

Annex 1 | **Preliminary study**

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Nepal is a country of diversity. One can easily see diversities in terms of geography, social settings and structures, cultural belongingness and practices, and in many other aspects. Geographically it is divided into three distinct landscapes namely Mountain, Hill and Terai (the flat land). It is the land of Mount Everest, the top of the world and has a land called Kechanakalan which is below sea level. It is a land of more than 100 languages and ethnic groups. Each ethnic group has got their own language, culture, rituals, festive events, customs and traditions that are passing from generation to generation. Even the people from same ethnic groups residing in different parts and places have different cultural practices, beliefs and traditions. In addition, same cultural events, performances, artifacts etc are observed, celebrated or performed in different ways and with different auspicious values in the same place by different groups according to their inherent cultural tradition.

Though people are following various culture and traditions, most of them even do not know the originated time and place but have deep attachment to their culture which has in fact continuing the cultures. If we go deep critically, we easily can realize the domination of religious values in Nepalese culture. The deep rooted religious beliefs have been found associated with the auspicious values of the culture. It could be considered as one of the typical characteristics of Nepalese society. The historical legacy is another factor behind many of rituals, performances, festive events, arts and artifacts etc.

As Nepal is a land of diversity, one can see different types of festivals all round the years. In addition, different communities, group of people and places have different oral traditions, performances, performing customs, musical instruments etc for the same events and festivals.

Majority of Nepali people follow Hindu religion. As Hindu philosophy believes in many gods', temples and monuments can easily be seen in every parts of Nepal. In fact, Nepal can be regarded as a country of temple and monuments. The temples are not only standing for the religious beliefs but are also very rich in their arts, artifacts and architects. They are found symbolizing the cultural beliefs, practices and craftsmanship and so on of the then contemporary Nepalese society.

Nepali society is hooked with strong structural beliefs. To some extent, it can be called a hard society as in some places the cultural value have heavily dominating the livelihoods. But if one examines them through anthropological and sociological point of view they are flexible enough for easing the livelihoods by the provisioned alternates. This has made the society colorful and diversified.

All the cultures are the precious heritage of Nepal and Nepalese society. Hence, cultural experts and scholars can easily see, feel and predict various forms of culture in Nepal.

Nepal and Nepalese societies have been regularly practicing the cultures and cultural activities regardless of dividing and defining into categories. It is wonderful in nature that there are specific process to be followed and in chronological order, specific customs for specific cultural occasions, specific places, times and so on but not classified into widely established categorizes. It may be due to insufficient knowledge or ignorance. However, with the expansion of modern education, Nepal has also started to define and categorize the cultural objects, events, activities in different domain in accordance with the significance, nature, historical significance, associated belief and so on.

With the pace of time as awareness has been increasing Government of Nepal has started in giving due attention for the preservation and promotion of cultural heritages. Government has established Ministry of Culture for the promotion and preservation of culture in Nepal. Similarly, culture relating education has been promoting by schools and universities. Similarly, legal provisions have developed and are in place to facilitate the efforts for the promotion and preservation of cultural heritages. Government has established Department of Archeology, National Archive, Monument conservation Offices etc for institutionalizing the safeguarding efforts. As a result, 10 different heritages, two natural sites and eight cultural sites, of Nepal are enlisted in the World Heritage List. But still Nepal is far behind in claiming its intangible cultural properties as master piece, human treasure and so on. This also reflects that we are continuing our culture as tradition not with cultural heritage perspective.

With the expansion of information and communication facilities, Nepal has also initiated to define and categories its cultural properties into different domains. The cultural heritages are now broadly defined in two domains Tangible and Intangible. Intangible Culture is comparatively new concept to mass of the people in Nepal. Though some of academicians and scholars have been using this word a bit earlier, government policies are found indifferent to this. This has resulted into a comparatively low attention toward the Intangible Cultural Heritage. However general public, even not being familiar with the auspicious values and motifs, are continuing intangible cultures in the name of traditions and spirituality. Realizing this fact the Government of Nepal has become the party of UNESCO Convention for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003 in 2010.

At present the awareness regarding the associated auspicious values of intangible cultures have been raising day by day with the raised political rights in Nepal. But still many of the cultures have not yet claimed as cultural property or heritage. This may be due to insufficient expertise, ignorance or so forth. Thus, it seems, we are in a need for integrated and holistic approach in safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritages.

Reflecting on all these situations, in this field survey we have tried to explore on the existing policy provisioning and institutional arrangements as well as the key stakeholders that are indirectly contributing the safeguarding efforts.