

**“The Marriage System among Tharu Community” A Case Study of
Bhangaha VDC, Mahottari**

**A Thesis Submitted to
The Central Department of Rural Development
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**In partial fulfillment of requirements for the Degree of Master of
Arts in Rural Development**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis entitled “**Study of the ‘The marriage system among Tharu community, a case study of Bhangaha VDC, Mahottari**” submitted to central department of rural development, Tribhuvan University is entirely my original work prepared under the guidance and supervision of my supervisor. I have made due acknowledgement to all ideas and information borrowed are from different sources in the course of writing this thesis. The result of this thesis have not been presented or submitted anywhere else for the award of any degree of for other purposes. No part of the contents of this dissertation is published in any form. I shall be responsible solely if any evidence is found against my declaration.

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

This thesis entitled “**The Marriage System among Tharu Community, A Case Study of Bhangaha VDC, Mahottari**” has been prepared by **Ajay Kumar Singh** under my supervision and guidance for the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Rural Development. Thus, I hereby recommend this thesis for the final approval and acceptance.

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APPROVAL LETTER

The thesis entitled “**The Marriage System among Tharu Community, A Case Study of Bhangaha VDC, Mahottari**” submitted by **Ajay Kumar Singh** in partial fulfillment of requirements for the Master’s Degree(M.A) in Rural Development has been approved by the evaluation committee.

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ABSTRACT

Tharus, who inhabit the southern Terai belt of Nepal hold a very important place among the indigenous people living in various parts of the country. Though the Tharus living here are believed to belong to the same origin, due to climatic and geographical differences, they have developed a great variation in the lifestyle among themselves. A curiosity to study these differences led me to choose this tribe as the main subject of the Thesis that is compulsory in the Central Department of Rural Development-TU for the completion of MA in the same subject as a student of Rural Development.

Though this report does not include the district of Mahottari as a whole, a particular VDC ie, Bhangaha which lies at the 'South Western part is chosen to represent the whole district. I consider it my moral duty to bring into light the hidden treasure of the folk cultures and traditions practiced by indigenous people in our country.

To make this report more analytical than a mere descriptive one, I have presented and analysed the information pertaining to demographic and economic conditions statistically. The information on the socio cultural aspect of the Tharus in general and marriage practice in particular is collected by using statistical tools such as questionnaire, observation, etc. The report has been made as brief as possible by including only the information relevant to the topic.

Even traditionally the marriage system of Tharu is determine by the cultural phenomenon, recent generation they come to assimilate the different types of marriage system in which they assimilate including marriage system e.g. Child, arrange, marriage by exchange love and

widow marriages system. On the basis of collecting information on sampling marriage couple, it shows that , the population having age group of 10 to 15 and 15 to 20 have not involved in any types of marriage. But the population with age group of above 15 are mostly involved in different types of marriage system.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

AP: Anga Puja

BD: Brahma Devata

BG: Bas Ghar

GD: Ghar Dekh

GD: Gram Devata

ID: Ista Devata

KD: Kanya Daan

KK: Kasha Kuti

LG: Lagaan Ganth

PG: Pani Grahan

SD: Sarva Devata

SD: Sindur Daan

VDC: Village Development Committee

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Marriage is a natural institution. It is also institution of the divine law. Children could indeed, be born out of wedlock. But, without the stable institution of marriage and resultant family, they could not be properly closed and trained and could not be given opportunities for physical, mental and spiritual development which their value calls for. Therefore, the primary goal of marriage is restated as the good of spring, and this good includes conception, birth ,living, care, training, unceasing, affection and interest; and to give these things to children is the fundamental reason which brings a man and a woman into the rounded beautiful and complete humanity of deep interrelationship.

The term ‘marriage’, thus refer to “a union of male and female which does not cease with the act of procreation but persist after the birth of offspring until the young are capable supplying their own essential needs”. (John Frazer)

In other words, marriage can be defined as “institution admitting man and woman into family life that is to living in the intimate personal relationship of husband and wife for the primary purpose of be getting and rearing children”. (google.com)

Marriage, as an institution, permits man and woman into family life. It is called further step towards completeness. It is the permanent relationship that allows the couple to have sexual intercourse and reproduce without social restriction. According to Malinowski, it is an accepted social

process in which two or more persons began the establishment of the family. Every existing tribe and community in the world has its own rites and a ritual regarding the marriage ceremony, but the basic meaning the marriage is same in all of them. Our Vedic scriptures have considered marriage as a necessary and sacred ritual. As stated above, one cannot attain perfection in social life without marriage. According to Manu, a man needs a wife in his household as much as the body needs air to breath, meaning they are the barer for the continuation of social life and biological life as well. There are several popular beliefs about marriage in different societies of the world. Some take it as a mutual and social agreement. Some consider it as a mean to continue the family's name and heritage. Similarly, it is also taken as the beginning of mutual co-operation or just the way to fulfill physical desire. The main objective of marriage in Hinduism is to lead a perfect and prosperous family life, Marriage is the declaration of the establishment of the relationship between a man and a woman which is popularly accepted everywhere in the world. Marriage determines the responsibility of the children of the respective couple. It is the institution that sets the codes.

Marriage system in Tharu community there is no similarity between the ethnic groups. They have known their own rites and ritual differs between various communities. They have difference regarding the rites and rituals of marriage. The Tharus of the east and the west do not perform marriage ceremony in the manner, the main reason behind there are the regional, linguistics, economic and the cultural difference, the Thrus of urban are found to be much more modernized in this regard for ex-in the past, betel nut was distributed as the symbol of invitation. But now the marriage card system is popular. Similarly, solemnize the marriage the Tharu Brahmin was a must but now any Maithili priest can do as well as

Brahmin priest, at all instead the presence of the wise and elderly people is required.

1.2 Determinants of Marriage

Caste is the ultimate determinant of marriage in Nepal. Even the most advanced, urbanized or westernized people hesitate to cross this barrier and marry the partner of some other cast. Inter cast marriage is still looked down upon. At present, different laws belonging to the same cast or the groups have relaxed this barrier in the name of linguistic similarity.

The Brahmen and Kshyatrias living in Southern belt are found to be doing cross- regional/boarder marriage but it is bit inconvenient due to the different religions i.e. those belonging to hill do not hesitate to marry their children with ones from Terai the loser castes, who are less socially dynamic, still lack this tendency.

Though in Nepal, the commercial aspect is less influential in marriage than in India, the importance of financial status of either party in marriage and its significance as one of the most determinants can not be denied. Generally, the marriage takes place between the families of the equal social status and economic prosperity. The virtue and personal ability of the groom tends to compensate if the above mentioned conditions are lacking. If a boy is poor, but seems capable of rearing the family because of his personal talent, the parents of the girl do not hesitate to give the daughter away to him. His future prospects such as his chances of being successful, his share of the ancestral property etc. are the factors which add some more opinions in his favour.

Among different Nepalese communities, the ones who belong to Awadhi, Bhojpuri and Maithili communities are very much conscious of the

economic aspect of marriage. The girl's side there must pay the amount of money that was agreed upon prior to marriage or demanded by the boy's side during the marriage. The amount may range from few thousands to hundreds of thousands. This amount popularly known as "TILAK" or Dowry depends upon the economic prosperity of the boy's family, their social status and personal attainment of the boy. It is a common social evil, which often results into break up of husband wife's relationship. Whereas the less suitable girls married to much better boys than they deserve, the virtuous girls are either married to less suitable place or remain unmarried due to the monetary aspect.

1.3 Types of Marriage

i. Arrange Marriage

This is the most common form of marriage in Tharu community. Though child marriage is on the verge of decline, neither of the concerned couple is more than 19/20 years of age. As the couple have not developed decision making ability, they have rely on their parent's choice. Besides, all the expenses are borne by the parents. They take it for granted that it is their responsibility to select the best suitor for their child.

Tharus live in joint family. The decision of the senior most member is ultimate. The retains all the property and makes decision pertaining to all the family members. The younger members of the family do not normally dare crossing his decision. The rebellious attitude towards the decision is looked down upon by the rest of the family as well as society. So, no matter what form the marriage is of, the consent of the parents is a must. The children are informed about the marriage beforehand. But this is only as far as it goes.

First, the parents of the bride start searching for the suitable boy through their relatives or a mediator. When the boy is selected, the girl's parents go to the boy's home and talk with his parents. On this occasion, the father of the bride gives a certain amount of money to the boy. After few days, the boy's parents go to see the girl and repeat the same thing. Only this time, the amount of money given to the girl is almost double. This rite is called Faldaan. If after this, the marriage is cancelled, the money is returned immediately.

In spite of performing the above mentioned ceremony, the marriage sometimes does not take place. In such cases, the girl's side repeatedly invite the boy's side. If they do not accept the invitation, the marriage is considered cancelled and attempts are made elsewhere. On the other hand, if the girl's father finds any reason to dislike the boy, he sends the message saying so. The marriage is also cancelled if either party lingers on performing marriage. If none of these happens, both sides decide to invite the Brahmin priest to fix the date of marriage. This date fixing ceremony is known as Thokai and involves a simple feast. After this, both sides start preparing for pre-marriage.

ii. Child Marriage

It is one of the most prevailing forms of marriage. The Tharu community is found to have been practicing this from the time of the Mogul Rule in India. According to legend, the Muslim aggressors, during their raids, molested only the unmarried women and spared the married ones. This statement is further strengthened by S.K. Shrivastava's above stated opinion. It is possible that this tribe started marrying the daughters at an early age so as to maintain their chastity as well as the purity of the tribe itself.

Even at present, this system is retained by the Tharus due to the belief that the children will be spoilt unless they are married at an earlier age. Due to lack of awareness they still think that giving the daughter away before she is six will ensure the parents a place in heaven. The system of Dwiraagaman (second arrival) contributes a great deal in favour of child marriage. According to this system, the inaugural step of the bride into the husband's house takes place twice. First, immediately after marriage and second, 3-4 years after that. It is a kind of assurance that the girl will not remain unmarried when she gets mature. The Tharus, on one hand, consider marriage a sacred and very important duty. On the other hand they consider it a matter of great worry because it is extremely difficult to the daughter as she approaches the matured age. So, they rather hurry to marry their daughter away while she is still a minor and there is still time in hand. Doing this, they get rid of the greatest burden.

The evil of child marriage was even worse in the past when it was combined with ill-matched marriage, i.e. a boy of 9-10 years was married to a girl of 16-17 years. The factors behind this were domestic convenience i.e., an older girl proves much more useful in the works of the house as well as field. The biological reason behind this is the possibility of infant mortality as a very young girl is physically not perfect to bear the child. So, still in the cases of child marriage, it is preferred that the age of the girl is much higher than that of the boy. The above mentioned organization of the Tharus is working very hard to eradicate these evils of child marriage and ill-matched marriage. Though it has been reduced in number, it still continues. However, the spread of education and means of communication have played a great role in bringing about social awareness. So, it can be expected that the future generation will gradually discard it.

iii. Widow Marriage

Widow marriage is well approved in very few communities of Nepal; Tharu community being one of them. It is not only approved, but is well reputed as well. To arrange married for a widow is considered a sacred task. Even our civil code has granted the provision of widow marriage. The widow, in Tharu community are not suppressed like other Nepalese communities. She is free to opt between staying at the deceased husband's house or marry again. In case the widow is too young to live as one, her parents and elders themselves start persuading her to marry again. If she disagrees, she can openly do so, if she remains silent, it is taken as her consent.

The proposal of the marriage of a widow is brought forward by the members of her maternal home only as such proposal, if made by her dead husband's family members, is thought that they detest the widow's presence, also it seems that they want to deprive her of her share of property. Such proposal, if made by the maternal side of the widow, is normally accepted by the dead husband's family members. However, they grumble at the beginning for the sake of formality. Occasionally, the expectant groom himself makes the proposal to the parents of the widow.

The restrictions about widow marriage are that a widow can only marry a widower, not a bachelor. But a widower can marry either a widow or a maid. In case of re-marriage, the widow can take the children of her former husband (if any) with her. Such marriages are performed not at home, but at temples with simple ceremonies and feasts.

iv. Marriage by Exchange

This is the form of marriage by the mutual exchange of sons and daughters between two families. In this, the groom's sister is wed to the bride's brother. This is economic in a way that the concerned parents often agree to avoid exchanging dowry and other gifts between themselves. Such marriages are performed on the basis of mutual understanding. Besides, it is compulsory that both the concerned families must have the boys and girls of suitable age. This type of marriage can be further clarified by the following example:

TonaChaudhari + Kalai Devi

SathuwaChaudhari + Ghunia

The above mentioned Tonachaudhari is the brother of Ghunia and SathuwaChaudhari is the brother of Kalai Devi.

Such a type of marriage is called Golaawat and is popular among the Tharus throughout the country. On one hand it is convenient but on the other, it leads to the unnecessary conflict between the families concerned as both the families tend to treat the new bride in the same manner their own daughter is treated in her new home.

v. Marriage by Stealth

Such marriage is common not only in Tharu community but in many other hilly communities as well. This is the marriage between a man and a woman who is still married to another man. Commonly it is known as Jaari and the concerned men (the previous husband and the new husband) are called Jaar to each other. In this, the woman elopes with a new husband who, in order to have their marriage approved, must pay compensation to the previous husband. There is no fixed amount for this

but it is expected that he pays the amount worth the one that was spent by the previous husband during his marriage with the woman.

1.4 Rituals of Marriage

Nepalese society consists of various ethnic groups. So, there is no similarity in the forms and rituals of marriage. The accepted rituals are that the groom takes a procession (janti) to and from the bride's house and the marriage takes place in their presence. One of the main rituals is putting vermilion (Sindur) on the partition of the bride's head. But, these too are not followed by every tribe; for example, there is no compulsion for the groom to go to the bride's place in Newar community.

No matter how the rituals are performed, the basic objective of the marriage remains to be to empower the couple with social rights and duties and to recognize their relationship.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The general objective is to analyse social economic and cultural aspects of marriage system on Tharu community in Bhangaha VDC. However the specific objectives are as follows:

- i. To find out the popular types of marriage in Tharu community.
- ii. To examine different rituals culture and gender.
- iii. To analyze people's perception related to marriage.
- iv. To know about the changes related to marriage.

1.6 Statement of the Problem

The social and economic life of the Tharus of this area has undergone a lot of change in the recent years. It has caused the cultural assimilation

between the Tharus and the other people of the rest of the country. Their dependency on land is decreasing day by day as urbanization increases. At present, due to internal migration and the external influence, it is very difficult for every tribe to maintain their original identity. So it is most essential to bring into light various aspects of their social and cultural life.

Many scholars have studied the Tharus mainly focusing on the habitant of occupations, economic exploitation and ethnicity but there is lack of study on the marriage system among Tharus of Nepal especially on the Tharus of Bhangaha.

Major studies of the Tharus of Nepal were started from 20-25 years before since then many changes have been occurred in the system Tharu community of Nepal. So, present study would pay its attention to the study of marriage situation of the Tharus of Bhangaha. As stated earlier, there is no similarity in the marriage. Its rights and rituals differ between various communities. The Tharus of urban communities are found to be much more modernized. In this regards but impact in rural area.

Due to the marriage system on Tharu people have changed their traditional pattern of marriage system by considering this facts, this study focuses on the following research problems;

- I. What is the degree of similarities between the marriage rituals among the present day Tharu with of the past?
- II. What change has been caused by the modernization in the marriage rituals in Tharu community?
- III. What is the impact of environment on the marriage rituals of the people of Tharu community?

Nepal has an agro based economy as well as culture and tradition. In general the Tharus too, are not exception and mainly dependent agricultural. This research though has the main objectives of also analysis the general demographic trend. The social and economic life of the Tharus of this area has under gone a lot of change in the recent years. It has caused the cultural assimilation between the Tharus and other people of the same community and land decreasing day by day as urbanization increases.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The importance of marriage among Tharu community on the basis of the people's participation, the duration, the objects required and their significance and use in various rituals. At the same time, the report deals with some negative sides of the marriage such as the unnecessary expenses, the evil of child marriage and mis-matched marriage, the repetition of the same ceremonies etc. The effort of the welfare organization of the Tharus in minimizing the cost and labor in marriage have been highlighted and duly appreciated. Though highly commendable, these efforts have not gained expected success due to social, economics cultural reasons. However, the efforts are continuing, one can be hopeful about their very much positive outcome.

In the context of Bhangaha, the task does not end merely by informing the socio-cultural condition of a tribe. Even more important is the suggestion and recommendation for their preservation. Talking about the significance of the study, they can be summarized as the following points:

1. Establishing origin of the marriage system and its rituals.
2. Categorizing the rituals on the basis of their significance and effect.

3. Raising awareness towards the evils of child marriage and mismatched marriage so as to publicise their biological and social effects.

Besides, the economic condition of the Tharus seems to be declining. There are very few exceptions of this fact. Many Tharus, who were freeholders of their own land have now become landless farmers due to social or environmental adversities. This report attempts to raise awareness about this fact as well.

1.8 Organization of the Study

This study has been divided into 6 chapters. The first chapter contains general introduction. The second chapter is about Literature Review. Research Methodology is done in the third chapter. The fourth chapter is the analysis and Interpretation of the data. The fifth chapter contains Socio-cultural practices of Tharu Community. Chapter six deal with the Summary, conclusion and Recommendation. At the end, List of References, the questionnaire used and the study area are presented.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many scholars have made attempts to trace the historical and ethnic origin in their books and research works. Hudgson (1972), Bista (1968/71/72), Baburam Acharya (2009), Mohan Lal Prasad (2035), LanakLal Sharma (2039), Rishikeshab Raj Regmi (2053), Baral (2004Bs), Rajauea (1979), Srivastava (1958), Macdonald (1969), Majumdar (1942), Rajesh Gautam (1994AD) are few among others who have done a great deal in regard.

The Tharus of Nepal are found to inhabit the Southern belt of the country between Mechi and Mahakaliriver. However, the identity of their ancestors is still Mysterious. There is a great conflict Whether their ancestors were Aryan of Mongolians, Initially, Who they really are and Where they come from still remains unclear.(hudgson 1972).

The Tharus of Nepal are found to inhabit the Southern belt of the country between Mechi and Mahakali river. However ,the identity of their ancestors is still Mysterious. There is a great conflict Whether their ancestors Were Aryan or Mongolions. Initially, who they come from still remains unclear.(Hudgson1972).

But the above statement seems just a hypothesis as is not supported by any scientific proof. it just seems a descriptive analysis.

Dr. Regmi (2053) has also presented a descriptive analysis of customs, traditions and socio-economic condition of the Tharus much positive on the ground of acculturation, Assimilation and Modernisation. But the

very aspect of the recent range experienced by the community still remains to be dealt with.

Barma(2039) has explored the cast and class division among the Tharus from Mechi to Mahakali as the following:

1 Katharia 2 Kanfata 3 Kochila 4 Kharal 5 Khas 6 Khan 7 Kunaha 8 Khauria 9 Gaddar 10 Chilawania. 11 Chaughari. 12 jogi. 13 Dhagaria. 14 Tabedaar. 15 Thandaar 16. Danuwaar 17. Dangaura

18. Dang 19. Dadhia 20. Pariyaar 21. Bardia 22. Bahaniya 23. Vanth 24. Batar 25. Boksa 26. Bore 27. Bhagat 28. Bhatgania 29. Majhaura 30. Malianta 31. Matauta 32. Majhi 33. Morangia 34. Rajudia 35. Bishwash 36. Sardar 37. Bhatagania 38. Mardania 39. Rajgharaia 40. Rjhattiya 41. Rama 42. Raji 43. Saitaar 44. Lumpujhawa 45. Lalpuriya 46. Sunaha 47. Solariya 48. Hemjaliya

However, his study too lacks the logics about the brought about in this community.

Ajure(1978) has studied the present condition of the Dangora Tharus of Dang and Eukhuri. His presentation, though much more analytical and descriptive, is very much limited in scope due to its limitation regarding the area. Furthermore, this part too does not deal with the recent changes.

Bista (1972) has tried to analyse the arrival of the Tharus into Nepal on the basis of hypothesis that is based on various rituals popular in the Tharus community. This study does not deal with the changes in Tharu society and their language, neither does it mention anything about the effect of modernization thereupon.

Srivastav (1958) has presented a descriptive account of the social condition, tradition and custom and lifestyle of the Tharus of Agra (India), but again, without paying much attention to the changes. Also, it studies the Tharus at the context of India so has limited scope regarding the study of the Tharus of Nepal.

Acharya (2009) has presented a much more reliable account of the origin of the Tharus. He seems more determined about the origin of the Tharus. According to him, the Tharus surely came from Rajputana and are Kshatriyas. Though they bear Mongolian structure and speak Aryan language, they used to speak Kirati language in the past.

Mohan Lal Prasad (2035) has tried to analyse the reasons for the conservativeness and narrow minded attitude of the Tharus. In his finding, he has held illiteracy as the most important factor. He says that the Tharus are too much confident of their land and think that there is no need to educate the children as they are going to cultivate the land anyway. This attitude has proved a great obstacle in their economic condition. But Mr. Prasad seems to be less concerned about solving the problem.

Baral (2004) has tried to trace the places in India where the Tharus inhabit in sizable number. According to him, the Tharus inhabit in different parts of India, specially UP, Bihar and Bengal. In UP, they reside in Northern Gharhwal, Southern Nainital, and Pilibhit districts. In UP, they inhabit the plain areas between Bilari and Bankatti. Most of them are found at the eastern bank of Sharda river. This study too, lacks the tendency of dealing with the changes.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Selection of the Area

The selection of the area has been quite purposive for the following reasons:

1. The study is done in Bhangaha VDC of Mahottari district. This is the Rural area though there are no major places of historic or cultural importance here, the economic condition of this area is rapidly changing due to the Rural market. Due to increasing settlement of the different tribes, the population is rapidly increasing here. This has caused a great social interaction between the native people and the settlers and causing rapid social changes. To study the sane change in the specific topic of marriage among Tharu community, this study is conducted in this area,
2. This area is setteled by vrious tribes, such as Tharu , Kalwar , Muslim etc. Their customs and tradition have blinded to some extent and the Tharus are under a pressure to maintain their true identity due to external influence. It is necessary to control this.
3. Due to the reacher's familiarity with the area and the people living here.
4. Though there have been many reseach works about the Tharus, but the Tharusof this area and their life are not much studied about.

3.2 Research Design

This research is descriptive in nature as far as the main subject i.e. the marriage ritual is concerned. However, analytical aspect has been

accommodated regarding the information on the socio-economic and cultural condition of the people.

3.3 Nature and Sources of Data Collection

The relevant data were collected by using both qualitative and quantitative techniques such as observation and questionnaire. The study includes the data collected from both primary and secondary sources.

3.4 Sample Procedure

This study is done on the basis of purposive and random of Tharu. In order to maintain a proper representation of the VDC. Total 110 household of the sample population. 50 families are taken as model families on the basis of random sampling. In the random sample there are 112 marriage couple have been observed by the researcher. Statistical tools such as observation and direct interviews were used to collect the relevant information.

3.5 Methods of Data Collection

This study involves different process in order to make it useful and informative. Qualitative and quantitative techniques such as observation, field visit, questionnaire, etc. Are used to meet the standard. Both primary and secondary sources are utilized to collect the information required.

a. Information Derived from Primary Sources

Primary information are scientific and more reliable and play a vital role in any research work. Questionnaire, observation and interview are used in this report as primary sources of data collection . These informations help in understanding the nature and mentality of the people.

Observation

Rituals and cultural practical have observed Researcher's also have lived experienced of the social and cultural aspect of the lived the understand native feeling.

Questionnaire

The local people belonging to various walks of life such as businessmen, social workers, teachers, students and unemployed persons were requested to fill a questionnaire. The questionnaire asked their opinions regarding the demographic, socio- economic and cultural conditions and the changes brought there upon. This questionnaire was used to obtain information on the family size, economic and educational attainment and is divided into 3 parts. The specimen of the questionnaire is presented at the back page.

b. Information Derived from Secondary Source

The documents of the VDC, the books, periodicals, other reports and magazines are used as the secondary sources. However, the primary data are chief source of the information. The sources thus used are mentioned in the list of reference at the end.

3.6 Data Analysis

It is certain that the success of any research depends upon the efficient analysis and presentation of the collected information. Various informations related to the study are categorised on the basis of their nature. Where necessary, they are presented on the table. Though,

descriptive aspect has been dominant, analytical is accommodation as per necessity.

3.7 Limitations of the Study

This study includes only the Tharus of Bhangaha VDC of Mahottari district and is limited within their marriage practice only .Further, the information collected are from only 50 families, selected as models on random sampling technique. So ,it may not represent the socio-economic and cultural aspects of all the Tharus of Mahottari District.

The scope of the study is further limited due to time and financial factors. The widespread illiteracy among the people of the area made the collection of information even more difficult.

Marriage is a very complicated subject to discuss and Tharus are a very conservative society. It was seen that the youth, specially girls were extremely hesitant in discussing about marriage with an outsider. Further, hesitation among other people was also sensed when it came to giving information away about their income and expenditure, food and residence, etc.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

4.1. Introduction

The main aims of the study are to find out the marriage system of the Tharu community regarding or on the basis of its types, marriage system and cultural rituals. Similarly, the objectives of the study also confirmed in terms of marriage system that fully oriented with cultural and socio economic phenomenon which has been more dynamic due to the diffusion and reflection of globalization process. In this regard, this chapter mainly concern with analysis and interpretation of the collected data with sampling population size. The analysis is mainly guided and detail in terms of targeted objectives of the study, which is presented in below paragraphs

4.2. The Marriage System

Traditionally the marriage system of the Tharu community was generally determine by the cultural phenomenon that was diffuse and expand by genetic ancestor. Within circumstances, the marriage system of the Tharu is came to change altogether with awareness and development of education, modified generation concept and many other cause are remain behind this factors. The combination of two means of getting marriage such traditional and modern mixed with cultural norms has been common on public levels of the Tharu community. In this study area, different types of marriage system is assimilated by community and public levels which is presented below table and paragraph as well.

Table 4.1: Distribution of Marriage System of Sampling Population

S.N.	Types of Marriage	15 to 20	20 to 25	25 to 30	30 to 35	35 to Above	Total
1	Arrange	8	10	14	18	18	70
2	Love	8	8	8	6	4	34
3	Widow	-	-	2	4	2	8
	Total	16	18	24	28	24	112

Sources: Field Survey, 2015

Table 4.1: represents that marriage types of sample population. The marriage system of the sample population is taken in terms age composition related to the types of marriage. According to the table, the population having age group of above 15 are mostly involved in different types of marriage system e.g. there are different types of marriage system regarding arrange, widow and love. On the basis of age group of sample population and their marriage system the total populations of 70 numbers of peoples get married in terms of arrange marriage. In the present situation, the most of the young boys and girls are involved in initially involve with love that lately get marriage system on the basis of arrange and love as well. Therefore, 104 numbers of populations among the total sample population are getting married according to the love and arrange system. Widow marriage system is not well recognized in terms of cultural norms in Tharu community. Even having such socio cultural norms some numbers of population are come to get married with widow marriage. The 8 population numbers assimilate the widow marriage system.

4.3 Distribution of Dowry System of sampling population

The Dowry System is the major socio economic and cultural determinants of marriage ceremony which system is begin by the genetic gradients. The Dowry is fixed before the marriage with its value which is given in different means such as Furniture, Land, and Bike and other as well. Dowry system of selected community is also having same circumstances which are presented in below table.

Table 4.2: Dowry System of the Sampling Population

S.N.	Description	Numbers of MarriedPopulation	Percent
1	Bike/jewellery/Cash/Furniture&Land	30	26.78
2	Jewellery/Furniture	15	13.39
3	Furniture/	26	23.21
4	Land property/Furniture/Bike	18	16.07
5	Cash/Bike	23	20.53
	Total	112	100.00

Sources: Field Survey, 2015

There are five categories of means of given Dowry in selected study area. In recent time, Bike and Furniture is most preferable means of Dowry in the study area whereas Jewellery, land and cash is rarely assimilated customs. The table shows that among the total population 26.72 percent of married couple receives a Bike, Jewellery, cash, Furniture and Land as Dowry where 13.39 percent couples receive furniture and jewellery means Dowry. Bike and Furniture are only given and take by high class of high class family and educated family. But cash, jeweler and land Assets gifted as a Dowry only in uneducated family. Only small group

of couples among the total married couple receive Dowry in the forms of land, jewelers and cash in which such families are from uneducated family classes.

4.4. The Basic Conditions of Dowry System

The basic Condition of Dowry system in the selected study area of the sampling population is categorized into four types which are presented in (Table.4.3). The given and taken of Dowry system in normally four conditions such as property, non property and educated, uneducated family or house units, which is presented below table.

Figure 4.1: The Basic Conditions of Dowry System (In Household Percent)

Sources: Field Survey, 2015

According to the figure 4.1, it attempts to forecast the basic conditions of given Dowry in the selected community of Tharu and the conditions implies the basic requirement of given and take Dowry as gift. The conditions of property are only applied to the socio economically family

whereas educated conditions are favors only by the educated families. Other conditions including non property, none educated and others are prefer by socio economically low profile family. Within such fact, those family having socio economically high status and profile may have got high amount of Dowry which is followed by education conditions. This figure present about 58 percent of the household are recognize Dowry on the conditions of property and educated families whereas about 42 percent of household is applied and assimilate those conditions such as non property and non educated and others as well. The conditions such non property and non educated families implies social, economically and educationally having low population.

4.5. Distribution of Investment of Dowry cash amount

The Dowry is given from mother's house to their daughter blessing to survive without any types struggles and obstacles with the help of given Daijo and this is the fact and importance of give Dowry. But it has been socially and economically vulnerable in the context of low classes family and societies. In this regard, the selected couple marriage invests their Dowry in different issues related household tasks and problems to be solved, which are as follows.

**Figure 4.2: Distribution of Output of Investment of Dowry Cash
Amount**

Sources: Field Survey, 2015

Figure 4.2: shows that investment of Dowry from mother' house in cash amount into the different household tasks. The gained Dowry from mother' house normally used to invest into different fields including Education, Buying land, Business, Foreign employ, Household tasks and treatment. According to this table buy a land is most prefer sources of investment by the about 26 percent of total household and that investment trend is followed by education. The 30 percent married couple invests their Dowry amount into the education sectors for their further educational study and it is only applied by educated families. The married couple invests into the business sector in which 12 percent of married couple invest their Dowry amount. In the foreign employment 10 percent of sampling population invests their cash amount. Finally, different household tasks and problems may charge some amount of investment including treatment, basic need goods and services or assets. About 16 percent couple married came to charge their amount Dowry

money to solve and access the household asset that is more necessarily required by daily life.

4.6 Amount of Spent and Expenditure of Cash in Marriage Ceremony

In marriage ceremony, spent of amount of money is basically determined by the socio economic conditions of families and persons in which it seen that higher the profile and status that spent high amount of money in marriage program and lower the status of families that spent limited and certain amount of money. Therefore the account of spent and expenditure of money by selected sampling of population is presented in below Table which are as follows.

Table 4.3: Amount of Money Spent in Marriage Ceremony

S.N.	Amount of Money	No of Household	Percent
1	Below 50000 thousand	4	8.00
2	50000 Thousands to 1 Lakh	5	10.00
3	1 Lakh to 2 Lakh	3	6.00
4	2 Lakh to 3 Lakh	6	12.00
5	3 Lakh to 4 Lakh	7	14.00
6	4 Lakh to 5 Lakh	10	20.00
7	Above 5 Lakh	15	30.00
	Total	50	100.00

Sources: Field Survey, 2015

There are seven categories or group's house units spent cash money in marriage ceremony in terms of their socio economic profile and status. The data has taken in terms of house hold percent units in the field survey

and data collection. The data reflects that about 30 percent of total household are spent their money above 5 Lakh rupees in marriage program it denotes these families constitute with economically high status and profile. The 34 percent of families and household are spent money in marriage ceremony with 3 to 5 Lakh rupees where 12 percent houses are able to pay 1 to 3 Lakh in marriage program. This reveals that these families are middle classes families in terms of economically. About 24 percent of houses spent their money in marriage ceremony where they spent below 1 Lakh rupees. This spent expenditure isn't form of Dowry and this amount is used to provide more necessary and required food items for the invited guests and relatives.

Amount of cash given as the Dowry

In marriage ceremony, cash amount of Dowry is basically determined by socio economic conditions of families and persons in which it seen that higher, the profile and status that give high amount of money in marriage and lower the status of family that give limited cash of money. Therefore, the amount of cash of money by selected sampling of population is presents in below Table which are as follows:-

Table 4.4 Amount of money given for Dowry

S.N.	Amount of Money	No. of Household	Percentage
1	Below 50 thousand	20	37.73
2	50 thousand to 1 lakh	14	26.41
3	1 lakh to 2 lakh	10	18.86
4	2 lakh to 3 lakh	5	9.43
5	3 to 4 lakh	3	5.66
6	Above 4 lakh	1	1.88
	Total	53	100.00

Sources: Field Survey, 2015

There are six categories or groups of house units given cash money in marriage terms of their socio economic profile and status. The data has taken in terms of household percent units in the field survey and data collection. The data reflects are given their money above 4 Lakh rupees of Dowry it denotes these families constitute with economically high status and profile. The 5.66 percent of families and household are given money as Dowry with 3 to 4 Lakh rupees. The 9.43 percent of household are given money as Dowry with 2 to 3 Lakh. This reveals that these families are middle classes families in terms of economically. The 18.86 percent of families are given cash of 1 to 2 Lakh. The total 64.14 percent of families are given cash money as Dowry with below 1 Lakh. This means such are categorized in low level families.

CHAPTER FIVE

SOCIO-CULTURAL PRACTICES OF THARU COMMUNITY

Every individual, tribe and community is free to follow their own religion, customs and social tradition. Although our country was known as the only in the world. Tharus are no exception. Amidst the domination of the Hindu majority, they have still maintained their own religious and cultural heritage. The following are some features which still make the culture of the Tharus quite distinct from the same of the others.

The Tharus of this area are very much conscious of the good and evil actions which they think will determine their place in heaven or hell after death. The Tharus here worship almost all the Hindu religious deities and their religious ceremonies and rituals are performed by a Brahmin priest, but they also worship some of their own gods and goddess such as Brahma Devata and Gram Devata whose images are found to be different in different villages, otherwise they worship Kali, Bhagwati, Gauri (Parvati) and Satya Narayan. Brahma Devata and Bhuihaar are the common deities for the whole village whose shrines are built at the edge of the village. Their family patron deity is called KulDevata or Deuhaar who is one of the ancestors. The praying room of Deuhaar is the room at the most interior part of the house. The chief of the family sleeps here at night. A Basil plant is planted in every household. It is offered water every morning.

Sacrifice of the animal is a very important part of religious practice. Many rituals and festivals involve the sacrifice of goat, pig, duck and pigeons.

Tharus have a deep belief in sorcery and witchcraft. Due to superstition, for every sort of problem, they still consult the village wizard or witch doctor for the best possible solution. Almost everyone wears or carries a totem for the protection against supernatural evils that may befall onto them any time or any place.

Main Festivals

5.1 SiruwaPawani

This is the first day of the year, so it is called Pawani (sacred day). As it falls into the first week of the month of Baisakh it is also called Baishakhi. The Tharus clean their household early in the morning and themselves. Then putting on a new cloth, they go to the fair that is normally held in the temple outside the village where they offer sacrifice of different animals and birds. This is an ideal day for the would be bride and groom to see each other for the first time.

5.2 FaguPurnima (Holi)

This is one of the most important festival that is celebrated with great enthusiasm. It falls on the month of Falgun. On this day, the friends and families get together and spread various colours on each others. Then in groups, they move throughout the village and play Holi. The feast begins after this in which, meat sweets and alcohol are the chief items.

5.3 Pawani or Maghi

This is the first day of the month of Magh. The people worship various gods and goddess on this day. There is custom of exchanging the sweets and other food items between the relatives. The married daughters and son-in-laws are offered various types of gifts.

5.4 Dashain

Although Dashain is not originally a festival of the Tharus, they have started celebrating it due to the Hindu influence in the same manner. Goddess Durga is worshipped with the sacrifice of different types of animals and birds. The festival is rejoiced with a variety of food and new clothes.

5.5 Tihar

This falls in the month of Kartik. It has also become popular among Tharus due to the Hindu influence. Deepawali is the most auspicious day of Tihar. On this day, the houses are decorated with various designs and oil lamp or candles are lit to brighten the house in the evening. This day is celebrated with the flashes of fire crackers and the excitement of gambling.

5.6 Chhath

This festival is devoted to the sun god. It falls in the month of Kartik just 3-4 days after Tihar. Mainly married women participate in this festival by fasting the day before and on the festival day, they go to the river or pond early in the morning. Along with the first rays of the morning they worship the sun god by offering holy water of the same river or the pond. After this, they give away the Brahmin priests money, cloths and food items. This festival in the Terai regions is somewhat similar to Teej of the hilly region in which, the married women pray for the long life and everlasting prosperity of their husband.

5.7 Rites and Rituals

Man, being social creature, most perform various social activities as prescribed by his tradition, norms and values. Some of these activities are the rituals performed from the time of one's birth till death. These rites and rituals differ among different communities on the basis of their social and environmental surrounding.

The Tharus of this VDC, though the ways of performing their rituals have been widely influenced by Hindu culture, still have their own district rites and rituals. The main ones are described below:

5.7.1 Birth

During the child birth, the male members are not allowed to enter the vicinity. Generally, the female relatives or a midwife helps the mother to deliver the child. It is very rare to take the assistance of medical professionals, so, maternal deaths as well as infant death rates are very high.

5.7.2 Naming Ceremony

It is performed on the 12th day after birth. The child and mother are applied with mustard oil and are seated in front of fire. It is supposed to cleanse their body. All the members of the household and some relatives must be present during the ritual in which the baby is given a name either by the Brahman priest or by the elder members of the family. The name conferred then remains the legitimate throughout the baby's life. After the ritual, the family members and guests are treated with a kind of bread made of rice, flour and sugar.

5.7.3 Shaving and the Head

This ritual is performed only on the boys of 4-5 years of age. This is a very important ritual as it is supposed to allow the boys into practical life. On this ceremony, the maternal uncle shaves the head of the boy. In case the uncle hesitates, the task is performed by the village barber. The presence of the daughter's family as well as the family of the boy's maternal home is required. After the ritual a feast is held which is participated by the family members and relatives.

5.7.4 Marriage

Marriage is considered the most important ceremony not only in the concerned family, but the whole village. Most of the marriage are arranged by the parents who fix the marriage on the basis of the similarities in caste and social status. At the same time, they make sure that their families are not related by blood from the father or the mother's side. A detailed description about the marriage procedure is given on chapter six and seven.

5.7.5 Death Rituals

Death is the ultimate destination of life and involves the last rituals due on the person. The death rituals performed by the Tharus are not very much complicated, neither are they very much inconvenient like the ones in typical Hindu community.

If a child dies, it is taken by the family members to the river bank and is buried there. After burial, the mourners return to the house of the bereaved and are fed on plain rice and curd. The male members of the concerned family shave their head.

In case of the death of an adult, the nephew daughters and her husband are informed first. After sometime (3-4 hours) the funeral begins and the dead body is cremated on the river bank. The funeral fire is ignited by the son who performs other funeral rituals as well. No presence of the Brahman priest is required then. On the 4th day of funeral, the Brahman priest and village barber are called upon and sent to the cremation place along with the son who performed the funeral service. The remaining ash from the cremation spot is cleared and a basil plant is planed there. Some ash is collected to be spread in the river later on. In case there is no son, the funeral service can also be performed by the daughter such son or daughter is called "KARTA" or performer. This person remains in mourning for 13 days. He/she can not eat salt and can even tough any one. The homage is paid to the departed soul on the 10th day, the daughter and her husband as well as the closest relatives of the family carry various offerings to the concerned house and go to the river bank. Here, a ball of the rice called "PINDA" is offered to the departed soul. The Brahman priest performs this ritual. The relatives who are called "DAS DINIYA" (the ones who must mourn for 10 days) cut hair and nail in order to absolve themselves. Then they end their mourning and are free to follow their normal fooding habit by eating meat and fish on the evening.

The son in laws and the nephews end their mourning on the 11th day which is called PACHADAAN. Again PINDA is offered while the Brahman pries chants mantra.

The mourning for the family members ends on the 13th day. On this day, the departed soul is offered 16 pindas in the morning and in the afternoon religious psalms are performed at the courtyard. It is called HariKirtan. In the evening the family members along with the son or Karta come out of mourning and start living a normal life.

Although originally there is no such custom as the annual death ritual or Shraddha, some prosperous Tharus are found to have copied it from their Hindu neighbours. Even other rituals of death are undergoing the similar changes at present.

5.8 Marriage Rituals Among Tharus

Like in every other community, the rituals of Tharu marriage are based upon traditional practice. All the rituals, though not same in every Tharu community, are greatly influenced by the socio cultural and socio-economic habits of the people. In this area, the marriage ceremony is very long and involves many stages. Though the marriage itself takes about 5 days to complete, some of the rituals begin as early as from the day of the date fixing. Even after 5 days, the marriage is not complete due to the earlier mentioned system of second arrival of the bride to her husband's house. The bride returns to her mother's home after spending 3-4 days at her husband's place for 3-4 years or more. After Gauna or the second departure from her mother's house she remains at her bridal home never to return to her native place except on very special occasions. Thus, the married couple have to wait for a quite a long time to enjoy the thrill and excitement of married life though they get married earlier.

By and far, the rituals of a Tharu marriage are divided into 3 categories named as:

1. Pre-marriage rituals
2. Rituals during the marriage.
3. Post marriage rituals

5.9 Pre-Marriage Rituals

5.9.1 First Encounter

As permitted by the parents, the would be bride and groom see each other at some common place in the village or at the weekly village market. During each is accompanied by his/her close friends. This is not a traditional system but is a modern and optional one. Still it is preferred that the boy and girl see each other at the girl's house. This event is known as BaherChake and the earlier mentioned Faldaan is not exchanged thence.

5.9.2 Inquiring

After the initial approach, the girl's side starts investigating about the boys' family, prosperity, caste, generational purity, age, etc. This is known as DekhaSuni. It is conducted through relatives or the mediator and normally kept secret. If the information thus obtained is satisfactory, the father of the boy sends message to his counterpart. Then the boy's family start making similar inquiry about the girl. After their inquiry about each other satisfied both the side, the father of the groom informs his counterpart about when they re meeting at the latter's house. On the given day, the boy's side go the girl's house with few relatives where they are offered a warm welcome. After they are seated, the girl is brought in front and asked some simple questions about her name and personal capability. Then her father asks the boy's parents whether they like the girl or not. If the answer is affirmative, there is further inquiry so as to whether there is blood relation between the two families. They ask questions about each other's predecessors up to 5-6 generations ago. This talk mostly takes place through the mediator and is locally called Goshthi

(meeting). If they happen to be within the restricted blood relationship, the marriage is cancelled. If the mediator ultimately declares that there is no such restriction, the meeting ends and after a simple feast, the boy's side returns home.

The similar visit is made by the girl's side too. Some senior relatives of the girl come to the boy's home and ask the similar questions to the boy. Then the boy's family offers some money which the girl's side may or may not accept (it does not have any significance on the decision made earlier). After this, the guests are fed with food and wine. Then they decide the date for another ritual "GharDekh". This ritual is considered mere extravagance at present and the Tharus are skipping it.

5.9.3 Visting the Groom's House

It is a very important ritual and is called "GHAR DEKH" (see the house). After the inquiry completes, the bridal side along with their relatives go to the groom's house. The number of such relatives may range from 25-30. The parents of the bride distribute red coloured betel nut among the relatives and with them go to the boy's house carrying a variety of gifts, i.e. clothes, sweets, fruit, etc. the boy's special place is allotted for the guests to seat which is called BAS GHAR (place to lodge). First, the boy arrives. When the messenger gives them the news of the arrival of the guests, the hosts along with the boy have to cover their head with turban. Then the boy is brought in front with a plate in his hand and the guests, the hosts along with the boy have to cover their head with turban. Then the boy is brought in front with a plate in his hand and the guests start putting on it the gifts they have brought along. At the same time, they go on asking the name of the objects and the boy goes on answering them. After this, the boy is asked by the guests the name of his forefathers upto

3 generations ago. After answering these, the boy is allowed to leave the place.

After sometime, the boy reappears in front of the guests clad in the clothes they have brought for him. There, he has to pay respect to his future father-in-law and other guests by touching their feet. Then the visitors are offered snack and dinner. Such visitors are called GharDekha. While they dine, the women members of the boy's house sing the songs, which are humorous and rather abusive. After dinner, guests are taken to the lodging place and the date is fixed for a similar ceremony to take place at the girl's house. On the fixed date, the boy's side arrives the girl's house in the similar way, and after all the ceremonies, the date for marriage is fixed. While fixing the date, both sides exchange 9 betel nuts each. These nuts are considered very important objects and are needed at yet another ritual during marriage. At present, this ritual too is taken as an unnecessary and extravagant one. So, it is generally done just before the marriage at the same stage.

5.9.4 Flouring the Rice

The ritual is performed at both boy's and girl's house; but with a slight variation. Five female members such as sisters, aunts of the girl and the boy perform this separately in their perspective places. The 5 females who perform this ritual are called Bidhakarani (performers of the ritual). This is done at the centre courtyard of the house at the evening time. During this the boy or the girl go to the ritual place with Bidhakarnis who carry on a tray a red cloth measuring about 2 yards, a small clay pot, Bermuda grass, paddy and cord. The five women stand around a mortar along with five large pestles. The lamp is lit on the clay pot that is put on the tray. First, the boy or girl puts some paddy on the mortar and the

women do the same. Then the women start making rice out of the paddy. After cleaning, the rice is further ground into fine flour. This rice flour is mixed with the oil and is applied on the body of the boy or girl respectively on the day of marriage. Sometimes turmeric is also mixed with rice flour and oil. This ritual is known as Kasha Kuti (grinding the rice flour).

5.9.5 Proving the Chastity

This is also a very important ritual. It is performed in boy's and girl's house both. It is performed in the late morning one day ahead of marriage.

During this ceremony, first, the patron god of the household is worshipped with a garland made of 18 leaves of basil (Tulsi) is placed on a round tray. The boy reaches the place with the above mentioned 5 performers of the ritual who, with them, carry some paddy with them. On this occasion, the boy must carry a sword covered with a yellow cloth. Again the paddy is cleaned and the rice ground into a fine flour and mixed with water. This paste is used to make a circle in which the boy puts vermilion (red colour). After this, the boy, along with the 5 performers put 5 fistful of rice into the mortar and grind it with a pestle.

In the girl's side all the other steps are same except carrying the sword and putting the vermilion on the circle.

This ceremony is known as Kumarawan and is the symbol of physical chastity of the concerned boy and girl. It is associated with different songs which are sung every night for 5 nights till this ceremony ends.

5.9.6 Digging the Soul

This ritual is done on the same night of the day the previous ritual ends. It is also done in the boy's and girl's house respectively. The boy or the girl, along with the above mentioned 5 ladies, go to the well. The same process of making the circle and offering flowers and colours is repeated. This ritual is devoted to the goddess of water (Kamala Mai). Close to it goddess Gauri is also worshipped. In the girl's side, the process ends here but at the boys places, the boy plant locally known as Siki is tied around with sacred thread and offered beaten rice which is scattered on all 4 directions. Thenafter, they dig some soil and with it return home. At the boy's house the same soil is used to pop the rice in the form of Lawa. In the girl's house, the soil is used to mop the floor where the stage will be made. There is the system of making this stage know as Mandap only in the girl's house and the soil is dug and brought for this purpose. The remaining soil is pressed in the fist. It is believed that the better the shape of the dough, the better the children will be borne by the couple. Then, the women who sang the songs are offered rice and gram before they leave.

5.9.7 Making the Stage

The stage that is popularly known as Mandap is made in the bridal place only. It is here all the rituals from the time the groom reaches here upto the brides departure are performed.

The soil that was dug during the previous ritual is used to clean and mop the floor and the stage is erected over here with the help of the villagers. It is 2-4 sided structure that resembles a temple. It is 4 times lengthwise and 3 times breadthwise and girl's hand. It is decorated beautifully with

coloured paper and flowers. To the north of it, 4 banana stumps are used to make a rectangular structure. This is called Jagbedi (place for holy fire). The ritual of colouring the bride's forehead (sindurDaan) is performed here. All other rituals are performed in the stage.

5.9.8 Rituals During the Marriage

These rituals begin on the same day of the wedding procession. Though all the rituals after the arrival of the procession are performed at the girl's place, some rituals must be performed at both the boy's and girl's house separately before the procession. They are defined as below:

5.9.9 Symbolic Marriage with the Tree

This ritual takes place aside a mango tree in the garden or grove. This ritual is similar to the Newar community. The different is in the symbolic object. In Newar community the symbolic marriage of the girls is done with a wood apple fruit (BEL) whereas among Tharus, it is a mango tree. Besides, in Newari community, only girls participate in the ritual whereas among the Tharus both, boy and girl perform it at their respective places with a slight variation. A mango tree is considered very sacred symbol in vedic culture. The same applies to Tharu community as well. The leaves and wood of mango tree are a must in almost every traditional religious ceremony and marriage ceremony to respects this importance by using various parts of a mango tree.

At the boy's place, the boy carries a sword and is accompanied by the aforesaid five performers. Reaching below the mango tree he encircles the tree rolling a sacred thread around. With each round, he has to embrace the tree. The women then clean the ground below and place a betel nut. Then the boy puts the vermilion on the nut. Then the 5

performers scatter some beaten rice around the tree. The remaining beaten rice is distributed among the spectators. During this ceremony the girl, instead of a sword, carries a banana bud. The other rituals done at the girl's place are similar to the ones performed by the boy.

The same rituals is also performed with a slight variation in some places. The boy and the girl, along with the performers, worship the religious deities in the village in the morning. Then after the bride and groom move from house to house where they are given the gifts in the form of rice and money. This gift is locally known as "Bilauki". The marriage with tree is done in the late evening with the same above mentioned ceremonies.

5.9.10 Ceremony of Paddy Frying

This ritual is performed on the first day of wedding at both the boy's and the girl's house. Mainly the daughters and their husband are invited during this. In case there is no daughter, the aunts and their husbands are called. Only the married people can participate in this ceremony. The performer asks for gifts in return for doing the job and is rewarded with cash, jewelry and even cattle.

This ritual is performed at the open courtyard and in the middle of the house. A big clay pot is put on the fire and in this the boy or the girl puts five fistful of paddy. The aforesaid 5 Bidhakarmi too do the same. Then the main performer start stirring the paddy until they start popping. This person (male or female) is accompanied by the bidhkarni who repeat the task five times. While doing this, they joke and sing. The product so obtained is called "Lawa" or popped rice.

After preparing lawa, at the boy's house, the boy is seated at the courtyard and is rubbed with the mixture of rice flour and oil. During this he keeps

a sword with him. Being asked the significance of the sword, an elderly member claimed that the Tharus are related to Raajput and a Rajput must hold the sword throughout the marriage ceremony. This lawa is carried along with the marriage procession and while the boy puts vermilion on the girl's head, it is scattered around. The same ritual is customary among other Hindu casts as well.

5.9.11 Preparing for the Procession

As the boy is about to depart, he worships the patron deity of the household in the praying room. Just outside the door, the Bidhakarmis clean the sword with water and vermilion and wrap a cloth around it. Then the boy puts five fistful of rice on the hand of the leader Bidhakarni who asks him whose coffer he is going to fill. The boy answers by saying that he is going to fill the coffer of his parents. Then the procession begins. The groom is generally taken on a palanquin whereas the other travel by foot or bullock cart. There are no women on the procession except on who remains with the groom. It is believed that this woman possess the power of goddess Durga and as long as she is with the groom, she protects him from the evil spirits. Just before the procession moves ahead, the groom touches his mother's feet ho blesses him for his success in bringing the bride home.

There are many items that have to be taken along with the groom. A sword is a must. The chief items for worshipping such as vermilion, rice, oil, turmeric, lawa, betel nut, incense stick and sandle pest are need to perform various rituals. Besides these are gifts such as clothes, jewels and cosmetics for the bride.

5.9.12 Welcoming the Guests

As soon as the procession reaches the girl's house, the boy is welcomed by the girl's parents and relatives with flower and rice. This ritual is known as "Dwar Puja". Then the five Bidhakarnis of the girl's side escort boy towards the stage that is set up for the marriage at the courtyard. Before entering the gate, the boy's guardians must put some money into the copper vases put thereon. The procession has to face some obstacles before entering the girl's doorstep. There are some of the relatives of the girl who hide in different places and throw paddy on the guests. The guests do the same in return. It is a symbolic war that results with a victory for the guests. This is a further example of the Tharus attempt to prove their relation with Kshyatrias. For the fear of the possible eye injury due to entering of the paddy, both the sides protect their eyes with one hand while they use the other to throw the paddy. After this, they are seated at the courtyard around the stage and are offered light snacks and refreshments. Thenafter the chief marriage rituals begin.

5.9.13 Marriage Rituals

The chief marriage rituals begin when all the guests are seated around the stage (mandap). First, the 5 Bidhakarnis from the girl's side help the groom to change his cloth on the Norh-eastern side of the stage. The boy then is covered with a large pieces of cloth all over. The leading Bidhakarni holds one end of the cloth which she moves around 3 times over the stage. Close to the stage, a barber draws a small amount of blood from the little finger of both the bride and the groom and mixes it. Then the names of their forefathers upto 3 generation ago is written on a mango leaf. This ritual is known as "Lahachu" (drawing the blood). Then the Bidhakarnis touch the head of the groom with different objects such as a

jug, a scale and a broom. After this the groom enters the stage where he is offered a set of cloth dyed in vermilion by the father of the bride.

After his, the groom is placed on his seat at the stage on one side with his family priest and the aforesaid symbolic goddess on the other side, the bride's father seats with the barber and his family priest. The leading Bidhakarni, who is married (not a widow) woman and one of the senior relatives of the bride and is called Daanpati makes all the necessary arrangements at the stage while the priest performs different marriages rituals. The priest, who is Brahmin, performs the rituals with chants of the verses from Samveda. The following rituals are performed at this time.

a) Offering to the Five Popular Deities

The 5 popular deities are as following:

- i. GraamDevata (Village God)
- ii. IshtaDevata (Protector God)
- iii. Brahma Devata (Brahka)
- iv. SarvaDevata (All other Gods)
- v. Anga Puja (Worship of the body)

Various objects i.e. cord, rice, sandle, flower and vermilion are used as offerings to the above mentioned deities. This ritual is performed by the bride's father and is commonly known as Pancha Puja (worship of the five gods).

b) Worshipping Gauriganesh

This ritual is performed by boy and girl together after it ends the bride withdraws from the stage and the groom alone performs some other rituals.

c) Vowing Ceremony

This ritual, known as "Sankalpa" is performed by the bride's father who wets up some money and spreads turmeric, betel nut, rice and flower on it.

d) Return of the Bride to the Stage

Before the bride returns to the stage, a short ritual is performed with a set of mortar and pestle. The boy is handled a pestle by the priest and four persons each from the boy's and the girl's side approach the mortar. These people are called "AathMangal" (eight good women). The priest encircles the mortar with the sacred thread and the eight persons hold the pestle. The father of the bride brings some paddy and puts into the mortar. The priest then orders the rest to strike. After this, all the eight people give fine grains of rice each to the priest who in turn, give each a betel nut. The priest then snaps the thread from the mortar, writes the names of the forefathers up to three generations of both the sides on a mango leaf, puts some grains of rice and ties it with the thread and makes a token. He then gives permission to bring the bride back to the stage. The groom then makes the same requests to his father in law. Then the aforesaid Daanpati goes to "Kore" (bridal room) and brings the bride to the stage. When the bride is brought there, the ceremony continues with "KanyaDaan" (entrusting the husband with his daughter).

e) Kanyadaan (Giving away the daughter)

This is the most important of all the marriage rituals. During this, the father of the bride, the groom and the bride herself place their right hands respectively. The groom's hand holds the bride's and the father of the bride pours water the entrusts his daughter to the groom. This ritual too is associated with the singing of songs. There are two of these. The first song reflects the feeling of the girl's parents where as the second is the expression of the boy's acceptance.

After completion of this ritual, the girl's relatives give her gifts such as cash, jewelries, and clothes. Then some objects, i.e. some rice, nine betel nuts, nine pieces of turmeric, nine blades of Bermuda grass (Dubo) and nine grains of paddy are mixed together and tied with the groom's cloth.

After this, the bride and the groom are given turban by the girl's parents. The mother of the girl puts turban on the boy's head and the father does the same to his daughter.

f) Thread Ceremony

This is the ritual of circling the bride and groom's wrist with sacred thread. The priest ties the thread on the right wrist of the boy and the left wrist of the girl. After this, the couple move round the stage and the process of SindurDaan begins.

g) SindurDaan (colouring the forehead of the bride)

This ritual signifies the couple's total acceptance of each other. The couple is brought outside the stage f the Jagabedi (the place where holy fire is burnt) by Bidhakarnis. The bride there is seat on a piece of wood facing East. The groom stands facing her. The groom's relatives bring a

torch and lit it. Then the Bidhakarnis part the hair of the bride and the groom puts vermilion on Sindur in the gap with his fingers. The process is repeated five times.

h) Making the Knot

After sindurdaan, some rice, turmeric, sesamesid (Til), vermilion and some money are tied in a piece of red cloth. Then the boy's and girl's father slowly tug it. It is symbolic testing their individual strength. This ritual is known as "Lagan Ganth".

i) Breaking the Fast

After the above ritual, all the rituals of the mandap come to an end. Then the groom allows his father in law, who has fasted throughout the day, to have some food. Then the guests are offered a feast as well. This ritual is known as "PaaniGraham".

j) Final Ritual

The final ritual during the marriage takes place in a room with a painting of the sun and the moon in it. The Bidhakarnis take both the bride and the groom into the room where no other male than the groom himself is allowed to enter. The groom there puts the vermilion on the painting. During this, the Bidhakarnis ask the groom 3 times whom he is marrying with. The groom answers he is marrying with the sun and the moon. The painting of the sun and the moon is known as Kohawar, hence the ritual is known by the same name. After this, the Bidhakarni slave the room. The bride and the groom are left alone there. This is the first occasion when the bride and the girl are left alone in a room. After this ritual, all the guests and the housefolk retire for the rest.

5.9.14 Most Marriage Rituals

One day after the marriage is not as busy as the previous day. The groom and his relative study at the bride's place on this day as well. This second day of their stay is known as Maryaad. On this day, after the breakfast, the bride and groom are taken by the Bidhakarnis to the place of the patron god of the village to worship. There, they are accompanied by some of the boy's relatives. This ritual is known as Thanlagi (visiting the place of god). The Laawa that was made earlier is exchanged between the boy's and the girl's side and offered to the god as well. When they come out, the groom puts off his turban, worships it and puts it on again. Then the bride and the groom pay homage aside the bamboo bush growing there by pouring a mixture of rice flour, clove powder and water. This mixture is known as Ghoran.

After this, the bride and the groom are brought back to the house and placed into the stage again. The bride's relatives here offer her some farewell gifts and money. The gift is known as "Chumawan". After this, the preparations to send the bride with her husband begin.

5.9.15 Farewell

The day after the above mentioned rituals is the day of farewell to the daughter. There are two popular traditions of bidding the farewell. The first involves the departure of the bride alongside her husband and the other does not. The people who send their daughter along with are called Nawayugia (modern) and the ones who don't are called Budhayugia (conservative). They were given their respective names in the general convention of the Tharus in Saptari district in the year 2022 B.S.

According to the modern custom, the bride departs with the groom on onto reaching house, the earlier mentioned Lahachu ritual is performed. This ritual means that the bride is accepted by her husband's family as a member. Then the bride and the groom are taken to the courtyard and the ritual of presenting them the gifts (Chumaawaan) is performed. The interesting aspect of the marriage here is that the husband and wife do not live together or mate on this night, but are quartered at the separate rooms. The next morning, the bride returns with her escort to her mother's home to come back only after the earlier mentioned second arrival or Adwiraagaman or Gauna.

The conservative or conventional way is that the bride remains at her parent's place. Instead, a jug filled with water and covered with cloth, symbolizing the girl, is sent with the boy. In this case no Lahachu ritual takes place at the boy's house. Since there is no bride to draw the blood from. However, the Chumaanwan ritual is performed inspite of the bride's absence. In this system, the bride enters her husband's house only after Dwiraagaman.

During farewell, the village women sing various songs expressing the duties of a bride at her husband's house or conoling her on the time of separation from her parent's house.

5.9.16 Dwiraagaman

The re-arrival of the bride into the household of her husband is known as Dwiraagaman. It is also considered as the second marriage between the same couple, also a more meaningful one as it is only after this ritual that the couple is allowed to live together. This ritual is considered even more important than the ritual of farewell after the marriage.

The bride, as mentioned earlier, does not start living in her husband's house immediately after the actual marriage ceremony, but returns one day after her farewell to her maternal place where she lives for 3-4 years after which her husband takes her to his home to live there permanently. At present, some conscious Tharu have started performing both the farewell and dwiraagaman together on the day after the marriage and some do it within a year. This ritual is performed on some auspicious occasion such as Dashain, Holi, etc. The groom's parent's take initiative for this ritual to prove their eagerness to bring their daughter-in-law. They consult the priest and send two messengers to the bride's home to send their daughter on the prescribed day. Generally, such request is derived at the first time by the bride's parents lest it may seem that they are in a rush to send their daughter away. The same request, made twice is accepted and the ritual takes place. Sometimes the groom and his parents delay in making this request. It is a matter of great worry to the bride's side. In this case, the bride's parents start making inquiries about the cause of such delay through their relatives.

On the prescribed date, the groom again comes to the bride's house with his relatives. After all the ceremonies similar to the ones which are performed back during marriage and grand feast the groom returns home with his wife. On the same date, the married couple is allowed to spend the night together.

On this occasion also, a lot of gift is given to the girl as dowry. The gifts include items of household use such as clothes, cosmetics, jewelries, utensils and furniture.

Though it is one of the most important marriage rituals, it seems very much unnecessary and extravagant one as the same ritual of farewell has to be performed twice, the expenses involved is double as well. It causes unnecessary economic burden specially on the girl's side. However, the marriage is considered complete and the newlywed couple enters the real and practical married life.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1 Summary

Tharus are one of the leading tribal group of Nepal on the basis of their number as well as the territory they inhabit. Tharus, who inhabit the Terai region of the Nepal. The reason for taking Tharus of Bhangaha for this research is that Tharus are the dominant people who have been living here for many centuries. Besides, though there have been many research about the Tharus of different parts of Nepal, the Tharus of this area have not attracted much attention so far. So, the main objective of this research has been to analyze the difference between the social habits of Tharus here with the same of the Tharus elsewhere in general and draw the attention towards their marriage practice in particular.

The level of child literacy rate here is very much satisfactory here, among the total number of the children of school going age, 80 percent go to school. Of them 65 percent are in primary level and 35 percent are in secondary level. Almost all the Tharus of this VDC use the surname as Singh. The family accepts the eldest male member as the guardian of the family and respect is the main family value. Their dressing habit is slowly being changed from traditional to modern. The women wear the jewelries of silver and also prefer to tattoo various body parts with different patterns.

Generally the Tharus follow Hindu religious tradition but have at least one deity of their own, which they call Gram Devata (Village God). Besides, they also worship the chief goddess such as Bhagwati, Kali, Gauri, etc. Tharus spend a great deal of money in social and religious

ceremonies. Their main religious occasions are Dashain, Diwali, Holi, Chhat, MagheSankranti and Shivaratri. Food items such as meat of chicken, goat, pig; and wine are used during these celebration. To celebrate the social and religious occasion, they don't even hesitate to take debt.

In their social life, they appear to have maintained a bit of originality as in this aspect, they seem slightly different from other Hindus. Still, the childbirth lacks any assistance from properly trained doctor, instead, the village midwife performs the tasks. Due to this, the infant mortality rate is still very high. Naming ceremony and hair shaving ceremony are performed in their own distinct traditional way. Marriage ceremony itself has gone a lot of changes as some of the rituals are being reduced or even discarded. The death rituals are very much different from that of other tribes. However, due to increasing urbanization, the Tharus of younger generation are getting more inclined towards the modern life and it has posed a real threat to their indigenous culture and tradition.

Talking about their economic condition, the majority of Tharus are directly dependent on agriculture. The fertile alluvial soil and convenient irrigation facility have helped to retain people's indulgence in agriculture. As there are many industries in and around this VDC, the younger generations have started showing less and less interest in their traditional economic practice. Some Tharus here have also started setting up new trades alongside the highway. There are very few of them in civil service or technical line. But, the economic condition of the Tharu specially of the farmers, is on declining condition because of the partition of the agricultural land into small plots, increase in population and the very extravagant nature of the Tharus.

The most prominent changes that the Tharus community of this VDC is undergoing through are the ones pertaining to their social structure and function, rites and rituals, fooding/dressing and dwelling habits, their view towards education and occupation etc. These changes are mainly caused by the rapid increase in the number of industries in and around the area, increasing number of immigrants from the hilly region and the increase in the facilities of communication and entertainment. At last, it can be said that there is still a dire need of awareness in the Tharu community of this area. Though the infra-structures of development in this area and their use in much better compared to the same with other parts of the country, it much not be allowed to effect the indigenous cultural heritage of the people and the place. The concerned authorities must consider this aspect and work positively in this regard.

6.2 Conclusion

Even traditionally the marriage system of Tharu is determine by the cultural phenomenon, recent generation they come to assimilate the different types of marriage system in which they assimilate including marriage system e.g. Child, arrange, marriage by exchange love and widow marriages system. On the basis of collecting information on sampling marriage couple, it shows that , the population having age group of 10 to 15 and 15 to 20 have not involved in any types of marriage. But the population with age group of above 15 are mostly involved in different types of marriage system e.g. there are different types of marriage system regarding child, arrange, widow and love. On the basis of age group of sampling population and their marriage system the total populations of 20 numbers of peoples get married in terms of child marriage. In the present situation, the most of the young boys and girls are involved in initially involve with love that lately get marriage system

on the basis of arrange and love as well. Therefore, 84 numbers of populations among the total sampling population are getting married according to the love and arrange system. Widow marriage system is not well recognized in terms of cultural norms in Tharu community. Even having such socio cultural norms some numbers of population are come to get married with widow marriage. The 8 population numbers assimilate the widow marriage system.

On condition of Dowry system the sampling population of married couple shows that In recent time, Bike and Furniture is most preferable means of Dowry in the study area whereas Jewellery, land and cash is rarely assimilated customs. The table shows that among the total population 32.14 percent of married couple receives a Bike as Dowry where 39.29 percent couples receive furniture and case means Dowry. Bike and Furniture are only given and take by high class of high class family and educated family. But cash, jeweler and land Assets gifted as a Dowry only in uneducated family. Only 27 percent couples among the total married couple receive Dowry in the forms of land, jewelers and cash in which such families are from uneducated family classes. The given Dowry system is mainly depends upon the socio economic and educational profile, status and background as well e.g. those persons who have high and good profile of socio economic condition have Dowry with high amount of money.

Investment of amount Dowry include into different field of household tasks and study found that The gained Dowry from mother' house normally used to invest into different fields including Education, Buying land, Business, Foreign employ, Household tasks and treatment. According to this table buy a land is most prefer sources of investment by the about 26 percent of total household and that investment trend is

followed by education. The 30 percent married couple invests their Dowry amount into the education sectors for their further educational study and it is only applied by educated families. The married couple invests into the business sector in which 12 percent of married couple invest their Dowry amount. In the foreign employment 10 percent of sampling population invests their cash amount. Finally, different household tasks and problems may charge some amount of investment including treatment, basic need goods and services or assets. About 16 percent couple married came to charge their amount Dowry money to solve and access the household asset that is more necessarily required by daily life.

6.3 Recommendations

In the current system marriage is determine by the amount of Dowry that included different types of sophisticated items e.g. jewellers, furntiture, land, bike and cash as well. Behind this fact and circumstances, it has been the major sources of socio economic vulnerable for low caste people with low levels of socio economic profile and status. In this regard, certain points have highlighted as a recommendations to the relative institution, organization and community in order to solve the generalize the Dowry system.

- Given and taken of Dowry as gifted from mother's house should be control with certain levels of amount either including different forms Dowry e.g. furniture, land etc.
- Educated persons must be mobilize as a resources persons for awareness caused by Dowry system.

- Community and people themselves should be participation in discussion on advantages and disadvantages of getting Dowry System in local periphery.
- Local government institutions must make decision of equal level of getting Dowry to the newly get married couple.
- Legal law and regulation must be managed by the local government authorities in order to punished the those persons who misuse the cultural norms instead of Dowry.
- Vocational and job oriented trainings should be provided by the related government and non government organizations in terms of empowerment of newly get married couple for future career.
- Newly get married couple has to consider to the investment of Dowry amount in appropriate sectors of household tasks e.g. buy land and achieve education.

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को रिपोर्ट

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Appendix

The Specimen of the Questionnaire Used

Name of the Researcher:

Report on Marriage Rituals Among the Tharus of Bhangaha VDC 2071

Name of the Villager:

Ward No.:

Village:

Date:

Dear Villager

I am doing a research on the above mentioned topic in which, your help is the most important requirement. You can help me by providing as much relevant information as possible in the questionnaire. I assure you that the information provided will be used for no other than academic purpose. So, I request you to help me by sparing some of your valuable time in answering the following questions.

Yours Sincerely

Ajay Kumar Singh

T.U. Department of Rural Development

Part I

Name of the Head of the Family

No.	Relation with the Family Head	Age	Sex	Education	Marital Status	Occupation

Name of the Family Head

Sex: (a) Male (b) Female

Religion:

Occupation:

Language:

Education:

Nature of Residence: (a) Indigenous (b) Immigrant

Part II

1. No. of Family Members

a) Literate

b) Illiterate

2. Occupation

a) Agriculture

b) Animal Husbandry

c) Service

d) Technical

3. Manner of Land Holding

- a) Free holdingBigha b) TenancyBigha

4. Annual Income in Rupees

- Rs. 10000-20000 Rs. 41000-50000
Rs. 21000-30000 Rs. 51000 Above
Rs. 31000-40000

5. Agricultural Yield per annum (Kg. per Bigha)

- a) Rice b) What
c) Maize d) Mustard
e) Others

6. Types of Household

- a) Modern b) Traditional
c) Cemented d) Thatched

7. Involvement in Other Sectors

- a) Labour b) Carpenter
c) Mechanic d) Others

8. What is your traditional occupation?

9. How much sufficient is the agricultural yield from the land that you farm?

- a) 3 months b) 6 months
c) Whole year

Part III

1. Name of any five main festivals celebrated in a year.
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)
 - e)
2. Name of any five rituals performed by the family.
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)
 - e)
3. Types of marriage performed
 - a) By consent
 - b) Love marriage
 - c) By stealth
 - d) By eloping
4. Has there been any inter-cast marriage in your family?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) If yes with which cast?
5. How much money does your family spend on marriage?
 - a) Rs. 1000-1000
 - b) Rs. 11000-20000
 - c) 21000-30000
 - d) Rs. 31000-40000
 - e) 50000 or above
6. Do you support the prevailing system of child marriage?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
7. Does your family approve of widow marriage should the need arise in your family?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) No idea
8. Should Dwiraagaman be performed on the same day of marriage?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
9. Are you in favour of dowry?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

