been established in southwest part of Baglung Municipality Ward No. 4. The place is called “Chhahara Pandhera” where the monument of Hanuman had been fixed on the center of the huge rock. It is believed that the monument was built some 275 years ago. It is 3 fit long in size. The significance of the place is Hanuman dance in Baglung begins from this place and ends at the same place. As Schechner (2008) has said “rituals are performed on schedule at specific locations, regardless of weather or attendance” (p. 613). Schechner (2008) views:

“Rituals integrate music, dance, and theatre. They use colorful and evocative masks and costumes. The processions, circumambulations, singing, dancing, storytelling, food sharing, fire burning, incensing, drumming, and bell-ringing along with the body heat and active participation of the crowd create an overwhelming synesthetic environment and experience. At the same time, rituals embody values that instruct and mobilize participants. These embodied values are rhythmic and cognitive, spatial and conceptual, sensuous and ideological (p. 632).

Hanuman dance can be performed on the road, chowks, in front of temples etc. by youths between 16 years to 40 years. Women are not allowed to participate in this dance. During the performance, youths are selected by the Kaji. There must be 13 couples at least but sometimes 15 couple can also be participated. This means that altogether 30 performers are needed for this dance performance. The design of the dance and the pattern of performance of Hanuman dance remain the same except for the characters, the place and the audiences as Schechner (2008) states “performance is a repetition-of-the-never-the-same” (p. 10). The situation is never static: one rises while the other declines. There are the changes in every performance. These performances are stereotyped activities that are well set in specified time and space. This performance is handed down generation to generation as their cultural identity.

After being prepared in the form of Hanuman, they remain in the place called Akheda in each couple. Among the performers, the couple who lead dance and the couple who stays at the back of the procession are regarded as the main Hanuman. From the beginning to the end of this dance performance Hanumans are supposed to obey the strict rule such as bathing every day and remaining in Bramacharya. They fix their territory and within that territory nobody are allowed to enter. After that musical artists begin to play the ‘Dholhaya’ tune which is supposed to evoke the God. When this beat is played Hanumans body begins to tremble and they begin to jump overwhelmingly. A type of power comes in their body and they do jump 2/3 fit up continuously.

In theatrical scenes, performance connotes the sense of activities of the characters through the utterance to a certain direction as guided by the stage directors. “From a theatrical perspective, performance is the transformation of combat technique into entertainment” (Schechner; 2008, 455). In a community, there are some communal problems or issues, which can be depicted in theatrical practices by the performers because he/she is the member who represents the whole society or the generation. In this respect, Schehner (2008) says, “The performances are social events not separated from the community activity. The actor is an active member of his community” (p.184).

Relating performance arts to social drama Victor Turner says, “The performance arts among them derive from the subjunctive, liminal, reflexive, exploratory heart of the social drama” (13). Ritual is a cultural practice which is observed and celebrated by the people of the concerned society on any particular occasion. Generally, a ritual can be considered as a kind of repeated pattern of behavior, which is performed at any appropriate time and situation. It is a set of actions, performed mainly for their symbolic value, and the religion or traditions of a community can well guide to the performance of the rituals. Performing rituals is not only the means of making a cultural practice; rituals are also the lenses to view and understand various kinds of performances in society. They also continue to give the shape of our lives and to bring the effect to our communities. We can give the core of the social identity of the communities through the performance of rituals because rituals create and maintain a society’s cultural identity and social relations. In this regard, Neville [as cited by Badene (1991)] views:

Ritual is language spoken through order, pattern, and intensity, frequency, rhythm, tone, and structure; it occurs on a specific context. It is an important vehicle for learning culture, intricately interwoven with the way in which, through

cognition, humans become cultural beings and maintain their separate cultures over time and space (p. 151).

So, the ritual is a dramatic performance, which ensues in any definite junctures and is performed in an organized order. Because of this human can be recognized as a social and cultural beings. Generally, in the performance of ritual randomly chosen actions are omitted or well verbalized by certain kinds of logic because publically rituals have their ethical uniqueness to be factual and they concern to the performance of orderly arrangement of the actions in order. A ritual may be performed on specific occasions, or at the discretion of individuals or communities. It may be performed whether singularly, in a group, or by the entire community, and in arbitrary places, or in the places especially reserved for it. It can also be performed either in public, in private, or before the specific people.

Rituals are such kinds of texts, which can be read (performed) for their symbolic value, "Ritual actions are often "symbolic actions" and make use of "symbolic representations" in myths and rites. The performance of rituals can be seen to be symbolic in the way that it represents the core of the social identity of the related communities. In rituals, there is an essential relation between religious beliefs and symbols, which are culturally coded. As a kind of repetitive social practice, rituals are performed in a sequence of symbolic activities like dance, song, speech etc. The ideas in the rituals are closely connected to that of some specific set of ideas that are encoded in myths. "Any ritual can be lifted from its original setting and performed as theatre just as any everyday events can be (Schchner 457). The performance of ritual conveys the miracles and keeps the audiences participating wholeheartedly within its frame of performativity.

Conclusion

Safeguarding the traditional culture and identity is regarded as the main characteristic of Newar people of Baglung. This *Hanuman Dance* has got unique cultural recognition all over the country. This dance has been transmitted from generation to generation as a creative performance. This has developed and promoted the communal feelings among the diverse community and unity in diversity has been proved in the society. The researcher has analyzed the creative dimension of this dance in the light of many performance art theorists such as Schechner, Victor Turner, Abhi Subedi, Certeu etc. Such type of traditional and cultural heritage, according to Srampikal, connotes "the act of handing down tradition from one generation to another" (quoted in Subedi 21).

And it should be valued and recognized as the national cultural heritage because diverse cultural performances have been the unique identity all over the world for a small country like Nepal.

Recommendation

Embracing the diversity within the community and acknowledging the contributions of various ethnic/cultural groups helps create an inclusive environment for cultural expression. While preserving traditional forms, also encourages innovation and creativity within the dance to keep it relevant and dynamic. Similarly, supporting institutions such as museums, theatres, and community centres should provide spaces for performances and exhibitions to enhance dance performance. It is necessary to use digital platforms, social media, and online resources for the progressive betterment of this dance performance. Collaboration and networking with other cultural organizations and communities can provide resources, support, and opportunities for cross-cultural exchange should be provisioned. Documenting and researching the history, steps, costumes, and music associated with this dance should be systematically recorded and preserved. Separate cultural institutions should be established in the local level to conserve this dance forever. Concerned authority should focus on its preservation and promotion. A sort of awareness program should be made pervasive to protect these dances of cultural importance. Providing opportunities for community members, especially younger generations, to learn the dance through training, workshops, formal classes, and mentorship programs should be ensured for its creative continuation.

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