

URBAN YOUTH AND THEIR EVERYDAY LIFE IN KATHMANDU: ARTS
BASED NARRATIVE INQUIRY

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DEDICATION

To all youth who struggled to make their fate and future in Kathmandu.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been submitted for the candidature for any other degree.

Suresh Gautam

30 January 2017

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Moving in the circle of time and space
ups and downs in Kathmandu enlaced
I met many cool mind, soul and body
who blessed me to complete my study.

There are several names of people
Who knitted the stories like needles
Prof. Parajuli and Luitel mentored soulfully
Prof. Wagley and Gnawali marked critically

I salute all KUSOED faculty and staff
Who care, love, and inspire me to be its part
I never forget all your support and gaff
Please accept thanks from my heart.

In this journey, I thank all of you
For your kind inspiration and motivation
These dead words became fewer
I salute all of you.

I would like to thank the University Grant Commission,
For its support and scholarship to develop my cognition.
My family and friends are the great source of inspiration
So that I change my thought into action

Youth had amazing stories to tell
Listening to them made me the vistas of yell
Dear Pasa and Rajmati, you drive me
to explore the unique ways to live

I acknowledge your ways of being
I learn to recognize the ways of living
Thanks Rock Star and Rajesh Da
I appreciate your ways of living

I ever learnt from Montu and Maili
Much lesson to anticipate daily.
I apologize not mentioning several others
But you remain in the center.

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Abstract Approved

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The thesis aims to uncover the everyday life of urban youth living in Kathmandu. Initially, the research concept was conceived from my observation of and interaction with the urban youth who were my undergraduate students whose ways of being, living, learning, and thinking were typically shaped by urbanism. In this regard, I set a preliminary research question, “How do urban youth experience their being, living and learning in Kathmandu?” which guided me to conduct the fieldwork. During my engagement in the field some other research questions emerged and I was unpacking the everyday life of urban youth. In the initial stage of the fieldwork, I interacted and observed several youth from various locations in Kathmandu, where I chose six participants for deeper understanding of their ways of being, living, and learning. Then, I deepened the arena of my observation and started making meaning of the everyday life of urban youth.

Employing the arts based narrative inquiry; I come up with emergent research questions “ How do I engage with urban youth in Kathmandu as a cultural insider/outsider?” leading to three main key constructs of the research, namely (i) arrival in Kathmandu, (ii) survival in Kathmandu, and (iii) revival in Kathmandu.

These three major constructs emerged from the diachronic everyday life activities of the urban youth. First, everyday life of urban youth in Kathmandu may not only be the (re)product of alienation but the product of the transformative process. Second, youth experience urbanism as a way of life, where they interact and negotiate with time and space, which creates and recreates the identities of urban youth. Third, youth in city reset their purpose after their arrival, as a result, they struggle to get opportunities, face many adversities and ultimately, become resilient in their everyday life. Fourth, cities have a stronger sense to flourish the active consciousness of youth citizens where they learn to live and demonstrate their agency. Lastly, youth learn from their everyday life practices in the glocalized space of Kathmandu. With these constructs, I particularly served the purpose of my research in three different layers: first, unfolding the experience of the youth as arrival, second, unpacking their worldviews of survival, and third, uncovering the notion of revival in their everyday life activities in Kathmandu. Thus, throughout the research, I uncovered, critiqued and envisioned the everyday life perspectives of urban youth in Kathmandu.

In doing so, I employed mandalic research space, believing the post-ontological nature of reality, which mainly served my three interests to be (i) a storyteller when I like to tell stories of my participants, (ii) an artist to illuminate the everyday life of my participants, and (iii) decolonizer to resist the use of Deja Vu research methods guided by conventional humanist qualitative research. In doing so, mandala offered a space to design integral research, including some of the features of a few research paradigms especially interpretivism, criticalism, postmodernism and integralism.

ॐ पूर्णमदा पूर्णमिदाम पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते ।

पूर्णश्च पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावसिष्यते ॥

—ईशावष्योपनिषद्



अनिरोधमनुत्पादमनुच्छेदमशाश्वतं ।

अनेकार्थमनानार्थमनागमनिर्गमं ॥

य प्रतित्यसमुत्पादम प्रपञ्चो पसमम् शिवम् ।

देशायमास संबुद्धस्तां बन्दे वततां वरम् ॥

—आचार्य नागार्जुन

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MANDALAM I

INCEPTION OF MY RESEARCH

Reflecting the initial days of my PhD research, I was much confused, unsettling and restless of clarifying my research concept, methodology and whole research process. This mandalam moves around the process that I followed to conceive the research on urban youth and their everyday life. I have described my unpreparedness of PhD in the prologue. Likewise, I described preliminary field engagement which helped to clarify research questions and methodology.

Prologue

As soon as I completed MPhil in Education in 2011, I rushed to get admission for PhD in 2012 at the School of Education, Kathmandu University, Nepal. In the initial stage of my PhD, I thought of extending my MPhil research on adult education using the similar kind of methodology- multi paradigmatic research. I thought of further substantiating the research areas that I had known a bit during my MPhil study. I underwent all the procedures: entrance test, interview and proposal presentation on the topic of literacy and orality. Then, I got the admission to PhD with the same ideas of doing research in literacy and orality, yet I was in a dilemma whether to continue my PhD with the same topic or not.

It was one of the days in September in 2012. I was travelling with my professor in his car. We were talking about upcoming conference on transformative education and research. Soothing music was playing on in the background of our conversation. Both of us were silently listening to the music. Abruptly, he asked me about my PhD agenda.

“Why do you like to do a PhD in orality and literacy?” He probed.

“It is all about generating knowledge on orality and tradition”, I replied as a great knowledge producer of the university. At that moment I might not be aware several other facets of PhD project such as a limitation, contribution of knowledge, engaging in the academic community.

“Can it be connected to your personal life?” he further asked.

I remained silent.

Then he uttered another question, “How does your research agenda link to your professional life?”

Again, I became silent. I did not have any answer.

He gave examples of the PhD from his university, showing the contribution of PhD, to the professional and personal life of students. I was listening to him quietly. He implicitly suggested me to choose a topic that may really contribute to link my personal and professional life. He never imposed anything but I began to be serious about his suggestion.

I came my home back. Then, I had dinner quietly. Neither had I had a *holy* mood to watch TV, nor to talk with my wife and daughter. My two-year old daughter



possibly would like to play with me, but I was haunted by the very questions of my professor. I did not have any *capitalist* mood to read any books and articles so as to develop a proposal for my PhD. Though I had defended a proposal for the admission to a degree, it was going to be worthless.

Figure 1. Chaotic Mind.

Nonetheless, I was shameful about my PhD preparation. It's be one of the delaying causes of the PhD journey. But I collected strong confidence and got determined to follow the suggestion of my professor.

I started sensing and observing some researchable issues for my PhD during the October. Relating to my profession, I interacted with the youth mostly in the undergraduate classrooms and observed their unique everyday life activities. I was connecting the everyday life activities of youth in Kathmandu which were unique and viable for local and global youth world.

I worked hard for a couple of months and developed a concept about exploring the lifeworld of urban youth. But I was not much specific to choose a research agenda. I shared those random thoughts and feelings with my professors in the university. Once, we were having coffee in the university canteen and my professor suggested to me about reading Heller's (1984) ideas of everyday life which could enhance my interest of studying urban youth. Following his suggestion, I observed and interacted to youth along with reading and thinking about their everyday life. I developed a research proposal. In one of the cold December days, I presented my research proposal entitled "Urban Youth and Their Everyday Life: Tales of Kathmandu" among the Research Committee members. Hopefully, I continued with the ideas of studying urban youth.

Thinking back to my presentation, it was more theory laden; dominated by urbanism, everyday life, and urban culture which I had used in a messy way. I was not able to present my ideas discretely in the viva voce. I followed the suggestions of the Research Committee on School of Education, Kathmandu University and moved ahead. The roadmap of the proposal had been drastically changed to align with the specific issues of urban youth in Kathmandu. During that time, my *official*

supervisors suggested to carry on the preliminary fieldwork to come up with the specific research questions, though I could enter the field with a broad overarching research question: “How do urban youth experience their being, living and learning in Kathmandu?” At that time I was infatuated by Van Maanen (2011) and ways of telling stories of the field.

Based on the broad research question, “How do I engage with urban youth in Kathmandu as a cultural insider/outsider?” I started my preliminary fieldwork.

Preliminary Fieldwork

It is one of the cruelest mornings of April 2013; my physical body is sitting on a chair in a faculty room of a private college, located in Kathmandu. I look at my wrist watch; it indicates 6: 45 AM in an earthly time. I do not know whether time is cyclical like *Kaalchakra* or linear as an arrow; it seems linear to me at the moment. The sun is growing yellow in the east, and sunrays are struggling to enter into the dark faculty room through the ventilation. There is a small ventilation in the east corner of the room and it is barred with the silver and glass in all directions. The room is completely metallic with metal cupboard, chairs and tables. I seem to be restless; stand out of the chair; and walk around the metallic room for a few minutes. Then, I drag a metal chair near me and sit down, restlessly. My restless mood is usually created by the undergraduate students.

I am contemplating on how I can better engage with the undergraduate students in teaching learning activities in the classroom. I have been experiencing that majority of undergraduate students is rarely engaged in their study in the classroom, which is the main ‘*headache*’ for me as a teacher. My passion of teaching to urban youth has been gradually dying out. I feel lazy to go to the class to deliver a lecture the undergraduate youth. Most often I experience as a phlegmatic teacher

before I go to the class. It is a great irony to be a teacher who feels uncomfortable with youth students. I usually blame these youth and hardly enjoy lecturing them. It may not be fair for a professional teacher like me who has been teaching in urban colleges for a decade.

Sitting on a metal chair, I recall Eliot's (1922) line "April is the cruelest month, breeding lilacs out of the dead land...." Unlike Eliot, I have experienced every morning either in April or in December to be cruel. This happens only when I am lecturing to undergraduate students. Does it mean that I am a bad teacher? Why am I not enjoying the teaching profession? Is it a destiny of a 'helmet' teacher in commercial colleges in Kathmandu?

I am a 'helmet' teacher. I usually ride my motorbike numbered Ba 51 Pa 5017 to travel from one college to another. Usually, I teach in more than three colleges in the morning and afternoon shifts. Often, I do not get time to keep my helmet on my office table. Actually, 'helmet' teachers do not have any office in the colleges. I often enter into the classroom with a helmet, keep it in the corner of the room and start lecturing. Occasionally, I am late to get into the class. Often I leave classes as early as I can.

Is it fair to blame my students on such circumstances?

Contemplation on Youth

Against the above backdrop, my contemplation of the youth, their study, career, future, choice, and lifestyles are hovering in my mind. As I decided to carry out my research on the youth and their everyday life, I initially focused on three things – their being, living, and learning. Broadly, I was thinking of exploring their self and identity while I was focusing on their being in the first circle of the inquiry. How does city create and recreate their identities in Kathmandu? Likewise, living

was another circle, where I moved to explore what kind of experience they had in Kathmandu? In this regard, living was close to the activities they carried out in Kathmandu. Similarly, the ideas of learning focused on the ways of gaining lessons from the city life. Did their experience of being and living in Kathmandu teach lessons to live their life? My contemplation of these youth's everyday life further helped me to frame my research scope and areas.

Youth's Ways of Being in Kathmandu

On that cruel morning of April, I am contemplating on the youth and their destiny in Kathmandu. It is my king-sized sarcasm who partly knows his own destiny has been thinking about the destiny of the youth in Kathmandu. It is around 8:00 am. My lecture is going to start, but the students have not arrived yet to attend my lecture in the lecture hall. I prepare a cup of tea, pouring hot water in a plastic cup, with a spoon of sugar and tea-pouch. I am thinking about the youth in Kathmandu and their world views of living and learning. Most of my students are outsiders of Kathmandu, who have arrived in Kathmandu to pursue higher education to shape their career and future. However, I have not observed them as studious as they should be. I am a bit worried about these youth and their future.

I am sitting restlessly, where the college principal gazes at me as he passes by the staff room. Possibly, he is thinking that I have not gone to the class yet. I do not care him. I see '*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*' is lying dead on my table along with the scattered exercise books of students. I give meaning to it, even though my conscious self says that there is no meaning just to turn the pages of the book, it is me who generates meaning from the 'dead' book. I pick it up and turn the pages. Though, I read Nietzsche a decade ago, I like to turn the page of Zarathustra to overcome my 'anxiety' of lecturing 'modern' urban youth. I turn its page:

I love the forest. It is bad to live in cities: there, there are too many of the lustful.

Is it not better to fall into the hands of a murderer than into the dreams of a lustful woman?

And just look at these men: their eye saith it—they know nothing better on earth than to lie with a woman. (p. 34)

How beautifully Nietzsche (1991) romanticizes the life in the village? How easily Nietzsche believed that he loved the forest. What creates the lust in the city? Does city kill humanism? What kind of lustful things he imagined? Personally, I fall in love with the lustful city because my '*self*' is formed with many lustful things. I wish I could have many lustful things which might make my life worthy. Perhaps, my students are expecting to get similar lustful things in my lecture. I can see my students interacting with some lustful things such as cell phones, i-Pod, i-Pad, and other gadgets in the classroom. Romanticizing Nietzsche (1991) to live in the forest is, thus, useless for urban youth in Kathmandu. Possibly, these youth are living and loving the city life.

We may have a lot of desires such as desire for a car, desire for a beautiful boyfriend/girlfriend, desire for some delicious restaurant food, desire for expensive clothes, desire for gadgets and accessories and many other desires that the city produces and/or offers. Possibly, these students might have some/ more desires similar to mine to live in the city and to be educated. Such many lustful things might have shaped the being, the *self* of urban youth. In this line, I use the term 'being' to refer to the subjectivities of urban youth who are portrayed as main characters. The notion of being might have captured the actions of urban youth, which shaped their identities.

I have used two ‘modern’ references to Eliot (1922) and *Nietzsche* (1991), possibly to raise my research problem within the ‘modernist’ space, where cities are supposed to be the outcomes of industrial mindset, the capitalistic mode of production and the global culture. This modernist approach of city life departs from the traditional and local ways of living and humanity, which focuses more on the specialization, mass production and standardization (Calthorpe & Fulton, 2001). Do the youth in the city get attracted to the standard ways of living and being in Kathmandu? I am thinking about their ways of being in Kathmandu.

Youth’s Ways of Living in Kathmandu

Looking at these undergraduate youth, interacting with them every day, and observing them regularly, I am interested in knowing more about their ways of living. What might be our (I use the pronoun ‘our’ referring to me and my participants) meaning of everyday life of Kathmandu even though I believe that these meanings are highly contextual and temporal? What is our purpose of living in Kathmandu? How and why does Kathmandu attract us? What are we doing to fulfill the purpose of life? How are we living in Kathmandu? How does Kathmandu (space) create hopes and aspirations of living in Kathmandu? What is the purpose of living, learning and earning for youth in Kathmandu? I have several such questions associated with the ways of living of youth in Kathmandu.

Reflecting back on the journey of a ‘helmet’ teacher; I usually blame my students who are wondering in the streets of Kathmandu purposefully. Possibly, they do not seem to be prepared for their careers and future. They look like the consumers who desire to consume the new and recent products in the market. The classroom atmosphere takes me further to know more about the youth’s ways of living in Kathmandu. In thinking so, youth in Kathmandu are not only the students who live in

Kathmandu. There are several other types of youth who work and live in Kathmandu. Some other youth neither work nor study in Kathmandu. The list of the categories can be expanded longer. I am essentially thinking about all of these youth and their everyday life in Kathmandu.

Youth's Ways of Learning in Kathmandu

Sitting on the same metal chair, I reflect on my journey as a teacher in Kathmandu. It was back in 2003 when I completed my Master's degree, I chose a road to be a teacher. It was easy for me to get the job of a teacher in the crowded Kathmandu since private schools and colleges were mushrooming at that time. When I once started a job of teaching, then I gained expertise on it. I could not leave the profession. However, it was difficult to balance the need of the students, curriculum, assessment and administration. Possibly, I was teaching themselves rather than facilitating learning. However, their performance was better in examination as compared to the classroom activities. Did they dislike the teaching and learning activities in the classroom? Can I not make my class more interesting? Is it only me whose classroom activities are dull and uninteresting? Is it the urban culture that makes them indifferent to their study? Are they learning from the areas other than the classroom?

I am quite fed up with my students who hardly show their interest in classroom activities. Does it happen only in my lecture? As I talk to my colleagues, they have also similar experiences on uninterested students. Almost all lecturers complain about the nature of students who do not engage in classroom activities. I still remember the voice of my colleague, "They all are criminals!" I gauged the frustration of my colleagues of teaching the urban youth. Why does the majority of students engage in talking to each other during the lecture? What affects them? Is it

either their cell phone or late night party? Is it online games on their cell phone or dating with boy/girl friends? Is it gang or the guitar? What distracts their motive of learning in the classroom? I usually ignore students who sleep on the desk, feeling lousy and engage in side talks. I am wondering in the faculty room thinking about these students and trying to figure out whether the Western Consumerism or the globalization has created such a situation?

Most of the time, I think about the youth, relating their culture and their future in Kathmandu. What skills, attitude and knowledge would they gain on completion of their undergraduate study? Possibly, I am trying to reflect on such a situation as a sincere teacher at this stage. Therefore, sometimes, I attempt to make my lecture more interactive. Some other times, I feel that it is in vain, because interaction during the lecture is mostly deviated by the movie, which is running in the theater. The interaction with youth in the classroom moves towards music, sports and games, especially English Premium League, and Spanish Football Leagues and Indian Premium League (Cricket). They are engaged in talking about different other topics rather than the assigned topic of the course.

Possibly, I have developed ‘wrong’ assumptions about the youth in Kathmandu: If they could not score marks in the examination, their life would be worse, they could only learn in colleges, formal education for youth was inevitable for their professional development and they would get jobs if they scored good marks in the examination. However, these assumptions were gradually degenerated in urban context because these youth hardly identify and experience the relevance of education. Can they learn outside of the classroom? From peer, from media, from observation of the city and from their experience? Here, I attempt to be both critical and creative while I am exploring the everyday experiences of urban youth.

WHEEL I

LIVING, LEARNING AND BEING IN KATHMANDU

Youth is wasted on the young.

George Bernard Shaw

It was during May, 2013 while I was gradually conceiving the research issue of urban youth. In so doing, I started observing my students more closely in the colleges. I compared the lifestyles of the youth in the village, where I was brought up and the youth in Kathmandu where I am living. I feel that everyday life activities of youth in Kathmandu seem to be more heroic, more romantic, and more pathetic too. Possibly, these wide ranges of youth everyday life activities might become the source of inspiration for others to come and explore their life and fate in Kathmandu. Unlike Nietzsche (1991), youth in Kathmandu are tempted to live in the city rather than in the forest. Why do I like to live in Kathmandu? In this wheel of living in Kathmandu, I introduce my situatedness of being, living and learning (from research in Kathmandu) focusing on the everyday life of urban youth.

Kathmandu is an example of a traditional city following its unique cultural and historical footage (Levy, 1992). However, these traditional manifestations of the city might have a bit less impression to the contemporary youth in Kathmandu as they seem to be trendy and 'modern'. Their uniqueness of thinking, doing, and believing have been reflected in their everyday life activities. Interacting with the youth students offers me an insight to know the contemporary play, picture, piracy, privacy and so on about the everyday life of urban youth.

I like to know more about them, their surroundings, and their interaction with space and time. I have hundreds of questions about them. Do they look what they

are? Do they believe what they say? Do they imagine what they see? Such many questions emerge when I interact with them. In the early phase of the study, most of the youth participants are my undergraduate students, where I focus more on the construct of urban education. However, my interest is something different to explore the everyday life ‘culture’ of urban youth rather than their education, achievement, classroom learning. I link the notion of learning with their everyday life in Kathmandu. In this regard, I further articulate my research scope, purpose and preliminary travelogue describe how my research questions emerged throughout the research process.

Pre Script: *Bhabasagar* Kathmandu

Creating the nuclei of everyday life of youth in Kathmandu, I am observing how the everyday life of youth have been shaped and reshaped in Kathmandu by urbanism, which might have fashioned the lifestyle of youth and society. I choose Kathmandu as my research area for a couple of reasons. First of all, Kathmandu is the only one metropolitan city in Nepal, where youth get all facilities to be unique.

Second, Kathmandu has got the power of the capital city, where all plans and policies are/were formulated, where ex-kings and queens live, where the present president, vice president, ministers and all



Figure 2. Perceived Space

political leaders stay, where all ministries and embassies are located. Thus, youth like to settle their life in Kathmandu. The status quo of Kathmandu’s space might have determined several ways of living among the youth. Third, it has got an only international airport that connects with the rest of the world and youth might learn

about global culture in Kathmandu. Lastly, it is the same city, where I am/was struggling to shape my career and identity for more than a decade.

While I was shaping my education and career, I was infatuated by various images of Kathmandu. Let me tell my story. .

I arrived in Kathmandu some 15 years ago for the first time. It was a fascinating experience to see the crowd of people, crawling vehicles, big mall *Bishal Baazar*, big cinema halls, wide streets, big restaurants and bars. I saw those holy, historical and modern places, which I had read in the high school textbooks. I was excited to tell the stories of Kathmandu to my colleagues in the village. I lived three days at one of my relative's home. During those three days, I felt awkward about using goods, space, and time in Kathmandu. I was not so habituated to live in the city like city-dwellers. I felt embarrassed and suffocated and wanted to return my hometown as

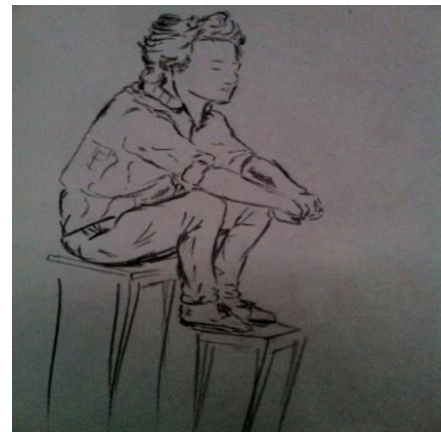


Figure 3. Wandering @ Kathmandu.

early as possible. Nonetheless, I had a radical dream to live in an urban center like Kathmandu.

Second time, I arrived in Kathmandu as a student of Master in English in 2001. I had planned to stay at least two years in Kathmandu to complete my Master's degree. My parents were also happy to send me to Kathmandu for further studies. It was a kind of pride to my parents who sent me to Kathmandu. Why did they feel glorious in sending me to Kathmandu? Possibly, they might have fascinated by the status quo of its space. They would tell proudly to their relatives and neighbors that their son was studying in Kathmandu. However, I was more fascinated by the ways of living of youth. I wandered around the streets and crossroads of Kathmandu during

those days. While travelling around the *Ring Road*, I would observe the lifestyles of people that were different from the concentric zone of the city like in *Durbar Marg*, *Thamel* and *New Road*. I would spend hours looking at what youth wore, how they talked, how they behaved. I was also fascinated by the buildings, streets, and monuments which I had never seen in my life before. I am not much aware of the fact that the “cities reflect as well as shape their inhabitants’ values and outlooks in various ways” (Bell & de-Shalit, 2011, p. 2). The crawling traffic creates different assumptions about the city that is different from the rural life in the areas of population control and state planning versus the free market (Bell & de-Shalit, 2011, p. 2). I was from the rural area in Western Nepal and was infatuated by its transient and intransient culture and construct in different forms- forms of vehicles, forms of people, forms of markets, and forms of gatherings among others.

As soon as classes resumed in the university, I was more desperate to understand the ways of urban living and lifestyle among the classmates. I also began to think as the urban youth, assuming that urban people are more ‘civilized’ and better than rural people. My thinking was completely shaped by the growing media and fashion. I would not like to maintain my ‘rural’ cultural values which I learned from my childhood days in my village. I was completely sunk observing the city construct that was completely different from the rural setting. During those days, I became a bit less focused on my study, and I spent the whole year just observing Kathmandu along with the various metaphors and images- metaphors of pain, metaphors of gains, and metaphors of tycoon and so on. Likewise, various images – an image of tramp, an image of calm youth, rebel, punk, celebrity, artist, and many others, appeared and vanished in my mind. I also observed youth who manifested religiously secular and secularly religious characteristics in Kathmandu. It was difficult for me to believe

that Kathmandu is the city of temple as most of the youth I experience are more hedonistic rather than spiritualist because of their ways of life.

Such activities deviated me from the study; and therefore, I failed in my first-year exam of Master Degree. I was highly criticized among my circles of relatives and friends. My parent thought that my study got worse because I was affected by the urban life of Kathmandu. My dream to live and to make my career in Kathmandu was shattered. I did not have any pride, prestige and power staying in Kathmandu, but my parents would still feel that I would continue to live in Kathmandu rather than return to my village. If I returned to my village without any achievement, I would be supposed to be a loser. Then, I did not dare to leave Kathmandu.

I searched for a job, which was not easy for me as I could not have a certificate of Master's Degree. I got a job of a lower secondary teacher in a school in Kathmandu. I also worked as a home tutor who visited two or three homes to teach their children in Kathmandu. I was not dependent on my parents anymore. During those days, Kathmandu became my teacher to understand the life and worldviews of youth like me. Since then, I have lived in Kathmandu for about a decade, struggling to be 'somebody' or at least 'something' as an urbanized 'buddy' helped me to understand urban youth culture.

Reflecting back on my arrival in Kathmandu, I had a hope to get an education and shape my future. I had dreams- a dream to be an educated person, a dream to earn more, a dream to get name and fame, and a dream of consuming the best brand of the city where these dreams are gradually growing day by day in the glowing mercury lights of Kathmandu. Youth like me migrate to urban centres in search of educational and employment opportunities but only a few of them are lucky enough to find jobs. In such circumstances, I observe two groups of urban youth. The first group have

been locating themselves as outsiders of the social dynamics of urbanism in Kathmandu because they seem to be detached from the urban cultures but they are trying to assimilate themselves in the urban context. This class usually alienate themselves among the social and cultural networks of youth. Another group as an insider of city has almost all urban facilities such as internet and media. This class maintain their life, adopting the contemporary ways of living and live in Kathmandu with jobs and prospects at their hand. They enjoy the fast changes that occur in the urban hubs. In such circumstances, I was both an outsider and an insider of the city.

As an outsider, the image of Kathmandu appears more infatuating and charming. However, as an insider, I experience Kathmandu's darker side more visibly. Youth in Kathmandu live in various layers of circles of pain, glory, adventure, sickness, shyness and open environment. During my stay in Kathmandu, I visualized darker side of the city influenced me most of the time. These darker images are created by my expanding dreams, failure to career and profession and unstable political situation. Whole cities get covered by the schizophrenic expressions but I also see that cities are not always as venerable as the used condom; they are also the creative forces of the people as Mumford (1937) wished, "The city multiplies man's power to think, to remember, to educate, to communicate, and so to make possible associations which bridge and bypass nations, cultures" (p. 94).

In my first year of the university education, I experienced that Kathmandu has both sides of the coin: glamorous and pathetic, creative and destructive, hopeful and hopeless and vulnerable and virtuous. Experiencing many sides of struggle shaped my career in Kathmandu. Kathmandu appeared both as creative and destructive force of city to shape the image of youth.

Everyday Life Perspective: A Travelogue

To portray the everyday life of urban youth, I chose a mini travelogue method to describe my observation of youth in the street, in the park and in the restaurant.

The travelogue was a handy approach for me to portray the culture of everyday life of people which helped to capture the everyday activities occurred in the particular time and space. Early ethnographers used travelogue to show their understanding of people in the particular ways of living. I used the concept of travelogue to conceive my research issue of youth and their everyday life.

During the beginning of the year 2013, after I passed my PhD proposal, I was convinced to carry out a pre-field study like a *new ethnographer* to portray the everyday life of urban youth. Believing everyday life as walking, talking and reading (Sheringham, 2006), I presented some snapshots of everyday life activities of the urban youth. It might be an example of starting research from the confessional tale (Van Manen, 2011) which demonstrates my engagement in the field. I experienced that collecting some snapshots of everyday life would help me to conceptualize the research problem and to frame research questions.

I was in a dilemma about what particular aspects of everyday life of urban youth should I explore? Everyday urban life might be ordinary life events occurring in the youth's life. Possibly, urban youth are aware of doing such things as sipping tea, having a girlfriend/boyfriend, playing the guitar, working in the office, visiting café and many more as they are doing. They might have created certain patterns of living in Kathmandu. "Being within the everyday aspects of cities is to be in a state of constant movement between being situated and being placeless" (Narula, 2002, p. 107). These youth are always in motion in Kathmandu. Let me describe the wheel of everyday life from morning to evening.

City of Temple: In the Morning

Early morning on 20 September 2013, I prepared myself to celebrate *Good Friday* by observing the morning everyday life of youth in Kathmandu.

I got up at 5:00 am. Then, I went for lecturing undergraduates' classes which usually started from 6:30 am. That day I was in a mood to observe Kathmandu, therefore, I decided not to ride the motorbike but to walk and to use a public vehicle. As soon as I exited from my room, I heard the tune of a conch. It appeared that Kathmandu is/was still a spiritual city. After walking for five minutes ahead from my rented room, I passed the temple. The blowing flame of *diyo*, and incense smoke felt my nose. I saw some Hindu souls moving around the temple with garland in their hand and possibly they were chanting mantras.

I thought that Kathmandu was still 'religious' in the morning. I arrived at the *Jawalakhel* crossroad, a foggy and dusty road.

Some of the female sweepers in green apron were sweeping the street near a tea-shop. I began to think about sweepers' green apron and gender. Why most of the sweepers were female? I was sitting in a small tea-shop at the crossroad of *Jawalakhel*, and watching people.

Most of the young people were in college

uniform. They wore coat and tie; they almost seemed like foreigners in their uniform.

They looked as if they were rushing towards colleges in different corners of

Kathmandu. I could recognize their college from the uniform because of my

involvement in many of those colleges. Some of them were riding bikes in high

speed. Some of them were smoking cigarettes on the way. Some others are walking



Figure 4. Impressionist Kathmandu.

to attend the first session in their colleges. Observing these students gave me a sense that urban center like Kathmandu was as an educational hub where you are searching their destiny.

Then, I got on a minibus and observed Kathmandu through its window. I saw many women who seemed to be from *Newar* community. They were worshipping stones in front of their homes. Possibly, they believe that stones are the gods and goddesses. I sensed that the coexistence of spiritual people in Kathmandu who worshiped animal (Cow), plants (Peepal) and stones in front of their homes. The mini bus stopped near my college and I walked for 10 minutes and observed the similar situations of worshipping God, walking on the pavement, moving towards the college. It was around 7:00 am and I was walking in the narrow road. I passed different kinds of people: some of them were in the morning walk, some of them were vegetable sellers who were carrying vegetables in *Kharpan* (traditional basket usually carried by Newar farmers), some of them were college goers, and some of them were street beggars. I reached the college at 7:10 am and started lecturing students of different classes which continued till 10:30 am.

Nobody complained my late arrival of the college.

Another morning in the same September, I was standing in front of Martyrs' Gate and saw other types of youth who were running, jogging and playing in *Tudikhel* (big open public space, covered with grass). There were no other such particular public spaces in the city, where people could do physical exercises, play and walk and even do some socio-political activities. Even *Tudikhel* has been used for many other purposes such as demonstration, fair and concert obstructing people in their use of it. Some youth were playing cricket in the morning. Observing such activities of youth and adult I thought that urban youth seemed to be more health conscious and active.

Yet, another morning of the same September, as I came out from my rented room, I observed a young man selling milk pouches in the street. Another youth, carrying a *namlo* (a rope usually used to carry goods) was moving towards the bus stand to work as a porter. While some others had opportunity to go to school or colleges or some had time to worry about their health or fitness, some others had to work since early morning for their living. Maybe, some other youth might be sleeping either in the street or in their cozy home in the morning.

City of Culture: In the Afternoon

The afternoon lifestyles of people are something different from the morning. During the afternoon, I observed, youth who usually utter the dialogue of movies; hum the songs of *Marley and One Direction*., talk about music, sports and movie especially in the park and restaurants. The dialogue “Kathmandu is a city of vultures” (Wagley, Maharjan, & Basnet, 2012) was quite popular among them. It is a famous dialogue of a super hit Nepali movie *Loot*. I was impressed by the film that portrayed the lifestyles of urban youth who were the main characters in the film. They were ordinary youngsters living in the city- Kathmandu.

However, how the image of the city has been transformed from the city of temples to the city of vultures? Mostly, the vulture image of the city might have been created by the unemployed youth who are struggling to search their destiny in the city. The metaphor of ‘city of temples’ is a well-established historical and cultural facet of Kathmandu whereas ‘city of vultures’ is an expression of the youth voice for making it just a city. The movie moved around the ideas of youth



Figure 5. Poster of the Movie

who would like to be rich in a short period of time where they plotted to rob the bank of Kathmandu.

Moreover, the movie used the typical language of the youth such as *Machis*¹ so-called vulgar words. This had confused me on what was vulgar and what was not because the use of such terms seemed quite natural and usual in the movie.

Moreover, urban youth have been using such words in their everyday life. Perhaps, such language emerges in the intermediate space of the city which situates in the imagination, thoughts and feelings of youth rather than its physical dimension (Maciocco & Tagliagambe, 2009). The movie was super-hit perhaps it showed the contemporary lifestyles and thinking of the urban youngsters who would like to be rich in a short time. They sought an easy way to maintain urban needs and necessities. In a nutshell, the film portrayed the importance of money in urban centers like Kathmandu, increasing crime and changing urban norms and values.

The movie made me to contemplate more on the urban needs and necessities of youth in Kathmandu. How do the needs and expectation of youth prioritize in their everyday life? Is it because of their connection to the globe physically and virtually? How do they get money to follow the urban ‘trend’? Do all youth have such swift ways to be rich in Nepalese urban centers? Do all youth have such intentions to be rich and ‘modern’ in urban centers? Has urbanization created such a criminal/creative mentality of youth? How would they spend their everyday life? Such questions emerge in my mind when I think of urban youth and their everyday life activities.

I often interact with the youth about their expectations, their lifestyles and problems they face in cities on various occasions. I usually ask their personal and private affairs during the classroom sessions such as: Where does your father work?

¹ A Nepali slang and offensive word to refer to mother fucker.

How long have you been staying in Kathmandu? Do you have a girlfriend/boyfriend? How long are you in relation? How do you spend your leisure time? What do you like to become? Are you '*brand*' conscious? What problems are you facing living in urban areas? I ask many other related questions to them.

Such interaction with my students in the classroom increased my interest of studying urban youth and their everyday life. I moved place to place to observe their activities in order to finalize my research questions. Another day in the same September, I was standing beside *New Road Gate*, I saw a group of young people crawling in the pavements. I could not ask them where they were heading to. Almost all seemed to be in a rush. Is 'rush' a part of youth in city? I observed their presence in the street and made my opinion on the common things youth usually do in the afternoon as Sheringham, (2006) said: i) any things that are very common, such as eating, phoning, shopping objects and gadgets, ii) how people form their community iii) present situation not as merely place of event, everydayness lies in practices that weave contexts together. These three concepts helped me to determine what to explore and what not to explore. However, I was aware of being deterministic to bring the everyday practices of youth. But I was not able to observe the 'wholeness' of youth community standing at *New Road Gate* but I made some visionary opinions about the context and the practices of youth. For the first cause, I observed that the common passion of urban youth was phoning, eating and shopping. Then I thought *New Road Gate* was not a suitable place to observe such kind practices of urban youth. I needed to go to restaurants to observe their choice of eating, and malls would be better to observe their passion for shopping.

Regarding eating habits of youth, they preferred to eat outside their home. Possibly café is the best destination of the majority of youth in the city. In one of another day of September, I followed a group of youth whom I met in the street. They were talking about a safe place to stay and enjoy. They were talking about spending their leisure time in a café. They entered into a café near Kathmandu Durbar Square, so did I. They were talking about movies, sports and contemporary songs. I was sitting nearby them and overhearing their conversation. One of the boys



Figure 6. Dusty Kathmandu.

called a waiter and asked the waiter for the Wi-Fi password. Then, they took out their cell phones, and started to surf the internet. They forgot to talk and communicate with each other for a little moment. They all engaged with the virtual world more than the physical companionship. Drinking a bottle of cold drink, I came out from the café. Then, I again entered into another café to observe the café customers; most of the tables of the café were filled up by youth. A few of them

seemed to be couples. Possibly the boyfriend/girlfriend culture is growing in Kathmandu.

What influences youth to form their community? During my observation, I knew that they have formed their own community based on their interests and name them gang, group, and circle. Some of their gang was born out of the virtual worlds, media, sports, music and films. When they were in the gang, they hardly seemed worried about their family and relatives. In this regard, I talked to one of my students

and he shared some interesting things about his gang. He shared, “When I crossed the door of my house, I see my ‘self’ a modern-urban boy, similar to my gang members. I listen to English songs, talk about the games and sports. I have a keen interest to wear clothes like actors and actresses. I speak differently with friends than with my parents. I normally use slang words while talking to my friends, which was not allowed at home. So my life is different at home as compared to the life of the street.”

These constructs enable me to think of urban life of youth, how youth are living with dual identities and dual space in inside and outside of their homes. Perhaps, they perform traditional family roles in their homes, whereas in the streets, they perform a modern role like the city dwellers. Does urbanism create an illusionary life in the city? Observing these three images, cell phone, café and common interest of youth in the afternoon, I came to make the meaning that afternoon of youth everyday life is more complex and more illusionary than the morning.

I stood at *New Road Gate* listening to the most ‘beautiful’ song I heard of Kathmandu, that is tit- tit- tut- tut, the noise from vehicles in the afternoon.

City of Glamour: In the Evening

It was yet another evening of September. Kathmandu was glowing with various colors. I was roaming around *Thamel* - a transgressive space in Kathmandu. I was passing through the bars and clubs. It seemed that *Thamel* was the central zone to observe the nightlife in Kathmandu. I could not count the number of the bars, pubs and nightclubs clustering in the *Thamel* area indicating various kinds of amenities which were available there - including restaurants, bars, pubs, ATM services, internet cafes, and shopping centers, narrow and small tavern, big and fancy lounge and so on. Many youth male and females, glowing with fancy dresses, were crawling there. Perhaps, they were planning to enjoy the nightlife in Kathmandu. Looking at the

environment, I thought that night was growing darker but the glowing lights and sparkling advertisement boards created an illusion that the nights are brighter. I was thinking that nights do not represent the time of social rest in *Thamel*. Night time is a space of creating meaning of youth freedom because youth activities at night challenged the status quo of Kathmandu that was visible in the afternoon. I sensed that youth liberated from the social and legal dogmas of the afternoon in *Thamel*. Thus, I felt that midnight created an innovative space for youth to live differently than the afternoon life. There were young and liberated souls awaken and living, drinking and dancing who were laughing, guzzling and walking in the intoxicated streets of *Thamel*.



Figure 7 Astonished!

Is the life in *Thamel* as illuminating as the streets are? What is the story of another side of illuminating *Thamel*?

I saw some call girls are peeping out of the half- closed doors and windows of the narrow road.

Another Day Breaks

Another day breaks

With morning

Some new dreams popped in my head

Indecisive to choose or abandon them

Circling in the space of mind

A while in a day

Follow the list of things to do

Moving here and there, there and here

Melts the day in the eve

Many soul dreams

These dreams

torn apart from

squished body

scattered into the

glamorous street of

T H A M E L

The wheel is the same

The wheel is the same

Setting the Research Purpose

In such a context of morning, afternoon and evening everyday life of urban youth in Kathmandu, I set the purpose of the research to explore the experience of urban youth and their living, being and learning in Kathmandu.

Emergence of Research Questions

Initially, I started this research with three broader research questions: a) How do youth experience the meaning of being and living in Kathmandu? b) How do urban youth face challenges and make opportunities in Kathmandu? How do they form coping mechanisms to overcome such problems in their everyday life? c) How do urban youth construct and reconstruct their identity in the urban context like Kathmandu? When I started field activities during the early January of 2013, I came up with insights of exploring the experience of urban youth. I set and reset research questions based on the field notes, reflections and vignettes of urban youth. The

process of evolving research questions is still going on but I have centralized all field activities about exploring the youth experience of living, being and learning in Kathmandu. In this stage, processing data and theory, I reset the research questions in the following way:

- How do I engage with urban youth in Kathmandu as a unique cultural insider/outsider?
- How do youth experience their arrival in Kathmandu? How do they interact with time and space in Kathmandu?
- How do urban youth experience survival in Kathmandu? What kind of purpose do we set living in Kathmandu?
- How do youth experience revival in Kathmandu? How do we learn in everyday life in Kathmandu?

Significance of the Study

This research moves around the everyday life of urban youth living in Kathmandu. It explores their experiences of being urbanized youth and living in urban centers. In so doing, circulates around the dreams and expectation; the struggles and snuggles of youth to adapt modern ways of living. The research might have mainly four layers of significance: personal, professional, policy, and methodological contribution.

From the perspective of personal contribution, I could have better ideas of understanding youth, interacting with them, listening to their voices and recognizing their sense of being. As a teacher of young people, every day I encounter with the youth and their worldviews which might be contradictory to my views. Personally, the research may increase the ways of dealing and counseling them as a teacher for their better future and harmonious relationship between teachers and students in the

college and universities. Moreover, it is significant for me so as to reflect my understanding on urbanism and the everyday activities of youth. These everyday activities of youth show possibilities and problems they experience in their ways of living.

For the professional development, the research may contribute to the urban development in Nepal, which is always appraised by the physical development rather than a social construct. Therefore, the study may change the perspective of urban development, giving necessary focus on the social, cultural and anthropological perspectives. Thus, my primary research interest may enable to address the socio-cultural aspects of urbanism for sustainable urban growth and development from the everyday life perspective. This research may be helpful to think about the urban development, thereby understanding urbanism from a different lens.

Along with my professional level, the research may contribute to the policy formation of urban development as the urban centers in Nepal have been increasing rapidly. This research may create an avenue to advocate the need of urban education for urban youth for mitigating urban inequalities and injustice.

Possibly, it raises the concerns of urban education for sustainable urban development. At the same time, this research possibly helps to frame a policy of youth friendly cities where these youth can be educated and can search their future career in the cities. As a student of Development Studies, this research, perhaps creates a new vision of urban development and its various facets of Kathmandu, but specifically it envisions urban education for youth in Nepal that may fulfill the requirement of the School of Education at Kathmandu University.

Lastly, this research sets up new epistemologies of researching urban youth, using local ways of thinking and believing. I used the mandala approach under the

notion of post-qualitative research premise using as a methodological heuristic which was generated from the local epistemology to rupture the traditional ways of doing qualitative research.

Linking Threads via Everyday Life Perspectives

Exploring the everyday life of urban youth, several theoretical dots appeared and connected with the research, I employed everyday life theory which helped me to explore the activities of urban youth that might have been influenced by the visible and invisible dynamics of urbanism as Heller's (1984) believes that everyday life activities are the reproduction of cultural and political context. For this study, a theoretical reference of Heller (1984) contributes me to understand the city life, such as courage, self- control, coping with problems, feeling pleasure, loyalty, and gratitude. This theory empowers me to interpret the opportunities that appear in urban centers rather than critiquing the urban challenges in the daily activities.

Everyday life of youth in Kathmandu gets influenced more by the modern Western ways of living (Liechty, 2002). Western ways of living can be gauged from their gadgets, phones, and lifestyles such as the music they listen, the conversation they carry out, the films they watch, the TV shows that they watch, the game they play and watch in TVs such lifestyles can be the part of the global culture and the youth are foremost agents to anticipate such changes. Their names and aims, their goals and modes, their culture and relations all are the part of their everyday life. These everyday life activities might be guided by not only by the reproduction of political and economic doctrine, but they are transformation of everyday as Lefebvre (1991) believes.

Such everyday life activities are the “part of the expression of cosmopolitan sentiments within spheres of everyday life, there should be identifiable carriers of the

cosmopolitan: humans and non-humans alike, which act as symbolic containers of cultural difference” (Kendall, Woodward, & Skrbis, 2009, p. 10). Thus, I used the everyday life to “explore and interpret the changes in the ways of living among youth. But this is not to say that the content and the structure of everyday life are the same for all individuals in all societies” (Heller, 1984, p. 7).

Everyday life theory enables me to explore the particular and individual features of urban youth in Kathmandu. These features are relatively fluctuating to create meaning of their everyday life activities. At the same time, I am aware of everyday life of youth as an alienated and aesthetic as a critique. Moreover, I inclined to Lefebvre’s (1991) ideas who suggested that everyday life activities are guided by the aesthetic components (Berger & Del Negro, 2004). At the same time, Heller’s ideas are considered “as everyday life are acquired through the constant internalization of experiences and perceptions, everyday thinking remains a ‘heterogeneous amalgam’ that is totally inseparable from praxis, imbued with needs, perceptions, and feelings, everyday knowledge” (Sheringham, 2006, p. 36). In this line, such everyday life theories empower me to look at the heterogeneous amalgam of the urban youth of Kathmandu to understand the urban anthropology of Kathmandu.

Possibly, everyday life of urban youth might have been guided by de Certeau’s (1984) notion of everyday life relating to the consumptions which is stronger than producer and the product which regulates the everyday life. de Certeau’s (1984) believes that:

In reality, a rationalized, expansionist, centralized, spectacular and clamorous production is confronted by an entirely different kind of production, called "consumption" and characterized by its ruses, its

fragmentation (the result of the circumstances), its poaching, its clandestine nature, its tireless but quiet activity, in short by its quasi-invisibility, since it shows itself not in its own products (where would it place them?) but in an art of using those imposed on it (p. 31).

In this sense, everyday life activities in urban centers are more guided by the presence of the consumer. Mainly the youth are the consumers who consume the goods and services of the market. The notion of consumption helps me to unpack the particular aspect to generate meaning of everyday life of urban youth. My research chapters are blended with the sense of these three major cultural anthropological perspectives: culturalist, resistant, and identity. First, I have employed urban culturalist perspective proposed by Boerer (2006) to describe living and being of youth in Kathmandu. Likewise, I have addressed the sense of living through the resilient perspective of cities (Ungar, 2012) where I have focused on the resilient subjects, objects and space of Kathmandu. I used the identity perspective to unpack the meaning of being of urban youth. Perhaps, all these three threads help me to explore the urban youth and their everyday life under the cultural anthropological domain.

Everyday life perspective helps me to unpack the life cycles, their personal expectation and problems to reflect their experience. In so doing, I mainly focus on the youth culture. It might be difficult to include the various subject matters of youth cultures such as caste, ethnicity, gender, globalization and modernity; I rather included the major themes generated from the ethnographic field study such as education, cultural reproduction, resilience, and identity construction.

Urban Cultural Perspective

Right from the beginning of the dissertation, I attempted to connect this research with the broader urban sociological approaches. In so doing, three major schools of urban sociology (the Chicago School, the Political Economical School, and the Los Angeles School) influenced me to adapt the culturalist perspectives, though these are not sufficient for describing the urban youth of city like Kathmandu. Along

the line of Boerer (2006), I identify a strand of urban sociology that explicitly focuses on the culture and introduce a theoretical framework for investigating culturally significant urban places. In so



Figure 8. Lived Locale

doing, I used three major domains

out of six of culturalist perspectives: place-based myths, narratives, and collective memories; urban identities and lifestyles; and interaction places and practices.

These three domains are intertwined together to address the everyday life of youth in Kathmandu. I used cultural perspective in the line of Kehily (2007), to depict that young people make sense of the world through participation and engagement with everyday social practices. Youth in Kathmandu perform a wide range of everyday life activities that construct their unique identity living in cities like Kathmandu. Cultural perspective enables me to see youth and their interaction with the place and people to form their identities because youth are active meaning makers of their life and they give shape to their life and actively ascribe meaning to events (Kehily, 2007, p. 12).

Resistant Perspective

It was one of the days in February 2013, I was facilitating the undergraduate students in management stream about the sociological theory. Students were preparing for their College Day. They were not in a mood to attend my lecturer. I requested them to take my session because it was usually asked in the examination. I was shameful about emphasizing the lesson for the examination point of view. One of the students raised the question, “What happens to score ‘A’ in the examination? We can learn such theories at home also. He uttered, “Fuck Exams”. I took it easy and thought why he did not like the ideas of attending the lecture. He resisted taking my session because it might not be interesting for them. I might not have been able to convince them to study social theories. I did not like to escape saying that it was in their syllabus, and thus, it was important to study. Initially, I felt awkward to hear such words, but later on I was habituated to hear such words. Often I used it to express when I was angry with the students.

I think I can better articulate their sense of being via resistant perspective. While they resisted, they would be able to address the existing adversities in urban life. Resistance of youth took place when they are supposed to be socially destructive and useless by the followers of mainstream and they revolted against their negative image (Carlson, 2005). In the same line, they might be suffering from various adversities in Kathmandu. They may overcome such adversities via protective and promotive factors to adjust to the city life. Thus, the concept of resistant is used to describe young people’s living conditions, lifestyles, and urban strategies of resistance (Dillabough & Kennedy, 2010). In so doing, the resistant does not remain as the struggle of hierarchies such as culture and subculture. It is more oriented to resilient perspective that helps me to conceptualize the just city where youth are deprived of

social justice. Describing adversities and resiliency of urban youth possibly need the critical engagement with youth. In this line, ecological approach of resilience (Ungar, 2012) may empower me to deal with the urban youth's adversities and assets.

Identity Perspective

Reflecting back on my own journey to Kathmandu to shape my life and career, it provokes me to observe identity construction of youth. Mainly identity formations of youth in urban center are affected by globally emerged popular culture. However, Kathmandu as a traditional city is not only blended with consumption of media, commodities and technology, it has erected on its cultural and spiritual horizon that formed multiple identities of youth.

I used the construct of identities to discuss the subjective understanding of being, living and learning in Kathmandu. In this line, I used the ideas of Bottrell (2007) to describe the identities of urban youth formed by their social and cultural performance, the work they do, and the education they get. I analyzed their identity formation with the sense of urban diversity in a local context rather than modern and global context. In so doing,



Figure 9. Who am I?

I focused more on the agency of young people living in Kathmandu. I connected the identities of youth with the broader elements such as modern and global tradition along with the local.

Learning Perspective

I employed learning perspective to deal with the everyday life of urban youth. I argue that learning of youth takes place within the interaction of city and its everyday life which would challenge the 'classical' notion of learning within the

classroom setting. Urban youth in Kathmandu might be learning from the urban space and locale and their relation with urbanism. In this line, I am using experience as a ways of learning in the city (Dominice, 2000) through the process of reflection. Boyd and Fales (1983) used the concept of reflective learning as examination of self which was gained by experience. The ideas of reflective learning may be suitable for me to make meaning of everyday life of urban youth and their meaning making process of living in Kathmandu. In this line, experiential learning creates a platform for youth to learn from their everyday life activities as living in Kathmandu. This idea may challenge the established 'isms' of education and learning as youth in Kathmandu experience their being and living as active meaning makers. In so doing, I may be able to show that learning is socially and culturally constructed phenomenon and it is influenced by the socio-emotional context in which it occurs.

I was influenced to bring the learning perspective from Dewey's reflective ways of learning. Later on, Jarvis (2012) envisioned learning processes is framed from the everyday life, such as copying, trial and error, being instructed, thinking and doing or exploring. However, his notion of copying, trial and error and instruction seems more essentialist than recognizing the autonomy of learning. I observed such ways of learning to live in Kathmandu and constructing their identities. As a facilitator in various private colleges, I experienced that urban youth are bored and disengaged as citizens, both in and outside of the classroom (Porfilio & Carr, 2010) which leads learning as a relational process in time and space.

Post Script: The Story Thus Far

Meaning making of everyday life activities and experience of youth in Kathmandu within and beyond the mandala framework helps me to explore the narratives of youth and thus I proceeded with post qualitative research sensibility

generating the layers of research questions moving around being, living and learning. As such, I started this research from my personal and professional context to study urban youth to explore the extraordinary experiences of the ordinary everyday life of urban centre like Kathmandu. In the following wheel, I have presented how mandalic research space helped me to tell the stories of my participants.

Glossary of Sanskrit Terms

Bhavachakra

One particular form of the mandala which depicts the cycle of birth, death, and after death consciousness of people.

Bhavasagar

Bhavasagar refers to the everyday life activities takes place in the cycle of the life, death and rebirth. In Hindu myths, devotees pray God or Guru; to sail them across the Bhavasagar and free them from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth

Kama

I used the notion of Kama describing the deep desire and sensuality created by urbanism. It also connotes the excessive passion for sexual pleasure. Deriving from Hindu mythology, Kama is one of the four aims of Purusartha which seeks emotional fulfillment.

Mahamaya

Among several types of mandala, Mahamaya mandala depicts the sense of illusion.

Manana

Manana is the process of reflection. Traditionally in Hindu tradition, disciples listen to their guru. They used the technique to get clarity on the sayings of gurus.

The process is a constant reflection upon the truth as offered by guru for the realization of self.

Mandala

Mandala are the circles which portrayed the consciousness of universe within human beings.

Mandalam

Deriving from the notion of Rig Veda, Mandalam refers to the referential with each and other part of text, body and matter.

Mantra

A mantra is sacred chant for the purification of body, mind and soul to attain the supreme god. A mantra may be meaningful or unintelligible, and may consist of a single letter, a word, or a complete sentence.

Nididyasana

Nididhyasana is a rational and cognitive process, which differs from dhyana attained after the manana and shravan. This is more practical aspects of using knowledge.

Shravan

Sharavan is the process of listening to the gurus.

Tantra

The process of taming physical desires for the salvation.

Yantra

Literally tools which are used to tame mind and body of people.

WHEEL II

MANDALIC DESIGN: ARTS BASED NARRATIVE METHOD

“Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life.”

Pablo Picasso

Whether my soul is full of dust or my feelings and emotion are dusty, I was nearer to the soulful inquiry, though the rationalist would deny the existence of soul. Unlike rationalist, right from the beginning of the research, I was thinking in integral ways (Taylor, 2012) to represent the social and cultural complexities of the youth in Kathmandu. I was aware of my strengths (possibly not weaknesses) and the nature of my mind/soul/body which tend to be less of logicians to that of storyteller. In terms of a storyteller, I enjoyed unconventional ways of telling stories which can possibly dismantle the dichotomy of fact and fiction that exist in the social science research. Thank you Saldana (2015) for developing my sense of eclectic thinking in this research process. As an eclectic thinker, deep down in my mind/soul/body, I was excavating process of inquiry from the integral research approach. In this regard, I chose mandala as a philosophy and symbol of the post qualitative research approach of my research to illuminate integral research space.

Pre Script: Mandala Orientation

The term mandala has been derived from the Sanskrit language and it refers to a circle in its literal form. However, I can see other various kinds of shapes such as triangles and squares in a mandala. I have been using mandala as “plans, charts, geometric patterns, or all sorts of artistic designs that are circular, where squares and other figures may be incorporated” (Settler, 2008, p. 49). The circle in the mandala represents the circle of the universe which connects both microcosm and mesocosm

(Longchenpa, 2001). The notion of mandala in this research was used to connect the microcosm and mesocosm of everyday life of urban youth in Kathmandu. I presented the entire belief systems of urban youth with the help of the mandala. These patterns are symbolic and often interpreted by the local cosmological thinking.

I used the notion of mandala as more than an image. It is a philosophy and worldview which is used for understanding the cosmos and belief system. In this line, Vira and Chandra (1995) believe that “Mandala is much more than a consecrated area that must be kept pure for ritual and liturgical ends” (p. 9). Moreover, mandala creates pattern to understand temporal and spatial belief of human and their consciousness because it is a map of the cosmos and the whole universe (Vira & Chanrda, 1995, p. 9). Mandala in the Buddhist tradition has been represented by various names to deal with the cosmic consciousness (Tucci, 1969, p. 4). The forms and functions of mandalas have served various purposes in different Buddhist traditions as tools of attaining salvation. On the other hand the idea of mandala in the *Upanishad* was interpreted as a form of *darsan* (Tuccci, 1969), which leads towards the light from darkness, from unreal to real and from illusion to clarity (Tucci, 1969).

Literally, in Sanskrit, mandala means a secret circle and center, the symbol of the cosmos in its entirety, while the square is the symbol of the

Earth and human-made world (Malandra, 1993). Its traditional design, hence often consists of a series of concentric forms, suggestive of a passage between different



Figure 10. Mandala Image

dimensions (Brauen, 2009). In this sense, it pertains not only to the Earth, but also to the macrocosm and microcosm, the largest structural processes as well as the smallest. It is the gatepost between the two. Thereby the mandala is a living structural matrix subjected to the infinite processes of growth and transformation by virtue of the ever-changing relationships both internal and external to its basic structure (Arguelles and Arguelles, 1974). The center is the beginning of the mandala, the origin of all forms and processes, and ultimately the eternal potential. Expanding from its center, mandala is a manifestation of human consciousness and perception of the universe in their present time, which continually appeared in rituals and art forms throughout history.

Five Deity Mandala

I used the notion of five deity mandala as an analytical tool of the field notes and data text. Among many types of five deity mandala, each shared a common feature with a central sacral area which is surrounded by a square which are entrance gates (Brauen, 2009). The most important elements of mandala's form are designed to work together to bring harmony to the body and mind, microcosm and macrocosm, cosmos and physical world. Three key elements appeared dominant in my research: a) *bindu* which are central seeds of the mandala as intense concentration of the research. Literally, these *bindus* are the intense concentration of energy, b) circle which symbolizes the whole and complete. I used three layers of circles in the mandala c) squares, which I used for describing the physical world and direction: north, west, east and south which, may be connected with various worldviews of urban youth, and d) perimeter is the outer circle of the mandala which creates boundaries of discussion (Tenzin-Dolma, 2008, p. 22).

Ontology: A Path to Wholeness

I derived the meaning of mandala from the Rig Veda as a metaphor of wholeness. The image of mandala itself as an image of wholeness combines both center and periphery as a unified existence of being. The center is guided by the periphery and vice versa to create wholeness. In the center of mandala there is the self, which we can refer as *Brahman* - the ultimate reality. Following the *Upanishads*, mandala can help to portray the relationship between part and whole within our body, mind, spirit (*Atman*) and *Brahman* (Tucci, 1969). Therefore, mandala is the wholeness of consciousness which never gets fragmented, and rather it shows us a path of reconciliation with the God.

In this line, I think the *darsan* of unification to the god and self in the *Upanisad* was translated as the operational tools in the Buddhist tradition. Following the Buddhist tradition, mandalas are designed to bring about the inner focus which most often take the form of the circle, the shape that represents the self, the earth, the sun and the cosmos and the state of wholeness for realization

ॐ पूर्णमदा पूर्णमिदाम पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते ।

पूर्णश्च पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

Trans:

That is Full; This is Full; Only from a Full does
a Full arise; If you take away Full from Full; Full
Remains

of our true nature (Tenzin-Dolma, 2008, p. 9). This ontological premise offers me a space to explore the nature of urban youth and their struggle to adapt the core values of urbanism as a complete process of being urbanized.

In this line, I believe that youth consciousness in city life has been shaped by their everyday life. In this line, Juliet (1999) opined, “Mandala symbolizes the instinctive human urge to create condition of wholeness and harmony” (p. 4).

Believing mandala as a path of wholeness of everyday life of urban youth in Kathmandu helps me to create an archaic meaning of everyday life. Mandala helps me to connect inner and outer world of urban youth. Using the Rig Veda style its ten books as the form of the mandalam to praise and glorify the gods and nature reconciliation. In this line, I believe that urban youth in Kathmandu reconciled their everyday life, appreciating the urban ways of living. In this regard, I take mandala as the assemblage which presents several stories of urban youth and their everyday life. These kinds of assemblage are unique and mythical. As in the Rig Veda, these unique stories of wisdom of praising gods and nature has been neatly woven with the help of the mandala. These mandalam might have been formed from the oral tradition ‘Speak together’. Believing the notion of assemblage, I explore the assemblages in the everyday life of urban youth.

The readers might have seen in the Figure 10: Mandala Image, I designed with the green center circle, which I believe consists of the core ideas of balance and harmony. Usually it is believed that the center of the mandala is the inhabitation of God as a form of totality. The square form in the second layer of mandala in red circle depicts the ideas of wall. Traditionally, the space is known as the space of semi god figures. In another layer of colourful circle, I created the space of my interpretation where human beings are inhabited. This mandala model led me to remember the classical urban theory of Burgess (1967) which presented the city structure which arranged people in different social groups.

In such a circumstance, I believed that youth in Kathmandu were living their real and surreal everyday life sharing local and global worldviews. I hardly thought that everyday life of urban youth as a realist because they (we) rarely preferred to live black and white life as humanist qualitative researchers believe. I believe that the

nature of lived reality of youth in Kathmandu as a whole like Kathmandu, and its space as configuration of everyday life (Lather & Pierre, 2013). Possibly, I believe in mandala in understanding things as a whole. In this regard, I believe that Kathmandu as a mandala where being, living and learning resonate as a whole.

As a realist, I believe that cities are centers of progress and prosperity but, as a nominalist, I think cities are the products of the cultural interaction of everyday life. My philosophical assumptions emerged from the dialectics of nominalism and realism, where such technocratic prosperity and cultural embodiments create the wholeness of the cities, and thus, affect the everyday life of urban youth. The symbolic mandala helped me to understand the everyday life of youth in the vast diversity of urban life in Kathmandu. Thus, I could articulate the experiences of youth in a meaningful way.

Thinking Kathmandu as a mandala gave me a space for insight, healing and self-expression as Fincher (1991) opines. As a nominalist, I followed and accepted the emergence of the meanings and constructs believing a holistic worldview that the world is an integrated whole and thus an organism is also integrated. This integration makes it organic and dynamic (Sattler, 2008). In this regard, I understood the cosmos of Kathmandu and its interaction of youth as a nominalist. In this line, the reality for me is the everyday life of urban youth in Kathmandu as an integration of relational, spatial, and integral ways of knowing.

Epistemology: Cosmological Understanding

Mandalas are the representation of the cosmos which can help to describe the mysteries of cosmology (Tenzin-Dolma, 2008). The nature of cosmology is complex, which is integrated in all belief systems of human, nature and society. In this research I understand the cosmologies of urban youth with the relative, critical and relational

ways of knowing. The relationship of circles and squares and the existence of gods and goddess in the mandala is a way to understanding the urban chaos and complexities. I understand such interconnectedness in urban cosmology via everyday life activities of the youth. Mandala helps to understand the meaning of such complex belief system of the universe of Kathmandu. Thus, mandalas are assemblages of cosmic law and order reflected personal, social and natural life of gods inside human beings. I believe that I could understand youth as the notion of mandala in the Rig Veda, which can blend the unifying opposite forces of nature and creates the meaning of the whole. The cosmology of Kathmandu has been manifested through its tangible and intangible heritages where people performed functions as the representation of town (Vergati, 1995).

Such everyday life activities of urban youth might have been embedded in their subconscious mind which is related to the purity or such purity might have been demolished by modern anthropocentric development. I am searching an image of Buddha Amitabh among youth to display their inner journey. At this level, mandalas are the maps of the awakened psyche and the geometry of enlightenment (Gray, 2006). Such interconnectedness helps me to be relational to move in (center) and out (periphery) of the circle of mandala. Mandala helps me to be an artist, not only to present drawings and charts, but as a culturally relevant art form in the current project in order to support cultural links within participants' stories of relocation and foster a more meaningful research experience (Blodgetta et al., 2013). I believe that everyday life of urban youth is more complex and chaotic, which can be illuminated by some artistic expressions.

Contemplation on the mandala is a spiritual joinery for the Tibetan Buddhists. The Buddhist tradition relates the notion of mandala for the nirvana liberating from all

the material values and heading towards unifying the god. The goal of the Tibetan Buddhists is to become awaken or to experience Tharpa. “Awakening is seen as the opening of consciousness to the ultimate reality of emptiness” (Bresnan, 1998, p. 289). The awakening process of connecting with the mandala penetrates body, mind and soul for Nirvana. In this regard, I believe that urban youth are searching their ‘enlightenment’ in the city in different forms.

Relational Truth: Order in Chaos

Believing the wholistic nature of reality based on the post ontological assumption, everyday life of youth is reflected via relational being, spatial being, temporal being, and relative being. Trungpa (2011) believes, “to begin with, we should discuss the idea of orderly chaos, which is the mandala principle. It is orderly, because it comes in a pattern; it is chaos, because it is confusing to work with that order” (p. 1). I started thinking the whole life as an orderly chaos. I always find myself as a part of Kathmandu, though I have migrated from a village. Then I learnt to follow the ways of being and living in Kathmandu. In this line, I understand the everyday life of urban youth as a relational being. I am relational to the youth, the city and its space to know the everyday life of urban youth. I explored the transformative possibilities of relational being in research or re-envisioning knowledge as co-creation (Gergen, 2009). My ways of understating city life might be guided by the ‘relational aesthetics’ (Springgay, Irwin, & Kind, 2008). I showed how I understood the everyday life of urban youth as relational aesthetic.

Moreover, I understand that everyday life forms the spatial being. Spatial ways of knowing might have emerged with the interaction youth and the space in Kathmandu. Youth are struggling to survive in Kathmandu, they want to earn more, get food, clothes, and shelter, more rooms and more space. These urban youth are

like artists who lived their life in Kathmandu contesting and negotiating the urban space. In other words, I understood, these youth create the meaning of life with the engagement and interaction with the ways of living and doing in Kathmandu. Circles of mandala allowed me to know the everyday life of youth balance, and coherence in order in the chaotic city life. Possibly, I might have known the epistemic pluralism (Richardson, 2000) to understand both a partial, local, and/or historical knowledge of knowing of urban youth.

Reflecting back on my ways of knowing city life along with youth is all blended with my socio-cultural and spiritual being. I believe that urban youth perform material and spiritual, sensible and sensual, violent and peaceful kind of activities as an integral form of understanding of global and local Kathmandu. Likewise, mandala seems to be closer to the integral epistemology (Wilber, 1998) provoking me to explore the ways of understating holistic city life of the youth. Observing of such ways of everyday life, I sensed the mosaic flavour studying urbanism and their everyday life. I talked to the colourful people- colour of occupation, colour of caste/ethnicity, colour of geography, colour of interest, colour of aim, colour of name, colour of fame and many other colours blended in urban development and urbanism.

This epistemological assumption might have been shaped and reshaped by the individuals in constructing a personal and unique reality with the several archetypes as Jung (1964) believed. These archetypes create the cities more heterogeneous in terms of many colours and these colours are created among the people living in the urban area which may help to explore the situated knowledge of Kathmandu. It may enable me to understand the particular situation and context of urban youth in Kathmandu.

Axiology: Symbolic Values

I have certain values of urban youth who look like dandy and flaneur, who act like a punk and rebel and who appear as monsters with their get-up which might also be an outcome of the youth culture but they have some sort of interrelationship with their mainstream culture. I believe like the Vajrayana emphasizes on the role that one's body and senses can play in awakening of the mind (Binaya, 2008). In this regard, these dandy youth might be developing awareness of their mind to adapt, assimilate and resist the urban ways of being, learning and living. They might be suffering in the Samsara of urbanism, where they are searching Nirvana, but I was skeptical whether the Nirvana was as Buddha or Curt Cobin envisioned. Any kind and form of the Nirvana would be the creative force of the youth agency which drive them to attain the freedom and liberation in urban life.

Buddhist tradition uses mandala as a ritual of meditation in the journey of Nirvana from Samsara. Mandala encompasses the composites of the Samsara and Nirvana (Tucci, 1969). All *Jivatmas* move around the layers of circle for enlightenment. The whole process of moving around the circle of time, space and consciousness for attaining *Nirvana* is the mandala. In this process, a lot of endeavours need for human beings raise the level of consciousness. The layers of consciousness move in and around the circles of and go towards the center. The mandala has four gates in four directions for entering into other layers of consciousness and leading into the center. In this regard, mandala helps us to connect the physical consciousness with the spiritual awareness. As a meditation practitioner, I think mandala is used for external expression to explore the universe within the self.

In this line, I used the notion of the wheel, unlike Buddha's wheel of life and death, and before death and afterlife, but as the description of movement of ever going

everyday life activities. The notion of the wheel is connected with the temporal and spatial activities, and consciousness of urban youth in the city like *Kaalchakra Mandala*.

Integral Research Space: Mandala

I started my research from the interpretive circle and the circle was green at the stage of incubation. When it was gradually hatching, it got blended with other several circles. Initially, I was thinking of using multi-paradigmatic research design, mainly drawn from the narrative, decolonial and artistic research spaces. Everyday life activities of urban youth could best be portrayed with the mandala metaphor which would lead to creating an inclusive research space. The narrative research space seemed to be more interpretive, where I became more inter-subjective while exploring the meanings of everyday life of urban youth. The red colour of mandala offered a critical outlook needed to identify the research problem, to reflect upon my experiences as an urban resident, as an urban youth and to make my lifetime's subjectivities transparent to readers under decolonial research space. Critical red circle in the mandala activates my reflexive energies to live in urban space. Likewise, artistic space acted to bring the colourful experiences of youth via multiple genres for cultivating different aspects of my experiences of living in urban life, and with the space of integralism, I envisioned inclusive urban youth activities in Kathmandu.

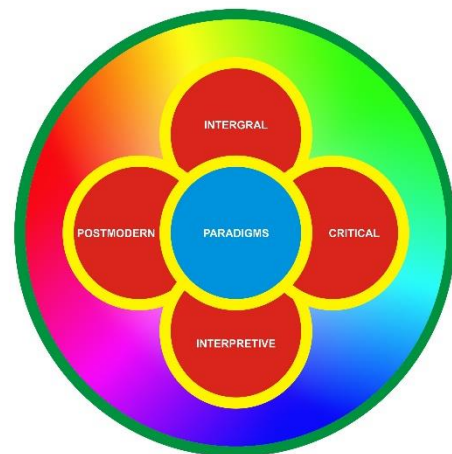


Figure 11. Paradigmatic Mandala

Within this integral research space, mandalic research design helped me to generate the research text of my urban cultural contexts. It also helped me to generate

new knowledge via a host of innovative epistemologies that have the goal of deepening understanding of everyday life practices of youth by examining them critically, identifying underpinning assumptions, and reconstructing them through scholarly interpretations.

Interpretive Self

In the center of the mandala, there is the habitat of the gods. Possibly, gods are there to interact with the people. This interaction creates an inter-subjective spiritual space (Brauen, 2009). I used inter-subjective space to unpack the everyday life of youth to depict urban complexities. In this regard, I acted to be a new ethnographer following the "potential for embracing more evocative and sensuous arts-based forms of working; a synergy of social science and the arts creating new opportunities which challenge orthodox ethnographic conceptions and practice" (Bagley, 2009, p. 2).

Therefore, unlike the traditional ethnographer, I engaged in capturing cyclical variability and fundamental patterns of change among youth in an urban context (Hammersley, 2006). For this, my prolonged field engagement enabled me to capture these cyclical variability and patterns of change in urbanism and everyday life of youth. Partly, plain ethnography evolved to the 'enhanced ethnography' (Humphreys & Watson, 2009) that enabled me to explore the cases of urban youth and their ways of living, being and learning with the description and dialogues. Similarly, I employed the 'semi-fictionalized and fictionalized ethnography' (Humphreys & Watson, 2009) to restructure the events occurring within more or more ethnographic investigations into a single narrative for sensitive and confidential data. At the same time I thought it was important to reflect on my understanding that depends on my life in the form of fiction because of ethical sensitivity of presenting events of urban

youth. In the journey of unpacking the youth culture as part of their identity formation and underground culture of drinking and dancing, I employed fictionalized ethnography. Usually, I employed fictionalized ethnography to deal with the sensitive issues of urban youth.

Such kinds of expressing and writing created another circle of mandala. These circles emerged gradually with the narratives. These narrative empower me as Barone (2007) opined to rupture the genres As I am describing colourful Kathmandu where youth were enjoying and struggling to experience, construct and reconstruct their identity blend in such a way that they highlight issues of complexity (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 71). I usually interpreted the everyday stories of youth, probed them and reflected on the being, living and learning situation of urban youth. I put on their goggles and saw youth world employing interpretive research paradigm. Understanding youth and their everyday life as interpretive self, uncovering subjective motivations is always necessary in interpretive work. When the ongoing everyday-ness of social life is the focus of research, action may be better understood not as doing but instead as being in context. Therefore, ethnography's working epistemic must allow for the decentring of the subjective and, by extension, the individual, motivated subject (Voyer, 2015) as an example of post-qualitative inquiry.

Critical Self

My critical self might be embedded with my critical reflexivity as Tucci (1969) believes, "The representation of the divine cycle in the form of a mandala is not the result of arbitrary construction, but the reflection in appropriate paradigm of personal intuitions" (p. 36). Further, it helped me to generate meaning by especially focusing on emancipation through social justice (Taylor, 2009). In this paradigm, my research was directed to "uncovering hidden relationships and making us aware both

that they exist and that they disenfranchise some groups while giving excessive power and resources to others” (Willis, 2007, p. 85). Most of the youth might be experiencing out of the urban circle as urbanism creates and divides too many forms of selves and others.

My critical self offers me a space to critique on the current ideology seeking to expose dominating or oppressive relationships in urban centers like Kathmandu. It may illuminate power relationship between individuals, enabling me and my participants to adhere to our commonly held values and assumptions. My critical awareness promotes willingness of knowing how a false understanding contributes to oppression and resistance among youth (Willis, 2007). In this regard, following the mandala features, I try to educate participants and enable them to see the situation in a different light and themselves as capable of transforming the oppressive culture of modern Kathmandu.

My critical self flourished my passion to work with youth who were prone to inequalities and injustice prevailing in Kathmandu Metropolitan city aiming to advocate the change in the urban construct of these underprivileged groups of people within the critical social research methodology. Despite juxtaposing the literature of critical methodology, my interest as well as un/counted experience might be dominating the prospects and challenges of critical researcher, though I could not hide the influences of the heuristics of critical research. To explore the urban centers as hub of opportunities and challenges I employ critical paradigm via performance and critical ethnography. In a similar way, Pant (2015) perceived that critical reflection helps us to be aware of the taken for granted issues. In so thinking, I was aware of such everyday life of youth in Kathmandu. In addition, my questioning skills and attitude may help to understand the structural development of the city.

Postmodern Self

Postmodern self allows me to portray the everyday life of urban youth in an aesthetic way. In so doing, I tell stories of Kathmandu not only by using the words to be expressive but using visual images to be illuminative. Moreover, postmodern self allows me to use pluralism in the colourful circles in mandala. Taylor, Taylor, and Luitel (2012) argued that postmodernism appeared in the research methodology to suspend the all universal knowledge claims. The mandalic research space allows me to question and challenge such established knowledge claim which acknowledges the holistic approach to study youth in city because “the city becomes only one of many institutions such as kinship, value systems, and subsistence activity as part of a socio-cultural whole” (Fox 1980, p. 106). Possibly, postmodern self provides such a philosophical base to generate meaning(s) from the everyday life of urban youth. For me, youth in urban space, which is a heterogeneous realm, play an active role in the organization of society at large, since the city “is both product and producer of particular political alignments, economic sectors and social structures” (Fox, 1980, p. 106).

Such kinds of tiny and local structures might have affected the life styles of youth in cities. Postmodern self-offered three things to create epistemic pluralism of the urban youth. First, it brought local worldviews of the urban youth as symbolic representation of the cosmos. As I understand, the ‘universe’ is symbolically represented in holistic and usually circular mandala forms (Gidley, 2006, p. 32). Second, it provoked me to explore the ways of understating holistic city life via ways of knowing. Lastly, my postmodern self helped me to articulate research space, where I could articulate narratives, arts, and postcolonial research space.

Integral Self

Being aware of the research paradigms, I am able to rupture that dualism of nominalism and realism. I often think as a nominalist, which brings synergy on my ontological position. Believing that everyday life of urban youth might be transient and changing, which I could have better represented with the paradigmatic sense, though thinking paradigmatically is not the end but the means of illuminating the complexities of everyday life of urban youth. My integral self helps me evoke several ways of thinking such as metaphorical, symbolic and eclectic as Saldana (2015) believes. In this line, I started thinking symbolically through mandala which was culturally rooted in the space of Kathmandu. Through mandala I was able to connect the research procedures with vignettes, narratives and stories of my participants. Mandala helps me to create a pictorial narrative mapping through the systematically designed constructed picture (Lapum et al., 2015). In this line, I used nontextual and artistic analytic technique by combining elements related to narrative mapping and narrative art.

Colour Symbolism in Mandala

Mandala has particular colour symbolism. I have used colour symbolism to represent my research design. In so doing, I chose green colour which represents the narrative circle. Green colour is associated with the growth, spinning, youth and renewal which has demonstrated calming and harmonizing quality (Tenzin-Dolma, 2008). Believing that narrative circle within green colour helps me to connect the self of youth and their interaction with the space of city. Likewise, I used red colour representing the decolonial circle of mandala which can increase joy, passion, and motivation of youth living in city, using a new methodology which is generated from

the local cosmology. Lastly, artistic colourful circle blending yellow and orange circles helped me to create artistic expressions.

Narrative Green Circle

I was telling various kinds of tales such as impressionistic, confessional, and linear (van Maanen, 2011) to bring the chaos and complexities of urban youth. In the same line, narrative inquiry gave me the license to present experiences of the participants that makes my research holistic in all of its complexity and richness (Webster & Mertova, 2007). I believe that narrative circle offered me

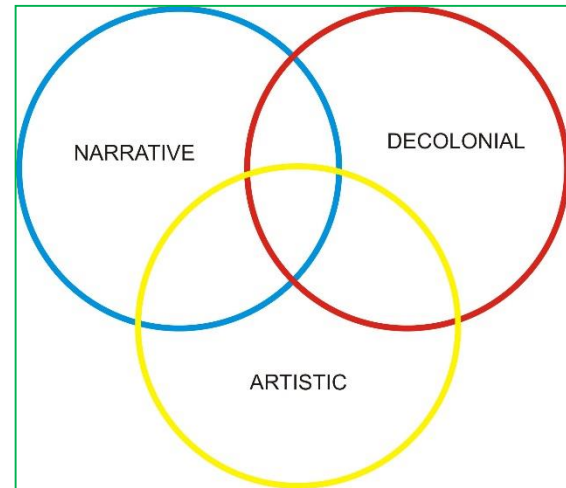


Figure 12. Methodological Mandala

the freedom to choose and not to choose the experiences of my participants. In doing so, I could reflect on my own experiences as an urban inhabitant as well. Relating to mandala in the Rigveda, it appeared in the form of oral tradition assembling the stories of various 'selves' and centers. Narrative circle allowed me to create a space of recognizing everyday pattern and trend of youth in diverse social and cultural settings. In such a heterogeneous context, narration enables me to perceive their experience, knowledge and the context. Using narratives I examine the urban youth issues through exploratory, open ended conversation and by prioritizing holistic understanding (Trahar, 2009).

Decolonial Red Circle

The red circle in mandala also created a departure from the western modern world view of researching. Mandala itself blended with the ways of understanding people and their socio-culture space. Moreover, studying youth in Kathmandu with

the mythical tradition is an example of using mandala as a decolonial attempt.

Decolonial attempt has been supported with the narratives, performance and art based research, which I collected in the form of vignettes in the research journey (Gautam & Luitel, 2013; Smith, 2000). I employed certain techniques from the Hindu mythology such as *Shravan*, *Manana*, and *Nididhyasan* to engage in the field and to generate meaning. These techniques departed this research from the ‘well-established’ research traditions such as positivism and humanism. Connecting to the ideas of decolonial tradition of researching people suspect the early established ideas. My intention of being decolonial, thus, portrays the local ways of knowing and thinking of everyday life of youth.

This red colour in mandala offers me a space to critique the current ideology of understanding everyday life of youth and research methods borrowed from the West. In so doing, I demonstrated dominating or oppressive relationships of youth in urban centers like Kathmandu. It possibly illuminated power relationship between individuals, enabling me and my participants to held common values and assumptions. Similarly, the red colour created a critical awareness to be willing of how a false understanding of urban youth such as punk, gang, and girlfriend contributed to oppression and resistance among youth (Willis, 2007). Thus, under the red circle of mandala, my main goal was to dismantle the western ways of researching youth in Kathmandu and to bring their voices (Smith, 1999; Willis, 2007). In this regard, following mandala features, I tried to educate participants and enable them to see the situation in a different light and themselves as capable of transforming the oppressive culture of ‘modern’ Kathmandu.

In this line, I used performative texts to engage readers with sharing awareness of youth by unpacking their experiences in illuminating ways (Madisson, 2005).

While creating performative texts, I was aware of the urban cultures, groups, and individuals in Kathmandu. The red colour showed my passion to work with the youth who were prone to inequalities and injustice prevailing in Kathmandu Metropolitan city which aimed to advocate the change in the urban construct of these underprivileged groups of people within the critical social research methodology. I believe that the red colour sensitized the urban problems of their social consequences to foresee the alternatives approaches of urban youth culture and development. Despite juxtaposing the literature of decolonial methodology (Gautam & Luitel, 2013; Smith, 1999), my interest as well as un/counted experience might be dominating the prospects and challenges of critical researcher, though I could not hide the influences of the heuristics of critical research. To explore the urban centers as hub of opportunities and challenges I employed the decolonial space.

Using performance as writing tool I could have better portrayed cities as a space, as a symbol, and as a location for the sharing of unique, subjective, and evocative stories of experience that may contribute to our understanding (Wall, 2006). Similarly, my self-reflection and reflexivity offered me an understanding of the significance of socio-cultural and socio-historical process of the construction of a dynamic youth agency in Kathmandu. In so doing, I could have better reflected the role of the urban youth for establishing their just space in city.

Colourful Circle: Artistic Expression

Mandala gave me a space for being artistic. Mandala is itself an art. Thus, it allowed me to be artistic in terms of thinking, presenting and doing research. I used artistic expression and portraits of youth in the research to illuminate the complex social realities. I revealed ambiguity and openness of youth via arts informed research. It helped to build empathy and engagement with the readers. Within an

artistic research space I might have applied an aesthetic form of the field engagement and meaning making process. Arts based research: (1) enables me to use of more affective experiences, imagination and emotion as well as intellect; (2) gives space for interpretations of my participants' experience, (3) attends to the role of form in shaping meaning and (4) exists in the tensions of blurred boundaries (Finley, 2008, p. 72).

I employed arts-based research space for making available new forms of representation such as (i) literary genres of impressionist writing, autobiographical writing, storying, poetry, ethno drama, screenplay and fiction, and (ii) visual imagery such as film, painting, sketching and photography (Taylor & Medina, 2011). I employed field-based or art based research design in order to understand their perceptions, with different logics and genres.

I might be aware of postmodernist vantage point to illuminate the complexities of urban youth and their everyday life. However, I could not claim that I was a postmodernist to rapture the hierarchy between the center and the periphery. Instead I dealt with the center and the periphery of mandala holistically. The mandalas in cities are reserved for the rich and affluent among the various groups of youth, rich, poor, shy, hardworking, lazy, and many others. The city continues to provide the prime socio-spatial context with which economic and political elites and ordinary people construct and act out the processes of disinvestment (Gothman, 2001). Lastly, my understanding of urban centers as a solipsist might have empowered me to create a distinct image of urban youth in Kathmandu through arts based research.

Research Time and Space: Kathmandu (Between 2013 and 2016)

Studying everyday life of urban youth in Kathmandu is soulful for me for a couple of reasons. First, I have been teaching in urban schools and colleges in

Kathmandu for a decade and my interaction with the youth made me think about their everyday life. Second, Kathmandu is only one metropolitan city in Nepal, where youth across the country wish to be so that they could realize their dreams. Third, Kathmandu is traditionally known as the city of temples, but modern youth perceive it as a city of vultures (Wagley et al., 2012). The construct of Kathmandu has been changing. And fourth, Kathmandu is the most politically and economically powerful city in Nepal along with its rich cultural heritages and history which influence the everyday life of youth.

Major Research Participants

Many visible and invisible characters appeared and disappeared throughout the research journey. They contributed to my understanding of the city, its youth and their everyday life. During the initial days of fieldwork, I talked to the youth, elderly people, male, female without differentiating them by any measures such as class, caste, gender, creed, and ethnicity. I talked to them on the road, in the park, at hotels, in and around the café and theaters, in the cinema hall and even in the classroom with my students. I was almost indecisive to select my major characters in the first few months of fieldwork. I was talking to several youth in Kathmandu about their everyday life. It took me nearly six months to choose the major characters based upon their everyday life activities in Kathmandu. As such, I chose them under three categories: students, job holders, and lastly, who neither study nor work. Finally, I selected two participants from each group.

Rajesh Dai: A Cool Guy

Rajesh Dai came to Kathmandu from one of the towns of western Nepal in 2005 to become an MBBS doctor. He struggled for a few years to be a doctor but could not succeed. Then he switched to Sociology and completed his Bachelor in

Arts from *Trichandra* Campus. During my field visit, his everyday life in Kathmandu was exploring job opportunities and moving here and there. Possibly, it was difficult for him to get an appropriate job. He attempted to start his own business but failed. He purchased goats from some remote villages and started selling them in Kathmandu. But he could not promote and sustain this business for a long time. Then he got a job in a motor driving center where he taught driving. He was not happy with that profession. He left the job as well. When I met him, he was living at home without doing anything. He wanted to work at some offices or organizations, but he was not able to find a proper job. However, he was hopeful to get an opportunity in Kathmandu because Kathmandu is a city where people would get work if they needed one. He experienced that nobody cared him whether he worked or not, whether he earned or not, whether he consumed or not. I like his optimism even in his miserable living in Kathmandu? I am interested in knowing why he seems to be optimistic despite having challenges to buy even a cigarette.

He is in his late twenties. He does not have any girlfriend now, but he likes to get married. He is worried about his future and shared that it was not proper time to get married because he would like to settle in Kathmandu first. Why do youth like to settle down in Kathmandu? He has not made his mind to go back to his village. He would like to struggle in Kathmandu where he can get a lot of opportunities.

Ms. Maili: The Sales Girl

It could be any day of cold February, 2013. I was in a tea shop outside my college, near *Thamel*. Usually, the canteen of the college remained crowded with students during the break time. I felt a bit free to sip tea in the tea shop. There were small plastic chairs outside the tea shop. I sat there and enjoyed looking at people walking in the street. I had noticed a girl around 25 years in front of the grocery shop.

She appeared outside of the grocery shop and was sun bathing. During those days, I talked to each youth wherever I met as a possible participant. On that day, I went to the shop and bought some chocolates. I started talking to Maili about the business. I visited her shop regularly and started talking about her experience of living in Kathmandu. In the initial days, I sensed that she was suspicious about my unusual questioning to her. Later on, I developed a level of trust with her by sharing my purpose of talking to her. Then, she seemed a bit more comfortable.

Maili- 7th Grade passed girl, arrived in Kathmandu from the Central Region of Nepal nearly 8 years ago to make her future. She has experienced many upheavals in Kathmandu. Gradually, Kathmandu healed her pain where she started her own business. I chose her as a character because of her gloomy experience in Kathmandu and also because Kathmandu healed her pain during her living there. When she came to Kathmandu for the first time, it was a magical experience for her. She was wondering of street light and crowd of people. She felt Kathmandu was as glamorous as her age. She was in her late teen when she first arrived in Kathmandu. With the several ups and downs in Kathmandu, she fell in love, got married and divorced. She lived in Kathmandu with friends because it would be cheaper for her to share expenditure. She neither had any specific skills nor academic qualification to get a job in Kathmandu. She had a kind of magical hope to live in Kathmandu, however, which could not last for long. Nevertheless, she experienced that Kathmandu has healed her pain and gloomy experience to some extent. She also does not want to return to her village. Though her mother often calls her and requests her to get married, she denies her mother's request. She plans to return her village after two years, collecting some amount of money so that she can construct her own house where she is planning to spend the rest of her life with her mother.

Pasa: The Mr. Weed

I was crossing the roundabout near *Jawalakhel*, I heard someone yelling, “Sir”. I stopped my bike and gave a glance around. I saw one smiling face calling me, “*Sir, Kata Ho?*” (Where are you heading, Sir?) I parked my bike and started talking to him. He was my ex-student. He introduced some of his friends who were sitting in a basement of a department store. His friends were busy in filling weeds in cigarettes.

Pasa is a local inhabitant of Kathmandu, who thought he was very good at studies in his early school life but he could not continue his higher education as he was trapped in drug addiction. However, he hardly accepted himself as a druggist because he was no any longer using drugs. Kathmandu taught him to use drugs and also to get rid of drugs. As a local resident of Kathmandu, he observed drastic changes in Kathmandu. He completed his +2 after ten years’ gap. He is in his early thirties now. He is doing his job at present in a public company.

Once I was his teacher at the higher secondary level. I treated him as a friend because of his silence in the classroom. Most of the +2 graduates did not like to study English as a subject because they thought it was one of the easiest subjects. They could score first division in English easily. Most of the students would like to make noise and distract me but he would listen to me most of the time. I chose him as my research participant because he made me familiar with the underground issues of Kathmandu. He helped me to explore how everyday life of such youth is going on.

Four years ago he got married. He has a beautiful wife and a daughter. His parents were a bit worried about him because he could not have any tangible progress in his life as compared to his siblings. His siblings were abroad and might have lavish life style. He became nostalgic while he recalled about education and habits. At

present he smokes weed but does not take any kind of drugs. He goes to office regularly. He is happy with what he earns in his life. Moreover, his inherited property is more than enough in Kathmandu.

Montu: The God Seller

I have been observing Montu's activities for six month. His small hut was located near my rented flat. We often met in the grocery shops in the evening. On a cold day in January 2013, we met in the grocery shop. The shopkeeper was busy. I asked Montu some questions about living in Kathmandu. We started talking to each other. The conversation became frequent.

After a few days of our conversation, I went into his hut. He was in the queue of water in the personal tap of his hut owner. He has been living in a small hut of his house owner for six years. When he came to Kathmandu for the first time with his father, he was in only sixteen. He has been living in the same rented tin roofed hut since his arrival to Kathmandu. He learnt the skills of making sculpture of gods and goddesses from his father using white cement. He continued his father's legacy to sell gods and goddesses in Kathmandu. Montu did not have formal education. He was the 5th grade drop out and did not want to continue his education. He got married when he was 19 and his wife and children were in the village. He usually visited his home in Eastern Terai of Nepal and he was highly desperate about having a male child.

In his early days in Kathmandu, he was called by several racial/ethnic names such as *Deshi*, *Bhaiya* (Such terms are used by the people from the hill to the people from the Terai) which hurt him. However, he is habituated to listen to such words, and thus, does not react offensively. He has a kind of experience of being a city

dweller. “Who cares,” he says if someone calls him *Deshi*². He is an entrepreneur in Kathmandu. He makes and sells gods and goddesses. Possibly, he does not dawdle to sell gods and goddesses in Kathmandu. It would be sinful to sell gods and goddesses in the villages. He is surprised to see how gods and goddesses become commodity in the capitalist society of Kathmandu. He produces masses of sculptures of Hindu, Christian and Buddhist gods and sells them in the market. He believes that people in the city are often hypocrites, so they easily buy his products.

Rajamati: The Geek

Rajamati is one of the undergraduate students who is very good at her studies in her early twenties. Mostly I talked to my students about their personal interest and hobbies. She is always worried about getting a good job. She is living with her grandmother and father. She does not have her mother. She does not like to talk about her mother. During her leisure time, she likes to sing songs. She even plays the guitar well. She is planning to get a job after she completes her study. She is aware that she does not get a job unless she has good education and qualification. She likes to join the party and to get together with friends. She seems worried about her future and job as she needs to bear her responsibility to take care of her family and relatives. She is from a traditional *Newar* family and very interested in celebrating festivals. However, she enjoys drinking coke and wearing branded clothes. She sings on the stage and concerts. She has got good vocal. She usually enjoys English songs. I think that she represents a character of the glocal world.

I choose her as one of the participants because she is an insider of Kathmandu who is expected to perform her activities.

² The term has been used by the people of hill to insult the people of Terai. The term is offensive.

Ramesh: The Rock Star

Ramesh is an undergraduate student who is studying management. He imagines feeling the metropolitan city Kathmandu. He cannot feel this city as he is still continuing his education. He likes to live a glamorous life like a rock star, likes to be a celebrity, and likes to earn name, fame and status. Thus, he dropped examination in the past. He himself asks the purpose of studying in colleges. He is hardly convinced about his study. But he is compelled to continue his education because of the family pressures. If he left studying, his father would be unhappy with him. Before admitting to a college in Kathmandu, he was a BBA student in a Western hill of Nepal. He was not happy with his life styles while he was studying there. Then, he planned to go to Kathmandu which in his word is “a city of dream”. First, he sought admission for his undergraduate studies in a renowned college, but could not get because of appearance. “I looked like a villager, so I didn’t get admission to that college.” That event changed him to be an urban guy, not only in look but also in feeling.

Suresh: The Punk Researcher

I am a novice researcher trying to explore the experiences of urban youth who are living in Kathmandu. In doing so, I perform a role of an active alchemist who proceed all the field notes, memos, reflection presenting and describing my participants’ feelings, aspirations and delusions of living in a city. Possibly, I became a punk researcher who challenged the western modern world view of thinking and expressing the complexities of urban youth. This worldview particularly culminates the Newtonian mechanistic view of reality which tamed research in the framework of positivism (Luitel, 2009; Gautam & Luitel, 2013).

During my adolescent days in the 90s, I was desperate to visit Kathmandu but I could not get any opportunities. My colleagues described that only elites and civilized people live and visit Kathmandu. I liked to be civilized and elite showing my access to Kathmandu. I got a holy opportunity to visit Kathmandu in 1999, but I was almost suffocated to see the crowd of people and vehicles. Eventually, I migrated to Kathmandu in 2001, when I got admission for Master in English in Tribhuvan University, Nepal. Since 2001, I have been living in Kathmandu and observing many socio-political upheavals. I have been observing the youth sentiments and desires living in Kathmandu. How is Kathmandu changing? During my stay in Kathmandu I am also a youth as Ministry of Youth and Sport (2015) defines youth to be within 15 and 40 years range.

Generating Meaning from the Mandala

As a punk researcher, initially, I employed mapping strategy to understand the certain ways of thinking of my participants.

In doing so, I quickly built rapport with any youth whom I met anywhere in the city. This mapping process mostly covered questions such as your zodiac? Do you believe in fate? Which movie have you recently watched? Do you have GF/BF? When did you celebrate Good Friday last time? Do you live

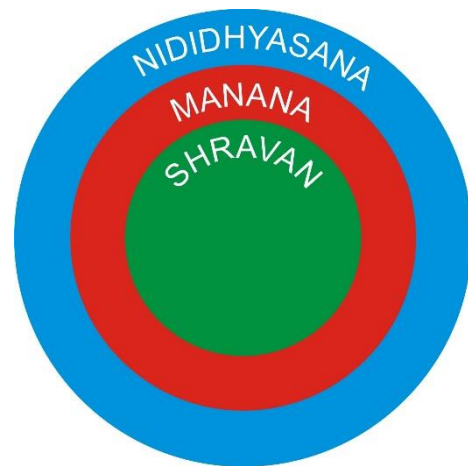


Figure 13. Meaning Making Process

with your parents? How much do you spend in restaurants? Do you wish to have an attractive body? Do you work? I asked such questions to my participants initially. I walked through the streets from *Jawalakhel* to *New Baneshower* to *Thamel* to *Kalanki* to *Jhamel*, to *Lagankhel* to map the ideas across the city.

I also walked in the illuminating street of *Durbar Marg* and the holy dark street of *Patan*. I attempted to sense how youth experience particular space. Though it was not the major concern of my research it gave me an insight to work among the youth in particular areas living in the city. After having a brief open ended interview, I chose around 10 participants and started to work with them. I categorized these youth into three groups as per their characteristics: students, worker and vagabond. Then, I chose two participants from each group. Then only I started listening to their stories in detail. Some other minor characters were born in relation to the major characters. I heard many stories of my participants and I told my stories to them. I was scared of organizing a wide range of stories of my participants such as plaster dongs, beer mats, wet dream, hard-ass and concentration of condom in urban life. In the early days of fieldwork I felt difficult to grasp the everyday life activities of the urban youth. However, I could not satisfy myself with whole fieldwork activities, meaning making, and portraying the everyday life of urban youth in Kathmandu through ethnographic tradition, transcribing interviews, coding themes and presenting stories under the theme. It seemed more technical to develop a narrative circles in my research.

I completed writing first two chapters of so called ~~analysis~~ in the same way but I felt that the creative ethos of qualitative researcher was tamed in the whole process. Then I began to listen to my participants' stories (*Shravan*). Then, I reflected (*Manana*) on their stories and tried to search the praxis of those stories in the research (*Nididhyasana*).

Shravan

The term *Shravan* is derived from a Sanskrit word, which refers to listening to a guru. *Shravan* is the Vedic tradition to learn from listening to a guru. While

listening to my participants, I tend to be their disciple as if they are like *guru*.

Shravan gives me evidence of their experience in their everyday life (Das, 2009). I used *Shravana* not as a mere act of hearing the stories of my participants but also to understand them in the urban context. I was slowly getting more clear, complete and comprehensive understanding of the everyday life and their experiences of living in cities. I used *Shravan* as the form of hearing to know what others have said about their experience (Rao, 2001).

I derived the concept of *Shurti* from the Vedanta philosophy, especially from the sacred Hindu tradition. I used *Shurti* as a means of hearing not only the religious text but as the voice of youth who are living in Kathmandu. Acknowledging *Shurti* as a tool of exploring their everyday life practices, I organized several rounds of interviews. I heard the stories of youth for “understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” (Seidman, 2006, p. 9) in the form of interview. Moreover, I listen and try to understand what my participants have experienced living in Kathmandu. Since conversation is the basic mode of human interaction, *Shruti* is the fundamental source of hearing their stories and offering my participants the opportunity of expressing their opinions freely and spontaneously.

It is a flexible way of generating meaning from my participants’ voice. *Shurti* helped

श्रुतेः शतगुणं विद्यान्मननं मननादपि ।
निदिध्यासं लक्षणं गुणम् अनन्तं निर्विकल्पकम् ॥

me to interpret the participants’ stories for deeper understanding of their experiences as told through a story or stories. Likewise, mandala offered me a space for “re-storying” them into a framework that makes sense (e.g., chronology, plot). This often involved identifying themes or categories of information within the participants’

stories (e.g., time, place, plot and scene). Likewise, *Shruti* prepared me for giving a strong emphasis on exploring phenomena in their natural setting. Similarly, there is a tendency to work with field notes and reflection. Listening to my participants may not be sufficient as it may make me dogmatic. *Shruti* fits to explore and to interpret their experience.

Manana

Manana is reflection to their stories that I understood in the research journey. I started being skeptical about the stories and raised questions on my understanding to know urban youth. I gradually settled many dilemmas and contradiction of their experiences as I began to think dialectically as well as reflecting on my journey of studying urban youth relational to my epistemology. Employing *Manana* I doubted, questioned, and argued what I heard from my participants. *Manana* gives me the sense of criticalism to challenge what I heard from them. After listening to the stories of my participants from *Shravan*, I started thinking over their stories which is generated from my doubt and reflection as *Manana*. *Manana* is the process of *aparoksha jyana* of the Self which is attained by the mind and which has been made fit by hearing the *Sastra* (epic).

Yukti is a process of reasoning. I used *Yukti* for questioning the existing knowledge. *Yukti* helped me to probe further for deeper understanding of everyday life of youth and their experience. *Yukti* promoted my self-critical-reflexivity to challenge and support the existing ways of living. It also offered space not only to explore deceptive and delusive everyday life but also helped me to explore the deeper experience of life. *Yukti* uncovered the taken-for granted components of urban youth to identify the value system, norms, key concepts that are guiding and underpinning situations. It also offered me a space for understanding the everyday pattern of

interaction, power relations, roles, sequences of events and meaning accorded to the situation. Asserting what distinguishes ‘reconstructive’ cultural themes, social and system factors are not usually articulated by the participant themselves.

Nididhyasana

I have hardly any experience of using *Nididhaysana* as the meaning making process. “*Nididhyasana*, involving an unceasing flow of knowledge takes one beyond understanding the truth. It gives one realization of truth in his/her being” (Rao, 2001). *Nididhaysana* helped me to unpack my further understanding to see the urban youth. It helped me to bring the contradiction of urban youth and their life in relation to their thoughts and action. I used the tool *Anubhuti* for *Nididhyasana*.

Nididhyasana helped me to be the part the soulful inquiry where I can feel the everyday life of urban youth from different perspectives and blending them to understand the reality (Koirala, 2016). It helped me to develop this inquiry as a soulful engagement with the participants which made me unpack their own situation, circumstances and lives. I applied the theoretical facets from Eastern wisdom and Western Wisdom to generate meaning of urban youth in Kathmandu. The orientation of *Nididhyasana* helped me to theorize about their life styles. This is a crucial stage because it enables the participants to have a voice and to democratize the research process itself. This is a stage, where I could come up with new insights, new form of depicting field activities and meaning making process thinking deeper of the urban everyday life constructs. *Nididhyasana* is the cultural understanding of the self-experience and praxis. After engaging in *Manana*, I started to think about my context of experiencing everyday life of urban youth for the implied meaning (Das, 2009).

Logics and Genres

Departing from the conventional ways of doing research and applying the hypothetical deductive logics (Gautam & Luitel, 2013), I used poetic logics and genre to represent the feelings and emotions of urban youth. Likewise, narrative logics helped me to portray the unique experience of urban youth. Employing performative logics enabled me to bring the lived experience of urban youth. In the same way, use of humor and satire possibly deconstructed the ways of presenting ideas in the creative research.

Poetic Logics: Poems

Poems and poetic genres made me more creative and imaginative. Limiting my knowledge in the argument through hypothetic-deductive logics hardly escalate the being of dynamic nature of youth in the city. I could be more expressive via poetic logics to portray the lifestyles of urban youth. In so doing, I experimented the ways of expression in academic writing to present my ideas of youth as Richardson (2000) suggests of creating evocative presentations of the voice of my participants. “The poems are meant to celebrate people as verbs, and lived lives. They are about poets with “sensitivity to form writers who are attuned to the music and harmony of life” (Rinehart, 2014, p. 657). Thus, poetic logic substantiates to present the emotions, remembrances, memories of urban youth to present their wholeness and intricate fabric of life itself. As such, I bring the youth’s experiences showing that they are more concerned about the contemporary lyrics and songs via poetic logics.

Narrative Logics: Mandala Tales

I used narrative logics and vignettes to generate the meaning of urban experience of youth in Kathmandu as a main source of showing multi-faceted and multi fractured nature of reality (Gautam, 2011, p. 32). Narrative logics helped me to

bring the hope, aspiration and dream of youth in the city like Kathmandu. Likewise, narrative logics helped me to bring the known and speculative lifestyles of urban youth. These narratives were also helpful to see the city life via the glass of youth because these youth are active agents to create a meaning of city and city life (Boerer, 2007). In so doing, I collected folklore, myths and folktales with some fantasy and realist stories to depict urban life styles of youth in Kathmandu.

Theatrical Logics: Ethnodrama / Screen Plays

Under the mandalic research design, I showed the performance of youth via screenplay and theatrical sensibility. In so doing, I focused on writing as inquiry. In most of the cases of illuminating the performance of urban youth, I used screen play as almost all youth communicated in a filmy style. They all were movie guys. They spent hours talking about movie, *masti* and music (part Wheel V). Possibly, my participants are as creative as the movie directors and the actors where I am like an author of their stories; I portrayed their life styles with the screen play. I experienced that I was also amazed by the filmy world because they presented stories of actors in an interesting way. The performative logics enabled me to portray their life-styles in an interesting way. It seems like the Leela writing (Shrestha, 2011) bringing all the participants together for creating the shared space in research.

Satirical Logics with a Humorous Tone

Humor and satire are the part of urban youth. They usually make fun and ridicule and criticize others. The intense of their activities can be depicted via the logics of using humor and satire. Humor is the state of producing laughter. Urban youth have several occasions to produce laughter either they are producing comedy or satire in their everyday life which I attempted to capture. Adopting humor and satire from the youth's life I used these literary devices to ponder on everyday life of youth

in the city. Using humor and satire encouraged me to know the youth's views on urban fault. In so doing, I was able to bring up segregation and inequalities in urban life. I could also portray 'morally' unacceptable urban behaviors of the youth.

Either / Or, Both /And and Fuzzy Logics

I intentionally wanted to make my research more holistic. It is only possible by using various logics. In so doing, I used either/or logics to claim black and white realities. For example, I dealt with everyday life of youth from either anthropological or sociological perspectives. In so doing, I explored either common or not common experiences they faced in their everyday life. This either/or logic is antagonistic (Sattler, 2008, p. 25) for me most of the time because it promoted the logics of dualism. I employed both/and logics to describe the urban youth.

“Both/and logic is reconciliatory. If you propose a theory that is opposed to mine, according to both/and logic, I need not refute your theory and possibly fight with you as it so often happens between adherents of contradictory theories” (Sattler, 2008, p. 26) Both/and logics envisaged the tensions between local and global, modern and traditional, and Western and Non-western ways of living of youth. I, therefore, planned to minimize the contradictions observed in

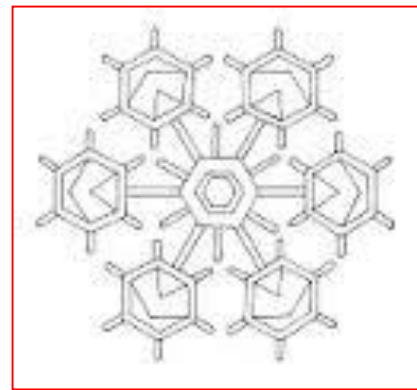


Figure 14. From 0 to1.

everyday life of urban youth in between tensions of dualism. Such dialectical logics supported the reasons behind choosing mandalic research design. It helped me facilitate the inclusive visions to address the problems and issues embedded in the research questions and process (Luitel, 2009). I assumed that dialectical logics might have depicted the relationship of urban youth and their experiences. Along similar

line, I used the “fuzzy logics which will make it possible to greatly increase the scope of our understanding because there is so much fuzziness in the real world” (Sattler, 2008, p. 28).

Quality Standards

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) addressed the issues of quality standards in qualitative research via crisis of representation, legitimation and praxis. The momentum within the realm of qualitative research recognized the plural epistemology and their approaches. In this line, employing an integral research space, I closely examined the experience of youth in urbanized Kathmandu. In so doing, I maintained crystallization, prism effect, self-compassion and critical reflexivity as the major quality standards of this research.

Crystallization

As multidisciplinary research work, studying urban youth from local and global perspective, I intertwined personal history, biography and their social and cultural context. In so doing, I adapted various premises of arts based narrative inquiry with multiple and varied ‘data’ sources and perspectives. In a way and round, I used various facets of knowing like crystals. The multiple angles of recalling the field activities for the sake of recapturing the meaningful engagement in the field gave it a shape of a "crystal" (Richardson 2000). In my research, like in Mandala, crystals have certain shapes and sizes to represent the local culture. Ellington (2009) says that crystallization helps to create a continuum of interpretation and representation of qualitative findings, spanning conventional realist approach with artistic genres.



Figure 15. Thinking Qualitatively.

Prism Effect

I used varied data sources and multiple perspectives in the research. As a researcher and as a participant, I am privileged with the opportunity of designing Mandala as a data generation and its meaning making process with a gain of multiple perspectives, and reflect upon and record an account of my insider point of view through the feedback. My critical self worked as the prism to reflect on the awareness of everyday life of youth in Kathmandu which altered my view through new ideas and new ways of looking at my teaching practice, which otherwise would remain elusive from my notice. Like the faces of a prism, the interpretive self presents the alternative sides to my research. Working together with the postmodern self is also helpful to notice certain things which neither the critical friend nor interpretive self can see alone. The prism effect could have been seen in all the phases of my research: fieldwork, meaning making, presenting and articulating research insights.

Self-Compassion

One of the powerful quality standards of this research is self-compassion. When I observed various forms of urban segregation, inequalities, pain and suffering of my participants, I extended my self-compassion to their wellbeing and myself. Self-



Figure 16. Empathic Self.

compassion helped me to remain quiet to myself rather than my critical self. Neff (2003) suggested that self-kindness, common humanity and mindfulness are the

features of self-compassion. In this line, I was/am kind and trying to understand myself instead of being self-critical. This notion of self-compassion helped me to see my fallibility as part of the larger human condition and experience rather than isolating.

Critical Reflexivity

I made confessions about myself as a practitioner. In doing so, I provided examples, details, and illustrations that interrogate taken-for-granted assumptions. In my research, I provided as many examples and details as possible so as to maintain trustworthiness. I also put some illustrations and drawings. When I was engaged in this research, I continually questioned my thinking, beliefs, and assumptions and the ways they connect to my action. I questioned the relationships I develop within my practice, looking first to myself and my own behavior as I attempted to grapple with situations that ended up being problematic or when things turned out less than I had hoped. In order to make my study trustworthy, I made public much of what other researchers kept private.

I constructed stories, ethnodramas and screen play to represent the urban youth and their ways of living and learning in Kathmandu. In doing so, I recollected the major events from the narrations of my participants and presented critically using different genres. Reflexivity helped me to explore my beings as one of the participants of the research who arrived, survived and revived in Kathmandu. In doing so, I closely inspected multiple selves of Suresh Gautam and critiqued the ideas of being modern and global in Kathmandu. How far do I adapt the modern ways of living? What is my purpose of living in Kathmandu? In this line, the research is critical to advocate the justice for the youth in Kathmandu as Paudel (2016) used the concept of motherly mathematics to educate the youth.

One of the interests that applying reflexivity serves is to question urbanism and ways of living of youth in Kathmandu for envisioning the inclusive urban development and youth engagement. I followed Berger (2015) regarding the use of reflexivity in this research as I engaged with my participants, practice and methodologies generating their voice and practice. In so doing, I examined my positionality while I was engaging with practice, participants and methodologies. Though, I was less concerned about data, I reflected my positionality and subjectivity as elite who in/directly segregated in the urbanized Kathmandu.

Temporality and Spatiality

As a narrative researcher, I was aware of the sense of time to describe the events which had taken place under certain space and time (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). In so doing, I was aware of presenting their past, present and future. Connelly and Clandinin (2006) define place as “the specific concrete, physical and topological boundaries of place or sequences of places where the inquiry and events take place” (p. 480). In so doing, I describe the events taken place in the particular places. Mostly, the stories of my participants are hovering around Kathmandu; however their past stories are related with the villages they migrated from.

Research Ethics

Writing ethics in the dissertation chapter is all about articulating how I remained ethical in the research journey. However, I faced layers of ethical dilemmas to maintain with my participants while listening to their stories, to present data, and to generate meaning. Following Lichtmen (2013) I maintained ethical concerns respecting and valuing my participants. I have created a boundaries of ethics based on the local context of urban youth in Kathmandu. My research is value laden which aims to explore the intrinsic and extrinsic experiences of urban youth in Kathmandu.

More so, maintaining the do-no-harm principle; I never forced my participants to tell their stories. I respected their opinion and tried to generate meaning of their experiences. Respect is also one ethical consideration I applied in this research. Similarly, I offered the sense of gratitude to my participants in the process of the whole research. I moved ahead with the consent of the participants in the research area. However, I did not take a written consent, as it would create a distance between me and my participants.

In the field, I started developing a rapport with my participants in the initial stage but later we turned to be friends, very close to each other. In so doing, we trusted and cared each other. Sense of care was developed among us during the research process. We even interacted on Facebook talking about our personal and social affairs. Likewise, I maintained confidentiality regarding any information about my participants. My participants shared very personal and unsocial and illegal experiences of living in urban center but I dealt those events' confidentiality by maintaining anonymity. I hope that this confidentiality led towards the ethics of care and compassion.

Moreover, I established non-coercive/non-manipulative/non-self-serving informal relationships with urban youth that enabled them to disclose sensitive thoughts and feelings leading to powerful and complex cultural insights. I was able to establish a rich communication relationship with these urban youth as we developed trust with each other. At the beginning, some of the participants were not opened up to share things. I continuously followed up and developed trust among them. In this line, I maintained honesty, sympathy and respect with my participants (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000, pp. 101-103).

As an arts based researcher I employed bottom up approach (Kara, 2015) as a creative way of doing research rather than preparing the list of ethical considerations before I moved into the field. I became more strategic to use direct quotes of my participants where they are likely to violate the personal and social values. More than this, I was aware of the spiral of life and value of the cosmic life energy (Tenzin-Dolma, 2008).

Post Script: Journaling Methodology

Thus far, my methodological heuristics has emerged in the fieldwork. My engagement in the field has created the ways of portraying the voice and everyday activities of urban youth via a newer approach of storying their lived experience, probing them, interpreting in a meaningful way, and generating their ideas. I have experimented with my expressions, mode of presentation and theorising. In so doing, I was conscious of maintaining ethics as a creative arts based narrative researcher. Possibly, these all quality standards are also reflected and ensured in my presentation and articulation in the upcoming chapters.

MANDALAM II

BEING IN KATHMANDU

Arriving at one goal is the starting point to another.

John Dewey

As soon as I arrived in Kathmandu in 2000 to furthering my study to Master in English, I was fascinated to be ‘modern urbanized’ person. Possibly, I lived a fanciful life during those days, imitating urban ways of living. Even in those

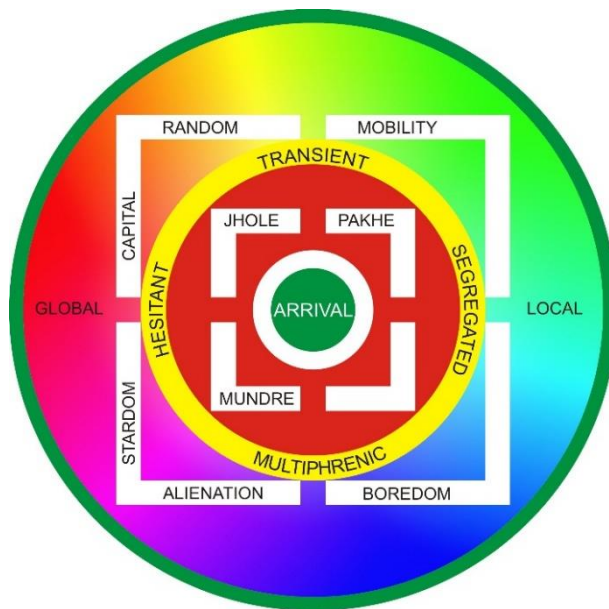


Figure 17. Arrival Mandala.

days, I stood in front of the 4X5' mirror at my rented room and watched my looks before I went outside. When I came out of my room, street gutter and waste material welcomed me. In such a situation, how dare I make life glamorous in Kathmandu? I wished to get all kind of material comforts such as riding in a private car, dinning in a fine restaurant, watching movie in a

mall and walking around the city with a girlfriend. In these dusty streets of Kathmandu, I was humming the Beatles (The Beatles, originally a popular music group from the 1960's, "invaded" the United States in the mid-1960s.) and trying to be urbanized. Those days, I had purchased some cassettes of western music and liked to demonstrate people that I could sing English songs.

Reflecting back to those early days in Kathmandu, when I was trying to be modern and urban, I got influenced by the Western music and Western ways of living.

I never asked myself why I was learning the urban way of living. Was I doing well? I was highly passionate about developing my identity as a 'modern urban'. My early arrival and experience of living in Kathmandu swayed me to explore the meaning of being urbanized? How do everyday life activities of youth excavate the sense of being in urban centers? In this line, my research questions consolidated into three different layers of everyday life of urban youth: being, living and learning. I have developed three different sections to deal with these three layers of everyday life of urban youth. In this section, I have focused on 'being' of urban youth in Kathmandu which was more influenced at the time of arrival in Kathmandu. As all these three categories are integrated in a way, it is difficult to separate in a particular section.

While exploring 'being' of urban youth in Kathmandu, I used three major theoretical perspectives: cultural, identity and resistant perspective of youth. Urban cultural perspective helps me to generate the meaning of everyday life of urban youth in Kathmandu to interpret the interaction of youth to the city. In doing so, the everyday life of youth might have been affected by migration, consumption, and popular culture and modernity (Liechty, 2003). They might be facing several forms of adversities in Kathmandu for developing the sense of being which I analyzed from the resilience perspective. In this line, the theoretical framework of youth identity helped me to shape their identity. However, other facets of globalization, modernization and urbanism appeared as crosscutting meaning making approaches of studying the everyday life of urban youth. I constructed two wheels under this section: Wheel III: *Pakhe, Jhole* and *Mundre*; and Wheel IV: Random, Boredom and Stardom. Wheel III is almost my, along with my participants', reflection and experience of everyday life of urban youth. This wheel moves around the arrival of youth in Kathmandu. These three metaphors emerged to deal with the everyday life

of youth and development of youth agencies in the city to shape and reshape our identities of individuals. I employed reflection as a writing genre describing being in Kathmandu. Similarly, I blend my reflection with the experience of my participants' arriving and living in Kathmandu.

Likewise, I enunciated the arrival ethnography of urban youth in Kathmandu in Wheel IV through the metaphor of Random, Boredom and Stardom to deal with the opportunities and struggles of youth in the city. I classified their struggle of 'being' into three stages of their urban life: Random, Boredom and Stardom. In doing so, I focused not only on the meaning of our 'being in terms of the cultural politics of identities of urban youth such as sexuality, gender and ethnicity but treated Kathmandu as a multiple and emergent space describing the difference of youth, showing the assemblages of everyday life of urban youth (Bridge, 2005). Possibly, these two Wheels best describe my subsidiary research question "How do youth experience their arrival in Kathmandu?"

WHEEL III

PAKHE, JHOLE AND MUNDRE

I have met 18 million youth, and each wants to be unique.

A. P. J. Abdul Kalam

Kathmandu, the only metropolitan and capital city of Nepal, is a dream city for me to live, to earn, and to enjoy my life. I had a wild desire to live and study in Kathmandu- the 'big' city in Nepal. I had never thought of struggles to make my career and life easy in Kathmandu because I often heard fascinating stories of Kathmandu. In pursuit of my higher education, I arrived in Kathmandu in 2000, and I have been living here since then, though I visit my hometown time and again.

During my stay in Kathmandu, I have been experiencing different fluctuating identities for a decade. I interrogate several times 'why am I living here?' 'Who am I, and what am I doing here?' What attracts me to live in Kathmandu? I am searching for the answers to these questions in this Wheel of time and space in Kathmandu. I could have attempted to find the underlying answer to these questions. In so doing, I came up with multiple answers what convinced me to live in Kathmandu, thereby reflecting some critical events of my life. While answering these questions, I related with the experience of my participants. Therefore, the Wheel was as designed to focus on some of our critical events of living in Kathmandu. In addition, I come up with four folding events of our lives which we experienced in Kathmandu during our arrival and being which constructed multiple identities: i) lost identity, ii) segregated identity, iii) glocal identity and iv) transient identity.

I believe that urban youth identities have been created through the interactions of their personal self with the everyday life of city. However, I am aware of the

notion of identity which is a fluid concept and a life-long process as Bathkin believes (Clark & Holquist, 1984). In the process of being something youth in the city experienced a loss in a process of being a member of a city. In the stage of arrival in Kathmandu, youth may experience the loss of their past cultural embodiments and their belongingness with the family and society. In this line, I use the concept of lost identity to describe the detached being of youth in the core values of city which are associated mainly with everyday notion of fame and fashion. I portray the notion of lost identity with the metaphor of *Pakhe*.

Similarly, the notion of segregated identity of urban youth was developed through the process of mingling into the city life adapting various ways of living such as tending to have dinner with friends instead of parents, preparing oneself to go to a bar or a club. In this shift, youth experience awkwardness and frustration to adapt the changing life styles. They are struggling for their education and career; meanwhile they also experience anger, powerlessness, and stress and sometimes hopes and enthusiasm (Gauntlett, 2008) which I describe using the metaphor of *Jhole*.

In the process of forming identity, youth share a local and global space. They cannot completely ignore and abandon the local ways of being which is inbuilt in their identity. At the same time, they adopt the global ways of living. I portray such mosaic being of youth using the metaphor of *Mundre*. In the form of glocal identity I describe youth as a reflective agent who engaged in the co-production of everyday meanings of special assemblages of music, fashion, images, text and context of city (Bennete, 2011)

Lastly, I depicted that these all forms of identities are transient as Flanagan (2010) believed that urban youths like me seem transient. In cities, everything is transitory. Urban youths are always searching for freedom- freedom of night life,

freedom of smoking, freedom of drinking. They rather use/misuse the freedom. Their freedom is always personal, always individual. They are seeking freedom from their parents, teachers, and education. My multiphrenic self has emerged in urban centers like Kathmandu in terms of my ways of thinking, feeling, and doing (Wenger, 1998, p. 56). I argue that my urban identity is not merely categorical in terms of caste, ethnicity and gender in Kathmandu as essentialists believe.

Urban youth identities are formed unlike what essentialists believe, “the preferred mode of operation is static typologies and rigid classification, whose grids separate things that are everywhere, and under all circumstances, really separate” (Fuchs, 2005, p. 15). My identities are created and recreated by ‘not an essence but a *positioning*’ (Hall, 1990, p. 266). There might be various categories for understanding identities of urban youth and these categories are not identical and dual because they got blended in many forms. It ruptures the categories such as Brahmin, male, from the village, student, and vagabond. In each moment of my presence my identity gets changed in urban life and context. For me urban centers are not merely physical growth and expansion of the space with thick human settlement, rather it is the fusion of all cultural artifacts those are interacting with the self to form an identity. Thus it is shaped and reshaped continuously.

Pre Script: Kathmandu Arrival

Let me start Wheel III with an ethnodrama of urban youth who experience different colours and shapes of tall towers, dense buildings, narrow roads, thick traffic and crowd of people. Our entry to Kathmandu was more romantic in the initial days of observing urban ways of living. We are struggling in Kathmandu to ‘be something’, ‘to do something’, ‘to learn something’. It is difficult for us to define and concretize that ‘something’ which we liked to achieve in our everyday life in

Kathmandu. I constructed this ethnodrama as a post fieldwork activity by listening to our stories of living in Kathmandu, mostly our stories of ‘being’ start with the arrival in Kathmandu. This ethnodrama helped me to uncover our desires, devotion and delusion of living in Kathmandu.

[*Ratnapark* is located in the center of Kathmandu. In my post fieldwork, I recollected scene and scenario and developed a performative text. I have chosen *Ratnapark* for this ethnodrama because all of us have some memories associated with *Ratnapark* in our initial days of living in Kathmandu. We all are sitting in *Ratnapark* which is covered by litters everywhere; dusty garden seems mocking us. We hear the voice of venders yelling to sell their products. Some other people just wander there. Some of my participants have already arrived in the Park and are sitting on the ground.]
 Pasa: Sir,..... Suresh Sir..... Here..... Here (*Yells out when he sees me walking and wondering in the street.*)

(Four of my participants had already arrived in *Ratnapark* and they were waiting for me).

Suresh: Thank you guys for your time. What a lovely evening. (*Smiling, sits down on the dusty ground as other four participants are sitting in a circle*)

Rajmati: I think it is not nice place to sit and discuss here, shall we go somewhere else where the horn of vehicles, and babble of noise cannot disturb us. (*smiling, moves to sit closest to me*)

Rock Star: I rather enjoy such crowd of people and open space though it is a bit dirty park. I can get a vehicle to my rented room from here.

Rajesh: Ya.., just busy park for common people like us. See, all people seem to be middle class here. You know, when I came to Kathmandu for the first time, it was the best place for me to stand alone and watch people and vehicles.

Maili: (*smiling*) Ah. It was also my best location. I often walked around the park in the evening with my friends. Once I came alone from my rented room but when I was returning I could not find the way to reach home. (*All laugh loudly*)

Pasa: (*interrupting*) You see, we always wanted to go to Kathmandu in our childhood days. We are from Patan (*Lalitpur*). And we would go to Kathmandu for shopping and movie but now there is no such separation between Kathmandu and Patan.

Rajmati: I spent my childhood days in *Samakhushi* and we only would go to Kathmandu in special occasions. I usually went to *Asan* with my grandmother during my childhood days.

(*Pasa gets up from the ground and goes to the vendor shop and buys two pouches of peanuts and puts at the center of our circle*).

Suresh: (*Seems thinking after a short pause...*) So, I am also thinking how the myth of powerful Kathmandu is inculcated in our mind since our childhood days. I also used to come to Kathmandu from *Kritipur* to observe people (*picks up peanuts from the pouch taking a bite. All of the participants are enjoying peanuts.*)

Rajesh Dai: Kathmandu is a dream city for the youth like us. In my village, it is a craze among youth to visit Kathmandu. I read and heard many stories of art and history of Nepal which was mainly rooted in Kathmandu. I heard the stories of politicians, singers, artists, who usually established themselves as a renowned persons in Kathmandu. Oh ... yes ... (*gaze moves again to the peanuts*)

Rock Star: I came to Kathmandu to be a star. People in my village would tell the stories of Stars in Kathmandu in my school days. I fought with my father to go to Kathmandu for higher studies. Basically, all 'good' colleges are located in Kathmandu and people think that youth who studies in Kathmandu are talented and brilliant. (*notices Rajesh Dai's gaze*) I like to drink water.

Mali: I had not completed School Leaving Certificate but I was fascinated by the romantic stories of living and earning in Kathmandu. I had a thin hope to continue my education in Kathmandu. (*turning aside to speak to the audience*) Did I?

Pasa: Yes, we had some mystical stories about Kathmandu even in *Patan* which are connected with it (*sitting up and leaning forward*). However, um.... (*chewing, swallowing*) reality is something different.

Suresh: What is that reality? I also thought that life would be easier in Kathmandu but I felt that people in city often ridiculed my get up, my looks, my dress up, my hair style, my body language.

(Montu arrives there, greets us, and sits in-between Pasa and Maili in the circle)

Montu: Thick traffic is the beauty of Kathmandu. I was trapped in traffic for an hour. If I was not trapped in traffic, I would not think that I was travelling in Kathmandu.

Rajesh Dai: *(interrupting)* I am thinking that I am civilized because I live in a city. I have kept all traditional values at my home in the village, otherwise I would be a *Pakhe*.

Pasa: *(turns to audience)* Fucking! Kathmandu is the place for showing-off. I have been segregated as Pasa, with my *Newari* tone, accent while speaking to teachers and colleagues. Get up and dress up also creates disparities between rural and urban.

Montu: I could not change my tone, and people in Kathmandu often ridiculed me saying “*Bhaiya*”. I am from Terai and I speak Nepali as *Madhesi*, so they used Hindi to talk with me.

Rajesh Dai: *(raises voice)* You know it was tough for me to be city-zen during the arrival in Kathmandu. I adapted urban dialects, dress, diet and Diana (Girlfriend) to be modern and civilized.

Suresh: *(cracks a joke to audience)* I have never found Diana in the street of Kathmandu.

Pasa: Possibly, the name of your Diana might be different.

(hahahha.....hihihi.....All laugh loudly)

Maili: You may call me Diana, Guys. *(deep breath)* Okay, okay. This is how Kathmandu creates the destiny of Diana in the street of Kathmandu? And we need a lot of money to get Diana. Money, right?

Montu: Well, all right. Let's see how you've acted? Like Diana or not?

Rajesh Dai: *(sneezing and coughing)* Terrific pollution in Kathmandu. Most of the time I get suffered from coughing. See, my eyes are red. I wish I was born in New York. Fucking Dirty Kathmandu.....

Rock Star: *(interrupting)* yeah, you have good habits of dreaming, but why are you staying here in Kathmandu? *(in a mocking tone)*

Rajesh Dai: Don't you know there is only one international airport in Nepal, in Kathmandu. That's why I am in Kathmandu. It is an entrance to the W.... OR.... L.... D.... man.

Pasa: Really? (*gaze shows surprise, eyebrows arched*) Oh... Yes... We better see you fly early but it is not as easy as to go your home by Night Bus.

Rajesh Dai: Wait.

Montu: Have you prepared to go to New York City? How have you prepared?

Rajesh Dai: I learnt English, practiced to listen to English songs, spoke to *Merican* (*knowingly not pronounced 'A'*) accent, see my language.

Pasa: (*smiling*) I can speak English with '*Merican*' accent, see my torn out jeans, and earring on my ear, do I look like *Mericans*?

[We have eaten all peanuts, have drunk two bottles of water. It is getting darker. *Ratnapark* is gradually becoming empty. All people are moving towards their home. We also like to depart today.]

Kathmandu: Dream City

The ethnodrama shows the willingness of youth to live in Kathmandu. These youth arrived in Kathmandu either from the rural areas or the periphery of the city; were passionate to live in the city for their recognition. We all like to start our life and career in the city because we all like to get the identity of the urban youth. Slowly, I understood why cities attract people, especially youth. All my participants had a dream to live a fabulous life in Kathmandu for their identity. They dream their self-image as a consumer which might have been affected by the telecommunication, internet, cinemas, DVDs and newspaper for shaping their identity. During the arrival of youth in Kathmandu, they are infatuated with the image of city and hardly reflect their self in relation with the city (Burkitt, 2008). After spending some time in Kathmandu, they experience the sense of loss and alienation which reshapes their lost identity. From the aspiration of Maili to be *Diana*, Rajesh Dai's expectation of being civilized, Montu's endeavor of speaking Nepali, Rajamati's nostalgic walk in *Asan* were the process of creating identity in the city, I reflect that my participants have

created more romanticized images of city life ignoring their traditional values. In this regard, I understand that city has initially prepared them not to be reflective but to be romantic which created their lost identity.

My Dreams in Kathmandu

I was returning from *Ratnapark* thinking about the ethnodrama of my participants. Reflecting back on my arrival in Kathmandu, it was July in 1999 when I was an undergraduate student of the public college in my home town Dang. I was residing in a small village of Dang District in Mid-Western Development Region of Nepal. I had heard romantic stories of Kathmandu from my friends and relatives. I had imagined that Kathmandu was a wonderful place to live and learn. Like Rajesh Dai, I had read about the history and politics of Kathmandu in high school text books and newspapers. It was back in early 90s, when I was in grade VII, I faintly remembered the history class of *Deepa Madam*, when she expressed the glorious history of Shah Dynasty who ruled from Kathmandu. *Deepa Madam* would often ask us whether we had visited Kathmandu or not? I wished I had visited



Figure 18. Fusion

Kathmandu. I wished I could have raised my hand in the class, which would have made me a hero among friends. How does the visit to Kathmandu make a person a hero?

When I completed my high school education in 1993, I migrated to *Dang* from *Surkhet* to continue my higher education. During those days, I was not much passionate about visiting Kathmandu because my parents did not allow me to go to

Kathmandu. I would pay attention when people talked about Kathmandu. In my college days, my craze of living and visiting Kathmandu was as similar as my school days.

During my undergraduate course, I was a regular costumer of *The Kantipur* (National daily newspaper) where *Narayan Wagle* a columnist used to write about the urban life styles of youth under *Coffee Guff* (Coffee Chat). I wish I had been the characters of coffee guff. Many times I heard the *romantic* stories of Kathmandu from my friends and colleagues. Some of the stories were about politician; some others were about actors and actresses. Some people would tell stories of thick traffic, a big mall (*Bishal Bazar*), shopping, and quality of goods and so on. I would just listen as a deaf and dumb because I had never smelled such fragrance of Kathmandu. As such, I was fascinated towards Kathmandu. My dream of visiting Kathmandu got fulfilled when I got a chance to visit Kathmandu in 2001. One of my maternal brothers offered me a chance to visit Kathmandu if I could manage the bus fare. I convinced my mother who gave me NRS 500/- as bus fare. Then I made a trip to Kathmandu with my brother.

After a long journey of 12 hours, we reached in Kathmandu. Though it was not the first visit of my brother, he was quite confused about the bus route and transportation. We got off at New Bus Park in *Balaju*. Then he went near the public communication office (PCO) and made a call to his friends. As his friends suggested to choose the bus in a particular route, we reached at his room. We stayed in his room that day. After lunch, we observed Kathmandu. I did not find any charming things around me, no actors, no actresses, and no politicians. It was amazing to see the crawling vehicles and crowd of people at *Baneshwor* crossroad. We visited *Pashupati* to worship lord Shiva. We climbed up the *Dharahara* (Bhimsen Tower). I

was surprised to see so many crowds of people, crawling vehicles, concrete jungle, towers and buildings, decorated people, cosmetic feeling. I was experiencing colourful Kathmandu. Does the identity of the youth relate to the role the city performs? Does the space shape the identity of the people? Is Kathmandu merely a space? How has the image of Kathmandu been embedded in my subconscious state of mind?

During my early days in Kathmandu, I was gradually learning to adapt the way people wear clothes, and the way people speak language, and the way people walk. During the initial days of my arrival in Kathmandu, my identity might have appeared to be reciprocal to the urban artifacts such as dress up and dream, language and living, food and favourites, gazettes and equipment, shopping, and working where I am/was living. I was feeling that my presence interacted with the urban space as the city was a great experimental laboratory. Since then, I have been experiencing various kinds of experiments to live my life- in search of job, quest of earning money, and selection of job. Those events create and recreate my identity. In the meantime, I become dumb and cannot answer who I am. My experience of living in Kathmandu made me more confused to find out the self and identity during the early days in Kathmandu. Experiencing my urban identity is more fluid and flux in urban culture, but at the same time I was haunting with the cultural capital and family heritages, which I brought from my village.

Room Number 14: Lost Identity

When I arrived in Kathmandu in 2001, I stayed a couple of days in my aunt's house in *Maitidevi*³. Two days later, I went to *Kritipur*⁴ to find a room to rent

³ Maitidevi is one of the core places in Kathmandu valley with dense population. It is near to the old bus station and mostly people chose this place to live there as they could have transportation access to the other parts of Kathmandu.

⁴ Kirtipur is suburb- a municipality where the university located.

where the university was located. I found a five storied building that had all together 21 rooms. I got a room in the third floor. The building was recently constructed with all facilities such as basin in a room, a wash/bath room with hot and cold water in a flat, drinking water. These were the basic facilities for the rented room. My rented room was unique as there was a space for kitchen in the room, where I could cook food. A bed was placed in one corner where I slept and sit. There was no space left for chair and study table. I cooked food, cleaned my utensils, studied, and slept in the room. I set my rooms within a couple of days.

I would not have any telephone contact during those days. However, there was telephone in the hotel on its ground floor. Neither my parents had telephone at my home nor did I have direct access to the phone. Occasionally, my parents would call me at the hotel's phone from the PCO. One day, in October 2001, my father called me and asked the hotel staff, "Can I talk to Suresh?" The staff responded that he did not know any Suresh. Possibly, he said that he did not know any Suresh who was living there. He might have asked room number where I was living. Maybe, my father did not know my room number. He might have asked other students from the same building who were having breakfast in the hotel and someone who guessed that I was in Room number 14 and would know my name. All of a sudden, a boy shouted loudly "Room No. 14: you have a phone." I was surprised that they did not know my name. Then, I received a call via extension in my flat and talked to my father. Later on, I went downstairs and talked to the hotel owner "Brother, my name is Suresh and I am a university student. How about calling me by my name?" He laughed and said, "There are more than fifty students living in all these 21 rooms. They all are university students. It is not possible for me to remember the all students' names. If

you like to receive phone-calls please tell your people to call by Room Number instead of your name. Otherwise I cannot forward your call.”

I felt strange because the owner did not want to know my name. He was not

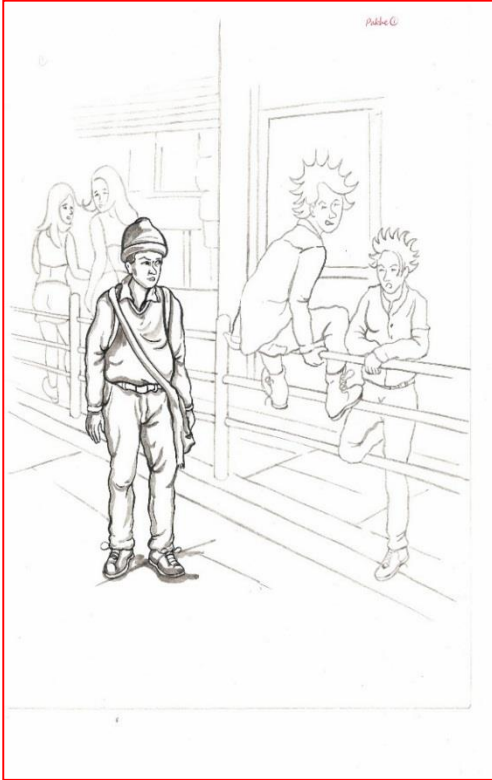


Figure 19: Are You Mocking?

interested to know me. He damn cared to know where I was from. He was neither interested to know about my family nor about my village. I feel that urban people are selfish, they enjoy anonymity. I got an identity of number - Room No. 14. No name. I lost my name. I lost my village. I was like an unknown citizen of W. H.

Audun. At this stage, I felt alienation in Kathmandu as “urban way of life is viewed only as a derivative of the ways of cities, and metropolitan areas are built and populated by

different types of people and activities” (Borer, 2006, 176). Gradually, Room No. 14 became acceptable for me. I could not resist against the derivatives of the cities.

I was gradually accepting my new identity ‘Room No. 14’ at the cost of losing my own name. Along with my name I lost my caste. Nobody asked my root (My father’s name, my village, my grandfather's name) and my past belongingness. I was identified by my room and its number like the citizen in the industrialized society as W. H. Audun portrays in his poem: “Unknown Citizen”. Moreover, past images such as a male, a Brahmin, a man from village were gradually eroding in Kathmandu. I became unknown citizen and an anonymous self, a creation of technocratic urban civilization. I used the concept of anonymity with some affinity of invisibility and

hiddenness to explain youth who seem to be different from the actual or perceived places and time (Garber, 2000). Anonymity is one of the processes of creating identities in urban centers. My identity of university student was annoyed and gone in the house where I was living in Kritipur.

It was not only me, Rajesh Dai, Montu, Maili, and Rock Star had also similar experience of being annoyed in Kathmandu when they arrived. They also did not like to stay in Kathmandu in their early days because nobody paid attention to us. They did not have any friends and relatives here. We mostly missed our family and village. We would usually spend our days in the college with his friends from the same home town in the beginning. We would feel more comfortable to form a group of people from our hometown. Gradually, we joined a new group of college friends in the college. Possibly, we liked to create a new identity in Kathmandu. We joined the circle of new friends from other districts because we would not like to be anonymous to them. We (Maili, Rajesh Dai, Rock Star, and Montu) all who migrated from different villages of Nepal were struggling to create our identities in Kathmandu. Firstly, we all were trying to create anonymity which helped us to create a sense of adopting the urban ways of living and being in Kathmandu.

Our anonymous selves formed in the initial days of Kathmandu. We were all struggling to preserve the identities in terms of geography, caste, class and gender. But Rock Star liked to hide his caste and class in Kathmandu and liked to be anonymous. Montu also enjoyed to be anonymous to hide his accent of Terai and adopted urban accent while he was selling goods in Kathmandu.

I thought that it was only possible to get good education and opportunities in urban centre like Kathmandu, When I (we) were in my village continuing my/our education; I thought I missed a chance to study in Kathmandu. There, I believed that

I was deprived of quality education. I do not know whether I got ‘quality education in my village or not. Some of my relatives who were living and studying in Kathmandu used to describe their wonderful experience of living in Kathmandu. They shared that they saw and talked to film stars, politicians, national leaders, king, queen, prince and princess, as if they were very close to them. At that time I thought I was isolated who had never visited Kathmandu. I enjoyed their descriptions and narrations of Kathmandu, blending political, economic, spiritual, and religious voyage in Kathmandu. I never realized how far they talked truth. But I realized that it was great to live in Kathmandu. The temptation of living in Kathmandu had grown since my adulthood. I was ever interested to know why Kathmandu seemed to be more powerful than my village. Why do people feel it was worthy to live, work, earn and sustain in Kathmandu? Why does Kathmandu have such a power to attract people? Possibly, Kathmandu has multiple images and meanings as it is growing as an urban centre of Nepal.

In such Kathmandu, my arrival offered me the sense of lost identity. I derived the notion of lost identity from the diasporic worldview. Most of those who migrated to Kathmandu from the rural areas do not sense the belongingness with the city in the initial days. Thereby, we experience the loss of collective categories such as kinship, homeland, and biological and cultural heritage (Chiang, 2010). Likewise, I relate the ideas of the urban youth as a cultural identity as Hall (1990) believes, “The first position defines ‘cultural identity’ in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective ‘one true self’, hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed ‘selves’, which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common” (p. 223). However, my participants have a sense of cultural identity crippled and deformed as a lost identity at one stage. However, it is the discontinuity of their heterogeneous

composite of Kathmandu. I think during the arrival in Kathmandu, we are searching one shared culture which was not possible in the heterogeneous city life and feel lost identity at one stage.

***Pakhe*⁵: Segregated Experience**

Did I lose my cultural identity? Or have I been recreating some new identities in Kathmandu? The notion of lost identities might have emerged from the segregation in the city. In this line, Rahesh Dai recalled one of the events that took place. It could be a fine morning of November, 2012. He liked to drink a cup of hot lemon because the weather was cold. His hands were cramped while he was driving motorbike under a bad weather that went below two degree centigrade. He stopped his motorbike in front of a café at New Road, went inside it, rubbed his hand and ordered a cup of hot lemon before he took a seat in a chair. He was thinking of rushing to his office in the morning but he was not able to drive his bike. He was sitting on a chair, rubbing his hands.

Rajesh Dai: Brother (*to the waiter of the café*) I have ordered a cup of hot lemon.

Waiter 1: (turns his face to Rajesh Dai) OK.

Rajesh Dai: (*turns the pages of newspaper which was on the table*) How long does it take to prepare a cup of hot lemon?

Waiter 2: (*is wiping table and chair, does not response him.*) It takes time to boil water, wait for five more minutes.

Rajesh Dai: OK. (scanning the pages of a newspaper).

Waiter 1: (brings hot lemon and puts on the table).

Rajesh Dai: (*takes a sip of hot lemon*) Brother, can I have a spoon of sugar?

Waiter1: Honey is mixed there (speaks as if I am a criminal).

⁵ The term *Pakhe* has been usually used by people who live in city tend to be modern to them who just arrived to city. They are uncivilized. Most of the time, these *Pakhe* people were humiliated and segregated by so called civilized people of city.

Rajesh Dai: It is not sweet, can you add some honey?

Waiter 2: *Kasto Pakhe Hola* (How uncivilized!)?

Rajesh Dai: (Speechless, drinks hot lemon quietly and exits from the café.)

(Rajesh Dai starts his bike to move towards his office.)

Recalling Rajesh Dai's experience of being *Pakhe*, I begin to think how city segregates youth. Was Rajesh Dai called *Pakhe* because he mixed sugar with honey in hot lemon? It was his choice. How does city create certain norms and these norms segregate people? How does the choice of an individual activity segregate self of youth? While listening to Rajesh Dai's experience, I recalled my early days in Kathmandu when I was struggling to adjust with the norms of city. How people in city segregate people who have recently arrived in the city. Possibly, it is an example of rural-urban segregation in the city. In this context, I understand that people who are living in the city usually segregate the people who migrated to the city because he/she does not know the ways of living in the city. I used the metaphor of *Pakhe* in a broad sense *not* only to describe the geographical segregation but also the social segregation which was taking place in the city. We (Me and my participants) all are/were segregated in Kathmandu in the process of adopting urbanized everyday life activities in Kathmandu. I also experienced the sense of being *Pakhe* during my early days in Kathmandu when I failed to perform urban ways of living which might have been reflected through my get up, dress code, hair style, tone and accent.

As soon as I got admitted to the university, I was passing days like a machine. I would go to university where students from my village knew that I am/was Suresh. My routine of everyday life was mechanistic; I would go to university and return to the rented room. I came to Kathmandu from a rural area and had great aspirations to get higher education like my participants who aspired to get opportunities for their

future and life in Kathmandu. Thus, I thought it was important for me to focus on my study.

It might be any day of December, 2001. I was studying in the morning in my room. I was sluggish to cook food in the cold December. I was planning to have lunch at the hotel on the ground floor of my rented room. I came to the hotel, washed my hands with Lifebuoy soap, sat on a bench. The hotel was crowded because it was office hour. The waiter served food. I started having food with my hands. I liked the curry, fried *daal* and ate a bit more. I asked for more food:

Suresh: Oh Brother (Calling the waiter)! May I have some curry, *daal* and tomato pickle?

Waiter: Please wait. I am bringing. (*rushing towards me*)

Hotel Owner: (*to the waiter*) Hey, you first serve the regular guest.

(I was not the regular guest of the hotel though my room was on the third floor of the same building.)

Waiter: Yea..... Yea..... (*moves towards the regular guests of the hotel. I was waiting*).

Hotel Owner: *Pakhe, Katti Khako Hola* (*Uncivilized guy, how much to eat*)!

(*the hall in the hotel burst with laughter*).

Suresh: (angrily) I eat.... I pay.....as I like. (*Murmurs*) Selfish pig. I ate and went to the university but I was scared to eat, to talk, to walk and to ask question to the teachers in the university.

All my aspirations of being urbanized were destroyed when I experienced segregation in Kathmandu. Like me, Montu and Maili had similar experiences of being segregated in Kathmandu. We all migrated from villages to get new identity in Kathmandu but it was difficult to adjust in the everyday life activities in Kathmandu. We experienced such segregation in Kathmandu in different forms such as dress, dialects, and that extends beyond space, residence and geography and our everyday life activities (Smiley, 2013). Such segregation created hesitant identity which

emerged when we were not able to adapt the urban ways of living. The ideas of hesitation emerged from the agentic personality of youth which formed lack of self-esteem and life purpose and shape the identity (Schwartz, 2005). However, youth like me feel absence of self-esteem to be cultured image of city youth and created hesitant identity.

Hesitant Identity

As we experienced segregated experience, our hesitant identity was developed. When I arrived in Kathmandu for the first time, I was hesitant. I was afraid of going to ‘big’ shops, big places, parties, restaurants with my friends. I pretended as if I knew ‘all’ urban culture.

Any day in 2002, one of my friends who had returned from the UK, invited us to join a party in Hotel California⁶ in Kathmandu. He organized a party in a restaurant of a grand hotel. I was hesitant to enter into the hotel first. I waited one of the friends so that it would be easier for me to go inside together with him. We two entered together, found the *hall* that was booked for us. Other friends had already arrived. We joined them. He shared his experience of living in the UK, describing the growth of cities and people in the UK.

He asked, ‘Can you order what you like to have?’ I checked menu and felt comfortable to order MoMo and hot lemon. Other two remaining friends ordered pizza and hotdog. I was observing the pizza and hotdog for the first time in my life. How would such dishes look like? How was the taste? How would people eat such dishes? Would they be superior when they had such ‘multinational’ food?

We sat in the reserved table. The clean white clothes were kept on the table. I did not know when and how these clothes could be used. The waiter brought some

⁶ One of the recognized hotels in Kathmandu.

other wet clothes. I did not have any ideas of these clothes. What was the use of these wet clothes? How should we use these clothes? Why do we use these clothes? I could not ask the purpose of these wet white clothes. I thought that my friends would laugh at me if I asked the usage of such wet cloth. At that time, I asked the waiter to take these clothes back but the waiter insisted me to use them. She said that I would be fresh by using these white clothes. I was surprised how I would be fresh with these clothes. My friends took these clothes and wiped their face and kept in their lap. Oh, shitttt! I got the reason.

I was very inquisitive to learn the urban culture; I had to pretend to be urban. In many times I felt segregated in the urban space because I was not habituated to following several other things. Like me other urban youth who have migrated from villages to urban centres might be hesitant to enter into the ‘big’ shops, restaurant, mall, and public places in Kathmandu. I was hesitant everywhere. I had to pretend many times. I could not say I did not know ‘your’ culture. I was becoming like a pendulum of the clock tower in front of



Figure 20. Where am I going?

Ranipokhari. Still, I am very willing to know the urban culture. I experienced as Jull (2012) shares that we can find many who are a ‘part of those who have no-part in cities’ such as the homeless, the disenfranchised, and many recent immigrants. Sometimes, I also felt that I had no place in the city like Kathmandu; I was outside of the urban network, thus feeling hesitant.

We were excluded from the everyday life of urban living but the passion of being urbanized increased in me. We were living a contradictory life in Kathmandu. For the sake of learning to live in the city, I must learn the ways of living in the city. I was facing the contradictions of ‘rural’ habits and behaviour which excluded me from being modern urbanized person. I often felt inferior and excluded because I was not able to adopt the way urbanized people live. Such situation created our hesitant identity in our arrival in Kathmandu.

***Jhole*⁷: Struggles in City**

It could be any day in 2013, when Rajesh Dai completed his Bachelor in Arts and was trying to search a job in Kathmandu. He did not like to return to his village. Possibly, he did not see any future in his village. Does city shape the future of individuals? Why did Rajesh Dai think that he could not make his career in his village? I asked these ‘nonsense’ questions to Rajesh Dai. Like Rajesh Dai, Rajmati, Pasa, Montu, Maili all liked to live in Kathmandu because it was ridiculous to return to villages for them. Returning to village would be a symptom of failure in our life. Thus, we had to continue our struggle to establish ourselves in Kathmandu. Rajesh Dai planned to get a job in Kathmandu. He did not get it for a long time. He did not get any opportunities to shape his career in Kathmandu. A few months later, he got a job in a driving center where he taught people to drive car. How was his driving life in Kathmandu? During those struggling days, he always carried a bag where he kept his credentials and CVs. He would walk a long distance because he did not have money for transportation fare. His friends used to tell him *Jhole*.

⁷ Jhole literally refers to bag. Struggling person who always carry bag and walk in the street of city without jobs. Mostly they keep their academic and professional certificate in bag and move here and there in search of job and work.

We all participants had a destiny to be *Jhole* in Kathmandu. I recalled Heidegger (2010) who often said destined to be. We walked a long distance in every corners of the city on foot in search of opportunities. Our life style was worse. We did not have money to afford *Khaja* in the afternoon. But we all were struggling to search our existence in Kathmandu. Thus, the metaphor of *Jhole* was used to describe the struggles that youth would often experience. Like Rajesh Dai, I was not able to get a job, I would not like to be a burden to my family. During those days, I could not wear proper clean ironed dress. I walked many times rather than using vehicles. I could not afford even bus fare during those days. But I was fascinated by the charms of Kathmandu. I would like to be someone. I would like to do something. However, I was not able to define what that something and someone was. I thought it was possible in Kathmandu. But I could not maintain the urban ways of living, where neat and tidy people would talk about million dollar plans and progress in Kathmandu.

During those days, I could not openly say that I was a school teacher who earned nearly 5000 rupees per month, who taught lower secondary level students in a private school. I could not say that I was selling my skills/knowledge in five thousand rupees per months. I often hide my *Jhole* identity to my friends and relatives in the village. I often said that I teach in a private college in Kathmandu which pays me handsome salary. Perhaps, it was the urbanism which creates disorder among the youth in Kathmandu (Fischer, 1995). I might have been experiencing such disorder in the city.

Teaching in colleges was a bit higher class job than teaching in a private school. I experienced how the nature of job has segregated youth in Kathmandu. Teaching in a college was perceived a little bit more respectful as compared to the

teaching in an institutional school. I attempted to show my income to friends pretending that I received a handsome amount of money in salary.

I was trying to find ways to be urbanized. I was more interested to show that I was earning more than I was working. I pretended to have a high profile job. There were several experiences in my life to pretend to be urbanized. Earning and job might have created a class of living in urban areas like Kathmandu. I was adapting the similar ways of living and being. However, reflecting back to early days in Kathmandu, I became pathetic to understand me and my situatedness of everyday living in city. My life was quite surreal because I was not doing something, which I could not have understood.

It could be any day in 2003. I was standing alone at *Pipal Bot*⁸, New Road and was looking at people around. Thousands of people were crawling in the footpath. I did not know anyone. I remained alone in the crowd of people. I did not dare to interact with them because we all were unknown citizens. In the crowd of people I found nobody. There was no one in the street who would ask about my family and education. They did not care why I was standing there. No one was concerned about each other. Sometimes, I thought to be a teacher, sometimes I liked to get some other job, sometimes I supposed to be wise and learned, and sometimes I was also interested to be the urban boy who wore jeans and Converse shoes. My hopes and aspirations were bubbled and faded as fast as moving traffic. Thus, my images (image of student, teacher, and boyfriend) were creating and fading out in Kathmandu. I struggled to earn money and name. Thus, I tried to be an author, tried to be a translator, an army, and a shopkeeper but could not be anything. All struggles

⁸ Pipal Bot is the hub for the people where journalists, artists, poet, authors meet and talk in a tea shop.

went in vain. My hopes and aspirations were forming and reforming to get identity as per the identity of Kathmandu. “Urban identity is a complex and multi referential phenomenon – it embraces linkages between the material and immaterial; it has different scales: local, city, regional and national” (Schaffer, Kulikauskas, & Barreiro, 2006, p. 1). Thus, my identities were confronting with these scales and phenomenon.

Then, I started thinking to serve my basic needs from any kind of job I got, which was shaping my struggling identity in Kathmandu. This idea is rooted in James’ (1890) notion that there are as many different selves as there are different positions that one holds in the society, and thus, different groups who respond to the self. This is where identity enters into the overall self. The overall self is organized into multiple parts (identities), each of which is tied to aspects of the social structure. One has an identity, an “internalized positional designation” (Stryker, 1980, p. 60), for each of the different positions or role relationships the person holds in the society, but I could not have any designation in the society and thus I remained *Jhole*.

Schizophrenic Identity

To get rid of segregated experience, Rajesh Dai, Rock Star, Maili and Montu were struggling to live a respectful life in Kathmandu. This notion of living respectfully in Kathmandu evolved with creating another identity. Let me recall my early days in Kathmandu. During the early 2000, I experienced my schizophrenic ways of living in the city. I often bunked classes in the university, walked into the wide, black pitched street and I saw my image(s) in the glowing hoarding boards of advertisements in Kathmandu while I was moving around *Durbar Marg*, *Thamel*, *Jawalakhel*, and *Sundhara* (business hubs in Kathmandu). I located myself in those advertisements. I wished to have branded clothes, watches, motorbike, cell-phones as I saw in the hoarding boards. I could not achieve such things in my life but I had an

expectation to get them all. I sensed that many hoarding boards around me were teasing me, ridiculing me. Many things I experienced were my obsession of the city life. I wondered why I liked to stay in Kathmandu and live an obsessed life. Could I not go to my village? The image of hotel owner appeared as an immoral selfish giant. I was less salience and established. Such schizophrenic experiences made me alienated.

Reflecting back to the days of 2002, I began to explore *Thamel* and its fabulous life styles. Possibly, it was my delusion to know the ways of living in *Thamel* as sophisticated. If I learnt some urban etiquettes, I would think I was great for following the urban trends. I could not concentrate more on my university studies. I was willing to learn these urban ways of living and became urbanized. In this regard, my choice of clothes, songs and food habits made me an outsider to the city. Why was I thinking that city life was better than my rural life? What made me look civilized in the city? Why did I know in my heart that I was like an urbanized person? Even though I was not able to demonstrate my urbanized image in the city, I was desperate to assimilate the ways of living like the urban youth. Possibly, I did not recognize the truth—that I could not imitate such ways of living within a couple of hours' observation.

When Montu arrived in Kathmandu at the age of twenty one, he experienced paranoid views of the city. He spent some whole days observing people and vehicles standing at the corner of the road at *Thapathali*. He had a lot of fantasy in the crowd of people. But whenever he reached into his rented hut, he found himself most frustrated and vulnerable. What makes people more insane and irrational? How does the city create our understanding? I have drawn the concept of schizophrenic identity from the Jameson's view who argued that identities of people are characterized by the

contemporary multiple selves which were fragmented and isolated and could not link up with a coherent sequence. “The schizophrenic thus does not know personal identity in our sense, since our feeling of identity depends on our sense of the persistence of the “I” and the “me” over time” (Jameson, 1988, p. 119). Jameson’s ideas of identity in the contemporary capitalism seems very gloomy, and youth experience such isolated and gloomy identity in the city like Kathmandu. Do we always remain sad and gloomy? Reflecting the theoretical orientation of schizophrenia, I experienced that our agencies have multiple selves, one of the self or some of the selves remained gloomy and some other are very active which would be rather closer with the ideas of Gergen (1992) who used the notion of multiphrenia describing the identity which have several possible selves and their representations to create identities of the youth in Kathmandu. In this line, schizophrenic identity gets changed into multiphrenic identity of the youth in the city.

Jim Morrison in *Jhochhen*⁹ : Glocal Experience

It could be any day in 2013, I was just freaking in Freak Street of Kathmandu –*Jhochhen* to explore the youth in city. Once *Jhochhen* was the center for Hippies, who lived their life with a flock of them, bundles of marijuana and the rocking sound of the guitar. However, it was not the day of 80’s. In one of the summer evenings, I observed some youths in T- shirt and shorts, sitting on the chairs in front of the café and playing the guitar. One of them had the guitar in his hand. A few of them were smoking cigarettes and gathering around. I was sitting nearer them, outside of the circles and listening to their conversation. They were talking about *buti*¹⁰ along with

⁹ Jhochhen is the center of Hippies during 80s and the major attraction of the tourists in Nepal.

¹⁰ It is marijuana or something intoxicated stuff that some of the youths prefer to have.

the songs and movies. I was quiet, still and motionless because I was not able to unpack the meaning of the term *buti*.

I was observing their get up, looks, conversation, and perspective. For example, they got unique hair styles, like the singers of *One Direction*. One of them who had long black hair had tied it with a rubber. Another guy had straightened his hair over his long face. On his cap, there was a logo of peace. I did not know how much he liked peace. They were wearing shorts, jeans and V shaped t-shirt. After a few minutes of my observation, another member joined the group. He greeted his friends. They had unique styles of greeting. They crossed their punch with each other. On his arrival, the whole crowd became excited and one of them asked, “Dude, do you have the *buti*?”

No *buti* yar..... I am hunting the *buti*. Today, I met Phurba, but he was in tension because his girlfriend was not happy with his..... the laughter blustered.

“It is a wreck”, said one of them.

They started playing the guitar along with the Western song so far as I understood.

I got a rare chance to hear their narratives in the congested café. The panoramic dialogues among the youths were going on. They were celebrating each moment with the puffs of cigarettes. It seemed as if it was a paradise for them. They were good speakers and were talking in between the tunes of the guitar. They shared that music had an unexpected charms among the youths.

“No more quest for *buti*. ”

All of a sudden their conversation started, “I like to be Morrison.”

“Yup.”

“He is a rock singer. He has got millions of fans in the world.”

“Is it?”

“He is passionate for songs and drug.”

“What’s wrong to try drug if we become singer like Morrison.”

For me, when I became familiar to the urban culture in Kathmandu, I was in a way of understanding such changes that were denied by the people. Possibly, these youth might have been searching their alternative identity through music and dance. Their role model is someone who was imaginary, who resisted the mainstream culture. In a way, they are infatuated by the life style of Morrison and like to imitate their life styles. I have not seen whether they have analyzed ups and downs of Morrison’s life. I observed their presence as carnivalesque. Between their childhood and adulthood they might be exploring an alternative ways of being (Cubitt, 1988, p. 116).

It was awkward for me in my initial days of ethnography because I had a rural perspective as ‘there is only the constructed understanding of the constructed native’s constructed point of view’ (Grossberg, 1988, p. 102). Thus, I realize that my such rural positionality further displace the urban youth to get their identity. I would resist the youth’s behavior in the café in the beginning. It could be their alternative identity. I recalled my initial days when I felt awkward to listen to Nepali folk music. I had never heard Bob Marley and Morrison before I arrived in Kathmandu. Possibly, they were familiar to the Western music and Jim Morison. More than being celebrity it works as antagonistic forces to the main culture. These youth seem to be rebellious. This is a symbol of unconventionality of the youth. Such tradition of being Jim Morison, possibly, is a response against the local culture.

This café is their space where they are exploring their identity, departing from the roles and responsibility of the family, work and education. They might have been

creating collective identities beyond the socialization process. They find the image of Morrison- a rebellion and delinquent. So they imitate the Morrisonian ways of living as an alternative identity.

***Mundre*¹¹: Glocal Identity**

Before the completion of 10+2 in 2012, Pasa was suppressed to demonstrate his interest of piercing ear and put on an ear ring. As soon as he was released from the rigid discipline of the school, he dyed his hair and put on an ear ring on his left ear. He became free to change his get up and hair style. After his 10+2 life, he had a tattoo on his hand, stylish hair styles and pierced ears. However, Montu had pierced his ears during his early childhood days in his village. When he grew up and started going to school, he removed his ear rings because his friends teased him saying that he was a girl. When he arrived in Kathmandu, he saw many youth who had pierced their ear and put on *mundra*. A few years after living in Kathmandu, he also tried to put on *mundra* on his ear to be modern and urbanized.

Rock Star had not pierced his ear before he arrived in Kathmandu. After living a couple of years in Kathmandu, he liked to have ear rings to maintain his cool looks. He pierced his ears for rings. When he went to his village, his parents threatened him to remove the ear rings. He denied the parents' warning. His relatives and friends often called him *Mundre*, but he could not resist against their voice. He did not care what people usually commented on his ear rings but he had not left putting ear rings.

In this sense, *Mundra* might be subculture of the youth but Roberts (2016) argued that piercing and tattooing is known as the mainstream culture of youth.

¹¹*Mundra* is an ear ring, mostly girls put on. However, male youth started to have ear ring and they are called *mundre* who are usually supposed to be cool, fashionable and modern in youth's circle but it was a kind of deviant behaviour in society.

Usually, Nepali culture set the standards that women and girls could have earrings as the mainstream culture but males are not supposed to have it. But urban youth tend to be fashionable by piercing their ears; it is becoming subculture among the youth for the sake of maintaining their identities.

Listening to the stories behind ear rings, I recalled the days when I used to have ear rings during the time of high frustration of my career and study in 2009. My parents had pierced my ears during my childhood days like Montu but I had not been putting on any kind of ear rings before 2008. When my time in life was not favorable as I did not have a good job, good money, and pride then I put on the ear rings. My intention was possibly to show my frustrated life against my fallibility of vulnerable living in Kathmandu. During that time, some of the youth appreciated my *mundre* identity but some despised it. Possibly, it was against the dominant cultural tradition that I should not put on the ear rings.

I interpreted *Mundra* (Ear Ring) for male youth is a symbol of alternative identity. Especially the youth in Kathmandu are attracted towards the western



Figure 21. To Be or not to Be

lifestyle, culture and tradition, and are trying to have *mundra* (ear ring). Is it not only the impact of globalization? As Manners (2002) has stated, globalization created norms, values, cultures and traditions that bind them among themselves and with the long existing value system of the

society. In this line, piercing- one of the local practices has been manifested in terms

of fashions in the context of Kathmandu. When I became familiar with the urban culture and space in Kathmandu, I was in a way of understanding such changes as denied by the people.

I interpret the symbol of *Mundra* into three different layers: first, it is a symbol of an alternative identity of the youth who are struggling to adjust in the city life.

Bozilovic (2010) believed that youth subculture has been manifested in various forms such as music, images and symbols to build an identity in opposition to the dominant culture. Second, *Mundra* might be a symbol opposing the dominant culture. Montu had put on ear rings several years after he threw his ear rings to get his adaptation to urban culture. Possibly, he liked to grab the attention that he had known urban ways of living in Kathmandu.

Third, *Mundra* is a symbol of resistance as Pasa resisted with the school administration while he was studying 10+2 against the established norms of college. For many youth like Pasa, they liked to adopt and follow different kinds of – subculture, which was different from the adult world. Adults might dislike such changes among the youth in the city. I perceived that *Mundra* symbolizes the changes taking place among the urban youth. In this regard, Williams (2007) states that what they all share is their framing of resistance as a sign of opposition or alternative to existing power relations.

Fourth, it is an imitation of fashion and urban trend. That may be why Montu and I both were willing to have a *Mundra*. Possibly, we liked to be fashionable and trendy showing others that we learnt urban ways of living. *Mundra* might be used to create sartorial distinctiveness in our everyday life activities and we might be afraid to adapt the radical punk and gothic life styles. Therefore, when punks draw a swastika on a jacket or jeans, they may not mean to signify fascism, but rather simply to shock

narrow-minded parents, teachers, and peers. Some youth may wear black clothing to signify a collective identity (Hodkinson, 2002, as cited in Williams, 2007). Especially the youth are attracted towards the western lifestyle, culture and tradition. This is a symbol of hybrid identity; “hybridization is a process of cultural transactions that reflects how global cultures are assimilated in the locality, and how non- western cultures impact upon the west” (Nilan & Feixa, 2006, p. 2). Youth in Kathmandu metropolitan city have been gradually globalizing with mimicking the global culture. The youth in Kathmandu are feeling a sense of loss (place and people) in one stage (Manandhar, 2013) and on the other they are prepared to be the part of the global citizen.

Post Script: A Journey to the Center

One of the mandala principles is to search for the existence of the self in the center (Trungpa, 2011). The urban youth experience dissociation in their everyday life as they have segregated, schizophrenic and hesitant identity and want to go into the center as glocal identity. From the space perspectives, these youth shape their identities from imagined space, real space and third space (Soja, 1996). Third space remains in the core circle of the mandala and these youth are struggling to attain them. During the arrival stage we have the journey to the center from *Pakhe* to *Mundre*. In the center of the wheel *Mundre* exists as a symbolic resonance and youth create and recreate their selves to achieve it. We youth create a space of nurturing to the urban citizen with the consciousness of being modern and civilized ironically not for opening mind for peace making, forgiveness, and accepting difference. Perhaps, the circle of *Mundre* is more mundane of glocal everyday space of the urban youth.

We experienced different kinds of images and identities living in Kathmandu during our arrival. I believe that the *Pakhe* identity of the urban youth was an

outcome of urban segregation in everyday life of youth because these youth were not familiar with the built environment of the city which affects their everyday life. In the same line, Do RioCalderia, (2000) describes that built environment and public space of city are changing which creates segregation. Interaction of these youth in the public space was not aligned together and they experienced segregated self.

Despite facing segregation in the city, they struggle to interact with the city for their identity construction in the stage of *Jhole*. Lefebvre (1991) argues that it is the representation of elite to create a city and its images. These youth have the identity of *Jhole* which makes their schizophrenic self (Jameson, 1988). The identities of *Pakhe* and *Jhole* might be the outcomes of the contested form of real and perceived space as Soja (1996) describes. The imagined space of the urban youth in Kathmandu was different in their real space. The images of youth and their selves in the city might have been moving dialectically and thus they experience their transient self in the city. Ultimately, the nature of youth in the city adapt fully as both real- and -imagined space, global and local, physical and virtual space and created identity of *Mundre*.

WHEEL IV

RANDOM, BOREDOM AND STARDOM

You have mobility almost throughout the entire city.

Duane Gapinski

After telling stories of arrival in Kathmandu and the process of forming our identities, we might have interactions with the city and its people. We all struggle to maintain urban life styles. In this wheel, I describe the urban youth and their struggle of experiencing the ways of living in Kathmandu via three metaphors, namely random, boredom, and stardom. During our struggle, we are learning various things in Kathmandu to live and to adjust in an urban context.

The metaphor of random refers to the chaotic stage of our struggle which does not have any fixed pattern of living, going, moving and doing everyday things. The metaphor of random helps me to unpack everyday life happenings of urban youth which they did not expect to occur in their life. How do urban youth wander in the city? Do they learn new things by wandering? Do they like to earn and learn something? What attracts them to roam around the city? The stories generated out of the above mentioned questions may justify the use of the metaphor of random. In so doing, I employed the theories of mobility to describe the random characteristics of youth in the city.

Similarly, the metaphor of boredom is another stage that might emerge after the random experience of youth who are living in the city. The metaphor of boredom uncovers the sense of alienation of the urban youth who have undergone through the random stage. The metaphor of boredom might be an outcome of their failures and tough struggles to fulfil the dreams and desires in Kathmandu. In so doing, I employ

the theories of alienation along with their struggles to overcome the boredom via resilience and resistance.

Likewise, the youth in Kathmandu expect to achieve success through struggle. The stage of achieving success in Kathmandu is represented via the metaphor of stardom. It explores the 'stardom' of youth which has not been recognized in the city. They have certain expectations to be fulfilled. The section helps me to unpack the aims and hobbies of the youth which they expect to happen in the city like Kathmandu. Likewise, the metaphor of stardom helps me to explore the hidden strength, ability, and capacity of the youth whose life literally seems highly fragile and weak.

Orientation: "I am *the* Rock Star!"

I am *the* Rock Star. Let me tell my random stories. I do not know whether people are living a planned life or not, but my life is random, (un)planned and (un)systematic. Possibly, I arrived on earth randomly during the late 90s in a remote village of Nepal. My parents sent me to an institutional school, which was often called a boarding school to improve my English, academic performance and perhaps manner. Actually, I had never planned to learn English, but I learnt English randomly. It was/is a tough language to use for me in my everyday life conversation. I was often punished by my teachers if I did not speak English during the class hours. After my SLC I did not have any plan to continue further study in my village because I liked to be *the* rock star. In this sense, my arrival and living in Kathmandu was also random. In this random journey of my life, I expect to achieve stardom, but most of the time I experienced boredom. Anyway, I have a dream to be a rock star in my life. Till date, I am struggling to be a rock star in Kathmandu.

I am struggling to get name and fame as a rock star. I am also hopeful that Kathmandu would give me such stardom. My arrival of Kathmandu was random and I lived a life of boredom. I came to Kathmandu to make my destiny as a rock star along with continuing my education. I could not deny the importance of education in my life. My dad also wanted me be a scholar. Can I be a scholar or a rock star? Thus, I continued my education and was admitted in a college. I could not kill my passion of being a star in Kathmandu though I had heard the struggling stories of many stars but I was determined to face any kind of hurdles that might appear on my journey to stardom.

Flashback of *the* Rock Star

Possibly, it was in May 2010, I felt as if I was flying on a Boeing when I took a seat on a night bus from Dhangadi to Kathmandu. I do not forget the journey because I had to revolt to come to Kathmandu against the wish of my dad and mom. I was wearing new clothes, new shoes, and new sunglasses. I was excited to travel by the night bus. I had not achieved such experience of travelling in a luxurious bus before. Though I travelled by local bus and cycle in my home town, it was my first long journey.



Figure 22. Conceived Space

Perhaps, I was listening to a song, “*Kanchhi lai Ghumaune Kathmandu Sahar*” on the night bus when I had become nostalgic. The events were screen played when I passed the SLC with good scores in 2007 from one of the ‘boarding’ schools

of *Kailali*. I am *the* son of an ordinary farmer, whose source of income is only the farming. As per my dad and mom's wish I completed +2 and joined BBA in the only private college in *Dhangadi*. Though, I was not interested to continue higher studies at my home town, there was no way to manage expenditure for study and living in the city like Kathmandu. Nevertheless, my dad and mom eventually agreed to send me to Kathmandu to improve my education and they became ready to bear the expenses. I thought that my dad and mom would like to get reputation sending me to Kathmandu for further study. Whatever might be the reason, my dream to study in Kathmandu came true.

Since my childhood, I have been highly impressed by the lifestyles of the city youth. I was passionate about going to Kathmandu for my education as I believed that brilliant minds of the generation would go to Kathmandu. I often thought that studying in my village made me dull and uncompetitive. Those days, I thought that I was not competent enough to get high profiled jobs in NGOs and INGOs. I did not have good English. I could not dress up properly. And I could not have good negotiation and communication skills because I was brought up in a village. I thought rural life to be the life backwardness.

I got up when I heard the ruckus of the helper of the bus. He was shouting "It's time to go to toilet, get refreshed, and to have dinner. You have only 20 minutes." I got off from the bus and saw 10/12 (i.e. the bus), which was parked in front of the hotel. I got off from the bus and checked the number of my bus. I ensured the number and went to the hotel. It was crowded, I could not get a proper place to sit. I did not like to eat anything at the hotel. Then, I bought a packet of noodles and a bottle of coke from the small shop near the hotel. After having noodles

and water, I slept on the night bus. In my dream, I saw Kathmandu as a deity - beautiful and sexy.

Last Destination(s)

When I woke up, I found I had already arrived in Kathmandu. After nearly 16 hours of 700 kilometers long journey in a moving coach, I arrived at *Naya Bus Park, Balaju*. I was feeling dizzy. It was about 8:00 am when I got off the bus. My friend had advised me taking a public bus to old bus park, then to change another bus to reach *Baneshwar*. I was searching a public bus to reach *Baneshwor* but it was not possible to get the bus to that specific route. I noticed the crowd of people, noise, rushing vehicles, street vendors, street children, beggars, business people, students (especially girls in skirts) and more others. The road was wide enough, at least for me. The buildings were modern and sophisticated; the number of people was more than my imagination. I was lost in the city. I could not have any ideas where to go and how to go? I called my friend to get some ideas about the way to reaching his rented room. He suggested hiring a taxi, which was expensive. I had no other alternatives too. So I hired a taxi. I observed the city from its window, every street had at least 2 boarding schools, every 4/5 buildings' gap had medicals or hospitals or clinic or pharmaceuticals, wholesale, grocery, readymade shops, shopping malls, hotels, restaurants, theaters, stations, colleges and cafes. I observed everything with keen interest. Really, Kathmandu was the capital(s) of dreams for me. I thought, I took the right decision to be a dweller of such a big and beautiful city.

Destination 1: A Ground- Floor- Room

I arrived at the rented room of my friend. It was all in one room: kitchen room, bedroom, and living room, store room, study room, TV room, and guest room whatever rooms. It was the room on the ground floor. The rent was high. Though

we had paid 3500/-per month, I was scared to switch on the light in the afternoon because my friend suggested not having the light. One day, I was reading a newspaper, there was not enough light in the room. I was feeling difficult to read the newspaper. Then, I switched on the light. My friend arrived at that time and told me to switch off the light. So did I. It was very good for moss and algae. Dam care about the indicator of effective settlement in the city. Just wrap up the issues of ventilation, sun lights, airy system and other basic things that we generally search in residence. But I was there in the same room. There was my dream, dream of stardom, future, success and responsibility and prestige I never dared to bring any friends to my room for the whole two years. But I went many times in others' rooms. Most of the students who were struggling in Kathmandu had almost the similar types of rooms. I had problems similar to them. We had to bring the expense from home and the little remaining money was only the source of our livelihood. I had to stay in the room which we did not think good for us. The rooms that we thought suitable to reside demanded four times more than of our ability; and therefore, I did not dare to change that room for three years.

It was one of the days of December. It was about 6.30 pm in the evening when I arrived at my ground floor room. I had hung some clothes on the top balcony. So, the darkness of December was already felt. The clothes were not protected there. Thus, I went to collect them. But there was a gate which was already locked. On that floor, the landowner was living. I rang the doorbell. They did not respond. I rang another bell. Mother of that house came and inquired me. I told everything. Unexpectedly, she became rude and started shouting as if I was a criminal. I tried to console her and apologized although I did nothing wrong. But she continued shouting at me. She treated me as if I was a refugee at her house. This was an example of

living in the ground floor room. Various stories of struggle are associated with the ground floor room. Every day, I would roam around the city and would observe people and space. The next event that made me feel difficult was its scarcities. No drinking water was there, no place to dump the wastes, no gas was available. Even one day I had to eat curry and *dal* without salt. In the village, if something finished, we would ask the next door. But in Kathmandu, it is/was not possible.

One day, I was cooking curry and *dal*. Everything was fine but there was not any pinch of salt. I quickly went to the shop and asked for salt, but I was disappointed there. I went to the next shop, the same story repeated. I came to know that there was no salt in the market. I ate saltless food for two days. But I did not dare to knock at the next door of my neighbor. I had very less interaction with the house owner. I had not been able to develop strong social ties with them. As Henriksen and Tjora (2014) believe, such relation would exist in a split community in the urban area. I had already been fragmented when I was detached from my parents and family members and staying away from relatives, almost all of us were strangers. Dry humanity and cooperation made me feel alone in Kathmandu. No one cared my hardship. To illustrate, once I suffered from flu and fever very badly. I could not even move properly. I could not boil water and cook food. There was no one to help me. I had to manage everything on my own despite severity of my sickness. Later on, one of my friends came and supported me but the neighbours were indifferent towards the problems.

Destination 2: A Gloomy College

I had been living in Kathmandu for three months; I was totally confused if my aim to be a rock star would be fulfilled. During those days, I was moving from one street to another, one destination to another. First of all, I moved around all the

historical places of Kathmandu such as *Kathmandu Durbar Square, Patan Durbar Square, Pashupati, and Swayambhu*. Then, I moved to the core city areas such as *New Road, Durbarmarg, Thamel and Jawalakhel*. I moved randomly here and there. Slowly, I knew many places in Kathmandu. However, deep inside my heart, I was searching ways to fulfill my stardom in Kathmandu which I had not got yet.

Then, I had no other option to join the college for BBA. I had scored good marks in my 10+2 examination, and I had a pressure to perform better in college too. However, I had a lot of challenges to perform better in college because my aim was to be a rock star. Thus, study was not my first priority. I did not have sound economic condition to be a rock star. There was no permanent source of income of my parents and I was not prepared to earn yet. The main source of my family income was agriculture which was just enough to run our family. However, I was not much worried about family income. I thought that it was my father's duty to teach me at any cost.

I searched hi-fi colleges in Kathmandu at first but I did not get admission in Ace Institute of Management and Apex College, where the fee was comparatively higher than in other management colleges. I did not get admission because they were not sure that I would be a 'decent' student. Later on, I decided to choose a cheaper college where one of the seniors introduced me as a genuine student.



Figure 23. My Dream vs. Father's Dream.

Finally, I listened to my heart. I chose a college and started studying. During the first two semesters, I studied seriously. But I could not continue the same spirit of

study and therefore failed a few subjects. I was getting accustomed to enjoy the city life and started acting like a rock star. During those days, I also started searching a job for me. It was not easy to find the job as I wished. I met some relatives and friends and asked them for a job. I visited many job centers. I also went through the advertisements published in the newspapers. Daily, I flicked my eyes on the page of advertisements of each newspaper with the hope of finding a job which would suit me. But they all went in vain. I could not find any job for five months. The money I got from my father was insufficient to maintain my stardom. I spent greater portion of money for enjoying the city life as I would go to bar and discotheque. I had not paid the college fee so that college did not allow me to use the library and I did not have money to buy books.

Gradually, I did not find any excitement to take classes in the college. Then I started playing truant and moving around the funky street.

Destination 3: Funky Street

I usually roamed around the funky street of Kathmandu when I was bored with the lecture sessions in the classroom. I was surprised to see colourful people in the funky street around *Thamel*. I walked purposelessly in the funky street behind the damp road and glowing road. I guessed all people I saw in the street might be celebrating life in the street. I also liked to celebrate the moments of life. I was completely upset with the gloomy college. I sensed that my stardom was gradually fading away.

It was one of the cool summer days in June, 2013; I liked to experience the city life in Kathmandu. Thus, I planned to move somewhere else. Then, I headed towards the funky-street. The funky street seemed romantic today with the romantic people. Pedestrians were walking on both the sides of the road. Both sides of the

street were stone paved. The yellow sun was full in its circle. Dust was hovering around its circles. I covered my mouth and nose with a mask. I was walking alone, watching people with a wet dream to be *the* rock star.

It was around 2:00 pm. I was standing in the crossroad of funky street, and watching people. I was thinking about how they could maintain their life styles in Kathmandu. How could they afford such urban life styles? How do youth earn money? What are my dreams? How can I fulfill my dreams? What can I wish to get in Kathmandu? Thousands of questions emerged and faded away but I was still standing and thinking about the city and its people. I observed many youth like me who were wandering to search their aim to be fulfilled in the city.

Destination(s) and Randomness

Thank you Rock Star for your narrative. Let me narrate my reflection and understanding beyond your experience, creating the layers of being, living and learning in Kathmandu. I have collected other similar and different stories of my participants who are randomly living in Kathmandu. In this part of the research, I reflect on the random ways of living in the city. I think your experiences in the city might be meaningful not only for me but also for other theorists who study urban youth from the continuum of globalization



Figure 24. LOL!

and localization. Your random arrival and shifting destinations in Kathmandu make me think from the perspectives of urban spatiality and youth mobility. In doing so, I

have generated meanings from your randomness into three layers: a) transition b) urban inequality, and c) individualism.

Mobility and Transition

Like Rock Star, I think our arrival at Kathmandu was not random because most of the youth might have been tempted to move from village to Kathmandu purposelessly. Perhaps, these people expected a transition (leaving village, leaving parents and leaving school) in Kathmandu. Possibly, these youth liked to leave their village like Irish youth for education and work (Cairns, 2012). In this line, I refer to Cairns (2012) who describes the reason for youth mobility as an important aspect for making the transition from education-to-work. These youth may be searching transition from local space of their village where they were prepared to overcome the challenges that they face in their life. Transition from their village might indicate that they liked to continue their study, search job, and trying to be independent. They might have thought that Kathmandu is one of the suitable places for you to explore the inborn talent that you have. Despite several struggles in a ground floor room, gloomy college and funky street, still Rock Star was motivated to live in Kathmandu for his career and life. Possibly, he might be searching opportunities to enhance his career in Kathmandu.

I have noticed three transition points of Rock Star as Furlong (2015) indicates: leaving school, leaving home and gaining employment. It is not only the case of Rock Star but Maili, Montu, Rajesh Dai had undergone similar transitions in Kathmandu. Possibly Kathmandu attracted us during our youth. These transitions may appear in Kathmandu not because of our age and opportunities but because of our expectations and wish to get fulfilled from the city.

However, Rajmati and Pasa who were born in Kathmandu had also travelled a lot in the streets of Kathmandu without any concrete purpose of earning educational degrees and money. They knew all about Kathmandu and they were not much more interested to learn about Kathmandu than those who migrated to Kathmandu from different parts of the country. Possibly, it was their ways to be familiar with the city and space they were living in. Regarding transition, both Rajesh Dai (Who migrated from village) and Pasa (Native Kathmandu) also enjoyed bar and discotheques believing that they were enjoying individual life. They were experiencing urban inequality as they were walking and doing things randomly.

Mobility and Inequality

Since Rajesh Dai, Montu, Maili, Rock Star and Suresh arrived in Kathmandu, their everyday life activities included searching individual opportunities. Such transition of youth creates mobility as self-positioning in social space of lifestyles which was influenced by the behavior and values of others (Denot & Koch, 2015, p. 2). Standing at the crossroads of funky street, Rock Star might have experienced that he did not have equal opportunities to live his life in Kathmandu. Rock Star's intention of living in a rented ground floor room might be an outcome of urban inequalities. Kathmandu was very new to all of us in our arrival, and we were not able to create an equal position and affiliation to compete with others in Kathmandu.

These urban youth possibly experienced the burden of inequality regarding the affiliation and resources. Relating to the story of Rock Star, in his gloomy days in the college, he was compelled to leave the class as he could not get books and materials. Then, he moved randomly without any purpose in the streets of the city to get affiliation from the city. However, he lacked the resources. The mobility and flexibility of these youth were creating their own space for their recognition and

identity. Possibly, Rock Star moved to different destinations to create his space in the city. Why do urban youth like to move randomly in the city? I observed dialectical relationship between youth and space. Both negotiated and created a circle of being for youth in the city. I agree with Kirby (1996) who believed that spatial organization is a crucial element in shaping subjectivity. Possibly, Rock Star moved in the city to flourish his stardom, but he could not do that because he lacked resources as per the expectation. The subjectivity of my participants has been reflected by their clothes, hair styles, and the dreams of living in Kathmandu. In believing so, they had a kind of feeling to be excluded from the mainstream of fashion, media and consumption in Kathmandu.

Was Rock Star alone to celebrate the day off in the crossroads of funky street? He did not call his friends. He never called his friends to his room. For me, possibly, he was maintaining the individualism in Kathmandu. Individualism for me is a self-view of the world filtered by the individual interest (Macario, 2011). Like the narratives of Rock Star, my other participants, Maili, Montu, and Rajesh Dai all searched our individual dreams to be fulfilled in Kathmandu. We searched our individual dreams and opportunities in Kathmandu. We all had blurred ideas, vague purpose, and ambitious plans in life to be fulfilled in Kathmandu. We became completely individualized while trying to serve our interest in Kathmandu.

Though our self-interests were completely different in the meso level of city life, our mobility varied in city. Rajesh Dai, Pasa, Rock Star, Maili, Rajmati had to build career and earn money. We all were attempting to be satisfied with the money we earn. We hardly thought about others. Individualist characteristics are often associated with youth in Kathmandu. In this line, they tend to be ready to look and do

cool things ignoring what others would tell them. I also stressed that I was giving priority to the individual self rather than collective and communal ways of being.

Boredom in Kathmandu

Experiencing randomness in the city, we underwent another stage of living which I termed boredom. Transition, inequality and individualism added another layer of everyday life experience, which I termed boredom. Boredom was a state of reproduction of inequality or vice versa (Dillabough & Kennelly, 2010). Let me reflect on the story of Rock Star who did not like to attend the lectures in his college? Why did Rajmati bunk her class and went to the theater often? Why did Rajesh Dai just stay at his home without any work? Did Montu sleep any day without working in a factory? How often Suresh thought that his life was boring? We all came here to Kathmandu to search better future, to fulfill our dreams, but we experienced certain level of boredom living in the city. I used the term boredom not exactly to refer to the psychological upheavals of an individual but to a) a sense of alienation, b) a sense of frustration and c) a sense of incompleteness of the youth in the city like Kathmandu. I have not used the term boredom when urban youth do not spend leisure time. Instead, I used the concept of boredom to describe a kind of obsession that youth experience and feel in their everyday life in the city. Possibly, I was influenced by Specks (1996) whose book *Boredom: The Literary History of a State of Mind* motivated me to uncover the boredom as a provocation and a consequence of living in city life.

Reflecting upon the everyday activities of my participants, initially, I heard their stories of boredom when they arrived in the city. It was not only Rock Star who was randomly moving in the streets of Kathmandu and feeling bored, but my other participants also experienced boredom as a temporal phenomenon in Kathmandu.

Boredom of Rajesh Dai

It was around 6:00 pm on a day in late May 2014. I called Rajesh Dai.

“Hello, Rajesh Dai,” I spoke through a cell phone.

“Hello, Dai,” Rajesh said.

“Where are you Rajesh?” Suresh said.

“I am at home,” Rajesh said.

“What are you doing?” Suresh asked.

“Nothing. Just sleeping,” Rajesh replied.

“Are you sleeping in the evening? When did you return from your job?” Suresh asked.

“I am on leave today. It is a boring job,” Rajesh said.

“Ok, Ok! Take rest.”

“Where are you brother?” Rajesh asked.

“I am roaming around *Kalanki*. I would like to know where you are,” Suresh said.

“Wait for ten minutes, I will be coming. I feel fresh if I talk to you,” Rajesh Said.

“Ok, we can meet and talk for a few hours,” Suresh promised.

I ordered a cup of tea sitting on a bench in the paddlers’ tea shop, watching people who were walking in the street at *Kalanki*. *Kalanki* is one of the doors of Kathmandu from where all vehicles from the country get entered into the capital city. I was thinking about Rajesh Dai and his boredom. Why did he not like to go to the office? Most of the other youth expected to get a job to survive in the city but Rajesh Dai remained absent from job to stay at home without any reason.

I recalled images of other participants who usually remained bored in the city. I recalled Montu who remained bored when he was not able to sell goods in the city. Rajmati remained bored when she did not get warm affection and kind voice from her grandmother. Rajmati also remained bored when she could not achieve good grades in the examination. Mr. Pasa remained bored when he did not get weeds and could not smoke weeds at his home. As far as I know, Rajesh Dai did not have any problem

with his job because he could get leave from his office as he expected. I always observed that his job was as cool as his life styles.

At the moment, when I was thinking about my participants and their boredom, a voice called me, “Hello Dai, have you completed a cup of tea?” I turned my head around and saw Rajesh Dai standing beside me with a faded smile. His hair was messy as if he just woke up from bed and rushed towards the *Kalanki* crossroads. He took out his hands from the pocket to shake with mine. We shook hands and sat together. I ordered two more cups of tea.

Boredom: A Sense of Affordability

After a formal conversation with Rajesh Dai, he explained the story behind the curtain of being absent from his office.

Once, on a Saturday, his day was off. One of his friends asked him to go for rafting. In order to escape boredom, youth in Kathmandu often hang on with friends, some of them enjoy bungee jump, rafting and hiking and so on. Sometimes they organize picnic and party with their colleagues. Actually, it was the idea of Rajesh Dai to encourage friends for rafting in the *Trishuli* river. He was the person who had been encouraging his friends for 2/3 months to go for rafting. They made a plan. He was excited enough but he would have to pay nearly NPR 3000 to go for rafting. He could not afford that much money as he did not have any balance from the previous month. “Just tell me how can I balance money as I earn NPR 7000/- a month?” He apologized and pretended that he had to attend a meeting. Now, they could not force him. He escaped from the group of his friends.

Late in the evening, he was surfing the internet on his smart cell phone. Meanwhile, he found tagged photos on Facebook. He checked all photos spending nearly 40 minutes and became more frustrated about missing the rafting with his

friends. He became jealous of his friends and was pathetic to himself. The photos of splashing water to each other, hugging tightly while rafts made quick movement and many other similar poses made him feel very sad. He said, “My eyes filled with tears; I tried to sleep but could not till late night.”

It was not only Rajesh Dai but we, most of us (participants), had to escape from our close circle when we were not able to afford the amenities in city life. Perhaps, Rajesh Dai also experienced the boredom in the world of city life. He said, “This was not the first time of telling a lie, when I escaped from my friend circles, when I was not able to afford.” Like Rajesh Dai, I also faced such situations many time. I was not able to share things openly as I could not afford such lavish things, rather I pretended to be a snob. I killed my desires time and again. If I had kept record, it would have been ‘trillions’. And if I were to blame for that, I would be in jail for thousands of years. I also became bored.

Rajesh Dai called a shopkeeper of the tea shop and ordered cigarettes. He lit one. I observed boredom of Rajesh Dai in each puff of his cigarette and spoke in a cool voice. “I don’t know why I occasionally remain absent from office. I don’t have any specific reasons. Simply I don’t like to go there.” Listening to his version of the story, I guessed that we all experienced the sense of boredom in the city because of affordability. We can get things to buy enough but it matters to what extent we can afford. In Rajesh’s case boredom was something which was less related to leisure activities.

Usually urban theorists like Hirsch (1969) and Flisher, Muller and Lombard (2006) believe that boredom is related to the leisure activities of youth. Rajesh Dai’s case was something different because he could have enough time to spend with his friends but he was a bit ambitious of achieving the progress in the city. I felt that my

other participants by nature were expecting progress in the city, which was difficult to attain; and therefore, they became bored. Usually, boredom was theorized in ways of connecting leisure time. Carl (2012) opined that youth remain bored when they do not get leisure time but youth in Kathmandu experience boredom with leisure time. These youth hardly get any opportunities to work.

In this line, Mains (2007) argued that such boredom is created by severe economic scarcity; this transformation is frequently never realized in the neoliberal urbanization. Possibly, youth in Kathmandu experience boredom to emphasize the relationship among the expression of troublesome behaviors and the socialization of young people into particular socioeconomic class positions (Willging, Quintero, & Lilliot, 2014).

Life is too mechanical and routinized in Kathmandu that leads to boredom. Pasa- the Mr. Weed used to be bored in the city during his post high school days. When he could not get a puff of weed, he would be bored. Maili still experienced boredom while she did not earn for food in Kathmandu. Rajamati remained bored when she did not get love and affection from her dad. Montu had also similar reasons to be bored as he lived alone in Kathmandu and usually became nostalgic recalling his family in his village. Perhaps, there are several other reasons to be bored for youth like Rajesh Dai. Montu as an entrepreneur was expecting to enjoy his leisure time with his friends but he did not get time. However, they all have different strategies to overcome the boredom in their life.

Boredom with School/ College

Usually, I spend time in some cafés where youth come for sipping tea and smoking cigarettes, and spend hours talking to their friends. Perhaps, it was mid-January, 2014; I went to a café. I was trembling with one degree centigrade cold in

Kathmandu. I was desperate to have some hot tea. As soon as I entered into the café, I heard a loud Hindi filmy song being played in the background. There was a tag: Wi-Fi zone. Most of the tables were occupied by young couples. I sensed that they were talking to each other, and at the same time they were playing with their cell phones. Possibly, they were in a virtual world. I wondered why they did not care much about their friends sitting nearby.

Possibly, they can go beyond the circumstances around them. I was inquisitive to know about their experiences of living and being in the city. I went nearer to a boy who was in a college uniform and saw that he was downloading some apps in his cell. I got his permission to talk about his life experiences, living and learning in Kathmandu. Perhaps, he thought that I was a *psycho*¹² willing to know about his personal life. He did not seem to be interested in talking to me. While I clarified my purpose he seemed to be ready to talk to me. He said that it was his lifestyles to be connected to his friends' circle. I did not want to ask more about his friends and circles as my intention was to look boredom of his life.

“Why do you come to the café?”

“I can escape from boredom. I can use free Wi-Fi here. I can read the major daily newspapers in the morning, and thus, I save money that would otherwise be spent on a newspaper. I can chat with my friends. Moreover, the shopkeeper makes tasty tea.”

“Well, does Wi-Fi or internet let you avoid boredom?” I asked him.

“Actually, I feel bored of studying at home. My parents always seemed to be worried about my education. I am not allowed to go to night clubs, parties and outing with my friends. Only one recreational activity available at my home is to be

¹² Usually youth used the term psycho to describe the crazy behavior of people.

connected with the virtual world. So, I do not have many friends too. There is no way out from the virtual life.”

“Are you an undergraduate student?”

He addressed me as brother and said, “Yes.”

“How is your study?” I further asked.

“Not good!” He said without noticing me.

“Why do you think your study is not good?” I further probed.

“What is the worth of studying, brother?” He countered the question to me.

I remained silent as I could not answer his questions, which might satisfy him.

As a teacher, I experienced that many students in their +2 and undergraduate course asked me the same question. When I attempted to answer their question, they mostly said, “Oldie, again the same lecture.” They never believed me that education in college really prepares themselves for their future. Sometimes, I tended to agree with them because education hardly prepared youth for their progress. They might be expecting the progress created by the neoliberal economy and school and colleges merely ‘impart’ the course work.

This was the education which hardly addressed the need of urban youth and their everyday life activities. Does this make any sense to think about the education of urban youth?

Retrospection of Teaching Career

Let me recall a story when I was teaching the students of 10+2 level in a private college in Kathmandu. A group of boys in the classroom were not ready to listen to my lecture. They were making noise and trying to disturb the whole class. I was attempting to persuade them saying that it was important to pass the +2 exam so that all the doors of their career and future would open. One of my students asked,

“Sir, you seemed talented, why did not you try for abroad?” Another student asked me, “Sir, how much do you earn in a month? Another boy put a question, “How do you feed your family by teaching? Is it enough for you?” Another student added, “Therefore, he is teaching in three/four colleges.”

I showed my sense of humility in many contexts to deal with urban students, convincing them education is important in our life.

Thus, I did not dare to tell much the importance of education to the boy in the café who was neither my

student nor a sibling. How could he take my advice if I told him to study well?

What created such a mindset of youth in the city? Is the quality of education in Kathmandu really deteriorating these days? I do not have an answer to convince the youth saying that they need



Figure 25. Learning Outside the College.

to be educated to be successful. Youth in the college experience boredom; and therefore, blame the whole education system. They share that that it was futile to get an education which hardly contributes to progress.

After talking to the boy, I came out from the café wondering how we can reengineer urban education. I also think about redesigning the education system from the perspective of neoliberalism which could kill the local ways of learning and being.

I came outside of the café but the image of the boy was hovering in my mind, questioning what I have been teaching these youth during my ten years long teaching career? Actually teaching such urban youth was also a boring job.

I see the flock of fragile foxes
 In school and college premises
 Instead of learning, I was mocked
 I give up my hope among the extreme
 I like to quit the job
 Would like to be far away from the mob.

Leisure Everyday Activities and Boredom

They might be feeling monotonous to maintain their life styles in the city. For leisurely activities in Kathmandu, the youth mostly redefine the leisure activities as the nature of work. They want to get rid of everyday routine of life “what happens at work, in the factory, or in the office can only be escaped from by approximation to it in one’s leisure time” (Gupta & Gopalan, 2010).

In this line, Rajmati, Pasa, Rajesh Dai, Rock Star enjoy their leisure activities with their friends. They often watch movie, sing songs, attend party and dine in the restaurants. Maili would like to go for shopping. Montu would invite his friends and play cards during the whole days. He would not like to go for shopping and travelling because he travelled a lot while he was selling gods and goddess on his bicycle. Most of the youth are searching pleasure activities in the city like Kathmandu to escape from their mechanized life styles.

Youth Stardom in Everyday Life

I arrived home from the café. I threw my bag. I spent a couple of hours with my family. After dinner, I sat for jotting down the reflection of the day’s field notes.

On completion of the field notes, I checked the diary and decided to give space for Rajmati's story. Now Rajamati narrates her story:

I am from a middle class traditional Newar Family. My father did not have higher education. I am living with my grandmother who is not even literate. My family background is not educated at all. When I was a child, I got an opportunity to go to a private school where I performed well. Then, I was more motivated to attain higher education, which I think changed my perspective to look at people and society.

In my college, friends called me a geek as I was inclined to study. I am good enough at my study. I scored excellent grades in my internal and external examinations. I was not much studious though I seemed to be laborious and hardworking among my friends who rarely paid their attention to study. I was born not only to attain education. I sing songs, I play the guitar, I even perform on some occasions of church, and hotels. I gained such confidence because of education. I think education helps to cultivate social and professional life. Education makes star of self. My friends teased me when I focused more on my study, when I submitted all assignments on time. It was a matter to be excluded from the circles of the students who hardly completed tasks on time. I remain lonely most of the time in the college. But when the end semester examination approached nearer, those friends would come to me and get help. At that time I was feeling like being a star. My teachers always appreciated me for my grade and hard work. I was quite hopeful to be a star by completing my higher education.

Reflecting back on the story of Rajmati, I believe that a few youth might be searching their stardom in education. The notion of education for urban youth is

related to the career foundation and primary step for getting a job. If youth hardly get a chance to grow their professionalism, they might experience boredom. In this line, possibly the youth who hardly meet their expectations from formal education in colleges and universities, they search alternative ways of being a star. They think and perform like stars. They might be cultivating several other skills and abilities to be became stars. Rajmati was often ridiculed when she performed well in the classroom of completing assignments, paying attention to the lecturer, and doing decent study. In her case, there might be very few students who are searching their stardom in education and who are searching alternative ways of being a star.

Stardom in City

Youth in Kathmandu are struggling to live, learn and earn. Rock Star's struggle to get admission into a good college, Pasa's struggle to attend parties with friends, Rajmati's struggle to maintain the good family life, Rajesh Dai's passion to be a stunner, not only created a lot of problems in their life but also flourished a stardom deep down of their everyday life activities. We were all searching success and achievement in Kathmandu. I have not used the term stardom to refer to their existence in cinema, and theater like *Kaliwood* (Kathmandu Film Industry), *Bollywood* (Indian Film Industry) and *Hollywood* (American Film Industry). I used the concept of stardom to refer that each participant has celebrated ordinary events in their life as accomplishing their goals, achievement, expectation and talents. Each participant like me was attempting

Youth Stardom

*Walking on the garbage of holy city
Hopes pop up from apex of garbage
Life starts with a dream
A dream to be the Macho
A dream to be the rock star
A dream to fight for freedom.*

*Walking on crowd of sinful souls
Aspiration comes up from the
Khyak's myth
Life starts with aspiration
An aspiration to inhale the dead air
An aspiration to pain ass for career
An aspiration to have dandy looks.*

to create and construct his/her stardom in the city in terms of preparing himself/herself to live in the city. My purpose of living in Kathmandu may be connected with the journey of exploring my stardom with opportunities and dreams. These youth in the city are struggling possibly to achieve their stardom in the city.

I was/am searching my stardom for exploring educational opportunity in Kathmandu. Being educated did not provide a glamorous life for me. Then, I looked for the glamorous job which could have better salary and better life styles. I am/was always destined to live and struggle in Kathmandu. Kathmandu, thus, became a magnet for youth like me who are searching opportunity for education and work which always pulled youth to Kathmandu. I was thinking what makes me a star? Am I a star teacher? Can I compare stardom with income? Do youth envision themselves as stars? How stardom is implanted in the city like Kathmandu?

Stardom and Transformation

Believing that everyone is a star in their everyday life, I observed an “imaginative engagement with everyday life which could stimulate the desire of social transformation” (Papastergiadis, 2010, p. 24). Everyday life of youth in the city has not only alienated the stage in random and boredom but has cultivated a dream of stardom among the youth as stimulating desire of doing good and being good. In this line, the following ethnodrama portrays the stardom of my participants.

[At the rise of curtain, all my participants are sitting at a round table of Van Gogh's café. The café is decorated with classical arts. Nearly 12 tables are decorated in the front hall of the café where my participants are sitting. The round table is in the center and seven chairs are around the table. There are two water bottles, one astray, some cigarette papers and napkins on the table. The room is cozy. The wall is decorated with the posters of stars and is glowing in its pink colour. The floor is well carpeted but there are a few

cigarette butts and burnt matches. It is just a few days later in the middle of April]

Maili: How many of you have watched the Nepali Movie “*Pashupati Prasad*”? (Suddenly all of them paid attention to her question)

Pasa: I watched it in a theater. It was wonderful. You know, I liked a dialogue very much: Everything which can be sold in the world must be sold. Just to get money.

Rajesh Dai: I don’t have anything to sell in Kathmandu but I have a dream to earn.

Maili: (*With a long sigh*) If I cannot have anything to sell, I sell even chastity in the city like Kathmandu.

Rock Star: (*puffing cigarette, looks into the ceiling and silently speak*). My father usually said that hopes poke when life gets sucked. I have lived a rotten life, haven’t I? I imagine living in Kathmandu – You know, to build my career and education. One day I will be a rock star and I will rock Kathmandu. I feel that I have a massive energy to be a rock star and Kathmandu will provide me with an opportunity. I don’t know why I am hopeful in Kathmandu. I am more hopeful here than in my village. (*short pause, sighs*) Possibly, cities create hopes.

Pasa: (Smiles faintly) *Pashupati Prasad* was also hopeful. You know how he confronted with the dream of his life. (*Voice became louder*) Kathmandu might have fulfilled the dreams of people but how are dreams fluctuating in the dark roads of nostalgic Patan.

Maili: I don’t understand. What do you mean?

Rajesh Dai: It was a joke of Pasa. (*all giggled together*)

Pasa: You know... I feel like a star when I crack jokes among the friends’ circle and they laugh. I get confused whether people laugh because of my joke or the dose of weeds. My friends are like stars. Mostly, we ridicule politicians of the country who raped the country. Eh?

Maili: The best of my stardom is reflected in the gloomy evening when I dress up beautifully, walked into the streets to search customers. If I could sleep quietly with someone that day I feel like a star. Otherwise, I am brutally treated by the dirty people in the dirty place. The best I can hope is getting the good hearted people in the city. I am not what I was in the past. Everything

has changed in the city: lifestyles, dream, and friends. (*pause...*) Oh, People aren't all as bad as you like to make out. All and all changed in Kathmandu.

Rock Star: I don't get any similarities between Tom Cruise and me but people call me Tom Cruise. I celebrate myself as a star in the city.

Montu: The day comes with hopes and aspiration when I take all the gods and goddess from my baskets and sell before the afternoon. Then, I return home and make delicious chicken curry, don't I?

Rajesh Dai: Anyway, I'm glad to say that my Tom Cruise looks appealed my friends to play the guitar and sing songs in the basketball court of Tri-Chandra College.

Rock Star: When I enter into the expensive restaurant and have drinks and dinner with the dons of the city, it makes me a star of the night.

Cultivating Stardom

Reflecting on the ethnodrama, Rajesh Dai's role model was Tom Cruise right from the beginning of his arrival in Kathmandu. Actually he had heard that Cruse had problem to be educated. But he struggled and achieved his success. We would do something different rather than getting the university certificates. Listening to the hopes of Rajesh Dai, I was exploring his stardom of living in the city. In the initial stage, I observed him to be a shy guy who was struggling to shape his future. He was not sure what he was going to do. He would dye his hair, put on worn out jeans, and pierce his ears. It was difficult for me to know his stardom but when I met him in a café with his friends, I saw that he dresses like them, talks like them and has got an aesthetic avatar. Moreover, his ways of being a star might be an outcome of his community.

I sensed that these youth were trying to explore their creative potentialities to be stars in Kathmandu. He started watching English movie and trying to imitate the image of Tom Cruise in his get up and movement. When he got admission in *Tri-Chandra* College, he hardly attended lecture sessions in the classroom. Rajesh Dai

said, “I am a hero. Hero always has a heroine but I don’t have. I am searching heroine in Kathmandu. My Tom Crusian looks will work and I will be able to find a beloved. But I am skeptical whether she is like Mimi Rogers.” Rajesh Dai was trying to maintain his stardom during his college days. He usually showed his presence in the basketball court like Tom Cruise. He played basketball to be a hero in the college. Likewise, he begged his friend’s bike and drove it into the college like a hero. Once he fell off the motor bike when he was demonstrating a stunt in the college premises. His stardom thus came down to earth.

Possibly such stardom might be the natural phenomenon of being adolescents. Rajesh Dai’s interests have shifted to earn money rather than spending time and money to his girlfriend. He usually says that time is superior to all and money matters to maintain the stardom. He never imagines going back to his village because he could not achieve and maintain his stardom in his village. When he would return his village, people in the village would take him as a loser.

Like Rajesh Dai, during my stay in Kathmandu, I was gradually making my dream clear. My professors at the university were my role models. I would imitate their life styles: the way they speak, the way they write, the way they think; but Rajesh Dai’s role model was *the* Tom Cruise who was global. I thought that he could not be as real as me to achieve stardom in Kathmandu.

At the same time, I reflect on the situation of Rock Star who did not have any role models in Kathmandu. He also had a similar belief. He said that city like Kathmandu made people civilized and learnt. He had compromised various things such as family, friends, study and relation to make his career in Kathmandu for the sake of his stardom. His life-styles in Kathmandu perhaps was influenced by the life styles of dons and gangs. He even hardly showed his interest to study. He made his

friends from the underworld and would like to earn easy money in Kathmandu. He started his career by joining a political agitation and by disrupting tenders of construction. He would get little amount of money and would drink alcohol in a fine restaurant in Kathmandu. He was gradually infatuated to such life styles. Perhaps, his parents did not like the ideas of earning money illegally. That is why, he often had debates and discussions with his parents.

Mr. Pasa celebrated his stardom in the dark corner of a supermarket while making the weed. On most of Fridays, his friends would join with him and drink alcohol, some other would take marijuana, crack jokes, discuss politics and sex together. They all appeared to be characters of “Coma- A Political Sex” (Dark Comedy of Kumar Nagarkoti), who would have better life by the end of the week. They usually thought it was better to stay with friends and appreciate themselves instead of going home early. They performed appreciative forms.

Such appreciative forms are creative spaces of youth in the city which cultivate their stardom. They created a space for creativity through their stardom. In this line, let me give an example of Rajmati who would act like a star when she scored good grades in her examination. She was praised by her teachers, friends and parents. The form of stardom among the youth was heterogeneous as they imagined to be a good singer and writer (Rajmati), to be a leader of gangs (Rock Star), to maintain the looks and get up of Tom Cruise (Rajesh Dai), to puff up weed like Bob Marley (Pasa), to act like a South Indian Hero (Montu), and to be a beautiful girl (Maili). All youth are attempting to flourish their stardom living in Kathmandu.

Black sunglasses

On the head

Making them stars in the crowd.

Ripped jeans

On the body

Stardom was endowed.

A hanged metal chain

With the bunch of keys

Stardom was trained

In this regard, stardom of youth in Kathmandu is all about the desire of gaining success and progress to accomplish ordinary things in their everyday life; and thus, they tend to follow the role models.

Post-Script: The Self in Cosmos

We five, four participants and I, arrived in Kathmandu from our villages to get and explore opportunities. Rest of the two participants (Pasa and Rajmati) struggled to quest their stardom moving towards the core city. Reflecting on the stories of the participants in random, boredom and stardom in their everyday life which are guided by the principle of self in cosmos. About this principle, Tenzin-Dolma (2008) believes:

Everything begins from the self, although each of us is but a speck in the cosmos, once we realize the connection with everything that is, and that there are no limits to our contribution, we gain a sense of self-worth and purpose that nourishes our wellbeing (p. 56).

Mobility is a part of everyday life which was initiated by themselves as Pasa's dream to come to Kathmandu was self-initiated. However, their/our journey was not easy and convenient to explore the stardom in our self. I think that they were

not mature enough to haunt the goal in their life but the city taught them to search the goal? The goal of life, the goal of education, the goal of their stardom? Possibly, the story of randomness emerged from Highmore's (2010) opinion that everyday life of youth might be affected by the fluctuating hopes, love, hatred and irritation of everyday life. Possibly, these are the struggles of youth who are exploring self in the cosmos.

As a teacher, not as the *guru*, I have constructed the stories from my students and participants showing that urban education in Kathmandu might not be addressing the needs of everyday life of urban youth. I employed the notion of urban education which might bring the wellbeing of urban students (Tobin, 2016). The notion of stardom might have emerged from the transformative learning of youth to cultivate youth agencies to develop their social life and social imagination for their wellbeing. In this line, Ruddock (2013) explains stardom of the youth as a cultural phenomenon which appeals ordinary people by promising to close the space between stars and ordinary people (p. 172). It shows that urban cosmos has become im/pure with modernization.

MANDALAM III

LIVING IN KATHMANDU

I have articulated the stories of our arrival in the previous Mandalam. When we all arrived in Kathmandu, we started living here. We experienced how our fluctuating identities and being evolved while interacting with the space and time of Kathmandu. We arrived in Kathmandu with the purpose of being and doing something, which was not very clear in the initial stage of our living in Kathmandu. How is our purpose going to change? How are we going to achieve that something? That 'something' has been more and more obscured because the desires of achieving material life have been increased. In this line,

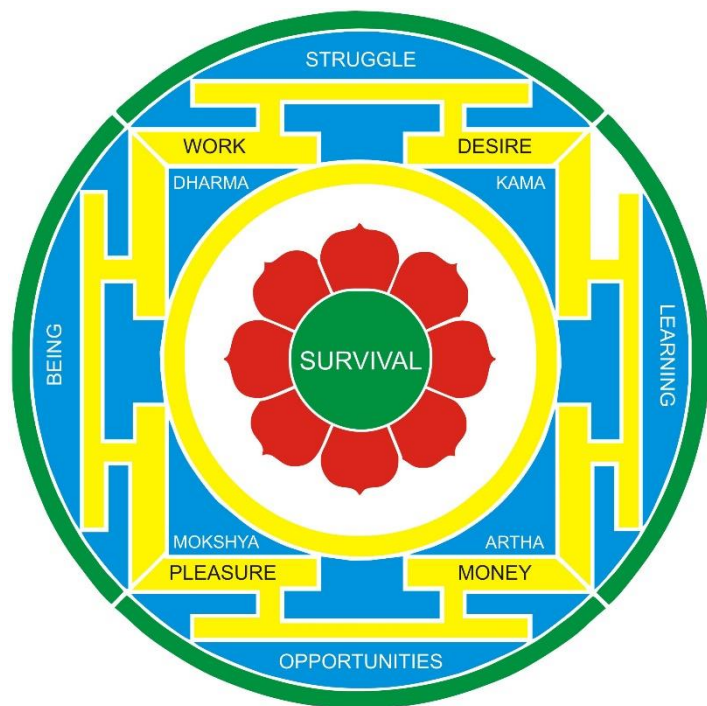


Figure 26. Survival Mandala

we redefine the purpose of living in Kathmandu. Our life in Kathmandu became more complex as compared to the stage of arrival. This Mandalam moves around our redefined purpose of living in Kathmandu. The ideas of living in Kathmandu have been emerged from the stories of my participants who told the purpose of living in Kathmandu. The section thus mainly describes the purpose of urban youth living in Kathmandu.

In so doing, I employed the notion of adversity from the resilience perspective which is mainly caused by *artha* (money) which leads them to be anonymous in their everyday life. In so doing, I chose Maili as the protagonist to tell her story. While achieving their purpose, urban youth struggle to set and reset their purpose which changes their everyday life. In doing so, another Wheel emerged as *Yantra*, *Tantra* and *Mantra* a basic technique of being resilient characteristics of youth in Kathmandu. I chose Pasa as the protagonist in this section.

WHEEL V
ADVERSITIES, *ARTHA* AND ANONYMITY

He raped my face. I'm never dating again.

Charlotte (Sex and City)

During the arrival of the youth in Kathmandu, I sketched a landscape of confusion and randomness of the very time when we mostly experienced segregation and hesitation to adopt everyday life of the city. Possibly, I sensed that Heller's (1984) description of everyday life activities are reproduced in the urban culture. But the youth who arrived in Kathmandu might not have been able to imitate such ways of living. They might have isolated with the mainstream urban culture. From the cultural perspective, our arrival in Kathmandu might have been more alienated and segregated, which reproduced inequalities. In such circumstances, we all struggled to fit into the urban culture.

In doing so, we redefined our purpose of living in Kathmandu. We could not be romantic any longer living in the city as a feature of the real space as Soja (1996) believed while participating in everyday social practices, we engaged in several struggles and became more resilient. Such perspectives enables me to see youth and their interaction with the place and people to form their identities (being) because the youth are active meaning makers of their life, giving shape to their life (living) and who actively ascribe meaning to events (learning) (Kehily, 2007). In this line, I explicitly explored how urban everyday activities lead the youth to their being, living and learning.

The Story of a Sales Girl

It could be any hot day in April 2013. It was around five in the afternoon. I was waiting for Maili at *Ratnapark*. When I had called her to set our meeting, it was nine in the morning. She had proposed to meet at *Ratnapark* around 4 pm. I arrived at *Ratnapark* around 2 pm directly from the college. I was sitting in the park and was observing people. Then, I phoned her but she did not receive my call. Five minutes later she called back me from *Jamal*. I went there, and after a few minutes she arrived. Then, we walked along the pedestal of crowded *Jamal*. She was wearing dark brown *suruwal*, dull brown sweater, and flat-heeled brown shoes. We were almost motionless and voiceless while crossing the road at *Jamal*. I was following her as an innocent child. I was searching her streaming eyes—which might explain the lifeless moments in her life.

We searched a safe and peaceful place, where we could sit, eat and talk for a few hours. She took me in a tea-shop near *Bishow-Jyoti* film hall. The tea-shop was congested and narrow. A few chairs were scattered. A show-case filled up with doughnut, bread and cookies. Most of the space of tea shop was covered with such things. Possibly, she thought that the place was not quiet to talk in the ground floor of the café. We went upstairs; it was also slender and congested but it was a little bit more open than the ground floor. As soon as we took our seat, I observed a few smokers –most of them were girls – sitting on small chairs. Perhaps, the upstairs of the tea shop was safer for girl smokers. After a few minutes, the café became empty. We started our conversation but it seemed to be more formal. I was struggling to unpack her experiences of living in Kathmandu. This meeting was different from former meetings because the conversation was lively. She seemed to be ready to tell her stories of being and living in everyday life in Kathmandu. Possibly, Maili did not

have full trust upon me in the earlier meetings. In the past 3-4 meetings, she shared just a few formal things: where was she from, what she was doing, how she was earning money and so on.

Today, she looked more bold but scary than earlier meetings. She was carrying a shopping bag. She kept her cell phone in it. She frequently took out her cell phone from her bag and kept it into the bag. She seemed as if she was confused or had been in a rush. At the time, she did not care me and other activities around her. I was closely observing her activities. Within a few minutes she closed her eyes and seemed as if she was expressing her hopelessness. I did not know what might be the cause of her hopelessness. I liked to know her and her purpose of living in the city. How did she prefer to live in the city? What were her dreams and expectations? I was not able to start our communication related to my research question; it was tough for me to explore her everyday life experiences of re-setting the purpose of living in Kathmandu. What to ask? How to start the conversation? I felt as if her hopelessness rolled in my conversation. I had already known about her family, education and intentions but I was on the way to explore some hidden mysteries covered in the city veil.

“What shall we have? Tea, coffee, or some cold drinks?” I started the conversation.

“I am too hungry; can I have some cookies or cakes?” Maili shared her intention. She seemed awkward and further said, “I did not have food in the morning as I came out of my home.”

“Didn’t you get time to prepare food?” I asked further.

“No, actually... (She seems hesitant)...I do not have money to buy rice and vegetables. I don’t have money to eat something outside of my room either in a hotel

or in a restaurant. I do not find someone who could offer me food. I do not get anything else to eat. I feel great that you offer me something.” (She seemed to be grateful to me).

This was not the first conversation with Maili. From the earlier conversation I had never assumed that she could not get food in Kathmandu. I had a kind of sympathy to her and I continued, “You can feel free to order anything that you like. Don’t worry, I will pay for it.” As soon as I offer something, I am in a dilemma of my research ethics. As a transformative researcher, is there anything to be unethical to offer food for a hungry participant? I think it is a question of humanity to offer food to a hungry person, though I cannot serve for several other hungry people in Kathmandu.

“How is your business in the grocery shop now-a-days? Is it going well, isn’t it?” I attempted to continue the conversation.

“Business! (She exclaimed). It is worse, as you know my business is something different from the one I shared earlier.”

“Is it? What is it then? (I was full of surprises) Are you not a sales girl in a grocery shop? Can you tell me something about your business?” I further inquired.

I sensed that she was not comfortable to tell what business she was doing in Kathmandu. Possibly, she did not have trust on me to share about her business. Ultimately she shared, “I work as a broker to find girls for people. I left working in the grocery shop.”

I sensed that Maili had hidden her identity in our earlier conversation. She told me that she worked in the grocery shop. Possibly, it was the urban characteristics that Maili wanted to remain anonymous to me. She might have some conditions of being completely anonymous to get freedom from the routinized social ties, but that

might also create feelings of alienation and detachment (Milgram, 1970). I felt that urban youth are likely to demonstrate their wellbeing in the city even under the terrific conditions as Maili did.

Death of a 'Salesgirl'

Listening to Maili, I was stunned and shocked. Why did Maili try to hide her identity in our earlier conversation? Possibly, she did not have trust on me to share that she was not a salesgirl.

As soon as the shopkeeper brought two cups of tea and a packet of cookies, she started to have the cookies. I was sipping a cup of tea but I was almost haunted by her profession. I was utterly confused whether to make her one of my key participants or not? I had to meet Maili frequently to explore her experiences during the journey of my research. Possibly, I was afraid of meeting *such* run girl because my society would blame me for meeting such a girl who is a broker of girls. Perhaps, my so-called status quo does not allow me to meet her frequently. Could she be open and honest of narrating her stories? I was full of dilemmas.

[Tea in the cup was almost over and I began to think over my university days. In my second year course, I studied 'Death of a Salesman', a play by Arthur Miller. Images of a salesman haunted me that time, where I created a story of saleswoman from the experiences of Maili.]

Maili who appeared to be a saleswoman in a grocery shop in the initial days of my research was no longer a salesgirl. I still remembered her voice, "I sell goods in the grocery shop. I make my customer happy." She had said it when I had met her in a tea shop near *Kalimati* for the first time. Then, I had created an image of Maili who worked in the shops from morning to evening to struggle living in Kathmandu. I had a kind of understanding of Maili that she completed her duty properly to live and

adjust in Kathmandu. My previous understanding of Maili as a hard worker youth who had “strong willpower; important sense of solidarity; negotiation skills; under high pressure from adult competitors working in the same trade (Aptekar & Stoecklin, 2014, p. 15) gradually got diminished. Could she be an ‘honest and loyal contributors to family income as Aptekar and Stoecklin (2014) understand of youth? I was skeptical about Maili. Are the youth in Kathmandu responsible for their family and society? How far do they change their purpose of living in Kathmandu? Let me bring some images, voices and situations of my other participants through the screen play.

Screen Play: Resetting the Purpose Living in Kathmandu

From the narratives of Maili, I was thinking on the purpose of youth? What is the purpose of living in the city? How do they set their preferences? Are the priorities of youth differing in Kathmandu? Let me present their purposes of living and struggling in the city.

EXT. RING ROAD @THASIKHEL LALITPUR - DAY

Untidy savvy youth, called Suresh was walking along the ring road of Kathmandu. He supposed himself as an urban ethnographer wearing torn-out jeans and converse shoes. The ring road was under construction so it was filled up with dust and dirt. It was difficult to walk on the roadside for him. Hardly four vehicles could pass on the road and there was less space for pedestrians. He had inserted a set of white ear phones into his ears, possibly he was listening to some English songs. He was nodding his head, walking by putting his hands into the pocket and observing the youth movement in the city, thinking about an image of Maili. He walked nearly three minutes on the road, passing a temple and church, he went across the road.

EXT. HOTEL CALIFORNIA – DAY

Suresh climbs up the stairs and reaches the balcony of Hotel California. It is well decorated and from here the scene of the road with dense traffic can be viewed.

SURESH

Namaskar friends!

CHOROUS

Namaskar Sir!

SURESH

How was the day, Guys?

MONTU

I have sold all the gods and goddess in the temple. Today, I went to *Thaiba*, nearly 10 kilometers far from my hut. The day was fine as I was able to meet my target today.

PASA

I worked in the office till 2 pm and directly came here to participate in the meeting. I do not have any problem to leave my office during the office hours. All staff are doing the same. Why not me?

RAJESH DAI

As I work for a businessman as his personal secretary, my job is to make him happy and get salary in time. Sometimes, I assist him in his personal stuff. Today, most of the time, I was busy in his driving school.

ROCK STAR

[Takes out his head phones from the ears and speaks silently. He seems to be hesitant while he is talking to each other. Today, he looks smart in his red t-shirt.]

My duty is to study but I hardly pay attention to my duty. I like to be a rock star thus my priorities get shifted to move from here and there.

[The camera pans and tilts up to Suresh. The background of the polluted city is captured.]

SURESH

How did your duty get changed in Kathmandu?

MAILI

First, Kathmandu provided choices of work, based on our abilities and skills. I always selected the best one. In doing so, I first started working at a grocery shop, then at a beauty parlor and then as a ... (stops talking)

RAJESH DAI

My purpose of arriving Kathmandu is to get an opportunity to study and earn. Thus, I was dedicated to my study but could not perform well, and, therefore, I searched a job but it did not last long. I changed jobs frequently.

MONTU

Since my arrival in Kathmandu, I worked in my father's factory and I do the things seriously.

WAITER

[A tall 20/22 years old enters through the back door of the restaurant, holding a tray in his hand with cups of tea and coffee. He puts his tray on the table safely and smiles at all. He has brown eyes, fair complexion, Mongolian nose, gets a great smile in his leaps.]

Do you need anything more?

SURESH

No thanks, brother. Where are you from, brother?

WAITER

I am from *Ilam*.

SURESH

How long have you been working here?

WAITER

It has been only 3 months.

SURESH

[The sun is sinking in the West hill of Kathmandu.]

What do you do?

WAITER

Oh! You know, I clean the tables, wipe the floor, and serve the guests, make people happy. Ultimately I earn money.

RAJMATI

[The camera is very close to Rajmati. Possibly, it is a close up shot.]

How old are you, brother?

MAILI

[Speaks in between]

I think he's 22/23.

WAITER

Correct!

RAJMATI

Forget it! Tell what other things you are doing here in Kathmandu?

WAITER

What to tell Ma'am, I am earning money. I fuck all my study and it is my kind of job.

[All have tea and coffee. They have 'Wi-Fi' (Selfie together). They chat with each other. Rock Star approaches Suresh. They shake hands and say good bye to each other. Suresh smiles and thanks all for their participation. One by one, the participants exit from the hotel and go their homes.]

FADE OUT

Reflecting on the Screen Play

The screen play is constructed based on the informal conversations with my participants to show how they all set aim of living in Kathmandu. One of the aims of living in Kathmandu is to earn money. The main purpose of living in Kathmandu is to work and earn. The purpose of urban youth could be redefined as their life styles are embedded with the struggle for maintaining their individual interests. Thus, their purposes have been gradually changing from the basic survival needs to being 'somebody' with adjusting themselves in the circle of mode of production and consumption.

Most of my research participants were busy in work to feed themselves and their family by selling something that they had whether it is goods and services. Are they commodities who sell their knowledge, experience, and skills in the city? Does a city make youth commodities? When people are unable to sell something that they have, they may face problems to survive in the city. Possibly, it is the feature of a capitalist city. How does the market choose youth and shape their purpose of living in 'modern' Kathmandu. The priorities of urban youth are changing to meet the everyday needs in Kathmandu.

One of the everyday needs of urban youth is education. However, the city has been reproducing the disjuncture of learning. Disjuncture for me is a complex phenomenon of everyday life of urban youth as it challenges the taken for granted status quo (Jarvis, 2012). Rajesh Dai, Rock Star, Pasa and Maili experienced disjuncture created by the imagined urban space. How vulnerable are they? Can it be taken for granted? What kind of education influences them to fall apart from taken-for-granted situation, believing that education empowers people?

Most of the time, I experience that my participants perform most individualist duties which only serve to satisfy their own needs. Thus, possibly, they may have priorities of accomplishing their duties in their everyday life via experiencing disjuncture too. It is not only the case of Maili but all other participants who perform resilience by acquiring “a practical aptitude preparing them to cope with and manage precariousness, unpredictability and diversity of life changes” (Martinez 2015, p. 16). Possibly, my research participants are selling goods, working in shops and offices and are engaging to work, and strive to serve their interest and the interest of their family too. In this line, they are not pure individualists but they also preferred to belong to their own family and community.

I recall the movie *loot*, when all youth planned to rob the bank to be rich in a swift way. Most of the news about youth get connected to drug addiction, rape, theft and other things. I do agree that virtues among the youth are gradually diminishing in the cities like Kathmandu. Cities are the centers of creating ambitions and youth are committed to ensure their ambitions at any cost. Urban youth become more individualists as Pasa, Maili and Rajesh Dai, even though they showed their belongingness to the family values. When the screen play ended, we all stood together having Wefie. Perhaps, urban selfie culture portrayed the visibility of youth

as a self-esteeming individuals. Most of my participants (except Rajesh Dai, and Montu) are educating themselves to have selfies to show their new looks, new clothes, visit new places, mostly restaurants.

Flashback of Maili

“When I was 17, I came to Kathmandu. It was my first visit. I was in love with Kathmandu at first sight. It was decorated with lights and life of people. I observed the city and its people no matter what they were doing, where they were going. I was happy to come to Kathmandu and feeling fortunate as a new session of my life was going to start. I guessed that my dreams would come true very soon.

I completed Grade VII from a school in my village. I was ridiculed in the village when I failed in the school examination. I was humiliated and tortured many times in my village when I failed Grade VII twice. My relatives enforced me to get married. However, I did not want to get married. I would like to experience urban life which was full of happiness and satisfaction. Then I moved to Kathmandu. I came to Kathmandu with the help of my friends. Contrary to the village, I did not find anyone who ridiculed me in Kathmandu.

I was feeling blessed to see clean people, folk people, thick traffic, big malls, and market all in a rush. Gradually, I was taking a shape in the city.

During those days, I lived in *Khestrapati* with my friends. I could see flocks of people walking in the street from the window of my rented room. I wondered where these people were heading to. Are they struggling like me to make their future? I was afraid of coming out of the rented room. In the evening, I used to go for a walk to observe the city. I lost the ways many times in the junction of *Asan* while returning to my room. Life in Kathmandu is a junction; a junction of dream and destiny; a junction of problems and pain, and a junction of past and future. I was

standing in the junction of the city to find the right direction to move my life ahead. I did not find the right direction to shape my life in the city like Kathmandu. In the beginning, I had very good days here as I was living with my friends and started to earn something to live. I started working as a salesgirl in a grocery shop. I would earn NRS 5000/-per month. I could afford food, clothes and shelter in Kathmandu. I would reach the shop early morning at around 7 am. When the boss would open the shop, I would clean each and every corner of the shop. The boss seemed to be religious as he worshiped god early in the morning. He would not speak to anyone while he was worshipping. He would never leave the counter the whole days but during his worship, I could get the keys of the counter as well. I could sell things and return the money.

In an early morning of May, my boss was worshipping the god. I sold bread and milk to our first customer. As I opened the cash-counter, I saw bundles of notes (rupees). I saw such a big amount of money for the first time in my life. Then I wished I had such earning to collect bundles of notes. Often, I would see the counter to know how much my boss collected that day. Ultimately I decided to leave the shop because I would not earn such bundles if I worked in a grocery shop. How long do I stay in this grocery shop with 5000/- month?’ This question chased me.

Then, I planned to switch the job. I would like to start my own business. But I did not have a penny to start a business. Then I started working in a beauty parlor thinking of learning parlor skills and opening similar parlor. My roommate, my sister found a parlor where I could learn skills and also earn some money. It paid me less than the grocery shop but I had an expectation to open a parlor myself in the city.

The beauty parlor was located in *Thamel*. I saw many tourists and well-to-do people passing by. I was jealous to see their life. I imagined spending my life as they

did which added a passion in me for earning money and making my life in Kathmandu. There was a curio shop in front of my parlor. The parlor was too cold in the winter as sunlight could never enter. We would go in front of the curio shop for sunbathing in the winter. Within a week, I came to know Pemba Lama- a worker of that curio shop. Gradually we became friends. Our friendship deepened. I longed to see an unfamiliar face of Pemba. I started spending a couple of hours with Pemba every day. His face became an unforgettable face for me (She smiled and paused for a while).

One sunny afternoon, Pemba proposed me to go somewhere. Date for the first love! We went to *Bhaktapur* and spent a day together. We talked a lot, shared our thoughts, had delicious food and came back to the rented room. Pemba fueled my passion of earning money. He not only proposed love but proposed to be a business partner. He suggested opening a massage parlour like the beauty parlour, which would offer more facilities to the customers so that they would not be afraid of paying more money.

Pemba became the first source of inspiration and hope for me to earn money. I found Pemba's plan interesting to earn millions of rupees within a year. Who would not like to earn money in this world? I had never thought of earning a large amount of money in the village. Perhaps, it is Kathmandu that planted a seed of earning money in my mind and heart.

Pemba usually said everything could be sold in Kathmandu. He came up with a concrete plan to run a massage center. He told me to collect two lakhs to invest in the massage center. He had done all the necessary exercise but was unable to collect two hundred thousand rupees. He requested me to start a new business. He promised that he would return my money within a couple of months. I trusted him. But I did

not have any source to collect two hundred thousand rupees. I asked for money with all known relatives and friends. Ultimately, I gave two hundred thousand rupees to Pemba. We two became partners of a business.

Earning and Learning

Maili's aspiration to earn more money in Kathmandu got flourished when she saw a bundle of rupees in the counter of the grocery shop. It is a quality of the city that increased her passion to be rich. All of a sudden her expectation of earning more money increased. All my participants valued their stay in Kathmandu as meaningful as they could earn more money than in their villages. Why did Kathmandu implant in its dwellers a passion of earning money?

It is not only Maili but almost all participants were hopeful to increase their earning so as to maintain their urban lifestyles. In this line, I would like to present a dialogue with my participant.

“At any cost my aim in Kathmandu is to earn money,” said Rajesh Dai.

“What are your plans for earning money? Can you invest in an industry?” I further asked.

“I am ready to get married with *Sindu Nepali*, a porn star working in the USA,” he said.

“What would your parents think about your marriage?” I further asked.

“Who cares? They would be happy if I gave certain amount of money to them.” How easily my participants prepared themselves to fight against the established system of the society? As one of my participants seemed to be ready to get married with a porn star. How is youth mind set changing in the city? I heard a proverb during my childhood days ‘*Jau Bazar, Lyau Hajar*’ (Go to market and bring thousand). One of the features of the city is money, which becomes visible in such a

powerful way that youth are easily attracted to it. Such opinion was reflected in the everyday life of the youth.

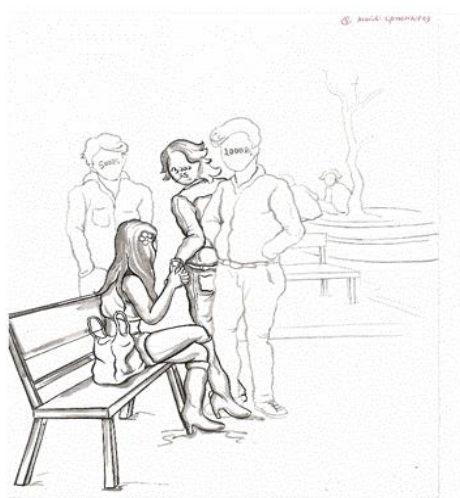


Figure 27. Bargaining in the City

gets connected to Artha they have or will have in Kathmandu.

It was a dream for Rock-star to earn money without efforts. “I don’t know how do I earn money but I am sure I will earn money here. Possibly, I go abroad to make money.” Likewise, Rajmati- the Geek also would like to make her career in the bank or musical industry to earn money. Thus, the viability of the youth

Commodity in Kathmandu

Maili had not enjoyed beauty parlour as she further narrated her own story:

I left the beauty parlor. I was no more an employee. I became the boss of my own industry. I became an owner. I along with Pemba opened a massage centre in *Thamel*. That day, when Pemba called business leaders to inaugurate the Mandala Massage Center, he introduced me as one of the owners of Mandala Massage Center. Most of the guests seemed very proud of Pemba and me. I was feeling proud to be the owner of my own business. I did not know how massage center works. I thought possibly massage centers offered more advanced services and facilities to the valued customers.

As I became an owner of the massage center, Pemba told me to look after all everyday activities, administration and transaction. I was ready to do that. After the opening of the massage center, Pemba called few girls as employees in the massage center on the first day. That day, it provided other services to its customers. It was

not easy to run massage centers in Kathmandu. Above all, we had to make the cops happy.

For the first few weeks, I was not comfortable to stay in the center. However, I could not leave the business as I invested money in it. It was a huge amount of money for me.

I was too sympathetic to my workers. Some of them were from Gorkha, nearer my village too. They were destined to do sexual work. They had their own life and were compelled to do so. Pemba and I had planned to get married very soon so I offered my girlhood to Pemba. I was an undeclared wife of Pemba. I was not too skeptical to get married with Pemba even though he frequently changed his voice, mind and tone of conversation. Sometimes, he said he would marry me within a year. Sometimes, he said to invest more in business. Sometimes, he fought with me.

One day, a crowd of customers was waiting for their services in the massage centers. Pemba requested me to serve the customers. For the first time, I slept with some customers. He said that the customers were our gods and if they were angry with us, we could not be billionaires. “I promise, I marry you within a month. Let me manage a flat for us.” He would say. I trusted him and got ready to be a *prostitute* once in my life.

Gradually, I was becoming a prostitute. I spent such days in the massage center for two years. Pemba did not marry me. He escaped from marrying me. He said, “How can I marry a prostitute?” I was then more tortured.

It was a day in November 2010; Pemba was missing taking three hundred thousand rupees that I had collected from the massage center. I searched him everywhere but I could not find him anywhere. I filed a case against him in a police-station. The police were also running after him. One day a police officer informed

me that he was caught in *Damauli* (130 KM West from Kathmandu) while he was robbing a house.

I was almost empty. I didn't have any money. No hopes. No expectation. How has my simple life been changed in Kathmandu? I could not think what to do and what not to. A few weeks later I got a call from the police station.

"Are you Maili?" a voice asked me.

"Yes, I am speaking. Is there anything?"

"We caught Pemba against whom you have sued. Will you come to the police station please?"

After the phone call, I was in a dilemma how I could get money back from Pemba. I was quite sure he would not marry me. I hoped to get the money back. So I thought to go to the police station and request the police to get my money back. I have no such regret to my past life. I was trapped by the dream of being rich.

I went to the police station and met Pemba. He was lean and thin. His face was not as glowing as it used to be. I was sympathetic to him to some extent. I needed money at any cost from him. He requested me to have a bail to get released from the prison. I said that I would do that if he paid my money back. He agreed to pay the money.

I returned from the police station in the afternoon. I was hopeful to get the money back from him. I got a call from a lady in the afternoon. She claimed that Pemba was her husband and she would bring money in the evening. I was shocked to know that Pemba was a married man and he had a wife and children. My remaining dreams got shattered. She came in the evening and returned my money.

I had dinner and went to sleep. I was thinking of using the money soulfully. I was planning to leave the existing profession. Though it was an easy way to earn

money, my heart suggested changing the profession. I was thinking of starting a beauty parlour.

On that evening, I heard someone knocking at my door. I did not open the door. But the knocking was continuing. After a while, I opened the door. A man who was looking as if he was from the Terai was in front of me. I immediately closed the door. I was totally confused. Who was he and what did he want? I was perplexed too. He persuaded me to get the money back to him. Later on I knew that he was Pemba's friend. Pemba had sent him to get the money again to start a new business. I did not listen to him. I threatened him to scream loudly. All of a sudden, he hit me, I fell unconsciously on the ground.

I found myself in the bed of a hospital around 10:30 pm that day. Friends from another room knew about it and they had taken me to hospital. I sued against him through the help of Women's Commission.

When he was in prison, his parents and wife came and requested releasing him from the prison. His mother said, "I love my son very much. He cannot do such things. Possibly someone might have compelled to do so." Maybe, they sensed me a mechanical prostitute who would sleep to anyone for the sake of money. Still, the case is going on in the court. He is in prison; I am still searching customers in the streets of *Thamel* and *Jamal*. It is my plight: plight of being a prostitute.

Kathmandu became completely inhuman to me. Still I love to live in Kathmandu; still I am hopeful to get a black magic that would transform my life. I hope that Kathmandu would make me a nymph. Though I always have to hide from the police, and I cannot do this profession openly, I would love to live in Kathmandu.

Commodity: Adversities for Youth

I was sitting on a bench in the street in front of the *Dharahara*, where street food stalls were set up. I was thinking Maili's story and attempting to relate it with the case of my other participants. While reflecting on the story of Maili, I liked to relate with the adversities of youth experience in the city. As Maili aimed to earn more money not only to maintain her everyday life but to increase her ways of living in Kathmandu, she became more passionate to earn more money and fell into the chasm of prostitution. Mostly my participants valued money because they might have faced a lot of scarcity living in Kathmandu. The purpose of living in the city like Kathmandu is more inclined to earn more money. However, youth hardly get opportunities to work in Kathmandu. In Maili's case, she did not have academic qualification and any other skills to earn money. She was not well informed about the business she was going to start in such a situation, so she experienced adversities.

The passion of money among the youth was increasing. In this line, I think they might be experiencing adversities because they want money to consume goods and services in Kathmandu. These youth are more passionate about making their life successful in terms of increasing their purchasing capacity. How much are they preoccupied with the material possession? Why do these youth make choices of goods and service? Is it the nature of the capitalist Kathmandu? Why do they like to own a car and a house in Kathmandu? Possibly, these are the symptoms of the consumerist behaviour youth flourished in Kathmandu and thus they needed money to do so.

***Artha* in the City Life**

So far as the youth earn money, I am interested in how they would spent it. What are their choices? Exploring the answer to the question, I reflect back on the

stories of Maili. How did Kathmandu construct and destroy the dreams of Maili? How were her dreams formed and deformed in the same streets of Kathmandu? Maili has been making her ‘mystic journey’ (Nagarkoti, 2014) in Kathmandu. In this line, I used the concept of *Kaam* to describe the youth and their utopian fantasy for pleasure seeking as it takes place offering a variety of performative masks (male) and masquerades (female) (Jagodzinski, 2005). Let me tell an anecdote of another day, in another café. Maili, me and few customers were taking our seats in the café corner. After 5/6 rounds of meetings and chatting with Maili, we became friends. I won her confidence and trust. She started talking to me openly in the *Van Gogh Cafe*.

The *Van Gogh Café* is centrally located in the Kathmandu valley. It is a classical blend of Hindu goddess in the modern wall. I feel more comfortable to book a table in *Van Gogh Cafe* because I can have ample space for parking for my motorbike. I can have no disturbances from others, so that I can record the conversation too.

“I have spent many nights with my customers.” All of a sudden she became rude. I was a bit scared of her. I am recalling Lacanian analysis at this stage as “sex is, therefore, a metaphysical category, whose riddle will never be solved” (Jagodzinski, 2005, p. 14). “Fuck. I don’t want to talk about my customers.” She said, pressing her lips together. “How hellish time I spent with them. I was feeling the whole *Dharahara* in my head,” She said.

She was a bit furious. “Shall I smoke a cigarette? She asked for my permission.

I said, “Sure.”

“Hello, waiter”, she called a waiter. Waiter arrived nearer her. “May I have a cigarette?”

“Sure Ma’am. Waiter replied.

After a few minutes, the waiter brought a cigarette in a plate. She lit it and took a deep breath with smoke. Her dull brown hair, pale skin, and dark eyes made her look like to be in a very somber mood. It was raining outside. A very big noise and thunder was hitting Kathmandu. Kathmandu was disturbed not only of thunder and rain but of melancholies experiences of Maili.

“I do not like to recall these past events. You know past is history and future is mystery. Past often haunts me as a ghost. I am attempting to forget it. I would like to start my new life in the old city. The decision I am going to make about my past life may rise with new hopes and aspiration too.”

She kept talking about her life, her journey in Kathmandu, and her destiny. I was not able to track our conversation to know her customers. Are they all brutal? Are they all savage? Are they all beasts who just like to have sex with her? It was quite difficult for me to explore something about her regular customers. I kept snapping my fingers on the table. Her each expression haunted me and flabbergasted me, and made me compassionate. We sat down together, facing each other. She told me a dream of being human, living simple and pleasant life rather than spending such a vulnerable life.

I thought whether the city teaches her lessons to be human. What makes her to leave the dream of being rich? Do these upheavals in her life turn her back to be human? How does she live her life again?

“I could not go back to my village. My parents and relatives had great expectations from me to support them. But I don’t have anything at this stage. I plan to live here in Kathmandu two years more for better or for worse without any more ambition. I don’t know where the destiny would lead me. I will no longer spend

brutal, dark and spinning days across the streets, behind the bars, and beside the restaurants. I will not feel sadder in my life. Kathmandu is no longer brutal and sadist for me. It may create the vibes of opportunity. Thus, I decide to live two more years in Kathmandu. I don't know what I will do after two years but I won't leave here."

She seemed optimistic, sharing how cities implanted the seed of hope in the people. I was also hopeful like Maili. Almost all frustrated faces in the dark streets of Kathmandu are searching hope. I do not know whether Pandora has scattered hope box in the city like Kathmandu.

Extreme Adversity in Kathmandu

"Pemba pushed me to the chasm of prostitute. I became ready to sell my body. I recall what Pemba used to say in the beginning of our friendship that everything is saleable in Kathmandu. Thus, I sell my body. I had sexual relationship with many people. Most of them were devil. They did not have any sense of humanity as they treated me as a puppet. They often misbehaved me.

But a few of them were good people. Last year in summer, one of the customer arrived. As soon as he entered into the room, I saw an ill looked, tall and thin man. He seemed to be a professional fucker. He quickly took off his clothes, t-shirt, pants, and innerwear along with his golden chain. He kept everything on the table in the corner of the room. When he completed his 'holy' job, he put on his clothes but forgot to take this golden chain. When I saw it, I wanted to give it to him but I did not have his contact. I was hopeful that he would come back when he knew about it.

He appeared next afternoon. I handed him his golden chain. He thanked me and moved away. Then after, he became my regular customer/friend and he never

harshly behaved me. As soon as he completed his 'holy' task he would go. We would not have any conversation with each other.

Reflecting the story of extreme adversity that Maili faced I pondered on how youth are living in chaos of the city and experiencing adversities. Possibly, my participants might have been experiencing such adversities in Kathmandu as Werner (1993) argues that adversities are created by the 'Western' dominated brining up and education. In the similar line, Ungar (2008) also points out that such adversities are outcomes of the cultural context. The cultural context of the Kathmandu which increases the need of money might be creating adversities.

Mainly, the adversities of urban youth are related to drinking, driving and demonstrating urbanized characteristics. I observed that youth were highly willing to spend their life with the pleasures so as to experience the freedom in their life. The choice of their freedom was rarely accepted in the family and society. Here I also recall the adversities Rajmati experienced. She often liked to stay with her friends outside of home, which was not accepted at her home. Likewise, Pasa hardly missed the gathering with his friends on Friday. Rock Star always wanted to drink in the fine dining restaurant with his senior boss as the symptoms of freedom. In this regard, I generated meaning that urban youth like my participants would usually like to consume the best quality food, clothes, and shelter for their liberation. Isn't it the extreme of materialism?

Re-Orientation: Searching Order in Chaos

From the stories of Maili, I understand that everyday life in the city was moved around a vicious circle of money which creates adversities in their life. The narratives of other participants also depict that they have been experiencing

vulnerability in their everyday life because they are running after money. It indicates that adversities might be the outcomes of city life. The city life was very chaotic and complex (Batty, 2005) and the city dwellers attempted to be anonymous. Kathmandu to some extent seems to be dual- city that creates “increasingly difficult conditions for minority youth seeking work, while the same changes provide the basis for lucrative salaries and benefits for top executives” (Flagana, 2010, p. 301). Maili and Pasa were examples, who are struggling to work in the city. All youth in Kathmandu are searching their destiny to earn money.

I link the story of Maili with one of the principles of mandala which is searching order in chaos. Maili and other participants are experiencing adversities in Kathmandu because of the chaotic city life which implanted the seed of earning money in their hearts. The passion of earning money created a state of chaos, however they have created a pattern of living in the city. As Trungpa (2011) believes, “It is orderly, because it comes in a pattern; it is chaos, because it is confusing to work with that order” (p. xx). My participants seemed to be confused to live in urban life. As Trungpa (2011) believes:

The idea of orderly chaos is that we are confused methodically. In other words, the confusion is intentional. It is intentional in that we deliberately decide to ignore ourselves. We decide to boycott wisdom and enlightenment. (p. xx)

Maili might have been known to the adversities of adapting prostitution in the city life but she could not escape from the confusion. It might be her intention to be confused. Her passion to be rich in the city created self-existing circle and decided to adopt such a profession. It might be her ignorance created deliberately. Her

perception and consciousness might have been created from the daily existence in the city life.

Connecting to the everyday life of urban youth with their adversities, *artha* and anonymity, it is orderly chaos. The chaos of urban life makes *artha* in the ground work of mandala. *Artha* is the supreme ground of urban life, where we struggle to get in and face many adversities. Since mandala is based on our ignorance and confusion, there is no point in discussing it unless we know who we are and what we are. Maili, Pemba, Pasa, are moving towards the circle of the Samsara aspects of mandala and there is no nirvanic aspects of mandala at all. The mandala principle includes the mandala of samsara and the mandala of nirvana, which are equal and reciprocal. If we do not understand the samsaric aspect of mandala, there is no nirvanic aspect of mandala either.

No matter how they earn money they need a huge amount of money. It is possibly they might be affected by the advertisement which influence the everyday life of the youth for promoting commodity (Chakraborty, 2011). Urban youth in their arrival in Kathmandu set and reset their purpose of living. It is my satire to the urban youth in Kathmandu who would hardly reflect on their cosmology for making life happy with the traditional wisdom. Learning of these youth is guided by modernity at large as the theory of Appadurai (1996) suggests creating the cultural disjuncture. My participants along with me experienced cultural disjuncture for performing their everyday life activities.

WHEEL VI

YANTRA, TANTRA AND MANTRA

Remember my mantra: distinct... or extinct.

Tom Peters

It is not only Maili who wants to start her ‘new’ life in Kathmandu. Pasa- Mr. Weed is also not happy with his income in Kathmandu. He liked to increase his income but they were sure that it was not possible to earn more from their job and education. Similarly, Montu was not satisfied with his business in Kathmandu. He liked to start something new in his own village with his own family and relatives. Rock Star and his dream was gradually fading away with the college education. Rajmati was struggling enough to make her career as banker and singer. In these disorders, they got a space to identify order in the city. It was possibly a rock star who narrated his story among us in this Wheel of text. However, we might have a different destiny to look at the city. In this line, several bubbles of thought emerged and vanished in my mind but I was chased by the question: “How do urban youth serve their purpose of living in Kathmandu?” I thought some metaphors from the Eastern Wisdom and came to the ideas of Yantra, Tantra, and Mantra.

Knowing of Yantra, Tantra, and Mantra

I did not study Sanskrit and I was not its practitioner but I was *infatuated* by these Sanskrit metaphors. Let me unpack my understanding of these terms. I was humiliating with the ideas using these metaphors at one stage. However, I consoled myself as understating of these Sanskrit terms might not have rooted in the essentialism. Literally, the term yantra derived from the word *yatna* which means efforts. In this regard, yantra is the symbol of efforts which aims to attain the cosmic

unity of individuals with the graphic, mathematics and magic representation of the divine one. The yantras are constructed through the reflection of the prehistoric time and space. The yantras therefore should not be confused with magic or superstition, but they are a real tool of worship. The meaning of the word yantra in Sanskrit is in fact instrument, support, machine, and device. Many yantras are contained in a square (bhupur) with four gates. The square represents the material world while the gates are the points of access into the yantra. They lead us gradually towards its center representing the supreme consciousness. A yantra is an instrument that allows us to make an inner journey to the discovery of the supreme self. I used the notion of yantra to describe the tools urban youth use for their liberation. This question comes to my mind as I see that everyday life in Kathmandu still follows the traditional values as Levy's (1992) believes. In this line, I use the metaphor of *yantra* describing how everyday life of urban youth is depended on the tools and technology. Moreover, yantras mean instruments, an apparatus, a talisman or mystical diagrams (Chawdhri, 1992). Through yantra, I depict the role of technology in the everyday life of youth in Kathmandu

The term tantra was coined by *tan* which means body and *tra* means control. Traditional sages used tantra to control their body and mind so as to get freedom from the worldly life. In the line, tantra is a special process or methodology of achieving energies for salvation from the material life. There are several "levels" in tantra to perform the rituals at which these *Devis* (Goddess) can be worshiped with the prescribed mantra and yantra. Like a simple worship of the yantra with the mantra recitation, as a remedial astrological measure, we can elaborate worship with all tantrak rituals for attaining various siddhis associated with these tantras and for spiritual salvation (Yaspal Jee, 2014). Successful *sadhana* of these *Vidyas* gives

several boons to the practitioner. The tantrik yogi who has control over his senses and positively inclined uses the boons to guide people and uses it for the benefit of mankind. In this regard, I used the metaphor of tantra to refer how do urban youth tame their body to adapt the city life in Kathmandu. Levy (1992) used the term tantric to refer to the rituals and celebrations in the traditional Newari city of *Bhaktapur*. Nevertheless, I use the metaphor of *Tantra* to refer to the rituals youth are performing in the city. Do they have similar rituals which were followed from the tradition of Kathmandu? Do they like to participate in the rituals such as *Jatra* (Carnivals)? What kind of rituals do they like to perform in their everyday life? The youth in city make a kind of form of being from the *tantra* they use. I use the concept of *tantra* to describe their knowledge or technique of living in the city. *Tantra* means technique or knowledge or technology of being able to unmake and make life” (Sadguru, 2015).

Likewise, mantras root word *man*, refers to think and to contemplate verbal formulas of special power, are the hearts of the ritual tradition as instrument of thought, a mantra should be preceded and followed by the pronunciation (Yelle, 2003). Originally designating any Vedic hymn the term mantra in the Tantric tradition refers also to formulas of a special sort distinguished from the Vedic mantras. The most distinctive feature of tantric mantras is the apparently meaningless “seed” (bija) mantras, syllables such as *hri* , *kri* , and *sri* , although there is precedent for these in some Vedic formulas (Yelle, 2003).

Mantra in the real form are interpreted with the combination of sounds, vibration and energies which blends universe and human consciousness. There are two forms of mantras a) *Aagnaya Mantra* and b) *Saumya Mantra*. *Aagnaya* mantras emerged from the earth, fire, and sky whereas *Saumya* Mantra emerged from the

water and air (Yaspal Jee, 2014). The Hindu tradition describes the whole human body as made up of these five elements: water, air, earth, fire and sky. These mantras are chanted differently in different occasions which connect the human soul and body. In this line, I use the notion of Mantra describing the thinking process of urban youth.

Likewise, another metaphor is

mantra, which I employ to refer to the ways of controlling the mind. How do youth control their mind? I

become a bit more ironical to describe the mantra of youth in city. Literally mantra is a complete set of words derived from the vedic

tradition to offer gods and goddess

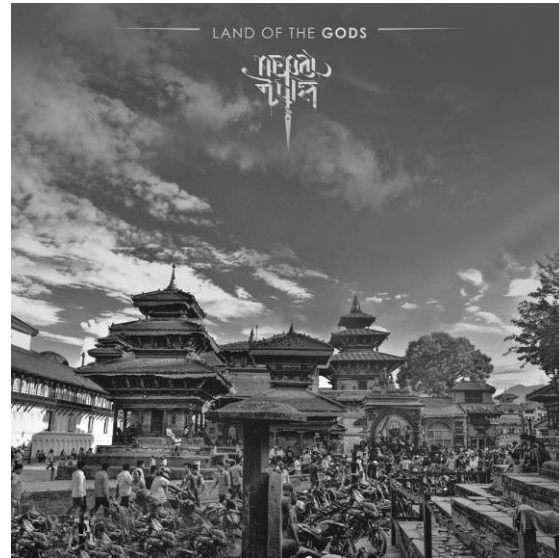


Figure 28: Tantric City

(Chawdhri, 1992, p. 75). Ironically, urban youth in the city set their mantra from the slogan of multinational brands and attributed to the mass consumer culture. These three metaphors “*yantra, tantra and mantra* play their roles in erasing the illusion and establishing realities” (Rao, 2004, p. 247).

Pre-Script: Yantra and Youth

It could be any day of fieldwork in June 2013, I liked to observe the city and youth from the window of a bus. I planned to travel by *Sajha Yatayat* – a public city bus system. I boarded onto the bus that ran from *Lagankhel* to *New Bus Park*. Some of the people were occupying seats on the bus. The seats were divided into two parts; first front part was for the girls/women whereas the last part was for male. Unlike in other public vehicles in Kathmandu, the bus driver was in his uniform. I did not hear helpers in *Sajha Yatayat* shouting and calling their passengers like helpers in other

public vehicles such as micro buses and tempos. Most of the passengers were taking their seat on the bus. The bus now was slowly getting its speed towards its destination but I did not know where I was going. I was almost purposeless as a vagabond travelling by bus in Kathmandu and observing youth in the city.

Dear Reader,

It was around four o'clock in the afternoon. It was a cool experience to observe the youth in the streets, riding bikes, and walking. I observed the life styles of youth who might be untouched by the current political upheavals, and hardships of living in the city. They seemed to be as chill as Tuborg. "Where am I going? Where is my destination?" I asked myself as soon as I took my seat on the bus. Where shall I get off? I was thinking of the last destination. The bus arrived at *Jawalakhel*, a few people got off there. Many people got on the bus. After a few minutes' wait, the bus moved towards other destinations. Still, I was not able to make my mind. But I think we all have the 'fixed' destination, death. I do not know why am I contemplating on 'death' today? Possibly, life does not give me a chance to think about death. I am thinking in a way of experiencing life that always serves a background to the meanings of death just as the meanings of death always serve as a background to those of life (Ross, 1997, p. 298). This cyclic relation of death and life or life and death contemplates the moments and happening occurring in the city life. Thus, I remained quiet to ask about a possible destination on the bus. We all were rushing to get such temporary things. Death! No one seems ready to go to their last destination by *Sajha Yatayat*. However, the destinations for youth may vary in Kathmandu, as their desire of going somewhere vary.

In between life and death, yantras are the inseparable tools for the youth to live in the city. I noticed that the bus arrived at *Tripureshower*. I was viewing the

panoramic scene of Kathmandu from its windows. When I got off the *Sajha Yatayat* bus, it was 4 pm at *Ratnapark*. I did not have any plan to meet my participants that day. However, I was thinking of organizing their narratives in a sequence of presenting their passion of using technology in their everyday life. I wandered into dirty streets of Kathmandu thinking of the yantras (Such as smart phones, laptops, I-pad, and other many more gadgets) they used in their everyday life. Most of the youth for me seemed very cool with their white ear phones. In my case, neither I panicked nor did I enjoy the white ear phones. When I observed youth with white ear phones, I sensed that they did not care what was happening around them. Have they become machines? Aren't they inquisitive to know someone or something around them? Is life more mechanistic and individualist in Kathmandu? How do these yantras transform or manipulate the ways of living in Kathmandu? Can life be possible in the city without yantras? However, yantras are the tools in the Hindu mythology to achieve salvation, to unify with the god (Chawdhri, 1992). How would youth in Kathmandu like to achieve salvation with these yantras in their everyday life?

In this context, I constructed an ethnodrama describing the use of yantras in the city, recollecting the lived experiences of my participants. My ethnodrama was set at *Van Gogh Cafe*, where I could drink a large glass of hot lemon/a large cup of coffee/a large bottle of beer/a large peg of whisky to recollect the memories of my participants. Today, we are in the same set as usual in the previous ethnodrama.

Pasa: Life rocks! I wish life could be as smart as my cell phone. I am using a smart cell phone on which I can chat with my buddies, selfie with guys, play the games of thrones, get connected and disconnected with my circle. I can have connection with the people around the world yet I have remained disconnected with my family and relatives.

Rajesh Dai: I think in a way that I can follow Modi, Obama, Gaga and several others on twitter but I am a bit indifferent to what my parents expect from me.

Rock Star: I became closer to the girl via Facebook, exchanged phone numbers, became friends and had sexual relation. Aha! She became pregnant. And then, I realized the idea of being smart, using smart devices to abort but she denied aborting. We were not planned to get married. Then she convinced me to abort the child. Ultimately she did because I was not as smart as the phone to marry her.

Rajmati: I use other technologies but I experience using a smart phone is easier and convenient for me. I use it for several purposes to be connected with my friends and enjoy the virtual world. Usually, I like to upload the selfies that I take when I become

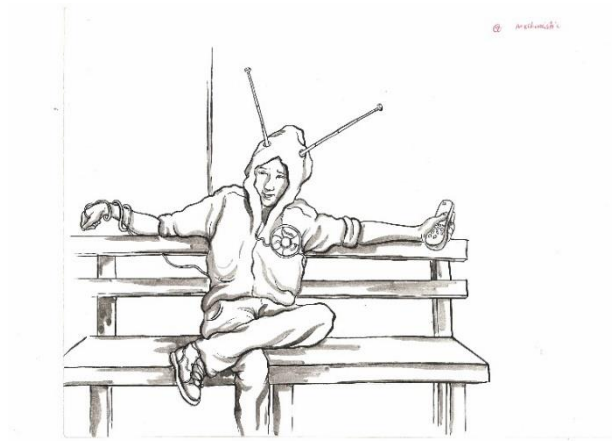


Figure 29. Yantric Youth

bored to life. I kill time with my cell phone when I feel bored.

Montu: Most of the time, I remain busy in my industry, producing gods and goddess. I do not have greater friend circle. Usually, my family members call me on my cell phone. I am comparatively more social than others. Though I have a Facebook account, I hardly use it for time pass.

Pasa: Good, that is the 'real' use of a cell phone. All people become narcissist when Facebook promotes the selfie culture. Recently, I have seen a horrible post with a selfie such as flying to asshole, having dinner with horny bla...bla...all irritating.

(Shrinks his nose)

Suresh: I am shocked to see the post of my friends who had a selfie with the corpse of his dead father, posting that 'missing you dad, lop u dad'.

Pasa: I like to kick the ass of the people who just posted things such as 'having dinner', date with Sunny, What fucking they are posting on the Facebook wall. One day will come, these crazy people will post "dude, I am having sex with my honey."

Maili: I use these all tools to promote my business but sometimes the cops torture calling unnecessarily.

Suresh: I often find my students in the classroom engaged with such social sites and games. As a result they do not focus on their study. I think it can be used in the teaching learning activities to prepare students for the global society.

Pasa: I wish your dream be true! (Giggles loudly)

Rajesh Dai: I love the story of white ear phone as you narrated in the background.

How much do they listen to songs? Do they watch movie on the cell phone? What kind of movie? Actually I have several clips of porn videos on my cell phone.

Rock Star: These yantras made it easier to have such pornos in a pocket. When I was in the village, we had managed nearly three days to watch a porno when my parents went to the District headquarters for documentation of land ownership. We got a CD and scarily watched it. But these days, every dude had clips on their cell phone.

Pasa: Possibly youth in the city get impressed with the *Mission Impossible* and *Tron Legacy* from the Hollywood and *Dhum* sequel from the Bollywood. They ride bike wildly into the streets but I did not

Suresh: I hardly see those youth on motorbikes following the street rules, traffic lights and lane disciplines. They are breakers of the rules.

Maili: Along with these kinds of things today's youth usually live with accessories such as cap, shocks, bands, watch, sunglasses. Are they not tools to live their life more urbanized in Kathmandu?

Suresh: I have also noticed such things such as they have a key ring with a bunch of keys. I even observed some youth with metal chain in their pants.

May we talk many things in another sitting? As a researcher, I used a few glimpses of using yantras in the ethnodrama]

[Shutters of the Café were down.]

Yantras in Everyday Life

A cool guy
Insert his white ear phones
When he shuts down the
door of his
home
Ignoring the values of
Family/school/street
Utters
F U C K
and takes the long steps.

Let me reflect on the ethnodrama. The ethnodrama assembles the types of *yantras* urban youth use in their everyday life. Similarly, it explores how these *yantras* help them to liberate for the salvation of the city life. Is salvation regulated by the consumerism? During my 10 years of teaching career in higher education in Nepal, I observed that most of the youth are distracted from their study as they are engaged with gadgets in the classroom. In this line, I imagined to connect education system which address the needs of the contemporary urban society and youth to the *yantras* they used. Critically reflecting on the role of colleges, I assume that university and colleges just would sell the certificates without engaging youth in the classroom. Most of the youth like to fulfill their lavish desire to live in the city via education but the question always lies, “how is it possible?” Simply, they wish to blend their life with *yantras* such as Mercedes, Mobile, Laptop, Gadgets and Others. I was taught in a way to live a life but the contemporary youth learn to use *yantras* in their life. Possibly, they think that university education does not prepare themselves to use and live life with *yantras*.

Urban youth in Kathmandu, like in other cities, are highly fascinated by the technology. Observing such youth, I understand how electronic gadgets become an inseparable part of their everyday life. Mostly, they depend on their gadgets to be connected with the virtual world. Some of them use these gadgets as a learning tool but mostly they use for entertainment and fun. They use their gadgets for chatting, mailing and surfing (Naik & Shukla, 2016). While listening to the story of Rock Star, I recalled an article written in the Canadian Context how these *yantras* are used to make relationship with their circle. Material gadgets create ‘symbolic spaces’ (Tilleczek, 2016) where youth are used for framing their interest group and critique and resist the opposite one. Likewise, Pasa and Rajesh Dai adopted this strategy to

resist the prevailing social and political evils in Kathmandu. One of the studies in India also showed that youth like to get connected by electronic gadgets and they are less connected with face to face communication (Upadhyay, Jesudass, & Chitale, 2014). How has youth circle been changing in Kathmandu? Do we perform like machines?

Regardless of the *yantric* atmosphere, Pasa was unusually grouchy and low for much of the evening. When I met him, he was enjoying his *yantric* days in the base of a supermarket having beer with his friends. Most of his friends were there to celebrate their life. Their life seemed to be *rajasik* as they ordered beer, whisky, and cigarettes. Possibly, Maili was inviting her guests to sleep with her. Rajesh Dai may be playing the guitar to release his pain and suffering of living in the city. Rock Star might be going off with his father. Rajmati might post on her Facebook wall “I am feeling pissed off in the examination”.

Reflecting on my *yantrik* everyday life in Kathmandu, I am moving to a routinized destination as Marcuse (1982) believed that human beings are enslaved by machine in the modern societies. I do not know whether Kathmandu is modern or not but everyday life of urban youth is more than mechanistic. Such mechanistic life may be the outcomes of the industrial society. City life might be affected by the industrial characteristics. Marcuse (1982) traced the change in individual and his rationality. He constructed the rationality of the individual in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and contrasts this “individualistic rationality” with the modern “technological rationality” (Marcuse, 1982, p. 141). Individualism was based on autonomous self-interest, whereas technology makes self-interest completely heteronomous, achieved only by “adjustment and compliance” (Marcuse, 1982, p. 146). It would be insufficient to deal urban youth from the Marcusean perspective as

they are not enslaved by the modern technological rationality they have. They might be performing more autonomously as *yantra*. *Yantras* are the tools that make life more doable and interesting. Moreover, it could be the technospace of Appadurai (1998) where the technocratic culture shapes the identity of the urban youth.

Yantra and *Rajasic* Lifestyles

Yantras usually create *rajasic* life style of the youth. The term *rajasic* refers to the joy which was experienced by the senses. *Rajasic* life of urban youth is dedicated to enjoyment but it usually ends with frustration and remorse (Rakhshani, 2014). Usually, *rajasic* life is related with the food habits which affect their behavior. However, I explore how the use of *yantras* created their *rajasic* life of my participants.

Perhaps, these youth who use modern *yantras* are more passionate to live and use new technology in the city. While comparing my participants, Mr. Pasa, Rock Star and Rajesh Dai are more indulged into the technocratic life than others and their passion of living modern life has been continuously expanding. They are examples to show the temptation of urban youth for *rajasic* ways of living in their everyday life. *Rajasic* life styles make youth more passionate of adapting new technology in Kathmandu. These *raja* characters of youth may led them to be active to achieve the modern and sophisticated tools in their life. These youth are more self-serving when they use social media such as Facebook or Twitter. Such modern *yantras* may give them a sense of superiority, and thus created urban segregation. For example, if they used the contemporary *yantras* such as iphone 6 and Samsung Galaxy they are supposed to be updating to the contemporary modern world. They are even segregated by the kind of *yantras* they have. If they have a simple technology such as simple Micromax phone, they tend to be hesitant to live without any segregation.

It is not only the cell phone that formed their lifestyle as *rajasic*, but the interest of youth in accessories, gadgets, and other weapons to be modern such as modified motorbike, torn out jeans, fancy restaurants and sophisticated theater were also the part of *rajasic* life styles. Such *rajasic* life styles of youth possibly make them spend lavishly to show their rich status, investing amount for decoration, clothes and vehicles. I recalled Maili and Montu who could not afford much money for *yantras* and felt extremely segregated within the group of people who had much sophisticated tools for their life. Observing these participants, I feel that modern urbanism creates a kind of digital divide among the youth in the city.

Yantric life styles might have created a sense of power and success living in Kathmandu. Most of the participants measure their success with the gadgets they have, with the brilliance they have on operating gadgets, with the restaurants they visited for food. Such youth in urban center might be attempting to be unique and rich in their life as they are living a glamorous life in Kathmandu. There is a sense of competition with one another in using gadgets and operating them. They might be jealous to maintain *rajasic* life style in the city.

Rajasik life style is one of the characteristics of urban youth, who struggle to maintain their passion and ego of using modern technology in their everyday life. Mostly the youth in Kathmandu like to maintain the passion for maintaining their lifestyles in a trendy way. I sensed that most of the youth attempt to live and enjoy their life fully. In doing so, they seem to be hostile to be part of the worldly life. These youth like to have a kind of sensation and adventures in their life and therefore, move from here to there for new restaurants, new books, and new girlfriends/boyfriends. They engage in forming their own circle where they can talk

about the movies, music and *masti* (fun). Being *rajasic* mind they tend to explore the deficiencies and lack of others and try to be superior.

It is not only Pasa who would like to live *rajasic* life in cities. Cities almost reproduce the *rajasic* ways of living. Reflecting back to my ways of living, I became totally *yantric*. Early in the morning, my schedule starts with the activities that really like to increase my income. Why do I like to earn more in the city? Of course, I have many dreams and desires that are flourishing by trying to maintain a *rajasic* way of life. I sensed that Pasa and I are not the only creatures to maintain the *rajasic* ways of living.

“I like to live like a King”, once Rock Star had shared his fantasy about the way of living in the city. While claiming that King’s life is the most wonderful life, mostly city life makes youth more passionate.

Tantra and Youth

Excessive use of *yantras* makes youth mechanistic. I used the term *tantra* to describe the rituals of youth in their everyday life. All my research participants have many stories of failure and success which are created by the city as a both cremation and creation and they are celebrating life. Maili as a sex worker would like to make her destiny in Kathmandu. Pasa celebrates each puff of his cigarette, wandering alone in the Patan Durbar Square. Most of the youth are dedicated in the city to various things such as career, job, income, gadgets, and many more but are overcoming such indulgences in a way and other. They even indulge in drugs and sex, fashion and brand but they gradually build assets whether to cope with them or to leave such indulgence. Osho (2006) believes that *tantra* is not the way of indulgence but it liberates them from the indulgence of any attachment. Are these youth liberating themselves? I believe that “the ideological aspect of *tantric* vision is the cosmos as

permeated by powers, a vision where energy is both cosmic and human where microcosm and macrocosm correspond and interact” (Padoux, 2002, p. 19). I also used the notion of youths’ tantric ways of living connecting to their energy within the broader construct of the city. In this line, I am also relating with the concept of resilience of urban youth to maintain their life styles in Kathmandu. Let me bring into light the story of Pasa and his *tantric* deeds in Kathmandu.

Tantric Life Style of Pasa

Marching through the dark streets of *Patan* is much more than just 'marching'. Unending concrete jungle, humans crawling in all directions, and snoring motorbikes are a few cases in point that add up to my marching experiences in *Patan*. But that is definitely not all. A lot of other senses and visuals intrigue me in these allies.

I can smell *Aila* (local wine) as I go deeper into the streets. *Aila*, served with Newari dish, is largely popular in Kathmandu. I see women taking a bath in their courtyard and smell the cigarette smoke circling in the atmosphere from the puffs released by the men of multiple ages.

The metaphor of cigarette keeps recurring in this write-up as if I am a smoker. But I am not. I smoke dirty pollution but not cigarette in Kathmandu. Wait! Why am I having this feeling that you (readers) are misunderstanding me? Did I ever say that I don't like smokers? I find smokers as cool as Dean¹³.

Marching in narrow roads is often hilarious in cities like Kathmandu. The thirsty mouths of *lakheys*, lions and lionesses on traditional water sprouts are dry. The streets are full of wide ditches and potholes. A carefree biker passing by me litters my clothes splashing the mud. See, my muddy wind-cheater!

¹³One of the major character on “On the road” by Kerouac (1976).

Traditional vernaculars and houses on both sides of the road are seemingly weaker than me. It looks as if they are stopping in silence to be transformed into skyscrapers that surround them on the horizon. After all, they are the parts of transforming Kathmandu city! Transformation from its unique tradition to the mundane standards of brand-new modernity. Sometimes I feel that Kathmandu is on the verge of fragmentation, just like the life of youth in the city.

I have heard and read some versions of Kathmandu-story which portrayed the noble and hilarious images of Kathmandu. The magnificent stories full of vibrant images of Kathmandu portrayed the city in a frame larger than life. Larger than life? Really? I have often tried to explore the larger-than-life Kathmandu, but all went in vain. Bloody larger-than-life!

I meet Mr. Pasa, with his colleagues, lying on his back against a stair of the supermarket, with a plastic cup containing Tuborg beer in one hand and a cigarette on the other. He inhales nicotine in tranquility, as if he is deep in a deliberation of youthfulness. For him, every single puff is important! More important than life.

I call him, "Hello Pasa! What's up?"

He smiles and says, "I have been waiting since afternoon."

Regardless of how long he has to wait for me, his company has the same degree of joy every time. The first thing Pasa remembers was cold beer which he offers me as well. We start drinking together. Wow! Will I be ethical to drink with my participant? I am haunted with the research '*Ethics*¹⁴' many times while I am carrying out research with urban youth.

¹⁴ Ethics with capital E indicates some universal research ethics which I feel difficult to maintain while studying urban youth.

Pasa is a five feet four inch tall man. His chubby cheeks and heavy weight may make him appear a little lousy, but he is not like that, especially, when it comes to enjoying the life. He does that in full swing.

Having been born into a Newar family in Kathmandu, Pasa thinks of himself as a lucky young man who is free to do whatever he wishes. His name – Pasa – a Newari term for 'friend', has attributed his same pride of being a Newar.

Without even asking for his permission, I started recording our conversation. Was I unethical to record the conversation without his permission? In such kind of inquiry, I attended many formal and informal meetings with them. How many times should I get permission of each formal and informal conversation with them? Many times, I have not recorded. I did not even use notebook. I just observed and maintained my diary. All of my participants are known to my purpose but this is a different situation where my participant's friends are also participating in my research propose. They are enjoying their private time.

Pasa is celebrating Good-Friday with his friends, and I am planning to record their discourse – the discourse of city, cigarette, and sex, among others – a kind of focused group discussion. He introduced me with his friends, “He is my English teacher. He is a brilliant guy.” All of them greeted me and introduced themselves.

“Namaste Sir, I am Dr. Smith, working in Alkapuri Hospital as a surgeon.”

“When did you complete your MBBS?” I asked him a question.

“Nearly two years ago from China.”

“Hello Sir, I am Maddy. I meet friends when I need companionship for drinking and smoking. I am a married male with two kids. I work in a private company.”

There is one more - a lean and thin person who is sitting at the corner of basement of the supermarket. His friends, including Pasa, quite often make fun of him as he is not as outspoken as the others.

He tells me in his shivering voice, "Sir, you must have been a teacher for years. May I ask you a question?"

Pasa interrupts even before he finishes his statement, "*Sodh na muji* (Ask bloody! (*Muji* is a Nepali slang for ass/asshole). He is your teacher as well."

I would not mind their language as they are used to repeating such slangs in every sentence they utter. The so-called vulgar words are not so vulgar for them and even I am habituated to hearing the slangs on a very frequent basis.

In order to develop intimacy with Pasa and his friends, even I have started using slangs in my conversation with them. My slang keeps me at ease with the group so that they open up profoundly to my probes. Is it ethical to use such slang with my participants?

The thin chap eventually asked me, "Why don't parents understand the feelings of their children?"

The question comes out of my expectation and hence it is difficult for me to answer. There is no black and white answer to the question.

Out of my inability to answer his query, I take a strategy to unpack the sense.

"Whose parents do not understand whom?"

"My parents, you know! I never wanted to study science. They forced me. I joined college in science stream even though I knew I could not study science. But my parents believed science would best suit me, for god knows what reason. I went to college but only to bunk the classes. My parents were eventually fed up with complaints from the college administration. I gradually started smoking cigarette, and

using *ganja* (Marijuana) and alcohol. I was disillusioned about studies. I left college and studies; I left my parents, but they did not leave me. I was addicted to so many things- addiction of *ganja*, girls and guff’.

While others laugh at him, I begin to think about the parents' expectations from their children. How parents relate their status to their children’s education? Did his parents want to make him a doctor? Or an engineer? Do they like to identify themselves in the society as a doctor's or an engineer's parents? Or were they genuinely craving for their son's bright future?

One of them in the crowd mocks, “Bloody, are you again crying because he (indicating to me) could not solve your problem?” Another speaks, “Just have a few glasses of beer dude! You will feel better.”

He becomes quiet, almost as silent as a blue sky. He is expecting a kind of magic from me to solve his problem. However, I am no magician and I have no tricks to solve such complex problems of life with an answer. It is, however, ironically true that I call myself a critical researcher who craves to bring changes among my participants, if not anyone else.

We chair forming a circle near the back door of the supermarket under the stairs, least concerned about the etiquette principles of some nicely dressed restaurant.

They do not seem to be worried about the country and constitution, “*Motherfucker*” seems like a holy word they use in each bits of their conversation. They often blame for the situation they are facing today; the life with no work and money, the politicians. I feel that they are the critical mass of the city and would expect some changes in the city.

Kathmandu city is slowly covering itself under the veil of black air emitted by the roaring vehicles. I find Pasa and his choices more restless than the city itself.

Probably, Kathmandu fails to give space to these youth for their success and progress?

Why are youth compelled to face such a destiny?

“Pasa.” I call him.

Pasa tightens the lace on his shoes and walks ahead. I follow him. He stops nearby a teashop in a dark street. He orders two cups of milk-tea. He opens his shoes and extracts some *Jharpat* (herbs). The *Jharpat*, which would literally mean useless herbs was marijuana. I am quite surprised to see weed that he has hidden in his shocks.

Upon seeing him about to smoke marijuana, I ask him, “Does your spouse know that you are a weedy boy?”

“I have never said her and she never asks me. Once I had kept a packet of Marijuana in an old pair of shoes in the shoe wrack. She found it when she was cleaning the house, (but never protested).”

“Oh! You are using it secretly?” I ask

“Everything is secret, Sir!” He replies.

“Is it Kathmandu that taught you to have marijuana?” I ask further.

“Sir, Kathmandu is a city of whores,” he opines.

Pasa identifies Kathmandu in terms of its unethical virtues. He believes that there are some people in Kathmandu who would even sell their ass for money. Pasa's views of Kathmandu are in sharp contrast with how I am relating Kathmandu as a spiritual ‘village’ of religious people, with about twenty five million people dwelling here. Its houses and buildings laced through the temples until no distinct borders of spirituality remained. The stone roadway to the inner city seemed too short to Pasa as the crowd within the city was gradually expanding.

However, I am still following him. In the conversation,

Pasa recalled his childhood experience.

“My father was a job holder in a public company. We were two brothers and both of us went to an institutional (private) school. My elder brother was very sharp in studies, so as soon as he completed his Masters, he went abroad. He is now living there with his family. On the other hand, I have never been able to achieve as much as my brother. I owe that to the bad company I came in contact with as I was just about to appear the SLC. It was during that time, when I started to use abusive things such as marijuana, hashish, and drug tablets. I could not continue my education any longer. I turned out to be a trouble to my family. They sent me to a rehabilitation center and I gradually recovered, both mentally and physically. Ten years later, I joined +2 and passed it. In the midst of all the melancholy, I was going through in that phase of life, my father searched a job for me in the same office where he worked. Well, this seems to be all and I don’t have the courage to study any further.”

Pasa was born like other youth in Kathmandu. But he grew differently, even unlike his elder brother.

Is Kathmandu a whore or a ‘*devil’s whore*’ as Pasa believed? I am in a dilemma. What relates Pasa’s melancholic experiences to assume that Kathmandu is a devil’s whore? Does a city like Kathmandu always create the whore’s destiny in the life of youth like Pasa? Pasa believes that people might have some whore-like destiny in cities like Kathmandu. It has not always been the same for Pasa. At the time of his childhood, the time of singing and playing, Kathmandu could have been something else. However, Pasa’s evolution as a matured being has also altered his view towards the city. Time has changed.

Pasa recalls his experience as he has long been observing the changing city; the change in political system, changing power dynamics among the ruling parties and

the opposition, and what not? He has seen how the journey from monarchy to federalism got materialized in Kathmandu. No matter what changes take place, for Pasa, Kathmandu has always been at the center and has acted as a playground for all those concerned. The metaphor of whore is not completely irrelevant, eh'!

Pasa fingered his thick dark hair. Pasa described the changes, political turmoil, street agitation and social upheavals as if he were a historian who had authored Kathmandu over time. If that was to be assumed, the next venture of Pasa was to be an author who could write a history of Kathmandu and its youth. However, he has a kind of regret in his life. He learnt lessons from his experiences to live a life peaceful. Of course, city teaches some lessons to youth. These lessons might be different from those I have had in my life. The difference owes to the fact that my everyday life activities differ from that of Pasa and his friends.

Pasa, however, was smoking *tantric* weeds and lived his life in hallucination of enjoying at present. I describe such lifestyles of youth in Kathmandu as a *tamasic* life styles.

***Tamasic* Life Style of Urban Youth**

Reflecting the biographical narratives of Pasa, I like to link up his stories with the *tamasic* characteristic of urban youth. *Tamas* the Sanskrit term refers to the darkness thus *tamasic* characteristics refer to satisfying the physical and emotional needs of individuals (Subbarayudu, Rambai, & Krishna, 2012). When *tama* characteristics are dominant urban youth often become lazy and indulge in adversities such as drug and prostitution. As Pasa enjoyed weed in the morning and evening with his gang, whereas Rock Star always preferred to drink whisky in a well decorated restaurant. Rajesh Dai also had a deadly smoking habit. I do have tobacco. We all tend to live a *tamasic* life in Kathmandu.

In this regards, these *tama* characteristics created a lot of adversities in our urban life. These adversities are related to our health, career, education, fashion and living styles because these are supposed to be darker aspects of living in the city. Possibly, it was the reason Nietzsche might have claimed that he found city was lustful (Section I). In this line, can we deny the role of *tamasic* characteristics? Pasa recalled his past life how he was addicted to the weeds? The life stage of Pasa was almost pathetic. Pasa and Maili were not able to fulfill the dreams of living in city and being modern. Perhaps, these frustrations are the source of the gloomy adversities of living in the city.

“Had you become too cunning when you started living in the city?” I still remember the voice of Montu who firmly believed that city produces cunningness. As per Montu’s opinion, city transforms people as a cunning member of society who only think about the success of their own life and would do any things for their self-interest. Have you not become more greedy and selfish in Kathmandu? Montu had questioned me.

Actually I was but I could not answer Montu’s question. I observed that many youth lives are dominated by the *tamasic* characteristics and therefore, they became depressed and inert. Mostly these depressions were related to the dream as they had to earn money to maintain life in the city. It was strange for me that they would like to make their life successful without hard work. They hardly showed their interest to work for example Rajesh Dai sometimes did not go to his office and stayed at home without any cause. Similarly, Montu did not go for selling Gods and Goddess. Maili took rest at her rented room. Rajmati did not attend the classes of her college. I think at several stages of living in urban centers like Kathmandu, *tamasic* features rule over

and youth lost interest in work. It is not merely eating and living habits of the people which ultimately shapes the worldview of the youth to be *tamasic*.

Mantra and Youth

Literally mantras are used in the lyrical form while worshipping gods and goddesses in the Hindu tradition. The term mantra has been derived from a Sanskrit word which refers to the instrument of thought (Rao, 2004). Traditionally, mantras are used for exploring the capabilities to live life for salvation of physical and material desire of individual to unite with the infinite cosmos (Froese, 2015). Therefore, mantras are related to the energy centers of the body parts which evoke them for liberation. Nonetheless, I used mantra as metaphor of salvation for youth from the traditional ways of living in Kathmandu. How do youth think they would get salvation in their everyday life? Do they worship gods and goddesses? What kind of gods and goddesses do they worship in their everyday life? Actually, they usually worship and chant the mantra of brand, fashions, and urban icons. Traditionally, mantras appear in the form of diagrams as physical processes of creation and harmonizing language with reality via language and non-linguistic physical reality (Yelle, 2003, p. 37). However, the youth in Kathmandu find mantras in the hoarding board, big shopping malls and advertisements of television. I think television advertisements also have soothing sound to influence the mind of the young customers.

It could be any day in fall 2013, I was observing the mantras in a traditional city like Kathmandu. I was, thus, highly inspired to choose the mantra as my research issue. Possibly, I was guided by my physical being of Hindu who have often chanted some mantras in my life for peaceful living. In the initial stage, I intended to explore the spiritual dimensions of youth with their *mantric* life. But as I proceeded, the term

mantra has been dissolving in the urban ways of knowing. In this section, I describe the journey of exploring the mantras and *sattvic* life of youth in the city like Kathmandu.

The most interesting aspect of *mantra* is that they can control the mind (Rao, p. 247). However, youth's mind in Kathmandu has been controlled by the brand, accessories and fashion in the street. Some of the urban youth were searching the mantras of using all the *yantras* available in the city; while some others might be exploring the swift ways of being rich.

Some youth like to be honest and work hard for future. In this regard, *mantras* for urban youth are not only seers and creators but they affect their life as well.

Just Do It - Nike

It was around 5 pm of any day in July 2014. I was standing in front of the



Figure 30. Modern Mantras

Bangalamukhi temple in Patan. This temple was quite popular for youth because mythically *Bangalamukhi* is the goddess of wisdom and love. Many youth visit *Bangalmukhi* temple for being blessed with love and affair. I entered into the temple where some vedantic spirits (possibly, people may call them beggars) were sitting silently and expecting to get some blessings from the devotees. I chose a calm place to sit and see people around the temple. Possibly, I may sense the seriousness of people and their devotion of worshipping god. I was feeling peaceful. I do not know why my mind was taking rest when I entered into the temple. Is it my hallucination to feel *chill* inside the temple? Possibly, I was living my whole life in hallucination? Then, what is real?

I was raising questions to myself; however, I was not much worried about the answers I got. It was the time of sun setting in the summer. *Bangalamukhi* is one the temples I often visited but my purpose of today's visit was to explore self and others in a *mantric* mood around the temple. I saw a holy couple (possibly they are not married) entering into the temple with all materials for worshipping god.

This evening I was enjoying the holy crowd. Observing the crowd, I thought how many of them might have a creed of religion, fate, *karma* and rituals. This evening allowed me to enjoy the sunsets disturbed by the tall towers in the east. The sky above my head hardly seemed as clear as it used to be, a blend of carbon fumes and oxide particles that were moving around my mind and body. It may be changing its identity as a modern city with big roads, tall towers, and thick settlements, where youth were searching their identity and future.

In the meantime, Pasa arrived at the temple. He had worn a T- shirt with Nike, a logo on it. After the formal greeting and conversations I asked a question,

“Pasa, do you know any *mantras* to worship goddess *Bangalamukhi*?”

“Not at all, but my father knows some *mantra*.”

“Any *mantra* you know?” I further probed.

“Just do it!” I followed the slogan of Nike as a *mantra* to get success in my life.

Then I recalled the brands of clothes as *mantra* of youth. At the same time, I thought of those who never get a chance to wear branded clothes, get branded education and job in Kathmandu. It might be that the *mantras* are allowed to chant for them who can afford. However, mantras for urban youth are something associated with their fashions, food and adventures. Trendy urban youth chant these *mantras* often to be successful in their life. Urban *mantras* are totally distinctive as compared

to the Hindu religious traditions. *Mantras* are usually found in the religious texts but urban mantras can be found on the hoarding boards and advertisement, on the walls of urban centers.

My interest of exploring their *mantras* moves ahead. I arrived at my rented room from the temple and went straight to Montu's hut. Montu was watching television sleeping in bed. He had kept television on an upside down basket, the basket which he usually used to carry gods and goddess. When I called him from the door, he got up and wrapped his lower part of the body with *lungi* (A thin and long cloth that can be used to put on in the Terai culture). After a short discussion, I asked him, "Do you chant mantra?" He was surprised to hear my question. Possibly he was thinking what kind of questions I asked. He replied that he chanted *mantras* in his village but he hardly chanted *mantras* in Kathmandu. I further asked him the secret of chanting *mantras* in his life. Montu with a long story came to conclusion that '*because life is complicated enough*' I am connecting it to the slogan of Abbey National¹⁵, which had a similar kind of slogan,". Montu realized that he forgot that god lives in the city and he/she would listen to his mantras like him. He would not like to disturb the god enjoying the city life in Kathmandu.

While coming back from Montu's hut I was thinking the growing fashions of youth with the increasing number of malls and urban stores. Most of youth like my participants might be searching their mantras to find out some proper outfits. Growing urban e-business usually helps them to change their choice and *mantras*. Most of the time youth like to tell that they are interested to buy clothes in the mall to ensure their originality. In the past I would think that being a trendy is only possible when we become a gangster, but this *mantra* has been faded away.

¹⁵ Abbey National was the brand for bank and insurance in the UK

Montu would chant real mantras of gods and goddesses in his life. Rajmati from the Christian background usually go to the Church and pray to god. Rajesh Dai, likes the *mantras* “*nothing is impossible*” as Addidas claimed the reality. Rock Star possibly thinks ‘The car in front is a Toyota’. Their mantra was completely different from the mantra chanted in the temples of the holy city Kathmandu.

***Sattvic* Life of Urban Youth**

Etymologically, *sattva* is derived from “*sat*,” referring to which is eternally existent. The eternally existent is also *chit*, referring to pure Intelligence or Spirit, and *ananda* or bliss (Avalon, 1913). Thus, *sat* refers to good things associated around the urban youth. They also think and wish good intention. Most of the youth have strong sense of patriotism and faith to their nation instead of political leaders in Kathmandu. This section mainly describes the youth living in Kathmandu, who have a sense of happiness and bliss. Let me tell a story of Rajesh Dai in the rainy days of Kathmandu that tells on *sattvic* qualities.

Most of the youth have *mantra* to wear branded clothes, to be like celebrities, to follow their heroes on Facebook and Twitter. They have a sense of *sattvic* qualities. “I have a holy aspiration to complete my study at Kathmandu. I came here at Kathmandu not to ruin my future but to make my future. I choose Kathmandu where I can design my life and career. I am hopeful doing so. However, I came to many hurdles to achieve these goals in my life” While Rock-Star is narrating his story, I reflect back *OM* my youthful days. I do have a holy vision to create an identity of an educated person in Kathmandu. It is not only the Rock Star, all of my participants do have many good qualities to live in Kathmandu. I like to use the metaphor *sattvic* characteristics that they flourish living in Kathmandu

It was one of the days in the rainy season in 2014. I was talking to Rajesh Dai at *Kumaripati*, near a petrol pump. We were talking in rain about cities and youth in Kathmandu. The wrist watch indicated that it was around 6:30 pm but we could not go home as I had no umbrella. For about 45 minutes, it rained heavily. All the people and the traffic were struck in both side of the road. Due to poor drainage system, water made a pool on the road. The road seemed like a river. All of a sudden, a couple in their scooty yelled “Help! Help” as they fell off their scooty on the road and could not stand up. They got wet and were nearly sinking in the water. Rajesh Dai who was observing them, went nearer to rescue them. He jumped into the water with his clothes and shoes. Another youth went there to help them. Both of the youth rescued the drowning couple. Possibly, the couple thanked them. These two boys seemed to be urban heroes as they did not care their branded clothes and shoes, and rescued couple. They helped spontaneously to the couple. One of the middle aged man thanked these two boys, “*Dharma garnu Bhayo Babu*” (Thanks for your help for god’s sake).

Most of the time, I had experienced that urban youth were most individualist and selfish; they hardly anticipated their duties in their everyday life. This small event insisted me to explore the *satgunas* (virtues) of the urban youth. It is not only the virtues, they know their duties too.

I came across another story of Montu who was a god seller. He worked in a small industry where he designed and created beautiful images of Gods and Goddesses. One of the days in September 2013, I visited Montu’s factory not to know about his right and responsibilities but to know his experience of living in Kathmandu. He was busy in decorating the Hindu Goddess *Laxmi* (Goddess of wealth). He sold gods in every corner of Kathmandu. He inherited legacy of his

father's business as his father was growing older and could not carry the load on his head. Montu replaced basket with bicycle to travel around Kathmandu city and taking a great responsibilities of his family living in his village.

These all participants living in the cities seemed to have some *sattvic* qualities. They performed righteousness activities and sometimes they felt that they were serious to their duties. However, their duties in Kathmandu might be changing. Priorities of urban youth were changing to meet the everyday problems in Kathmandu. They all seemed to be more humanitarian than religious.

Pasa and other participants experienced that cities were the center for rising/creating ambition. They forgot to know their own duty and responsibilities. Possibly, Rajesh Dai experienced youth as selfish and narcissist. The virtues of Rajmati were connected to the humanism and human welfare. She described the importance of virtues in the dark tea-shop, where workless people were playing cards. These glimmers glanced at us. I was probing her between the conversations. Traditionally, people have more virtues as they think about others but I have not seen more number of youth who think about others.

Re-orientation: The Web of Life in Mandala

One of the functions of mandala is to create a balance in the web of life. In this regard, Tenzin- Dolma (2008) describes, "We all are part of a complex web of life. Every species on our planet, from the tiniest organism to the largest mammal, contributes to the health and balance of the whole" (p. 120). I along with my participants performed everyday activities in the web of city life. In doing so, we used certain protective and promotive factors (Ungar, 2008) to balance the urban life. We developed certain assets while adopting *yantra*, *mantra* and *mantra* in our everyday life.

Yantra, *tantra*, and *mantra* are supposed to be the traditional life styles of the people in Kathmandu. However, the traits of such traditional ways of living have been reflected on the life of urban youth. I argued that how such notion of everyday life of youth have been affected by the modern worldview. Youth in Kathmandu enjoyed the materialistic worldview which prioritizes the complex cosmology created by the city. The cosmology of the city might have been affected by the cosmopolitan cosmology which might “lose the connection with the other parts of the web- family, friend, and spiritual community” (Tenzin-Dolma, 2008, p. 20). Everyday life of youth in Kathmandu is like the “spider’s web, in which the slightest movement sends vibrations through the entire subtle yet resilient structure” (Tenzin-Dolma, 2008, p. 120).

MANDALAM IV

LEARNING IN KATHMANDU

Being and living of urban youth in Kathmandu offered an insight to learn to cope with adversities in Kathmandu. Though learning is supposed to take place inside the classroom, it takes place in particular time and space with different kinds of experience (Kolb, 1984). The basic ideas of learning I employ in these two chapters are closure to the learning from everyday life (Jarvis, 2009). Urban youth in Kathmandu might have different kind of experience on being and living in the city, and they might be learning things from their everyday life experience. In this line, I understand learning as a process, which leads to capacity enhancement, and which is

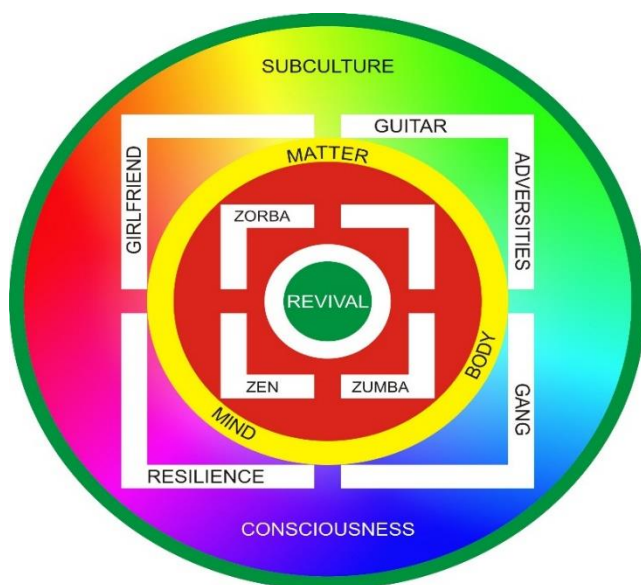


Figure 31. Revival Mandala

not solely due to biological maturation or ageing (Illeris 2007, p. 3). I believe that learning is a very complex phenomenon, and youth in Kathmandu are learning from their everyday interactions with people and space.

During my teaching career, my interest of youths' learning process might evoke the sense of exploring

ways of learning in the city. Moreover, I was keen to explore why urban youth tended to show their disinterestedness in the classroom activities. Are they learning in a different way by interacting with the life world? The question always pushed me ahead to explore the learning aspects of the youth. In the process of writing the Mandalam, I outlined the everyday life learning of my participants relating it to other

theories of learning. The Mandalam connects the experiences of my participants, which I discussed in the earlier wheels with the learning perspective.

In doing so, I designed two Wheels: Wheel VII: 'Zorba, Zumba and Zen'. It shows how youth in Kathmandu learn from their everyday life experience which changes their ways of living and thinking. Likewise, Wheel VIII: 'Gang, Girlfriend and the Guitar' describes the urban ways of living and learning in Kathmandu. These two wheels move around their consciousness, which was formed from the everyday life of Kathmandu.

WHEELVII

ZORBA, ZUMBA AND ZEN

Punk is musical freedom. It's saying, doing and playing what you want.

Kurt Cobain

This wheel of everyday life concentrates more on the consciousness of youth and explores the youth's ways of learning in Kathmandu. Usually, after struggling for survival in the city, youth learn to revive their self in it to adjust themselves in the atmosphere of city life. I used the concept of revival showing how urban youth learn from the everyday life in Kathmandu. I define revival as the stage of overcoming the struggles they faced at the stage of arrival and survival. Youth in Kathmandu seem as if they represent the new generation of the city because their life is being accelerated with all amenities and technology they use and adopt in their everyday life on the one hand, and on the other, they have not left their own traditional ways of celebrating rituals and cultures. My participants learn the ways of living and making their life more prosperous in Kathmandu. Thus, revival is the process of learning after enduring all the adversities they face during their survival in Kathmandu.

Describing the learning of urban youth in Kathmandu, I coined three metaphors Zorba, Zumba and Zen. I argue that when youth cross a stage of survival they revive in the city like Kathmandu with changed life styles. Revival is a stage of manifestation of their learning that takes place in the city.

Youth revive from the adversities as a Zorba. First time, I read about 'Zorba' by Kazantzakis (1952). The main character of the novel tickled my fancy for a long time by her innocent struggles to fight against the adversities of the cities. I relate Zorba with the consciousness of the matter of youth to solve everyday life problem

with the sense of playfulness. The youth in city are expecting to fulfill the material happiness to overcome adversities.

Likewise, the metaphor of Zumba helps me to unpack their consciousness of body and physique. Possibly, the metaphor of Zumba might be connected to the ideas of Lefebvre (1974), “There is an immediate relationship between body and its space between the body’s deployment in space and its occupation in space” (p. 170).

Zumba becomes a popular form of exercise in Kathmandu as it incorporates aerobics and music together. Possibly, Zumba is a quite popular form of maintaining physique in Kathmandu. How do youth became conscious of their body? Does the city create such consciousness? Possibly they are conscious about looking attractive, or maintaining their fitness.

Similarly, the metaphor of Zen enables me to uncover the youth consciousness of spirit. I seem to be eco-spiritual to deal with the Zen consciousness of the urban youth via the metaphor of Zen. I used these three layers of consciousness of urban youth to describe their revived experience of resilient activities. Thus, I dealt these three metaphors with the resilient and resistant perspective. Resilient perspective helps me to unpack the strategies of urban youth to cope with the adversities of cities they faced. Likewise resistant perspectives help me to describe their resistance against the structure of urban consciousness.

Let me start with an ethnodrama of Zorba youth in Kathmandu.

Pain to Gain

[It is an evening in May 2014 at Van Gogh Café. The Café is illuminated with the dim light. Pasa and Rock Star are sitting together. Suresh is thinking of ordering some snacks for all the characters. Maili enters and stands at the reception of the café. Montu walks nearer the group, drags a chair and takes a seat. We hear the cops in their car are passing with the siren. We become a bit conscious and silent. Rajmati is as silent as night, holding a book in her hand.]

Suresh: It has been a couple of years I am living in Kathmandu with the hope of doing something here for me and my people. My life is being comparatively easier in Kathmandu. (Stands up from the chair and searches the dust bin in the corner of the cafe and spits tobacco, again takes his seat, shakes his head.)

Pasa: When we see the success in the future, we usually forget the pain and suffering of the past.

Rajesh Dai: How long can we hold the pain of life? It is my own choice to live in Kathmandu but it might have created a lot of adversities. I experienced joblessness for a long time. My academic certificates are no longer useful for me to get a job. I was a kind of *frastu* (frustrated) guy, wandering in the streets of Kathmandu. You know, I did not search any job. Can you find a job while you are wandering? Of course, not dude. (Smiles and calls a waiter)....Waiter can I have a cigarette?

(A waiter arrives with a tray where he has kept a lighter and a cigarette. Rajesh Dai, in his own style lights the cigarette and inhales deeply.)

Maili: You know guys; I will be living in Kathmandu for two more years. I have overcome the grief and pain that I get from Kathmandu. I will be making my life as pious as a holy grain with hard work and family support in the future.

Montu: I am planning to leave Kathmandu forever. I like to serve my parents and family in my village. Life for me in Kathmandu is too monotonous as I miss my family and parents a lot, and thus am planning to start farming and business in my village. I experienced a lot in Kathmandu and learnt lessons of city life. Mostly, I know business skills, negotiation skills. I enjoyed Kathmandu in my prime youth but I do not forget the responsibility towards my family. (*Drinks a glass of water*)

Rahesh Dai: I experienced being a kind of refugee in my initial days in Kathmandu. My ground floor room was a symbol of my adverse living in Kathmandu, scarcity of money, less ability to afford things, limited access to the facilities, and many more. But I was hopeful to change my ways of living in Kathmandu.

Montu: Kathmandu hates people from the Terai. They often called me '*Bhiaya*' (Brother). Literally, it is good but the intention of using the term *Bhiaya* humiliated me. I was forced to tolerate such a discrimination.

Rock Star: I am tense today. My girlfriend became pregnant and she denied aborting the child. You see, I am not ready to get married, now. I am not yet fully prepared for future and career. (Takes his both hands onto his head and pulls his hair)

Maili: You selfish pig, don't you know about the use of Condom? Can't you use it before intercourse?

Rock Star: Did I make you pregnant? You are talking as if It is my personal life. I actually hate Condom. (Music plays in the background)

Maili: Shame on you.

Pasa: Sometimes, it happens. Life is unpredictable in Kathmandu. Complaint is not the solution. (Pasa speaks as if he was a wise intellectual who experienced city life for a couple of decades)

Rock Star: Dude, I wasn't. I didn't mean..... I am sensible butit happens. I lost control over my passion and emotion. Not only I. We two were passionate.

Montu: This is how passion makes people fool. You cannot get what you want.

Pasa: I agree, Montu. For nearly 6 years I was in a gang of people who smoked weed and used drugs but my family supported me a lot and ultimately I am able to live a healthy life. I overcame such adversities when my family cared me. My father and mother are too much worried about my education and career. When I was released from the addiction, I joined higher secondary level and completed too. But I did not plan to continue my higher education. I got a job from my father's network and am working as a chill dude now.

Maili: Actually, I am afraid of the police who usually torture us when they find us in the streets of Kathmandu. I think the invention of cell phone has made our job easier.

Rajmati: I have undergone several adversities in Kathmandu. Though, I was born in Kathmandu I experienced a sense of loss in my family. I could not get love from my parents during my childhood. Possibly, misunderstanding of my mother and father created lots of tension. They often fought for trivial things. (Tears in her eyes)

Suresh: The form of adversities youth experience in the city are highly contextual and they attempted to overcome it developing their economic and social capitals.

Zorba: Playful Consciousness

Let me extend the ethnodrama relating to a story of Rajesh Dai. It is one of the days in September, 2012. I was waiting for my friend at *Kalanki*. First time, when I met him in *Kalanki*, he was busy talking over the cell phone to his friends. I was waiting for my friend in the bridge of *Kalanki*, where Rajesh Dai was with his colleagues. I sensed that he has got a kind of impression to attract people around him.

I was impressed by his gestures, age and the style of communication. I was searching an opportunity to talk to him. I went nearer to them as they were talking about the recent road expansion in Kathmandu. Rajesh Dai was supporting that the urban development starts with the access of road. I just supported his version of the story so that it would be easier for me to become closer to him. Then, I regularly went there to meet Rajesh Dai. Nevertheless, I could not get him in every visit. But three days later as I was just sitting in a tea-shop, he appeared in his lanky funky looks. We sat together and exchanged our phone number in the second meeting. On that day, I shared my purpose of meeting him.

My assumption of Rajesh Dai as a jobless philosopher came to be true as he was struggling to get a job in Kathmandu. Though, Rajesh Dai often said that he was living in his dream city Kathmandu, he seemed quite confused of his life and future. He seemed quite shy in the early meetings. Then after, I frequently went to the same location to meet Rajesh Dai and talked to him.

Rajesh Dai never completed his master's degree in sociology but he generated meanings of everyday life of urban youth like a sociologist. He neither worked for someone else nor for himself. In his version, "doing job is serving others. I like to serve myself." Hearing Rajesh Dai, I felt that he was living like a Zorba. How can he be a freak without any job, without money and without earning? I recalled my past days when I had just completed my Master's degree. I had undergone with massive pressures to earn money, to take responsibilities of my family but Rajesh Dai remained chill. No work. No money. No worries. It was strange for me. I have never met such a chill buddy.

I selected him as a jobless person and I assumed that he must be facing several adversities in the first few meetings. I thought that he might have gone with several

pressures to maintain his family and friends. He might have been receiving criticism from his friends, relatives and family members. I was also thinking that he must have several nasty stories and experiences of living and being in the city as a jobless guy.

As far as I knew Rajesh Dai, he seemed to be a Herculean figure, tall, mighty and strong. He was like a stranger to me. My thinking of the stranger follows Camus (1964) that he was completely indifferent to society. In contrast to Camus's outsiders, Rajesh Dai celebrates all ups and downs in his life. He never laments on the loss like Camus' outsiders. I ask myself many times about Rajesh Dai whether he could be alienated or was still searching a community to live. Possibly, he ruptures the dichotomy of alienation and community. Observing Rajesh Dai, I would say that someone can be alienated in the community, and even community can alienate individuals. Initially, I thought that he might be alienated from his circles of friends and family, virtual life or the politics of popular culture (Kalevin- Fishman, 2015), but he was not too addicted with virtual life.

Tell me a story
of your revival
In the dirty skirt of the city
How you achieve survival?
You overcome pain and grief
You create an image of resilient.
Life here is a pity
How nice is it to love life?
How gloomy is it to fuck life?
The circle of renewal in the city!

It was the first of May in the same year, the international day of labor. He offered me dinner in a nearby hotel to celebrate International Labour Day in an old classical tavern. Tavern was classical because green tapestries were hanged down the shutter. A group of young men were drinking alcohol with traditional *Newari* dishes.

He cracked a joke, “All the lovers/workers of the world be united.” See! The lovers of wine were united together. As we started having dinner, he built a rapport to the hotel owner. He introduced himself as a taxi driver which he was not. He even confessed that we did not have money. So he ordered half plate of vegetarian rice for each of us. As we were having dinner, he talked to the hotel owner in such way that he was ready to offer us mutton along with additional plates of rice without additional cost. Rajesh Dai narrated his story:

This winter became so cruel. He used to move early in the morning from my house. I would have food outside of the house. He was not so health conscious person. He thought it was a ‘common’ cold. Unfortunately! It turned out to be uncommon. He fell sick. One day when he was just moving from my house for a job, he was stocked by high fever. He did not go to the office that day. He came to his room. His mother cared him and took him to hospital. Doctor declared that he had got pneumonia. The doc suggested that he should take a rest for a month. During a month of rest, he lost the job. It was difficult to get a job again. He did not dare to compete for the civil service job. He became an educated unemployed guy.

Most of the time, Rajesh Dai visited *Khasi Bazaar of Kalaki* as he used to go there for smoking cigarette. He was not allowed to smoke cigarettes at home. His mother and brother did not feel comfortable with the smoke. *Khasi Bazar* became his junction for the afternoon. As he went there he could easily pass time. After a few months, he got a job to see goats and deal with the customers. They paid him less than the previous work. He worked there for a few months. He would like to start his own business rather than working for others. He collected NRS 50,000 from his relatives and friends. Then, he went to the Western hill of Nepal to collect goats for selling in Kathmandu. The business was not going well. He did not feel comfortable

to go to remote villages to collect goats. He was also feeling sick. After a few weeks, he failed to understand the market dynamics and bore quite a loss. He decided to leave the business. He was worried about paying back the loan to the relatives. Again, his everyday life was as common as an unemployed youth. He purposelessly came out from home in the morning and went home in the evening.

After a few months of being unemployed, he started working in a driving school where he managed setting to issue the driving license. It was a good job for him. The more he would deal with the customers, the more he would earn as commission. His commissions were higher than his actual salary. Early in the morning he would go to the driving school and would have lunch there, would work whole days, would teach driving to his customers and in the evening he would return his home.

“My life was going well! I met an accident two months ago from my boss’s bike which I rode. My boss was generous. When I informed him about my accident, he arrived where I was lying down after the accident. He took me to hospital and processed all the treatment steps. As he knew that my (right) leg was broken, he gave money to have a plaster in my leg. He even left me at my home. When my mom knew my leg was broken, she became sad.”

Then again, I was in a rest for a couple of months. I played guitar, sang songs to pass time during those days. Rajesh Dai shrugged his shoulders and said, “I have to get back in the city life to survive me. Nothing is lost in my life yet. Nothing is gained in my life. Life is going on.”

He did not seem to be serious in his life. He was not lamenting on what he lost and gained in the city. His purpose of living in the city seems just to experience the city life. He talks as if he has a liberated soul, liberated mind and liberated heart.

He does not have any plan to return his home in the village. Neither does he have any plan to be a millionaire in the city. He just struggles to meet the everyday requirements in his life. He does not have any regrets of being incompetent for getting a job in Kathmandu. He knows the ways of living. His friends tell that he is a chill buddy. Then, is he a hedonist? He does not seem to be so. Is he flaneur? Possibly, he is. Or the city has exploited more so he sacrifices all of his dreams? He might have some dreams so he will not leave the city.

Pasa and Zorba

Let me tell another story of Pasa, the Mr. Weed and his story of weeding. I met him in the dark narrow store room in the department store in *Jawalakhel*. He was totally in the Zorba mood. He was sitting on a small wooden stool with his friends and drinking Carlsberg beer, squeezing marijuana in his hands, and smoking a cigarette. He seemed that he hardly cared what other people thought about him and what other people said about him.

“Pasa, aren’t you little scared of the society? What do you think people would make opinion on you?”

“Who cares? It is my life. I have the right to celebrate my life in my own style.”

He sang a song from *Into the Wild* as Penn (2007) presented:

Society, you're a crazy breed

I hope you're not lonely without me.

Pasa answered me with the rolling smoke with his mouth. The smoke flew high and vanished somewhere into the ceiling, somewhere in the universe. But his answer tickled my mind. “Who cares?”

How easily does Pasa remark ‘who cares’? Is it a sign of youth alienation? Does it mean losing the social and family ties? I have a further query. Does your father not always ask you where you have gone; what you have done? Isn’t it your mother who always prepares the delicious food for you? What do you think about your wife who always cares you from morning to night? Is she merely fulfilling your sexual needs? What about your lovely daughter, who always asks for chocolates when you reach home from office? But I could not ask these questions. I suppressed them as the atmosphere was completely hilarious. They were jovial and cracking jokes about sex and city.

I am waiting for the day to ask Pasa questions, when we were having tea in a tea- shop of Patan. We were only two. It might be the most suitable time to ask Pasa about who cares! I asked him, “Pasa can we make list of people who cares us!”

Pasa was surprised all of sudden. He remained silent all of a sudden.

He said, “I can make a long list of caring people in my life. If people did not care me, I would have died due to drugs a long time ago. I am alive and living a normal life because of the people who care me.”

Then, I compared two version of Pasa’s story in the supermarket and the tea-shop. He seems more responsible and serious to people who care him, whereas he was completely Zorba when he was in the supermarket. Possibly, it is the city that creates transient atmosphere for the people. How did the mental construct of Pasa get changed in two different times and two different spaces?

Pasa spent a pathetic life with drug addiction for ten years. He overcame such addiction because of the people who loved him, people who cared him. I am thinking that Pasa’s life recovered with the cultural resilience that promotes macro- and micro-cultural contexts and guidelines for everyday living (Theron & Liebenberg, 2015).

When I feel alienated in the city, when I find little upset to the modern progress to get in the city, I also usually ring up my parents and share that I have undergone with problems. After I get some soothing words of consolation from my parents I gain energetic vibes to face such challenges.

Playfulness of Youth

Despite several adversities, youth like Rajesh Dai and Pasa maintained their playfulness in Kathmandu. Playfulness allows youth to stand on the ground against

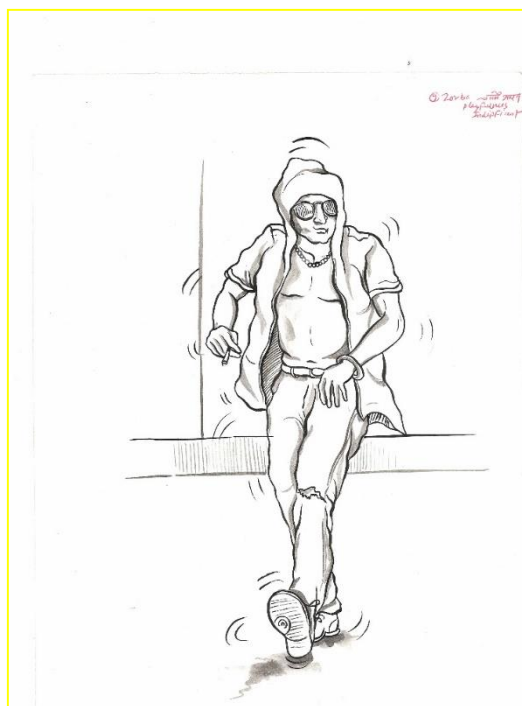


Figure 32. Am I Rocking?

the adversities they face in the city. I

used the concept of playfulness to describe something which creates meaning of fun and relaxation such as telling jokes, chatting with friends, dancing and so on (Cole, Ronan, & Taussig, 1996, p. 92). Rajesh Dai became playful like Zorba when he remained unemployed. Likewise, Pasa hardly recalled the worse time in his life.

He started to celebrate life as it moved

on. Likewise, the stories of Maili also showed that she remained chill and cool in the dark corner of Kathmandu. Montu remained quite playful when he did not have money to celebrate *Holi*. The stories of Rajmati were also similar to be playful while she was getting the companionship of her dad. Rock Star even hardly lamented on the case when his girlfriend became pregnant and did not have money to abort. He equally enjoyed drinking in the expensive restaurant or in the local traven. These youth learnt certain skills to remain quiet and playful while they are struggling in the

city. Such kind of playfulness was often criticized among the dominant culture but they chased such comments and criticism playfully. Such playfulness could also be part of their subculture when they tended to enjoy their life.

Within the playfulness
They hide their
graveyard seriousness
whole city was inside their mind
Worries about all human kind
“Who cares!” They often say
But they lament on what they pay.
But they lament on what they pay.

Zumba: Consciousness of Body

In one of the cool Monday evenings of *Shrawan*, possibly in July 2014, I was standing in the bank of *Bagmati* River near *Aaryaghat*. *Shrawan* is the sexiest month in Kathmandu. Almost all Hindu women decorated themselves in green and red clothes. Most of the streets got covered with the green women. Whether they appealed environmental friendly city or not, green saris and bangles make the green city. They were devotees of lord Shiva. Most of them were fasting and wished to get peace and prosperity in their home and family by worshipping lord Shiva. Lord Shiva is a quite popular god in the Hindu tradition, not only for boys but also for girls.

I was going to participate in a holy celebration in the evening. *Aarati* was going to be started in *Pashupati*. I was waiting to be religious within a few minutes. Both the banks of *Bagmati River* get crowded by its devotee. As hymns were being broadcast through loudspeakers, a young man nearly 25 years old, took out his shirt and started dancing in hymns in jeans and innerwear.

As I saw the crowd, it was like a concert of rock singers. Are these youth really enjoying the spiritual/religious ways of chanting hymns and expressing themselves? Are they intoxicated by marijuana with Shiva's blessings?

Either it is an *Aarati* of *Pashupati* or the front line of agitation, mostly youth are visible in Kathmandu. Either pulling *Rathas* or pushing people in the crowds, youth are active. To make meaning on how youth are actively living their everyday life in Kathmandu, I develop a metaphor of Zumba, describing their energetic ways of living in Kathmandu. In so doing, I walked in the morning and in the evening to observe their active life in Kathmandu.

Zumba for me is an urban culture, urban life styles, urban space and urban identity rather than merely a dance form. However, Zumba appears with the notion of body building and physical exercise. "Physical exercise is typically used to decrease body mass and to improve silhouette and body image satisfaction, enhancing self-esteem and decreasing possible depressive symptom" (Silva, Silva, & Gonçalves, 2015, p. 537). However, youth in Kathmandu like to join Zumba to make attractive bodies. The dance form of Zumba not only prepares youth to maintain fitness in the West but it is quite popular in Kathmandu but also to indicates how youth get fit in the city like Kathmandu.

Zumba Master in Kathmandu

Before making any analogies of Zumba culture and urban youth at Kathmandu, I visited one of the Zumba centers in Kathmandu to experience the Zumba culture. It was one of the rainy days in August 2014; I had already noticed the Zumba Center named 'Physique Center'. I went upstairs. It was on the fifth floor of Trimurti Building. As I reached near its door, I took off my shoes, entered into the hall. I heard the rattling sounds of iron and rods. I approached nearer the Cash

Counter. A masculine man like Arnold was standing at the counter. I asked him about the facilities they provided in that Zumba cum Gym center. He gave me a leaflet with price and course list. There were basic three facilities: Gym, Zumba and Trade-mill.

I asked him another question, “Who is the Zumba Master?” Looking around the people who were struggling to maintain their fitness, I confirmed that youth seemed to be more conscious of their body. They seemed quite busy to maintain their physique. Possibly, my question is strange for him. I asked about the master.

He said, “Ms. Swasthi is our Zumba Master.”

“May I talk to her for a few minutes?” I asked. Before I got an answer from him, one of the guys standing by me replied.

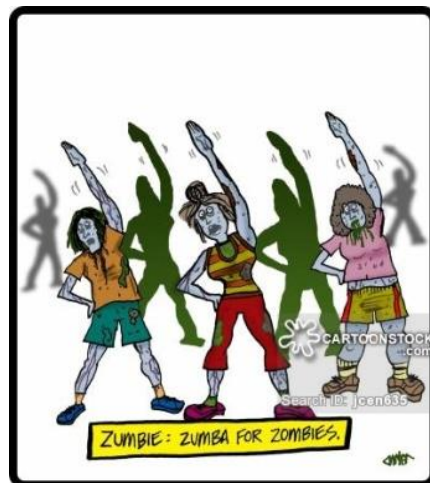


Figure 33. Let's Dance!

“Don't worry she can teach all the steps of Hip Hop, Contemporary, Belly, with aerobics. She is well-experienced.”

“Oh! Great!” I said.

I was too curious to know about the Zumba setting. I further inquired, “May I see the Zumba Hall? What are exactly people doing there?”

He surprisingly glanced, smiled and quickly answered, “Simply, they dance.”

“Oh, I see.” I said.

On that day I could not meet Zumba Master and get her opinion on why youth like to dance in a room.

I promised to come again to the Zumba center. Possibly, they were thinking that I am one of their customers.

Actually I was not.

After a week, I went again into that Zumba center. I openly talked about my purpose of visit.

“You know, this is the urban trend where people can dance and feel relief and relaxed. They can maintain their sound health. When they will be physically healthy, they can be mentally fit. It is all about physical fitness. It is not as tough as the Gym. They can just feel relaxed.” She explained the importance of Zumba.

As I came out from the Zumba hall, groups of youth were lifting weight, running in the trade-mill. They were working hard with different instruments. They seemed ready to pounce in the music. Zumba Master was sharing the importance of Zumba to the urban youth. Why are they doing hard-work? Is it just to be healthy or maintain the looks, figures? Possibly, they like to look smarter and more attractive like the city. Kathmandu also looks very beautiful from its outer appearance. Many people like to come and settle down in Kathmandu as it has the power to attract people in different ways.

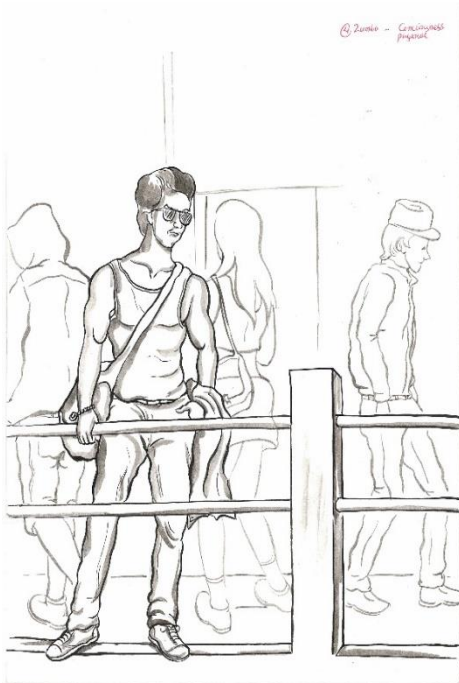


Figure 34: Resilient Figure

After the conversation with the Zumba Master, I stepped down the stairs. While stepping down, I met two of the youth who returned from Zumba I asked them, “What advantages do you get in Zumba?” They told me a story of making their body. They were the fans of their own body. They were practicing Zumba as the form of physical exercise in seeking a muscular body and becoming more aesthetically acceptable by the society (Hale, Diehl, Weaver, & Briggs, 2013).

While going down to the ground floor, I was thinking of the images of these body loving guys. Possibly

they represented the middle class family in urban Kathmandu. However, the study in China showed that higher class people tend to be more dissatisfied with their body (Luo, Parish, & Laumann, 2005). Do they ever think about their class consciousness during the Zumba class? Does the city produce the consciousness of body than mind? I am in dilemma thinking about the body consciousness of the youngsters.

Knowing the non/essence of Zumba characteristics, I went to my participants to talk about Zumba consciousness which they have been involved in a way to maintain their appearances. “It matters, Sir,” Pasa said. Mr. Pasa shared that when he quit drug, then, he joined the gym. It was one of the fascinating experiences too. Likewise, Maili joined yoga class; Rock-star preferred to go for morning walk occasionally. Rajesh Dai does not believe in outer appearance as he was not able to make any girlfriends. He therefore does not have any interest to join either a gym or any yoga class.

“I am health conscious but I don’t believe in six and eight packs. I am thin and I don’t need any kind of morning walk and evening walk,” Rajesh Dai Shared.

I observe many people in *Tudikhel* being engaged in different kinds of physical exercise. Some of them are running, some of them are practicing yoga. Some of them are just walking. The *Tudikhel* is full of body conscious people in the morning. However, the identity of *Tudikhel* keeps changing from the morning to the evening.

Punk/Zen: Consciousness of Mind

Youth, after getting shaped of their body, they reflect another layer of consciousness which I named Zen. I connect the metaphor of Zen with their mind and soul. I have experienced that their consciousness can be blended with matter, body and mind. Mostly, urban youth appear to be punk with three genealogical

components- “kinesthetic imagination, ludic space, and displaced transmission via bad brains’ concerts, lyrics, and music” (Maskel, 2009, p. 414).

Usually, youth appeared in the physical changes, resisting the dominant culture. I came to know that this is a wordily nonsense as these youth are willing to perform their inner rebellious activities against the self and other situated things in the cities. Gradually, I am experiencing the unfolding self of punk. I sense that these rebellious activities of youth are the waking up experiences. These punk activities questioned the openness of the youth. Most of the punks in the cities have been criticized because of their appearances, because of their ways of living and ways of thinking.

But at the same time I experience that they are not only the mass of body and material but also mindful Buddhas – I sense their mindful engagement as those of Buddhists, where they blend the ideas of soul with verse and music and attribute the meaning of being. I used the term Zen to describe a kind of concentration on our usual everyday routine (Suzuki, 1995, p. 57).

When I met Rajesh Dai for first time in his driving school in Kathmandu in the month of January 2014, he stood with the desert boots (American soldiers wear in the war), dirty blue jeans, white t-shirt, black ribbon sunglasses hanged on his t-shirt, sitting under a tree and playing the guitar. He seemed almost funky, playing the guitar in the office. He looked so cool playing the guitar. His clothes might be ridiculous to others as he had not worn formal coat and pants in his office. However, his office was not corporate.

Mali in a similar way hardly cared what others said about her. The city has created her destiny to live or not to live in Kathmandu. Despite her sufferings, Kathmandu compelled her to be bound with the expectation and thus she was living her life with her consciousness. Pasa- Mr. Weed allocated his consciousness to live his funky life in the corners of Patan. Rajmatai was aware of her activities in the city

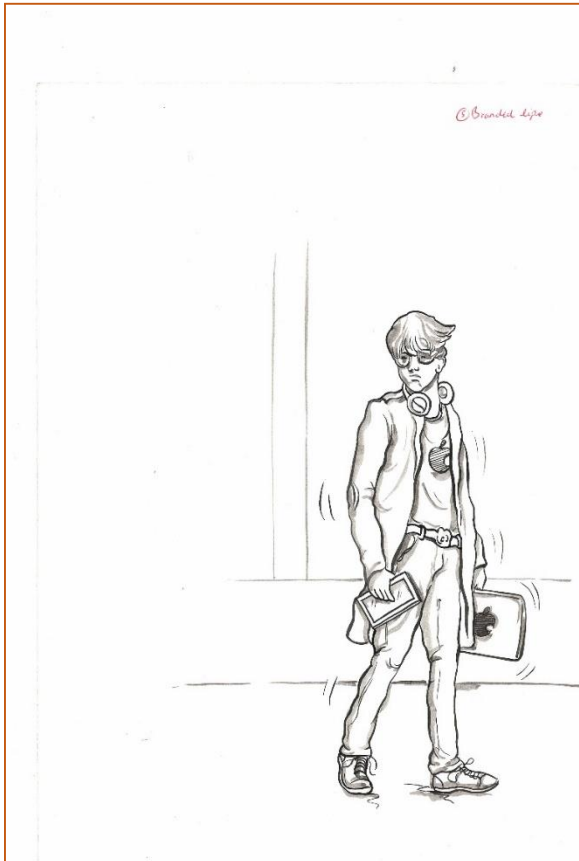


Figure 35. Brand Consciousness

like Kathmandu. These punks feel the sense of city without feeling guilty or angry at themselves.

In the beginning of the research, I was tempted to know about the punk consciousness that exists in the physical appearance of the youth. I sensed all of my participants were punk, and so did I. We all violated the social norms and values to some extent. Later on, I realized that punk consciousness emerges with the inner self of the freedom of youth. I read

their physical features via the metaphor of Punk whereas I read their soul via the metaphor of Zen. Thus, the metaphor of Zen helps me to explore the creative forces of youth which might be reflected in their punk activities. Such creativity might be fostered by the cities.

Kathmandu, however, has not been suffering from any anti-authoritarian movements after the Post war situation like in America; but piles of frustrations have been created by the 10 years long people war, political transition, unemployment, and

many other social and cultural problems. The youth in Kathmandu might have been affected and dissatisfied. As a consequence, possibly such alternative life styles have emerged. They might learn from the global mass media. In such circumstances, the youth in Kathmandu may adopt funky and punk life styles.

Under such dissatisfaction, Zenness has been gradually growing up among the city youth. However, the city has created a passion of money, matter, sex, and rest. The city makes youth schizophrenic but they have been struggling to know themselves. The city is not absolute; it is more fragile as creating the source of suffering. In such circumstances, youth are trying to know themselves as Zen. They have certain creative forces to fight against the schizophrenic city, against the fragile city, against the moveable city. They understand themselves as Zen.

Punk: Rebellious Consciousness

It could be any day during my field visit, as I was crossing a narrow road, I saw the slogan written in black letters on a white wall near DAV School, *Jawalakhel*: “Punks are not dead”. Then, I reflect myself. I am in a rush since early morning to late night. Do teaching students and earning money for my livelihood make me dead? Am I dead? Am I dead because I am not punk? Then the question emerges, who are alive? Are politicians or musicians or artists or teachers?

When I arrived at my college, I met one of the students. I was highly curious to know about punk characteristics of the youth.

I asked him, “Are you a punk?”



Figure 36: Rebellion Consciousness

He smiled and said, “I am a punk a bit.” He was one of my decent students. I was expecting that he would say “No, sir I am not a punk”. But his answer was completely different from my expectation.

Then, I asked another question, “do you know any punk teachers who taught you ever?”

He replied, “You are the most punk teacher for me in my educational life. I have not seen any teachers who are so punk like you.”

It was another shock I experienced. “What makes me punk?” I hastily asked a question to him. Possibly, my expression made him awkward and hesitant to pass any comments. He just smiled. I insisted him to tell about me that makes me punk.

After a short conversation, he went to the classroom. Now I felt a challenge to know and experience the punk consciousness. I think punks are those who wear loose and XXL sized clothes. They wear a cap with a big print of a guitar. Punks' fashion includes a weird range of clothes, hairstyles, jewelry and most importantly the body modifications and alterations. The most disturbing fashion in the punk genre for me is the 'Horror Punk' and 'Death Rock'. People with this kind of dress up give me the creeps, and I mean it literally. Even though I do like the sound of the music made by the death rockers, their music videos scare me to death. I could not even separate the men from the women if it were not for the natural characteristics of women. Right from the beginning I understood that punk is a subculture of the city and youth adopted it to resist social values and norms of the dominant culture.

The conversation with my student changed my perspective to look at punks. This punk fashion is closely related to the gothic fashion, where people actually dress up like the descendants of some dark and unholy being. The only bright side to this fashion is that it includes "sexy" items such as fishnet stockings, corsets and elaborate

make-up for men and women. The punks in the streets, however, wear leather, denim, chains and military style boots and they have this weird habit of creating graffiti on the walls. Thus, I have heard but never actually have seen it with my own eyes. As an art lover I am fascinated by the punk graphic designs that I see on the internet every once in a while, the art itself sometimes graces the punk subculture.

I might have been deemed as a punk once or twice in my life because of my juvenile delinquency, rebellious nature and bad behavior. I guess it is a stage that all youngsters go through when growing up. It is up to them to choose what they want after they can distinguish right from wrong. It is their choice.

This is all I know about punks and their culture; all I have read and all I have heard of. Other than this, I do not know a thing about them because there are no people who claim to be punks in the society where I grew up, though their bad behaviors sometimes make them seem 'Punk'. Needless, I like to say that the PUNK is definitely 'NOT DEAD'.

Punk the Rock-Star

Once, I was alone in the faculty room of a college. Rock-star appeared near me and said “Sir, I won’t be able to appear the board exam this year.”

“Why? Have you not paid the college fee, yet?”

“Yes Sir, I have not. I have failed in total 17 subjects since the first semester. My father always blamed me that I could not study as shown by the bloody mark-sheet. However, I would like to appear in the final exam. If I appeared it, I swear I would pass them. Of course! I could not complete within a year. It may take two years to pass all the subjects.”

Rock-star was not a dull student. I facilitated him in the first, second, and fourth semesters of his undergraduate class. I never felt that he would fail in the

exam. He was a hardworking student too. He came to Kathmandu when he misbehaved his teachers in the village. He had already lost his 2 years studying undergraduate in his village. When he arrived in Kathmandu, he searched admission in the glamorous college but could not get admission.

His brother was admitted in the college, where I am teaching. Right from the beginning he was unique for me. I am interested in knowing about his past and future. During the initial days I sensed that he was rude but not exactly as rude as I guessed.

“Why didn’t you study, then? It is our duty to study, isn’t it?”

He nodded his head. “Yes sir! I know. It is easy to say but difficult to do. I could study too. I can show you my passed mark-sheets but I do not like to study at all. I would like to earn money. I would be a business tycoon. My parents are not as ambitious as me.”

Rock-star is still blaming his father. His mother was neither educated nor did she interfere in his activities.

“Is it your father’s suspicious nature that affects your study? Unbelievable! Man.” I became little skeptical to his explanation.

“Not exactly sir. I am experiencing Kathmandu in a way that Kathmandu exists. I have long experience of living in Kathmandu. Some of them are nasty, some of them are interesting. You know sir one day I found myself almost dead in the ditch of *Maharajgunj* in the early morning. I was cold, cramped and silent as death. As I checked my pocket, I found my antique cell phone. I took it out to see the time. It was dead like me. Some stray dogs were sleeping around me. I came out from the ditch and found myself wet. I stood with dirty clothes. I didn’t know how I reached there. Last night I had drunk with my friends at *Durbar Marg*. I tried to recall what

had happened last night. I came out from the bar to buy *Guthka* (Chewing tobacco). My friends were inside the bar enjoying with girls. It was raining slightly. I walked to search *Guthka* and reached there. It was almost five kilometers from *Durbarmag*.

As I got up, I was desperate to sleep. My whole body was aching with fatigue. I was almost fragile. When I get up from the ditch, I liked to return to my rented room at *Anamnagar*, where I could have sound sleep. I was not much worried about the morning class in the college. As I had not gone college for a week, I struggled to walk to my room but I could not. Even I could not sleep there.

I had a kind of regret. I should not have done such things. I promised not to drink any more in my life. I had a kind of thought to focus on my study and be a rock star with a lot of money. I spent all money that my father sent in alcohol and entertainment. I have a girlfriend too but I hardly afford any money for her. She is so generous she offers many things to me.”

Reflecting on the stories of Rock-Star, he came up with a lot of adversities. He could not even pay the college fee as he spent his money in alcohol and night party. Kathmandu is gradually developing night life culture as youth get tempted by the night life. Unfortunately, they do not have any earnings to spend celebrating their night life. They instead demand money from their parents. When their parents deny giving money for night life, they keep distance with them.

Rock-Star’s dream to be a rock star hardly is supported by his education. How can he fantasize of earning money and living like a rock star in the city? Could he not work hard for achieving the position of a rock star? He still believes in magic which could transform the life of people in Kathmandu. “Shall I call your father for money so that you can pay the college fee?” I proposed a plan as I have known his father when he was in college to know the progress of his son.

“No, no sir, do not call him. I don’t need any money from him. I can manage myself or I won’t appear the exam. Thank you very much for your words.”

He saw the accountant of the college and requested her to delay his paying of fees a few days later when he could manage money. As the accountant was familiar to his expenses and extravagances, she suggested meeting the college principal. He met the principal and started blackmailing him emotionally. “As you know sir, I cannot continue my study further, if you cannot support me.”

Next day I saw him in the college corridor and asked him, “Have you filled up the form?”

He smiled and said “Yes sir, I did.”

I was a little bit curious to know how much money he paid and how he collected it. “Who gave you the money?”

“I got it sir.”

“Got it? From where? Who was so generous to you?”

“My father, Sir”. Saying this, he just slipped away from me so that I could not ask any questions.

I was thinking how many subjects he would pass in the exam.

Good Luck Rock-Star!

Post Script: Layers of Consciousness in Mandala

They are the youth who are living for matter, body and mind. Three different layers of stories suggested creating layers of meaning of youth. The urban construct has created the consciousness in particular time and space and they are compelled to live and create a destiny with resilient activities. Their resiliency and resistance can be reflected in different layers of consciousness. The Zen consciousness appears in the core circle of the mandala. My participants have a consciousness of Zen to some

level however it is more dominated by the outer circles of consciousness: Zorba and Zumba.

Everyday life of urban youth has been manifested from their ways of being, living and learning. The manifestation of their behavior creates a pattern of their consciousness. The way they live their life is very ordinary and simple but the problems are associated with their consciousness. These youth are aware of what they are doing such as Zorba- a consciousness of playful which appear in the outer circle of mandala. Zorba consciousness is an asset to overcome the everyday adversity of urbanism. Zorba helps them to avoid stress and adversities in their everyday life. Likewise, Zumba is the state of being aware of their body in the middle layer of mandala circle and it prepares them to avoid unhealthy ways of living and promotes wellbeing. Finally, Zen is the state of being aware of their mind analyzing what they can and cannot do. In the state of Zen, the hopefulness as manifested in the center of the mandala makes their life more profound. This is similar to the mandala pattern of being aware of self. In this line, Trungpa (2011) describes, mandala helps to know the complexities people face through the process which is manifested in terms of body, mind and soul. Urban youth and their consciousness has been shifted from playfulness, body and mind though they look like punk. Their consciousness of body, mind and soul might be reflected in their modern punk get up.

WHEELVIII

GIRLFRIEND, GUITAR AND GANG

You couldn't not like someone who liked the guitar.

Stephen King

This wheel unveils the everyday life of youths in Kathmandu city by exploring their scheduled activities. In doing so, I put forth youth's perspective(s) who had put love and life in the center of their space. They have attempted to create an individual space so as to live in the city. How do they like to spend their leisure time as part of their everyday activities? Usually, though the everyday life of youth in Kathmandu has been highly influenced by globalization (Liechty, 1995), they might have invented some specific meanings of being, living and learning in Kathmandu. I like to reveal these meanings via three metaphors in this chapter namely: girlfriend, guitar and gang.

Initially, these three metaphors are associated with the exploration of their everyday life in Kathmandu as expressing the life and love of youth. However, closely reflecting to the field notes and field diaries, I like to articulate the feelings of youth in Kathmandu. Most of the youth expressed that they mostly 'feel' about their beloved or girlfriend/boyfriend. Possibly, I use the term girlfriend because out of six major participants, four of them were male. As a part of the patriarchic society, the images of girlfriend might be dominant. The youth in the city almost prefer to have girlfriends and boyfriends because of hetero-social competence. "Hetero-social competence is the ability to negotiate social situations that involve the other sex including acquaintanceships, friendships, romantic, and sexual relationships" (Grover, Nangle, Serwik, & Zeff, 2013, p. 491). The urban youth might have girlfriends and

boyfriends to spend their time. They might have friendship/companionship with whom they could share their internal feelings and emotion. Sometimes, the friendship would escalate to the romantic and sexual relationship. My participants expressed that mostly they have boyfriends and girlfriends for security, showoff, maturity, and romantic relationship.

Likewise, the metaphor of the guitar explores their creative force in their everyday life to adjust in a glocal city like Kathmandu, to be the part of the globalized figure and to perform as the modern youth. The guitar symbolizes that youth are less bounded with the traditional geographical space to learn things. Playing guitar is the part of urban lifestyle. I chose the metaphor of guitar for showing urban life style of youth in Kathmandu as a collective function of urban individuals.

The metaphor of gang is associated with the urban youth and the way they form group(ism) in the city. However, I have used the construct of gang differently than the classical understanding of gang as Miller (1957) sees “gangs as a collection of working-class youth whose habits and values are incongruent with the institutional logic of middle-class society (as cited in Konots & Brotherton, 2008). In this research, I argue that gangs do not only committed crime and violence in the city but they can also be creative forces to live their life. Thus, I use gang as more metaphorical term to see the association of youth and their pride of calling it a gang. Apparently, I am not going to observe the gang activities in the street of Kathmandu but I employ the metaphor of gang to describe the youth and their interest of forming groups in their everyday life.

Orientation: My Pamila

[Rock Star is the protagonist in telling the story of his girlfriend].

I wanted to change myself. A new environment with new friends, a perfect place to change myself, I don't even know how I transformed myself as an extrovert. I started being 'frank' where 'frank' is defined as talking with girls, interacting with teachers and having fun with my classmates. I used to crack joke and make fun of everyone wherever it was possible. Pamila was the first girl who paid her attention to me. We were friends on Facebook. All I did was making her laugh in every silly topics but what I didn't notice was she was falling for me. I believed that she liked my sense of humor.

One evening in hot May 2010, she called me on my cell phone and I was shocked to hear her say "I love you. Would you mind going on a date tomorrow?" I was puzzled to answer. I just said nothing and hung up. , when I told everything about the last night, my friend Nick said, "Come on, man! Just go and spend time with her. She is real beautiful. Look at her figure man! You know Nilesh and Rolin, they both purposed her but she denied. You are lucky." I never showed her any attention. I just used to speak to her whenever she was with me. But who cares, all I have to do is meet her. I got ready in a way as if I was going to a wedding party. I asked my brother for some money. I usually never ask him for money. He used to give me money for lunch during my college times. He gives me 200 bucks. With the money and the student ID card in my pocket, which I carry for discount on bus fare, I headed towards *Gausala* where she had called me to meet her. She had already called me almost five times when I was on my way. When I reached at the cafe on the way to *Ratopul*, which she had described on the call, I was amazed to see the same Pamila so beautiful on the white t-shirt and black jeans with her hair left open. I was feeling so uncomfortable to talk with a girl in a cafe where I felt all others were staring at me. She ordered coffee. "My parents have gone out of town to attend a family function

and won't show up until a couple of days; I'm all alone in my house, let's go to my house," she said. I remained dumb for a while when I heard her say this.

Recollecting myself, I thought it to be a better idea to go to her house than being stared by a mass of strangers. Leaving coffee cups half full, we abandoned the café. I was pretty sure I/we would never visit that place again, though the exit showed 'Thank You! Visit Again!' in bold and colorful letters. We became good friends.

After getting friend like Pamila, distance with college friends had been increasing. We had less frequent meetings and gathering. One day, my friends arrived at my home to watch movie on my laptop. They bought beer and some cigarettes and asked me to join them. We drank beer and smoked cigarettes. They were smoking and making circles from the smoke. They blamed that I did not maintain the courtesy as a friend because I spent much time with Pamila. We often celebrated good Fridays in my room. After a month, our routine for exam was published. We all were busy on exam.

When after the examination was over, I called Pamila requesting her to meet but she denied and shared that she had got a boyfriend. On that day, I organized a break-up party with my friends. So, it was not big deal to attend break up party. We organized such party in several names for the cause of visiting clubs, drink, and smoke and just listen to the talks of our seniors in the cafe (which usually were about fights with other group). Going to clubs helped me to get introduced to many girls and ultimately I found another girlfriend.

Girlfriend: Emerging Urban Youth Culture

Rock Star told me that having a girlfriend was as common as having a cup of tea. "It is okay to have a girlfriend because it makes us something masculine, boys would appreciate on the skills of making girlfriends. How the concept of masculinity

has been transmitted via urban culture in Kathmandu. Whereas Rajesh Dai has different perspective to have a girlfriend as he shared, “Most of the time I am alone, so sometimes I plan to find a girl to share things so that I can feel comfortable and relaxed. *Rajamati* also shared that she has a boyfriend too as she made a boyfriend to be safe from other boys and males who usually have vulture looks to them as if girls were born to be mutilated by male. She shared, “Worse of all” She closed her eyes and continues:

It was some months ago when I first dated with a boy. Indeed, I was in search of companionship of a boyfriend. Was it a fault to search a boyfriend for a girl? We went somewhere 10 kilometers far from the Kathmandu city near the hill, it was located near the beautiful tea-garden. *Rajamati* smiled and said, “It’s ok, it is really quite common to go on a date with a boy. I was normal. As we reached at the resort, he ordered a bottle of beer but I refused it. Instead, I ordered a cup of milk coffee. I was little nervous as I was outside of my house with a boy, telling lie to my family. I should not have done that but my parents would not allow me to go somewhere else with a boy. To some extent we should follow the social norms and values too but he insisted me a lot and I could not deny. I was having coffee with him talking about the past and future of our lives. In between the conversation, he turned to be little freak as he pulled me towards him and tried to kiss whereas I did not want to screw it up ...nervous...reticent. But really, I was just a girl. I also leaned forward; I thought that he was conscious of my gown gaping a little more and the lowering of his gaze. I just removed his hand from my thigh. Am I just a flesh and blood? I said to him, “How about behaving like a friend. I am simply a girl like others for you. Don’t expect much on the first date?” He became totally upset, me too. He was just searching an opportunity to romance with me whereas I was searching some cordial relationships.

His male ego might possibly feel humiliated as I did not surrender in front of him. He asked me, “What was your problem?” I was almost choked at his intention and would like to return home as fast as I could. Rajmati wished she could break up at the moment but could not, she asked a question, “Why do boys try and trick a girl? Do they think that date, girlfriend, and chatting are simply for romance?” She looked at my face and quickly added, “Possibly we were not.” I did not have any answer at that time. As I was also the product of the same society, I might like to have romance with girls. But it was not something to tell in front of her.

I was returning to home, leaving Rajmati at her home. I inserted white earphones into my ears and played ‘get up stand up’ by Bob Marley. However, I am thinking more about the girlfriend culture. Instead of gendering friend as girlfriends and boyfriend, it would be better to use the term *gender friend* as it would be justifiable to represent all relationships in the urban center.

Scene in a Club: A Valentine Love

The Da Vinci Club, one of the famous clubs located in central Kathmandu, was full of youth on 14th February 2014. I did not have any aesthetic mood to celebrate the Valentine Day but I was observing how these youth in Kathmandu celebrate the Day. Originally Valentine Day was not a local cultural ceremony among the youth but it has been accepted as a local ritual among the youth in Kathmandu. The hall was gradually getting crowded with couples. Multi colored strobe lights were hung and flashing. I am thinking how these youth see their love in their beloved in the crowds where they hardly can see fair looks of their beloved in the blaring music and blazing lights.

Everyone seemed enjoying themselves. Rajesh Dai had invited me to attend the party. I developed good rapport with the hotel owner and shared my purpose of

observing youth in the party. Thus, I acted as his guest sitting in a counter and moving here and there. Sometimes, I shared that I asked questions to them. He agreed and was surprised to know that I was going to study the youth. But he warned me that I should not disturb their guests. The day was very private and couples would share their love to their Valentines. I was feeling lonely there.

Rajesh Dai rounded in dance floor with his girlfriend. She was holding a wine glass in her hand and looking awesome with her white short skirt. She started to shake her body ignoring other entire youth in the bar. She went to the crowd and started to dance with other guys leaving Rajesh Dai behind. I was thinking that she would just dance with Rajesh Dai and they would sit together and express their love. I later thought that other guys might be her college friends and she was not feeling hesitant to dance with them.

Five minutes later, she came back to Rajesh Dai and started talking to him. I did not know what they were talking about. I could not disturb their personal communication particularly on the Valentine Day. I was thinking if I could ask Rajesh Dai what they were talking about (love) on that particular day.

Love is one of the most important aspects of everyday life of youth and Valentine Day was the special day for expressing their love and exchanging gifts. Because of the Day, they might be looking awesome. Her white oval face was glowing in the sparkling light with acrylic nail, blonde hair and a beautiful dress she wore.

I was sitting with bar tender and he seemed to be surprised. He asked me, “Do you not have a girl friend?”

“I am married”. I replied to the bar tender.

“What’s wrong for a married men to make a girlfriend? They can enjoy their life with them”. He suggested me.

“Thanks for your suggestion. I will think. Where can I get a girl friend?” I fixed an ironical gaze at him.

“It is you who like to get/make girlfriend, and then you have your own style to make girlfriend. I am not a broker who searches girlfriend for others. I don’t have even mine.” He was a bit rude and humorous too. “Can’t I marry my girlfriend?” He counter asked me another question.

“I don’t have. I cannot tell about others. Possibly, my wife is waiting for me at home to have lunch together now.” I shared my condition.

His wry expression to my statement made me more confused. I thought I should not be there. I should dine with my wife together outside of home, either in a restaurant or in an inn. I had never celebrated the Valentine Day in my life. Then he ignored me. He joined another female bar tender in the other corner of the bar who was meagerly dressed in a blue jeans and pink t-shirt. She was pulling out her compact and checked her lipstick.

Possibly he shared that I was a guy just to observe the crowd of youth and possibly searching a girl friend to celebrate the V-Day. Both of them were looking at me and conversing with a faint grin. I felt that I was being ridiculed in the bar. Thinking that it was too much I asked for a bottle of coke. I took out 100 rupees note and showed her. Her eyes quickly shifted to money and draw her attention. She arrived nearer me and handed a glass of hot coke in February.

Rajesh Dai was busy with his beloved. After dancing for half an hour, they drank wine and kept talking. It was around 10:30 pm, Rajesh Dai was ready to drop his beloved to her home. I was also planning to move from there.

I came out from the bar and rode my motorbike to my home. During the journey, I was thinking how societies were gradually being changed. How easily youth take love affairs. It was supposed to be taboo nearly ten years ago. Tall, white image of Rajesh Dai and his beautiful beloved was reeling in my mind.

Vegetable Love

I like to see the general trend of making girlfriend among the youth in Kathmandu. As I was lecturing sociology for undergraduate level, I got wonderful opportunities to know about the relation in early twenties. I was supposed to deal with the topics such as prostitution and pornography; I thought it was the right time to deal with such issues. I started a discussion on pornography, where one of the boys openly shared that everyone in the class has different clips of porn in their cell phones. To validate his statement, I asked one of the girls “Is the statement true for you?” She neither said yes nor did she say no but she agreed that she often visited porn sites. Then I switched the topic, “What is your opinion on having/making girlfriend/boyfriend?” Most of them seemed to be positive to have or to make boyfriends and girlfriends. This indicates that it is a part of everyday life of urban youth to make girlfriends and boyfriends.

Then, exploring the voice of my participants, they also believed that it is inevitable to make GF/BF in their college days. I met Rock Star and asked him, “How did you celebrate the V-Day?”

“Valentine love seems fashionable. These youngsters like to show that they are now grown up and decide about their life themselves. I just only wished my girlfriend on that V-Day. We did not go anywhere for a date. I think it is not the only day to celebrate the V- Day.” Rock Star shared in our conversation two weeks after the V-Day.

It was another beautiful day of February, the month of love in 2014. I called Rock Star because I liked to hear his love story. He has also got a beautiful girlfriend who was studying in 11th Grade in a private college. He said that she was as shy as he was while expressing love. She used to help her parents in a grocery shop. Once Rock Star went there to buy cigarettes, he observed her as her future girlfriend. Then, he made his visit more frequent but occasionally bought chew gum and cigarettes. One day, “I collected guts and proposed her that I loved her.” He shared as if he had conquered a war of the *Mahabharata*. Then they were in love. “I am not sure how long I will be in relation with her as she is not my first love”, Rajesh Dai clarified my question about sharing his love experience.

“Have you thought about marriage?” I further probed.

“Not yet”

“Then how will your relation build/end?” I asked this question because love affairs usually end in the marriage as I believe. However, Rock Star never accepts this. For him love affairs develop and end without any cause and effect. It is a kind of happening in the life. Possibly, Rajesh Dai and Rock Star both are not aware to develop and end the relation in future.

Masculinity of Youth

As working with these youth for a couple of years, I observed that developing relation with girlfriends and boyfriends demonstrated the sense of sexuality on the one hand and on the other they could prove that they have grown up and are conscious of selecting their partners. Totten (2003) understand the notion of girlfriend as any present and past short term sexual relationship or intimacy with females. I understand that making a girlfriend was completely a masculine phenomenon. Perhaps the Nepali urban society has been rooted in the patriarchic values where masculinity has

been performed as a social structure. In this line, Both Rajesh Dai and Rajmati both experienced how maleness has been dominated in their everyday life. Such experience vegetable or valentine love has not only an outcome of the patriarchal society but also related with their personal history and interpersonal relationship (Connell, 1995). Similarly, urban youth are searching sense of security from the possible risk of urbanism and thus they make boyfriend and girlfriend, which was not just to fulfill the sexual needs. However, the trend of having girlfriend and boyfriend has been interpreted as cultural shift of youth. They became more open and confident of selecting their partner.

Night Life of Urban Youth

The idea of this section emerged while I was observing the night life of urban youth in Kathmandu in May 2014. Night life is one of the integral parts of the youths' life. Thokney, one of the urban youth whom I talked in the beginning of the research described the night life of Kathmandu in a magnificent way. I was tempted to portray the images of everyday night life of youth. How does it differ from the morning and day's life of youth? How can I depict the beauty of night life and youth in Kathmandu? My participants have different perceptions of enjoying night life. Except Montu all participants often visited *Thamel* to celebrate night life. I can better portray the night life of Kathmandu with the metaphor of three G (Gang, Girlfriend, and Guitar).

In all my thirty- five years, to be honest, I have never had experience of three G (Gang, Girlfriend and the Guitar). I was never in love with a girl; I never played the guitar and formed a gang. Rather Kathmandu taught me to belong to a community rather than a gang. However, I am much fascinated to those metaphors to describe the urban everyday life. In my life, I had a truly violent will to experience the night life

of Kathmandu. However, I had a couple of times experienced visiting dance bar of Kathmandu with my friends, which may not be sufficient to describe the everyday night life of urban youth.

It was the month of October, 2014; I decided to experience the night life in Kathmandu. I was in a dilemma where to start, where to visit and what to do? Possibly, I was not accustomed to night life of Kathmandu. I shared my plan to my participant Pasa for suggestion but he ridiculed me, “Want to be young again.....with grey hairs!!! However, he suggested visiting some dance bars in *Jawalakhel*, which would open till 10:00 pm. I could go to *Thamel* to spend the rest of the night. I shared such idea to my wife, she threatened to leave me. I was in a dilemma and promised not to break my love to her.

Youth in Dance Bar

Following Pasa’s suggestion, I was on an expedition of observing the night life of Kathmandu. It was nearly 8:00 pm, I headed to the first dance bar in *Jawalakhel*. I was feeling scary as I did not want to spend money on alcohol and girls. After I had parked my bike, I confidently went upstairs and entered into the dance bar. Two girls were standing at the door; they greeted me as if they knew me for centuries; as if I was a regular bar customer. They referred a seat for me. One of them asked, “Are you alone here?” I just nodded my head. As a disciplined student, I sat wherever I was instructed. Fast beat Hindi songs were playing in the background. A few tables were occupied. Instead of youth, I saw many of them were adults. They were sitting with girls. It was really difficult to hear them; occasionally I heard their giggles. One of the waitresses came nearer to me and asked, “What do you like to have?” She handed over a menu and faded among the customers. I was thinking what to order. I did not have any idea to order in the dance bar. What would happen

if I ordered a cup of cappuccino? She appeared after 2/3 minutes but I was indecisive till that moment. Then all of a sudden, I ordered a glass of juice. She insisted me to drink beer, whisky or rum. But I did not. She did not seem to be happy with my order. I was planning to go to *Thamel* to observe the rest of the night. She brought a glass of juice and sat on the chair next to me for a few moments. She opened up a conversation, “Where are you from?” Such questions are genuine as people like to know the root of people, as many people have migrated to Kathmandu. She possibly would like to know about my hometown. I said, “I am from Dang.” Then, she asked another question, “What do you do in Kathmandu?” I said I was a teacher in a school. She surprisingly asked, “How can you visit a dance bar being a teacher?” I did not have any words to tell. Possibly, she thought that teacher is a man of ‘moral’ who teach his students what to do and not to do. Possibly I was not supposed to visit a dance bar as I was a teacher. I also asked a few questions along her line: where are you from? How long have you been a waitress in this restaurant? Why did you choose this profession? She was answering these all questions diplomatically.

She narrated her story in a short span of time. She was from the remote village of Central Hill in Nepal. It has been nearly a year of choosing this profession. “I could not complete my education in my village and arrived in Kathmandu with my family. My family migrated to Kathmandu for better livelihood. I joined *Bhanubhakta* High school in Grade VIII, but could not continue my education. I worked here and there; ultimately I was trapped in such a profession. I can’t work any longer here, as I am planning to go to Israel next month.” I had many queries to ask her but how can I ask all personal stuff to her. I was listening to her. In-between she asked, “Don’t you offer me anything, juice, beer....?”

“What would you like to have?” I counter asked her a question

“Is it Ok if I drink a can of juice?” She asked.

“Sure!” I said but I was scared that my bills would increase. I wondered whether I would be able to afford the bills of the whole night or not.

She came back to me with a glass of juice; however she could not give as much time as she gave at her third visit. She smiled and moved away from my table. I was almost speechless to talk about her life and career. Many questions were hovering in my mind, “Why did she choose this profession? What kinds of job she was supposed to do? Did she go outside to spend a night? How much should she take for a night? But I did not dare to talk about these things.

One of the waitresses who were talking to other customers was now dancing on the stage in a Hindi song. She wore a blue short, actually it was short, loose transparent t-shirt, it could not hide the colour of her bikini. Her bikini was not as fit for her as her breasts seemed to be pouncing to come out and the audience might be ready to catch them. The mirrors on the walls made the scene more illusionary.

I was alone sitting in the same place. No one would come nearer me. Possibly, they gauged the weight of my wallet. It did not take much time for me to finish a glass of juice. As soon as I emptied my glass, another waitress came nearer me to ask what I liked to have more. During the moment, another girl was performing a seductive dance on the stage.

I came out from the dance bar with many questions and curiosity. Meanwhile, I was planning to move to *Thamel*. As I reached *Kupondol*, cops stopped me, and asked for my driving license. Before I showed them, they let me go. I headed towards *Thamel*- to observe the night life.

One of the most popular destinations of youth’s night life might be the dance bars in Kathmandu. I observed that such dance bars are located mainly in *Thamel*

area. Roaming around the streets, I entered into another dance bar. I was much confident now that I would be safe and could have a drink in the bar too.

When I got inside the dance bar, the music was blurring, with all blazing lights, few customers were enjoying there. The dance bar was not as live as it was in *Jawalakhel*. I took a seat near the counter and ordered a bottle of chill beer in the crazy October. Dancers were performing their dance in Nepali and Hindi songs. All of a sudden, people in two tables started fighting. They threw beer bottle on each other's head. The main channel gate of the restaurant was shut down by the bouncers. The bouncers were trying to control the mob but they did not seem to be calm. One could go outside from the bar. I was trapped inside along with these gangsters. I was totally confused how to go outside of the dance bar. I was thinking that cops would arrive and caught me and would take me to the police station.

Possibly, the news might get published in the national daily newspaper, with my photograph. This imagination totally scared me. My teachers, students, and relatives would question on my character. "Mr. Gautam- immoral man often visits the night bar of *Thamel*", I would scanned all the national daily headlines of tomorrow. I was hiding inside the counter with one of the dancers. The counter was comparatively big; we two adjusted with our cramped bodies. Within the 15 minutes of suffocation, cops arrived and took those people who fought along with some dancers. As I was suggested to come out by the dancer, I could not have collected enough courage yet. As I came out from the counter, I ran as if I had murdered a dancer in the dance bar. I did not even pay money for the bottle of Everest Beer I took.

We can see dance bars in the streets of Kathmandu almost in every location of the city. However, decent people are not supposed to visit the dance bars. It is a kind

of immoral sensual characters of people. Most of my participants are taking night life especially as a prostitution hub connected to the immoral activities. The urban culture in Kathmandu has not been emerged from the traditional ways of living. Possibly, night life is a symbol of freedom in the West and the culture has been derived from the West as an outcome of the increasing trend of foreign tourists in Kathmandu.

Montu- the God Seller directly denied visiting such bars to spend the night life, rather he preferred to drink alcohol with his friends. Sex for him with others is almost impossible as it needs affection to have. Likewise, Rajmati does not find very safe night culture in Kathmandu. She believed night culture mean to drink alcohol and dance. Pasa the weed did not have much interest in night life of Kathmandu as his family hardly

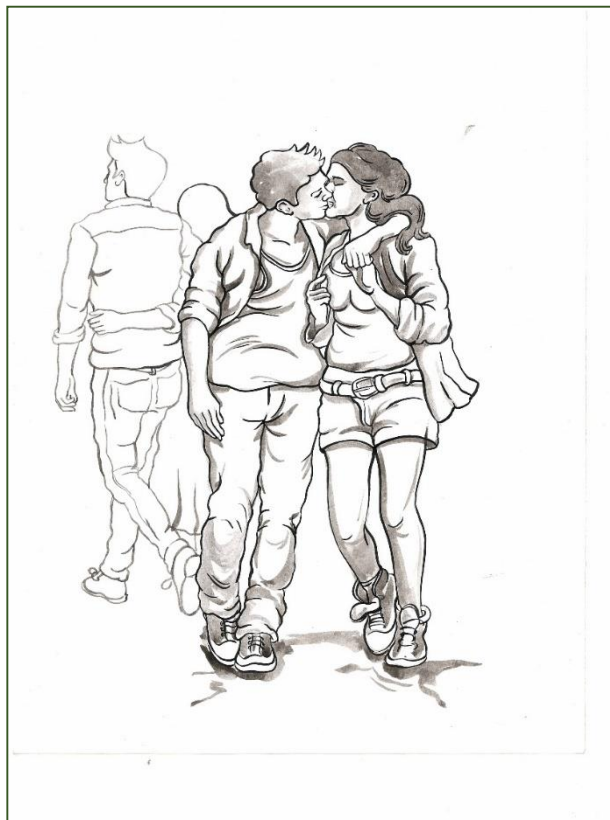


Figure 37. Rupturing Public Space.

allowed him to visit bars. The youth could not tell openly as they visited the dance bar as Kathmandu society does not yet take it positively.

Open Kiss in the Close Society

I had spent only NPRs 615 for the juice in the *Jawalakhel* Dance Bar. Everything had gone as per my budget. Otherwise, my research procedures particularly, observation of the city would be expensive. Again with shaken legs, fearful heart, and sweating body, I was not sure where to go and what to do to spend

the rest of the night. It was 10:30 pm. Still, I had six hours to spend in *Thamel*. I saw a tea-shop, where some youth were sitting and chatting. I entered into the tea-shop and ordered a cup of tea. A couple was sitting opposite my table. I could see what they did and talked. Possibly, they were worried of their friends who did not follow their suggestion to start up a business. The boy's right hand was on the girl's shoulder and his left hand was on the hand of the girl's right hand. The tea was ready. They were very somber. I checked my watch it was 12:30 am. While I was having tea, the boy slowly dragged the girl towards him and gently kissed on her lips. I observed that Nepalese society has become more open. They could kiss in the public places. I might be outdated as I was shocked and/or surprised to see the couple kissing in the open space.

Their kiss may be natural for them and other youth in the city. But I am not feeling so comfortable with their activities. On some other days, I was supposed to explore how urban youth perceived such things in their everyday life. After my *Thamel* visit, I met Mr. Pasa and shared the events of *Thamel*. "It is usual for urban youth. I kissed my girlfriend first time in the classroom when I was an Eighth Grade Student. It was my first kiss."

The couples' kiss in open place in Kathmandu is a challenge for me as I was brought up in a village, a close society, who would like to expect such close society in Kathmandu as well. I met some couples who fed each other in a cafeteria. I started thinking of a girl. Did her parents allow her to go outside at night? Such feelings were emerging into my mind. I was thinking that Kathmandu was a close society where youth could not express their love and affection to their girlfriend and boyfriend openly in the public spaces. Possibly, Kathmandu and its youth might be challenging the notion of a close society and they openly kiss. During those days,

most of the elderly people take night life as immoral and dark life but youth are enjoying it. How does it matter that youth have been searching their life in a dance party, bar and pub? Back of my university days, I understood that night life in Kathmandu was formidable for youth; almost all youngsters celebrated their night life with deceiving their parents and relatives.

The Guitar: Brand of Being Urbanized

I sighed sitting in the corner of a restaurant and waiting for Rajmati to talk something about the everyday life of urban youth in the city, especially about music and *Masti*. I have seen that most of the youngsters enjoy carrying a guitar and move here and there. The cafes of Kathmandu are crowded with youth playing the guitar. I would like to know more about such culture from Rajmati as she plays the guitar and enjoys singing songs. I was bored enough sitting there and waiting for her. I was jotting down my observation in the diary. Different questions were emerging in my mind as though I was going to carry out a research on the guitar. The metaphor of guitar has emerged while portraying their choice of music.

She arrived, and started talking about her musical journey.

When I was 11-12 years old, I went to a music school and then I started playing the guitar. At that time I was not aware of my vocal that I could sing songs. After completing a couple of years I recognized my vocal as if I could sing songs. I have a distinct kind of vocal. During my music school, I learnt to play the guitar. I had taken equal chance of playing the guitar and singing songs. Once I got an opportunity to sing a song at school, I considered this as a great opportunity for me to learn something about developing confidence. Then, I regularly participated in music and songs competitions at school. During the school days, I did not have any plan to take music for my career development but later on I knew that there are many

potentialities to gain in personal and professional life from musical industries and I think I would make this a part of my profession. However, my priority is education. I prepare for my examination and do assignments together as I rehearse my vocal.”

Singing at school made me feel special as I was being respected by my teachers and colleagues. I do not know whether the track I chose was good or not but I started playing the guitar. I started singing in the restaurant.

When I was in my college, during the certain festivals some of the restaurants called us to sing songs, to perform on the stage. We were also paid for doing so. Earning and surviving, and creating opportunities to learn, thus, were part of my life in Kathmandu.

Since I started playing the guitar in a Church to spread the key message of god, it helped me to cultivate my passion for playing the guitar. The rest of the devotees also paid great attention to me when I sang in the church, which also made me popular.

Church mostly affects the life styles of youth and they pray with the guitar. The Pastors also prioritize engaging youth in different activities of the church. The Pastor usually shared that it is important to engage youth to change the society. Thus, I got a chance to grow my interest of playing the guitar and singing songs.

The guitar has become inseparable part of my life. When I remain alone, I play the guitar so that I can forget anxiety and pain. I can feel very light hearted. Thus, I often play the guitar, though I do not perform to show off my attitude to others. Actually I see some other people who play the guitar tend to think as if they are celebrities of the nation. But I do not think so. Some of the youth are really benefitted from the guitar but some of them hang on with the guitar to impress others.

The iconic guitar is connected with the music of youth. They love listening to popular songs.

Once upon a time, Rajesh Dai himself thought to be a guitarist in Kathmandu. It was the time when his family had afforded every basic need of Rajesh Dai. He did not have any worries to work for survival and existence.

I think Rajesh Dai's wish of being a guitarist might have emerged from the space, where he was living. He could have observed the prestige of being a guitarist that he would get from Kathmandu. In those cherished days, he usually left his rented room in the morning with a guitar on his back. His get up was different, "I used to have desert boots, worn out jeans, black ribbon sunglass (duplicate) and guitar on my back so as to go to college. I bunked many classes of the college and sat on the ground and played the guitar. I thought I played the guitar nicer than Curt Cobin. I was imagining that I would be a guitarist in future and would contribute to the Nepali music. Though Rajesh Dai hardly played the guitar, he was struggling for his life and livelihood.

Nowadays, I am gaining a bit more confidence to walk in the street of Kathmandu at night. In one of the fine evenings of December, Kathmandu was covered in a veil of frost. I was almost desperate to capture the everyday night-life of youth. In so doing, I was planning to observe, one another destination called *Jhamel*. Originally it is known as *Jhamsikhel* but it has been renamed as *Jhamel*. *Jhamel* has been growing as a tourist area. I was totally confused where to go? Broken laughter erupted from the corner of the restaurant grabbed my attention. I went directly into that restaurant and saw some of the couples were just preparing to dance. I just sat there for five minutes and came back to the street. I again went to another coffee shop and spent some hours. I got the feeling that I would not get such open night life here

in *Jhamel*. I could not get any information about where to go and not to go. As I was returning home, I saw a board in front of the restaurant with the information “Live Musical Show”. Hoping that I would get further information on how they perform and who their possible customers are, I headed over there.

I could hear the chorus songs that were spreading across the street. I went inside the restaurant; a few seats were already occupied. Some of the customers were drinking and chatting. How could they talk in the rock-&-roll atmosphere? One of the waitresses appeared near me and left the menu. As I checked the menu, I would have got tea and coffee. I ordered a cup of espresso black that had comparatively lesser price. As I observed the stage, Nepali youth were playing the guitar and singing English songs. I do not know whether singing those English songs was their compulsion for survival or their hobby. As compared to the night life of *Thamel*, which I sensed to be more erotic, a family atmosphere was being maintained in *Jhamel*.

Gang: Group and Interest

Urban youth use the term gang to refer to their group in Kathmandu. However, generally the term gang has been used to represent the ‘underclass’ or ‘socially isolated group of people’ with negative connotation but later on the concept of gang has been gradually changed and analyzed from gang community relation (Venkatesh, 1997). In the streets of Kathmandu, most of the urban youth formed their gang for different purposes. They unite together and would like to fulfill their interest ideas in a gang. I observed the construct of



Figure 38. Slashing Culture

gang from the classroom to the streets in Kathmandu, which happen to be the part of their everyday life activities. In so doing, I focus more on the gang construction and their nature in Kathmandu unlike gangs in the United States focusing on crime and destructive forces of the city. I rather see the concept of gang from the subculture for youth perspective (Richardson, Murty, & Johnson, 2009, p. 315).

Gang in the Classroom

As I was teaching in one of the classrooms of undergraduate level in a private college in Kathmandu, one of the junky and tall students entered into the classroom without my permission. He introduced himself as the chair of Royal Gang in Kathmandu. He further briefed about the activities carried out by Royal Gang such as to organize sports in the locality, to organize blood donation campaign and to make the city drug free. Then, he was requesting or threatening me and my students to donate some money to his gang.

I was a bit surprised because I had observed many leaders both from Gang or political parties have entered into the classroom and talked about gang's ideology in the class. But it was the first time they were asking money for their purpose, though they claimed that it would be spent for the humanitarian purpose. Who knows? How would they spend their money? It was difficult to know the transparency of government in the local and central body. How could I ensure that my money would be spent in the humanitarian work? I was skeptical about this gang.

What does your gang do?

Social service!

What kind of social service does it do?

Based on the need of the society, at times we need to break the legs and hands of the people, other times we may construct library to the youth in the society. We

may organize some charity to the youth in the city. We engage in several kinds of activities for society and community.

First time I heard about the gang that is involved in various kinds of social work but I was still in doubt.

I was surprised to know how students could collect donations for their gang in an urban classroom. I denied to pay any money for them as I was not interested in any gang.

After a couple days, my students in the same class shared the ideas that they were going to establish a gang and they named it Royal Gang. They were also collecting money and shared that they would spend money for printing T-Shirt and selling them without profit. Their interest of forming a gang was unique for me because they borrowed a concept of gang from the street and employed to carry out their tasks. Though I usually hear the term 'gang' in the informal conversation among the youth in Kathmandu, I am not much familiar with the 'gang' construct. The question strikes me "How youths in Kathmandu perceive and conceive gang in their everyday life?" In this section, I unpack their 'gangness' either in the classroom or in the street. Possibly, these youth formed such group themselves based on their interest. Though there is no consciousness of understanding the issues of gang not only in Kathmandu but also in Europe because it undergoes with the complex social, psychological aspects (Wood & Alleyne, 2010).

"The symbolic culture of urban youth gangs is organized around the street fashions, slang words, advertising logos and 'soundbites' of global popular culture appropriated into local contexts"(Feixa, 2006, p.150). Students, even in the classroom, imitated gang culture in their fashion and slang words. They named their

group as gang, and they were interested in performing activities like the gang in the classroom.

Re-orientation: .*Mahamaya* Mandala

The consciousness of youth has merged into the interaction of space and time in Kathmandu. They adapted the ways of learning in Kathmandu based on the interaction of people, city and time and formed the consciousness of girlfriend, gang and guitar. This is the stage of revival, which helped them to fight with the adversities of the city. This is the stage of learning from the city, where they are attempting to live urban life happily.

The notion of .*Mahamaya* is related to the day of Siddhartha's renunciation of household life and adaptation of ascetic life for the quest of enlightenment (Bajracharya, 2011). In this line, I used the concept of .*Mahamaya* mandala to tell the stories of urban youth in their life who are searching their destiny in Kathmandu. Though it is unlikely to compare with the Buddha's quest for enlightenment (consciousness), it might be the quest of their dream and illusion of consumption, renunciation and salvation in their everyday life in the city.

Mahamaya mandala has the wheels of becoming (Blau, 2000), with which I have connected the life of urban youth who are creating their identities of modern urban youth, where their becoming has been represented by the circles of illusions as they live in the city. *Mahamaya* mandala helped me to decolonize the ways of knowing the youth and their everyday life as devoting to *Maya*, liberating from the circles of illusion and dream.

The themes of gang, girlfriend and the guitar can be connected with the youth subculture in Kathmandu. The everyday life of youth has been entangled in the circle of *Maya* thereby spinning the wheel of illusion and imagination and ruling the

everyday life of youth. These urban youth might have been trapped in the *Mahamaya* to make love, gang and songs.

They spin the wheel
of Illusion
and trapped in
Everyday life of city.

MANDALAM V

HEARING THE UNHEARD STORIES

Knowledge would be fatal; it is the uncertainty that charms one. A mist makes things beautiful.

Oscar Wilde

I narrated the stories of my participants as arrival, survival and revival thus far. The stories are the assemblage of being, living and learning in Kathmandu. I have illuminated these stories through the theoretical referents. In this section, I reflect on my research journey and elucidate major themes of my research in a consolidated form. In doing so, like other sections, I have designed two chapters: Wheel IX: ‘Arrival, Survival and Revival’ where I have discussed the philosophical base of being, living and learning in Kathmandu from cultural, resilience and identity perspectives. Likewise, theoretical referents such as resilience and resistance became handy for me to raise the active agency of urban youth. Similarly, I used globalization, modernization and localization to describe the everyday life and learning of urban youth in Kathmandu.

I have designed Wheel IX: ‘Arrival, Survival and Revival’ in the form of a screen play, where I invited the entire theorists in Van Gogh Café, where they argue and debate for generating and theorising the meaning created in the Mandalam II, III and IV of everyday life experience of urban youth.

The theatrical logics via self-study of reflection makes easier for my audience because they might be experiencing as if they were watching the debate of major theories and themes for theorization. I am not going to theorize distinctly by discussing the stories of my participants through the established theories. I have

rather used the local theoretical lens to observe the everyday life of urban youth, which may help to generate the meaning of everyday life of urban youth in Kathmandu. This section is broadly a/theoretical section, where I consolidate the major themes. In doing so, I adapt some strategies of reductionism, where I attempt to reduce the stories in a theme.

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WHEEL IX

CONNECTING DOTS IN THE WHEEL OF EVERYDAY LIFE

All theories are legitimate, no matter. What matters is what you do with them.

Jorge Luis Borges

I have identified, explored, and generated several dots of everyday life of urban youth in Kathmandu during the process of translating the field experience into textual and non-textual representations. These dots in the mandalam are scattered in nine different wheels of mandala. In this regard, I am attempting to connect the dots in the wheels from the perspective of theorization. I understand that theorization in arts based narrative research evolves from the artful engagement of the researcher and the participants. In this regard, I reflect on the whole research process of explaining the theorizing process of everyday life of urban youth.

This wheel of the research is a kind of alternative way of narrating the process of theorisation, and articulating the whole process artistically. I am contemplating on the process of theorising the field notes, memos, vignette, and stories of my participants. I aim at making it more artistic and credible. Creating and contemplating on the circles of narrative accounts drives my creativity towards the theorization process. In so doing, I envision mandala as an approach of inquiry, which could be part of theorization to depict underlying textually, visually, and/or performatively (Finley, 2003, p. 283) of everyday life of urban youth in Kathmandu.

Pre-Script: Connecting the Dots of Theorising

It is one of the fine days of January 2016. I have just completed the whole research process, and am working in the initial drafts of the thesis. But I am not happy with the concept and process of theorization. The term theorization for me is

rooted as a positivist notion of thinking. I am thinking the use of theory as the heuristics of explaining the everyday life of urban youth. In so doing, I follow several ways of the theorising process.

On the day, I am on the third floor of Hattiban Complex, School of Education Kathmandu University. I am contemplating on my being as a PhD candidate. Sitting in the library, reflecting on the whole research process, and moving ahead with the bubbles of thoughts, I console myself that the whole process of inquiry may be a theorising process. Describing mandala, its application of carrying out research in the context of studying youth in Kathmandu may be a major theoretical construct. Mandala model helped me to be a post qualitative researcher. Possibly, it also contributes to the methodological innovation in my research.

Literally theorisation appears as a reductionist approach for me, which hardly tells the meaning of the stories that I have narrated. Possibly, theories such as urbanism, everyday life, urban culture theories informs my ways of narrative constructionism. I was thinking of presenting these abstract ideas through my monologues. Is theorising of the stories important? Do I need to make stories more abstract? In this regard, I reflect on the process of theorisation, which I employed in my research. In this line, I used four kinds of theorizing process: grounded theorising, local ways of theorising, narrative theorization, and writing as a theorization.

Theorising Process through Stories

Theorization for me in this research starts with telling the stories of my participants, which is the key source for the meaning making process. Initially, I have generated meaning of everyday life of urban youth in Kathmandu from the process of grounded theorization from my extensive fieldwork. Nevertheless, I have not followed the model of grounded theory for theorization as Strauss and Corbin (1990)

purposed. Rather, I was exploring the narrative of youth in Kathmandu, and accordingly generated meaning for their being, living and learning. Similarly, the narratives of my research participants and my reflections on these narratives lead me to theorize the whole research as a theorization, which was embedded with the stories and reflections of my participants and myself. In so doing, I was aware of particularizing my understanding on the youth and their ways of thinking, being and doing in Kathmandu.

Reflecting back on the theorization process, I maybe a poststructuralist who have accepted my fallibility of presenting the unfinished stories of my participants like the stories of common people. Let me give an example from Wheel III, where I coined three metaphors, *Pakhe*, *Jhole* and *Mundre*. I generated these three metaphors from my experience of being, living and learning in Kathmandu. These three metaphors helped me to create a map of everyday life of youth about their arrival in Kathmandu. In telling the stories of my participants, I tended to be aware of sensitivity of the stories that might be incomplete. I always connected the stories of my participants with our past experiences and socio cultural positioning at present in Kathmandu. I believe grounded theorization helped me to generate meaning from the fieldwork and activities. The process of grounded theorization may include more poststructural ways of processing qualitative research; however, I emphasized local ways of theorisation.

Let me bring an example from my fieldwork. One day when I was having lunch in the hotel during my arrival in Kathmandu, the waiter of the hotel used the term *Pakhe* (Wheel III). I was not aware of the meaning at the moment, though I was humiliated by the way he used his language. Gradually, I understood the meaning of the term and realized that the term might have different meaning as semiotic sense.

The term was used quite often to describe the urban segregation in Kathmandu. In so doing, my interpretation of *Pakhe* was based on the outsider group of people who migrated to Kathmandu. Later on, I understood that the term *Pakhe* did not only cover the socio-spatial segregation but it would also reflect the growing civilization of the urban culture which always denounce the recognition of the people who are migrated from rural to urban areas. Reflecting back on the construct of *Pakhe*, I developed a narration informed by the same construct of being *Pakhe*. Though the term was hardly used by the *Newar* community, it was popular among the migrants from their villages of Nepal.

The metaphors I used are the local construct, and are used as the theorization process. I have used the Nepali words rather than translated one not because of claiming the theorization process, but in its assemblage in presenting the local ways of knowing. While I was generating the meaning from the local construct of being, living and learning of everyday life of urban youth, I have generated the meaning through writing process. The writing process itself is a kind of theorization in my research.

Throughout the research, I seemed to be inquisitive to bring out various facets of everyday life of urban youth. In so doing, I started designing the narratives from the textual representation, my experiences and everyday happenings of urban youth in Kathmandu. Barth (1977) also shared that narrative is a more prodigious variety of genre. In this line, the whole process of telling stories of my participants demonstrates the sociological imagination. In this regard, I generated theories and used theories as a polymorphous rather than normative construct. All the wheels and the circles were created from the theoretical referents, generated from the field texts.

In so doing, I might have critiqued the purpose of theory as a reductionist approach to generalize the so called findings of the research.

While listening to the several versions of the stories of my participants, I was able to construct their narrative of lived experience in the complex urbanized Kathmandu. The narrative theorisation helped me to unpack the ways of exploring their situatedness in Kathmandu. It further illuminated the way of presenting spatial and temporal space of the youth in their everyday life events, actions and reactions. Throughout the process, I was thinking of blending their stories within the perspectives. In this regard, major themes of being, living and learning are also knitted with the theories.

Let me start with an example of Wheel IV: “Random, Boredom, and Stardom”, this concept has been theorized from the writing process. I was searching a metaphor for describing the ideas of urban youth and their purposeless wandering. I am not well satisfied with their ways of wandering in the city. The ideas of randomness emerged not from any specific theories I studied but from the stories the participants were telling. As their stories developed, I came to know that they felt alienated and alone, possibly it could be their boredom of living in Kathmandu. Then after, I used the term boredom which rhymed with the random. As a poetic nature, I was acute of searching another word, which both portray their everyday life and used the stardom. Can I call such process theorisation?

Each of the wheels in my research appeared with three words such as (*Pakhe, Jhole, Mundre*), (Random, Boredom, and Stardom), (Adversity, Artha and Anonymity) and so on. Some of the ideas emerged when I started writing the stories of my participants. I like to thank Richardson (2000) who opined writing as an inquiry. Maybe some major theorising process emerged with in the circle of writing.

I still remember the date, March 2014. When I was redesigning the Wheel IV, I struggled a lot, where I could not get any concrete images of urban youth. All of a sudden, some ideas of *Artha*, and adversity emerged during the writing process. After reading literature and field notes, listening to the voice of my participants, the new concept anonymity appeared and thus the wheel was constructed. In this line, I believe that I have applied writing as theorisation.

Similarly, I give several examples which were generated during the process of writing. The ideas of gang, guitar and girlfriend emerged during the writing process, which helped me to organize the stories of my participants in some creative ways. I framed the ideas of mandala in each wheel acknowledging writing as the theorization process.

Theorising the Wheels of Everyday Life

I generated meaning from the events associated with youth from the everyday life perspective. Everyday life perspective helped me to explore meanings from the ordinary events of the youth. Each event in turn is associated with everyday life of the youth. I attempt to see these everyday life activities as unique aspects of the youth that shape their identity, lifestyle and learning. While selecting the themes from everyday life of urban youth, I observed mainly how these youth interact with the space. I prioritized how their life styles are shaped by the culture of the city that offers them both opportunities and challenges in their life. Most of the areas of living (Gang, Girlfriend and the Guitar: Adversity, *Artha* and Anonymity) in the cities are the major themes of everyday life of urban youth in Kathmandu. Most of the themes emerged from the youth and their ways of living such as entertainment, work, education, leisure activities, agitation, and movement.

Till this stage, I told stories of my participants in the previous Mandalams, interacting with relevant literature and theories. I moved around my research agendas of everyday life of urban youth. I explained their ways of living, being and learning. In doing so, I used mainly four theoretical perspectives as referents vis. cultural, resistant, resilience and identity to shape the stories of my participants. At this stage, I believe that stories are informed by theories. Thus, it may not be non/essential to discuss theories in the separate section of the dissertation. Unpacking the everyday life of urban youth and their experience of living, being and learning in Kathmandu, I integrated the major themes of previous Mandalam.

In the Mandalam II, while addressing the first research question, I coined three metaphors: *Pakhe*, *Jhole*, and *Mundre* and I dealt with the identity perspective and urban segregation while I was describing the experiences of the youth in their arrival. Similarly, three other major themes emerged from the field in the Wheel of the same Mandalam: Random, Boredom and Stardom. I set, critiqued, and generated theoretical base to deal with the everyday life of the youth. Similarly, mobility helped me to deal with their randomness in the city. In the same way, I used the theories of alienation to deal with youth boredom. Likewise, I used the theoretical referents of heroism and urban youth capitals to deal with the stardom of the youth in the city.

Mandalam III is all about how my research participants redefine their purpose of living, being and learning after our arrival in Kathmandu. In this Mandalam, there are two Wheels: Adversity, *Artha* and Anonymity; and *Yantra*, *Tantra* and *Mantra*. Dealing with these ideas, I employed the theoretical facets of resistance and resilience to deal with the opportunities and struggles we experience in Kathmandu. Mandalam IV is set around our consciousness of adopting and challenging the urban culture which I depicted via the metaphors of Zorba, Zumba and Zen, and analyzed via the

resistant and resilient perspectives. Another Wheel of Gang, Girlfriend and Guitar emerged from the fieldwork where I employed the youth sub-cultural theory.

Many times while producing meaning from the fieldwork, I have developed a common sense of applying theory into my vignettes and stories. Here, I would like to give an example: I was inclined to engage meaningfully with the theories. I often become skeptical to know the political dimensions of using theories in the research. In doing so, I experience a kind of burden of producing tacit knowledge via certain theoretical lenses. Moreover, these theories appear in between the text and context as self-referential activities. In doing so, I may be reflecting on my sense of humiliation showing the negative dialectics as Adorno (1973) argued for the theorising process. I am aware that theoretical bubbles may create a base for a) theorising stories and b) generating theories from the stories of my participants with the local ways of theorization process.

The Wheel of Arrival

I used the notion of the wheel of urban youth portraying the cyclic order of everyday life. Everyday life activities of my participants in the city like Kathmandu have been revolving around time and space. As an urbanist, I agree that both temporal and spatial movements of the youth shape the ways of being, learning and living. In this regard, everyday time is cyclic from the morning to the evening and to the morning. Temporal everyday activities of the youth seems more routine which perpetuates *Jhole*, boredom, adversity, gang, as interpreted by Highmore (2010). However, temporal aspects made them move around to be more transformative like *Mundre*, Zumba and Zen, and the guitar (Lefebvre, 1991). In this line, time is an important concept which heals the pain of living in the city for the youth. During their living in the city, everyday life of youth was shaped by the reproduction of

urbanism as Heller (1984) believed. Though, my participants' living is more connected with urbanism of Kathmandu which does not only make them consumers like de Carteau (1984) believes but they critique the production and producer at the same time. From the wheel of morning to evening, the images of Kathmandu have been changing where the youth like to adapt urban ways of living. In each wheel there are three temporal and spatial images like in the *Bhabachakra* Wheel. Let me give example from the notion of *Pakhe* which is linked with the theory of urban segregation. In everyday life of urbanism the youth in their arrival stage have confronted walking, talking and reading (de Carteau, 1984). The interaction of those youth with the public space (Boerer, 2006) of Kathmandu reproduces (Heller, 1984) the hesitant identity. However, I argue that these youth are unlike Heller's objectified activities. They exercise their self to move inside the circle of *Pakhe*, in so doing, they use their agency to move ahead with the urban trend and tradition. During the stage, the 'perceived space' (Lefebvre, 1991) of the youth in Kathmandu differs with the 'lived space' (Lefebvre, 1991). Thus, I argue that *Pakhe* is the contested form of the perceived space and lived space. In the mandala, it appears in the outer layer of the circle. Like in the *Bhavachakra*, this wheel might be trapped by the god *Yama* which gave the life of the youth more panic.



Figure 39. Journey to Centre

The youth overcome the contested space and are trying to create an identity in the city. In this line, they struggle to make their life and career in Kathmandu and experience cultural schizophrenia (Jameson, 1988) of adopting the urban ways of

living. I termed this notion as a *Jhole* when they hardly recognize other various 'selves', city creates schizophrenia to assimilate the ways of living. However. I find they are not as pessimistic as Jameson (1988) described, they still dream to live in the core of the city as 'lived space' (Lefebvre. 1991). Among various selves of the youth, one of the selves or few of the selves are schizophrenic but other selves of the youth are active. Some of them lost some selves in this circle and some are attempting to move into the core circle of the mandala. In the mandala the circle of *Jhole* appears in the second outer layer. As in the *Bhavachakra* it appears in the circle of human beings where they experience ignorance, desire and aggression (Grey, 2007).

I did not sense that these youth were too pessimist to continue their living and learning in Kathmandu and they were gradually developing a sense of confidence to assimilate the ways of living as Gergen (1992) believes their self was something optimistic which was searching an appropriate opportunity for their survival and entering into the core space of the city as glocal space. Soja (1996) discussed the third space in the fusion of the imagined and real space where, as I observed, the youth create an identity of *Mundre* in Kathmandu. It remains in the core circle of the mandala which is the core circle of the *Bhavachakra*, which appears to them as the ultimate freedom from the mainstream culture.

In this regard, the arrival of youth in Kathmandu is a journey to the center, a third space as Soja (1996) believed. The journey of youth identity moves from *Pakhe* to *Mundre*. It was a core circle as mandala principle believes the core is the place of god and youth imagined their god as *Jim Morrision* and *Bob Marley* in the center. I was skeptical whether it liberates them from the city life or it creates some other circles of reproduction of 'modern' ways of living and being in the city.

While creating their self in the arrival stage, they have some unique experiences which I presented through the metaphors of random, boredom and stardom. These unique experiences of urban youth locate their self in the cosmos. At this stage, the cosmos blends with their identity. The first experience of youth in Kathmandu was random which depicted that they were moving around the city

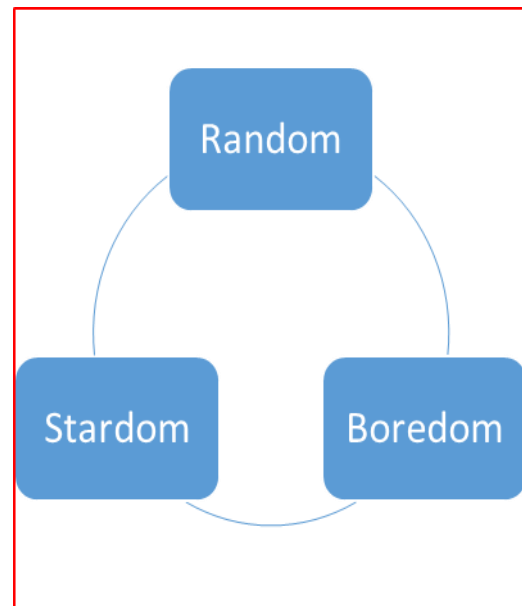


Figure 40. Cycle of Everyday Life

exploring the facets of the city life. As compared to their past life, they were searching similar pattern of everyday life but could not meet their expectations. They randomly moved from here to there. I connected the notion of randomness with the ideas of everyday mobility (Cairns, 2012). However, the mobility of the youth within the city seems different as Cairns (2012) describes because the transition of education, work, and leisure time was not clearly reflected in everyday life of the youth.

My participants either depended on their family or parents for the cost of mobility. They moved to bring changes in their life and to maintain the life standards of the city as Furlong (2015) describes. However, it is not sure that leaving home, school, and city brings the changes in their life which produces inequality and individualism (Denot & Koch, 2015). They perform random activities in the city especially in the arrival stage. These random activities appear in the outer circle of the mandala and are trapped by several dreams to achieve in the city.

To achieve their dreams in the city, they experienced everyday life alienated because their life is more routine and thus they experienced boredom. They are not

meeting their expectation from the college, salary and wages to maintain their life in the city and as a consequence remain bored. Boredom is the state which is mediated by money as Simmel (2004) describes social relations are determined by money. They might be expecting to get connected with the urbanism of Kathmandu and experience boredom in Kathmandu as a modern society (Lefebvre, 1991). Moreover, boredom was a state of reproduction of inequality or vice versa (Dillabough & Kennelly, 2010).

Then they hardly remain in the stage of boredom and enter into stardom. Ultimately, they are expecting to perform stardom in their everyday life. They no longer search economic scarcity as Mains (2007) argued that such boredom are created by severe economic scarcity; this transformation is frequently never realized in the neoliberal urbanization (p. 606), but which lead to the transformation which I termed as stardom. Furthermore, the “imaginative engagement with everyday life could stimulate the desire of social transformation” (Papastergiadis, 2010, p. 24). The images of their role models were created from the mass media, cinema, music industry and sport world (Gledhill, 1991). These youth’s stardom reflected their creativity from the industry, which would transform the cultural landscape to infuse the new ideas (Barth, 1977) so as to make youth livelier. Otherwise, the city life of the youth may go gray.

The Wheel of Survival

The wheel of survival appears in the second layer of the overall wheel. In this wheel, I employed the theory of adversity which influences the ways of living of urban youth. The theory of adversity itself is the first phase of the resilience perspective. In this line, Ungar (2004) proposed that “Risk factors are contextually sensitive; risk impact is cumulative, factors combine exponentially; attributions and

belief systems are preconditions of risk; effect of risk factors may also be neutral or protective” (p. 344). Maili, Pasa and Montu have been experiencing different kinds of risks during their living in Kathmandu. Their belief of being rich and prosperous creates such risks. The extreme case of Maili is an example of portraying adversities. In this line, adversities and risks of youth in the city were contextually precised and constructed (Ungar, 2004). In so doing, they experience several adversities living in the city. As such, there is no simple connection between someone’s position “as an ‘at risk’ young person or as anything else – and the ‘truth’ or ‘value’ of what they say” (Archer, Hollingworth, & Mendick, 2010, p. 20).

Such adversities are cultural specific and mainly related with money. Simmel (2004) argues that everyday life of youth in the city influences the relationship of individuals. The notion of *Artha* was related with the ideas of consumers (de Carteau, 1984). The youth like Maili became an extreme example of the consumers who influence both the product and the producer. Such notion increased the ideas of commodity, she is even ready to sell her body in Kathmandu. It might be her plight but she would like to remain anonymous. My participants experienced adversities which are created with the notion of imitation of western modern consumer culture in the initial stage but they were able to resolve such contradictions with the help of family and community (Liechty, 2003). In so doing, they resisted against the established mainstream culture as an outcome of the existential crisis.

The primary interest of the youth in the city like Kathmandu is to earn money. They experienced several adversities for the sake of earning money and their family and social values are weaken. Thus they liked to remain anonymous in the city life which is very chaotic and complex (Batty, 2005). Kathmandu to some extent seemed to be a dual city that creates “increasingly difficult conditions for minority youth

seeking work, while the same changes provide the basis for lucrative salaries and benefits for top executives” (Flagana, 2010, p. 301). In such circumstances, they did not like to make their status visible and would like to maintain their life anonymous (Form & Stone 1957). Youth highly dream to make their status in the city unlike Form and Stone (1957) believed but they were running after the money making process. Possibly, it is not at their stage to think about social status symbols other than earning.

In the wheel of the mandala, *artha* was in the center of the circle and they attempt to be anonymous in the second outer circle and the circle of the adversity remains outside the circle. In the stage of survival they adopt the urban ways of living. Trungpa (2011) articulates the philosophy of mandala as orderly chaos in everyday life activities of human beings. He compares the physical world with the chaos and people are searching order. I like to connect the chaotic urban life where we research participants are seeking order. These urban youth hardly anticipate beyond physical order and thus they experienced more chaotic situation. Searching order may be the simple step to liberate ourselves from the chaos of the city life. However, do urban youth go beyond the physical world of city for searching order in their everyday life?

Regarding another wheel, I employed the metaphors of Yantra, Tantra and Mantra describing the terrestrial understanding of everyday life of urban youth. In this research, I could not go deeper as the celestial components of the Hindu tradition. I might not have interpreted the notion of Yantra, Tantra and Mantra as essentialist understanding as our ancestors understood and interpreted. I take such ‘heavy’ terms as an analytical hubristic to deal with the lifestyles of urban youth. At the same time I also think dialectically and find that celestial and terrestrial notion interact with each

other in everyday life. However, urban youth's lifestyles in these three layers depict that they have been setting their own interpretations of Yantra, Tantra and Mantra. Literally, these youth neither tame their body (*Tan*) nor their mind (*Man*) with the efforts (*Yantra*) to unify with the *Parambhrama* (ultimate truth) but they used their body and mind to achieve the cosmopolitan ways of living. I used these notions from two different perspectives of resilience in their life styles which appears and protective and promotive factors to adapt the lifestyles in the city.

Regarding the resilience theory, Rutter (2013) emphasizes that resilience is not related to individual psychological traits, but rather it is an ordinary adaptation given the right resources. He emphasizes that it is the environment, not the child that is the catalyst for these differences. Warner (1989) held an ecological view of resilience, focusing on protective factors that promoted resilience at the individual, family and community level. However, Warner (1989) seems much wider to take his opinion of using the concept of resilience to the wider community level instead of narrowing with individual and family.

Rai, Luitel, Gautam, Pant, and Gautam (2015) indicated that urban students are developing their assets from the home, community, and environment. However, the city life itself became protective to offer them a space to fulfill their dreams. The urban youth prepared themselves to overcome with such adversities from their life styles. Gautam (2015) indicated that urban youth developed asset to cope with the adversities changing their life style even in the emerging city like Jumla.

As the mandala principle itself demonstrates, the urban youth are moving around the web of life which was so delicate like the spider's web and movements in the corner affect the whole net of the spider's web. The city life is also as integrated and complex as the spider's web. The youth in Kathmandu enjoyed the materialistic

worldview which revolves around the cycle of birth and death with the dreams and expectations created by the technocratic societies. The cosmology of Kathmandu for youth is more inclined to the technospace (Appadurai, 1991) which “lost the connection with the other parts of the web- family, friend, and spiritual community” (Tenzin-Dolma, 2008, p. 20).

However, they attempted to connect with other parts of the web as their asset to release their pain of urban life. In this line, I could give an example of Montu who was living with his father who taught him to carry out a business. Rajamati experienced more comfortable to share her thoughts with her grandmother when she was experiencing grief. Pasa often shared everyday life activities with his wife. They were connecting with the web of family and community life as cultural assets. Everyday life of youth in Kathmandu is like the “spider’s web, in which the slightest movement sends vibrations through the entire subtle yet resilient structure” (Tenzin-Dolma, 2008, p. 120).

The Wheel of Revival

Revival in the third space is possibly closure to the youth subculture in the city. My research participants are ordinary youth who are attempting to learn to live in Kathmandu. I presented their stories of survival in Mandalam III to locate the relationship among the youth and their everyday life in the city. The youth are struggling to live and make career in Kathmandu in this space. They hardly experience the ‘conceived space’ which created the romantic version of life, while they were struggling to live. In this regard, they might be alienated and were learning to overcome such adversities. After their arrival and forming of the conceived space, urban youth experience lived space where they experience ‘disjuncture’ (Jarvis, 2012). In this line, Jarvis (2012) further argued, “Disjuncture situations are often

emotive in category, which just cause us to wonder at the beauty, and pleasure that we are experiencing” (p. 12). In this situation urban youth may tend to be more resilient and resist the conceived space. As a result, most of the youth seemed disinterested in their formal education because they could not match their aim, ambition, and rhetoric of education. Perhaps, my participants were resilient by building their capacity to mitigate disruptions, self-organize, learn and adapt (Ungar, 2012). Such kind of resilient activities might have helped them to dream and desire life in Kathmandu.

The youth’s perception of everyday life from the morning, afternoon and evening might frame their identity construction and reconstruction in Kathmandu. I believe that urban youth’s everyday life activities and experiences influence their identity as Ferguson (2007) describes, “Selfhood is constructed from experience while, at the same time, it gives experience its characteristic form” (p. 6). Dealing with the youth in Kathmandu I understand that everyday experiences of the youth shape their identity as a cultural form (Heller, 1984). The identity of the youth might have been associated with the identity of the city that has been associated with the urban environment.

Contrarily, the youth might not be able to cope with the situation and remain outside of the perceived space of the youth in Kathmandu, yet this might have taught them to modulate their identity, which might be influenced by the power of industry, speed of communication and technology with the economic prosperity (Rowe, 2003). In this regard, the youth culture resists the established ideas via various forms such as Zorba, Zumba, and Zen and Gang, Girlfriend and Guitar. These metaphors helped me to reflect on the youth culture which is flourishing in the city. The youth aimed to spend their time in the transgressive space which was not accepted by the dominant culture. The vignettes from the morning, afternoon and evening in Kathmandu

offered a sense of youth's living and learning being influenced by the western modernism. The group of youngsters in Van Gouge's Café was enjoying English Songs with the foreign taste of coffee. They worship in the temple or church in the morning, entered into the intermediate space in the afternoon, and finally they rest in the transgressive space of Kathmandu in the evening. Such transgressive space is loose to perform everyday life of urban youth (Franck & Stevens, 2007).

The scenario of Van Gouge's Café where the youth have coffee, and listen to English songs, made me think that the youth in Kathmandu appear to be losing the local and cultural values. Initially, I interpret such events as a threat to an identity of the youth. In such cases, I perceived that urbanization has been a major threat to the local and distinct cultures. The youth would be the first target of materialization and commercialization driven by hegemonic pressures of the global market. A loss of distinct urban culture is a loss of "place identity" and "people identity" (Choe, 2007, p.133). However, their life outside the café was totally different. The youth in Kathmandu are learning to balance both global and local cultures.

Fischer (1975) believes that urbanism has created and developed the subculture where the youth "interact with the manufactured cultures of being deterministic in the sense that they influenced by the consumer" (Brake, 1985, p.ix). In this line, urban youth enjoy the transgressive space as a subcultural practice. However, I used the sense of subcultural theories as an analytical tool to describe that these youth have developed their own space in the city unlike as part of the sub-society. In this line, they have learnt their norms and values to adjust, yet recognized and valued the urban culture. In this line, they developed the consciousness of playfulness which might be an asset to overcome the adversities. Likewise, they became conscious of body which I portrayed via the metaphor of Zumba as the part of

the youth subculture which tends to be some form of exploration of masculinity (Brake, 1985) and lastly, they perform like zen/punk with the consciousness of mind.

The layers of consciousness in the mandala principle created a pattern of being aware of the self (Trungpa, 2011) similar to the performing styles in the sub culture of youth as revolting style and the style as homology (Hebdige, 2004). First of all, I noticed they were aware of their matter, later on they became aware of their body and lastly they became aware of their mind and started resisting the social upheavals via their appearance, music and thought which is manifested via their styles and performance.

The girlfriend, gang and guitar reflect the notion of urban subculture which I connect with the *Mahamaya* mandala reflecting on the illusions and dream of urban youth of their being and becoming. In the wheels of becoming, *Mahamaya* mandala is referential which not only shows the infatuations of urban youth but their journey to clarity and illusion. It shows that urban youth are veiled with the maya and illusion which was difficult to overcome for their liberation. Maya and illusion of urban youth appears as the subcultural activity as Fine and Kleinman (1979) argues.

Allegory of Three Wheels: *Bhavachakra*

I think it is relevant to connect the ideas of arrival with the notion of mandala because Levi (1992) provides the evidences that Kathmandu's built environment was itself designed by the mandala principle. However, I think it is connected with the everyday life of the people also in the rituals and performance. In the wheel of life in Kathmandu, I created three concentric wheels: arrival, survival and revival. In the core of these circles, I presented the revival where they are able to cope with the adversities they face, where they resist the injustice, where they are prepared to adapt urban ways of learning, where they envision living their fullest life in the city. It is

the nuclei of the wheel. The third wheel is the outer wheel which represents the youth as an outsider. This wheel of time in Buddhist philosophy revolves the macro level interpretation from birth to death to rebirth. Likewise, the stories of my participants move around the living wheel before and after the death and reincarnation. In this sense, I believe that their present scenario is the outcome of the past life and karma.

Second outer circle represents the survival where they experience several upheavals and struggle to transcend to the core circle of revival. This wheel describes the cause of adversities and its effects in the ways of living and being as experienced by the urban youth.

The core layer of the circle of the *Bhavachakra* is revival where the youth prepare themselves to live and learn the urban ways of living in the city. These all three wheels of the *Bhavachakra* describe the causes of frailty and weakness which are reflected in the materialistic phenomenon of urban life



Figure 41. Cycle of Bhavachakra

experienced by urban youth from the arrival to the survival. The karma of urban youth might have been shaped by urbanism, especially consumers of technocratic society. I also relate the karma of youth in the six different category to reflect the notion of *Bhavachakra*. These are the symbolic worlds which reflect the ways of living in the city like Kathmandu. In these symbolic six worlds, I would like to locate the everyday life of urban youth from the vignettes of my characters and their aspirations of living in Katmandu.

I used the notion of wheel as an allegory of *Bhavachakra* describing the everyday life of urban youth. The wheel describes the sense of being, living and learning depicting our thought processes and behavior. In this line, Nichtern (2016) shared that the wheel of life shows how karma functions in our life, how we get trapped in ignorance and bliss. Describing the model of *Bhavachakra*, Metzner (1996) shared “this mandala with six segment represents both topographical and biographical; temporal and spatial and entering and leaving in the different realms, according to our accumulated karmic predispositions” (p. 156).

These six karmic worlds are transient as Fischer (1995) describes urbanism into three different theoretical perspectives. As the first category of urbanism theory depicts, it is deterministic which deteriorates the urban life which is referred by the asura (demon) and preta (ghost). I would like to argue that everyday life of the youth in Kathmandu created the images of the city which

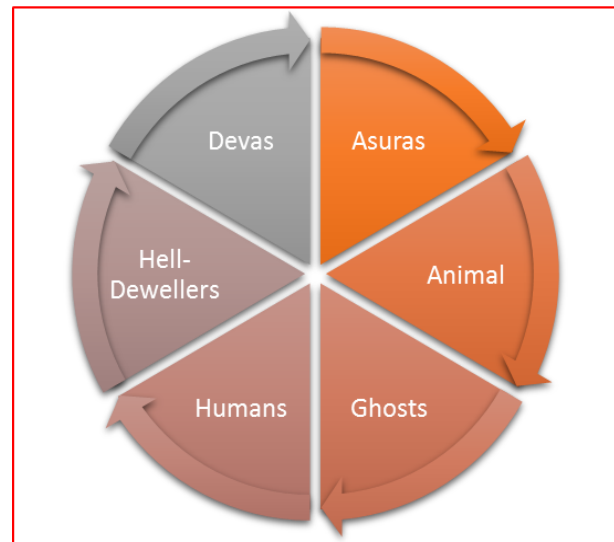


Figure 42. Bhavachakra Mandala

they would like to escape from. Similarly, Fischer’s second category is ‘compositional theory’ I linked the ideas of ecology with the *Bhavachakra* relating to the world of animals and humans where everyday life of urban youth trying to maintain the ecological perspective of living learning and being in Kathmandu. Third, I categorize the subculture of urban youth as the abode of god where youth perform their activities such as Mundre, Stardom, Zen, the Guitar as the temporal paradise as the supreme sense of living. They perform their mastery of being modern

and urbanized. Everyday life of urban youth has created the positive energies to live their life. These are a kind of higher order of living.

However, this higher order of thinking and becoming has been challenged by the opposite energies which always confront with the god. They are called asuras (devils) in the *Bhavachakra*. The asura habitus of the urban youth made them a critical mass who always confronted with the devas. In this sense I relate the notion of asura with the notion of resistance of the youth. The *asura prabirti* (Devil Characteristics) of youth warn themselves to follow the positive energies, thus they rebel with the dominant culture of the society where they created the style as homology (Hebdige, 2004). These youth are creating order in chaos with the homology between the different subcultural styles. They rupture the established godhood and create a unity of asura.

In the upper half of the wheel, karma of urban youth is to preserve the ego and self of living and learning in Kathmandu. It is another characteristic of the urban youth showing their ignorance and egoism of being modern and urban. All participants in my research reflected on their ego of living in Kathmandu, the ego is typical which was created by urbanism of the people. In this sense, I argue that Kathmandu reproduces such karma in the everyday life of youth which is related to the ego and ignorance.

In the *Bhavachakra*, there is a space of animal in the lower half of the wheel which illustrates that urban youth in Kathmandu have been suffering from the fetish of capitalism and consumerism which is destroying the local and cultural assets of youth. The dream of money possibly comes from the sense of beast, to destroy the life of people.

In another world of the city life of Kathmandu similar to *Bhavachakra*, the fifth world is the space of the greedy ghosts which let me remind the youth who are suffering from the adversity of the city. The life of these people was pathetic as the greed of being urbanized has been reflected in their ways of living, being and learning.

Thus, sometimes Kathmandu became *Narak* (Hell) to those youth who could not achieve their dream, who could not find peace and harmony, who could not be satisfied with the ways of being and living. Similarly, the characteristics of youth reflected in the six world of the everyday life of youth were trapped in the Samsara of Kathmandu. In this line, Kathmandu looks like the *Kaam Loka* (Mahathera, 2001), however, we all have possibilities to attain and create our own nirvana. The nirvana of Buddha might be different from the nirvana of the urban youth. They are attempting to attain the nirvana. In the journey of Nirvana, the mandalic methodology helps me to unpack the everyday life of urban youth.

Reflecting on Research Methodology

Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls;

The most massive characters are seared with scars.

-Khalil Gibran

Such theorization is possible with the creative research methods, however my methodological innovation was challenging. I came across several obstacles during the journey but I collected some courage to move ahead with the strongest soul.

I saw many scars on my PhD journey. When I started it with zeal and spirit, I came across with massive upheavals in such spirit. I asked a question many times, “What is the purpose of doing a PhD? Is it only the way of being academicians? How can I as an academician contribute meaning to my life? Several other questions

emerged and vanished over the period of time. I experienced many hardships; my PhD grew with tragedy, and most of the time I was in darkness, but I had developed a confidence during the time as Gibran expressed. Possibly, such experience was leading towards transformation as I was building competence and self confidence in my new role as a PhD candidate (Mezirow, 1975) who comes up with the ideas of using mandala as a methodology.

Methodological Dilemma: A Plunge into Mandala

As my fieldwork was developing, I was more confused about locating all research process within an ‘appropriate’ research methodology. While I was engaged talking with my participants, my approach broadly seemed to be qualitative, which more specifically appeared as the way of collecting stories of urban youth. Initially the journey was simple but it became more complicated as the life of urban youth in Kathmandu. I simply began with the observation and interview of knowing how these youth experience their being, living and learning in Kathmandu. Therefore, I made certain assumptions based on the narrative ways of thinking. After selecting participants, I planned to listen to the stories of my participants rather than organizing any forms of interview. We usually met in a tea shop, café, restaurant, or theater and park. I requested them to tell their stories. Most of the time, I listened to their stories and probed while listening to them. Mostly our conversation was based on the natural setting of Kathmandu in café, in the park, under the sky bridge, in the mall and in the theater (Atlasti, 2016). After meticulously outlining the procedures, I was engaged in conducting my journey to find answers to my research questions. In this regard, I used the thinking eclectically, thinking metaphorically, thinking thematically as Saldana (2015) proposed.

Thinking Eclectically

I like to thank Saldana (2015) for developing a sense of qualitative researcher. In doing so, I started thinking more than I wrote. In many cases, my writing has been overtly expressed the theme of urban youth. Initially, I was cultivating various ways of thinking such as thinking thematically, symbolically, metaphorically and others (Saldana, 2015). These thinking made me easier to develop the heuristics of research methodology. At the same time, I was thinking eclectically to develop the conceptual clarity about the themes and methods of the research. Eclectic thinking made me get outside of the research paradigms to evolve with Mandala. In doing so, I draw the concept from various theories and writing styles to deal with the urban youth and their everyday life. Eclectically thinking blurred writing genres and thus presented both fact and fiction of youth experience.

Likewise, I was attempting to be as creative as Kara (2015), who proposed to blend arts based research with the transformative framework, though I was not radical advocating right and justice of the youth in the city like Kathmandu. These all thinking worked subconsciously, and thus, presented running notes in my diary as stream of consciousness. In so doing, I usually searched what I was not getting from the field and was exploring what exactly was bothering me.

Eclectic thinking led me to explore the ways of thinking of my participants, their experience of living in Kathmandu, their struggle for existence, their everyday language, and values created uncertainties of managing in the text of this research. In this regard, I chose mandala which helped me to present such ideas in a creative way than using dogmatic research with the creative logics and genres.

Thinking Metaphorically via Mandala

It was difficult for me to pinpoint the birth of mandala in my research as an organizing metaphor for research methodology. In the early stage, my PhD project evolved from the preliminary research question “What do youth experience living in Kathmandu?” Thinking qualitatively as Saldana (2015) suggests, I am open up with the emergences of the themes and patterns of urban life in Kathmandu. During my fieldwork, while exploring the first research question, another research questions emerged: ‘How does youth develop resilience in traditional cities like Kathmandu?’ As I started looking the lifestyles of urban youth in Kathmandu, the first thing I was convinced was to look at the issue from the globalization and westernization perspectives. However, working with the participants, I came up with the ideas that they have still deeper belief and faiths in their tradition. They look like Westerners but they think like Easterners, they talk like Westerners, but they behave like Eastern, they drink like Westerners but they dance like Easterners in Kathmandu. Thus, I attempted to depict the everyday uniqueness appeared in their everyday lifestyles via personal narratives. I was searching their lifestyles in-between the existing contradictions and complexities of urban life in Kathmandu thereby applying the urban culturalist perspective (Borer, 2006).

I employed the mandalic research design to depict the contradiction and complexities of everyday life of youth. The mandalic research space allowed me to see the holistic approach to study the city because “the city becomes only one of many institutions such as kinship, value systems, and subsistence activity as part of a social-cultural whole” (Fox 1980, p. 106). Such kinds of structures have affected the lifestyles of youth in the cities. I was struggling to develop a proper philosophy of urban study, particularly in a traditional city like Kathmandu. In this line, I also

assimilate a few glimpses of Mandala philosophy, researching local culture and youth in Kathmandu.

My interest of telling narratives has further been strengthened by Saldana (2015). In this line, I thought symbolically to present my methodology. Then, I decided to use the mandala as a symbol of studying cities like Kathmandu. The symbol helped me to explore the holistic lifestyles of urban youth that portray the ways of being, ways of living and ways of doing of urban youth in Kathmandu.

I do not have any fixed recipes to carry out the research under the mandala framework. I started communicating with my participants differently on different days. Prendergast, Leggo, and Sameshima (2009) explain that poetic inquiry “is a methodological approach to qualitative research that utilizes the conventions of poetry as representational or presentational modalities” (as cited in Saldana, 2015). I set the words that are extracted from the interview in such a way that it could create an artistic experience for the readers. As per Saldana (2015), poetry can be created from the researcher’s own reflection of the experiences or can also be generated from the data collected in the qualitative research such as from the interview transcripts and can be converted into a found poem. Perhaps it is an innovative way of structuring or utilizing the stories of the participants in order to create meanings. In this line, I used performative texts such as screen play and ethnodrama to bring the stories of my participants in a meaningful way.

Transcribing and Coding: A Challenge in Writing Stories

In the initial stage of my research, I started to transcribe the interview. When I returned from the field with the interviews, hundreds of thoughts were moving in my mind. When I transcribed the data and coded them, I began trying to generate meaning from the codes. These interviews were mostly in the form of the stories;

thus they seemed to be holistic. I thought that traditional ways of meaning making process was blended with the coding. It was an integral part of data analysis. Coding refers to the organization of copious qualitative information acquired from the field into analytical segments that contributes to meaning making. I was not much comfortable to generate meaning via coding. It is used as a tool to develop general ideas, themes and concepts, which contribute to the process of 'data' analysis and generation of research findings.

Transcribing to Coding: A Reductionist Perspective

I have attempted to generate meaning with *Shravan*, *Manana* and *Nididhaysana* as an embedded form of meaning making process. I was thinking and reflecting during the interviews rather than processing the raw 'data' (transcripts, memos, filed notes) for 'analysis', moving deeper into understanding the data, representing data and making an interpretation of larger meaning to data.

I started the process of coding, reducing the qualitative information into preliminary analytic categories called open coding (Neuman, 2006) in the initial stage of data processing, I was lost in the codes and categories; my narrative flow has been completely disturbed from the coding process. I agreed with Saldana (2009) who opined that coding is based on the reductionist approach to condense the data. I experienced that codes are specific entities which are hardly used for generating an art and a story. I felt that the codes limited the researchers' boundaries to be creative. For me coding is the reductionist process of meaning making where codes were identified and classified to generate themes and finally are linked with theory. Hence, in my research I was carefully engaged in the meaning making process so as not to reduce the 'data', but interplay of raw information to form knowledge, constructed droplets which contributes to making a stream of meaning clouds.

In my research, I began the meaning making process from the reflection process of data interpretation by first transcribing the qualitative interview conducted with my participants. Then, I organized my filed notes and memos. In generation of general ideas, I listened to the recorded stories, recollected the versions of stories, and unheard version of stories to develop a general understanding of everyday life of urban youth. As opposed to Creswell (2011), who recommends reading of field notes only after taking short break after the fieldwork is completed; Saldana (2009) recommended carrying out coding in the field itself. I employed the technique of circling, highlighting, bolding, and underlining as the key constructs as discussed by Saldana (2009).

Though, I designed a chapter based on the codes and categories and themes, I was not happy with the themes I generated from the coding process. My narrative logics were doomed under the codes when I applied coding to design the first chapter of so called analysis. Can I be artistic with the codes though the codes were generated from the transcribed interview of my participants?

Dear “Data”: When Will You Be Saturated?

During the research I was haunted by the question: How long do I carry out field activities? In each meeting with my participants I listened to their new experience of living in the city. New stories of my participants emerged in each meeting. Once I talked to my supervisor telling my helplessness to present data in the report. Another question emerged in my mind: Do data saturate in qualitative research? As a post-qualitative researcher, can we imagine understanding our participants as we need? I recalled a phrase of Sadguru¹⁶ who opined that it would take nearly 10000 years to know self of an individual, how would I know my

¹⁶ Sadguru is mystic, yogi and guru of India.

participants in a 2 years fieldwork? In this line I captured the everyday life of urban youth as per the need of a narrative research.

I went to field
to collect data
Where are data?
In my mind?
Heart?
Soul?
Or
Outside me
in the field?
Again I asked where is the field?
In my mind?
heart?
Soul?
Then, I recollected memories
In Heart?
I listen to my voice
Or in soul?
Then I reflect
In memory
Can I be conscious?
To collect 'data'
If data are in mind
Can I be mindful?
If data are in my soul
Can I be soulful?
If data are in my heart
I am sorry I cannot be heartfelt.
I travelled by time machine
went back to Greek Civilization
Met a young man
Who coined the term data?

Rooted from the datum
 Meant for things given
 But I had not been given anything
 Just I
 Collected
 Recollected
 Created
 Recreated
 Valuing the knowledge
 What I perceive
 What I possess
 As a creator
 for/through/with me/more (Reinertsen, & Otterstad, 2013)
 to saturate data
 which will/is/was not possible in this
 Birth

Insights and Future Perspective

Addressing research questions from the post qualitative researcher perspective, I realize that use of mandala can be useful research approach to develop methodology from the process of engaging in the field. I studied urban youth from mandala design which can be used of studying any phenomenon in the community. Initially, I used mandala as the methodological heuristics but later on it also informed the field text, reflection and stories of my participants.

I experienced a challenging ideas of using Eastern wisdom without having an excellent command over the Sanskrit Language. Schooling during my time hardly emphasized learning Sanskrit text. Thus, I did not have any motivation of learning Sanskrit language and literature. I valued English as an important language to learn for my better future created obstacles for using Eastern wisdom in my research.

However, I decided to start learning Eastern tradition and wisdom which is the need of contemporary Nepalese academia to recognize our culture.

Likewise, while storying the experience of urban youth and their arrival in Kathmandu, I get insight to link youth migration to the cities. Youth migrated to the city to fulfill their dreams and aspiration which gradually delink them with their village or root. I have portrayed only their struggle of adjusting in the city. However, another part of their life is a village from where they migrated. I could not bring the sense of those parents who felt very proud when they sent their sons and daughter to the city and they gradually forget their root? Which might have several changes after the youth migration. While telling the stories of survival all youth tend to return to their village after attaining their expectation in the city but I could not give the answer do they return to their villages.

Reflecting back my arrival in the city, I did not have any plan to stay in Kathmandu. Neither had I plan to return to my village. I thought to achieve progress with education, career, and profession. For the sake of career, I gradually connected with my root in the village. I am endeavoring to make my life more successful with money, matter and materials. However, I have a fantasy to go back to my village to spend rest of the life with parents and relative. This would be another possible area to engage academically in future.

In the survival wheel, despite the romantics of returning back to village, my youth participants struggle to adapt city life in the Kathmandu. During this process, they experienced several adversities and demonstrated resilience characteristics. This notion lead me to think the resilience of youth is more communal rather than individual. I have not brought successful cases as the notion of urban youth portrayed the minorities and segregated in several ways while surviving in the city. In this line,

I showed the contradiction they experience in their life made them more resilient.

Broadly, this section shows that youth valued money in their living which may bring social changes of understating of social capital. The wheel of survival in the everyday life moves like the wheel of four seasons: spring, winter, autumn and summer. Some of the days in the seasons are pleasant and some others are not.

Finally, the wheel of revival gives me insight of redefining learning. Like urban youth learn to settle them in the urban culture which they learn more informally. Urbanism has created more opportunities of youth learning from their interaction with space both physical and virtual. In this wheel, I portrayed ways of learning which hardly takes place in the formal setting of the classroom. The dimension of learning has been expanding among youth which shapes their identities of being modern and urbanized.

Post Script: Reintegration of Self in Cosmos

During my research process, I am thinking of generating new knowledge under the integral research paradigm. It would not be possible if I thought and did not act. In the begging of the research whether to select themes and theory; methods and metaphors; techniques and trope, I was very confused and chaotic. As the part of PhD reading and writing may not be enough to come up with some creative ideas, gradually I gradually increased thinking, looking deeper and exploring the pattern of thought.

Reflecting back, I have worked in the mandala model. Going deeper into the stories of my participants, presenting them artistically, and theorizing locally are the deeply rooted principles of the mandala.

“Reintegration is not possible without this experience, this world living in the midst of maya and then dissolving it, annihilating it with that conscious experience,

since to know by testing means to dissolve” (Tucci, 1969, p. 16). Unconsciously, I followed the same process to understand the youth in Kathmandu. My position as a researcher experienced the world of youth in Kathmandu and experienced their everyday life. Then I reintegrated with the literature and theory I read. The integration process was the most difficult one in the beginning of thinking. Gradually, I assimilated the changes taking place in my thinking, reading and writing as solid (Yang) and broken (Yin) lines of the mandala (Tenzin-Dolma).

Reading, writing and thinking all start from the self. However, the ideas come from the cosmos of the youth and their everyday life. I try to connect myself with everything around urbanism and everyday life of the youth. The connection was a bit problematic in the initial stage but gradually I became convenient to be part of the cosmos.

Arriving at this stage, exploring the everyday life of urban youth, I travelled the journey from alienated to the transformed one. All dots of the themes get connected with the passion, desire and motive of maintaining the city life. Outwardly, I experience that my participants are more consciousness of meeting the needs of the consumer culture, being part of the capitalist society, assimilating the global values of living. However, at the same time, they are well connected with the local values such as family values, societal values and educational values to live their life in Kathmandu.

I captured the hopes and aspirations of my participants living in Kathmandu despite their gloomy lived experiences. Perhaps, the selection of my characters (participants) might have been influenced by the notion ‘urban’ which often reproduces such gloomy experiences. Perhaps, I was influenced by the literature which denounced the creativity and opportunity of the city. Perhaps, urban youth

tend to be portrayed as the vulnerable population. Perhaps, I experienced such notion of adversities more in the cities. Perhaps, I interacted with such youth in my life.

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