

Chapter 2

Research Methodology

Experience and Challenges of Field Work

2.1 Ethnography Study: A Perspective

Ethnography is about telling a credible, rigorous, and authentic story. Ethnography gives voice to people in their own local context, typically relying on verbatim quotations and a “thick” description of events. The story is told through the eyes of local people as they pursue their daily lives in their own communities. The ethnographer adopts a cultural lens to interpret observed behaviour, ensuring that the behaviours are placed in a culturally relevant and meaningful context. The ethnographer is focused on the predictable, daily patterns of human thought and behaviour. Ethnography is thus both a research method and a product, typically a written text (Fetterman, 2010, p.1).

In ethnographic study, an ethnographer involves in participating, overtly or covertly, in people’s daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal and formal interviews, collecting documents and artefacts – in fact, gathering whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the emerging focus of inquiry (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p.3).

Field work is considered as one of the important aspects of ethnographic studies. Usually, it requires living with the group of people for quit longer period of time from a year to more with objective to record and interpret their living, belief system and values (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p.1). Ethnographers generally enter into the field with open mind towards the people and culture they want to study; however, it is exaggerated to claim that they do not have any kind of biases and preconceived notions about how people will think and behave as other researchers do have while doing study. In fact, the decision what problem to be studied, which geographical location to chose and people to interact itself is biased. There is both positive and negative impact of biases. Controlled biases can focus and limit the research efforts but uncontrolled can badly affect quality of ethnographic study. It is very important

for an ethnographer first to make their biases clear if they would like to mitigate negative effect of biases. They can adopt techniques such as triangulation, contextualization and non-judgemental perspective to control negative impacts of biases. The ethnographic method gives opportunity of multiple interpretation of reality and alternative interpretation of data. An ethnographer makes efforts to understand social and cultural reality of people through emic or insider's approach. The ethnographer is also considered both scientist and story teller. An ethnographic work can be better example of both story and science if ethnographer represents understanding with point of views of natives (Fetterman, 2010).

Ethnographers commonly adopt relatively open-ended approach which is generally called 'research design' in methodological text (Maxwell 2004). In the beginning, they focus on some social aspects of people but gradually mature ideas about what they would like to study about people. They include in study views of people towards their life, situation and their regards toward one another. As ethnographers moves towards depth into research their initial objectives or research question may redefines or even get transformed over the course of research which demand relatively much time for it. Finally, this process will give more clarity to ethnographers to focus on their set research questions which will lead to strategic data collection to get effective answers of those questions.

It is also one of the distinguish characteristics of ethnographic work to collect data in a 'natural setting' where an ethnographer is expected to interact with people in field where participant observation is involved as an important technique. An ethnographer can do it at least through implicit, and probably also through explicit, interacting with people in the field (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). In the beginning, gatekeepers can be useful source to get access in the community; but at the same time it should be negotiated and renegotiated with people who are participants of the study. It is also not easy to make participants agree for the interview without establishing strong rapport with them. An initial exploratory character of ethnographic study implies that a researcher will not have clear idea where to begin, what setting need to be chosen, what observation to be done, which participants to be focused and so on. This is also applicable to make decision for interview. Ethnographers will develop clarity over the period of time whom to interview, where and when to start interview. An interview is started with unstructured form in beginning which takes form of structured interview towards the end of the field work. The data are collected in form of written

fieldnotes, collecting documents and also through audio and video recordings. It takes quite long time and much effort to process and analyse large chunks of data. That is the reason that ethnographic research requires longer time and diverse skills with ability to make certain important decisions in conditions of uncertainty (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

Participant observation as the one ‘consists in well-trained anthropologist going to the area, or people of his (her) choice, spending a long enough period with them, usually 12 to 18 months, staying in conditions similar to those of the natives, being able to speak to them in their own language, winning the friendship of the people, collecting information through the use of well-known anthropological techniques such as conducting census surveys, collecting genealogical information, selective use of questionnaires, informal and in-depth interviews, and above all, through participation in the activities of the people rituals as well as secular’ (Srinivas, 2009 as cited in Reddy, n.d).

2.2 Research Paradigm

“A paradigm constitutes a way of looking at the world, interpreting what is seen, and deciding about things seen by researchers are real, valid, and important to document” (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). The two worldwide known philosophical assumptions of research are ontological and epistemological. Ontology is concerned with what real or true exists in the world about which humans can acquire knowledge while epistemology focuses on how and what way knowledge can be acquired. Nomadic and Denotified communities having certain problems in common; but there are many differences between these groups in terms of their culture, identity and livelihood. The epistemological and ontological assumptions of the research study are based on **Subjective Constructionist Interpretivist approach**. An ontological assumption of research is derived from what the reality is based on subjective experiences by people. The perceptions of people towards reality are based on their own experience and understanding. The research study is focusing to understand reality of Devipujak people considering their views and perception. The epistemological foundation of research is how to understand reality. The understanding of reality is different for different people and considering it, an epistemological assumption of research is based on interpretive approach to know the situation of Devipujak community with their experiences. An

interpretive approach assumes that reality is a social construction means what people believe is true about the world and is constructed with the interaction they are making with each other over the period of time. It does not believe in one reality and argues that reality differs in context. Different people have different versions of what is real and even they have different understanding for the same events (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). The study adopted ethnographic method to understand subjective reality to know meaning and function of human action particularly with Devipujak community.

2.3 Ethnography with Devipujak Community

I was aware about Devipujak community since my childhood. They used to visit our home to collect old clothes in exchange of new utensils. Earlier, they were giving utensils of aluminium but later they started giving plastic utensils. I used to wonder why they were not taking money for the things given to us. My family was having very cordial relations with them and they were visiting us four to five times in a year. Initially, I was not aware about the concept of nomadic, criminal or denotified tribes; but when I was pursuing Master of Social Work at Mumbai and had sometimes seen Devipujaks from my town at Mumbai railway station. As Mumbai was very crowded and people used to be in hurry so I never got a chance to interact with them. Females were also seen at Mumbai railway station with cloth bundle on their head. I was not aware that they were coming for selling old clothes collected by them in big markets like *Chor Bazar* situated at Grant road, Mumbai. Devipujaks were involved in occupations such as selling vegetables, collecting scarps in my home town. I had also observed that some people were not allowing them to sit nearby their houses to sell vegetables. Though I was aware about Devipujak community since my childhood, seen their poor conditions and hardship; but I was not having much knowledge about historical injustice done to them. While studying in Master of Social Work course, I became aware about the problems of nomadic and denotified communities.

In the beginning, I had thought to do study on nomadic and denotified tribes but was not specific to conduct on which particular tribe. I had also seen other nomadic communities like Madari, Nat who used to come to my hometown for entertaining people but not very much knowing about their situations. Devipujak was the community that I had observed closely though not having detailed understanding of their situation in terms of discrimination they face, historical injustice, their traditions and so on. I started searching literature on them and

referred various articles, reports and books which helped me to understand the concept of nomadic and denotified tribes. I got information about Criminal Tribes Act, settlements for criminal tribes by British, criminal identity, discrimination, torture and poverty. I was somehow aware about the conditions of Devipujak community which encouraged me to know about them, to understand injustice suffered by them, their culture and identity. Based on studying existing literature and my own experience, I formulated research questions which led me to conduct an ethnographic study on Devipujak community. The research questions are:

1. What is social history of Devipujak community?
2. What were traditional occupations of Devipujak community and how changes have occurred in their traditional occupations over the period of time?
3. What is present socio-economic condition of Devipujaks?
4. How social organization influences life of Devipujak community?
5. What is identity of the Devipujak community for self and views for other communities as well as the perspectives of other communities towards them?

To get the answer of these questions, the specific objectives were formulated to gain deeper understanding about the community.

2.4 Objectives

- To study social history and cultural of Devipujak community
- To study their traditional livelihood, its changing pattern and adoption of new occupations
- To study migration and its reasons among Devipujak community
- To study role of Caste Council and its influence on Devipujak community
- To study identity of Devipujak community from its own perspective, views towards other communities and views of other communities towards Devipujaks

2.5 Searching for Field Site

In reality, exploring field site for ethnographic research is not less difficult than conducting the actual study. It is very important in ethnographic study to select suitable field site considering the objectives of the study. Though I was somehow aware about Devipujak community since my childhood but was not aware about the concept of nomadic and denotified tribes or historical injustice happened to them as ex-criminal tribes. It was during pursuing my master degree I knew about the concept of nomadic and denotified communities. Though, I knew the concept but did not develop depth understanding about the CTA, prejudices towards these groups, exploitation and discriminations by the society and even government functionaries etc. Before deciding the topic of ethnographic study, I started reading about criminal tribes, their historical context, their situation during British time and after independence which somehow helped me to understand the phenomena. It somehow helped me to think about conducting a study on Devipujak community in the beginning. An ethnographic study was selected to gain deeper understanding about social history, culture, traditional as well as new changing occupations, their status in social and economic life. Most of the literature is also focusing on these communities as ex-criminal or denotified tribes but to understand these communities individually has not been much covered in research arena. It was very difficult and confusing for me from where to start because I was not having close contact with Devipujak people who would extend me support in initial phase of my study. I was also not very much aware in-depth about their culture, social organizations, and historical aspects. Among my friend circles, some of them were aware that I am doing a doctoral study on Devipujak community. One of my friends named Jatin who was working as a Physiotherapist at Community Health Center (CHC) in Saurashtra region. He had a colleague named Maheshbhai who was working as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) in 108 Ambulance and was belonging to Devipujak community. My friend informed him that I am doing a doctoral study on Devipujak community and made my telephonic talk with Maheshbhai. On long telephonic conversation, he assured me to provide all necessary support for this work. I met him in person and had long discussion about my research. I gained quite good information about Devipujak community from him especially about Saurashtra region which enhanced my understanding for the community. He also assured me that he will accompany me to visit nearby villages where Devipujak people are residing which would help me to know about their existing situation. After couple of months, I decided to do pilot visits

to different villages where there were settlements of Devipujak population before making any decision to choose suitable field site. Maheshbhai was not able to give me his much time due to nature of his job role and it was very difficult to reach out to community people without any known contacts. I visited Block office to gain some demographic information about Devipujak population in villages situated in particular Block. There was no separate list with Block office containing separate information about Devipujak community as they are part of Socially and Economically Backward Class (SEBC) in Gujarat. I got a list of Booth Level Officer (BLO) from the block office and one of the officials told me that BLOs know local community people well and they will support me to get access to the Devipujak people in village. BLO is a local government or semi-government official who is very much familiar with local areas and people and work as a representative of Election commission of India in task of preparing or updating electoral roll collecting actual data at grassroot level of assigned polling areas to him. As he is having local knowledge so I felt that BLO can be good source to me in beginning to get access to some of the people of Devipujak community. I had motor-bike with me and decided to visit different villages which will help me to finalise field work site.

I got list of Booth Level Officer (BLO) with their mobile number from Block office. I contacted them one by one and they helped me to make my initial contact with Devipujak people. I roamed almost twenty-two villages and was meeting Devipujak people there. Maheshbhai accompanied me at three villages but he was busy with his job so was not able to be with me every time. I was sharing information with them about my research and was also observing which village will be suitable field site keeping in mind objectives of the study. I had decided certain criteria like migration, different caste groups, occupations, practicing cultural rituals for selecting the field site. Pritampur village was finally decided as a field site which was fulfilling broad criteria of research.

I had felt different experiences when I was meeting BLO or other staff member at school to gain information about Devipujak community in village. At one of the villages, I had chance to meet Principal who was from Darbar community. I explained him about purpose of my study. I said that my research study is ethnographic in nature so I will have to stay with Devipujak community for quite long period to understand them. He told me that I will be like them only if I will stay with Devipujaks and also advised me that I should be in company of

good people rather than bad ones. I met BLO in one village who told me that Devipujak community is still living under exploitative practices of Darbar community. One of the teachers who was working as a BLO was also afraid to share information about Devipujak community to me. He was outsider in a village and originally resident of Chhota Udaipur district of Gujarat so he told me to meet Sarpanch first who was belonging to Darbar community and get information about community from him. He said to me that Sarpanch may not grant permission to me quickly but will check permission letter or other legal documents first. During pilot visit, sometimes Devipujaks whom I was meeting were asking me what benefit they will receive from this study. I used to tell them I am not going to give them any direct benefit but will write about your real situation in present context which may help others to know about your present conditions.

2.6 Selecting a Village

After conducting extensive pilot visits, a village namely Pritampur was decided to conduct an ethnographic study which was meeting broad criteria of research study considering multi-caste population, migration, historical background and so on. I stayed with community between February 2019 to July 2020 as a part of my field work. It is very important to identify a person from a village who can help me to make initial contacts with some of the people in Devipujak community. I had met BLO during pilot visit who was new to the school as he joined two years before only. He made my contact Magabhai Chavda who was having contract of mid-day meal in the school. Magabhai was a native of the village and I had long conversation with him about my study. He seems to be somehow interested to extend help to me. He told me that he knows almost all houses in the village. He shared that there are nearly 50 to 60 households of Devipujak community in the village with estimated 300 to 400 population. Devipujaks migrate to cities like Delhi, Mumbai to earn their livelihood and those who are staying in village are meeting their earning as daily wag-earner, keeping land or labour on contract (*Bhagya*). He also told me that there are multi-caste people residing in village comprising Darbar, Patel, Brahmin, Tadapda Koli, Chualia Koli and Schedule castes. Magabhai was belonging to Schedule caste but he asked me in the beginning only about which caste I am belonging. I said that I belong to Sindhi community. He was aware about the Sindhi community and told me that you people are *Nirashit* means refugees who came to India from Sindh province during partition. I felt at this point that people are very much

conscious about caste identity in village whether they belong to so-called higher or lower castes. Magabhai told me at the end of conversation to meet him after ten days and he will extend all support to me for research study.

I was staying on rent at Karnala which was block place during pilot visits to different villages. Pritampur village was nearly 10 km away from this place. After some days, I went to meet Magabhai Chavda with thought that he will be able to make my initial contacts with Devipujak people. Magabhai was busy in some work so he sent his younger brother Ratanbhai Chavda along with me to visit Devipujak community. There were group of young people who were playing card while we visited and they stopped playing it once we reached there. It was like surprise for them seeing me first time even though Ratanbhai was there with me. We met two elder persons and I talked about purpose of my visit to them. In the begging of my pilot visit, I knew that people in rural community were not able to understand what is PhD and research. It was very difficulty to make them understand about purpose of my visit so I was making them to understand that I would like to write one book on them so need some of the important information to write it. They were able to understand and thought that I am here to write about their *Itihaas* (writing their history). I began conversation with two elder persons Vajabhai Kumarkhaniya and Narharibhai Kumarkhaniya regarding my visit. I first gave them my introduction with my name. I said that I have come from Vadodara and would like to write about Devipujak community so I need information about Devipujak community from them. Ratanbhai who took me with them also informed them that I need some basic information about Devipujak community to write a book on them. They did not share all the information as I was new to them and meeting first time but gave me some of very basic kind of information about the community. They said that there are nearly three hundred to four hundred population of them. Majority of young people from families go out to big cities to earn livelihoods and rest who are residing in village are engaged as daily wage earning. They worship Goddess *Bahuchar Maa*. Majority of them do not own land in the village. I felt that the first meeting with Devipujak community will help me to establish rapport with them in future. I was offered tea during meeting with them; but Ratanbhai Chavda did not take tea or water due to prevailing caste system in village. Ratanbhai was belonging to Schedule Caste and Devipujaks consider them above to Schedule Caste in hierarchy.

It was my first interaction with Devipujak community at Pritampur village in which I got very basic information in conversation. I was knowing that the future path is not very easy to get access in community. After few days, I again went to meet Narharibhai at his home but he was not available there. I then met Ratanbhai who took me to the house of Sartan Kumarkhaniya. I explained him about purpose of my visit. He shared some information to me about Devipujak community that they are descendants of Rajadada whose temple is near Surendra Nagar. Rajadada had four children who later went to different directions to settled down. Their surname is known by the villages they settled down namely Kumarkhaniya, Devpara, Mithapara and Khakhrodiya.

I was thinking about any person from Devipujak community who will help me to introduce with people in the community. I had talk with Maheshbhai who made my contact with Kharmubhai who was distant maternal-uncle of him and native of Pritampur village. I met him very next day and told him purpose of my visit. He had completed MA first year with Gujarati literature so I told him that I am doing a Ph.D on Devipujak community which he understood. I explain him that my study is ethnographic in nature so I will have to stay with the community for long period nearly a year. He shared little historical information about his forefathers. They are descendants of Mobhadada who was lost in *Mela*² at Rathnath. I came to know about that the Devipujaks residing in village are descendants of two forefathers namely Rajadada and Mobhadada. It was very brief meeting but I felt that Kharmubhai could be a good source to establish rapport with community in the beginning. I was staying nearly ten kilometres away from Pritampur village so asked him for help to find rented house preferably inside Devipujak community or nearby area which have close proximity. After a week, I again went to meet Kharmubhai along with Maheshbhai. Kharmubhai was distant maternal-uncle of Maheshbhai so I thought that it will help to establish rapport with him. We reached there in late evening around 08.00 pm. We had conversation regarding the research study and intended to meet people in the community but it was late so he told me to come next day in evening. He also told me that people may not give me right information when I meet them. They will not be easily getting open with you. He was also somehow critical for people in community and told me that Devipujaks are very superstitious in their life. He said that he is very much against towards the ill-practices followed in the community. He being an

² It is an Indian religious festival or fair where people gather at one place.

educated one does not believe in practice of *Bali*³ and *Dana*⁴ ceremony. I also explained to him that my research study is focusing to understand Devipujak community in context of historical aspects, their culture, livelihood aspects so it is necessary for me to meet different people during my stay. I felt during conversation that he is somehow not liking to introduce me with other people in community as he was believing that I may not get correct information from them about my research. He also insisted that I should meet educated people rather than meeting others in community. Maheshbhai then told him to extend possible support in my research study. Kharmubhai later agreed to accompany me to meet people in community next day. I along with him went to the house of Vajabhai with purpose to meet people at one place. Vajabhai said that it is difficult to meet people today as most of them have gone to attend occasion of *Mandavo*⁵ in nearby village. He told us to come next day so that we can meet more people in community. Next day, Kharmubhai and me went to meet Vajabhai with purpose to arrange group meeting so that I can meet more people in community and can talk with them regarding my research study. We selected one house which was in centre for the purpose of meeting. Vajabhai went to call people in community for the meeting but only eight to ten people joined us. We waited another fifteen to twenty minutes with hope that more people will come but it did not happen.

I began conversation with word *Jai Matadi*⁶ and first gave my introduction. I then asked a question when they got name Devipujak; but people were not aware about the exact year for change name of their community from Vaghri to Devipujak. Someone in the group said that they were under category of Schedule Tribe but later transferred under Other Backward Class (OBC) category. They also protested against the move to include them into OBC category from Schedule Tribe. They did not success to stop it due to lack of representatives and leadership among community people. Kharmubhai then shared his critical understanding about the community that there is lack of unity among them. An education level is also very low in community. Although, they migrate to cities for earning livelihood but they do not

³ Bali is a local word for rituals of animal sacrifice to God or goddess.

⁴ Rituals among Devipujak community through which they communicate with goddess. It is performed by a person know as *Joshi* who act as messenger between goddess and people.

⁵ A custom among Devipujak community and they believe themselves fortunate if they are able to perform *Mandavo* ceremony in life. It is considered as very auspicious and sacred occasion among them. They offer animal sacrifice to God and goddess in this ceremony.

⁶ It is a greeting word they speak while meeting each other.

improve their lifestyle in cities also and stay in slum there. I then explained to them that I am here to write a kind of book on Devipujak community and will be staying with them for longer period. I also share that I am not going to give any direct benefit to them through the research study but it can be useful to someone in future to know about the Devipujak community in future. It was very first meeting with many of them and I was also confused whether this meeting will be useful for me to establish rapport with people or not. The meeting lasted nearly forty-five to sixty minutes. It ended by saying *Jai Matadi* during departure.

2.7 Finding House for Stay in Village

I was staying at Karnala town which was little far away and it was not feasible to conduct an ethnographic study living away from the community. It was also not very easy to get house for the bachelor in village. I felt it in very true sense when looking for the house in Pritampur village. I wanted to get rented house to stay in Devipujak community so that I will help me to interact with them frequently. It will also help me to observe their activities and life-style through out the day. I had requested Kharmubhai and Vajabhai to find out one house for my stay in community itself. Some of the houses were locked in community because they used to migrate to cities for nearly eight to ten months in a year for earning livelihood. Vajabhai asked one or two families to rent their house but they denied because they had kept their goods inside the house and they also come to stay for nearly two-three months there in a year. Kharmubhai also made efforts to find rented house but there was no any vacant house even in nearby area of the community. Many days passed but I did not get house to stay in Pritampur village. I used to commute from Karnala town for some days to meet Devipujak people. I had also asked Magabhai Chavda to support me in finding rented house in the village. He came to know about one vacant house in the village and we both went there to meet landlord. We had brief conversation regarding myself and my research study. He showed readiness in the beginning to rent his house but later denied after knowing my caste. I felt that caste is the prominent factor to decide about various aspects in the village. We got information about another vacant room in *Chavda Vas* where Schedule caste people were living. I along with Magabhai went there to meet owner of the house. I introduced about myself to house owner and discussed about purpose of my study. I also told him that I am single and will stay for longer period of time due to my research study. There were two rooms in house in which one

was occupied by tenant and owner agreed to rent me another room. I shifted myself to Pritampur village after some days. It took two to three days to settled down at new place. I felt much overwhelmed to get accommodation in village. Though I did not get rented house inside community or nearby areas but it was also very helpful to me as I can meet people frequently in Devipujak community or village also.

2.8 Establishing Rapport

I was able to establish contacts with two to three people from Devipujak community whom I met before coming to stay in village. It was not enough to meet some of the people in community and it was needed to establish good rapport with as many as people in Devipujak community for the research study. After settling down in village, I did not visit community and met people there for two three days as I had to make arrangements of my luggage at new place. It was surprise for people in neighbour when I went there to stay as I was new in village. People were not having idea about my identity and reason for my stay. In village, people generally used to sit outside their homes in group during evening time. I felt that it is good to sit with them which will be helpful to know about village and its people. I was very new to them so they had assumed that I have come here for job in school. During my conversation, I told them that I am not here for job but doing a research study on Devipujak community. It was bit difficult for them to understand what is research study so I was making it simplified that I am here to write a kind of book on Devipujak community. The place of my stay was little far from area of Devipujak community. The inhabitants were belonging to Schedule caste there. I started going to meet people in Devipujak community after two to three days. I was able to develop initial contacts with Vajabhai and Kharmubhai so I went to meet them. Kharmubhai was out of the town due to some work so I went to meet Vajabhai. My first word to greet them was *Jai Matadi* always. I was aware there merely meeting them two to three times before was not enough to earn their trust for the research. It was a morning time nearly ten o'clock when I reached to home of Vajabhai. Vajabhai along with elder brother Narharibhai and other people was sitting there. I started very casual conversation with them by asking *Kem chho?* (how are you), *Shu karo chho?* (what are you doing). Vajabhai was looking in tension due to some documents he required. I asked him why you are in little worry? He replied that he needs to get age certificate from government doctor as he had to submit it somewhere. I told him that you can also submit Aadhar card for this purpose but

there was only birth year mentioned in his Aadhar without date and month of birth which was not being considered. Narharibhai who was elder brother of Vajabhai brought all his documents from home to show me. He and his wife were getting benefit of Old Age Pension scheme. These were kind of conversations I was making with them in the beginning.

I was feeling that it is good that I meet most of the persons in the Devipujak community so that they will come to know about myself and my purpose to stay with them. There were *two faliya* means streets where Devipujaks were residing in village. I went to second street which was walking distance from the first one to meet Shambhubhai. He was nephew of Kharmubhai. He was telling me that there is nobody who concerns about the poor people and they are always remaining poor in the world. Poor people are not getting their rights and benefits. The benefit of government scheme is reaching to close relative of persons who are in power and no to the poor person who are real beneficiaries of it.

I was going to meet people in community mostly during evening time in initial days. This was the time they were sitting outside their homes with their family members and relatives. Shambhubhai accompanied me to meet neighbours in his street. We met one family having three to four members sitting outside their home on *Khatalo* (bed). I greeted them with *Jai Matadi* and gave them my introduction. I told them that I am here to write a book on Devipujak community. They were staying at Calcutta most time of the year and come to village for a month or two in a year. They were involved in occupation of second-hand clothes at Calcutta.

After few days, the news about my stay was spread in whole Devipujak community that there is one person who came from outside and is writing something on us. Though I was not having chance to meet all of them in the beginning but people came to know about myself that I am someone who is staying in village and writing book on them. I was also meeting people of other community in my neighbour so that I can get general information about the village, its people, culture and way of their life. I used to go to market to buy groceries and milk where I was able to make contacts with other caste people. In span of fifteen to twenty days, I was known by most of the villagers that I have come here to do research on Devipujak community. They were also taking interest in what kind of task I am doing. It was also

surprising for them as I was doing a study on this community as people are having their own set of prejudices for the Devipujak community in society.

2.9 Demographic Profile

According to Gram Panchayat data, Pritampur village was having population of 2048 with 347 families. Devipujak community is categorized under OBC in state so there was no separate population record for particular community available with Gram Panchayat. A survey was conducted to know socio-economic aspects of Devipujaks which found 603 people of Devipujak community residing in village. The village was having population of other castes also such as Darbar, Bania, Barber, Patel, Brahmin, Koli and Schedule Caste.

2.10 Daily Routine in Field Work

My routine was to visit community generally in evening time during initial days because it was the time where people were sitting outside their homes with family members and relatives. Majority of the people staying in village were daily wage earners so they were leaving their homes early in the morning. It was an evening time that I was able to meet most of the people in community. I was greeting them with word '*Jay Matadi*' and in return they were also greeting with *Jay Matadi* to me. I was meeting earlier to key informants, sitting with them and engaging in very casual talk with them. After some days, I started going to farm along with them to understand about their livelihood. Majority of the people in village were farm labourers. Over the period of time, I started participating in their cultural activities also. They are worshipers of goddess and believe in *Dana ceremony* which I used to go attending it. I had also participated in two marriage functions held in village and observed their marriage rituals. I was always trying to attend their functions and rituals whenever I came to know about it. I went to death occasion of relatives of Vajabhai and observed their rituals. Though I was meeting key informants during early days to gain information about my research but I started meeting different people over the period of time in community. It helped me to know about various information and life style of the Devipujak people. The *Mandavo* is considered as very auspicious occasion in life of Devipujak community. Whenever I was getting information about organization of *Mandavo* in the village or other places, I was participating in such occasions and trying to understand and observe their rituals

during occasion. I was trying to visit Devipujak community at least once in a day and meeting people there. I also used to meet other castes people in the village. There was group of middle-aged people who were sitting outside their homes for an hour or two every day. Many times, I was sitting with them and was getting involved in conversation with them. It was helping me to know about perspectives of other caste people also towards Devipujak community in formal or informal conversation with them. I used to visit groceries shops and soda shops in the village with main purpose to meet different people and getting engaged with them in interaction which was helping me to know about village, its history, population, culture and also views of different people towards Devipujak community and other caste.

2.11 Recording Observations and Writing Diary

“Ethnographers ultimately produce a written account of what they have seen, heard, and experienced in the field” (Emerson et al., 2011). It can also be true that different ethnographer or even same ethnographer at different times may write their experiences and observations in different ways. “Field notes are the brick and mortar of an ethnographic edifice. These notes consist primarily of data from interviews and daily observation. They form an early stage of analysis during data collection and contain the raw data necessary for later, more elaborate analyses” (Fetterman, 2010, p.116). It was my daily routine to meet the people in the community and interact with them. I was keeping pen and pocket diary with me whenever I used to go for meeting people. But I also observed that people used to become conscious and hesitated to share information in the beginning when I was writing during conversation with them. I then stopped to write down in front of them thinking that they may not share their right information with me due to fear or reveal of identity. I later started to write down my observations and conversations during night time mainly on same day. As time was passing and people in the community started trusting me and were sharing to me for the research study. After couple of months, they were not hesitating when I used to jot down important points in my pocket diary while making conversation with them. During the mid-time of field work, I had also conducted in-depth interviews to understand about their historical aspects, their livelihood, customs and rituals. I used to carry small voice-recorder device with me whenever I was conducting interview with any person in the community. I was always taking their oral consent before starting recording of the conversations. People were not having any problem with recording of conversation during interview after having trust on me. They

started believing that the information they are sharing with me will not harm them in any way but may be useful to gain information about Devipujaks to other communities in future. I always tried to take part into various occasions such as marriage, *Mandavo* during my stay in community. I had also kept digital camera with me to capture photographs of different places and events. After taking their consent, I used to take photos and videos. They generally did not raise any objection for doing photography and videography except rituals of animal sacrifice. The recorded conversations were transcribed by me during free time at home which were later translated into English language through laptop.

2.12 Difficulties Encountered During Fieldwork

In ethnographic study, a researcher is mostly unfamiliar with settings and people. They are stranger to the social structure in the beginning of the study. They strive to learn about social settings through watching, discussing, meeting people and making blunders (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). I was going through lots of confusion from where to begin during initial days of my study. I was coming from semi-urban area and somehow little aware about the village life. I had opportunity to stay in village for short-time during my master degree but it was my first experience to stay in village alone for longer period. When there is an overt research, people in the field will understand an ethnographer within social background bound by their own experiences. Field researchers are generally suspected as spies, government officials in initial days. Kaplan (1991) was perceived as either government official or insurance investigator in early days during her study on New England Fisherman. The suspicious attitude of people will disappear once trust is established but it is not in all cases. Hunt (1984) reported that she was suspected as undercover agent of Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) during her study on police officers and was only able to win trust of police officers by extending help in emergencies and criticizing high level officials. During my study, I was also suspected as CID officer who is sent by police to collect information about Devipujak community. Initially, they were believing that I will collect all information of them and will hand it over to police who will then harass the community people in future. I was able to build rapport with two-three people who acted as gatekeeper in the beginning of the study. They were told not to share any information about the community to me by other people. It was very difficult to me for two to three months in the early days of my study to build trust and rapport with people. I also did not get very detailed information about the

community for my study during that time. It also forced me to think whether I will be able to complete my study in field and will get relevant information for it or not. I was also somehow worried whether I will be able to make good rapport with people in community or not. People were also not giving much attention to me wherever I was visiting them in initial days. They sometime dispersed seeing me coming to them. They were avoiding to make conversations with me. Sometime, I also experienced that they would tell me to meet other persons in community to get information about them when I was initiating conversation with them. Surprisingly, family members will tell me that a person is not at home and has gone outside though he is inside home only. I had gone through such experiences during early days of my stay. I was able to establish good rapport with them as time was passing with them. Then, I was also sometimes appreciated by them for the research study.

The Devipujaks were addressing me as *Saheb*⁷. They were believing that one *Saheb* has come to study us from Vadodara. It was like that I am someone who have come from city and is superior to them in terms of knowledge. The village people generally consider people residing in city as superior to them. It was also challenge for me to present myself as simple as possible to community people so there is no feeling of superior and inferior between us. It was also important for my research study that I should be accepted like one among them so that they feel no boundary to share information with me. It is not easy to copy exactly in dressing and behaviour of the people we are studying but our appearance and habits can be changed little bit to minimize deep differences between researcher and its people. It will help them to establish more close relationship with people (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). I used to wear simple pant and shirt most of the time while meeting people in community and the clothes were also not new ones. I used to avoid to tuck shirt so that my appearance be look like somehow similar to them. I was intentionally wearing either *sandals* or *chappals* during field work. It was very difficult to present myself as similar as them in appearance and behaviour but I tried to present myself as simple as possible in the field.

Devipujaks have strong belief on their *Kuldevi*⁸. They always take permission from *Kuldevi* before taking up any task or confess their mistake and illegal acts before *Kuldevi*. The *Dana*

⁷ *Saheb* is a word used for Sir.

⁸ *Kuldevi* is referred as an ancestral tutelary deity who is believed one to be worshipped in clan and family to protect themselves.

ceremony is performed by *Joshi*⁹ and family members sit together for it. I wanted to take part in this ceremony to observe what generally they perform in ceremony. Initially they were not allowing me to sit along with them in *Dana ceremony*. Sometimes it was happening that I was informed by someone in community that *Dana ceremony* will be happening to house of that person so I was reaching to him and asking whether you are performing *Dana ceremony* today and was getting reply in denial. It was bit difficult to gain their trust and get involve into their rituals during initial days. I went through these rejections for quite long time. Slowly and gradually, they started allowing me to be part of their rituals. *Mandavo* is also considered as one of the auspicious rituals in life of Devipujak community. They generally do not allow outsiders to attend the *Mandavo* especially lower caste communities. They perform animal sacrifice to Goddess on this occasion so remains extra-conscious that outsider does not be part of it. The community people were sceptic about my caste whether I am higher or lower in order to them. They were not taking me along with them whenever *Mandavo* was organised at nearby villages. They were informing me that *Mandavo* is to be organised in particular village but will not take me or accompany me with them even though they go to attend *Mandavo*. During initial days, I faced many challenges as an outsider to be part of their certain rituals.

Language did not create any significant barrier for me during field work. Their mother-tongue was Gujarati which was easily understand to me. The only difficulty was that to understand their local words sometimes. I need to ask them meaning of their local words. I was also able to speak Gujarati language well so there was no question of language barrier with people during ethnographic study. Gender is also considered as one of the important components during field study. Sometimes male research may face difficulty to interact and get access of the setting which are mainly reserved for women due to cultural aspects and restrictions based on sexes (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). I was able to make conversations with female members of Devipujak community in front of their family members but it was not the same way as I was able to engage with male informants in field. Being male researchers, there were some natural restrictions for me due to cultural and gender aspects in village. I wanted to conduct Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with female members of the community which could not happen being a male researcher. I was not able to organise female members of community for FGD though I tried for it. I was told that

⁹ A person among Devipujak community who perform Dana ceremony.

female members will feel shy and will not be allowed to have conversation before male person in group. So, I was not able to conduct any FGD with female members during my stay in village.

2.13 Challenges Encountered to stay in House of Schedule Caste

Devipujak community is categorised under Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) under Gujarat state and Other Backward Classes (OBC) under Central list (Director Developing Castes Welfare Government of Gujarat, n.d). They consider themselves above to schedule caste in caste hierarchy. Generally, higher caste people consider Devipujaks community lower to them and avoid to eat and drink at their homes. It is also not easy task to get house in village when you do not have much contacts and will stay alone. I had faced many difficulties to find rented house for my stay in village. Sometime, I was rejected to lend house by owner due to my caste and research study on Devipujak community. I had finally got house to stay which was owned by Scheduled Caste (SC) landlord. After settling down with new house in village, I started my routine focus on research study and was going regularly to the Devipujak areas and meeting them. After couple of days, some people who were helping me to search rented house in village asked me whether I got house on rent or not in village. I was not aware that Devipujak people usually do not prefer to allow schedule caste persons inside their house and not eating offered by schedule caste. It is unethical for an ethnographer to lie to its participants. Vajabhai kumarkhaniya once asked me where I got rented house and who is owner? I replied that I got rented house of Shyamlal Chavda which is situated in *Chavdavas*. Shyamlal Chavda was known to people in community and they were aware that Chavda community is belonging into schedule caste in village. As village is very small entity, the news about my stay in house belonging to schedule caste owner spread to most of the Devipujak people in village. I had no idea that my stay in house of schedule caste will create challenges for me and it will affect my research study also. I was going to meet Devipujaks as my daily routine in community but observed that I am not getting proper response as I used to get from them. It was surprise for me because I had no idea why their behaviour towards me suddenly changed. They stopped inviting me to sit with them and used to go inside their houses or spread here or there from group seeing me coming to them. It was difficult for me to understand their changed behaviour toward me in the beginning. I got news about happening of *Mandavo* in nearby village from Sartan and he said that we both will go

there. I went to meet him on day of *Mandavo* and asked to accompany me to go there. He was very much enthusiastic during my initial meeting with him to extend all support for my research study. But he started making excuses for not coming to attend *Mandavo*. I insisted him to accompany me there but he denied. I later knew the reason for his denial was that he was informed by someone about my stay at house of schedule caste.

Even after change of their behaviour, I was going to meet people as my daily routine. One day I went to meet Karajibhai who was around 65 years old. We had normal discussion and he asked me why I am staying at *Chavdavas*. I said that I found vacant house there only in entire village. His wife informed me that the people in community have changed behaviour towards you because I am staying at house of SC. It is main reason that people are not talking with me and keeping distance from me. They consider schedule caste lower to them and consider them as untouchables. They said to me that their goddess does not allow them to eat or touch people belonging to schedule caste. If they do so, they are punished by their goddess. It was like shock to me because Devipujaks themselves are victims of caste discrimination. Higher castes consider Devipujaks lower to them, but Devipujaks themselves practice caste-discrimination toward schedule castes. I left place of Karajibhai and went to my house. I was very confused coming to home which affected my sleep also that night.

I was also little worried and started thinking what to do for couple of days. I was concerned whether I will be able to complete my study or not. There were two kinds of thoughts coming into my mind. I was thinking to express my resistance to Devipujak people that it is not right thing they are practicing towards the schedule caste people and at the same time I was also thinking that my role here is of an ethnographer not an activist. I was going through an ethical dilemma about what to do and what not to do. I went to meet my research guide Prof. (Dr) M N Parmar to give update about the research study till now. I discussed the whole issue aroused in the field work with him. He advised me that you have gone there as a researcher. It is important that you build good relations with people for your study otherwise they will not share information with you for the research study. Your role is as a researcher to collect and document the information for the study so it is better not to act as an activist. He suggested me to change the house and shift to house belonging to upper caste landlord which will be beneficial for the research study. I also discussed the same issue with Prof. Raghavan who always guided and supported me whenever I needed any help for my research study. He also

suggested me to change the house rather than indulging in resistance with people in field because I have gone there as a researcher and not reformer. I went to the field again and decided to change my house. I went to meet my landlord and told him that I need to change the house as I am facing some difficulties in my research due to my stay here. He replied me that there is nothing to worry about it. I do not have any problem if you are leaving the house due the problem arising for your stay here.

I had an experience of how difficult it is for a single person to find rented house in village but I had no any other choice. I knew that it will be like near to impossible for me to find new house without help of local people. I met Kharmubhai and asked his help to find another house for rent in village. After searching for a week, Kharmubhai came to know about vacant house of Mansukhbhai Patel who was staying at Surat. He was having two houses in village. He himself was staying in one house and another house was vacant. Kharmubhai was not having close contact with Mansukhbhai so we approached his friend Giteshbhai Jani. Giteshbhai was very good friend of Mansukhbhai and having grocery shop in village. We both went to meet Giteshbhai Jani at his shop. Kharmubhai gave my introduction to him and discussed about getting house of Mansukhbhai Patel on rent for me. Mansukhbhai Patel was available in village during that time so Giteshbhai asked us to come in evening and we together will go to meet him. We all visited house of Mansukhbhai and he asked me about myself and what I am doing here. I said that I pursuing a doctoral study at Vadodara and have come here in village for the purpose of data collection. He did not look concerned about the caste and agreed to rent me house. He told me to coordinate with Giteshbhai Jani as key of house will be with him. Ater some days, I shifted to new house belonging to higher caste. Village is a small entity so most of the people know each other. After shifting, I started going to meet people in Devipujak community. I would say that I intentionally started telling people that I have now shifted to the house of Mansukhbhai Patel with thought that people will start to respond me normally as they used to be earlier. I observed changes in their behaviour towards me and they started indulging with me as usual. It was really very different experience during the field work.

2.14 Methods of Data Collection

2.14.1 Unstructured Interview

An unstructured interview technique is normally adopted by ethnographer during the study. It includes open-ended questions on the topics raised from the research settings and conducted considering place and time suitable to participants (O'reilly, 2012). A qualitative researcher is less concerned with the number of interviews conducted but more interested in quality of interviews to collect rich data for study. I adopted unstructured interview technique during field work. It does not have pre-defined set questions but a researcher keeps some key questions before conducting it. It gives freedom to researcher to ask additional questions also while conducting interviews. This technique resulted to gain details information about their customs, livelihood, migrations and social panchayat system.

2.14.2 Focus Group Discussion

“A focus group is a group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on from personal experience and the topic that is the subject of the research” (Powell & Single, 1996, p.499). It is important to ensure that participants are having experience or views of particular topic of study. The different views of participants are investigated in relations to pre-decided research questions (Merton & Kendall, 1946). I conducted focus group discussions with youth during course of my field work. I wanted to know views of Devipujak youth on various aspects so used Focus Group Discussion (FGD) as a technique to understand opinion of youth. I conducted two FGDs during field work covering youth from both the areas of Devipujak community in village. There were nine participants in first FGD and seven in second one. The places *Matano Madh* (temple of Kuldevi) was selected for first FGD and second FGD was conducted in open space near house of one of the participants. I got understanding about views of youth covering various aspects such as belief in rituals, livelihood, migration and its reasons, life in cities, education, approach towards women and local politics. They all expressed their views on different aspects. Sometimes I had to ask certain participants to express their thoughts when they were not speaking.

2.14.3 Participant Observation

Ethnographic research gives opportunity to learn about lives of people from their own perspective and understanding their lived experiences in their context (O'reilly, 2012). It does not involve only simple talking with them or getting answer by asking questions but learning from them by observing and participating in their daily activities to understand their lives. Participant observation allows researcher to involve into daily lives of people with maintaining professional relationship that permits adequate observations and collecting data (Fetterman, 2010).

Participant observation is immersion in a culture. Ideally, the ethnographer lives and works in the community for 6 months to a year or more, learning the language and seeing patterns of behaviour over time. Long-term residence helps the researcher internalize the basic beliefs, fears, hopes, and expectations of the people under study. The simple, ritualistic behaviours of going to the market or to the well for water teach how people use their time and space and how they determine what is precious, sacred, and profane. The process may seem unsystematic; in the beginning, it is somewhat uncontrolled and haphazard. However, even in the early stages of fieldwork, the ethnographer searches out experiences and events as they come to his or her attention. Participant observation sets the stage for more refined techniques—including projective techniques and questionnaires—and becomes more refined itself as the fieldworker understands more and more about the culture (Powdermaker, 1996 as cited in Fetterman, 2010, p.37).

The researcher can develop a context about the sampling and interview with the help of participant observation (Musante & DeWalt, 2002). Participant observation is defined as a method of establishing rapport with people, learning from them and involving with community in such a way that their members can carry their daily routine naturally and at the same time researcher detaches himself from the field setting or community to get engaged into data for understanding existing reality and writing about it. It is more than mere observation in process of participant observer which also include natural conversations, interviewing, questionnaire and checklist (Bernard, 1994). Fine (2003) uses the term 'peopled ethnography' in context of text which gives understanding of settings based on field writings

from observations, interview and group discussion. It is based on extensive observation during field work which may last for years.

2.14.4 Audio-Visual Usage

Digital voice recorders, desktops, laptops, tablets and cameras are various tools used in ethnographic studies which extend support to memory and vision. These devices can be useful to record rich field details which give flavour to ethnographic experiences that can be helpful to organize and analyse the recorded data (Fetterman, 2010). Usage of audio-visual tools can enhance recording quality of data in key aspects (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). It will be good for an ethnographer to use digital recording devices which will allow to engage into long informal conversations and semi-structured interviews without disruption. It will record exact data including long verbatim quotations which are very important fieldwork data while an ethnographer can carry conversation in natural flow with people. There is possibility that some people may feel fearful to speak during recording the conversation so it is a duty of an ethnographer to ensure them for maintaining confidentiality of data and their identity (Fetterman, 2010). I had kept recording device with me during field work. With prior consent of the participant, I recorded in-depth interviews in the field setting. It helped me to understand data of their historical background, traditional occupations, past life and so on very well and develop meaningful understanding through listening recorded conversation. I used to transcribe the whole audio data into text. It provided added help to me to record some of the important data in detail during field work.

Cameras, especially digital cameras are considered as vital tool in ethnographic studies (Collier & Collier, 1986). It helps to record special events, places, people and setting during the field work. An ethnographer can document photographic record of particular behaviour of people (Fetterman, 2010). The ethnographers are using now video-recording also during field work (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). It can help them to understand new aspects of meaning including non-verbal gestures among participants. At the same time, the verbal communication also becomes very clear when they repeatedly watch the recorded videos (Fetterman, 2010). I carried digital camera along with me in field. I also captured photographs and sometimes videos of important places such as temple, houses, workplaces and occasions like *Dana* ceremony, *Mandavo*.

2.15 Data Analysis and Use of ATLAS.ti Software

Analysis of data in ethnographic research is not separate stage. It starts from pre-field work process in formulating research problem and continue till writing of final report. The importance of data analysis in initial phase of field work is to gain some understanding about what is going on while collecting data. We may not be sure in the beginning about what is going and may not have clarity about it. The analysis will help us to develop different perspectives of the subject we are concerned with (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

The first set of procedures, inscription, transcription, and description are done in the field. They require exhaustive and scrupulous attention to details of listening and observing, as well as attention to one's own inner organizational schemes and biases. They also require hours of typing up field notes and a good system for filing or cataloguing data. The second set of procedures involves "tidying up" data right after the fieldwork is completed. Only the third and final stage is what most researchers more commonly recognize as data management and analysis: a laborious process of organizing and "cooking" raw data until it becomes research results (LeCompte & Schensul, 2013, p.29).

Coding helps to organize data into categories relevant to research objectives which will lead to support analysing and interpretation of data well. The goal of initial phase of organizing data is to identify major themes and underlying structure of data. The later stage will support to find discrete components whiting those identified themes and structures (LeCompte & Schensul, 2013, p.29). There are numbers of software available that test specific hypothesis and gives new perspectives in data. These tools help the researcher in data analysis with appropriately visualise and organize data into categories (Fetterman, 2010).

The analysis process started before selecting final field work site. I visited many villages and met people before finalising a particular field site. I was not writing in front of participants during pilot visit but writing down some of the important observations after coming to home. I was analysing the written details to find out whether the villages I visited are suitable to the objectives of ethnographic study. The various forms of data such as daily reports, personal diaries, observations, in-depth interviews, FGDs were analysed and coded to generate themes

and sub-themes which resulted in emerging meaningful data from the raw ones. During this process, repetitive components were carefully avoided and taken care during writing the report. I also used ATLAS.ti software to organise and analyse data. This tool helped in coding the large chunk of data and creating major themes out of it.

2.16 Shifting to Mumbai

Marcus (1995) describes following of the people which is usual and seen in most of migration studies as one of the six modes of conducting multi-sited ethnographic studies. A multi-sited ethnographic study can be useful to understand holistic perspective, explore various aspects and ideas of the subject. The Devipujak community is migratory in nature and many of them were migrating to different places like Mumbai, Calcutta, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Orissa and so on from village to earn their livelihood. It was an important to study Devipujak community in holistic aspects to gain better understanding about their way of life. There is one of the biggest second handed market also known as *Chor Bazar* situated near Grant Road in Mumbai. There were many families who migrated to Mumbai for livelihood and also Devipujak population from different parts of Gujarat migrate there for earning purpose. I shifted myself to Mumbai and stayed for a month to understand how Devipujaks are staying there, what are their different sources of livelihood and what difficulties they are facing in city. I also gained understanding about role of female among Devipujak community in occupation.

2.17 Ethical Considerations

In ethnographic study, there is always a concern for ethical issues a researcher has to consider. This kind of study is conducted in natural settings which give opportunity to an ethnographer to study daily lives of people, interact with them, observe them, taking part into their rituals, interviewing participants, writing the conversations and many things (O'reilly, 2012). The primary goal of research is to generate knowledge but not at the cost of ethical standards. There are also certain ethical issues concerned with social research same as with any other form of human activities. Hammersley & Atkinson (2007) have categorised the ethical issues under five headings so as 'informed consent, privacy, harm, exploitation, and consequences for the future research' (p.209). The ethnographers are expected to follow code

of ethics which preserves rights of the participants, allow smooth communication with them and keep opportunities left for the further research in field. The most important is that the researcher do not cause any harm to the community while conducting study. The ethnographers should be utmost careful that they do not insult the feelings of natives and disgrace the sacred culture of community they are practicing (Fetterman, 2010).

One of the most important aspects in ethnographic research is informed consent. It is necessary that a researcher should get informed, full and meaningful consent from the participants for the research study. A researcher should explain meaning and purpose of the research as well as what it will result from the study to the participants (O'reilly, 2012). In the field of qualitative study, it is mostly discussed that people must be able to give consent without any constrain and make their decision based on the accurate information shared with them. In addition, they are free to withdraw from participation any time during study. Whether it is overt research, ethnographers should tell 'all the people about everything of the research' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p.210). I had taken meeting with the participants in the beginning with purpose to share information about the research study and gain access in the community. In the meeting, I shared objectives and details information about my study to them. All the people in community were not present in the meeting so I used to share information about purpose of research study whenever I was meeting participants for first time. O'reilly (2012) mentioned that the participants were not able to understand when he shared that he was doing a Ph.D. I had also faced the same situation in the field. Most of the participant who were aged not able to understand what the Ph.D is when I was telling them that the study is part of my Ph.D. I was making them understand in simple words that I am here to write a book on them. I was ensuring to take their consent before capturing photographs of their sacred places and occasions. I was sometimes denied to take photographs or videography of animal sacrifice ceremony for which I had not taken any picture of particular event during field work. The informed consent in present study was oral and not written. The reason behind oral consent was that most the participants were illiterate in the community. I was informing participants all about purpose of the research study in local language before taking their oral consent. The oral consent was also recorded in audio form.

It is also moral responsibility of a researcher not to share false information or false promises to the participants. Sometimes participants were asking me whether they will get any financial benefit due to research study which I was answering to them that they are not going to get any direct financial benefit from me or government for them through research study but it may be useful to social organizations, future researchers to understand situation of the community.

Like informed consent, confidentiality is also one of the important components in qualitative study. Confidentiality in simple term means to ensure that what you hear and do is not identified by someone else (O'reilly, 2012). Participants' rights to privacy and confidentiality should be given due respect but sometimes it puts us into baffling situation when some of participants express desire to mention their names in ethnographic studies (Grinyer, 2002). I have come across two of the participants who were not having any objection to write their real name in ethnographic studies while most of the participants denied to mention their name in study because it may lead to hostility with other people if they are recognised. Considering the views of majority of participants, I have used pseudo name both for participants and village to uphold right of confidentiality of them in the study. It will ensure that their real identity will remain undisclosed to others and also will not put them into any harmful situation in future.

A non-judgemental attitude prevents ethnographers to build any value-based opinions about the observations in the field. It is very important that ethnographer does not bring his own prejudices and views towards the people and their rituals while conducting a study rather understand views of participants for their own culture. Fetterman (2010) mentioned that he tried not to set standards of hygiene based on his western practice of hygiene during study on Bedouin Arabs in the Sinai desert. I tried to prevent myself to build any person views towards sacrificial ceremony and their ways of worshipping their *Kuldevi* during study. I was hearing from other caste people many times that Devipujak community is very superstitious in nature or even some of the Devipujaks themselves sharing that they are highly believing in superstitious practices. But I made efforts to understand point of views of community for the practices they are performing rather than influenced by views of others. I faced experience that Devipujaks community consider schedule caste persons lower to them in hierarchy which led myself to change my accommodation as I was staying in rented house which was owned

by schedule caste landlord. But I remained very objective while dealing with situation and did not allow my own values to make any bias observations for Devipujak community though I did not like to change my accommodation due to caste-based practices in village. I was neutral towards them during entire stay with them during field work.

2.18 Leaving the Field

I was very strange to people when I first time entered in village. It was my first experience to stay at naive village for such a longer period. The field site and people were new to me in the beginning, but slowly and gradually they became very familiar. More than a year, I stayed with Devipujak community which helped me to know about various aspects of them. Rather than knowing, I learnt about new culture, their life history, their difficulties and livelihood. I had participated in many rituals of Devipujaks, built strong relationship with key informants, met almost all households during stay, had dine with them so it was not so easy to bid good bye at the end of field work. I was very confused and sometimes anxious whether I will be able get required data from the community in initial days, but the reality was different at the end. I was able to build credibility and had enough required data for the ethnographic study. I met personally to all households of Devipujak community and talked about leaving of village withing next three days. I received good words from them about my work. They were very much happy because I stayed with them for quite long time. There was no any researcher who stayed with them previously and it was first time experience for them. They felt that I have collected true data by observing and staying with them for long period. They also expressed their desires that I should write a book on them as early as possible. They told me to write very good report on them which depict the real situation of Devipujak community. They also wished that I should come again in village and be in contact with them. I would say that it was very enriching experience for me to stay with them in village. It started as a stranger but it converted into close bond with people at the end. Not only Devipujak community, the other caste people also complimented for being in village and conducted this kind of work. The field work has helped me to know about village life and particularly Devipujak community.