

CASTE SYSTEM AMONG NEPALESE MIGRANTS IN SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

Rasna Prajapati

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Department of International Studies

Faculty of Arts

Macquarie University

Abstract

The focus of this thesis is to understand the relationship between the migrants and their cultural practices in the foreign land. I undertook interviews with Nepali migrants including students in Sydney to understand the reasons behind the continuation or termination of cultural practices beyond boarder. The study was conducted with qualitative research design, using in depth-interviews as the primary research materials. Semi-structured open-ended questions were asked which allowed the interviewer and interviewee to discuss an idea or response in more detailed way openly.

At present, there is an abundant movement of people. More recently, issues of international migrants and their search for nationality and own identity in a foreign land have created popular discourses about the continuation of their cultural practices across the border. A growing number of migrants and the extension of their cultural practices is an essential factor of study for the immigrant-receiving countries to understand and address their issues. This research project gives insights into their different perception regarding the caste, caste behaviors, their beliefs, and attitudes. Different participants have various ideas on caste, and it's practices abroad, examining what the presence or termination of caste practices among Nepalese in Sydney tells us about caste and culture.

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Lastly, I would like to thank my family and friends for their moral support and encouragement.

Statement of Candidate

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis titled ‘Caste System among Nepalese Migrants in Sydney’ has not been previously submitted to any other institution or university for a higher degree. This work is substantially my own and where any part of the work is not my own, I have appropriately acknowledged it.

Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee approved this research presented in the thesis.

Rasna Prajapati

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	2
Acknowledgement.....	3
Preface	6
Chapter 1: Introduction	10
1.1 Research Review.....	11
1.2 Background of Caste	15
1.3 Nepali population in Australia	17
Chapter 2: Literature review	24
2.1 Origin of caste.....	24
2.2 Revolution against Caste based Discrimination	27
2.3 Caste and global world	28
2.4 Caste among Nepalese Diaspora	30
2.5 Multiculturalism, Host community and Caste Practices.....	35
2.6 Application of Practice Theory.....	38
2.7 Dumont's Purity and Pollution.....	40
Chapter 3: Research Methodology.....	43
3.1 Introduction	43
3.2 Identification of Approach.....	43
3.3 Source of Data	45
3.4 Procedure.....	47
3.5 Advantages and limitations of research methods.....	49
3.6 Ethics consideration.....	50
Chapter 4: Data Analysis	51
4.1 Social Interaction	51
4.2 Stories of Discrimination	54
4.3 Marriage.....	57
4.4 Habitus	61
4.5 "Being Nepali beyond Nepal"	69
4.6. Culture Versus Human Rights	73
Chapter 5: Conclusion	77
Appendix B: Ethics Approval	90

Preface

I was studying in standard 5 and I had friends from lower caste groups who used to study in the same school. One of them is still, a very good friend of mine. All of them were very friendly and helpful which makes our friendship stronger. I used to share my lunch, sweets, and stationaries with them and they shared it as well. In a way, we were the good bunch of friends. It was summer vacation and I called them at my house to show my new dollhouse. All of them came and we started playing.

I used to live in a joint family with 32 family members along with my grandparents, parents, uncle, aunts, cousins and my siblings. One of my cousin and I do not share a good bond, we always used to fight with each other. She was jealous that I got a new dollhouse and I have called my friends to play with it instead of her. Unfortunately, she was aware of my friend's background i.e. their caste as she was in the same school. She was 3 years elder to me and was studying in Standard 7. She had a better idea about the caste system and it's practiced as it is included in her textbooks. She complained to my grandparents about my friends that they are untouchables. Then, my grandparents asked my friends to leave home which was very rude. They were scared as well and left without saying anything. I almost cried there because I had planned to play with them all day.

Suddenly, my grandmother took me for a bath and asked my aunt and mother to clean the house. I was really angry because I just had a bath in the morning. I disagree but she forced me. I cried a lot but no one listened to me. After me, everyone took a bath in turn. They clean the utensils again, which was already clean and mop the floors with cow dung and red mud. We usually do these type of cleaning when are impure. We are temporarily impure when there is

death in families, when any of your family members have given birth and when one is going through a menstrual period. The time period of one being temporarily impure is between a week and a year. At that time, I didn't realize why we were cleaning in such detailed as we were impure. At the end, my grandmother gets holy water and sprinkles it on all members and the every corner of the house.

Everyone was so furious of me and asked not to bring any friends who belong to lower caste. At that time, I was wondering what does a lower caste mean? I asked everyone but no one gives importance in answering it. My mother asked me not to keep any contact with these friends else she will punish me but I was not one of those who obeys my parents in everything they say. I always do things that make me happy. I kept on sharing the strong bond with my friends even after that incident.

As I grew up, I started to learn about Caste System and it's practiced, which was included in my textbooks. Then, I finally realized why all those purification processes were done when I invited my so-called lower caste friends to my home. I feel bad for my friends who were discriminated on the basis of their caste. They were innocent as me. They had no idea what was going on. Since then, the question always keeps hovering on my mind. Why are people judged on the basis of caste, which they inherit by their birth?

Later as I grew up, I encounter a lot of caste experiences with me personally. I belong to a Newar group, which is an indigenous group of Nepal's Kathmandu valley. The Newars are peculiar than other ethnic groups because they are divided into various endogamous clans or groups on the basis of their ancient hereditary occupation (Shrestha, 2007). This means that Newars have their own caste stratification. Despite being divided into different caste hierarchy,

the Newars are identified as one-caste groups among another existing caste in Nepal. However, among Newars, their caste is their identity. My friends, who belong to Upper caste Brahmin and Chettri caste used to make fun of me being a Newar. I was usually picked because of my funny accent, which is induced because of our mother tongue Newari. I really get embarrassed when they make fun of it in public. Sometimes, I was made fun of the food we eat. Newars are very popular for their food items and these foods also included dishes that are restricted to upper castes. For an instance: A Newar can eat buffalo meat but it is restricted to the upper caste Brahmins and Chettris. It is assumed that they lose their caste if they consume it. However, these days there are very rare Brahmins and Chettris who have not eaten buffalo meat but yet, they make fun of our food by stating that we eat every part of buffaloes like brain, tongue, tissues, and tail which they find disgusting. Their attitude, jokes towards our caste make us feel humiliated. I do not intend to say that only these higher castes practice caste discrimination. Among the group of Newars and Sherpa friends, I have seen a Brahmin being made fun of his caste. This is part of daily routine of Nepalese, which many assume it to be normal. To me, it has always been a disturbing factor. I do not like being made fun of my caste and do not want others to face it as well because I know it hurts but none express it. This always raises a question in me, what if we don't have caste identity? Do I fantasize a world without caste and how life would be? This is why I chose this study to understand the meaning of caste overseas where it is not practiced. I wanted to explore caste practices, an inseparable part of Nepalese life in foreign land.

I have been on the journey of my own while working on this thesis. I am very grateful to be given an opportunity to study and write about my own people so that I can bring their experiences, problems, and perceptions to the forefront in an academic publication. While

reading and preparing for the thesis, this entire work is emotional at times. When I recalled the history of lower caste people who were treated inhuman, I feel extremely disgusted to be part of the culture. I empathize on all caste-based discrimination that takes place around the world, which has killed thousands of people and has violated millions of individual's rights.

The questions were always in my mind while writing the thesis. Does caste have any existence across the border? Do Nepalese practice caste system here in Sydney as well? What has compelled them to practice caste in a country where it has no meaning? I wonder about those people who have left Nepal, in pursuit of equality and happiness in Australia, do they really achieve it? If caste does not matter here then what could be the factors that affect Nepalese migrants to terminate their practices? If caste is not practiced in Sydney among Nepalese diaspora, then why do Nepalese diaspora at other parts of the world subjected to practice caste? Therefore, the purpose of the research is to explore caste practices among Nepalese migrants in Sydney and to know the factors of its continuation and termination.

We Nepalese are very proud of our cultures and practices but we have never thought if it has hurt other's sentiments. Through this research, I would like to bring people's experiences, their sentiments at the forefront, which is induced by our practice of caste, which we are practicing for the continuation of culture. And I also intend to emphasize the importance of minority studies in Australia where it is practicing equality to all other nationalities and is known for its successful multicultural practices.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Mother: You should not allow people from the lower caste in your kitchen.

Son: Mom, please. I am in Australia and there is nothing called caste here. Everyone's equal.

Mother: No matter where you are, you should not forget your cultural practices. You should not have allowed them to your kitchen. You should not share your food with them. Even their touch makes the food contaminated. Clean everything now.

Son: Mom, they are as clean and healthy as us. Why should not I eat with them?

Mother: Because they are from the lower caste. They are untouchables. Even their touch makes us impure. Everything is contaminated because of their presence.

Son: Seriously mom. Just because of their presence, do we need to purify?

Mother: Yeah, you have to.

Son: Sorry mom, I can't argue with you and please I do not want to listen to your nonsense. Bye.¹

What if people denied to touch you, eat with you and denied entry to their home just because of your ancestry? We all are human and we share similar traits but why do we practice inequality in the name of caste, ethnicity, religion, race, color, class and so on? In this case, a mother is enforcing her child for caste discrimination in the name of cultural practices. Could equality be expected, when the teachings in it is unequal? What about the rights of an individual who is fronting discrimination on the basis of caste? Is it his/her fault to be born to any caste?

¹ This is an excerpt of the study, which one of the interviewee shares while being interviewed. This is the conversation that he had with his mother back in Nepal.

1.1 Research Review

This basis of this research is in diaspora experiences of Nepalese migrants by caste in Sydney. This research aims to explore the caste encounters of 12 Nepalese migrants of diverse caste and generations including both male and female. The caste system in Nepal which was made illegal by law in 1963 but still is being practiced in some forms even in present time (Bhattachan, Sunar, & Bhattachan, 2009). The purpose of this research is to explore if Nepalese migrants are still practicing caste in Sydney. Many of them might have assumed that one loses one's caste when leaving the country because the social context abroad leads you to abandon caste constraints, but this might not be true in every case. Caste may still live in overseas among Nepali communities.

Australia is a multicultural country is a home to 200 different nationalities who speak 300 different languages, there are followers of more than 100 religions, and more than 300 different ancestries live here. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016), 49%, almost half of Australia's resident population is born overseas or who had at least one parent born abroad.

Australia and its multicultural policies are internationally known for their success. In multiculturalism all cultures and people are considered equal- but what if there is a cultural trend that does not view people as equal? Caste system's effects on society may inadvertently disrupt the policy of equality. Thus, it is essential to study such cultural trend practiced by minorities in Australia to investigate and understand their cross-cultural experiences and discrimination. There

is very less or no study on Caste practices of Nepalese migrants in Sydney. So, this research is focused on caste experiences in Sydney of 12 Nepalese migrants from different castes. It is important to conduct this research in order to contribute in Nepalese diasporic study. To better develop this research following research questions were proposed.

1. Do Nepali immigrants to Australia continue caste practices abroad?
2. If so, what are the factors contributing to this continuation?
3. If not, what are the factors contributing to their termination?

To determine whether the caste practices are continued overseas, and why, I undertook interviews with Nepali migrants including students in Sydney. The study was conducted with qualitative research design, using in depth-interviews as the primary research materials. Semi-structured open-ended questions were asked which allowed the interviewer and interviewee to openly discuss an idea or response in a more detailed way. This study dealt with the caste practices and its impacts on their lives, which reflected the sufferings, and difficulties of victims. So, in-depth interview conducted individually (Berry, 1999) was the appropriate way for exploring such a sensitive topic. Altogether 12 people were interviewed with a representative portion of both male and female. The interviewees were recruited from different Nepalese society in Sydney and also from Nepalese student associations in various universities in Sydney, such as MUNSA (Macquarie University Nepalese Student's Association).

The focus of this thesis is to understand the relationship between the migrants and their cultural practices in a foreign land. To understand the contemporary world, it is essential to study the migrant's perception and behavior of their cultural practices. Such study will help in

understanding the importance of culture in a foreign setting. This also gives insight into people's reaction to the cultural practices across borders.

My research aims to study people's perception of caste across borders, particularly in Sydney Australia. Scholars have identified Caste system as a fundamental part of the life of South Asians. Despite this, overseas caste remains under-researched. Literature suggests that these practices of the caste system are not only limited to within Nepal but are also found among the growing Nepalese diaspora overseas. The study conducted by Mitra Pariyar among the Nepalese migrants in the UK highlights the presence of caste-based discrimination by the Gurkha immigrants. Gurkha's, warriors who belong to the middle ranking caste of hills, are known for their contribution to Second World War, and all ex-Gurkha were allowed to migrate permanently with their families in the UK. This study has found that Gurkha use their status to undermine lower caste people wherever it's possible (Pariyar, 2016b). The reasons behind such practices could be many. No matter the reason, such behavior raises severe issues of discrimination against lower castes, even in foreign lands where there are no obligations to abide by caste practices. Caste among Diasporas exists, and they are practicing the discriminatory practices, which raises questions about the theory, and practice of multiculturalism- what is to be done when all cultures are equal, perhaps while culture is institutionalizing inequality? There had been very few studies about the overseas caste.

Caste practices invite issues of social inequality and discrimination, a threat to peace and stability, creating a gap between higher and lower caste and ultimately resulting in social fragmentation. So, this study at first will help in recognizing the presence of caste among Nepalese migrants in Sydney, and if people practice caste here, it will help in identifying the

factors that contribute in the continuation. If this study finds no practices of caste among the Nepalese migrants, then it will assist in determining factors contributing to their termination. In the present time, there is an abundant movement of people in the world. International migration promotes two different movements: globalization and local identity. On the one hand, the world becomes more homogeneous, but on the other hand, people are demanding their status. More recently, issues of international migrants and their search for nationality and own identity in a foreign land have created popular discourses about the continuation of their cultural practices across the border. So, this is an essential factor of study for the immigrant-receiving countries to understand and address their issues. If there are no compelling factors to follow caste practices, and if these practices are found being continued, then it raises questions about why they are being perpetuated. From another perspective, if Nepalese are not employing caste concepts and methods in Australia, this study will help in identifying factors contributing to the termination of caste practices, developing a comparative study of caste behaviors.

The study gave insights on the practices of the caste system among the Nepalese diaspora in Sydney. Their continuation or terminations of caste behaviors were the subjects of study, which is essential to understand transnational caste practices. Such caste practices abroad had limited people from lower castes to enjoy their freedom even in a foreign land where caste would appear to be meaningless. In a globalized world, such issues highlight potential tensions between multiculturalism and human rights and may pose threats to social cohesion and harmony in multicultural nations. This research project addressed these challenging issue, examining what the presence or termination of caste practices among Nepalese in Sydney tells us about caste and culture.

My interaction with the Nepalese migrants in Sydney gave me insights into their different perception regarding the caste, caste behaviors, their beliefs, and attitudes. Different participants have various ideas on caste, and it's practiced abroad.

In the following pages, at first, I provide the Background of the Caste in Nepal that helps in understanding the context of Nepalese Caste System. Then, I offered a brief description of Nepalese population in Australia. After this introductory chapter, Literature Review follows the thesis where further discussions on caste revolutions and caste in the global world are discussed. Then, after giving an in-depth discussion on caste experiences by Nepalese Migrants, I present evidence for caste practices among Nepalese Migrants here in Sydney. I also explore some of the reasons for continuing this practices across borders, which is reflected in the emerged themes. Some defend it as the continuation of their culture that is practiced for maintaining being Nepali. Some defined it to as an unconscious activity. In the conclusion chapter, I highlighted my findings and concluded by outlining the implications of my work and need for future research among Nepalese diaspora.

1.2 Background of Caste

The word 'caste' is of Portuguese origin meaning pure of chaste to define Indian social organization. An Oxford English dictionary defines caste as "each of the hereditary classes of Hindu society, distinguished by relative degrees of ritual purity or pollution and of social status" (Stevenson, 2010). The foundation of caste is the ancient Hindu categorization of commonalities in four hierarchical social groups known as Varna. It is the division of society based on occupation, which also determines their social class. According to the model, society is divided into four Varnas: the Brahmin who is priests or scholars, Kshytria as the warriors, the Vaishya as

merchants and lastly, Sudra as the workers. Everyone below that was the occupational groups considered impure—the “untouchables,” who are now known as Dalits. According to the Hindu law book, there are only four groups, never the fifth one (Deshpande, 2010). This evidences the exclusion of Dalits through.

According to Manusmriti and Rig Veda, the ancient Hindu texts, the varna system was set out by divinity. Conferring to these texts, each Varna is born out from the body of Brahma (the Hindu god of creation). Brahmins emerged from Brahmas head so are the source of all knowledge. Then, the Kshatriya was born from Lord Brahma’s chest who was gifted with great physical strength and martial traits. The Vaishya are believed to emerge from the thigh and Shudras from the feet. These two Varnas are socially and religiously endorsed to serve the upper castes. Later, these Varnas are divided into numerous endogamous castes and sub-castes known as Varna, jati, but most commonly the term ‘caste’ is used to refer to them (Pariyar, 2016b).

The caste system is considered as the oldest existing hierarchy in the world with a history of more than 2000 years (Pyakurel, 2007). It is mostly dominant in India and Nepal where “it is considered one of the rigid stratification systems without any possibility to change one’s caste or move between caste categories. His/her birth determines caste of a person into a particular social group” (Pyakurel, 2007). The caste system in Nepal is a traditional institution wherein people are socially segregated through class, religion, tribe, gender, and language. These forms become the basis of ranking, and it results in unequal access to resources like wealth, income, power and prestige. The caste system in Nepal is considered as a closed stratification where a person’s social status is indebted to the caste they were born in.

Caste system and Hinduism goes alongside, and it shares a close nexus with Hindu

philosophy, religious belief, custom, and traditions. Despite being rooted in Hindu philosophy of social hierarchy of purity and pollution, the caste system is also practiced by Nepalese Muslim to some extent. Over last several hundred years, Nepalese, both Hindu and non- Hindu were socially defined by the caste system(Bennett, Dahal, & Govindasamy, 2008).

In Nepal, people are known by their caste basically as a form of their identity. A caste of an individual determines his/her behavior, obligations, expectations, power and economic condition. Any activity that hampers the social principle is criticized. For an instance, inter-caste marriages are not yet accepted in many communities. In the past, people were punished for violating social rules.

The caste system in Nepal is based on the concept of purity and pollution. The higher castes are considered pure and the lower caste as impure and polluted. However, the issue of purity and being impure is within one's caste as well. People of higher castes are temporarily impure when there is death in the family, during menstrual period and while giving birth to a child but the lower castes people are declared impure for their lifetime. If lower caste people come in contact with the higher caste people, holy water need to be sprinkled to purify them. This is why, in the past, lower castes people were banned in the public spaces to avoid contacts.

1.3 Nepali population in Australia

Migration is one of the most talked about issues in current scenario. Moreover, it's a reality of all the nations across the globe. According to International Migration Report 2015, the number of international migrants worldwide was 173 million in 2000 that raised up to 222

million in 2010 and by the year 2015 the number was 244 million(UN, 2016). Australia, is one of the favorite destination of these migrants due to successful Australian multicultural policies. The most recent data shows that 6.7 million people which makes 28.2% of Australia estimated resident population are born overseas and 43.1 per cent of people have at least one overseas born parent(ABS, 2011). As shown in figure 1, there has been gradual increase in immigration since 1944.

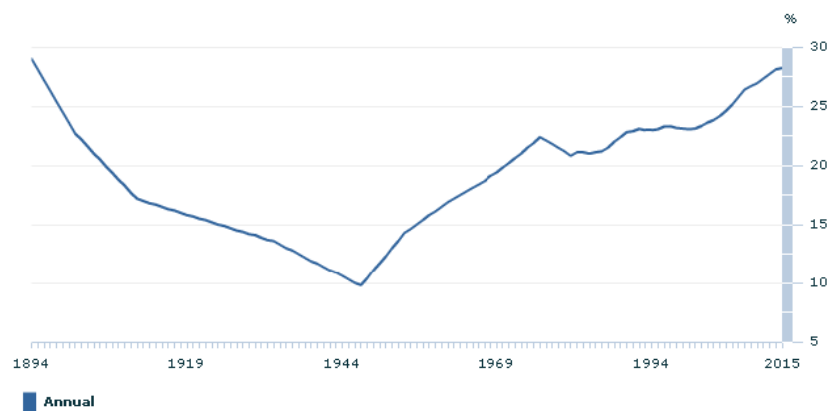


Figure 1: Australia's population born overseas (ABS, 2011)

Since 1960's Nepalese started migrating to Australia. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of 2011, 24,636 Nepal born people live in Australia, which indicates the rocketing increase of 439.6 per cent from the 2006 census.

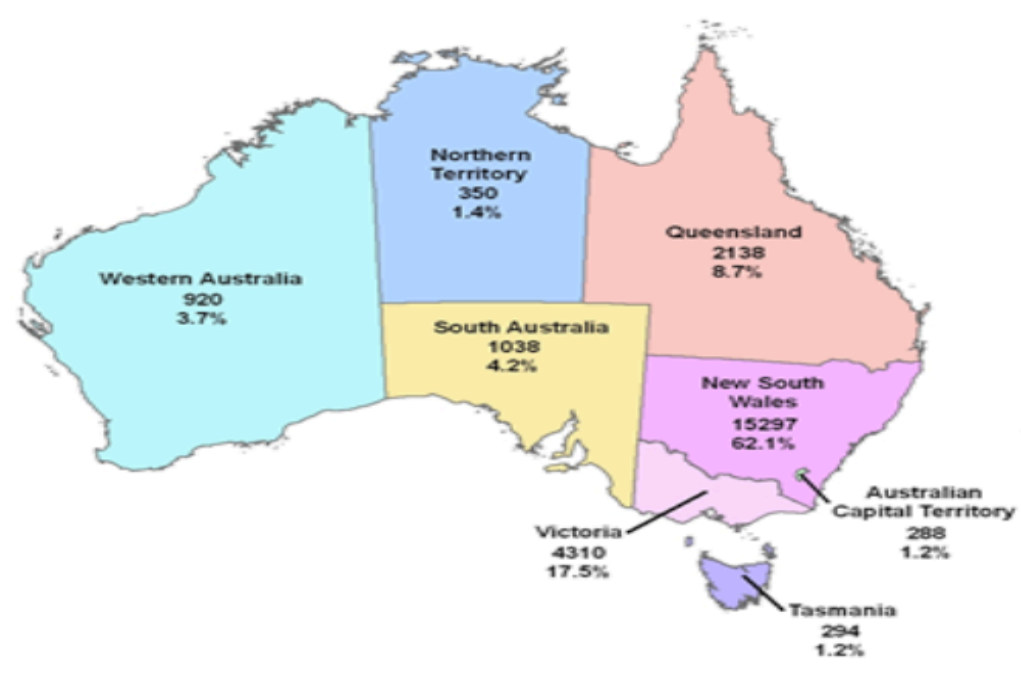


Figure 2: Nepali population in Australia (ABS, 2011)

In comparison to other overseas-born population, there was a steep increase of Nepalese migrants from the year 2007. Nepalese are one of the fastest growing groups in Australia. In 2001, Nepal born people were numbered to be 2600, then in 2006, it was 4600 and by the year 2011, there were 24,600 Nepal born population with a five fold increase in these 5 years (ABS, 2013). After the civil war in the year 2006, which overthrows Nepalese monarchy and established People's Republic, still leaves people in despair due to the unstable government. Thus, the migration continues even after establishing peace in the country.

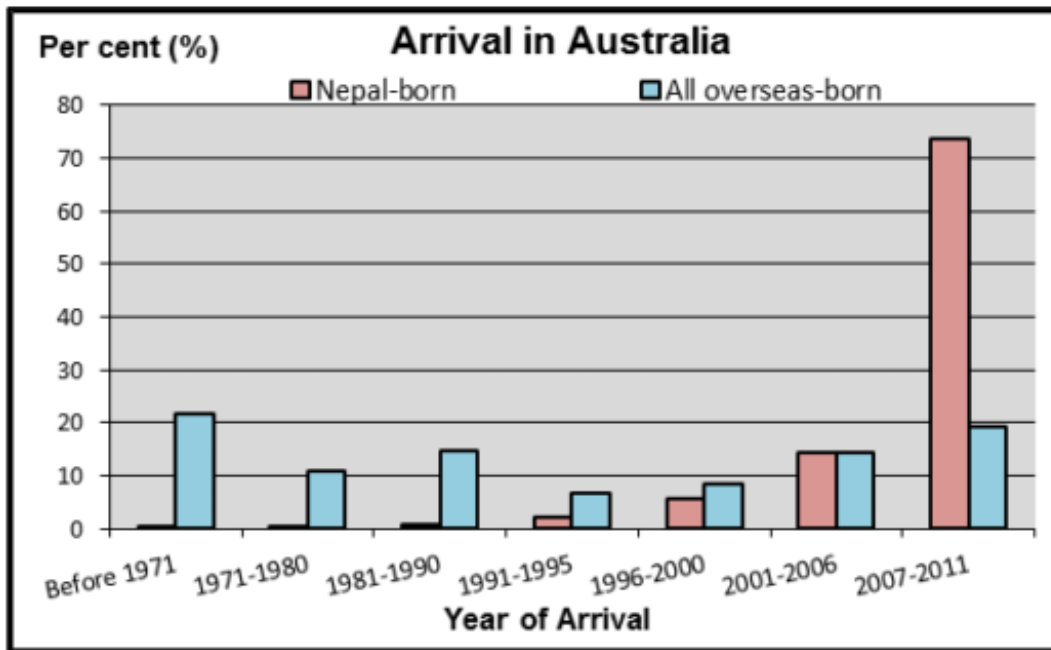


Figure 3: Arrival of Nepali people in Australia (ABS, 2011)

The figure 4 depicts that most of the Nepalese immigrants follow Hinduism and then Buddhism. This highlights the importance of study of caste practices among Nepalese migrants here, as Caste System and Hinduism are two inseparable parts.

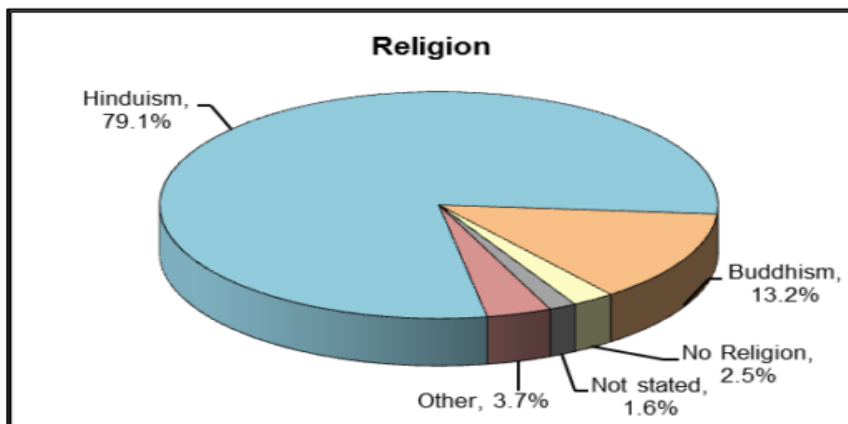


Figure 4: Religion of Nepalese population in Australia (ABS, 2011)

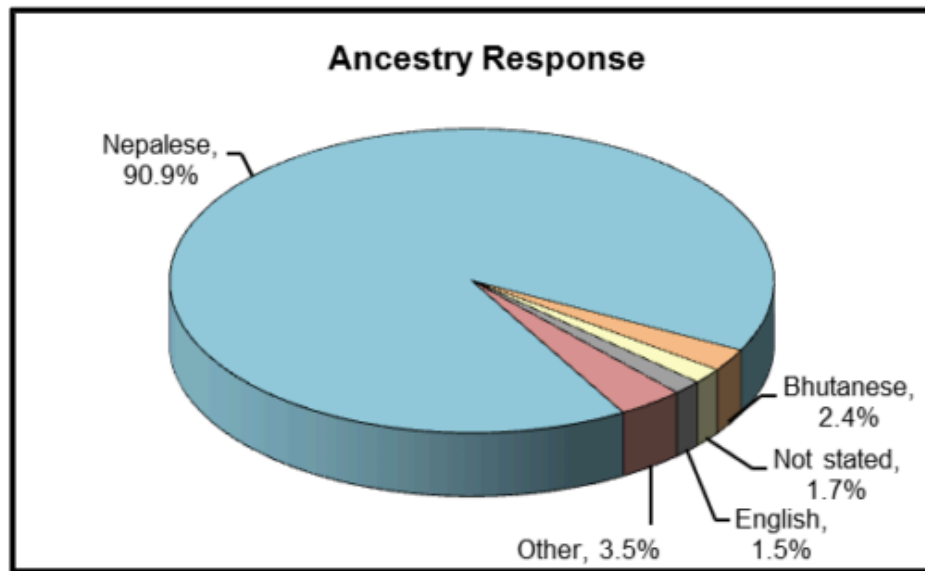


Figure 5: Nepalese Ancestry division in Australia(ABS, 2011)

In the 2011 Census, it was reported that almost of the Nepal-born people are of Nepalese origin while very few are reported to be from Bhutanese and English origin. The higher the representation of population from Nepalese origin, the higher are the chances of caste practices to be continued as back in the country.

The figure 6 below illustrates that most of the Nepal-born people speak their national language ‘Nepali’ other than English at home. Language is part of Nepali identity and their continuation of speaking in their national language in a way is the continuation of the culture as back in the country.

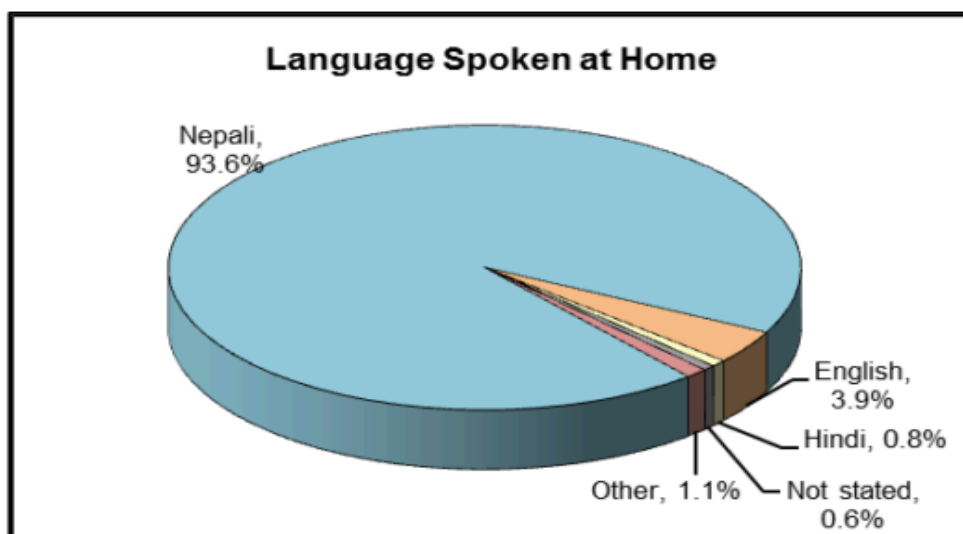


Figure 6: Different Languages spoken at home by Nepalese population in Australia (ABS, 2011)

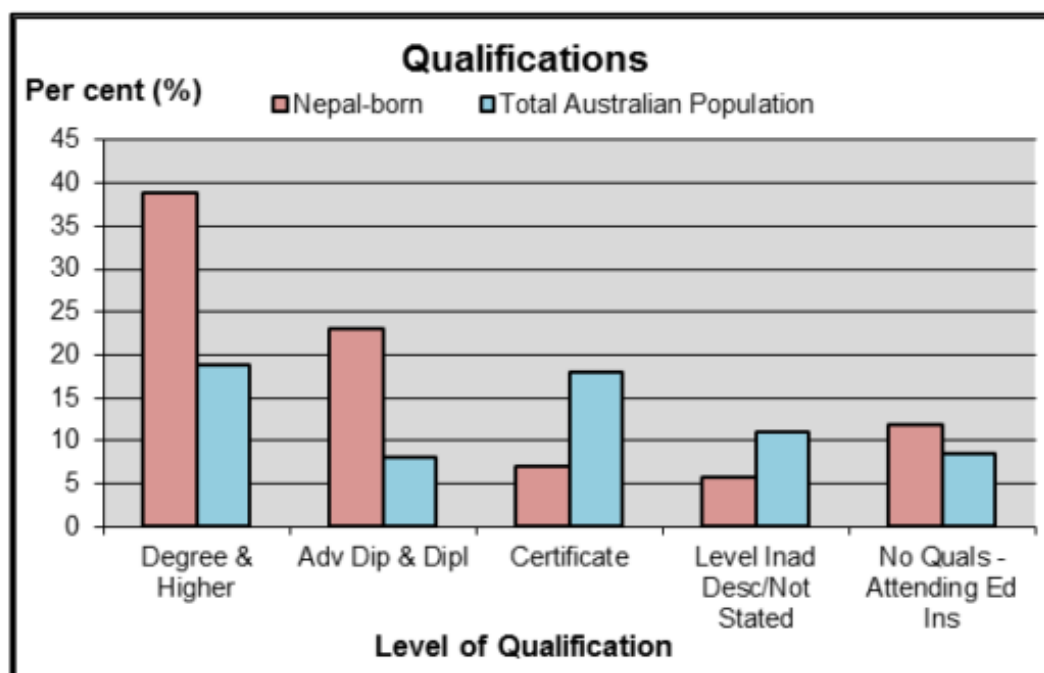


Figure 7: Level of Qualifications among Nepalese people in Australia (ABS, 2011)

The figure 7 shows that more than 35 per cent of Nepalese possess tertiary qualifications where as less than 20 per cent of Australian population has a degree or higher degree of qualifications. This findings reveals that Nepal-born population come to Australia to pursue their tertiary education, which is why Nepal-born population were the 5th largest foreigners studying in the country in the year 2014. This makes 3.8 per cent of foreign students enrolled in Australia (The Kathmandu Post, 2015).

This statistical outline of the Nepal-born population in Australia highlights that Nepalese are potential migrants here in Australia with rocketing growth rate. Next, it shows that most of the Nepal-born people are of Nepalese origin and still most of them follow Hinduism, which in a way demonstrates existence of caste among them. So, in order to understand the need of this research here in Sydney, a brief review of Nepalese population was much needed.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Origin of caste

How did the caste system start in Nepal? The recorded history of Nepal began with the Kirats, 7th or 8th century BC from the east. At their period, Buddhism was introduced to the country but it diminished by 200AD with the invasion of Lichhavis from northern India who overthrew the last Kirat king. After their arrival, the Lichhavis introduced Hinduism. It is believed that with Hinduism, the caste system was also introduced in the country. The groups of Indians brought the caste system of Nepal but the caste system in Nepal is dissimilar, and complicated compare to the Indian caste system (Jensen & Zalla, 2014).

The earliest historical record of the caste system could be found during the reign of Newari King Jayasthiti Malla (1380-1394). During his reign, 64 different castes were allocated different tasks and were ranked. Later, Ram Shah (1609-1636) introduced the concept of the caste system as an organizing principle to integrate diverse people of different petty kingdoms in the territory of now Nepal. Among the number of historical constructors who have been liable for re-constructing the state and reforming the caste-based discrimination and untouchability, one of such vital indicator was the promulgation of Muluki Ain (Civil code) in 1854 by the Prime Minister Junga Bahadur Rana (Bengts, 2016). It laid out detailed laws for inter-caste behavior and specified punishments for their violations. It legally formalized the highly fixed and hierarchical caste system and brought the Adivasi Janajatis (non-Hindu indigenous nationalities) into the system with middle-rank status (Asian Development Bank, 2010).

In this system, everyone was organized as in the classical Hindu order regarding ritual purity into four varnas: the Brahman as priests, the Kshyatriya as Kings and warriors, the Vaisya as traders and businesspeople and Sudra as peasants and laborers. There was an additional group outside of the caste system because of their ritually impure occupations, which rendered them as ‘Untouchables.’ This fifth group is not even acknowledged as part of the system, while also, by existing “outside” of the four pure castes, essentially determining the outline/ boundaries of the system itself.



Figure 8: The Nepalese Caste Pyramid(DFID & World Bank, 2006)

The Muluki Ain (1854) brought all the diverse groups into one legal system but each caste and sub-caste was permitted different obligations and privileges. It could not do justice to many groups. Thus, many groups were not happy with their “exclusionary inclusion.” These divisions labeled people of the communities according to the hierarchy which led the practice of caste-based discrimination and untouchability on an everyday basis. The Brahmins and Chhettris, the two most significant caste groups, have access to state funds due to their social and economic status. Therefore, they have the most dominant role in forming the modern Kingdom of Nepal through political, social and religious fields. The lowest castes and the untouchables who were considered impure have difficult life. They were socially excluded and economically marginalized and have humiliating jobs. The Dalits are assigned to perform occupations that were deemed to be unclean and polluting, which includes scavenging and skinning dead animals. Some instances of Dalit castes are Kamis (Iron-smiths), Sunars (Gold-smiths), Lohars (Iron smiths), Vishwakarma (Drivers), Nepali (ancestry unfounded), Sarki (Cobbler), Damahi (tailor/musician). The Dalits were deprived from all kinds of luxury and were forced to serve the members of the higher castes. They were not involved in any decision-making activities and their voice were unheard. Further, even their presence is considered to be polluted and were punished for doing nothing. For instance, such excluded castes are forbidden from entering the temple; entering the alleys of houses of upper caste and if they do so is considered to be criminal offense. Such customs and laws keep them beyond villages and towns. Their settlement is placed in the peripheries of the city and was never considered as a part of the community. Such practice of social exclusion is deep-rooted in the political, economic, and social aspects of Nepal and has been a defining feature of its historical development (Deshpande, 2010).

These categories, although they are very problematic, also become ways of

understanding/ organizing the world. As a result, although they come from outside of individuals, they can be internalized as part of the way that individuals make sense of the world. Through Primary socialization, which an individual undergoes in his childhood makes an individual becomes the part of their society. Further, Secondary socialization enhances an already socialized individual into the new sectors of objective world of society(Berger & Luckmann, 1966a). As a result, these very problematic categories have an element of individual affective investment in them and their maintenance. This is why a lower class child perspective on the social world is different than that of the higher caste child. They have considered the discriminatory behavior as part of their social life and this continued the histories of caste-based discrimination for ages.

2.2 Revolution against Caste based Discrimination

The caste system was banned in 1963 in Nepal, but it still has effects in the educational attainment, employment opportunities, location of one's house and social activities within the country (Thapa, 2015). In 1990, the restoration of democracy gave a ray of hope for equality among Dalits. The new constitution was promulgated in 1991, which states equality to all citizens of Nepal before the law. Nepal was declared as multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-lingual, democratic, independent, indivisible sovereign state where all the citizens were equal. The new constitution guaranteed civic rights, freedom of speech, freedom of organization, freedom of religious practices and freedom of languages. However, it failed to address equality among all castes and the declaration of Nepal as a Hindu Kingdom legally prohibited indigenous people and other minorities from practicing their religion (Bennett, 2005).

As the return of democracy in 1990, could not bring much difference in outcomes for excluded groups. These disparities intensify the Maoists recruitment and justification of the decade-long People's War from 1996 to 2006. Maoists took the issue of all marginalized group including Dalits as the main agenda. After the Maoists civil war, there was an increase in the political representation as there was particular reservation of seats for indigenous people, women, Dalits and Madhesi but the increased percentage doesn't solve the existing problem of poverty among them. In fact, Maoists civil war give rises to other exclusions such as language, religion, regional exclusions (Bennett, 2005). However, the Maoists insurgency internationalized the ethnic activism, particularly UN declaration of 1994-2003 as a decade of indigenous people which highlights the issues of ethnic groups including Dalits within the country and globally (Hachettu, 2003).

Since then, the political parties are focusing on the inclusive government. The Nepali Congress, CPN-UML, CPN Maoist and other small parties are approaching marginalized group (indigenous people, women, madhesi, and Dalits) to participate in policy making by providing special reservations so that they get equal opportunities and can compete with those mainstream people. This has bring changes in the more inclusive participation of marginalized people in all sectors.

2.3 Caste and global world

According to the Baudhayana Sutra, one of the Hindu Dharma Shastras says that 'making voyages by sea' is an offense and will cause 'pataniya' which means loss of caste. This was the scenario of orthodox Hindus in India, particularly the high caste Brahmins in the bygone days of 1800s and 1900s and even long before that. High caste-Brahmins never ventured overseas

because crossing the ocean or sea was a taboo. It was an offensive religious practice as ocean and sea are the resting places of god according to the Hindu mythology (“Historic Alleys: Hindus and the Ocean taboo,” n.d.).

Such orthodox religious traditions are not in practice today. The availability of better opportunities and quality assurance has encouraged people to migrate voluntarily. At the same time, war, crisis, poverty, inequality, and unemployment are reasons that have forced people to migrate nationally as well as internationally in search of a better future.

As Ban Ki-Moon expressed, “Migration is an expression of the human aspiration for dignity, safety, and better future. It is part of the social fabric, part of our very make up as a human family.” Moreover, it is a reality of all the nations across the globe. The availability of better opportunities and quality assurance has encouraged people to migrate voluntarily. At the same time war, crisis, poverty, inequality, and unemployment are reasons that forced people to migrate in search of better future.

International migration is affecting all the countries in the world. People of different Diasporas are forming their communities to enhance their unity. They are promoting their own culture, religion, and traditions. The preservation of their culture is a clear means to take pride in their identity in a new environment. On the one hand, they are promoting their identity with their glorious culture, and on the other hand, they are practicing traditional unjust practices like caste-based discrimination that treats people unequally.

The social immorality of caste- prejudice is a violation of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights by United Nations in 1948

states that: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.” The Universal Declaration has been recreated in all these years, but still today we live in an unjust world. In many countries, the hierarchical division still exists in some societies, which places inborn privileges and limitations by birth. A study made by United Nations shows that due to caste-based discrimination, some human right has been violated worldwide (Jensen & Zalla, 2014). Caste discrimination is found in India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Japan, Yemen, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Mali, Cameroon, Mauritania, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia, Yemen, and Micronesia and possibly more countries (International Dalit Solidarity Network, 2014).

2.4 Caste among Nepalese Diaspora

There are around 4 million Nepalese migrating to foreign countries every year in search of work and better opportunities (Jones & Basnet, 2013). They are mostly working in Dubai, Bahrain, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. Some other countries like Malaysia, South Korea, and Japan are also some of the popular migration destination for the Nepali workers. Some workers are also located in war zones like Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya (Verité, 2013). The percentage of people migrating to India is 28 percent, Gulf countries is 64 percent, Malaysia 19 percent and other developed countries--Australia, Japan, the UK and the US--15 percent (Jones & Basnet, 2013).

The well settled of these diaspora populations are in close touch with Nepali events and often support their community events i.e. on the basis of caste, ethnicity, religion, language and geography in forms of different festivals, celebrations, social work and political movements back in Nepal. Even being far from their homeland, they tend to practice cultural and religious

practices of Nepal.

Literature suggests that these practice of caste system is not only limited to the country but with the growing Nepalese diaspora overseas. The use of caste stereotypes in public discourses is popular in overseas communities (Pariyar, 2011). In a study conducted by Mitra Pariyar among the Nepalese migrants in UK highlights the presence of caste-based discrimination by the Gurkha² immigrants. Gurkha's, the warriors who belong to middle ranking caste of hills, which belongs to the pure category, were recruited highly by the caste sensitive policy. They are known for their bravery and for their glorifying contribution in Second World War, all ex-Gurkha were allowed to migrate permanently with their families in UK. In comparison to other Nepali migrants, they are economically sound and are oldest and largest immigrants in UK. This study has found that they are using their power to undermine lower caste people who are in minority and not economically sound (Pariyar, 2011).

Similarly, on a study conducted by Macolm Knox for Special Broadcasting Service, has revealed some cases of caste-based discrimination among Nepalese and Indians in different parts of Australia. It was Mr. Bhanu Adhikari who lodged a first legal complaint of discrimination on the basis of caste in the Equal Opportunity Commission of South Australia. He was discriminated not because he was from the lower caste but because of his associations with lower class people. He ate, drank and visited lower class people's houses and allowed them to enter his house as well, which people have objected on. They asked for 'Chandrayan', the purification process, in order to regain his caste. He was against of it because he believes that if he agrees for the purification process then the lower caste people will never be purified and forever remain the

² Gurkha: Nepalese men serving the British Army

untouchables(Knox, n.d.).

There are many instances of caste-based discrimination in the studies across border. Such discrimination could not always be a conscious strategy but also of their unconscious reflex, as a result of the force of habitus (Pariyar, 2011). Pierre Bourdieu's concept of 'episteme' and 'habitus' i.e. 'knowledge' and 'practice' is of great significance while analyzing the practice of transnational caste practices. Society plays a significant role in controlling our knowledge. We learn from past experiences. We have been watching various types of caste-based discrimination in our country. This practice that we have been watching is now our knowledge. So, people are finding it difficult to adjust their mode of thought, even when they move to a new social context unburdened by these constraints.

.....Man is biologically predestined to construct and to inhabit a world with others. This world becomes for him a dominant and definitive reality. It's limits are set by nature, but once constructed, this world acts back upon nature. In the dialectic between nature and socially constructed world the human organism itself is transformed. In this same dialectic man produces reality and thereby produces himself.... (The Social Construction of Reality 1966, p. 18)

As stated by Luckman and Berger on their book, People started considering the discriminatory practices as natural, which we learn by growing up in the society where it is in practice. Then, we consider these as part of our social reality and started acting the same way it guides us. There could be many reasons behind these discriminatory practices and no matter what it is, but ultimately it could raise serious issues in future of being discriminated on the basis of caste even in foreign land (Tyson, n.d.).

Caste among Nepalese diaspora is present in different forms. One way to their continuation of caste is their continuation of celebration of local festivals across borders. Nepalese migrants have been following their local festivals (depending on caste, ethnicity, space and religion) in every way possible in foreign land. Especially Nepalese associations across border are preserving as well as promoting their culture.



Figure 9: Newari festival 'Mha Puja' to be organized by Pasa Pucha Guthi

The Figure 9 depicts a celebration of Newars (ethnic group) cultural festival going to be organized at London, UK. These kinds of programs are organized to continue unity between the Nepalese migrants and ultimately for continuing the culture, which is their pride. Across the globe, there are many instances of such different other festivals being celebrated.

Marriage is the other way of existing caste practices among Nepalese diaspora. There are

matrimonial sites of among Nepalese across the world aiming to arrange marriages. These matrimonial sites provide personal description of an individual - age, height, caste, nationality, educational qualifications, profession, and hobbies. Caste comes as a highlighted package here. In their advertisement, some will state: “caste no bar”, “Prefer a Chettri girl”, “Brahmin family seeks...” According to a matrimonial agency, “ only 25 per cent of marriages takes place across caste barriers”(Singh, 2015). People are still mentioning their caste in their marriage advertisements and some are highly concerned on caste issues.

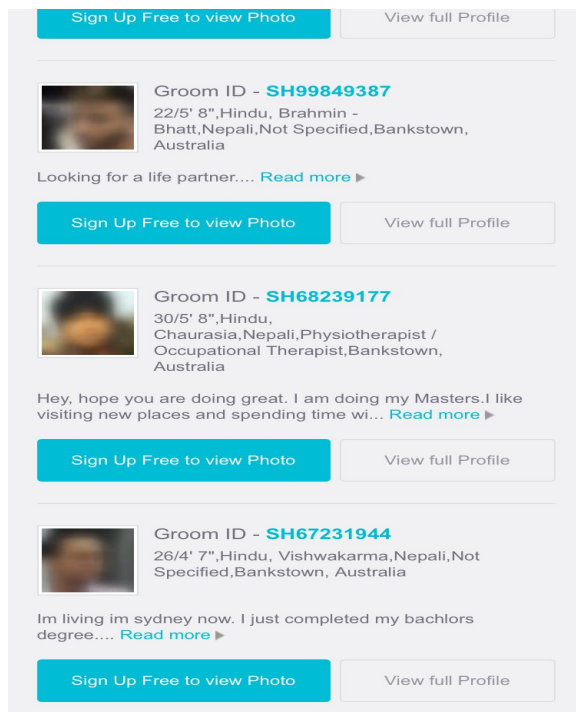


Figure 10: Grooms depicting their caste

There are many matrimonial sites for Nepalese diaspora in Australia as well and most of the advertisements on the sites depict caste. The Figure 10 shows advertisements on matrimonial. Caste is included along with their personal details.

2.5 Multiculturalism, Host community and Caste Practices

International migration is affecting all the countries in the world. The entire world is multicultural, either they are democratic or authoritarian as to some extent there are cultural diversities and the needs to address minorities. According to the 2009, Human Development Report almost 1 billion people which means one in 7 person is living outside the boundary of it's origin(UNDESA, 2012). In such case, it is obvious that multiculturalism is not an untouched issue globally.

International migration promotes two contradictory movements: globalization and nationalism. On the one hand, we ensure homogeneity and in the other hand we are demanding for our own identity. When policies could not integrate these ideas, it invites institutional violence, terrorism that removes the feeling of being secured, that put the cultures into crisis(Belisario Sánchez Martín, 2006). Most importantly, the value of being human would not have any value if the immigrant receiving country could not address these.

Multiculturalism and migration are two key issues today. Host countries have different experiences with migration and multiculturalism. German Chancellor Angela Merkel declared that, "Multiculturalism has utterly failed and immigrants need to do more to integrate in German society." Likewise, British Prime Minister David Cameron also made similar remarks regarding the United Kingdom(Green & Staerkle, 2013). On the other hand, countries like Australia, Canada and Sweden are known for their inclusive policies regarding multiculturalism.

Australia, today is one of the most multicultural country with almost one-fourth of its population who were born abroad and nearly half of its population with one parent born

overseas (Hartwich, 2011). After the World War II, migration to Australia was in large scale that invited cultural diversity, which is a now country's most defining contemporary characteristic. The policies related to Multiculturalism was not at all inclusive at the beginning of migration, but with increased immigrants, the country realized that it would be better to accept the diversity rather than trying to eradicate them (Ozdowski Am, 2016).

Australia's multicultural policy is the heart of their national identity that shows support for cultural religious and linguistic diversity (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2011). It has some core element in their established culture such as; parliamentary democracy, civil liberties, the rule of law, equality of sexes and English as a national language (Ozdowski Am, n.d.). All the indigenous and immigrants are the contributions towards the elements rather than being contaminants. Multiculturalism in Australia is a success not only by these integrating factors but the key to its success is its particular policy(Hartwich, 2011). Australia's migration policy does not depend upon 'come one and all' as of Europe. It receives qualified migrants through their selective migration system that can integrate and are willing to integrate into the society but the case of European countries particularly Germany and Britain are different. They have failed to select their migrants and as a result receive migrants with poor English and qualifications who are dependent on the welfare state, which is why the multiculturalism has failed there (Hartwich, 2011).

Different nationalities settled in their Diasporas with the continuation of their culture, norms, values, traditions, customs, and beliefs. They continue these values and beliefs in different forms. For instance, the establishment of religious sites like church, temple, mosque, and monasteries. Lapervanche on her book, "Indians in White Australia" has found that the The

Indian community of Woolgoolga has established a first Sikh temple in Australia, and this has helped them to continue their culture and traditions and in a way helped them to adjust with the changes in the new settings. When the host society does not accept the immigrants and discriminates them, such as continuation of their cultural practices unites them together and helps in adjusting to the change (De Lapervanche, 1984). On the other hand, some unjust cultural practices create differences among the people in diasporas. The practice of caste is one such example of unjust cultural practices which South Asian countries particularly, Nepal and India are depositing among their Diasporas across the world. This practice of caste in the name of the continuation of their culture has indeed divided the people into different categories rather than unifying them together. Discrimination by caste is immoral, unacceptable in the migrant-receiving countries. Some host countries have responded to stop such practices. British society responded to caste unjust by establishing ‘CasteWatchUK’ which is a secular, non-denominational, independent and voluntary organization registered with the Charity Commission (Singh, 2015). It is established with an aim to promote social cohesion and equality among all individual regardless of caste, color, race, gender, origin, age background, gender and so on. Since it’s establishment in 2003, it is continuously working to raise public awareness of caste-based discrimination happening in the UK and has been assisting people who are subjected to caste discrimination.

As Julie Bishop (Australian Politician) says, “Australia has an increasingly multicultural society.” Thus, the study on minority issues needs to be addressed to maintain the beauty of diverse communities.

2.6 Application of Practice Theory

The theoretical framework that is for analyzing the findings in this study is the Practice Theory by Pierre Bourdieu. He works on the foundation created by Maurice Merleau Ponty who was interested in the concept of "being-in-the-world" who believes, all knowledge is embodied, and there is unity between the body and mind (Leonard, 1989). Building on his foundations, he focused on the practical disposition, body, and action in his work (Bourdieu, 1977). Bourdieu's theory provides the theoretical framework for understanding 'people' everyday practice and their way of living. In Theory of Practice, Bourdieu introduced the concept of “capital,” “habitus” and “field” which were intended to overcome the objective/subjective divide which he viewed as an intertwined entity rather than a single, independent being.

Bourdieu defined "capital" as resources possessed by an individual or group. Capital can be economic, cultural and social. Economic capital includes money and other assets; Social capital is the network and Cultural capital which states about right cultural codes, how to behave. Capital in all forms helps in gaining prestigious position in the society. It is the foundation of social life, and it decides role in the social world (Bourdieu, 1977).

Capital increases with time, and it outspread beyond the idea of tangible material assets includes a diversity of resources available to individuals in the "field" (Nairn & Pinnock, 2017). For instance, embodied capital includes skills, accent, posture, and manners. The dominant social class tries to differentiate on how they look and behave. Their attires can represent their prestige, influence and the power they possess.

The word "Habitus" is originally a Latin word associated with Aristotelian philosophy. Bourdieu uses the term "habitus" to refer to the organized way of doing things which is both regulated and regular, even if they are not the product of any obedience to rules. Bourdieu

elaborates habitus as a system of "dispositions," "tendencies," "propensities" or "inclinations." The "habitus" deposits over an individual over their lifetime and the individuals are socialized to respond in particular ways according to the capital they retained (Shusterman, 1999). The habitus is the amalgam of the psychological disposition and physical skills of an individual which is affected by their past, history, traditions, rituals, and values (Bourdieu, 1990). Habitus is the culturally refined way of thinking, which reflects, owns class and background. According to Bourdieu, the habitus is an unconscious production and reproduction of the existing social order that is intangible even though; an individual's action could only determine the presence of habitus. For example, if an individual imitates skills and mannerism through imitation and repetition, then the habitus is developed. The habitus tends to have a structuring function, but usually by mistake individual assumes the habitus as such. This way, the production and reproduction of habitus are invisible, and this results in the production of a commonsense world as an independent. Bourdieu identifies habitus as the key to conceptualize humans as active agents even though they are not wholly conscious of their own agency Bourdieu states, "Each agent, wittingly or unwittingly, willy-nilly, is a producer and reproducer of objective meaning (Bourdieu, 1977)."

History comes from our embodiment, and this background internalizes on the way we think and act. The values that we are brought up with starts to affect our moves and the way of thinking and we tend to be natural. Bourdieu's idea of habitus is the key to an adequate understanding of human action is "practice" which I find to be an appropriate concept to study the caste practices among Nepalese migrants in Sydney.

Bourdieu's concept of "field" and "habitus" is essential to understand social science research. According to Bourdieu, to critique on the society, one needs to have an in depth

understanding and work reflexively on their habitus to understand the species of capital that is relational to them. It is essential to understand how they use their habitus, their perception, values and above all how these will effect the social space they are attempting to critique. So, the application of this theory to study caste practices among Nepalese migrants would be essential to understand people's perception of practicing caste across borders and to analyze the reasons of the continuation and discontinuation of caste practices. The findings and themes generated in the study are critically analyzed applying Bourdieu's practice theory in this study.

2.7 Dumont's Purity and Pollution

"The Homo Hierarchicus: The caste system and its Implication (1966) is Louis Dumont's empirical study including 'text' and 'context' on the Indian caste system. In this study, Dumont's main concern was the ideology of the caste system, which is a basis for understanding the social structure. According to him, caste is set of association of economic, political and kinship system, which is prolonged by specific values, which are mostly religious (Dumont, 1972). In this study, Dumont argues that caste is not a social stratification but rather a system of hierarchy based on inequality. He identifies 'hierarchy' as an important value primary to the caste system supported by Hinduism. Dumont's study is based on the single principle of purity and pollution, which makes the study peculiar, as it constitutes of binary opposites and according to him the concept of purity and pollution is a form of inequality in it (Dumont, 1972). This binary opposition underlies hierarchy, which is understood regarding purity that are the superior ones and impurity which are the inferior ones.

Purity and Pollution are interlinked with the caste system and untouchability where the superior caste tried their best to maintain their ceremonial purity by not engaging with the mixed

ones. And this degree of Purity and Pollution decides the hierarchy of caste, which determines in keeping the required distance between different castes. For instance, Dalits were not allowed to go near the water sources from where the Brahmins fetch their water because it was believed that their presence or physical touch would contaminate the water. The Brahmins, who were assigned with the priestly functions were ranked on the top of the social hierarchy and also were considered pure whereas the untouchables were deemed to be impure and were not even allowed within the territory of upper caste people. In his study, he identified the number of practices considered as pure and impure in Hindu system. For instance, endogamy, cleanliness, vegetarianism are found pure and superior (Dumont,1972). The concept of pure and impure is not only linked to the occupation that they are supposed to perform but to the entire structure of ideas. Even the objects are considered as pure and impure: gold than silver and silk than cotton. It is essential to learn the concept of purity and pollution to understand the caste system and the reason behind the continuation of caste practices. These learned patterns of purity and pollution are inherited in their knowledge and practices and this intentionally as well as unintentionally guides their behavior in practicing caste. Such practices are even harder to leave when ones sense of identity is bound up with them. Caste is a form of identification to people and moving any learned pattern related to caste can be emotional and more complicated, which is why despite knowing the harmful practices of caste, people may not intend to act as their will and thus be guided by their pre-deposited concept of purity and pollution visibly and invisibly.

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Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study is to understand people's perception on following the cultural practices across boundary where there are no obligations. I studied the relationship between different castes and inter-caste relationships i.e. between the higher and lower castes and within castes, which is the major indicator to evaluate the existence of caste practices among Nepalese in Sydney. To understand the caste experiences of Nepalese Migrants needs an appropriate methodology as in-depth interviews, which allowed the interviewee to express their experiences, challenges and perceptions in their own way and style. Further, in this chapter I will provide the sources of data, research procedure, advantages and limitations of the research methods, ethics consideration and information on how the analytical themes were selected for analysis and discussion.

3.2 Identification of Approach

This study employed qualitative research method, using in-depth interviews as the primary research materials. An in-depth interview is a qualitative research technique that includes conducting intensive individual interviews, which explore the perspective of any specific program, idea or situation (C Boyce & Neale, 2006). In-depth Interviews are an interactive mode of conversation that allows a rich, informative and productive experience. It

helped in understanding and interpreting the meaning of what interviewees say by disrupting the monotony of an interviewer. Basically, the in-depth interviews are essential for getting the story behind the experience of a participant. It provides a depiction of a social world where we live in and how things go around us. As my research focused on understanding the caste practices among Nepalese in Sydney and the reasons behind their continuation or termination, I believe it was best addressed through the qualitative approach to data collection. An in-depth interview is the most appropriate method, which allowed the interviewee for the free flow of the ideas reducing the researcher's chances to guide them.

The goal of an in-depth interview is to explore a respondent's point of view, experiences, feelings, and perspectives in a detailed way and it helped to explore new issues in depth. During the in-depth interview, participants expressed openly and comfortably. As my study dealt with caste-based discrimination overseas that reflected the sufferings and predicament of Nepalese Dalit migrants of all castes, an in-depth interview was the best approach to explore such sensitive topic.

An in-depth interview functioned like a moderator guide- they had no measures, interviewees responded in their own words, and I, as an interviewer was able to amend the flow and order of the questions and ask additional questions when necessary. To conduct a more coherent and transparent conversation, in this empirical research, a semi-structured open-ended question were asked which allowed the interviewer and interviewee to openly discuss an idea or response in the more detailed way and was explored more by the answers. During the interview, when there was a difficulty for a respondent to answer or when the respondent just provided a brief explanation, then I was able to modify the questions into simpler forms, which allowed the

interviewee to consider the issue further (The Wallace Foundation, 2007). As this study dealt with the caste practices among Nepalese migrants and its impacts on lives of Nepalese migrants of all castes that reflected the sufferings, and difficulties of victims so in depth interview conducted individually (Berry 1999) was the appropriate way for exploring such a sensitive topic.

3.3 Source of Data

- **Primary Data:**

Primary data was collected by conducting in-depth interview with Nepalese Migrants from Nepalese society present in Sydney and also from Nepalese student associations in various universities in Sydney, such as MUNSA (Macquarie University Nepalese Student's Association).

In this study, I intended to interview 20 people with a representative portion of both male and female and including diverse caste groups. However, I was only able to interview 12 people due to difficulty in finding representative from different caste and their lack of availability of time. Among the 12 interviewees, 5 were the University students while 7 of them were recruited from different Nepalese associations. For an in-depth interviews, it is common to conduct the interview with as few as 10 to 15 participants as they provide much more detailed information than other data collection methods like surveys (Boyce & Neale, 2006). The most beautiful part of the qualitative research is that it favors small numbers. In fact, the number of respondents is unimportant but what matter is the quality of information (Thapa, 2015). Despite interviewing 12 respondents, I believe that I have collected enough information necessary for data analysis within

the scope of Master of Research thesis. The participants voluntarily contributed in interview, as they were participating in the interview on their own will. No participants were forced for the interviewee.

During the interview, I tried my best to provide a more relaxed environment to collect more in-depth information and allowing respondents to openly discuss their views and ideas to produce valid output.

If time had allowed, I would have interviewed more than 12 participants. Most of the participants that I interviewed were adults in their 30's whom I recruited through different Nepalese associations based on caste, ethnicity and religion. As many of the Nepalese Associations did not reply my invitation email, I lacked representation of respondents from diverse caste so I even used the snowball method to recruit the participants who fit into the criteria but none of them was forced to participate in the interview. I also interviewed some University students who were in their 20's and had been in Australia for more than 2 years.

- **Secondary Data:**

Secondary data were collected through journals, reports, documents, articles, researches and websites, which were written by different academic scholars on overseas Caste System and Dalits. These documents provided me the background and relatively important information on transnational caste practices. There are very few studies on Nepalese caste overseas however, there are plenty studies on Indian diaspora and caste practices, which gave me better insights on practices of caste overseas and Dalits experiences. By reviewing the literature, I got evidences of

caste practices overseas and explored the stories discrimination faced by Dalits in foreign land where caste has no value.

3.4 Procedure

My research method combined in-depth interview followed by a follow-up interview in some cases. After the first interview, some participants wanted to share more of their experiences, so a follow-up interview was arranged. At first, an invitation email was sent to different Nepalese associations in Sydney, which were based on caste, ethnicity, and religion. The email was also sent to various student associations of different Universities. However, only a few of the Nepalese association and students associations replied the email. To those who responded distributed the email to their members. Then, the interested participants contacted me via email. This way, the participants did not feel pressurized and only those of the interested people contacted which ensures the quality of information.

Next, the date was finalized after their approval for the interview. As directed by the ethics committee, the interview was either to be held at available rooms of Macquarie University or via online through Zoom, Macquarie University's web conferencing tool. A respondent was given sole authority to choose the way they want to be interviewed, but all the interviewees chose to do it online to avoid travel time to the University.

On the day of the interview, verbal concerns of the participant were taken. As my research deals with personal views and experiences, the privacy of data was my major concern. So, I preferred to take the verbal consent that allowed avoiding papers with names and personal

details. As part of ethics, I disclosed my intention on interviewing and took informed consent before starting the interview. As a researcher, I emphasized that they have the freedom to discontinue the interview if they don't want to. They were free to skip questions, which they were not comfortable in answering without giving any reasons. Further, if they were not comfortable with what they have disclosed, they were allowed edit their parts as well by negotiating with the researcher.

Caste practices are still a taboo in Nepalese society, which is not openly discussed. Upon disclosing the participant's privacy, they may be humiliated, discriminated or people can make fun of them. So, the identity of the participants remained anonymous throughout the research to protect their confidentiality. Depending on the sensitivity of the topic, no participants were forced to answer any sorts of questions that they did not want to to avoid distressful situations.

The interviews were conducted in both English and Nepali language to allow multilingualism for the better understanding of specific terms and expressions. The participants were given the option to choose the language they were comfortable in so that it enables easy and smooth communication. Interestingly, all respondents preferred to speak in Nepali.

All the interviews were audio-recorded, and all participants' consent was taken. These recordings were translated and transcribed (when necessary) for further analysis. It was a benefit as a researcher to understand both (English and Nepali) language which enabled me to analyze it without delusions.

After conduction of in-depth interview, which was a storytelling style allowed new nuances to emerge naturally which helps in generating specific themes (MAcAdams, 1997). The

transcripts were generated after the interviews. Then, after reading and re-reading the transcripts for several times, common and reoccurring themes were identified. Then, I developed a set of themes such as Habitus, Being Nepali Beyond Nepal, Culture, and Individual Rights and the relevant extracts were placed under these themes. All the themes generated are analyzed with the interview content, which is mentioned in the Chapter Four: Data Analysis.

3.5 Advantages and limitations of research methods

As this study aims to explore people's perception, their insights, and experiences of caste-based discrimination; an in-depth interview uncovered the valuable insights and enabled me to find out the real story (Carolyn Boyce & Neale, 2006). Similarly, as the in-depth interview is conducted one on one basis, the respondents were most likely to open up and share their stories and experiences which they would not have been able to share in groups. Also, respondents were probed with questions for more detailed information. The most feasible part of conducting an in-depth interview is that the semi-structured questions could either be modified or new ones could be added when necessary (Hancock, 1998).

In comparison to other methods, data for in-depth interviews could be collected faster than the other research methods within few weeks as the number of the participants are very few, but in this study, the most challenging part was finding representatives from diverse caste background. Next, the analysis of data was very challenging and time-consuming (Carolyn Boyce & Neale, 2006). It was not an easy job to conduct an in-depth interview especially when

the subject is sensitive. I had to study rigorously to improve my interview techniques to obtain qualitative information.

3.6 Ethics consideration

Ethics is an inseparable part of the research. Ethical consideration makes the researcher more responsible as it limits the act of generalization of any research topic and maintains the privacy of the participants for their security. Prior to conducting interviews, ethics approval was received which approves that this project obeys with the Macquarie University Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research. It usually takes few weeks on average for approval of the study which had to go the central committee of Higher Degree Research but it took me more than 10 weeks for approval of this study. The committee was concerned about the interviewees due to the sensitivity of the topic. I had to resubmit my application to prove my capability to conduct such study. Finally, the ethics approval was received and then the process of interview started.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

Data analysis started after completing and coding of all the interviews. The analysis first focused on to answer the first research question i.e. Do Nepali immigrants to Australia continue caste practices abroad? Finally, after completing all the interviews, it was found that the Nepali immigrants to Australia continue the caste practices. Many of the interviewees may find this result conflicting with their perceptions because most of them were negative about the caste practices overseas. However, their saying and acting were contradictory i.e. they are saying ‘no’ to the caste practices overseas, but their behavior and practices clearly show that caste practices is being continued here in Sydney as well.

I do not intend to say that the caste-based discrimination here is rigid as back in Nepal but caste matters and many decisions in their lives are influenced by the caste to which they belong. The interviewees were first hesitant to speak about caste practices abroad but later revealed their stories, which show that Caste practices live on in Sydney. I have highlighted the instances of caste practices in following three topics.

4.1 Social Interaction

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Nepalese immigrants had the highest rate of increase compared to other immigrant groups with an average annual growth rate of 27.8% between the year 2006 to 2016 (Khatry, 2017). Sydney is one of the most preferred

destinations for the Nepalese immigrants because of its successful multiculturalism policies. People from all over Nepal can be found in Sydney, and these people from different caste, ethnicity, religion, and geography have formed different association based on these backgrounds. They aim to preserve Nepalese identity overseas regarding language, culture, religion, and ethnicity and most importantly to unify all Nepalese overseas.

These different Nepalese Associations have been a place for their social interaction with their community people. Even being thousands of miles away from Nepal, they want to enliven their rich cultural practices as back in Nepal, and these associations are a way to exist these practices as back in the country. People, by their caste and ethnicity, choose to be a member of their familiar associations present here. It does not mean that the associations do not welcome other groups. It accepts membership from all Nepalese, but their preferences are their particular groups based on caste, ethnicity, religion, and space. For instance, the target group of Guthi Australia, which is a Newar community-based organization, does not only include Newars but also the non-Newar Nepalese community and the wider Australian community. In programs organized by Guthi Australia, we can find participants from other community groups as well, but the majority are Newars. These associations do not intend to be biased to other community people. However, it was found that people are not comfortable to attend programs organized by other groups. One of the reason, people refuse to attend these programs are the higher preferences of their community groups which makes the external to feel like the 'other.'

One of the interviewees shared her experience of attending a program organized by Guthi Australia:

I belong to Brahmin community and one of the features of Brahmin girls is to pierce their nose. This makes me distinct in a group of Newars as Newars girls can't pierce their nose. I love to explore new cultures and practices so I attended one of the programs organized by Guthi Australia. They are really doing a good job to preserve the Newar culture and practices here in Australia. However, my experience was not pleasing this time. People at many occasions kept on commenting on me being Brahmin, as the stud in my nose clearly states it. A lady came to pour aila (alcohol) and I wanted to taste it so I asked her but she commented, 'Bahun bhayera ni aila khane ta' which means even being Brahmin, do you want to consume alcohol? In past, Brahmins were not supposed to consume alcohol as it impure them. I do not understand her intention of her comments but it makes me feel awkward. There were many such small incidents in the program, which makes me realize that I am an outsider.

People may unintentionally, without thinking the comment on someone's caste, ethnicity or religion. And this may make some people feel awkward, without the other person knowing/realizing what they have done. People intention of asking and commenting on anyone's caste, ethnicity and religion may be an unconscious activity, but some people find it difficult and awkward. They are concerned about being judged by caste even though when they are not. Such activity makes them feel humiliated. Despite the person's intention of commenting on her being Brahmin was not to hurt her sentiments, issues of caste identity can often be very emotional. She felt like an outsider. And as a result, in the future, she might not attend such cross-cultural programs because of the fear of being unaccompanied in unfamiliar groups.

Guthi Australia is just one example here; there are many such other associations based on caste, religion, and ethnicity. All these associations aim to contribute to conserving their culture and practices, but on the other hand, they also promote cross-cultural practices by inclusive representation from other castes, ethnicity, and religion in their programs. Programs and gatherings organized by these associations are best places for social interactions for people from their community and outside. So, the organizers and participants both are responsible for making the cross-cultural programs successful. In the end, no one should be left to feel like an outsider. All Nepalese, despite coming from different background needs to be united and should be identified as a Nepali. This is how we will be recognized in this multicultural country Australia.

The caste-based associations do not purposefully promote any sorts of caste-based discrimination, but in a way, by their very structure, they keep caste alive among the Nepalese diaspora. Even in a foreign land, caste-based identity has to mean, and unknowingly people are still being judged by caste.

4.2 Stories of Discrimination

At first, people were hesitant to speak about the caste system but by the end of the discussion, many came to reveal heart touching stories of experiences of caste that they or their acquaintances have faced. Some have even settled in Australia hoping to escape caste-based discrimination back in Nepal, but unfortunately became a victim here as well.

An interviewee shared her journey from Nepal to Australia. She belongs to a lower caste untouchable group but her husband is from a higher caste. In Nepal, in most cases, the

community does not accept inter-caste marriages especially when one is from the untouchable caste. Even families break all ties with people who opt for inter-caste marriage.

Our families were against our relations. My partner's mother even stopped talking to him. We were not supported by anyone and we realized that our union is not possible in Nepal. So, we decided to move to Australia and settle here. We thought when we would be in the foreign land, caste would not be an issue and later our families would easily accept us. We lived together for 7 years before getting married and in these 7 years, we tried to get our families approval but we could not. In addition, none of the family members and relatives in Sydney appeared in our wedding. I completely understand the reasons for not being accepted by our families back in the country but I was so shocked by our relatives here. We escaped Nepal to get away from the caste-based discrimination but even here I could not get rid of it.

Most of their relatives are well settled here and have been here for more than a decade but they have not given up the concept of caste. Thus, they boycott their marriage celebrations for the sake of continuation of their culture of not accepting inter-caste marriages.

Similarly, another interviewee, 'Pode' by caste one of the lowest caste groups, shares a disappointing story in finding accommodation.

I wanted to share an apartment with the Nepalese, hoping it would be easy for me to adjust here. I went to many places to check the apartment and interact with them. The most common question asked was 'kaha bata' and 'kun jati' which means where are you

from and which caste do you belong to? At the beginning, everybody was positive but later after knowing my background; I find him or her quite hesitant.

It is difficult to understand people's psychology of judging someone on the basis of their ancestor's history. They have not yet been able to accept people from lower caste by heart. People do not dare to abuse anyone against caste directly as it is against the law to judge someone on the basis of caste in Nepal. Nevertheless, in most cases discrimination are not direct, they hardly say anything but their action speaks more than their words. Their hesitation to share their apartment with the lower caste, in this case, is an instance of action of their disapproval.

The next interviewee was a Dalit and a Madhesi, an ethnic group living in southern plains of Nepal and close to the boarder of India.

As you know, Madhesis are back warded in every aspect, we can find very few of them in higher level jobs in Nepal. It is rare that a Madhesi can go abroad for studies on own's expenditure as their income level is very low back in the country. We are one of the poorest groups. This is why; we have very less representation of our community members here in Australia as well. I look a bit different i.e. dark in skin color and my accent makes my Nepali language different to others as our mother tongue is not Nepali. Many of my Nepali friends make fun of my color and, calling me 'achut' and 'dhoti' which is an abusive word often used to doubt my identity of being Nepali and rather being an Indian.

In this case, the interviewee is double discriminated, at first, on the basis of caste and then on the basis of ethnicity and geography as well. These experiences of the interviewees

clearly state that the caste-based discrimination among Nepalese is practiced in Sydney as well and these issues are within the victims themselves. These comments made for fun hurt people's emotions but the victim could not share it to anyone and keep it within self.

4.3 Marriage

Endogamy, meaning marriage within one's caste, is a central feature of the Hindu caste system. The caste system in Nepal is considered as a closed stratification wherein a person's social status is indebted to the caste they were born in and marriage in Hindu Caste system is a sacred institution through which birth legitimately occurs. To maintain the Caste System, the proper regimentation of marital bond, i.e., marriage within caste only is in practice since ages. Endogamous marriages pass the caste structure down to the next generation, reproducing not only people but also caste identity.

In a way, marriage in Nepal is caste driven which is more a family matter than a personal thing. Family members and relatives help you to find a partner within the caste. Otherwise, one can also find a partner but within the caste. Today, marriages outside one's caste or Inter-caste have gradually gained acceptance due to increasing education, employment, and modernization but are still forbidden entirely in orthodox Nepalese families.

In most of the educated and modern families, the inter-caste marriages are accepted, but in contradiction to the younger generations who are educated are still obsessed by the caste and Gotra. An interviewee stated:

“Marriage is a lifetime dedication and I want my marriage to be approved by my family. My parents would never accept a girl from another caste and religion. I know, we should not be judging someone on the basis of caste and religion but I also wish to continue the same tradition and values in my children, I need to get married to a girl within my caste.”

It is surprising to find higher affiliation towards their religion and traditions among educated youths. They are ostensibly opposed to the caste discrimination and do not intend to hurt anyone but could not help themselves to compromise the lifetime commitment of marriage because they believe that a stronger bond could only be created among people from the same community who shares same beliefs and values.

People are aware of caste-based discrimination in their consciousness but could not bring it into practice. Despite having knowledge: tradition, values, beliefs, and history are being obstacles here to change their knowledge into practice. They still have the fear to accept the present practice of inter-caste marriage by challenging the pre-conceived beliefs of the past.

Here, I do not intend to mean that all the youths would not agree for an inter-caste marriage but most of them find ‘caste’ as an influential factor in case of marriage. Even in the case of dating, caste plays a significant role. In Nepalese society where dating is typically followed by the next step of marriage builds pressure of dating also within the same caste. Parents forced their children to find a girl or boy within their own caste and religion so that the perceived honor of the family could be maintained in society. That is why even before dating, ‘caste’ comes in his or her consciousness. As an interviewee mentioned, “As far as possible, I want to date someone from my caste so that I can get married without any obstacles but I do not mean I won’t date someone from another caste. If the person is good with heart then caste won’t

be a barrier but it would be better if I can find someone nice from the same caste.” In some ways, ‘caste’ is still an issue to be considered both in marriage and dating even overseas. Caste influenced the decision of choosing a life partner.

Interviewees believe that there are advantages of endogamous marriage. According to them, getting married within the same caste ensures that their values and beliefs will be inherited to next generation and any future child need not have to grow up with the conflicting viewpoints of two different caste groups. They do not completely agree that only endogamous marriage should be practiced however they were favoring it.

Another interviewee commented, “ My parents had always forced me to date a boy of my own caste. Only now that I am happily married do I know why they were so interested in me marrying within the same caste. My husband gets me like no one else could, we understand each other so well and moreover, our opinions do not collide.” Caste, only does not only determine the strong bond of the relationship. There may be many successful and unsuccessful endogamous marriages but they are not critically analyzing the later aspect. There are instances of broken endogamous marriages. They are believing in things that were in practice since past and have been taught by their elders.

Next, the values, traditions, and beliefs are found to be more rigid overseas where there is a high density of diaspora. People try to form a unity within their community and copy the same culture and customs as back in the country. Marriage is a perfect instance of bonding within own community overseas. Even here, people try to arrange marriages within own caste and religious groups so that their small community might living abroad make the sense of caste even stronger, as the need to protect a perceived ‘tradition.’ As one of the interviewees said, “If the Nepalese

representation was less here in Sydney, I do not think inter-caste marriage would be an issue.” The larger the community, more concern will be to represent itself in a positive manner. People will try to maintain one’s social status at any cost. In some cases, parents and relatives force to get married within the same community and in some cases people are self-conscious and decide marriages only within caste. In a way, the presence of a majority of Nepalese diaspora here in Sydney is contributing in endogamous marriages and making ‘caste’ an influential factor in deciding the partner for marriage.

Based upon the evidence provided in the examples above, caste practices are clearly still alive in the Nepali community in Sydney, Australia. The following sections of this chapter will discuss the factors that contribute to the continuation of Caste System. This part of the chapter also illustrates some extracts of the narratives of twelve Nepalese migrants of different backgrounds. These extracts focus on three main themes:

- **Habitus**
- **Being Nepali Beyond Nepal**
- **Multiculturalism and Discrimination**

In this part, these themes and concepts are discussed with the support of the relevant literature. I aim to produce knowledge based on the narratives told by the Nepalese immigrants in this research and to make analysis in relation to the theories.

4.4 Habitus

The concept of habitus is initially introduced by Aristotle and reworked by many social theorists. But it was Pierre Bourdieu, the French sociologist/anthropologist who re-introduced the idea in a more organized intent. According to Bourdieu, Reality is a social concept, where to live is to live socially and what is real is relational to things around us. Bourdieu defines habitus as “ A structuring structure, which organizes the practices and the perception of the practices” (Bordieu, 1984). Habitus is the internal representations of external structures, i.e., a cognitive system of structure rooted in an individual. It includes our tastes, beliefs, thoughts, interests and our perception of the world, which are created through the primary socialization through family, society, and attainment of education (Bourdieu, 1977).

Habitus is “the way society becomes deposited in persons in the form of lasting dispositions, or trained capacities and structured propensities to think, feel and act in determinant ways, which then guide them”(Navarro, 2006). Thus, habitus is the history turned into nature, which refers to the deeply rooted habits that we possess by our life experiences, naturalizing constructed culture.

According to Bourdieu, “habitus has the potential to influence our actions and to construct our social world as well as being influenced by the external.” The internal and external worlds are two interdependent spheres, which influence the habitus of an individual. Thus, the habitus of the two individual will not be the same because of the fluid nature of habitus, which changes with time, travel, education and parenthood (“Habitus,” 2012). So, an individual habitus is guided by on own experiences and this experience effects our position in our society. Our experiences direct our desires, our beliefs, and our mannerisms. A poor person will view the

world differently than a successful businessman. A poor man's social reality is different than a businessman, so will see the world uniquely. Similarly, people from Upper Caste and Lower Caste group also have different experiences and the way they view the world is different to the other. The social reality of being from lower caste is different to upper caste. A caste which has determined their occupation, education, economy and in overall their class has resulted to live an unfair life to those of lower caste groups hence the 'feel,' the habitus may be different to them. Thus, 'Habitus,' according to Bourdieu is intricately linked with the social structure within a specific field, in this case, caste, and is important for the sociological analysis of the society because an individual is not a separate entity but rather an intrinsic part of the whole.

Educational curriculums in Nepal have emphasized education about caste system to educate and to aware people that discriminating someone by caste is inhuman and against the law. To stop caste-based discrimination, the government launched awareness programs in social media and different other programs through government and non-government organizations. Despite government efforts, much change could not be brought in people's perception and practice. Despite knowing and being educated about the fact of the caste system, younger generations also could not stop themselves from the caste injustices which most of them have started to occur unknowingly.

An interviewee mentioned:

I really feel guilty for behaving like that. Even though the aroma of the food is luring, I have never tasted it. I control myself because it's prepared by Damai and my mother used to tell me that we will be impure and will go to hell after death if we eat food prepared by the untouchables. I know this is complete nonsense and we should not act the way but I

can't help it. I know my colleague must have been sad because she had cooked my favorite dishes many times but I ignored it. It's not just once, I have acted this way many times.

Sometimes, our action is different than our opinion. The things that we have been learning from the childhood are in our unconscious mind and it eventually misguides our action, despite knowing the fact that it is incorrect. As Bourdieu has stated:

... it is yesterday's man who inevitably predominates in us since the recent amounts to little compared with the long past in the course of which we were formed and from which we result. Yet we do not sense this man of the past because he is inveterate in us; he makes up the unconscious part of us. Consequently, we are led to take no account of him, any more than we take account of his legitimate demands. Conversely, we are very much aware of the most recent attainments of civilization, because, being recent, they have not yet had time to settle into our unconscious....." (Outline of Theory of Practice 1977, p. 79)

Our present is being dominated by the past events, which have longer histories. However, we are not aware of the engagement of past in the present. Our action, beliefs, perceptions, and thoughts are all being guided by our past experiences but in a way, we are ignorant about it. They are entrenched in our unconscious mind in a way that despite knowing about the recent changes, we can't adopt it. We need time to get habituated to it. The situation is same with the interviewee: despite knowing right and wrong, she could not take the correct decision. The interviewee is completely aware of the fact that s/he is being judgmental and biased on basis of caste but could not stop her actions. It is because in deep inside her mind, s/he still believes in

her mother's teachings and the present learning's could not challenge it. Next, the interviewee does not want to come out of the box and go beyond their comfort zone. Definitely, new things are full of risks, but our hypothesis would not be true or false unless we try it. In this case, the interviewee is not trying to challenge her actions despite knowing that it is a nonsense behavior because her concept is again guided by the purity and impurity of caste and s/he is scared of the consequences that it might result into.

We learn many things by looking at others' behavior, perceiving phenomena that we may not recognize in our behavior. Rather than having a personal opinion and act accordingly, they copy others. One of the participants reveals that her aunt who had been living at Rockdale in Sydney has never shared her house with Dalits. Not only Dalits, but she also has not shared the apartment with any other caste communities from Nepal nor foreigners. She is very particular and only allows Brahmins(the caste group that she belongs to) to share the apartment with. She had rather left the rooms vacant and paid all the rent on her own. The interviewee used to live with her aunt but now has been living in a rented apartment for three years. She also had not chosen any one of the lower caste groups to share the apartment with despite many came to inspect the studio, and she found some of them to be very good.

Though the interviewee knows that she is unfair, she is not clear what she is doing, and her action has more meaning. This happens when we are uncertain of the meaning of our action and gets adjusted to others practices that we have been observing for, and the same trend continues. Sometimes we can't decide right and wrong then we favor comparative decisions of similar incidents even though it's the correct or incorrect solution. As Bourdieu has mentioned,

That part of practices which remains obscure in the eyes of their own producers is the aspect by which they are objectively adjusted to other practices and to the structures of which the Principle of their production is itself the product..”(Outline of Theory of Practice 1977, p. 79)

This way, one started following the other, and the same action continues. The habitus, which is the product of the history, produces individual and collective practices and this way history are reproduced in the same pattern. So, Bourdieu has highlighted a key point that “habitus constrains but does not determine thought and action.” This is why an individual needs to be meditative and should be aware of one’s own habitus to observe the social fields with relative objectivity. Only then a fair judgment could be possible as individuals have a different habitus due to their internal and external worlds.

On the one hand, Caste could be a matter of pride, and on the other hand, it could be a matter of shame. It depends on how the society has perceived our caste. Caste determines the occupational divisions, so those of the higher caste who are subjected to higher-level jobs assume caste as a matter of pride. To those lower caste people who are subjected to perform lower level jobs including scavenging of animals, cleaning towns and drainage and so on accept caste as a matter of shame. An interviewee who is a Chettri by Caste is proud because his ancestors were warriors known for their bravery. The educational texts in Nepal had included about the glorious history of the Chettris, the warriors whose contribution has abetted Nepal to be a sovereign country. Another interviewee who belongs to the Sarki caste, who were traditional cobblers, is ashamed of his association with this caste. He mentioned,

I feel uncomfortable whenever the caste issue is raised. Since my childhood, I had been told that I belong to lower caste, called Sarki and I should be ashamed of my identity that is my caste. This is the way, how my society has fashioned me. Even here in Sydney, when people asked me about my identity including the origin of my place, caste, and ethnic groups, I hesitate to reveal it. I wonder if I had been from other higher caste groups, would the scenario be the same? Will I feel the same hesitation?

Both of the caste groups have different histories. The Chettri's have a heroic picture in the society while the Sarki's were not even considered human. They were the untouchables. The former caste was praised for their bravery and the latter was valueless. The aim of Ancestors of both caste groups was to earn living by performing their skills. If the skills of the Sarki are not to be appreciated then all the rest of the caste group would have to walk barefooted and how would a soldier fight well without shoes? Each work performed by any caste group has their peculiar values and every work is great. But people instill an idea in our mind, which makes us conscious, and act accordingly. What your ancestors did was because of their talent and a means to earn their living through honesty which one should not be ashamed of. But our society shapes our mind in such a way that we started to take it as reality. Both of the individuals from two different castes have a different history, which has determined their social status, and this is why two individuals have different perceptions on Caste. Such habitus plays an important role to constantly enliven a subject in people's mind, which results in repetition of the same action.

In my study, I do not intend to say that all people practice the caste system. There are people to whom caste is meaningless in this foreign land. They welcome everyone regardless of color, caste, religion, and ethnicity. For example, one interviewee stated:

I have never faced any kind of discrimination on the basis of caste despite I belong to the lower caste groups. My friends are very nice and treat me equally as others. Most of my friends are settled here with their families here and they invite me for different functions at their home despite knowing I do not belong to their caste groups. However, I had rarely accepted such invitations but I have enjoyed the most to the ones that I have attended. I know it is fun to attend these functions yet; I do not attend many of them with the fear that someone might ask me about my caste and I have to face similar shameful situations as my relatives.

Sometimes caste issues are just created unintentionally. Despite having the favorable environment, sometimes people's preconceived assumptions make it unfavorable. Though people might not have experienced any discrimination they become judgmental, as most of the members of their society had gone through the situation. As Bourdieu stated, "all individual who are the product of the same objective conditions are supportive of the same habitus: social class"(Bordieu, 1984)

Though it is impossible for all members of the same class to go through the same experiences, in the same order but it is obvious that each member of the same class is more likely to have been confronted with similar situation than any member of another class. Because of the experiences of shameful consequences to their group members, people are insecure and unwilling to change despite it is happening for a good reason. Thus, habitus not only guides an individual but members of the same groups to act collectively. It could be considered as a personal but not an individual system of perception and action, which is common to all members of the same group.

Further, as Bourdieu mentioned, cultural capital creates a sense of collective identity and a significant source of inequality. He explains the concept of cultural capital, beyond the notion of economy and in the more symbolic realm of culture. His idea of cultural capital refers to the symbolic elements such as skills, tastes, posture, clothing, mannerism, material belongings, and credentials that one gain through being part of any specific social class. He states that these cultural capitals create a sense of collective identity and are a major source of inequality. Here I consider Caste as a group of people sharing similar skills. These skills were the way of earning their livelihood in the past, and these occupations have determined their economy. In the past, the skills possessed by the lower caste groups used to have low economic value while the upper caste groups were paid more. In the past, their skills have determined their economy, which still has effects on their social status today.

The low economy in the past when caste system was highly practiced has affected in the educational attainments of the more moderate caste groups because they could not afford it. This resulted in less representation of lower caste groups in higher post jobs, which means in the present as well they are more engaged in low-level jobs, which paid them less, and their economy is not as strong as the upper caste. This has created the gap between the social status of higher and lower caste groups. In a way, these gaps lead to an unconscious acceptance of social hierarchies, to 'a sense of one's place' and to behaviors of self-exclusion. Thus, not willing to collaborate with other higher social groups could be an unconscious acceptance of self-exclusion from the group, limiting self to owns caste group. Therefore, the way the interviewee reacted by not accepting invitations from other castes might be an act of self-exclusion. The interviewee is just limiting him/her to own group because of the fear of being dominated by their groups.

In my study, I found that the presence of caste is more in self-consciousness rather than in people's action. As caste practices are illegal, people are concerned about their actions and try to control it, but in their unconscious mind, they have not yet accepted equality among all castes. Here, the caste discrimination is more subtle than open. It is difficult to point it out, but there are traces of its presence seemingly everywhere. I find it in the indirect conversations where people make fun of other's caste. I see it in the shamed face of lower caste people when they have to reveal their caste as an identity.

4.5 “Being Nepali beyond Nepal”

No matter where we are, we need to carry our identity. A person without an identity will be meaningless in this world. I want to see a small Nepal in every part of the world where there is a representation of Nepalese and this could only be possible by continuing all our practices. All practices do not include any evil beliefs that would discriminate anyone's feelings. I am completely against caste-based discrimination and gender discrimination that is still in practice in Nepal. However, I feel caste is an identity of your belongingness to a certain group and is a sign of your identity that tells the glorious history of our ancestors.

Since the origin of civilization in Nepal, it has been a home to diversified settlements with regard to ethnicity, language, culture, and religion. People from different origin and different principles have been living together in peace and harmony. After the unification of modern Nepal by Late King Prithvi Narayan Shah, of Shah dynasty in the year 1769 A.D, the the

concept of Unity in Diversity was put forward in his Divine Sermon, which characterized Nepal as “a garden of 4 castes and 36 sub-castes”(DFID & World Bank, 2006). Since then, this has been the foundation for Nepal, a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious society. These different languages and culture have created a vibrant and distinctive national culture, and these are an essential part of Nepalese national identity. Nepal is culturally diverse, and the caste system makes it even more assorted, and unfortunately, it gives power to specific groups. This has created discrimination by caste, religion, language, and ethnicity. The laws of the country have prohibited discrimination by caste, religion, language and ethnicity and guaranteed equal treatment to all. However, these constitutional provisions have not yet been practiced entirely.

People of different origin and beliefs have migrated from Nepal, and some of them migrated voluntarily for better opportunities and the quality of life. At the same time war, crisis, poverty, inequality are other reasons for them to relocate forcefully. Most people from most of the countries have the love for their country and a strong sense of identity and so do Nepalese. This is why in every corner of the world, where there is a representation of Nepalese, one can find Nepalese culture alive regarding language, religion, ethnicity, and festivals. The case is no different in Sydney as well; there is the number of Nepalese from different origins and culture, and they are continuing their practices here as well.

The interviewee's desire to see small Nepal everywhere in the world is a symbol of love for the motherland. Regardless of the years that they have been far from Nepal, they love to be identified as Nepalese. This is why people are still in a way living in Nepalese here in Sydney as well. For instance: Celebration of different festivals in Nepal according to their caste, ethnicity, and religion. Next, they still use their mother tongue to communicate with the people of their

community rather than national language Nepali. It is only used to describe with other Nepalese from outside their community. People still are dressed up in their ethnic attires whenever more significant celebrations are organized in their families here. Moreover, they just do not want to limit these practices to themselves but rather pass it to the younger generations who are born here and have been living here for longer period. Small children are taught the cultural values, beliefs, practices and their languages as well. In a way, this helps in forming a small Nepal, and they hope to continue these practices in future as well.

As the interviewee, many Nepalese migrants do not want to continue all the cultural practices that promote inequality and injustice. In this context, s/he talks about caste-based discrimination, which supports prejudices to people of lower caste, but in contradiction, the interviewee does not want to give up on caste entirely. According to the interviewee, the caste is an identity that distinguishes him/her from the others. It is a means through which our origin could be traced so it should not be completely ignored, for, without history, our identity will be meaningless. In a way, to the interviewee caste is a matter of pride which should be respected, no matter which castes you belong to but the injustices done in the name of caste is to be halted.

It's not only the interviewee to whom caste matters in this foreign land. The presence of Nepalese associations based on caste, religion, and ethnicity here in Sydney demonstrate its importance among Nepalese migrants here. Some of them are as follows:

- Nepalese Hindu Society of Australia
- Australian Nepalese Christian Community Church
- Guthi Australia
- Tamu Samaj Sydney

- Tamang Society NSW
- Pokhara Samaj
- Sherpa Kyidug Australia
- Thakali Sewa Samiti
- Magar Samaj Australia

Some of these associations are based on; religion like Nepalese Hindu Society of Australia, ethnic groups like Guthi Australia and caste groups like Magar Samaj Australia. Though the names are many, all of these aim to preserve Nepalese identity overseas regarding their particular language, culture, religion, and ethnicity but most importantly to unify Nepalese overseas.

On the one hand, the presence of these Nepalese associations is promoting diverse culture, and on the other side, they are indirectly responsible for dispersing Nepalese migrants here. It is clear that they are developing these sub- Nepali ethnic and caste identities, which are perceived as means of representing genuine Nepali status, but we can not ignore the fact that we are the minority regarding the population here in Sydney. There is this ironic relationship between these identities that divide up Nepali identity being perceived as authentically Nepali.

Referring, the theory of Globalization, globalization, and localization is two mutually complementary processes rather than contradictory terms. On the one hand, we are fighting for our identity as Nepalese in Australia and on the other hand, we are fighting for our diverse local identity. We wanted to be identified as Nepalese as a whole, but within that, we do not want to miss the local identity as well. Like Globalization, localization is also a debate between discourses of how one society as a whole should be. In globalization theory, cultural

homogeneity and heterogeneity coincide in a way that when global consciousness seems to be possible, it creates a contestation between discourses of how one society, as a whole should be (CHEN, 2005). Establishment of different local community groups is part of globalization, which is founded with an intention to create one society.

We might have come from different background back in the country, but here in overseas, we have a common identity: being Nepali. It does not mean that we have to give up our local identities, such as our culture, caste, religion, language, and ethnicity. These are the basis of our genuine Nepali identity. We can take these two concepts together by doing justice and fairly judge people regardless of their background. Nepali identity as a whole seems to be captured in the dividing identity of caste. Caste ID would be genuinely Nepali, but it also divides the identity.

4.6. Culture Versus Human Rights

It is clear from the study that Nepalese migrants believe in continuing their cultural practices even in a foreign land. They think that Nepali identity as a whole is captured in the dividing identity of caste. The continuation of their culture helps them to maintain their integrity of being a Nepali. In a way, practicing these cultures here, they are trying to be a Nepali outside Nepal. Caste, in this perspective, is an integral part of Nepalese culture and their identity. People believe that the unity in diversity of caste is a unique feature of Nepal, which should be continued to be practiced in Nepal and overseas. However, people have also stated that they are against caste-based discrimination. Is it possible to continue caste without any issues of discrimination?

In the study, we found that people were judged just by caste, some were denied to share a room because of being from the lower caste, some were dismissed to share food, inter-caste marriages were not accepted, and some were dismissed in their workplaces. Many find this discrimination towards lower caste as the culturally practiced behaviors since history and those who offended the caste-based discrimination are often judged for disrespecting the Hindu religion and culture. Cultural Relativism has the benefit of being open to different cultures, but this raises that question how open should one be? To most rational people who are familiar with caste-based discrimination needs no philosophical explanation, only including cultural relativism is sufficient to justify these issues of biases. According to Gellner (1985), “Cultural relativism is a theory that asserts that there is no absolute truth, be it ethical, moral or cultural and that there is no meaningful way to judge different cultures because all cultures are judgmental” (Zechenter, 1997). But what about the individual who has been victimized in the name of caste? Does culture take primacy over individual rights?

An extreme cultural relativistic view would suggest that we should refrain from criticizing caste-based discrimination, seeing such conceptualizations and practices as part of Nepali culture. Do humans have rights over culture? Who creates culture? And who judges what is beyond judgment? In that sense, culturists might argue if are not there any cultural rights? If cultural rights are to be protected, then an individual right is violated. In a way, a cultural right overrides the individual rights. For instance: Families disapproval of an inter-caste marriage. Here the families are justifying their decision of disapproval in the name of the culture. As the culture of caste does not allow any inter-caste marriages, should one give up on their partners? What about the right of two individuals who love each other immensely? Is their future going to

be judged by others by culture? Is not individual happiness greater than following cultural practices? Such practices made by cultural rights dominate an individual right.

If possessing a caste is parallel to being a Nepali then we are talking about false equality here. Caste in itself is multi-layered, which have hierarchical divisions. Even the caste-based discrimination is not practiced; the divisions that caste within itself carries could not be segregated from it. Those of the higher caste may comfortably mention their caste, but the scenario may be awkward for lower caste people because their caste is an identity that reveals their history, which may not be pleasant ones. By practicing caste, we are overlooking the internal divisions thus generated within the seemingly unified concept of “Nepali tradition” and in fact violating the individual human rights.

To address this issue, the international human rights law under universalism has stated that each state and culture holds independent power over its cultural development though within the limits as described by international law (Zechenter, 1997). Even though the international human rights laws are minimal, they have provided important protections for individual who would otherwise be only at the mercy of the state and group of powers who dominate the society. This ensures an individual protection against arbitrary and brutal customs and cultural practices including the right to choose to be associated with, or be free of, any religion, culture, ethnicity, and language (Zechenter, 1997). The supporter of the cultural relativism and many authoritarian might not follow these universal laws in the name of culture and religion which might create discourse between the right of an individual to reject the culture and the rights of groups to maintain their traditional cultural practices. Therefore, a universal idea must be developed to address both issues that could be legitimized in various cultures. In different societies and

cultures, the forms and content of right are different. In that case, it might be difficult to resolve all such differences. So, we need universal, cross-cultural human rights through a comparative survey of specific rights that are recognized by all worlds' culture (Turner, 1997).

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The research presented in this study provided an exploratory analysis of caste practices among the Nepalese migrants in Sydney, Australia. There had previously been no research conducted to study caste practices among Nepalese here in Australia. At first, these project analyses different types of caste practices among Nepalese in Sydney and then, upon determining the continuation of caste practices, analyses the factors that have contributed to continuing the caste system. More specifically, this research demonstrates how caste is perceived by higher and lower caste Nepalese here in Sydney. Hence, the study focuses on finding inherent caste-discrimination issues between these two groups in this foreign land.

To get this information, the study went through twelve qualitative interviews with Nepalese migrants. Representatives came from diverse caste and ethnic groups so that everyone's views could be represented and the analysis could be done in a broader context. I encountered many memorable incidents during the interviews and while preparing for the meetings. I would like to share my experience with an executive director of one of the ethnic associations herein Sydney to let you know how people avoid talking about caste openly. When he listened to the subject of my research, he misjudged me that I am trying to influence people for caste-based discrimination here by talking about caste issues in Sydney. After lots of effort, I finally convinced him on what I was doing, i.e., I am trying to explore caste practices among Nepalese, but I am not confirming that it's being practiced and why is it necessary to be studied. Despite understanding, he did not agree to be interviewed because he did not want to get into any troubles in future by speaking about any caste and it's issued. He believes that he may be judged by people if he comments on any caste issues and being in such a position, he feels that he

should not share any of his views, perceptions of caste. I wonder how a person in such respective post can ignore issues like this for personal image.

Throughout my research, I encountered people from different caste and ethnic backgrounds; including some board members of different Nepalese association who were not much comfortable with my project. Some found my research insane to be conducted here in Sydney, and they felt I am just provoking a non-issue to create discourses between upper and lower castes. As the topic was sensitive, I was not surprised by their reaction to discomfort. Indian Dalits in India who demanded their dignity and respect in their communities were accused of being anti-Hindu and is a conspiracy to spread Christian culture (Pariyar, 2016a)

After the analysis of the data, the research reveals that the caste system is still being practiced in Sydney among the Nepalese migrants. Most of the respondents objected to the caste practices here in Sydney, but their practices show the continuation of caste. Many of the interviewees in this study might find this result contradictory. Hence, I have collected their narratives to prove the practices of caste in three different topics in Chapter four, i.e., Social interactions, Stories of Discrimination and Marriage. Some instances of such discrimination were not encouraging cross-cultural gatherings and instead strengthening the functions of caste and ethnic based groups to serve people of their community. Next, members of lower caste communities were discriminated by their castes in different circumstances like social gatherings and work places. Then, caste is found to be a major issue in the cases of marriage, as many of them still believe an inter-caste marriage would invite tensions because of sharing different values, beliefs, and opinions. There were higher preferences for caste-based marriages not only with the older generations but also among the young, educated adults.

Next, the research reveals the factors of continuation of caste practices here in Sydney. To study the factors of continuation, the findings were divided into three themes, which are: Habitus, Being Nepali Beyond Nepal and Culture Versus Human rights. In the study, I found that the presence of caste is more in self-consciousness rather than in people's action. Often, our unconscious mind guides us to act in a certain way, which is different than the way we have thought. Thus, this is the consequence of habitus, which our society deposited on us for a long time. For instance: To keep distances from lower caste people despite knowing they are of good nature. The society has deposited in our mind that lower caste people are impure and polluted and we should not interact with them. We know this is nonsense, yet could not accept them completely. Our action is guided by the habitus, and thus we reacted differently than we think consciously.

Nepalese migrants believe that Nepalese identity lies in the diversity of cultures shared by people from different caste, ethnicity, and religion. This is why; they are continuing their cultural practices based on their origin here in Sydney as well. This way, they want to keep the trend by 'Being Nepali Beyond Nepal.' For the sake of not losing their identity, their continuation of culture in a way is creating differences among different groups of Nepalese migrants, creating divisions between Nepali in the name of being Nepali. Especially, Nepalese associations established by caste, religion, language, and ethnicity play a major role in preserving their cultural practices but they do not realize that promoting their own culture and practices, in a way is creating groups and dispersing the Nepalese migrants. Next, if possessing caste and practicing diversity is equal to being Nepali then we imagine the false equality here. Caste is a social stratification, which has a hierarchical division. The division of caste within itself carries discrimination. To some people, Caste may be a matter of pride because it reveals about the

glorious past of the ancestors but to others, it might be a matter of shame because of the unpleasant discriminatory experiences of their ancestors. We are continuing different cultures including caste in the name of enduring culture and being Nepali but what about the internal division we have created by these actions and violating the human rights of an individual.

Caste affects all Nepalese migrant groups in Sydney in different ways. Those castes that are in the minority are suppressed by the other castes that are present in the majority. As I have mentioned in Chapter Four, a Brahmin felt discriminated in a group of Newars. S/he was criticized by her caste and made fun of. This shows that whoever is present in majority tries to oppress the minority. Today, caste is not only about being from higher or lower caste; it is more about the representation. Brahmins and Chettris who are traditionally blamed for sustaining caste hierarchy and discriminating against other groups also experienced pressure by other castes who are present in the majority. It is not only the lower caste people who are made fun of their caste but sometimes the upper caste is not spared as well. For example, Brahmins are often mocked for being stingy. Similarly, Newars are teased for their funny accents induced by their mother tongue Newari and other lower caste as ‘black kami,’ ‘smelly sarki’ which resembles the impurity their caste carries. Even though the higher castes seem to benefit from the continuation of caste practices, in actuality, everyone loses out.

However, most interviewees objected to any sorts of caste discriminations and attributed different caste practices as just a continuation of culture. This is why my study was not an easy journey. On the one hand, people were hesitant to participate in the interview, and on the other hand, those who did participate were hesitant to open up completely about these issues. We are practicing caste in both roles sometimes as a suppressor and other times as a victim but yet; no one opens up. They were scared that the disclosure might invite more problems to them. This

takes me a lot of patience and effort to make an interviewee open up about the topic. The major challenge was in finding people from different background here in Sydney as representation from different caste was pivotal for my thesis and next, convincing them for the interview.

Despite the difficulties, the study was worth doing. This research has laid a foundation for further research among Nepalese migrants in Australia, especially considering the diversity of caste, ethnicity, and religion. It is crucial because such minority inclusion leads to successful multiculturalism policies. Next, the research is also groundwork to study other Nepalese migrants in the same context, in different parts of Australia. The outcomes may vary from Sydney to other locations like Canberra, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth. Then, the research highlights how an individual right is being violated in the name of culture. Similarly, it also highlights how a cultural trend in itself is practicing inequality within a minority group. So, it might be a basis for Australian multiculturalism policymakers to think through the paradox of how we simultaneously have respect for both cultures and individuals, for cultural rights and human rights?

The everyday lives of most Nepalese migrants in Sydney are profoundly influenced by caste despite their acceptance or denial of occurrence of caste. In a way, caste was and is their identity, back in the home and now in Sydney. Here, the caste discrimination is more understated and more within a person. It is difficult to point it out directly, but it could be traced out in humiliating jokes of other castes and an ashamed face of lower caste people when revealing their identity. Caste is part of their life in names of culture, identity, and religion. It is not just the lower caste people who have to negotiate with caste issues constantly, but all castes are in a way struggling to find their space here. Unlikely the widespread assumptions that one loses one's caste when going overseas as social context outside leads you to abandon caste constraints turns

out just to be a mythos. Caste exists abroad, and despite being far from Nepal, it is no more distant from reality.

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Appendix A: Research Questions

Caste System among Nepalese Migrants in Australia

Sample of interview questions

- 1) How is life in Australia? Are there any similarity or differences in life here in Australia and that in Nepal?
- 2) Please tell me, what do you know about the caste system in Nepal?
- 3) Do you think the caste system still exists in Nepal?
 - a. If yes, what could be the continuing factors for caste based practices?
 - b. If no, what could be the factors that helped in changing the age-old caste practices?
 - i. To what extent has it changed in comparison to past?
- 4) Did you know that in the past people were assumed to lose their caste identity if they went overseas? Do you have a similar feeling? Different? Why?
- 5) What have they experienced in the past in Nepal as a result of their caste? How is this experienced in Australia?
- 6) Do you think Nepalese practice caste overseas?
 - a) If yes, why do you think people practice caste overseas where there are no obligations?
 - b) If no, what could be the factors towards this termination?
- 7) Do caste influence people from non- Nepali background?
- 8) Is caste important to you? Why and why not?
- 9) Have you or anyone known to you encounter any kind of caste discrimination here in Australia? If yes, what happened? Did you raise voice against it?
- 10) Do you think caste consciousness exists among Nepalese migrants here? If there were any, would you like to share what happened?

Comment on the statements below:

- a. Nepalese Caste based associations are creating differences among the people belonging to different castes.
- b. I believe caste-ism exists, but do I practice it?
- c. “When we came to Australia, we all signed an Australian values statement which says we will follow the laws and not discriminate.”

Sample of follow up interview questions:

- Since our last interview, have you noticed anything new about the caste practices among Nepalese in Sydney? If yes, would you like to share it with us?
- Has the last interview change your perspective towards caste system?
- Do you think such kind of study is essential or not?
- In any way, have you ever practice the caste-based discrimination or has been victim of it? Would you like to share your experiences?

Appendix B: Ethics Approval

Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor
(Research)

Research Office
Research Hub, Building C5C East
Macquarie University
NSW 2109 Australia
T: +61 (2) 9850 4459
<http://www.research.mq.edu.au/>
ABN 90 952 801 237



MACQUARIE
University
SYDNEY • AUSTRALIA

9 June 2017

Dear Dr Carrico,

Reference No: 5201700423

Title: *Caste practices among Nepalese migrants in Sydney, Australia.*

Thank you for submitting the above application for ethical and scientific review. Your application was considered by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC (Human Sciences & Humanities)).

I am pleased to advise that ethical and scientific approval has been granted for this project to be conducted by:

- Macquarie University

This research meets the requirements set out in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2007 – Updated May 2015) (the *National Statement*).

Standard Conditions of Approval:

1. Continuing compliance with the requirements of the *National Statement*, which is available at the following website:

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/book/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research>

2. This approval is valid for five (5) years, subject to the submission of annual reports. Please submit your reports on the anniversary of the approval for this protocol.

3. All adverse events, including events which might affect the continued ethical and scientific acceptability of the project, must be reported to the HREC within 72 hours.

4. Proposed changes to the protocol and associated documents must be submitted to the Committee for approval before implementation.

It is the responsibility of the Chief investigator to retain a copy of all documentation related to this project and to forward a copy of this approval letter to all personnel listed on the project.

Should you have any queries regarding your project, please contact the Ethics Secretariat on 9850 4194 or by email ethics.secretariat@mq.edu.au

The HREC (Human Sciences and Humanities) Terms of Reference and Standard Operating Procedures are available from the Research Office website at:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics

The HREC (Human Sciences and Humanities) wishes you every success in your research.

Yours sincerely



Dr Karolyn White

Director, Research Ethics & Integrity,

Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee (Human Sciences and Humanities)

This HREC is constituted and operates in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2007) and the *CPMP/ICH Note for Guidance on Good Clinical Practice*.

Details of this approval are as follows:

Approval Date: 6 June 2017

The following documentation has been reviewed and approved by the HREC (Human Sciences & Humanities):

Documents reviewed	Version no.	Date
Macquarie University Ethics Application Form		Revised Application Received 30/05/2017
Response addressing the issues raised by the HREC		Received 08/05/2017, 30/05/2017
Invitation Email		08/05/2017
Participant Information and Consent Form		30/05/2017
Sample Interview Questions		08/05/2017

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