

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ITS BARRIERS:
A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF DALITS IN PALAKOT VDC,
BAGLUNG**

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RECOMMENDATION LETTER

This thesis entitled "**Socioeconomic Development and Its Barriers : A Sociological Study of Dalits in Palakot VDC, Baglung**" has been prepared by Mr. Janak Raj Pathak, under my direct supervision, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Sociology/Anthropology. I, therefore, recommend for its evaluation and acceptance by the thesis evaluation committee.

Mr. Jiban Mani Poudel
Research Supervisor

Date: March 2008

APPROVAL LETTER

This is to certify that the thesis, submitted by Mr. Janak Raj Pathak, entitled "**Socioeconomic Development and Its Barriers : A Sociological Study of Dalits in Palakot VDC, Baglung**" has been approved by the Department in the prescribed format of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

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ABSTRACT

It is clear that Nepal is an amalgamation of diversity in terms of natural and cultural features. So many mysterious as well as superstitious values and norms of Nepalese society have presented the country as a complex cultural combination. Traditionally, Nepalese society has inherited deep roots in the Hindu caste system, with hierarchy of different groups of people within the system.

Traditional social systems and beliefs have made some communities of society socially and economically backward. Dalits of Nepal are one of the communities within Hindu caste system whose social, economic health status and participation in social and political activities are lower compared to other communities. They have been suffering from inhuman prejudices, and unbearable discrimination throughout the country. Various practices have been carried out in order to uplift living standard of such communities in different time periods but the Dalits have yet been surviving in miserable conditions. Progress and prosperity of the countryside is being disturbed by such conditions. In this context, this study is an attempt to identify barriers in the socioeconomic development of the Dalit community concentrated only in the Palakot area of Baglung district.

The overall socioeconomic condition of the people in this area is approximately similar to the rest of the Nepalese countryside. Sarki, Damai and Kami are the Dalit castes in this area. Population of the Dalits covers 19.08 percent (842) of the total population in this area who live in 143 households. About 48 percent (70) of total households have been taken as respondents using the stratified sampling method.

In spite of so many promotional practices, there is no remarkable alternation, progress and prosperity in the overall socioeconomic condition of the Dalits in this area. Unfavorable customs and superstitious thinking in the society, on one side, economic backwardness, on the other, have compelled them to survive miserably. Inherent traditional occupations of the Dalits have been going towards vulnerable condition due to lack of competitive capacity and advancement. Likewise, inadequate promotional practices and lack of continuity of appropriate programmes are also the major factors behind the backwardness of these communities.

Social and economic developments are closely related, i.e., they are interdependent variables. Thus, equal emphasis should be given on social and economic factors for the overall development of Dalit communities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | Page No. |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Recommendation Letter</i> | <i>i</i> |
| <i>Approval Sheet</i> | <i>ii</i> |
| <i>Acknowledgements</i> | <i>iii</i> |
| <i>Abstract</i> | <i>iv</i> |
| <i>Table of Contents</i> | <i>v</i> |
| <i>List of Tables</i> | <i>ix</i> |
| <i>List of Figures</i> | <i>x</i> |

CHAPTER - ONE

INTRODUCTION

| | | |
|-----|---------------------------|---|
| 1.1 | Background | 1 |
| 1.2 | Statement of the Problem | 2 |
| 1.3 | Objectives of the Study | 4 |
| 1.4 | Significance of the Study | 4 |
| 1.5 | Organization of the Study | 5 |

CHAPTER - TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

| | | |
|-----|--|----|
| 2.1 | Review of Caste System and Dalits in Nepal | 6 |
| 2.2 | Review of Promotional Practices | 8 |
| 2.3 | Review of Present Issues of Dalits | 13 |

CHAPTER - THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

| | | |
|-----|-------------------------------------|----|
| 3.1 | Rationale for the Selection of Site | 16 |
| 3.2 | Sources of Data | 16 |
| 3.3 | Universe and Sample | 17 |

| | | |
|-------|--------------------------------------|----|
| 3.4 | Data Collection Techniques and Tools | 17 |
| 3.4.1 | Household Survey | 17 |
| 3.4.2 | Observation | 17 |
| 3.4.3 | Interview | 17 |
| 3.5 | Data Processing and Analysis | 18 |
| 3.6 | Limitation of the Study | 18 |

CHAPTER - FOUR

INTRODUCTION OF STUDY AREA

| | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------|----|
| 4.1 | Short Profile of Baglung District | 19 |
| 4.2 | Palakot VDC | 21 |

CHAPTER - FIVE

SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ITS BARRIER: AN ANALYSIS

| | | |
|--------|--|----|
| 5.1 | A Short Profile of Daits in Palakot Area | 24 |
| 5.1.1 | Arrival of Dalit People in Palakot VDC | 25 |
| 5.1.2 | Sarki | 25 |
| 5.1.3 | Damai | 25 |
| 5.1.4 | Kami | 26 |
| 5.2 | Socioeconomic Characters of Respondents | 30 |
| 5.2.1 | Respondents by Caste/Ethnicity | 30 |
| 5.2.2 | Respondents by gender and Age Group | 32 |
| 5.2.3 | Education Status of Respondents | 33 |
| 5.2.4 | Household Size of the Respondents | 34 |
| 5.2.5 | Occupational Status of Respondents | 35 |
| 5.2.6 | Income and Expenditure Status of Households | 37 |
| 5.2.7 | Landholding Size of Households | 39 |
| 5.2.8 | Livestock | 40 |
| 5.2.9 | Status of Respondents in Political and Social and Political Activities | 40 |
| 5.2.10 | Perception of Dalits on Development | 43 |
| 5.2.11 | Indicator of the Development | 43 |

| | |
|---|----|
| 5.2.12 Barriers of Socio-Economic Development | 44 |
|---|----|

CHAPTER - SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

| | |
|--|----|
| 6.1 Summary | 45 |
| 6.2 Conclusion | 48 |
| 6.3 Recommendations | 49 |
| 6.3.1 Recommendations for Planning | 50 |
| 6.3.2 Recommendations for Further Research | 51 |

BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDICES

LIST OF TABLES

| | Page No. |
|--|-----------------|
| Table 4.1: Population by Caste/Ethnic Group | 21 |
| Table 5.1: Distribution of the Dalit Household by Caste and Ward | 24 |
| Table 5.2: Distribution of Respondents by the Caste | 31 |
| Table 5.3: Distribution of Respondents by Gender and Age | 32 |
| Table 5.4: Distribution of Respondents by Level of Education | 33 |
| Table 5.5: Distribution of Household Size of Respondents | 34 |
| Table 5.6: Distribution of Respondents by Occupation | 36 |
| Table 5.7: Distribution of Households by Income and Expenditure | 38 |
| Table 5.8: Landholding Size of Household | 39 |
| Table 5.9: Distribution of Status of Respondents in Social and Political Activities | 41 |
| Table 5.10: Perception of Dalits on Development | 42 |
| Table 5.11: Barriers of Socio-Economic Development | 44 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | Page No. |
|---|-----------------|
| Figure 5.1: Distribution of Respondents by Caste | 31 |
| Figure 5.2: Distribution by Age and Gender | 33 |
| Figure 5.3: Distribution of Household Size of Respondents | 35 |
| Figure 5.4: Distribution of Respondents by Occupation | 37 |
| Figure 5.5: Income and Expenditure Status of Households | 39 |

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | | |
|--------|---|--|
| ADB | : | Asian Development Bank |
| BCE | : | Before Common Era |
| BS | : | Bikram Sambat |
| CBS | : | Central Bureau of Statistics |
| DDC | : | District Development Committee |
| Etc. | : | Et cetera, i.e. and so on. |
| GDP | : | Gross Domestic Production |
| HDI | : | Human Development Index |
| HDR | : | Human Development Report |
| INGO | : | International Non-Government Organization |
| KM | : | Kilo Meter |
| NDC | : | Nepal Dalit's Commission |
| NGO | : | Non-Government Organization |
| NHRC | : | National Human Rights Commission |
| NPC | : | National Planning Commission |
| PDDP | : | Participatory District Development Programme |
| Rs | : | Rupees |
| SLC | : | School Leaving Certificate |
| TU | : | Tribhuvan University |
| UDC | : | Underdeveloped Countries |
| UN | : | United Nations |
| UNDP | : | United Nations Development Program |
| UNICEF | : | United Nations Children's Fund |
| US | : | United States |
| WWW | : | World Wide Web |

CHAPTER - ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Development means qualitative change in the life of the people. Education, health and economy are major indicators of development which shows socio-economic condition of every community. Development is a multidimensional approach which emphasizes qualitative and quantitative progress towards positive direction in economic as well as social aspects of the society (Estava, 1997). However, the living standard of the people in different communities presents a vast gap in the field of socioeconomic progress and prosperity.

Nepal has 103 caste/ethnic groups (CBS-2001) including 19 Dalit communities. Dalit communities of Nepal are living in miserable conditions in the country. The life style of such people is incomparable with the other higher class people. Settlements of these communities are especially located in marginal remote areas and they are sustaining as backward communities. Some of them are neglected and dominated in their daily life as secondary class citizens in spite of the equality envisage in the law of the nation.

The Dalit communities of Nepal have been exploited economically, dominated socially and neglected politically. On the other hand, they are unable to receive education, neglected in religious sector and displaced from the main stream of state in terms of socio-economic development.

This study is mainly focus to find out the socio-economic situation of the Dalits communities in Palakot Village Development Committee

(VDC). Moreover, this study also analyses of these people with public sphere and barriers of socioeconomic development.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Nepal has heterogeneity in terms of socio-economic characteristics. Traditional social systems and beliefs have made some communities of the society socially and economically backward. They have their own culture, tradition and lifestyle created the period of ancient time. They have their own skill and art but they are unable to improve their socio-economic condition. Such backward communities especially Dalits of our country are unable to achieve desirable change in terms of development at the beginning of 11th periodic plan. Various programmes have been launched by the government and non-government organizations to uplift the living standard of these communities but they are still in miserable condition with regard to social, economic, educational and health aspects. On the other hand, such programmes have been even increasing the gap among communities. Practices towards improving the conditions of these communities and in bringing them in mainstream of the development have been failures. Progress and prosperity of the countryside is disturbing by such condition and also hampering the overall development. Due to inadequate prior research, there are many things unknown about the socio-economic development of the backward communities like the Dalits of Pala VDC. Thus in this content, barriers related to socio-economic development of backward communities should be identified. So an attempt has been made to find out such causes in the backwardness of these communities.

Hindu society had been categorized into four *Varna* and determined by occupation and status on the basis of division of labour in ancient period. According to *Linga Puran*, *Varna* System had been started from

northern '*Bharat Barsha*'. At that time, there was no prejudice among the various *Barnes* as untouchable man. Caste was not inborn; it had been determined by his deeds. At the period of ending of *Righved*, *Barna* system had been started among the Hindu society (NDC, 2060). *Manusmriti*, code of the Hindu society, written by Manu had categorized the caste and *Barna* as Braman, Chetri, Baishya and Sudra. After that, the caste system was transformed into inborn pattern in the Hindu society which is still in existence.

In Nepal, prejudice and discrimination of untouchable castes had started at the regime of Lichivi in Kathmandu as four *Barnas* and eighteen castes and Shakya regime in Kapilbastu (NDC, 2060). Besides, Jayasthiti Malla had classified into four *Bornas* and sixty-four castes and practiced hard social rule more strongly on the basis of *Manusmiriti*. Similarly, Ram Shah started such social system in the Gorkha state. After that, they have been suffering from humiliation, domination and discrimination as Dalits. Nepal Dalit Commission has classified Dalit as follows: Bishokarma (Kami), Dargi (Damai), Sarki, Khadki, Dhobi, Deaula, Bantar, Tatma, Khatke, Wadi, Kutche, Musahar, Gaaine, Dushad, Halkhor, Kapali, Dom, Phatherkattna, Chamar (NDC, 2059 BS: 21).

According to the Living Standard Survey (CBS, 2061BS), nearly 31 percent of Nepalese people live under the poverty line. Eighty percent of the Dalits are under the poverty line and they use only 1 percent cultivated land. Besides, among the 2 million landless, 75 percent are Dalits. Their literacy rate is only 10.7 percent, average life expectancy is 42 years and 50 percent of the children are suffering from malnutrition (Jha, 2000). Such condition may be found in Dalits of Palakot VDC of Baglung which is not different in the Nepalese context. Various efforts to improve the condition of the Dalits have been made but they have not been fully successful.

Changes in the life style and traditional occupation can be seen in these communities somewhere but marked progress in their socioeconomic condition missing even today. So, they are suffering from the various problems and social prejudices until now.

What are causes behind backwardness despite various efforts in the field of socio-economic development? Are social and cultural factors responsible for backwardness of Dalit communities?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to identify the causes of underdevelopment among the backward communities In Palakot VDC. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To find out the socio-economic situation/condition of the Dalit community in the study area.
2. To find out the access of these people with public spheres.
3. To explore the barriers in the socioeconomic development of the community.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This is a sociological study on socio-economic development of Dalit communities in Palakot VDC. This study mainly focuses on the access of Dalit people on public spheres and explore the barriers of socio-economic development for these people. In this regards, this study will be beneficial for those individuals or institutions who will be concern or to this topic. Moreover, this study will be fruitful to the further researchers who will be interested to study on the access of Dalit people in public spheres and explore the barriers in the socio-economic development of Dalit community.

This study may be helpful to organizations (government and non-government), planners, policy maker, development practitioners or social

workers who has concern to these subject matter for socio-economic upliftment of Dalit people by removing the barriers.

1.5 Organization of the Study

This study is divided into six chapters, where the first chapter deals with introduction, statement of problem, objectives of the study and significance of the study while second chapter is about literature review, where different reviews conducted on Dalit of Nepal as well as in other countries are included. Similarly, chapter third related to methodological procedure that the research applied on this dissertation. Chapter four introduces the study area. Similarly, chapter five includes socio-economic development and its barriers: Dalit caste on study area, educational background, socio-economic condition, population distribution of the respondents household and so on. The concluding chapter remarks the summary, conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER - TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many studies have been conducted about the Dalits and other backward communities in national and international level. This part of study is concentrated on the review of related books, journals, thesis, project reports and other related books.

2.1 Review of Caste System and Dalits in Nepal

Bista (1987), the Nepalese anthropologist, has quoted that Dalits were to be treated as sudra, low caste, because of their neglect of caste rules. But when they came into contact with the immigrant Brahmans of the plains, the Khas were given the very high (Chetri) Kshatriya Status.

Brahamans rank highest in the caste hierarchy and along with Chhetris they formed a majority of the influential and wealthy people of traditional Nepal. They are also the most widely distributed throughout the country. Nepali, an indo-Aryan language of occupational castes, the Damai (tailor), Sarki (Cobbler), Kami (blacksmith) and Sunar (goldsmith) castes, and of such other castes as Sanyashi and Gharti. The number of occupational-caste people is estimated to be only a small percentage of the total Nepali, speaking population, spread unequally throughout the country. The total number of people speaking Nepali as their mother tongue than is close to five million, or about half of Nepal's entire population (Bista, 1987:4).

Manusmirti, code of the Hindu society, had made the hierarchy and established social value in the field of caste-based discrimination according to the then social system about 2000 years ago.

Binadi, A. (2061 BS) states in his book *Manusmirti* that Dalits are untouchable and totally neglected people of society. Study for knowledge, property for survival and respective life are strictly restricted for Dalits. Likewise, they should live far from non-Dalit communities, use only pots of clay, ornaments of iron, oldest cloths etc. They are prohibited to make any kind of relationships with non- Dalits.

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, has described about historical status of Dalits in Hindu society. In the context of traditional Hindu society, Dalit status has often been historically associated with occupations. Any occupation involving killing, handling of animal dead bodies or night soil which is regarded ritually impure. Engaging in these activities was considered to be polluting to the individual who performed them, and this pollution was considered to be 'contagious'. As a result, Dalits were commonly banned and segregated from full participation in Hindu social life (they could not enter the premises of temple), while elaborate precautions were sometimes observed to prevent incidental contact between Dalits and other Hindus. Historically, there may not have been clear demarcation between Dalit castes and the lowest *Shudra* castes ([WWW.Wikipedia.Org/ Wiki/Dalit](http://WWW.Wikipedia.Org/Wiki/Dalit)).

Situational Analysis of Dalits in Nepal, National Dalit Strategy Report Part-I (2002) submitted in NPC by Dahal has also stated about origin of Dalits in ancient time. Nepal Dalit model in itself is an off shoot of larger Hindu Indian model who come to Nepal along with other caste Hindus with traditional occupational caste. At the same time, some high caste Hindu groups also became Dalits over the years because of the caste expulsion model practiced in the Hindu System until 1963. They were the discarded Hindus from the illegitimate sexual relations between high caste

groups and Dalits in those days, sexual relation between the members of high caste group and Dalit was strictly prohibited (whether this sexual relationship was between the high Hindu male or female with the Dalit female or male or vice versa). In the other words, the present Dalit population of Nepal could be the mixture of two distinct groups of people; (i) A group of people who originally came to Nepal from India along with other Hindu caste members, and (ii) the male Dalit group from the illegitimate sexual relations (Dahal, et al., 2002:5).

Nepal Human Development Report (2004) has included history of untouchability in Nepal in such way. While caste division and the practice of untouchability reaches back to the *Aryan* invasions that began even before 1500 BCE, the legal authority for suppressing Dalit communities anywhere in what is now Nepal dates back only to the 14th century Common Era. King Jayasthiti Malla (1380-1394) formalized the caste system in the Kathmandu Valley by dividing the Newar (largely indigenous) population into 64 caste groups, each occupational category. These castes, then, had no fundamental basis in ancestry or strictly religious ascription, but derived from the nature of work performed (UNDP, 2004:57).

2.2 Review of Promotional Practices

After the political changes of 1950, various practices had been carried out to achieve goals of development in the Nepalese area. Periodic planning had been started from 1956 and tried to take systematic way of socioeconomic development. So many legal attempts have also been carrying out in order to improve the socioeconomic condition in national and international level.

The international conventions and resolutions of the conferences in which Nepal is one of the signatories are equally treated as the law of the land. The human rights conventions, resolutions of population and development and women conferences have explicitly mentioned the equality of all citizens of nation regarding the highest possible use of their potential in total production, consumption and national development process (Dahal, 2002: 50-51).

United Nation have declared millennium declaration in 2000 in this way, 'we have a collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level. As leaders we have a duty therefore to all the world's people, especially the most vulnerable and, in particular, the children of the world, to whom the future belongs' (UNDP, 2005:17).

Although the country later condensed significant political turmoil , including the overthrow of the Rana regime in 1950 and the establishment of politically egalitarian governance in 1958, the country code of 1854 remained in force with only moderate informal adjustments until 1963, when the *Naya Mulki Ain* (New country code) was enforced under the Panchayat system. This New Code marks the beginning of a New Era of the most radical changes in Nepal because it stated that legally all citizens are equal irrespective of caste, creed and sex. The *Mulki Ain* of 1963 also abolished discrimination between castes in respect of capital punishment. However, it did not declare the practice of untouchability punishable (UNDP, 2004:58).

Restoration of democracy in 1990 intensified the voice of subjugated groups. The new constitution of 1990 reiterates the universality of human rights, equality among Nepalese citizens in respect of rights and

responsibilities, and also declares discrimination on the basis of caste punishable. Despite the reform measures introduced during the last four decades, little has changed in Nepal's social structures, norms and practices, including the attitudes and behaviours of non-Dalits towards Dalits or among Dalits themselves (UNDP, 2004:58).

Introduction of the New Legal Code 1963 was bold attempt in the traditional Nepalese society but could not function effectively because of the poor economic system of people as a whole. Dalits could not go against this traditional Hindu model, as they were heavily dependents on the high caste Hindus and indigenous nationalities for their survival. There might be other hidden problems, but the irony is that they need to fight for their rights against those who are virtually seem to have been supporting their livelihood. Therefore, the Dalit emancipation coming relatively has been taking a long time in Nepal (Dahal , 2002:7-8).

Land Reform 1964 had tried to make the equitable society in terms of land ownership by ceiling and other attempts. But in reality, it could not change socioeconomic condition of oppressed people like Dalits. Besides, several legal and practical attempts have been carried out in order to improve miserable condition of Dalits in Nepal.

Similarly, Constitution of Nepal 1990 has provision of the Fundamental Rights of the citizen in article 11; Sub-Article 2 as well as 3 which has also ensured that all are legally equal. There is also provision of freedom for all. No discrimination based on caste, sex, religion, creed, ethnicity or political inclination have been made by the state in the course of law enforcement. On the other hand, Sub-Article 4 has clearly focused on the Dalit and ensures that no one would be discriminated on the basis of caste and creed in public presence and in the use of public properties. It has

also declared that discriminating behaviour against this provision is punishable by law.

The Restoration of democracy in 1990 gave greater voice to subjugated groups of Nepal and attracted the attention of the planners, policy makers, government, national and international non-governmental organizations and donor agencies to the plight of the Dalits. The 9th plan (1997-2002) stated for the first time in Nepalese history that Dalits had occupational abilities, knowledge and skills to raise the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In order to improve their socioeconomic conditions, a committee for the advancement of the Dalits, *Upekshit, Utpidit Dalitbarga Bikas Saniti* (depressed, oppressed, Dalit group development committee) was established in 1996 under the auspices of the Minister of local development promulgated an eight-point programme for mainstreaming the Dalits in national development processes. In addition, in March 2002, a high-level National Dalit's Commission was instituted to look into the issues related to the welfare of Dalit communities (UNDP, 2004:59-60).

Ninth plan had also taken the long vision of 15 years raising the living standard of Dalits and neglected communities by empowering them on the basis of equality, and mainstream them into the development efforts while enhancing their self-respect.

During the Tenth plan, special programmes had been implemented on uplifting backward indigenous people, people of backward nationalities, neglected, oppressed and under privileged (Dalit) people. These programmes will pay special attention to preserve languages and culture of indigenous people and nationalities, and the vanishing nationalities; in addition, these programmes will modernize the occupation of the Dalit

people and make it honorable and respectable. These programmes as they need multi-sectoral coordination (NPC, 2002:588).

Tenth plan has realized that all-round development is possible only if the multi-ethnic groups, multi-lingual and various groups and communities within the country develop in proportionate manner. Such type of development will help to utilize their inherent skill, ability and knowledge in the national development process on the one hand, and on the other, assist to uplift the living standard of the Dalits, neglected, downtrodden and oppressed classes by creating employment opportunities through the mobilization of local resources. Serious efforts are still needed to bring this class of people who have been back-warded from every aspect of socio-politico-economic issues because of the prevalence of aged old poverty and social deprivation. Special steps had been taken to implement the outcome of research and studies for their betterment during the Tenth Plan period. The programmes had been initiated from the very beginning of the Tenth Plan to involve them, as co-actors and partners, in the mainstreaming of nation building activities (NPC, 2002:562).

After the general assembly meeting of UNO held on 21st March 1965, passed "International Convention on Elimination of All Kinds of Racial Discrimination", the concept of avoiding all forms of discrimination between human beings penetrated the world scenario. "All human beings are equal before the law" is the concept developed by the convention, which Nepal ratified in 30th January 1971, and has put into effort to implement by formulating laws and policies against discriminations (Jha, 2000).

After the great pro-democratic movement of 2006, restored House of Representatives has approved the proposal against untouchability giving

the Nepalese society liberation from untouchability and discrimination. It called for declaring the nation free of untouchability and discrimination along with special economic programmes for the education health and employment of the oppressed Dalits community living under the poverty line. There was realization in discussion of parliament that Dalit have an important contribution to building the nation and pointed out the need to bring special programmes as well as strict enforcement of relevant laws to bring them to the mainstream of the nation. Likewise, MPs also realized that country's 16 percent population has not been given a humane status and so it was essential to put an end to such ill traditions. The proposal was the only issue of the parliament's daily agenda today that also called for the equal representation of the Dalits in the constitution of the election assembly and drafting of the constitution, so as to built an equitable society after incorporating the community in the mainstream of the nation (TRN, 2006:1).

2.3 Review of Present Issues of Dalits

Nepalese Dalits are politically, socially and economically oppressed people of 21st century. Inclusion of the Dalits in different sectors of the state is arising issue of the present time. Besides, respective life in society and fulfillment of basic necessities are important issues in the field of Dalit empowerment

Nepalese economy has fared less well amid political instability and conflict. Growth slowed to 2.3% in fiscal year (FY) 2005, compared with 3.5% in FY 2004, affected also by lower agricultural production due to poor weather and by weaker industry and services sector. If it is to regain the average growth of 5% in the 1990, it will need to resolve the conflict and accelerate its reform process (ADB, 2006:83-84).

The caste-based discrimination to Dalits is found not only from the higher caste Hindu and indigenous nationalities but also equally observed with in Dalits even today. The intra-Dalit discrimination could be the result of the larger Hindu caste model of hierarchical structure where Dalits themselves became a part of it (Bhatta, 2005:235-234).

Kishan (2002), has described various constraints related to Dalits. Intra-Dalit discrimination, lack of clear definition on Dalits low level of literacy rate lack of solidarity among Dalits lack of commitment in the field of Dalit empowerment and weak implementation of the law and programmes, are serious constraints in socioeconomic development in the Dalit communities according the report.

This has also tried to analyze the development paradigm related to upliftment of the Dalit there are two schools of thoughts emerging for Dalits development. First, development of Dalits community should be attempted through enhancement of their traditional skill as shoe-makers, black-gold smithing, and tailoring as well as other so-called lower level occupations. Second, the improvement in the quality of life of Dalits is to be sought by the educational and income generating facilities for other segments of population. In general, it is often expressed that the former is suggested by non-Dalits, and later is the chosen approach of Dalits. The second approach of improvement in education, employment and other social reforms is equally applicable for all down trodden groups of people. This might lead towards a culmination of programme and resource mix-up with other population sub-groups where Dalits issues are often disguised. Therefore, a third and intermediate approach of a mix-method of improvement in traditional skills as well as education and employment is to be adopted for the development of Dalits in Nepal (Dahal, 2002: 65).

Wagle (2061 BS), States in his book *Nepalko Bikasma Dalitharu* that evocation of awareness in other communities is also necessary to make

aware Dalits. Without changing beliefs of upper caste people's psychological attitudes, practices towards Dalit empowerment may to be effective. Besides, serious issue of intra-Dalit discrimination, which has divided the Dalits themselves, should be avoided for the empowerment of Dalit communities.

Further more, community people's attitude towards Dalit plays important role to bring significant changes in the status of Dalit in society. However, majorities of the community members still have not much positive attitudes to change unequal relationship between Dalit and other caste. Thus, social status of Dalit is far behind than other caste in rural part of Nepal (Thapa, 2004:58).

The scheduled castes are a stigmatized lot and on this account they suffer from a number of disabilities that are buttressed by religion. Some of their disabilities are "untouchability", segregation low economic status, politically less powerful, low level of education and little chances mobilization. All these factors, reinforce each other mutually only to worsen the lot of scheduled castes. Though legally or constitutionally they are no longer "untouchability", in practice many of them still bear that stigma (Reddy, et al., 2004:1).

Dalits are very far from light of education. Economic condition is governing their education system as well. They are unable to get any opportunities to get any loan as they do not have property to keep as security except their residence.

Thus, they are helpless to get loan even they urgently require it. The borrowing take place for consumption purposes rather than productive sectoral investment. It is also observed that most of the people spend a large proportion celebrating traditional festivals (Neupane, 2005: 58-59).

CHAPTER - THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Rationale for the Selection of Site

Palakot VDC is boarded by Baglung municipality in east Malika VDC as well as Jamrukkot VDC of Mygdi district in North, Sigana VDC in south and Bhim Pokhara as well as Binhu VDCs in West. Total area of the VDC is 7.59 KM² including the altitude of about 1050 m. of Khahare to 1750 m. of Sansarkot. Topological structure of the VDC is sloppy and climate of the VDC is mid-temperate in general. Total population of the VDC is 4411 whereas population of Sarki, Damai and Kami are 399 (9.03%), 298 (6.76%) and 149 (3.28%) respectively. Other caste people such as Brahmin, Chhetries, Magar etc. also inhabited in surroundings. In this regards, this site is suitable to obtain the objectives of study.

3.2 Sources of Data

Primary as well as secondary data in qualitative and quantitative form had been used in this study. Primary data had been collected from the field. In case of secondary data, different relevant sources such as National Planning Commission (NPC), Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), National Dalit Commission (NDC), District Development Committee (DDC), Village Development (VDC) as well as related journals, articles, books and published and unpublished data had been used.

3.3 Universe and Sample

The population of the Damai, Kami and Sarki of Palakot VDC had been considered as universe of the study. Among the 842 Dalits of this VDC, stratified sampling using random sampling had been used for the selection of sample at the time of the study. Seventy (33%) of the universe had been taken as respondents whereas Sarki, Damai and Kami are 46 (65.70%), 15 (21.70%) and 9 (12.8%) respectively.

3.4 Data Collection Techniques and Tools

The primary data had been collected through the field survey, observation and interview using pre-tested check list and structured questions sheet. Some persons had been selected as key informant to take valuable information about their socio-economic condition.

3.4.1 Household Survey

Number of household had been identified by district profile. Among 143 Dalits household, 70 households had been taken as universe of study whereas systematic random sampling procedure was applied. Out of 70 Dalits households Sarki, Damai and Kami covered 46, 5 and 9 households respectively.

3.4.2 Observation

Socio-cultural activities and life style of Dalits of the study area had been observed during the field visit. Their participation in public sphere was also observed during the course of study.

3.4.3 Interview

Interview had been taken with some local people and key informants using checklist during the field survey. The interview was mainly done to

find out their participation in public spheres and barriers to participate them.

3.5 Data Processing and Analysis

The collected primary and secondary data had been compared and presented in tables with the help of index, percentage and ratio. They had been classified and tabulated systematically. The collected data had been rearranged using statistical and analytical tools. Besides, the rearranged data had been tabulated and arranged systematically for the meaningful presentation and classification of the data.

3.6 Limitation of the Study

Among the various backward communities related to ethnic groups, indigenous groups and Dalits, this study had been covered the Dalits of the Palakot VDC of Baglung. The conclusion of this study would be or would not be applicable to backward communities of other places.

CHAPTER - FOUR

INTRODUCTION OF STUDY AREA

4.1 Short Profile of Baglung District

Baglung a hilly district situated at 28°15' to 28°37' northern latitude and 83°00' to 83°36' eastern longitude is one of four districts of the Dhawalagiri zone the western development region. Total area of the district covers 1784 sq. km. It is bounded on the lap of Parbat district in the east, Gulmi, Pyuthan and Rolpa districts in the South; Rukum district in the west and Myagdi in North. It is known as a district of sixteen-thousand hills and the district of *Jolunge Pool* (Bridges, made using local technology, 475 such bridges are found in the district) in national level. Historically, area of the Baglung was included into the *Chaubise* (twenty-four) principalities before unification of Nepal.

The district covers the altitude of 600 m. of Kharbang to 4690 m. of Fagune Duri. Diverse territory of the district occupies sub-tropical, mid-temperate, cool and alpine climate with minimum temperature of 6.5°C to 37.5°C. Average annual rainfall is estimated 2200 ml. in the district.

Majority of the people, in the district, have adopted the agricultural occupation, which covers 85 percent of the total population. Besides, service and others occupation include 10 and 5 percent respectively. Only 25 percent of the total area is arable land. Forest covered area of the district is 53.73 percent of total area. Major crops in the district are paddy, maize, Millet, wheat etc. and various fruits such as different species of citrus, banana, pear, apple etc. Vegetable farming and livestock rearing are also income generating activities in Baglung. Mines of the different minerals

and metals such as lead, slate-stone, iron and copper are found in distinct area of the district. *Nepali Kagaj* (paper made using local technology), *Butte Nali* (stick of the small bamboo with beautiful pictures made by carving) and *Radipakhi* (locally made cloth using wool) are the original products of the district.

The district is divided into 3 constitutional regions in national level and 13 Ilakas including one municipality and 59 VDCs in local level. Population of the district is 31,8,594. Among them, population of the males and females are 158,593 (49.78%) and 1,60,001 (50.22%) respectively. Ethnic composition of the district is in diverse pattern. Population of the Magar is 28.22 percent of the total population in the district. Similarly, population of Bramans is 23.5 percent and Chetri, Kami, Sarki, Damai as well as others occupy 18.5, 12.6, 4.44, 3.92 and 8.8 percent of total population respectively.

The district has extended from fertile land of low altitude with *Sal's* forest to high valley and plain grass land of high altitude where medicinal herbs, beautiful forests of pine, rhododendron, oak etc. as well as endangered species of musk deer, wolf, red panda, cheer pheasant and *Danfè* are found. Only one hunting reserve of Nepal, Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve is habitat of the many vulnerable and valuable species where licensed hunting is allowed. Shahid Yogendraman highway and other local roads as well as Balewa and Dhorpathan airports have made it accessible in terms of transportation.

Map of the Baglung district is similar to the map of the nation. Vast variation in the altitude of the district includes cultural, climatic, geographical and biological diversity. Including these features, the district looks like mini-Nepal at the national arena.

4.2 Palakot VDC

Palakot VDC is situated nearly 5 km west from the headquarters of Baglung. It is one of 59 VDCs of the district which is boarded by Baglung municipality in east Malika VDC as well as Jamrukkot VDC of Mygdi district in North, Sigana VDC in south and Bhim Pokhara as well as Binhu VDCs in West. Total area of the VDC is 7.59 KM² including the altitude of about 1050 m. of Khahare to 1750 m. of Sansarkot. Topological structure of the VDC is sloppy and climate of the VDC is mid-temperate in general. Although, upper part of this area use to be covered by snow during the winter rainfall. But in the low land of the VDC, temperature of nearly 35°c can be found during the summer season.

Total population of the VDC is 4411 whereas population of male and female cover 2186 (49.5%) and 2225 (50.5%) respectively. Diverse Pattern of ethnic composition is found in this area. Below table presents ethnic composition of the Palakot VDC.

Table 4.1
Population by Caste/Ethnic Group

| Caste/ethnicity | No. of population | Percent |
|-----------------|-------------------|---------|
| Chettri | 1685 | 38.20 |
| Magar | 992 | 22.49 |
| Brahman | 575 | 13.06 |
| Sarki | 399 | 9.05 |
| Damai | 298 | 6.76 |
| Kami | 145 | 3.28 |
| Newar | 67 | 1.51 |
| Gurung | 30 | 0.6 |
| Other | 220 | 4.98 |
| Total | 4411 | 100.00 |

Source: District Profile of Baglung, 2058 BS

Above table indicates that Chettri is the major caste group of the Palakot VDC, which occupies 38.20 percent of the total population whereas other caste groups like Magar, Brahman, Sarki, Damai, Kami, Newar, Gurung and others include 22.49, 13.03, 9.05, 6.76, 3.28, 1.51, 0.6 and 4.98 percent of the total population respectively (DDCB, 2058 BS).

Economy of the VDC is totally dominated by the agriculture. About 90 percent of the total population has adopted the agricultural occupation. Besides, business and other occupation adopted people are 4 and 45 percent of the total population respectively (DDCB, 2058 BS). Land of this area is classified into *Khet* (where paddy is cultivated), *Bari* (where millet and corn are cultivated) and *Pakho* (thatch land or grass land). Mostly, farmers of this area are dependent upon rainfall for the cultivation. Although, some area of the lowland is irrigated through the canals. Arable land in the VDC is low in quantity. Extreme sloppy and marginal land of the VDC is covered by thatch, grass and jungle. Paddy, maize, wheat and millet are the main crops in the VDC. The Production of paddy in a year is 2500 *Muri* whereas other crops like Maize, wheat millet and others include the production of 2340, 1200, 930 and 10 *Muri* respectively (DDCB, 2058 BS).

Various species of citrus as well as banana, pears, gova etc. are also produced in the lower and middle part of the VDC. In the upper part beekeeping and cattle grazing are also practicing with the other agricultural activities. Some castes like Damai and Kami have been practicing their traditional occupations like tailoring and iron tool making. Involvement in the government service and Indian as well as British army are main attraction among the youths. Most of the young people in this area use to go various countries for employment. Such tendency is increasing since the last decade.

Houses in the VDC are made by stone, mud, wooden planks, Bamboo whereas roofs are made by *Khar* (thatch grass), slate-stone and tin (galvanized iron sheet) although some houses are made by cement and bricks.

From the prospective of natural resource, the VDC seems to be quite prosperous. In this regard, water resource, pasture land, forest resource including timber and non-timber forest products etc. are main resources. Five community forests, water resources including Kate Khola (river) as well other streams like Kahare Khola, Thulo Khola and Iram Khola make it rich in terms of natural resources. They exploit the community for domestic purpose such as firewood, fodder as well as timber in systematic way. Local rivers are used for irrigation purpose and drinking water.

Various development programmes, were launched by the NGOs/GOs in order to improve the living standard of the people through the distinct point of views. In these days, programme of the Participatory District Development Program (PDDP) is running in the VDC. Four hundred people of the VDC have been benefited by the service of drinking water. Similarly, in the field of education and sanitation different programmes were launched which brought slight improvement in these sectors in the VDC. Electricity is available in some part of this area. Ilaka post office as well as sub-health post have been established in the VDC. Three primary schools, one lower secondary and secondary school have also been established in different part of the VDC. Population of Dalits in Palakot VDC covers 19.09% of the total population and they have been living in every word of the VDC. Three castes of the Dalits (Sarki, Damai and kami) live in this VDC (DDCB, 2058 BS).

CHAPTER – FIVE

SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ITS BARRIER: AN ANALYSIS

5.1 A Short Profile of Daits in Palakot Area

Dalits in Palakot area have been living and facing extreme hardships for survival in each and every word of Palakot VDC. Among the total population of VDC, 842 (19.08%) people are Dalit.

Table 5.1

Distribution of the Dalit Households by Caste and Ward

| Ward No. | Damai | Kami | Sarki | Total |
|----------|-------|------|-------|-------|
| 1 | 25 | 7 | 12 | 44 |
| 2 | - | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| 3 | - | - | 13 | 13 |
| 4 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 18 |
| 5 | - | 6 | 30 | 36 |
| 6 | - | - | 11 | 11 |
| 7 | - | 1 | 12 | 13 |
| 8 | - | - | 3 | 3 |
| 9 | - | - | 3 | 3 |
| Total | 31 | 19 | 93 | 143 |

Source: Field survey, 2008.

The above table clearly indicates that Sarki is the largest Dalit caste which occupies 93 households among 143 Dalits households whereas Damai and Kami cover 30 and 20 households respectively.

5.1.1 Arrival of Dalit People in Palakot VDC

Almost all of Dalits in Palakot area are not aware about their history and arrival. According to some older men, they had been brought by the non-Dalits in order to take necessary services related to traditional occupation in different time periods.

5.1.2 Sarki

Sarki is considered as an untouchable caste in the Hindu society. According to the *Muluki Ain* (Country code) 1854, Sarki and Kami were considered equally untouchable to each other. But in case of Palakot area, Sarki is in lower hierarchy than Kami or they are considered untouchable by Kami according to the local people.

Traditionally, Sarki is caste of leather-worker and shoe-maker as started by traditional occupation system. They use to work as *Hali* in the house of *Bista* (upper caste's people) in this area. More or less, present activities of the Sarkis in Palakot area are distinct than Past. Almost all of Sarkis have given up their traditional occupation of shoe-maker in these days. They have been adopting non-farm wage earning, services and farm labour as major occupations because their traditional occupation of shoes making is replaced by availability of modern shoes and technology in the urban areas. Besides, center of attraction has become foreign employment as a source of earning. Some of them have skill to make agricultural equipment using leather and wood.

5.1.3 Damai

Damai is the lowest Dalit caste of the Palakot area. They have also been adopting their traditional occupation as dress maker and traditional musician. Their occupations have unique significant in Nepalese Hindu

society because *Panche Bajha* (five musical instruments) played by Damis in various cultural and traditional occasions such as marriage, *Bratabanda* etc. has great significance which is considered as a symbol of fortune. Similarly, their contribution being tailors in the Nepalese society has been the most important since ancient time. Likewise, Damis of Palakot area use to make dress for all people and play traditional music during the special occasions taking money. But in case of dress-making occupation, *Bali Ghare Pratha* (Contracted Dalit provides service related to traditional occupation and takes grain annually) is also in practice. Besides, they use to work as *Hali* (Annually contracted plough-man who takes only grain) and other types of agricultural as well as non-agricultural labours some of them have gone for employments in other countries. Likewise, some of them have skill of making agricultural equipments using leather and wood.

5.1.4 Kami

Kami is another Dalit caste of Hindu society. They believe that Bisowkarma (who is considered great artisan of heaven according to Hindu mythology) is their ancestor. Another tale related to origin of Kami is also popular in Palakot community. According to the tale, the word Kami had come from the Nepalese word *Kamuk* (lustful). But in reality they are true artisan because since ancient time, they have been making agricultural and other instruments as well as so many necessary things of metal closely related to daily life. So, Kamis are black-smiths who have skill of making and repairing tools and pots of metal.

Majority of the Kamis in the Palakot area have been adopting their traditional occupation. They have been living in various places in this area. They have been facing challenges created by modern advanced technology related to their traditional occupation. Generally, they use to work in the

Aran (Traditional chimney where they make and repair metal instruments and pots) everyday but their economic condition is still in miserable condition.

5.1.5 Life Cycle Rituals, Festivals, Economic Life and Their Changes: A Brief Discussion

Almost all of Dalits have been adopting the Hindu religion and their religious and cultural values, norms as well as activities are similar with the other non - Dalit Hindus in general.

They perform *Chaiti* during the sixth day from birth day as other upper caste people use to celebrate. Likewise, *Nawran* (name giving ceremony) is completed by the *Bahun* (priest of their own caste). Similarly, *Chewor* (Bratabanda) is performed when a boy becomes at least eight years old. Various types of marriage are in practice in their communities. Besides, arrange marriage and love marriage within caste are also in practice. Processes of related to marriage look like similar to that of non-Dalits. Average age of their marriage is 16 years (Field survey, 2008). Similarly, death ritual in these communities is also similar to that of Hindus. When a man dies, he is burnt in general, in some cases; he is also buried in the *Ghat* (Special place where last ritual is performed). Dead body is carried in the bank of Kali Gandaki by their relatives and neighbours to perform last ritual. *Kaj Kriya* (last rituals) is continued till thirteenth day in his/her house. At the thirteenth day, special ceremony is held. All of the relatives as well as neighbours who had helped them during that period have to be participated in that ceremony. During the period of *Chewar*, marriage and 13th day of last ritual, traditional feast is held where various items of food including meat and different types of wines are also included according to their economic capacity.

Dashain, Tihar, Mage Sankriti and Chaite Dashain are major festivals in these communities. Similarly, *Harelo* (worship of the crops after finishing cultivation during the August), *Dewali* (Worship of special god for further promotion of cattle grazing) are also festivals related to agriculture. During these festivals, they use to celebrate feast as usual. Different types of wines as well as meat of chicken, pig, goat and especially buffalo are necessary for these festivals. Besides, another important festival is *Kul Pooja* (Worship of ancestral God). Generally, it is performed ever year, somewhere within five year.

Majority of Dalits are fatalist in Palakot area. They use of describe every event joining to their luck. They are completely inside superstition. When someone becomes sick, they first take him to the *Dhami Jhankri* (witch-doctor) then only to the hospital or health post. They do not believe upon the effectiveness of the means of family planning. Greater numbers of Dalits use to hear radio not for information but for entertainment. They have no access in newspaper and television because of poverty and rurality.

Economic Life

Majority of Dalits people has small piece of land for cultivation which does not provide sufficient grain to sustain their families. Their major source of income is only labour-intensive work that fetches them very little money. Their traditional occupation is also another source of income. *Bali Ghare pratha* (System of annual contract where Dalits provide service related to their traditional occupation and take only grain) is in practice in this area. *Bali Ghare* System includes *Hali Pratha* (Dalit who contracts annually and provides service as plough-man and take some grain), *Bali Ghare Pratha* related to dress maker of Damai and metal worker of Kami. Besides, they have also adopted non-agricultural occupation.

Most of Dalits in this area misuse their leisure-time either drinking wine or playing card or walking uselessly. They celebrate feasts and festivals in order to respect custom either earning themselves or taking loans from local lender. Due to lack of competitive capacity, modern advanced manufacturing technology has displaced their traditional occupation. Likewise, negative social view upon their occupation is another cause of abandoning their traditional occupations. There is no practice to improve and advance their traditional skill. Because of negative view of society upon their traditional occupation and lack of advancement and improvement in their skill, traditional occupations of Dalits are going towards vulnerable condition. So many Dalit youths have been going to India and other countries for employment taking loans in these days.

Various practices in order to improve socioeconomic condition of the people had been practicing since Panchayat period. After the change of 1990, various programmes were launched to improve condition of the people. Among these programmes, there was no specific programme only for Dalit communities. Bhim Pokhara Youth Club, an NGO, had launched the programme in order to improve their educational condition in Palakot area by the economic assets provided by UNICEF. Participatory District Development Programme (PDDP) has launched programme in order to alleviate poverty in the Palakot area since 1996 which is practicing in these days. So many groups have been formed including Dalits under this programme. Besides, DDC and VDC have been helping regularly in different sector of this area.

More or less changes in their socioeconomic condition can be seen in the Dalit communities. Majority of the children go to school and number of school going children has been increasing in these days. But large number of them has also been losing to take higher level education. On the other hand, taps of drinking water have been constructed in different places of

this area which have made the daily life easier. Similarly, toilets have been constructed in every house. Different organizations such as VDC, DDC and NGOs have helped to construct these infrastructures in different time period. But some of taps and toilets have been destroyed and some of Dalits do not use toilet completely. Thinking pattern about health, traditional customs and social activities has also been changing. Internal conflict created by Maoist insurgency has also disturbed in their socioeconomic development. Overall socioeconomic condition and living standard of Dalits is remarkable below than the average level of general people in Palakot area.

In spite of various similarities among Dalits, some distinct socio-cultural characteristics have been found among different castes of Dalits. Such dissimilarities have been introduced separately.

5.2 Socioeconomic Characters of Respondents

It had been found that Dalits of the study area had been adopting different business and life style. Local Dalit people associated to distinct socioeconomic characteristics had been taken as respondent during the period of field survey. Among the 70 respondents, respondents of almost all kind of socioeconomic characteristics had been tried to incorporate in this study. The socioeconomic characteristics of the sample households had been presented in different sub-headings.

5.2.1 Respondents by Caste/Ethnicity

Out of 21 castes of Dalit, only three castes had been accommodating in the study area. Respondents of all Dalits castes had been included in this study. Following table given a picture of respondents on the basis of caste.

Table 5.2

Distribution of Respondents by the Caste

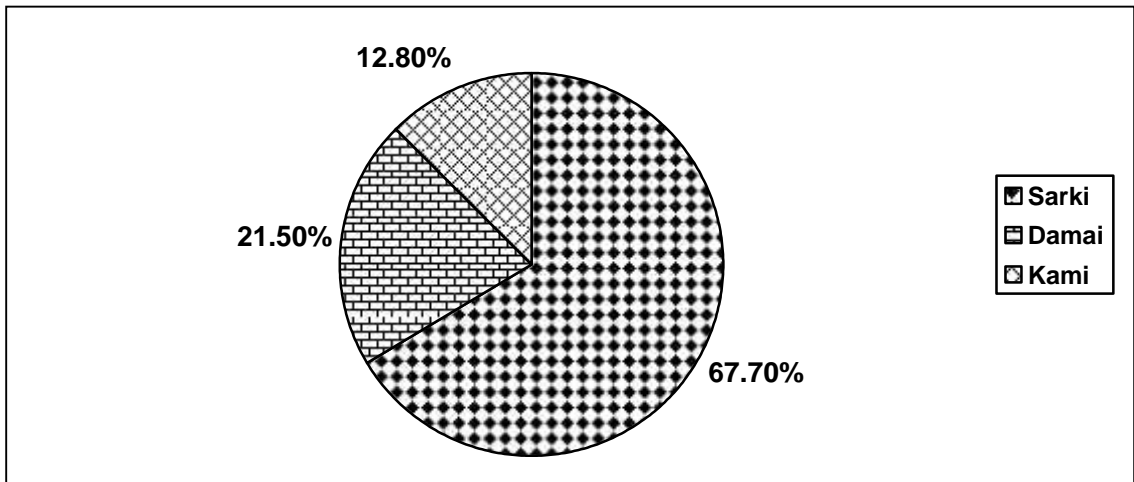
| Caste | Respondents | |
|-------|-------------|---------|
| | Number | percent |
| Sarki | 46 | 65.70 |
| Damai | 15 | 21.70 |
| Kami | 9 | 12.80 |
| Total | 70 | 100.00 |

Source: Field survey, 2008.

The highest number of respondents had found from the Sarki because population of the Sarki was the highest in that area. So, Sarki was largest caste which had occupied 65.7 percent of the total respondents whereas Damai and Kami had included 21.5 percent and 12.8 percent respectively. It is presented in following pie-chart.

Figure 5.1

Distribution of Respondents by Caste



Based on: Table 5.2

5.2.2 Respondents by Sex and Age Group

Male and Female both are two sides of same coin. Role of both sexes is equally important for the overall development of the society. Similarly, age factor is also important for the socioeconomic development. Distribution of the respondents by sex and age is shown in the following table.

Table 5.3

Distribution of Respondents by Sex and Age

| Age | Sex | | | | Total | Percent |
|---------|------|---------|------|---------|-------|---------|
| | Male | Percent | Male | Percent | | |
| 1- 19 | 4 | 5.72 | 2 | 2.19 | 6 | 8.58 |
| 20-29 | 6 | 8.52 | 7 | 10.00 | 13 | 18.57 |
| 30-39 | 9 | 12.86 | 10 | 14.32 | 19 | 27.14 |
| 40-49 | 7 | 10.00 | 8 | 11.45 | 15 | 21.42 |
| 50-59 | 5 | 7.15 | 6 | 8.61 | 11 | 15.71 |
| Above60 | 3 | 4.28 | 3 | 4.30 | 6 | 8.58 |
| Total | 34 | 48.58 | 36 | 51.42 | 70 | 100.00 |

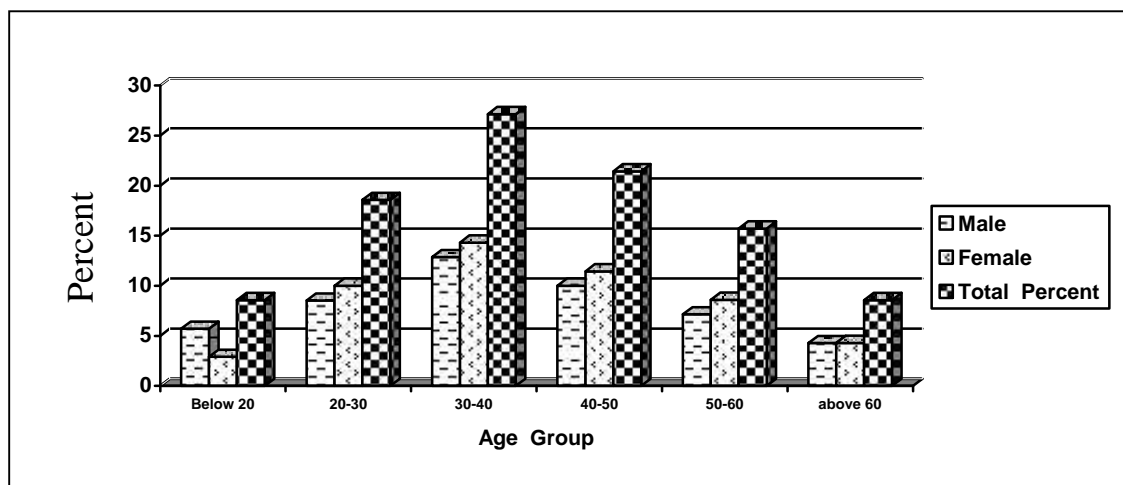
Source: Field survey, 2008.

The above table shows that the highest number of the respondents had found from the age group of 30 to 40. Generally, people of such age group are active in social activities and on the other side, age group of below 20 and above 60 are not perfectly active in such activities physically and mentally. So these groups had occupied the lowest number of respondents. Out of 70 respondents, 34 and 36 respondents had been

taken form male and female respectively. The distribution by gender and age of respondents can be shown by using following diagram.

Figure 5.2

Distribution by Age and Gender



Based on: Table 5.3

5.2.3 Education Status of Respondents

Education is primary factor of development. Level of education of a place may represent degree of awareness of that place. It is a necessary element of human development which plays crucial role in the overall development of the country. Following table presents the educational status of the respondents.

Table 5.4

Distribution of Respondents by Level of Education

| Level of Education | Respondents | |
|--------------------|-------------|---------|
| | Number | Percent |
| Illiterate | 58 | 82.88 |
| Primary | 6 | 8.58 |
| Lower secondary | 3 | 4.25 |
| Secondary | 2 | 2.86 |
| SLC | 1 | 1.43 |
| Total | 70 | 100.00 |

Source: Field survey, 2008.

The largest number of respondents had been found completely illiterate. Out of 70 respondents, 82.88 percent of the total respondents were illiterate whereas only 17.12 percent had been found literate. Among the literate respondents, very lower percent had been able to take higher level education. There were no respondents of intermediate level and above educational attainment. The table indicates that only 1.43 percent of total respondents had passed SLC level. Nearly 98 percent of the Dalit children study in government school. Only 2 percent of them are studying in private boarding school. So the table clearly presents that the educational status of Dalit communities in Palakot area is not satisfactory.

5.2.4 Household Size of the Respondents

Different size of families had been found in the study area. The family size is categorized into four distinct categories. Below table presents household size of the respondents.

Table 5.5

Distribution of Household Size of Respondents

| Household Size | Respondent | |
|----------------|------------|---------|
| | Number | Percent |
| Below 5 | 12 | 17.14 |
| 5-7 | 31 | 44.29 |
| 7-10 | 20 | 28.57 |
| Above 10 | 7 | 10.00 |
| Total | 70 | 100.00 |

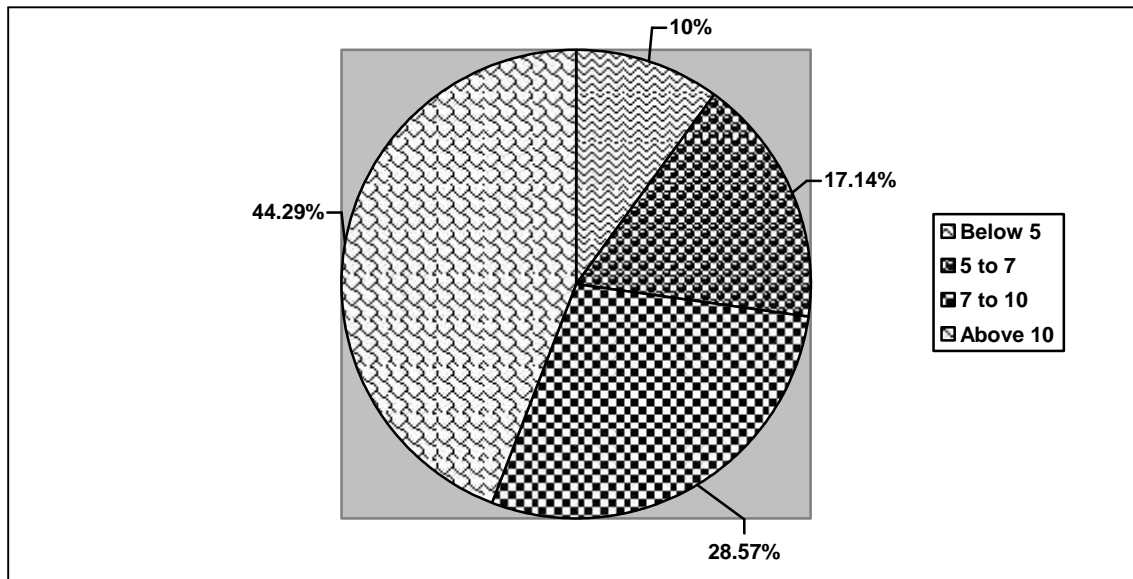
Source: Field survey, 2008.

The above table indicates that most of the respondents were from family size of 5 to 7 members which occupied 44.29 percent of total respondents whereas only 17.14 percent respondents were associated to

below 5 group of household size remaining 28.57 and 10 percent of total respondents were related to 7 to 10 and above 10 groups of size of households respectively. Such condition of the family size shows that majority of Dalits of study area were associated to large family. Illiteracy, poverty and ignorance were major causes of being large family. Different household sizes of respondent have been shown in the following pie chart.

Figure 5.3

Distribution of Household Size of Respondents



Based on: Table 5.5.

5.2.5 Occupational Status of Respondents

Occupation is a major indicator of the socioeconomic development. Majority of Dalits had been adopting different occupations. Following table shows distribution of respondents by occupation.

Table 5.6**Distribution of Respondents by Occupation**

| Occupation | Respondents | | | |
|-------------|-------------|---------|------------|---------|
| | Main | Percent | Subsidiary | Percent |
| Agriculture | 3 | 4.28 | 33 | 47.14 |
| Business | 1 | 1.43 | 2 | 2.86 |
| Wages | 47 | 67.15 | 19 | 27.14 |
| Traditional | 14 | 20.00 | 16 | 22.86 |
| Service | 5 | 7.14 | - | - |
| Total | 70 | 100.00 | 70 | 100.00 |

Source: Field survey, 2008.

The above table indicates that almost 67 percent of the Dalits had been adopting the wage earning as main occupation. Due to the lack of other opportunities created by mass poverty and illiteracy, they had been compelled to adopt low wage-earning occupation. Similarly, it had been adopted as subsidiary occupation by 22.86 percent of total respondents. Only 4.29 percent of the total respondent had been adopting agricultural occupation as main occupation whereas 47.14 percent respondents had been adopting it as secondary occupation. They had no sufficient land for survival. Some of them had been cultivating in the land of other people paying different types of rents. The majority of them had adopted the agricultural as subsidiary occupation because there was not commercialized agriculture. They had considered service only as main occupation which occupied 7.14 percent of total respondents.

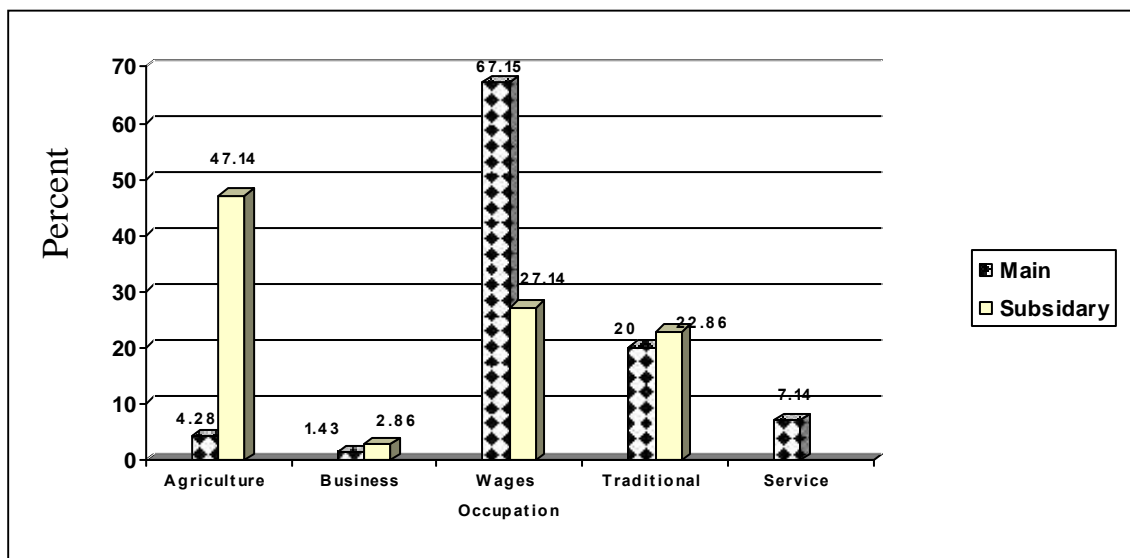
Besides, very few of the total respondents had adopted the business as main and subsidiary occupation whereas 1.43 percent and 2.86 percent of total respondents had adopted as main and subsidiary occupation

respectively. Likewise, 18.57 percent and 22.86 percent of total respondents had been adopting traditional occupation as main and subsidiary occupation respectively. It had been found that Dalits of that area had wanted to give up traditional occupation due to the low income-earning and negative views of society upon such occupations. The above table clearly indicates that major occupation adopted by the Dalit in study area was agricultural and non-agricultural wage-earning activities.

The following figure shows distribution of respondents by occupation.

Figure 5.4

Distribution of Respondents by Occupation



Based on: Table 5.6

5.2.6 Income and Expenditure Status of Households

The majority of Dalits have earned low income than average people. Likewise, they can not spend money sufficiently in necessary sectors of life.

Table 5.7**Distribution of Households by Income and Expenditure**

| Amount (Rs.'000) | Income | | Expenditure | |
|---------------------|-------------------|---------|-------------------|---------|
| | No. of households | Percent | No. of households | Percent |
| Below 20 | 20 | 28.57 | 18 | 25.71 |
| 20-50 | 36 | 51.43 | 38 | 54.29 |
| 50-80 | 7 | 10.00 | 10 | 14.29 |
| 80-100 | 4 | 5.72 | 3 | 4.29 |
| Above 100 | 3 | 4.29 | 1 | 1.43 |
| Total | 70 | 100.00 | 70 | 100.00 |

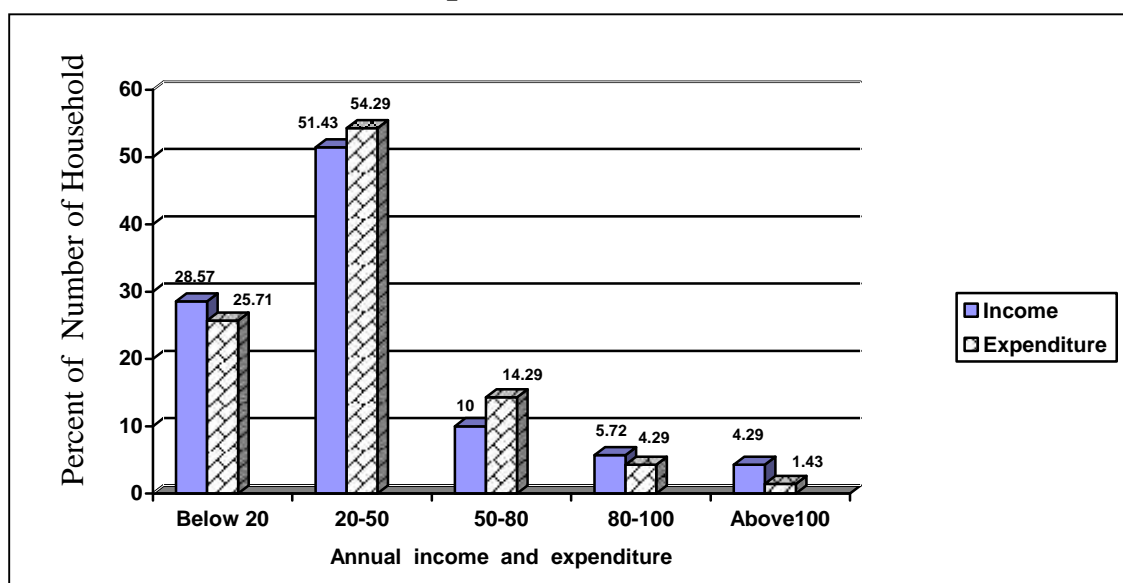
Source: Field survey, 2008.

The above table shows about 29 percent of total household had been surviving in less than Rs. 20000 annually. Likewise, 51.43 percent of total households had been earning 20 to 50 thousands which was followed by 10.00 and 5.72 percent of 50 to 80 and 80 to 100 thousands income-earning groups of households respectively. On the other hand, expenditure pattern was different than earning. It indicates that the lowest income-earning group of households used to spend more than earning. Only few households could save some part of their earning. The lowest income group used to solve their economic problems borrowing loan and selling assets. Due to lack of sufficient economic resources, majority of Dalits of Palakot area had been suffering form malnutrition, weaker health, illiteracy, ignorance etc.

The following figure presents comparison of income and expenditure of households.

Figure 5.5

Income and Expenditure Status of Households



Based on: Table 5.7

5.2.7 Landholding Size of Households

Land is primary means of production. So, ownership of people upon the sufficient land is necessary for the socioeconomic development of the country. Nepalese Dalits have few percent of land of the country whereas ratio of the arable land is extremely low. Likewise, land ownership among Dalits of Palakot area looks like similar to national status.

Table 5.8

Landholding Size of Households

| Holding size (<i>Ropani</i>) | No. of households | Percent |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|---------|
| Landless | 4 | 5.71 |
| Below 1 | 30 | 42.57 |
| 1-5 | 26 | 37.15 |
| 10-20 | 3 | 4.28 |
| Above 20 | 1 | 1.43 |
| Total | 70 | 100.00 |

Source: Field survey, 2008.

The above table reveals that most of the households had been found less than 5 *Ropanis* land. Among the 70 households, almost 6 percent had been found landless. Only one percent household had been found having sufficient land. On the other hand, most of land possessed by Dalits had not been found suitable for cultivation. Such sloppy and marginalized land of the study area was in ownership of Dalits. Likewise, among the land of Dalits, ratio of the *Khet* (where paddy is grown) had been found quite low. In spite of use of compost (FYM) and chemical fertilizers in the land of Dalits, forsaken and small size of land did not produce sufficient production. The table clearly indicates miserable condition of land ownership among Dalits.

5.2.8 Livestock

Livestock rearing and cash-crops, including horticulture, had not been practiced commercially in that area. Out of 70 households, about 40 percent had buffaloes, 25 percent had cows, 79 percent had goats, more than 85 percent had chicken and 15 percent had pigs. Almost all the cattle and birds belonged to local breed. About 8 percent of total households did not have any kind of livestock. Milk and other related produce were not acceptable for the non-Dalits so they did not want to graze buffalos and cows by commercial purpose. Livestock rearing among Dalits of Palakot area had not been found systematic way.

5.2.9 Status of Respondents in Political and Social and Political Activities

Generally, involvement in the social as well as political activities of communities indicates social equity in the society. In this regard, such participation should be active and spontaneous but not passive and

provocative. In this study, social activities shows involvement in community forestry user group, mother's group and formulated group by participatory district development programme (PDDP). Similarly, it also shows participation in discussion about local issues. On the other hand, political activities refers involvement in political parties as general member or responsible leader. Participation of the respondents in these fields has been presented in table No. 5.9.

Table 5.9

Distribution of Status of Respondents in Social and Political Activities

| Status | Social activities | | Political activities | |
|--------|--------------------|---------|----------------------|---------|
| | No. of respondents | Percent | No. of respondents | Percent |
| Yes | 37 | 52.86 | 6 | 8.57 |
| No | 33 | 47.14 | 64 | 91.13 |
| Total | 70 | 100.00 | 70 | 100.00 |

Source: Field survey, 2008.

The majority of Dalits had found to be participated in social activities. Among 70 respondents, 37 (52.86%) respondents had been participating in social activities. On the other hand, political participation of the Dalits in Study area had been found in miserable condition. Only 8.57 percent of total respondents had been participating in political activities whereas remaining had not been participated in such activities. Most of participation was in community forest, mother's group and formulated group by PDDP. They were not completely aware of the participation and their role. Due to the lack of time, they used to miss various activities of organization. It was the bitter reality that they were not optimistic about progress through these activities.

5.2.10 Perception of Dalits on Development

Dalits has defined the terms development in their own way. Below table shows the perception of the Dalits about development.

Table 5.10

Perception of Dalits on Development

| Perception | No. of respondent | Percent |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------|
| Economic progress | 12 | 17.14 |
| Equal social status | 7 | 10.00 |
| Socio-political involvement | 5 | 7.14 |
| Infrastructure | 40 | 57.14 |
| Unknown | 6 | 8.57 |
| Total | 70 | 100.00 |

Source: Field survey, 2008.

Above table shows that majority of the Dalits defined development as infrastructure development in society. Among 70 respondent, 40 (57.14%) respondents had taken infrastructure development as development whereas 12 (17.14%) had considered economic progress as development. Likewise, 5 (7.14%) and 7 (10.00%) defined development socio-political involvement as well as equal social status in society respectively and remains 6 (8.57%) we unknown about development.

5.2.11 Indicator of the Development

On the basis of interview with some respondents and key informants, these are the indicator of socio-economic development. State of the available infrastructure (electricity, school, drinking water, road) is one of the indicator of development. Similarly, social attitude on caste based

discrimination and genuine participation on social and political activities are other indicators. Likewise, economic prosperity is another development of development.

5.2.12 Barriers of Socio-Economic Development

So many common characteristics related to socioeconomic condition have been found among different castes of Dalits in Palkot area. They have been living in acosmic settlements facing inhuman prejudices, ignorance and extreme poverty. Caste-based discriminations practiced in Palakot area are lumped in such way.

- a) In the study area, the Dalit people had no allow to enter the house of high caste people.
- b) In the study area, the Dalit people had no allow to enter into the temple and to participate in religious activities.
- c) In the study area, *Hali Pratha* (annually contracted plough-man who takes only grain) and *Bali Ghare Pratha* (contracted Dalit provides service related to traditional occupation and takes grain annually) system are also in practice.
- d) In the study area, it is found that inter-caste marriage is strictly prohibited among the Dalits and non-Dalits.
- e) In the study area, untouchability is in practice.

Generally, people believe that development process is disturbed by some internal and external activities. Opinion of the respondents on barriers of socio-economic development is presented below.

Table 5.11

Barriers of Socio-Economic Development

| Factors | No. of respondents | Percent |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Fatalism and superstitious thinking | 2 | 2.85 |
| Worse habit of Dalits | 7 | 10.00 |
| Discrimination among Dalits | 10 | 14.28 |
| Lack of appropriate programmed policy | 25 | 35.71 |
| Primacy of rurality | 4 | 5.71 |
| Unfavourable customs | 22 | 31.42 |
| Total | 70 | 100.00 |

Source: Field survey, 2008.

Above table shows that 15 (35.71%) of total respondents considered lack of appropriate programme and policy is main barriers of socio-economic development. Among total respondents, 22 (31.42%) has taken unfavourable customs as such barriers. Likewise, 10 (14.28%), 7 (10.0%), 4 (5.71%) and 2 (2.85%) of the total respondents has considered discrimination among Dalits, worse habit of Dalits, primacy of rurality and fatalism and superstitious thinking as barriers respectively.

CHAPTER – SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, an attempt is made to summarize the findings, draw some conclusion and provide recommendations.

6.1 Summary

Dalits are economically, socially and politically oppressed community in the Hindu society since ancient time. They have been compelled to bear inhuman prejudices of untouchability throughout the country. Socioeconomic development of the Nepalese Dalits is directly related to rural development as well as overall development.

Hindu mythologies of ancient time such as *Veds*, *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana* and *Upanishads* have not described cast-based discrimination and proved that there was no discrimination on the basis of caste system during the initial phase of human civilization. It has found that there was division of labour on the basis of *Barna* system and any one could change *Barna* choosing deed by himself. At the period of ending of *Rigveda*, racial discrimination according to *Barna* system had been started in the Hindu society. About 2000 years ago, *Manusmiti*, code of the Hindu society, written by Manu, had started caste-based discrimination on the basis of the then social system. After that, caste and *Barna* system had been transformed into inborn pattern which is still in practice.

In case of Nepal, prejudices and discriminations upon Dalits had been started and legalized by Jayasthiti Malla in Kathmandu valley and Ram shah in Gorkha principality on the basis of *Manusmiti* and the then

social system. Likewise, the state had formalized and the caste-based discrimination more strongly throughout Nepal during the reign of Janga Bahadur Rana, founder of the Rana rule, who had promulgated the Muluki Ain (Country Code) in 1954. After that, Dalits have been suffering from humiliation domination and inhuman discrimination in the Nepalese arena. Overall socioeconomic condition of Dalits is remarkable below than the average Nepalese people. As a consequence, about 15 percent of total population of the country have been depriving from the mainstreaming of national development and surviving as backward communities throughout the country.

So many practices have been carried out in order to improve socioeconomic condition of the Dalit and stop the untouchability especially after 1950. *Naya Muluki Ain* (New Country Code) in 1963 had tried to stop such discrimination. Land reform programme in 1964 had also tried to distribute the land for landless. Similarly, periodic plans and constitution of Nepal 1990 have made efforts in order to improve the socioeconomic condition of the Dalits. In spite of several promotional practices, they have been surviving still in miserable condition.

Socioeconomic condition of Dalits of Palakot area in Baglung district looks like similar to Dalits of other places of the country. Among 4411 population of VDC, 19.08 percent are Dalits out of 143 households of Dalits, Sarki is the largest caste which occupies 93 households whereas Sarki and kami are 30 and 20, respectively.

The objectives of the study are identification of causes of under development among the backward communities and exploration of the possibilities of socioeconomic development in such communities. In this

study, 48 percent of the total households of study area have been taken as respondents by using stratified sampling.

They have also their own traditional occupations directly related to daily life. But because of negative views of society and lack of competitive capacity with market advanced technology, such skill and occupations have been facing vulnerable condition. Besides, due to low income earning from their traditional occupation and negative view of the society upon such occupations, most of Dalits want to give up their traditional occupation. Majority of Dalits have been adopting the wage earning activities for survival. They have remained out side of mainstream of national development and deprived from fundamental rights. Living standards of Dalits in this area is remarkably below than non-Dalits.

Various government and non- government organizations have launched programmes in order to uplift their socioeconomic condition. Mass poverty and economic backwardness, unfavorable customs and manner, belief on fate and suppositious thinking, worse habit, intra-Dalit discrimination, lack of continuity of promotional programmes, lack of competitive capacity in their traditional skill as well as lack of appropriate planning and policy are major obstacles in socioeconomic development of Dalit communities.

Rural development of the country is not possible without improving the socioeconomic condition of backward communities like Dalit. All round development is possible only if the Dalits communities within the country develop in proportionate manner.

6.2 Conclusion

Dalits of Palakot area have remained out side of main stream of national development. Various practices in order to uplift their socioeconomic condition have been failed. So obstacles in socioeconomic development of these communities have been presented below.

-) Mass poverty and economic backwardness are major constraints in socioeconomic development of Dalits committees. Due to the lack of economic resources, they have been failed to achieve basic needs. Landlessness, low income, ownership in small and forsaken land etc. have created the vulnerable condition. Because of extreme poverty, they have affected by malnutrition, illiteracy and weaker health. There is unemployment, underemployment and disguise-employment in the Dalit community. Lack of entrepreneurship and its initiation in Dalit community is another factor of economic backwardness. Such condition has created the vicious cycle of poverty in that community. Ultra- poor Dalits and women are bitterly affected by economic backwardness and poverty.
-) Unfavorable customs and manner are barriers in overall development. They want to show social prestige spending more than their capacity. In this regard, they use to spend huge amount of their income in such unproductive sector. Unnecessary feasts and festivals have pushed them towards backwardness.
-) Fatalism and superstitious thinking have affected the Dalit community bitterly. They have deep regard upon supernatural power. When a man becomes sick, he is carried with witch- doctor.

-) Worse habit of Dalit is cause of backwardness. They use to pass their leisure-time either playing cards or drinking wine or so on. Majority of Dalits use different types of tobacco and some of them use to drink wine everyday. There is so many cases of wife- beating and second marriage which have created instable family structure.
-) Discrimination among Dalits is the worst problem in the Dalit community. Hierarchy among Dalits castes and prejudice according to traditional social system has created miserable condition of the lowest caste Dalits.
-) Because of the lack of appropriate programmes and continuity in promotional practices in Dalit communities, their socioeconomic condition is not improving. Launched programmes have not made them optimistic because such programmes have been failure making their active participation and unable to address actual needs.
-) Due to lack of improvement in their skill related to traditional occupation, they have not competitive capacity to face with advanced market production system. So, market goods have been cheaper than their products. Such condition has disturbed their socioeconomic development.
-) Primacy of rurality and instable political situation of country are other important causes behind backwardness of Dalit community.

6.3 Recommendations

Social and economic activities are interrelated variables. Freedom from economic deficiency is basic foundation in overall development of backward communities which opens the door for multidimensional

development. Besides, creation of socioeconomic equality and optimistic thinking in such communities is also other important factors for the development. Likewise, peace, stable political situation and political commitment play the role of catalyst in this context. Based on the study, following two sets of recommendations are presented.

6.3.1 Recommendations for Planning

-)] An effective programme, including systematic land reform in order to alleviate mass poverty and economic backwardness should be implemented continuously at least one decade.
-)] Awareness creating programmes among Dalits and non-Dalits communities against social discrimination should be launched in this area which would help to reduce the various types of discriminations.
-)] Vocational trainings related to handicraft, traditional occupation and agriculture to Dalits should be provided which would also make their traditional skill more advanced and competitive with the modern market technology. Such attempts would create employment and economic opportunities.
-)] Improvement in existing law and order and these should be strictly implemented against discriminations. Ultra-poor Dalits and women should be focused in every promotional practice.
-)] Education should be provided using formal and non-formal education for all Dalits which would be helpful to reduce superstitious thinking and beliefs.

-) Road, electricity, health, market and other necessary services and facilities should be provided.
-) Actual data about Dalit need to be published which would be better to reduce confusion about Dalit related issues.
-) Provision of especial reservation in political as well as administrative units must be adopted and appropriate environment for active participation should be created.
-) Appropriate mechanism of monitoring and evaluation need to be established in order to achieve the goals completely.

6.3.2 Recommendations for Further Research

-) A national level study related to socioeconomic condition of Dalits need to be conducted.
-) Comparative study between economic progress and socioeconomic condition of Dalits need to be explored.
-) A details study about seriousness of Dalits related issues in rural development need to be conducted.
-) Impacts of promotional practices in actual condition of Dalits need to be explored in detail.
-) Possibility of sustainable development of Dalit communities should be studied in detail.

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Appendix-A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE HOUSEHOLD

1. General Information

Respondents

House No.:

a. Name:

b. Caste:

| Name of F.M. | Sex | | Relation with respondent | Age | Marital status | Occupation | | Income | Remarks |
|--------------|------|--------|--------------------------|-----|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------|---------|
| | Male | Female | | | | 1 st | 2 nd | | |
| 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | | | | | | | | | |

2. How much may be your spending?

| Purpose | Annual (Rs) |
|--------------------|-------------|
| Food | |
| Health | |
| Education | |
| Entertainment | |
| Feast and festival | |
| Domestic items | |
| Others (specify) | |

3. How much *Ropanis/Annas* of land do you have?

| Land type | Area (<i>Ropani</i>) |
|--------------|------------------------|
| <i>Bari</i> | |
| <i>Khet</i> | |
| Forest | |
| <i>Pakho</i> | |

4. Is the food grain product from your land is sufficient to maintain whole year?

Yes [] No []

If No, for how many months is it sufficient?

.....

How do you manage?

Buying the grains [] Daily wages []

Borrowing loan [] Assets selling [] Others.....

5. How many livestock heads do you have?

| Livestock | Number | | Breed | |
|-----------------|--------|-------|-------|----------|
| | Adult | Young | Local | Improved |
| Buffalo | | | | |
| Cow | | | | |
| Goat | | | | |
| Chicken | | | | |
| None | | | | |
| Other (specify) | | | | |

6. Are they hybrid or local? (Fill in the above table)

7. What type of fertilizer do you use?

Compost/FYM [] Chemical []

Both []

If both, in what proportions?

Compost/FYM.....% Chemical%

8. What is the type of your house?

Stone built [] Concrete built []

Semi-concrete built [] Muddy house []

Other (specify).....

9. What are the major festivals? (Multiple choice)

Dashain [] *Tihar* [] *Teej* []

Janai Purnima [] *Saune Sakrati* [] *Maghe Sakrati* []

Others.....

10. What are the major ceremonies?

.....
.....

11. Are you discriminated in public places as Dalits?

Yes [] No []

12. Do you have any inter-caste marriage?

Yes [] No []

13. Which is most common marriage arrangement?

.....

14. Are you participating in social activities?

Yes [] No []

If Yes, what are the major areas?

.....

If No, why?

15. Are you participating in political activities?

Yes []

If Yes, in what kind of activities mainly?

No []

If No, why?

16. Do you use the following things? If yes where?

| | At home | Outside (specify) |
|------------|---------|-------------------|
| Radio | | |
| TV | | |
| Newspapers | | |
| Others | | |

Do not use any

17. What is your educational status?

Literate [] Illiterate []

If yes, where are you studying?

Government school [] Private boarding school []

If illiterate, why did you miss educational opportunity?

Due to poverty [] Due to ignorance []

Not interested [] No school available []

Other reason (specify)

18. Do the children in your household go to school?

Yes [] No []

If No, why?

19. Do you use toilet?

Yes [] No []

If No, why?

20. Do you believe in traditional methods of health?

Yes [] No []

21. Whom do you first contact during illness?

Neighbour [] Health worker [] *Dhami/Jhankri* []

22. Do you know about family planning?

Yes [] No []

23. What is the source of the drinking water?

Spring [] Tap [] Stream []

Other (specify)

24. How long does it take to collect water from the source?

Less than 10 minutes [] 10-20 minutes []

Above 20 minutes []

25. What do you use as cooking fuel?

Fire wood [] Animal dung []

Commercial fuel (specify) Other (Specify)

26. Do you borrow money?

Yes [] No []

If Yes, from whom?

Local lender [] Local shopkeeper [] Friends [] Relatives []

Cooperatives [] Bank [] Others (specify).....

27. Why did you borrow the loan? (Multiple choice)

To celebrate festivals [] Clothing []
Food [] Wedding [] Other

28. Do you have traditional occupation?

Yes [] No []

a. Is there change over the years?

Yes [] No []

b. Do you want to improve it?

Yes [] No []

29. Do you want to adopt modern technology in every sector of life?

Yes [] No []

30. Do you have experience of development programmes launched by GOs and NGOs?

Yes [] No []

31. Have you experienced biasness from the agency between Dalits and Non-Dalits?

Yes [] No []

32. Is your socio-economic condition improving?

Yes [] No []

33. What could help to improve your socio-economic condition?

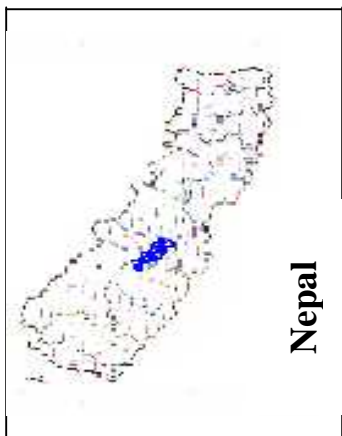
.....
.....
.....

Date:

Place:

Thank you.

APPENDIX-B



APPENDIX-C
Baglung District in the Map
of Nepal

