

**CULTURE, PERSONAL CHOICES AND CHILD MARRIAGE IN
TAMANG COMMUNITY**



A Thesis

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DECLARATION

I, hereby, the research entitled, “**Culture, Personal Choices and Child Marriage in Tamang Community**” declare that to the best of my knowledge, in this thesis is my creation. No part of it was earlier published for the candidature of research degree to any university, college, or educational institution. The subject matter presented in this thesis report is the result of my work and original effort.

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Raj Kumar Lama

Date: 2025

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ABSTRACT

Child marriage has become a serious issue, particularly in developing countries as well as in Nepal. Child marriage has caused several social issues such as poverty, and health-related issues and it has also interrupted the advancement of individual and society as a whole. The main objective of this qualitative research work is to explore the underlying causes and consequences of child marriage among the Tamang community with special reference to Dupcheswhor Rural Municipality, where Tamang ethnic people have a majority of the population. The researcher has assessed how the culture, personal choices and child marriage among the Tamang community have interlinked and influenced each other. The findings suggest that poverty, social norms and values, and educational factors influence the prevalence of child marriage among the Tamang community. The study also elaborates that the Tamang community is reluctant to adopt the current educational system, and hence, there is a high prevalence of school dropouts. The study also shows that such a school dropout trend is highly responsible for the prevalence of child marriage in the Tamang community. Studies found that those who drop out of school at early ages were found married at their early age. Therefore, the study suggests further research work on why school dropout prevails in the Tamang community.

Keywords: Culture, personal choice and child marriage

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Marriage is the legal and socio-cultural ties between men and women that allow individuals to live as husband and wife. It is an inherent right of individuals to choose their life partner at their preferences. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 recognizes the right to grant 'free and full' consent to marriage. Marriage before the legal age of consent is known as 'early and forced child marriage'. It is considered a human rights issue since it affects individuals in numerous ways and also leads to human trafficking in developing countries. Early Child Marriage destroys the lives of adolescents or pre-adolescents physically and psychologically, depriving them of their childhoods and making them subject to abuse and exploitation (Acharya & Welsh, 2017).

Early marriage violates human rights, harming girls globally and restricting their ability to live lives free of various sorts of violence. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights defines early marriage as the involvement of at least one person under the age of 18 (Durgut & Kisa, 2018). This practice violates numerous human rights, including but not limited to the right to education and work, freedom from violence, freedom of movement, the right to voluntary marriage, reproductive rights, and access to reproductive and sexual health care. Furthermore, early marriage increases girls' vulnerability to assault, discrimination, and abuse, preventing them from fully participating in the economic, political, and social spheres (Suyanto, Sugihartati, Hidayat, Egalita, & Mas'udah).

Child marriage, also known as marriage before the age of 18, is a human rights violation that reduces literacy and educational attainment and raises the risk of living in poverty as an adult. In certain contexts, there are gender differences in educational results because girls are far more likely than boys to marry (Fan & Koski, 2022).

1.2 Introduction

Child marriage is a very crucial issue in most of the under developing countries. Nepal as under developing country faces child marriage as serious cases and as obstruction of its human development process. Child marriage prevails in Nepal

rooted with deep cultural, socio-economic factors and also due to lack of awareness /education. Child marriage is still common in Nepal. In Nepal, child marriage affects approximately 33% of girls prior to the age of 18, and 8% of girls by the age of 15. The practice has various causes, which include a lack of education, poverty and societal norms (Seta, 2023). The Tamang community is a major ethnic group in Nepal who resides mostly northern hilly region of the central and eastern region of the country. The Tamang community faces various social challenges due to their rooted socio-economic and cultural background. The Tamang community struggles with low education, lack of access with health care and livelihood opportunities causing many social obstacles. The child marriage prevails highly in the Tamang community and this obstruct their entire social advancement process.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

In Nepal, child marriage affects approximately 33% of girls prior to the age of 18, and 8% of girls by the age of 15. The practice has various causes, which include a lack of education, poverty and societal norms (Seta, 2023). Child marriage in Nepal is attributed to factors like lack of education, poverty, and low social status. It leads to early pregnancy complications and school dropouts. Mental health is impacted by homework and isolation. Raising awareness and employing women can help address this issue (Seta, 2023).

According to the Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) 2022, child marriage is a major issue which prevails in the country. According to the survey, 47% of women in Nepal have been found to marry before the age of 18 and 25% of women married before the age of 15. The early marriage affects society in several ways, with a negative impact on health and education. Due to early marriage, the bride suffers from poverty, mental health issues, child mortality, and is deprived of career opportunities (UNICEF, 2020).

The government of Nepal has expressed solidarity with target 5.3 of the Sustainable Development Goal (5.3) and committed to eliminating it by 2023. Despite the government of Nepal's efforts to eradicate child marriage, it continues to prevail particularly among the ethnic and indigenous communities. The early marriage prevails highly in the Tamang community in rural areas due to a lack of education,

economic empowerment and on their cultural grounds (Timalsina & Silwal, 2024). As such, this study has selected Dupcheshwor Rural Municipality of Nuwakot where the Tamang community predominantly resides.

Early child marriage is a social issue with far-reaching consequences affecting many communities worldwide. According to National Census Report 2021, there are total 21,005 population in Dupcheshwor Rural Municipality. Tamang language is mostly spoken in Dupcheshwor Rural Municipality, A total of 7774 population have married before the age of 20 years in Dupcheshwor Rural Municipality. Within the Tamang Community of Dupcheshwor Rural Municipality, the prevalence of early child marriage has significant implications for the wellbeing of individuals and the community at large. Due to child marriage, school dropout tendency is higher. It also increases economic and health related vulnerability among the population who marries before attaining the legal age. It also contributes negatively to literacy growth and as a whole to the entire aspect of the social life of the Tamang community residing in Dupcheshwor. Child marriage in the Tamang community of Dupcheshwor Rural Municipality has a multidimensional issue that demands thorough research. Understanding the current state of child marriage is critical for establishing focused treatments. The absence of detailed research on the socioeconomic variables influencing child marriage in the Tamang community impedes the development of effective policies and initiatives. This information vacuum limits the capacity to determine the severity of the problem and its impact on the affected individuals and the community as a whole. Without a thorough awareness of the scope of child marriage, it is difficult to adopt preventive measures and give enough support to children at risk. The degree to which personal choice is involved in marriages within the community, with considerations of societal pressure, gender expectations, and individual autonomy. It will be accessed in the study.

Second, addressing the causes of child marriage in the Tamang community is critical for establishing measures to solve the underlying issue. Deep-rooted cultural, economic, and societal variables may influence the occurrence of child marriage, and a lack of awareness or resources may help to perpetuate the practice. Investigating the underlying causes will assist policymakers' community leaders, and Civil Societies (CSOs) in developing tailored interventions to address the specific difficulties faced

by the Tamang community in Dupcheshwor Rural Municipality. Without a thorough investigation of the causes, all attempts to address the issue may be insufficient or misdirected, resulting in ineffectual solutions and the perpetuation of child marriage.

Culture also plays an important role in shaping the social behaviour of an individual or society as a whole. As a member of society, an individual's perception, beliefs, norms and values are always influenced by the social atmosphere where that individual resides. According to Stephanie (Psaki, 2021), ‘‘child marriage may be driven largely by social norms’’.

The Tamang community has a unique ethnic culture guided by traditional norms and values. The Tamang community is highly influenced by culture in every aspect of their life and societal behaviour. There is a high prevalence of child marriage in the Tamang community due to deep-rooted cultural beliefs and customs. The parental generation of the Tamang community believes that marrying their children at an early age preserves their societal prestige and family honour. (Gurung, 2019).

The elderly generation of the Tamang community also wants to see their grandchild sooner. The elder generation seeing their grandchild from their son or daughter considers them well settled, and they feel calm and quite satisfied. It is also accepted in the Tamang society that with marriage and having children, individuals become more responsible and do not act irresponsibly. Therefore, Tamang society prefers early marriage for their children to prevent them from being irresponsible. They think early marriage can make their children more responsible citizens and they would be bonded by their social responsibilities with the marriage.

However, the practice of child marriage in the Tamang community is a highly debated issue. Nepal Marriage Act has already restricted child marriage. According to marriage law in Nepal, marriage is legally registered only if both girl and boy attain the age of 20. The government of Nepal has made secondary education compulsory. The prevalence of early marriage obstructs children from accomplishing secondary education as per critics. Public opinion is rising against child marriage as it exposes risks related to health because of early pregnancy among the bride if they marry at an early age. It also deprives both boys and girls of pursuing their education and career goals.

Numerous studies have proven that the effects of early marriage are not only associated with girls' lack of emotional preparedness for the hardship of married life but are also related to the hindering of their career opportunities and the restriction of their ability to develop their future economic potential (Durgut & Kisa, 2018). Marriage, pregnancy, child-rearing, and household tasks all forced girls who married young to forego their aspirations, rather than realizing their socioeconomic potential (Williamson, 2014). Child marriage not only deprives girls of their fundamental rights to learn, develop, and become children, but it also has the potential to lead to many forms of violence. Many females divorce during the first year of marriage due to emotional unpreparedness. Girls who marry young frequently suffer hurdles to their education and are far more likely to encounter domestic violence, harassment, and even marital rape (Boyce, et al., 2018)

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions will be solved in the study:

1. How do personal choices affect marriage decisions in Tamang Community of Dupcheshwor Rural Municipality?
2. What role does social structure play in shaping child marriage practices in Tamang community?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The study aims to explore the root cause of child marriage in Tamang community and their consequences in social welfare. The specific research objectives for the study are:

1. To access the personal choices of marriage in Tamang Community of Dupcheshwor Rural Municipality.
2. To identify the cultural, social, economic, and educational factors that influence child marriages in the Tamang community.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it has the potential to expand our knowledge of the complicated relationships between the various factors that lead to child marriages in

the Tamang community in Dupcheshwor Rural Municipality. Through investigating the ways in which individual decisions, in addition to cultural, social, economic, and educational elements, impact the frequency of child marriages, this study attempts to provide light on an important domestic and international human rights concern. The analysis of the effects on social, psychological, and economic fronts clarifies the complex ramifications that these practices have on people especially young women and their families. Policymakers, local and international NGOs, and community leaders must be informed by these observations. This study could greatly increase the efficacy of customized programs aimed at preventing early marriages by providing an understanding of the unique community context.

As a result, this research may make a substantial contribution to the current initiatives aimed at enhancing gender parity, access to education, and economic prospects for impacted communities. In the end, the results may form the foundation for activities aimed at reducing the number of child marriages and fostering long-term societal development, both locally and globally.

1.7 Organization of the Study

The study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter deals with the background of the study, statement of problem, objectives, research questions, significance and assumptions and limitation of the study etc.

Second chapter deals with the review of literature where the causes and impact of child marriage from previous researchers are described and interpreted.

The third chapter focused on the methodology of data collection and analysis. It elaborated the qualitative, exploratory study design in detail, persons involved in the research study, methods used in sampling these persons, methods of data collection, and various analysis. This section also covered ethical issues and limitations to the study design.

The fourth chapter deals with the findings of research work which is presented in qualitative method.

The fifth chapter deals with the theoretical linkage, conclusion and suggestion of whole study.

1.8 Limitation of Study

The following are the limitations of the study:

1. The Study focuses on the Tamang community in Dupcheshwor Rural Municipality, limiting generalizability to other communities.
2. The data were collected at a single point in time, hindering the ability to establish causation or capture dynamic changes over time.
3. Participants were hesitant to disclose accurate information due to social norms and leading to social desirability bias and because of their busy days due to millet harvesting time in their village

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

A literature review is a description of an academic paper, which includes the current knowledge including considerable findings, as well as theoretical and methodological contributions to a particular topic. Literature reviews are taken as secondary sources. So it does not report new or original experimental work. Literature reviews are taken as the basis for research in nearly every academic field. Literature reviews helps to locate the current study within the body of the relevant literature.

The purpose of literature review is, thus to find out what research studies have been conducted in one's chosen field of study, and what remains to be done (Wolf & Pant, 2002). Rossman (1999) stated that a thoughtful and insightful discussion of related literature helps to establish a logical framework for the research that sets it within a tradition of inquiry and a context of related studies (Rossman, 1999) that shows the importance of literature review.

2.2 Marriage

The Oxford Dictionary definition of marriage is, "The legally or formally recognized union of two people as partners in a personal relationship." Further to illustrate this definition, we can define as a bond/commitment between a woman and a man which is strongly connected with intimacy, trust, love, tolerance, support, and harmony to each other. Marriage leads both couple to a new stage of social advancement having support from each other. According to Rousseau (1762), on the other hand, "marriage as a necessary condition for the formation of political citizens. Marriage is not a "natural" situation, but rather it is related to the obligations and nature of the state, and thus the marriage relationship is essentially political". Rousseau insist that marriage is a political obligation and it is not a natural. He describes that marriage forms family and family forms state or nation and therefore, these all are political institution.

According to Aristotle "Men and women come together because they need each other and they like each other. They need each other for the necessities of life and for

having and raising children”. Despite the different views on marriage, we can say that marriage is a social tie between man and woman to live and spend life together as partner.

2.3 Child Marriage

Child marriage is defined as being married during the childhood age. The UN Convention on The Rights of Children (UNCRC) defines a person until 18 years of age as a child. Therefore, any marriage not attaining the age of 18 years is known as child marriage/early marriage. However, the Marriage Registration Act Nepal 2080 describes that both boys and girls should attain the age of 20 before marriage. Therefore, any marriage before the legal age is considered as a violation of law and human rights.

Child marriage has similarities across settings- marriage before age 18 is illegal in many contexts and is often associated with low levels of education for girls, along with numerous negative health outcomes. Yet these experiences also diverge in important ways: in some settings, child marriage may be driven largely by social norms, while in others poverty or unplanned pregnancy may be more important determinants (Stephanie & Psaki, 2021).

Growing concern that this issue could have a detrimental effect on health is reflected in its increased prominence on the global development agenda. To summarize the corpus of research on the effects of child marriage on health and to determine the potential for bias in this body of work, we carried out a systematic review (Fan & Koski, 2022).

Numerous studies have proven that the effects of early marriage are not only associated with girls' lack of emotional preparedness for the hardship of married life, but are also related to the hindering of their career opportunities and the restriction of their ability to develop their future economic potential (Durgut & Kisa, 2018). Marriage, pregnancy, child-rearing, and household tasks all forced girls who married young to forego their aspirations, rather than realizing their socioeconomic potential (Williamson, 2014). Child marriage not only deprives girls of their fundamental rights to learn, develop, and become children, but it also has the potential to lead to many

forms of violence Many females divorce during the first year of marriage due to emotional unpreparedness. Girls who marry young frequently suffer hurdles to their education and are far more likely to encounter domestic violence, harassment, and even marital rape (Boyce, et al., 2018).

In India, Intra-gotra marriages are treated less favorably than inter-caste marriages due to gender, caste, and class implications. This leads to tensions between individuals, families, and panchayats. The traditional panchayat (khap) exercises authority in conjunction with the statutory elected panchayat. The state should intervene to protect citizens' rights enshrined in the Constitution (Ahlawat, 2015).

In his well-known study of marriage patterns across the world, Jack Goody has highlighted a number of reasons why young brides are preferred in traditional societies: they have a longer period of fertility before them; and they are more likely to be obedient and docile, necessary qualities to learn and accept the rules and ways of her new household (Goody,1990). The consequences of child marriage are very bad for girls in terms of health and education. They had experienced complication during antepartum and postpartum period. It was the most common reason for school dropout. They were also at high risk of any form of violence by their family members (Shahi ,2019).

Child marriage generally occurs below the age of 18 years. It affects not only the health of the child but also their education. However, it also affects psychologically increases the risk of depression. (Mahato ,2016).

2.4 Consequences of Child Marriage

Early marriage is likely to disrupt the accumulation of human capital due to early school drop-out, withdrawal from labour markets, and the adverse effects on health from early childbearing (Jensen and Thornton 2003) Child marriage practice is strongly established social violence carried on from generation to generation. It has an overwhelming impact on girls, their communities and their countries. Child marriage can lead to maternal health risks, great exposure to HIV/AIDS and domestic and sexual violence, and deprivation of childhood and a future (Sahi ,2021)

Early marriage can lead to various challenges, including medical issues, restrictions on education and work opportunities, and the burden of domestic responsibilities. It can also result in intimate partner violence. Factors such as poor education, societal views, and traditional norms also contribute to early marriage. Changes in society's value system and permissive associations can also influence premarital relationships and unwanted pregnancies. It is vital to establish particular education for girls and teenagers in general about education and sexual reproductive rights. Numerous research revealed that girls' lack of awareness of reproductive health and how they should protect their personal safety is one of the reasons why early marriage continues to occur (Suyanto, Sugihartati, Hidayat, Egalita, & Mas'udah).

Rising awareness of child marriage as a worldwide development issue appears to reflect rising understanding of its possible effects on population health in addition to its effects on schooling. Several international agencies, such as the World Bank, UNFPA, UNICEF, and UN Population Fund, have expressed concern about this practice due to its potential for negative health effects. These groups draw attention to the links between early childbearing, child marriage, and violence during childbirth, and STDs, among other unfavorable consequences (Fan & Koski, 2022). The study analyzed literature on child marriage, its impact on health care utilization, intimate partner violence, mental health, and nutritional status. Due to the risk of bias, the results were interpreted cautiously. The study assessed the directionality of effects measures and precision of these measures.

In fact, child marriage is a serious issues. Early age or child marriage has multiple negative impacts and its interrupts the holistic development of individual, family and entirely nation as well. All literature shows that there are wide range of negative consequences that child marriage causes to an individual and social life.

2.5 Theoretical Review

To create a theoretical framework for the topic "Culture, Personal Choices, and Child Marriage in Tamang Community," one would synthesize theories from sociology, anthropology, and psychology that relate to culture, personal autonomy, social structure, and economic factors. Here is a relevant theoretical concepts:

2.5.1 Theory of Socialization

Social learning Theory was pioneered by Albert Bandura. According to this theory, people learn from society. The societal culture, norms, and practice highly influence human behavior and their action. This theory posits that the behavior of a human is determined by what he/she see in the society and surroundings. According to Social learning theory, an individual learns from the society what he/she observe and experience in his/her daily life. Human behavior is deeply rooted in cultural and social norms, which are shaped over a long course of time and duration.

Social Learning Theory suggests that people learn behaviors and norms from the community around them through observation, imitation, and modeling. Within the context of child marriage, this theory explain how the practice is learned and perpetuated across generations in the Tamang community

2.5.2 Cognitive Development Theory

Jean Piagets describes that socialization influences the cognitive development of a human being. An individual and specially children learns from the socialization process. An individual learns through his regular interaction and social environment. An individual personality is constructed based on his social norms, values and perception. As such this theory explained how the children in Tamang community learns from their society in regards to marriage decision.

2.5.3 Structural Functionalism

The application of Theory of structural functionalism can facilitate an analysis of the ways in which social structure, such as the institution of family and religion and cultural impact the incidence of child marriage in the Tamang community. This idea emphasizes how structural inequality affects social norms like marriage. Durkheim explained that the social structure determines human action (Durkheim, E. 1984).

In the case of the Tamang community, understanding cultural capital might provide insights into how traditional norms and values are transmitted, respected, and possibly challenged, thereby shaping the prevalence of child marriage. For example, different forms of cultural capital - such as embodied capital (personified by an individual),

objectified capital (in the form of cultural goods), and institutionalized capital (like educational qualifications) - can be linked to marriage decisions in the community. An individual's personal choices could be influenced by their embodied cultural capital and the dispositions they have internalized from their family and community, which might inform their attitude towards child marriage. Objectified cultural capital, including possessions that represent cultural sophistication or status, might also play a role in such marriage decisions, particularly in how dowries or marriage transactions are perceived. Meanwhile, institutionalized capital might reveal what role education plays in influencing individuals' perspectives on child marriage.

As this theory scrutinizes the influence of education and cultural know-how in society, it fits well with research question two, which seeks to understand the cultural, social, economic, and educational factors impacting child marriage. It could also shed light on question three, explaining the social, psychological, and economic impacts of child marriage, particularly if viewed through the lens of social inequalities related to the distribution and recognition of cultural capital.

2.5.4 Cultural and Marriage Practices

Culture also plays an important role in shaping the social behavior of an individual or society as a whole. As a member of society, an individual's perception, beliefs, norms and values are always influenced by the social atmosphere where that individual resides. According to Stephanie (Psaki, 2021), ‘‘child marriage may be driven largely by social norms’’.

The Tamang community has a unique ethnic culture guided by traditional norms and values. The Tamang community is highly influenced by culture in every aspect of their life and societal behaviour. There is a high prevalence of child marriage in the Tamang community due to deep-rooted cultural beliefs and customs. The parental generation of the Tamang community believes that marrying their children at an early age preserves their societal prestige and family honour. (Gurung, 2019).

Cultural practice is influential in every sector of human social life. Cultural norms, values and traditions shape human perceptions and behaviour. We can take the

example of South Asian countries where arranged marriage is considered more common. Family plays an influential role in their culture while choosing their life partner on the ground of social factors such as caste, religion etc. (Gupta, 1976).

The cultural perceptions of Western countries are different and thus we hardly see arranged marriages in Western countries. They do not consider caste, ethnicity and religion as determining factors for their marriage (Cherlin, 2004).

2.6 Research Gaps

The research has showed that social economic factor are mainly important for the occurrence of early marriage in many countries including Nepal. However, studies on several Asian counties with diverse socioeconomic conditions have found that the ethnicity factor significantly affects the timing of marriage and the time of first birth, independent of socioeconomic factor. (Thapa, 1996)

The researcher will explore the culture, personal choices and underlying root cause of early marriage in the context of Tamang community in Rural Municipality

The statement's research gap relates to the need for targeted studies on early child marriage in the Tamang ethnicity, taking into account the prevalence of the practice, ongoing initiatives to raise awareness, and the relative paucity of research when compared to other groups. To provide important insights for policy-making and social development, researchers could investigate the underlying causes, societal attitudes, and potential treatments associated with early child marriage within the Tamang community. Some gaps can be listed below: I have found the following gaps.

- a) There is a research gap in understanding the dynamics, causes, and consequences of Early Child Marriage within the Tamang community with the special reference of Dupcheshwor Rural Municipality
- b) Comparative research is needed to bridge this gap and improve understanding of Early Child Marriage in other cases, areas, or professions.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

While research methodology is the way used to answer research problems fully, research methods encompass all strategies and procedures used for performing research. It is a science that examines the methodological aspects of research. In this area, the researcher introduces himself by outlining the various stages often used to investigate a research problem. Thus, methodology refers to the scientific approach used to undertake a research project (Mishra & Alok, 2017). Research methodology is the one of the important part of the study. This chapter will include study procedures, data sources and gathering techniques, the respondents' sample size, and analytical indicators and tools.

3.1 Philosophical Position and Research Approach

Empiricism holds that knowledge is primarily derived from sensory experience, meaning observations, data, and evidence gathered through experience is central. In the context of child marriage research, this would emphasize collecting empirical data such as interviews with individuals affected by child marriage and field observations in communities where child marriage is prevalent.

Empiricism values evidence-based research, and this approach would rely heavily on verifiable data to understand the scope, causes, and consequences of child marriage. Empirical knowledge, however, may have limitations in capturing the nuanced subjective experiences and cultural meanings behind child marriage practices. I have applied the empiric approach for this research by interviewing the children affected by child marriage, parents affected by child marriage and observing the field etc.

Further, the child marriage issue can be reviewed and considered through human rights and social justice points of view. Socio-cultural and economic factors are influential factors for the prevalence of early child marriage in Nepal particularly in the Tamang community.

Philosophers insist that a child below the age of marriage cannot decide what is best and what is wrong with their life. Due to their immaturity, they are not in a position to give consent for their marriage. Therefore, child marriage deprives young boys and girls of choosing their partner at their own.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children (1990) entitles every child to the right against every form of harmful practice. The prevalence of early child marriage violates the rights of children causing an interruption of their individual development. Child marriage causes challenges to the health, education and overall development of individuals and society violating the rights of children entitled to them through various international and national frameworks.

Philosophers also insist that child marriage promotes gender discrimination and causes the cycle of poverty. Child marriage in the Tamang community deprives youngster of pursuing their education and career goals and this ultimately causes a poverty cycle in the Tamang community.

This study aims to explore the underlying cultural and socio-economic causes of child marriage in the Tamang community. The exploration of such underlying factors may promote social justice in the Tamang community addressing the child marriage issue with due respect to their culture.

Addressing child marriage requires respecting the cultural context of the Tamang community while promoting ethical principles, human rights, and social justice. Efforts to end child marriage should involve community engagement, education, and legal reforms that protect the rights and well-being of children.

Researcher has taken different approaches to the research process. In general, researchers followed two research approaches; namely, the inductive approach and the deductive approach. (Trochim, 2006) Describes his two "broad ways of thinking": the inductive approach and the deductive approach. He defines induction as the transition from the specific to the general, and deduction begins with the general and ends with the specific. Arguments based on experience or observation are best expressed inductively, while arguments based on laws, rules, or other generally accepted principles are best expressed a priori. So, inductive reasoning is a bottom-up approach and deductive reasoning is a top-down approach. Inductive reasoning leads from specifics to generalities, while deductive reasoning leads from general premises to specific conclusions. In deductive methods, research involves gathering data from investigations. The results/findings are then analyzed to determine if the results confirm or reject the hypothesis/theory. Similarly, an inductive approach, research studies, examined data and then theory for regularities, patterns, and topic and shape generalizations (Kumar, 2017).

Based on a deductive approach, this study will identify the status of child marriage, its influenced factors and their impacts on social welfare life.

3.2 Research Design

A study design is an overall plan for connecting a conceptual study problem to a relevant (and actionable) empirical study. Therefore, it is the main plan of the research study. As Robson (2002) explained, he has three possible forms of study design: Exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. Since each design serves a different end goal, the classification criteria are based on research area objectives (Robson, 2002).

Researcher has described the research questions based on the observation of field visit and interpreting the data collected in the narrative way explaining the underlying causes and consequences of child marriage among the Tamang community of Dupcheshwor Rural Municipality, Nuwakot, Bagmati province.

A phenomenological research design that derives from philosophy and psychology, in which the researcher describes an individual's lived experience of the phenomenon described by the participant. It is a qualitative strategy by which researchers identify the nature of human experience with phenomena, as described by a participant in one study (Creswell J, 2014).

Researcher has described the underlying causes and consequences of early marriage following the field visit and consulting the respondent involved in early marriage and exploring their experience through interviews. The study therefore is a descriptive and exploratory research with a phenomenological research with qualitative data interpretation.

3.3 Data Source

Data are a particular kind of information that are typically gathered through observation, surveys, inquiries, or are produced as a result of human activity for the goal of research. For present research work, primary as well as secondary are used.

Primary Data

Data that are fresh and first-time collections are considered original and are referred to as primary data. These informational pieces resemble raw materials. Primary data is more dependable, authentic, and unbiased and has not yet been published. Since primary data has not been modified or altered by humans, its validity is higher than that of secondary data.

Tools for Collecting Primary Data

Primary data sources are scarce, and it is often challenging to collect data from them due to either a lack of people or a lack of collaboration. So, data collection tools, data collectors and strategies of data collection should be responsible in attention. The primary information were collected directly from the respondents of different areas by using Research questionnaire and Key Informant Interview (KII) and Focus group discussion (FGD).

Questionnaire

Researcher developed a checklist for one to one correspondence for collection of data through questionnaires. Opened - ended questions were provisioned within questionnaire.

Key Informant Interview (KII):

A face-to-face interaction with the respondent is called an interview. The biggest issue with an interview is when the respondent purposefully withholds information; otherwise, it is a rich source of information (Kabir, 2016). In addition to listening to the interviewee's statements, the interviewer can also watch the interviewee's body language, facial expressions, and other responses to the questions. This makes it simple for the interviewer to reach conclusions. The researcher carried direct interviews with such key informants at the field level. The researcher used open-ended, semi-structured questions for the interview. The information obtained from the respondents was captured through note taking and some photographs were taken with permission of respondents. In-depth interview was organized to collect the qualitative information.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

The work of Merton and Fiske in the 1940s led to the development of focus group techniques. Focus group discussions (FGDs) are an in-depth field technique that gathers a small, homogeneous group of people (often six to twelve) to talk about subjects that are on the study agenda. With the help of a moderator or facilitator, the aim of this discussion is to motivate participants to explore hidden beliefs, attitudes, and motivations behind their actions. In other words, a well-run group can be useful in determining the "how" and "why" of human behavior.

Focus groups are used as a tool for gathering data. Semi-structured group interviews are used to gather data. Focus groups are frequently used to gather information on a specific subject. The discussion is held in an informal setting so that participants can speak freely without feeling any hesitation. In the study to get objectives, FGDs were carried out. The researcher organized a focus group discussion among 8 participants consisting of the students of boys and girls of class 10 of a school from the project location.

Ethical Consideration

The researcher obtained consent from the respondents to be interviewed, explaining the purpose of the study and its academic importance. The researcher explained that the names and photos of the respondents would not be presented. As explained and agreed with the respondents, the respondents are coded with initial and surname in text to refer their information in any reference document. High attention and respect to local cultural sensitivity were paid during field work.

Secondary Data

Secondary data are those that have already been statistically analyzed or that have been gathered, statistically processed, and then transferred to another party. Whether or not it has been made public, it is information that has already been obtained and used for another reason.

Tools for Collecting Secondary Data

Various tools were used to collect and analyze the secondary data.

- a. Document Review:** To gather the relevant materials, several libraries at universities and other organizations were consulted. For document evaluation, a variety of publications, including encyclopedias, journals, and occasionally published data were studied.
- b. Web Search:** The information about the outside area (another region of Nepal and the world) was obtained through online. Journal articles, reports, and publications on the subject, as well as electronic/internet searches were examined. Further, the ideas/concepts were borrowed/referred through the assistant of google/AI.

3.4 Research Methods

Qualitative Research Method: Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meanings people construct, that is, how people make sense of their world and their experiences in it (Merriam, 2009). Some emphasize epistemological attitudes. Research that uses methods such as participant observation and case studies to provide narrative and descriptive descriptions of environments and practices. Sociologists who use these methods typically reject positivism and adopt a form of interpretive sociology (Parkinson & Drislane, 2011). On the view of Crossman, Ashley (2021) Qualitative research is a type of social science research that collects and processes non-numerical data and attempts to interpret the meaning of that data, helping us understand social life through surveys of target groups or places (Ashley, 2000). Similarly, the view is presented by Bhandari, P. (November 24, 2022). She stated that Qualitative research is used to understand how people experience the world. There are many approaches to qualitative research, but they are flexible and focus on maintaining rich meaning when interpreting data (Bhandari, 2022). This research has aimed to capture the underlying root cause of early marriage and explaining its impact on the Tamang community of Dupcheshwor Rural Municipality interpreting the findings/information that are gathered from the participants who have experienced child marriage themselves The researcher has described the subjective information provided by the participants following a qualitative research method.

3.5 Sample Design

Population and Sample Size

The total number of objects concerning which knowledge is sought. Finite and infinite are the two categories into which it can be divided. If the population has a fixed number of components that can all be counted together, then it is said to be finite. It is necessary to characterize the population in terms of its components, sample units, scope, and time. Finding a representative sample (or subset) of a population is the objective because it is exceedingly uncommon to have adequate time or resources to collect data from everyone or everything in a population (Kabir, 2016). The researcher has interviewed with the respondents of early marriage cases of Tamang community from Dupcheshwor Rural Municipality. The 14 participants were purposefully selected as they had witnessed child marriage themselves. Further, I have also interviewed 5 key respondent (parents, teachers, local government representative and NGO worker) who have closely observed child marriage cases in this study area.

Sampling Methods

It is the process of selecting the sample for estimating the population characteristics. In other words, it is the process of obtaining information about an entire population by examining only a part of it (Kabir, 2016). There are two basic approaches to sampling: Probability (random) Sampling and Non-probability (Nonrandom) Sampling. Researcher selected early marriage cases of Dupcheshwor Rural Municipality as its sample for research. The researcher selected 14 sample participants to represent the child marriage issue. Similarly, 3 parents who witnessed child marriage of their children were taken to represent the parent's view/experience regarding child marriage. The researcher also interviewed 1 teacher, 1 NGO worker and 1 Rural Municipality ward chairperson to obtain the opinion of key informants.

Sample Size for Key Informant Interview (KII)

The purposive sampling technique is used for selecting of respondents for interviews with the expectation that important information will be obtained from the subjects involved. The purpose was to get rich information. Attention were paid while

planning and conducting interviews to secure a quiet area for interviews and to ensure that interview process are be free of interruptions. Interviews were recorded by smartphone with the consent of interviewees.

The school teacher, the official from the Rural Municipality office, and NGO workers working with the child sector were taken as samples for consultation as key informants by the researcher during the data collection period.

3.6 Data Collection

One of the most crucial phases of doing a research is data collection. The first step in data collection is identifying the type of data that is needed, which is followed by the selection of a sample from a certain population. To answer specified research questions, test hypotheses, and assess results, data collection is the act of acquiring and measuring information on variables of interest in a systematic and defined manner. First of all literature review were carried out for the data then primary data were collected.

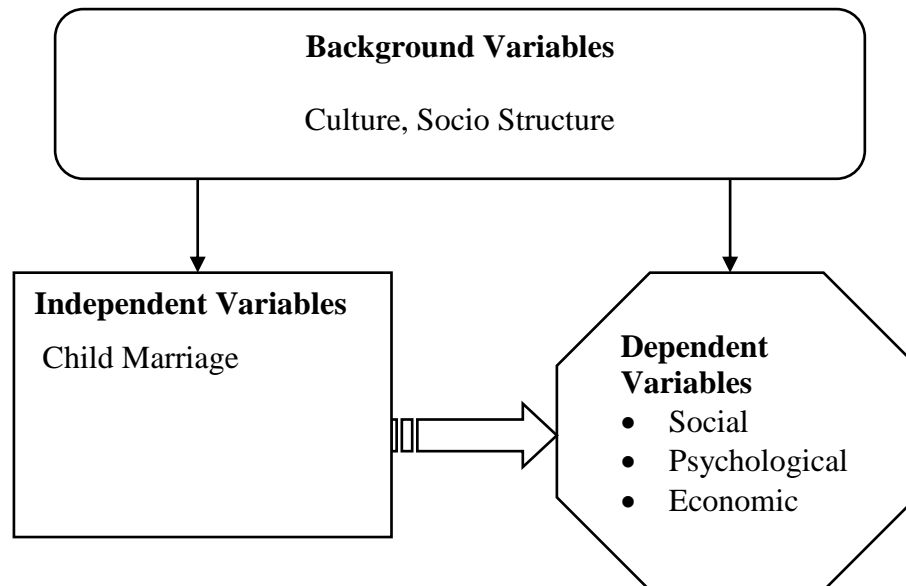
3.7 Variables in the Study

Research's primary component is the variable. This is regarded as the concept, perception, or image that can be quantified. To address the goals of the study, the study-related variables were found through literature reviews and discussions with experts. The dependent variable is what the researcher assumes will change throughout the experiment. The experiment's independent variable is what is changed because the researcher believes it will have an impact on the dependent variable. Background variables are an explanatory variable that can influence but not be affected by other (dependent) variables.

In the study the setting of variables are as follows.

Independent Variables: *Child Marriage*

Dependent Variable: *Social, Psychological and Economic*

Figure: 1*The Setting of Variables**Background variables/Cultural Practices-Child Marriage-Consequences/Effects***3.8 Data Analysis and Interpretation**

Data analysis is the methodical application of logical and/or statistical approaches to describe and demonstrate, summarize and assess, and assess data. Various analytical techniques were used. Data Presentation and analysis are essential elements of the research process as they help to communicate the depth and complexity of respondents' experiences. The present study aims to determine how personal choice is influenced by culture and thus child marriage occurred in the Tamang community with special reference to Dupcheshwor Rural Municipality. In this research, I have used a qualitative narrative analysis approach to explore the influence of cultural and socio-economic factors among the Tamang community and how it affects their social behaviours. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with the people who married at an early age, guardians who faced early marriage of their child, and key informants; such as the ward chairperson of Rural Municipality, School teacher, and NGO worker working in the field of child protection. I have also organised focus group discussions with the children from classes 9-10 of the study area consisting of both boys and girls. While presenting and analyzing the data, this study initially

transcribed the interviews of each informant under the themes. Narratives are used as an analytical tool in conducting the analysis, which, according to Riesman in 2008, refers to the analysis of the person's account of an event or experience. It allows different but equally substantial and meaningful interpretations and conclusions by focusing on different elements. In the analysis, the data collected are categorized into main aspects; personnel choice and marriage practice among the Tamang community of study area, cultural and socio-economic and educational factors responsible for the child marriage and its impact among the Tamang community of study area.

Analysis and Interpretation of Quantitative Data

A data collected from the respondents of the study area were grouped and sub-grouped as per the requirement of the study into themes and sub-themes. The discussion has been then made on relevant themes and subthemes based on descriptive analysis. Both recent and old data has been used for descriptive analytics and to seek out patterns and connections. It has only been described as trends and associations without going any further, it is frequently referred to as the most basic type of data analysis. The data obtain from interviews, observation and Focus Group discussions are analyzed following qualitative data analysis process. Phenomenological Analysis was carried out for the purpose. The data obtained from the field through in-depth interviews has been presented in this section. The researcher has prepared a table of demographic information where first initials and surnames are given to refer to the respondents. The informants' demographic profile is in Annex.2. The transcribed information obtained from the field has been placed in relevant thematic areas of research.

CHAPTER IV

PERSONAL CHOICES AND CHILD MARRIAGE IN DUPCHESWOR RURAL MUNICIPALITY

4.1 Demographic Features in Study Area

Dupcheshwor Rural Municipality has situated in the Nuwakot district of Bagmati Province, Nepal. It is divided into seven wards and occupies the area of 131.62 square kilometres. According to the population census of 2021, 21005 people have been living in Dupcheshwor Rural Municipality in which 49.9% male and 50.1% female with 5141 total household within total 7 wards. According to the village profile 2076, 85 % of the population is indigenous by ethnicity. Among the indigenous groups, the majority are Tamang.

Historically, agriculture has been the major occupation of local habitant in the rural municipality. Agriculture and animal husbandry exists as a main source of livelihood in this locality. Working as wage laborers, sand extraction, and cultural tourism have emerged as local income generating activities after agriculture and animal husbandry. Based on the village profile 2076, about 35 % of the population worked as daily wage labor and unemployed, while 8.2 % are employed in foreign employment. Traditionally, firewood has been used extensively as fuel for cooking food and making local alcohol. In Dupcheshwor rural municipality, there are 5,185 household using firewood as fuel for cooking and in most of the rural areas and this is common in almost every household.

4.2 Demographic Information of the Respondents

A total of 14 young women have been involved for the study who had personally experienced child marriage. Further, 3 parents witnessing the child marriage of their children were also involved. In addition to this, 3 key informants; a teacher, an NGO worker, and a Rural Municipality ward chairperson- were interviewed to obtain their fundamental perspectives on the child marriage agenda.

The 14 child brides ranging from the age of 14 to 18 years and belonging to diverse educational backgrounds were consulted for interview as main respondents for the

agenda. Out of these respondents, some had to leave school before marriage, while others dropped out after getting married. Interestingly, some of them continued their education despite they married in an early age. The parents of the child brides were interviewed to obtain the understanding/views and experiences regarding child marriage they have personally experienced. There is also inclusion of key informants from education, government, and non-governmental organizations to help broadening the perspective of the study, offering insights into the community-level responses to the agenda of child marriage.

4.3 Marriage Practice among the Tamang Community

According to L. Tamang (personal communication, June 18, 2024) “marriage is known as ‘*Breslang*’ in the Tamang language. Previously, marriage was dealt with /by elders/guardians of the family most of the time. However, some couples eloped choosing each other and leaving home and later they also arranged marriage fulfilling their cultural practice. According to her, cousin (maternal side only), marriage practice prevails among the Tamang community. Tamang ethnic community resides isolated from other communities normally and they do have their own distinguished culture and practice which could have encouraged them to have cousin marriage, so all members of their community are not away from each other and they are always tied and closed socially.”

According to her, the marriage forms can be categorized as;

***Riba Breslang* (Arranged Marriage)**

Arranged marriage is called *Riba Breslang* in the Tamang language. With *Riba Breslang*, the bridegroom's side goes to the bride's home with guardians/elders, and *Tamba/Ganba* (ethnic/community leaders of the Tamang community who are considered prestigious and trusted among their community). Groom side comes to the bride's home along with *Sagun Pong* (A bunch of food and drinks)

Sagun consists of *Irak* (Homemade alcohol of millet) full of *Pongs* (Several numbers of mud/soil pots) and chickens, and *Sel Roti* (*Traditional Nepalese ring-shaped dough made from rice flour*). The *Tamba* from the bridegroom side requests the bride's parents to hand over her daughter to the boy for marriage.

Then, *Tamba* from both the bridegroom's side and the bride's side and other elders of the family, and neighbours first check if they have any customary forbidden relation for marriage. They check *Swage* (*Kinship by blood*) which is a forbidden relation for marriage. They don't make marriage among their own *Swage Bhai* (Blood kinship). They also don't make marriage with a boy or girl if the *Rui* (Internal clan of Tamang ethnic) of both side mothers is similar. They will check that the boy and girl must be *Kutumba* (customary relation that allows for marriage) to each other by custom for marriage. Then bride's family/elder guardians and *Tamba/Ganba* asked the bride for her opinion and consent. If the girl gives her consent then her parents and neighbours *Tamba/Ganba* put some conditions on the boy's side with the obligation that the boy should fulfil for the marriage. The obligation states that boys should take proper care of girls after marriage and should not discriminate for any reason. All members of the boy side shall take good care of the girl and show love and kindness. If the boy side agrees to these conditions they will deal for a *Rit* (some offering from the boy side to the girl side family which is similar to *Sagun*). The spirit of *Rit* is that the boy side must pay something (although not monetary) to the girl side to value the girl and her status in the boy's family. If this is also agreed by the boy side then *Tamba* of the girl side ask the girls to accept the *Sagun* (Bunch of food and alcohol) and serve it to all people attending that *Pong* (first dealing of marriage among the family of both boys and girl) ceremony. Most importantly, the *Sagun* must be served to people attending the *pong* ceremony by the girls for mandatory. If the girl is in disagreement for the marriage, she may refuse *Sagun* and will not serve it to people attending the *Pong* ceremony. Non acceptance of *Sagun* by girl will lead automatic cancellation of propose marriage deal. If the girl accepts *Sagun* then she will serve it to all people attending that *Pong* ceremony. They will also exchange the introduction of all relatives of both sides during the *Pong* ceremony and fix a date for *Chardam* (the second deal of marriage)

During the *Chardam* ceremony, the bridegroom side brings *Tamang Goila* (full set of Tamang traditional attire and ornaments) for both girl and boys and then *Tamba* will make some customary practice. They will serve *Sagun* again and fix the date for the marriage ceremony then. This *Chardam* is considered as the most important part of Tamang marriage ceremony. Once the *Chardam* is done meaning marriage is finally dealt and it can't be avoided/terminated or cancelled from either side of the

bridegroom or bride. If either side cancels the marriage for any reason by chance then they have to compensate money to other party as per the claim of the party affected. After *Chardam*, they will fix date for marriage finally.

Then as per the date fixed during *Chardam*, they will perform the marriage ceremony. A marriage ceremony is conducted following a visit of the bridegroom to the bride's home with relatives, friends, and villagers with *Tamang Goila* (traditional attire and ornament for the bride). The bride side also offers *Tamang Goila* to the bridegroom during the marriage ceremony. They exchange *Khada/Mala* (Garland) with each other. There will be *Damphure* (ethnic dance practitioner and singer) who will perform the traditional Tamang *Shyaba* (dance) with the *Damphu* and *Tungna* (Tamang ethnic musical instruments) and Hyai (song). They will serve traditional food and drinks along with a meal to all the people attending and finally, the bridegroom takes the girl to their home.

Yarsi Breslang (Elope Marriage)

The most important form of Tamang marriage is Yarsi Marriage (Elope) marriage which is becoming more common these days with new generation. In such a marriage, both girl and boy meet each other, and understand each other's staying in the affair for a time (differs from person to person as some stay in the affair for long times; years and some couple elope immediately also after once dating) and finally they choose each other as life partner and elope from their home. However, in such cases, it is found that later they talk to their respective family and the families accept their relationship. Then after, the Marriage ceremony is also organized following the same cultural practice of arranged marriage.

According to U. L Tamang, (personal communication, June 18, 2024) previously there was the practice of forced marriage and thus girls did not have much freedom in choosing their partner in many cases. He said such marriage was called "*Balsing Breslang*" (Force Marriage). This form of marriage does not exist anymore in the Tamang community. With this form, the boy forcefully pulls the girl to his home and keeps her as his wife without her consent. When a boy prefers any girl as his wife and

sometimes the boy's parent also choose a girl as their sister-in-law and then they plan for her to be brought forcefully into the boy's home. This practice was really violent and extremely hazardous as sometimes it may cause violent fighting with local arms and ammunition among the Tamang community and cause a massive human casualty or loss of lives. However, these days such practice has almost disappeared among the Tamang community. These days, they insist on the consent of both; boys and girls marrying with each other.

According to him, there is a practice of *Samdi/Samdini Breslang* (Cousin marriage) marriage in the Tamang community which is a much-preferred form of marriage. In such a marriage, the boy and girl prefer their *Samdi* as partners and elope themselves for marriage. The cousins from *Angi* (Fupu in Nepali, paternal aunt) and *Aseng* (maternal uncle *Mama* in Nepali) are called *Samdi* (boy) and *Samdini* (girl) and marriage is still mostly preferred among them. However, they do not organize marriage among cousins from maternal aunt and paternal uncle. They also strictly avoid marriage among *Swage* (kinship in the blood). However, some new generation refuses such marriage these days and only making such marriage among extended cousins from maternal uncle and paternal aunt and not with immediate cousin from their own paternal aunt for maternal uncle.

According to him, some girls also make a second marriage if they are not happy with their husband. In such case, she elopes with a second husband and this is called *Jari Bibaha* (Compensated marriage)

In such a marriage bridegroom pays economic compensation to the previous husband of the girl whom she was married previously. The amount is determined by the previous husband and his family for compensation and the new bridegroom has no option other than paying said compensation. If the latter boy refuses to pay compensation then there will be violence from the previous husband's side and it was acknowledged as rational among the Tamang community socially. The *Jari* denotes compensation. The boy also needs to pay *Jari* not only if a girl was previously married but even if her *Chardam* is done earlier with other boys following Tamang customs.

4.4 Personal Choice and Marriage Decision-Making Process among the Tamang Community

4.4.1 Cultural Practices and Personal Choice Related to Marriage Decision

It is seen that the marriage decision-making process is heavily influenced by the parent in the Tamang community. Previously, most of the marriages were arranged marriage in the Tamang community which were always arranged by parents /family. The boy or girl did not had autonomy in choosing partner previously as per the respondent. The parents of both especially from boy side will choose daughter in law for their son and they will go to the girl's side with a marriage proposal. Then if the parent of the girl side accepts the proposal, the marriage will be dealt with for final. The parents always preferred early marriage due to many socioeconomic factors and this was mainly causing early marriage at the previous time. However, focus group participants and other interviewed responded that such practice does not prevail currently and there is not much parental influence nowadays among their children for marriage purposes compared to previous days. These days' children themselves choose their partner at an early age because of various social factors. There is emerging trends of love and elope marriage among the Tamang community currently. The boys and girls are choosing their partner on their own at a very early stage and eloping for marriage without parental consent. Later they return to their village after escaping a few days of eloping and their parent accept their marriage. Parent also organize the formal marriage of their children in similar ways later as they organize arranged marriages. It is learnt through the respondent that the personal choice of girls or boys was given high respect even on previous days socially in the Tamang community. The arranged marriage in the Tamang community is followed by the practice of “*pong*” ceremony. A “*pong*” ceremony is organized at an early stage of marriage when the bridegroom side comes with “*Sagun*”. *Sagun Pong* (A bunch of food and drinks) contains “*Irak*” (Homemade alcohol of millet) full of *Pongs* (Several numbers of mud/soil pots) and chickens, and *Sel Roti* (*Traditional Nepalese ring-shaped dough made from rice flour*). The *Tamba* from the bridegroom side requests the bride's parents to hand over her daughter to the boy for marriage. The *Sagun* must be served to people attending the *pong* ceremony by the girls for mandatory. If the girl is in disagreement for the marriage, she may refuse *Sagun* and will not serve it to

people attending the Pong ceremony. Non acceptance of *Sagun* by girl will lead automatic cancellation of propose marriage deal. If the girl accepts *Sagun* then she will serve it to all people attending that “*Pong*” ceremony. However, respondent said that even at earlier arranged marriage cases, parents’ influence/counselled the girl to accept the *Sagun* in a formal *Sagun* ceremony. (S. Tamang, personal communication, 19 June 2024). The personal choice of girl is influenced by parents especially mother and other female senior members of the household beforehand as explained by respondent during interview. The girl will not have other options than accepting *Sagun* in front of *Tamba* and villagers in the *Pong* ceremony. Therefore, as per the respondent such influence of parents in marriage decision always promote early marriage in the Tamang community. (L Tamang, personal communication, June 18, 2024)

The Tamang ethnic community considers marriage as an important part of their life. They have different forms of marriage in practice. Previously, marriage was dealt with /by the elders/guardians of the family most of the time. However, some couples eloped, choosing each other and leaving home, and later they also arranged marriage fulfilling their cultural practice as well (LTamang, personal communication, June 18, 2024)

There was also the practice of forced marriage earlier where the girl was taken forcefully by a boy to his home as wife. Previously Tamang community also had the practice of marrying with cousins (maternal side only). Tamang ethnic community resides isolated from other communities normally and they do have their own distinguished culture and practice which could have encouraged them to make cousin marriage so all members of their community are not away from each other and they are always tied and closed socially. In such pattern of force marriage, the personal choice were always underestimated/ignored. *Balsing Breslang* (Force Marriage) does not exist anymore in the Tamang community. However, such marriage practice was there in the Tamang community previously. With this form, the boy forcefully pulls the girl to his home and keeps her as his wife without her consent. When a boy prefers any girl as his wife and sometimes the boy's parent also choose a girl as their sister-in-law and then they plan for her to be brought forcefully into the boy’s home. This practice was really violent and extremely hazardous as sometimes it may cause

violent fighting with local arms and ammunition among the Tamang community and cause a massive human casualty or loss of lives. However, these days such practice has almost disappeared among the Tamang community. These days, they insist on the girl's consent especially and also the consent of boy who are marrying with each other. (L Tamang, personal communication, June 18, 2024)

The most important form of Tamang marriage is *Yarsi Marriage* (Elope) marriage which is becoming more common these days with new generation. In such a marriage, both girl and boy meet each other, and understand each other's staying in the affair for a time (differs from person to person as some stay in the affair for long times; years and some couple elope immediately also after once dating) and finally they choose each other as life partner and elope from their home. However, in such cases, it is found that later they talk to their respective family and the families accept their relationship. Then, the Marriage ceremony is also organized following the same cultural practice of arranged marriage. (L Tamang, personal communication, June 18, 2024). Therefore, such elope marriage is occurred following the mutual consent of boys and girls and with the preference of both couple.

According to D. Tamang, (personal communication, June 20, 2024) the boys and girls are involved in the marriage decision. The family, boys and girls jointly decide regarding the marriage cases, however, the final and ultimate right to decide on marriage remains to the boys and girls themselves. However, according to him, these days, boys and girls are eloping from the home and getting married without the consent of their parents in many cases.

According to S. Tamang, (personal communication, June 17, 2024), "Boys and girls choose each other and elope from home first. Then after, their family also accept their relationship and fix the marriage. These days, boys and girls elope first at their own choice. Then the family of both sides; girl and boy also accept their marriage later with no objection most of the time in the Tamang community. Previously, the bridegroom used to come to the girl's house with his parents first to make the marriage proposal. Then, the girl's parents, family and *Tamba/Ganba* (Tamang social leader) put some conditions on the boy's side that "the boy can't misbehave with girl in future", and "she should be treated well by the boy and his entire family in future". Then, the parent and family also ask the girl for his consent for the marriage."

There is currently no pressure regarding selecting a partner for marriage from the family in the Tamang community. However, they prefer the “*Korali Satta*” (*exchange system*) practice for marriage. This refers to marrying between the son/daughter of the maternal uncle and paternal aunt. There is a custom for marrying the son/daughter of a maternal uncle or paternal aunt. This practice has become an integral part of Tamang culture. Sometimes this practice limits the personal choice of marriage in the Tamang community. (P. Tamang, personal communication, June 17, 2024)

According to M. Tamang, (personal communication, June 17, 2024), there is no pressure from the family regarding the marriage decision in the Tamang community. Normally these days, boys and girls are making their marriage independently. However, the boy and girl choose their partner influenced by their culture and societal norms. There are societal norms that marriage should be organized as early as possible and boys and girls are expected to have their own families settled at a very early age and this leads to child marriage in the Tamang community.

According to D. Tamang, (personal communication, June 17, 2024), the family influenced marriage decisions in the Tamang community. They consider various social and economic factors for a marriage decision. In her case, the elder mother decided their marriage at an early age and this proposal was accepted by her parent also.

There is no pressure from family or parents on marriage decisions. In her case, she married by her own choice. She had seen her husband in a marriage procession before marriage, and then they had a love affair in between. Later they eloped and afterwards, the family of both sides accepted their marriage. However, she said that they see so many child marriage cases in their community and thus they are influenced towards child marriage seeing this. According to her, girls in the Tamang community are influenced by their peers because they see most of their friends are married at an early age (B. Tamang, personal communication, June 17, 2024).

The girls have the final decision regarding the marriage decision in the Tamang community. According to her, the bridegroom's side should come to the bride's family with “*Pong*” a soil-made pot filled with a local wine called “*Irak*” to make a marriage proposal. The parents of the bridegroom and the “*ganba*” (Cultural leader of

the Tamang community from the village) come to the bride's home for a marriage proposal with the “Pong”. The bride's family, *ganba*, also gather and ask the girl if she is happy with the marriage proposal. Finally, the girl needs to touch the *pong* and she should serve the alcohol to all family members, and villagers attending the marriage proposal ceremony. If the girl is not happy with the marriage proposal, she has the right to deny serving the alcohol. If the girl does not serve the alcohol brought by the bridegroom side then the marriage proposal is considered as not accepted. However, the parents influence the girl and force her to accept the pong and serve the alcohol to members attending the proposal-making ceremony before the bridegroom arrives. (P. M. Tamang, personal communication, June 17, 2024)

Both the girls and boys are free to choose their partner in the Tamang community. They elope first and then their parent organize the marriage function later in a formal social way. However, according to her, girls and boys are influenced by the culture and social norms in many ways. Their parent educates them that they should marry at an early age and they shall have grandchildren for them to maintain family lineage. (B. M. Tamang, personal communication, June 18, 2024) They are also taught that they should not marry out of their ethnic group and not far from the village. They are taught that the boy should be economically well so there is no financial scarcity in future.

The marriage decision in the Tamang community is ideally decided by girls and boys who are getting married. However, the girl and boy are influenced by their parents while making decisions for marriage. They being children not able to decide such an important matter of marriage independently and most of the time are influenced by the parents. (K. Tamang, personal communication, June 18, 2024)

According to H. Tamang, (personal communication, June 18, 2024) , the marriage decision in the Tamang community is generally decided by the family. However, these days, boys and girls are making an elopement marriage at their own decision and later this is accepted by their family, and parents with no objection.

The Tamang community is an open society where girls and females have comparatively little more freedom. According to her, parents in the Tamang community do not interfere with their children in marriage cases. Currently, most of the girls and boys in the Tamang community choose their partner and elope without

the consent of their parents. Later, their parent also accept their relationship and they will organize a formal marriage as per their culture (P.R. Tiwari, personal communication, June 20, 2024)

The girl and boy are independent in deciding their marriage. According to the respondent, she made an elopement marriage with her husband. She married her “Samdi” of her own will. However, she realized afterwards that she was influenced by her culture unknowingly making her assume that marrying *Samdi* is part of a social obligation. Society shaped their mind that marrying *Samdi* is a part of social norms. There is a mindset in the Tamang community that early marriage is beneficial for their family settlement and cultural preservation. The parents are always worried about their girls and boys and afraid that they will elope with a non-Tamang ethnic group which is much unwanted for them. Therefore, they influence their child to get married at an early age to avoid inter-caste marriage (S. Tamang, personal communication, June 18, 2024)

The participants of the FGD expressed that the personal choice of the girls and boys plays a vital role in the marriage decision in the Tamang community at present. However, their personal choice has been influenced by their customs, traditions and other socioeconomic reasons as per the FGD participants. They said they follow the footsteps of their forefathers and what their elders are doing regarding marriage. They said there is social pressure to marry at an early age. According to them, especially if a girl does not marry at the age of 14-17 then the community will start passing comments on them. The family will also encourage them to marry if they reach 14-17 years of age to preserve their social honour.

Based on above discussion, in fact, the personal choice while making the marriage decision in the Tamang community is not much get adequate space. The personal choice of boys and girls are influenced directly or indirectly by their parents, society and culture as a whole.

Based on above discussion, it can be said that the personal choice while making in marriage decision in the Tamang community is limited and restricted.

4.4.2 Family Influence and Marriage Decision Making Process in the Tamang Community

Although it looks that the both boys and girls are free to choose their partner in the Tamang community but there are some form of practices which prevent couple choosing each other for their marriage. In some instances, it is seen that the marriage decision-making process is heavily influenced by the parent in the Tamang community. Previously, most of the marriages were arranged marriage in the Tamang community which were always arranged by parents /family. The boy or girl did not had autonomy in choosing partner previously as per the respondent. The parents of both especially from boy side will choose daughter in law for their son and they will go to the girl's side with a marriage proposal. Then if the parent of the girl side accepts that proposal the marriage will be dealt with for final. The parents always preferred early marriage due to many socioeconomic factors and this was mainly causing early marriage at the previous time. (LTamang, personal communication, June 18, 2024).

However, focus group participants and other interviewed responded that such practice does not prevail currently and there is not much parental influence nowadays among their children for marriage purposes compared to previous days. These days children themselves choose their partner at an early age because of various social factors. There is emerging trends of love and elope marriage among the Tamang community currently. The boys and girls are choosing their partner on their own at a very early stage and eloping for marriage without parental consent. Later they return to their village after escaping a few days of eloping and their parent accept their marriage. Parent also organize the formal marriage of their children in similar ways later as they organize arranged marriages. It is learnt through the respondent that the personal choice of girls or boys was given high respect even on previous days socially in the Tamang community. Even with the arranged marriage in the Tamang community they follow the practice of “*pong*” ceremony. A “*pong*” ceremony is organized at an early stage of marriage when the bridegroom side comes with “*Sagun*”. *Sagun Pong* (A bunch of food and drinks) contains “*Irak*” (Homemade alcohol of millet) full of *Pongs* (Several numbers of mud/soil pots) and chickens, and *Sel Roti* (Traditional Nepalese ring-shaped dough made from rice flour). The *Tamba*

from the bridegroom side requests the bride's parents to hand over her daughter to the boy for marriage. The *Sagun* must be served to people attending the *pong* ceremony by the girls for mandatory. If the girl is in disagreement for the marriage, she may refuse *Sagun* and will not serve it to people attending the Pong ceremony. Non acceptance of *Sagun* by girl will lead automatic cancellation of propose marriage deal. If the girl accepts *Sagun* then she will serve it to all people attending that “*Pong*” ceremony (L. Tamang, personal communication, 18 June 2024). However, as per the Focus Group Discussion (19 June 2024) even at earlier arranged marriage cases, parents’ influence/counselled the girl to accept the *Sagun* in a formal *Sagun* ceremony. The personal choice of girl is influenced by parents especially mother and other female senior members of the household beforehand in such cases. The girl will not have other options than accepting *Sagun* in front of *Tamba* and villagers in the *Pong* ceremony. Therefore, as per the respondent such influence of parents in marriage decision always promote early marriage in the Tamang community. (L. Tamang, personal communication, June 18, 2024)

Previously, marriage was dealt with /by elders/guardians of the family most of the time. However, some couples eloped choosing each other and leaving home and later they also arranged marriage fulfilling their cultural practice as well. There was also the practice of forced marriage earlier where the girl was taken forcefully by a boy to his home as wife. Previously Tamang community also had the practice of marrying with cousins (maternal side only). Tamang ethnic community resides isolated from other communities normally and they do have their own distinguished culture and practice which could have encouraged them to make cousin marriage so all members of their community are not away from each other and they are always tied and closed socially.

According to L. Tamang (personal communication ,19 June 2024), previously there was practice of *Balsing Breslang* (Force Marriage). However, according to him, this form of marriage does not exist anymore in the Tamang community. However, such marriage practice was there in the Tamang community previously. With this form, the boy forcefully pulls the girl to his home and keeps her as his wife without her consent. When a boy prefers any girl as his wife and sometimes the boy's parent also choose a girl as their sister-in-law and then they plan for her to be brought forcefully

into the boy's home. This practice was really violent and extremely hazardous as sometimes it may cause violent fighting with local arms and ammunition among the Tamang community and cause a massive human casualty or loss of lives. However, these days such practice has almost disappeared among the Tamang community. These days, they insist on the girl's consent especially and also the consent of boy who are marrying with each other. (L. Tamang, personal communication, June 18, 2024)

It is also found that the Tamang community still practice marriage among cousin relations. The cousins from *Angi* (Fupu in Nepali, paternal aunt) and *Aseng* (maternal uncle *Mama* in Nepali) are called *Samdi*(boy) and *Samdini*(girl)and marriage is still mostly preferred among them. However, they do not organize marriage among cousins from maternal aunt and paternal uncle. They also strictly avoid marriage among *Swage* (kinship in the blood). However, some new generation refuses such marriage these days and only making such marriage among extended cousins from maternal uncle and paternal aunt and not with immediate cousin from their own paternal aunt for maternal uncle (BM..Tamang, personal communication, June 18, 2024). In this form of marriage, the paternal aunt and maternal family also influence both girl and boys for marriage among *Samdi/Samdini* since their childhood when they are not in stage of age to decide what is their personal choice.

According to BM..Tamang, (personal communication, June 18, 2024), he married his *Samdini* (Cusin from his paternal aunt) of his own will. He and his wife became intimate and close while visiting their uncle and aunt's home and they married. First, they became intimate with each other and then they informed their parent, both sides agreed on this and they arranged marriage for both. According to respondents, there is no pressure from family while making marriage decisions in the Tamang community. He said although both girls and boys have freedom while making marriage decisions in the Tamang community, they cannot decide freely and independently regarding their marriage due to their immaturity. According to B.M. Tamang (personal communication June 18,2024), children cannot make independent decisions and therefore, there is no personal choice in marriage decisions in the Tamang community.

The marriage decision in the Tamang community is decided by both girls and boys. She said, that if parents do not accept their decision for marriage then they will elope. Therefore, these days, parents do not interfere with their personal choice and allow them to marry whom they choose as partner. However, she said that if their children decide to marry outside of their ethnic group then they will not allow and prevent them from doing so. She said that earlier there was a practice of forced marriage where a boy pulled a girl coercively if he liked her. However, according to her, such practices do not exist these days. (S. Tamang, personal communication, June 19, 2024)

According to N. Tamang, (personal communication, June 19, 2024), there are both personal choices and family pressure on marriage decisions in the Tamang community depending on the cases. According to him, if a girl decides to marry at an early age to a boy, then parents will react depending on the family background of the boy to whom the daughter is going to marry. If the boy is capable of fulfilling the basic needs of their daughter or if the boy is economically stronger than the girl's parent, then there will not be any objection from the girl's parents. However, if the boy is not in a position to fulfil the basic needs of their daughter then the parent will interfere and they will not allow the daughter to marry him. He also said that the personal choice of girls or boys regarding marriage decisions is sometimes influenced by their peers in schools or the community.

These days, girls and boys are fully independent in choosing their partners. However, he said that girls and boys are influenced by their culture and norms and thus they marry at an early age following the customs that their forefathers performed. (F. Tamang, personal communication, June 19, 2024)

According to B. Tamang, (personal communication, June 20, 2024) he married when he was 15 years. He married *Samdini*, the daughter of his paternal aunt. The Samdi/Samdini (daughter of paternal aunt and maternal uncle vs son of maternal uncle and paternal aunt) is considered the most preferred marriage relation. The family members and other relatives encouraged *Samdi/Samdini* marriage. They also become closer when visiting the homes of their maternal uncle and paternal aunt and thus prefer marriage with *Samdi/Samdini*.

According to him, his parent decided on his marriage with Samdini and he accepted it as he was only 15 years old at that time and did not have the maturity to reconsider this. The elder generation/parent of the Tamang community prefers early birth and to maintain the family lineage and structure. The parent of the Tamang community is strongly tempted to see their grandchildren sooner possible.

There was parental influence on marriage in previous days but these days, the boys and girls are free to choose their partner for marriage. However, the girls and boys are influenced by their culture, and peers for early marriage in the Tamang community. (B. Tamang, personal communication, June 20, 2024).

According to S. M. Tamang, (personal communication, June 17, 2024), She was not involved in her marriage decision. Her parent decided about her marriage. She only saw her bride during the marriage ceremony. She says that although there is no forced marriage currently. However, the parents were making the final decision regarding marriage at her time. Parents are also pressured to marry the boy whom they choose.

4.5 Social Norms and Marriage Decision in the Tamang Community

According S. Tamang, (personnel communication, June 17,2024) “She married her sister’s brother-in-law. According to Tamang custom, they are called “*Samdi*” in relation. The son/daughter of a maternal uncle or paternal aunt or the brother /sister of a brother-in-law and sister-in-law are called “*Samdi*” in the Tamang community. The “*Samdi*” relation is the most preferred and comfortable relation for marriage as per her. According to her, the community members tease them with *Samdi* and encourage them to make a marriage between both. She also adds that if girls stay at parental homes for a long age then the community members start bullying girls for late marriage. There is the social perception that a “girl should leave parental home at an early age and settle her own home/family with her husband sooner possible”. (S. Tamang, personnel communication, June 17,2024) She also adds that the lack of awareness among the parents and poverty is responsible for early marriage in the Tamang community “There are societal norms among the Tamang community that marriage should be done at an early age” (S. Tamang, personnel communication, June 17,2024). A couple will have their son/daughter sooner if they get married at an early age. If the couple will have a son/daughter sooner then it will also help increase

the manpower in the family in future and this will enable a family to have an added workforce for their farm work. The increase in members enables further to have an added workforce in the family which they also require for looking for their livestock. R2 also thinks that the lack of education among the Tamang community also contributes lack of awareness and this causes early marriage.” (P. Tamang, personal communication, June 17, 2024)

According to M. Tamang, (personal communication, June 17, 2024, the agricultural form of occupation of the Tamang community is also responsible for child marriage. The bridegroom's parent expects that the bride will help the family in the agricultural farm work and thus they are more attracted to early marriage. The low level of education and lack of awareness among the parents also leads to child marriage in the Tamang community.

According to D. Tamang (personnel communication, June 17,2024) is a social belief that “a girl should marry and settle their home sooner possible and take care of her family”. She further said that “the Tamang community believes that there is no career scope for girls having study”. There are not any role model girls in the Tamang community who studied higher and obtained a prestigious job. The lack of such a role model girl in the community caused a strong mindset in the Tamang community believing that education will not accomplish jobs and employment for them.

According to S. M. Tamang, (personal communication, June 17, 2024), the responsible factor for early marriage in the Tamang community is the lack of awareness among the parents. The lack of education, poverty and cultural practice are responsible for the prevalence of early marriage in the Tamang community. The parents decide about the marriage and the girl/boy is not involved in the decision-process as she said. The boy and girl are also influenced as they see so many of their friends are married at an early age. Tamang community considers the marriage of their daughter as an honour/prestige issue. There is a strong belief that if their daughter runs away with a stranger and out of their ethnicity then they will lose their social prestige within society and community. They mostly prefer their daughter to marry her ethnic group/ community and not the outsider. They also want to see their daughter close to their village so they can see, meet her very often and can invite daughter at every social and cultural occasion to celebrate together.

According to P. M. Tamang, (personal communication, June 17, 2024) , they have the social practice of getting married during the age of 14-16 in the village. If a girl is not married during the 14-16 years of age, the parents will get worried. The villages will make comments the girl, who is not married by the age of 14-16 becomes the subject of social gossip. Marrying at an early age is very common. Early marriage has become a social norm among the Tamang community of her village.

Further the practice of making a marriage with their “*Samdi*” (cousin from maternal aunt or paternal aunt.) also leads Tamang community to early marriage. The relation of “*Samdi*” is the preferred relation for making marriage in the Tamang community as per their tradition. Both the boy and girl visit their maternal uncle and paternal aunt home frequently from their childhood and thus they become intimate and closer to each other leading them to marriage at an early age. Further, they are also told by the community, and parents from childhood that they are made for each other and the relation *Samdi* is made for marrying each other.

According to S.T.Tamang, (personal communication, June 18, 2024), the Tamang community, especially the elder generation considered early marriage as beneficial for them and not hazardous. The simple belief of the Tamang community as per the respondent is ‘girl needs to go to another family after marriage for sure then why should delay this’. The psychology of community is ‘if marriage is arranged at an early stage then they will have dependent/child sooner’. The elderly generation also has thrust to see their grandchild sooner. Having seen the grandchild, the elder generation thinks that their life came meaningful and they accomplished the fullest goals of their life. When the elder generation sees their child; son or daughter get married and their child running their household independently, then they consider them as having well settled, and they feel calm and quite satisfied. The elder generation feels secure and satisfied just seeing their child as a couple and having their child’. It is also accepted in the Tamang society that with marriage and having their children, individuals become more responsible and do not act irresponsibly. Therefore, Tamang society prefers early marriage for their children to prevent them from being irresponsible. They think early marriage can make their children more responsible citizens and they would be bonded by their social responsibilities with the marriage. As per the respondents, the Tamang community considers the marriage of

their daughter as an honour/prestige issue. There is a strong belief that if their daughter runs away with a stranger and out of their ethnicity then they will lose their social prestige within society and community. They mostly prefer their daughter to marry her ethnic group/ community and not the outsider. They also want to see their daughter close to their village so they can see, meet her very often and can invite daughter at every social and cultural occasion to celebrate together. Even parent prefers their boys to marry girls from their ethnic group and not outsiders. Therefore, they prefer the marriage of both son and daughter as an issue of honour and social practice and therefore, they organize early marriage for their children to avoid any possible act that may defame their social prestige within the community.

The elder generation/parent of the Tamang community prefers early birth to maintain the family lineage and structure. The parents in the Tamang community are strongly tempted to see their grandchildren. As per the respondent, the parents think that with grandchildren, their children will be more responsible, mature and grown. The psychology of community is ‘if marriage is arranged at an early stage then they will have dependent/child sooner’. The elderly generation also has thrust to see their grandchild sooner. Having seen the grandchild, the elder generation thinks that their life came meaningful and they accomplished the fullest goals of their life. Therefore, due to the strong desire for grandchildren, they prefer early marriage for their children leading high prevalence of early marriage in the Tamang community. (BM. Tamang, personal communication, June 18, 2024)

According to B. M. Tamang, (personal communication, June 18, 2024), the *Samdi/Samdini* marriage practice has increased the emergence of early marriage in the Tamang community. The respondent said the term “Samdi and Samdinee” is such an appealing word among teenagers that it increases attraction to each other leading to early marriage. Respondent said, that even the relative teased them from the very start that he or she is your *samdi or samdini* and both of you are made for each other. They heard such statements from the villagers, relatives and family members from the very childhood. This increases their attraction to each other from early age and that causes early marriage among the Tamang community.

According to (S. Tamang, personal communication, June 19, 2024), parents normally accept the marriage proposal of their children at an early age because they don’t want

their children to get married outside of their ethnicity. They think marrying at an early age, will prevent them from marrying outside of their ethnic group. Furthermore, she said that they don't consider early marriage as a social issue rather they consider it as a social advantage to maintain ethnic culture and purity. They think that early marriage will ensure marriage within their ethnic group maintaining cultural heritage and customs.

According to N. Tamang, (personal communication, June 19, 2024), the traditional practice of child marriage in the Tamang community is responsible for prevailing early marriage. He said that the new generation of the Tamang community sees their parent, grandparents and forefathers making marriage at an early age, thus they assume this as part of their culture. There is subjectivity in the Tamang community if a person sees grandchildren from their daughter or boy, they consider their own life complete and meaningful. He said there is subjectivity that "girls are meant to go to other homes anyway and thus it is better to go early". The Tamang community also prefers early marriage to avoid their children being married outside of their ethnicity (B. Tamang, personal communication, June 20, 2024.)

According to B. Tamang, (personal communication, June 20, 2024), boys and girls are influenced by their peers. They see their friends getting married at an early age and eloping with each other. They also see that their parents, and forefathers are making early marriage and thus they accept it as a part of their culture. The Tamang community normally prefers marriage from the age of 14 to 17 since from this age, they can work at farms and help families with agriculture work. The parents always insist on marriage while they are younger and their parents are alive. (B. Tamang, personal communication, June 20, 2024) There is a perception that if a girl becomes old, it will be difficult for marriage. There is also a perception that if marriage is organized after 14, it would be difficult to raise their children. (P.R. Tiwari, personal communication, June 20, 2024)

According to D. Tamang, (personal communication, June 20, 2024), the main reasons for early marriage are peer influence, poverty, lack of education and lack of awareness. Tamang community are not aware of the hazards caused due to early marriage.

4.6 Factors Influencing the Prevalence of Child Marriages in the Tamang Community

According to the FGD participants, the reason for early marriage in the Tamang community is due to lack of awareness, poverty and illiteracy. They said the parents are not able to provide proper parenting to their children. They always pressure their children to study but they do not provide the proper domestic environment for their study. The teacher also pressures children to study but the students in the study area cannot perform well in their exams due to their language barrier. They cannot study properly due to a lack of command of the Nepali language. Since they cannot perform well in study and thus they fail in exam. When they fail in the exams, their parent insists they marry and settle their own family. As per the FGD participants, the students of the Tamang community are reluctant to study, because there is not any role model individual in their community who has obtained government or any formal job after study. Therefore, they do not see any career opportunities after having studied. The student also thinks that their parent can not afford them to study after SEE and they cannot pursue further study in college due to their poor parental condition. This leads them to frustration and thus they drop their study before SEE which leads them to early marriage. The FGD participants also said that their parents encourage them to early marriage because the parent thinks if they can see their grandchildren then their lives become blessed and meaningful.

4The causes of early marriage among the Tamang community have multidimensional social factors. The social structure and cultural factors influence early marriage in the Tamang community. There is not only a single factor that is responsible for early marriage in the Tamang community. Many factors are related to socio-economic factors that influence marriage time and age in the Tamang community. Further, there are some cultural factors responsible for early age. Lack of awareness and education, geographical locations of their village settings also influence their connectivity with other communities of the country making them isolated from the wider community as a whole and resulting in them to practice many social customs which is not beneficial for the society and themselves. Therefore, the causes of early marriage in the Tamang community as per the respondent married in childhood, key informants and participants of focus group discussion can be summarised with the key below categories;

4.6.1 Social Factors

4.6.1.1 Customary Values, Norms and Social Acceptance

Culture also plays an important role in shaping the social behaviour of an individual or society as a whole. As a member of society, an individual's perception, beliefs, norms and values are always influenced by the social atmosphere where that individual resides. According to Stephanie (Psaki, 2021), ‘‘child marriage may be driven largely by social norms’’. It was found during the interview with respondents that social factors consisting of social values, norms and customs also plays a vital role in causing early marriage among the Tamang community. As per the respondent, the Tamang community, especially the elder generation considered early marriage as beneficial for them and not hazardous. Study has highlighted several reasons why young brides are preferred in traditional societies: they have a longer period of fertility before them; and they are more likely to be obedient and docile, necessary qualities to learn and accept the rules and ways of her new household (Goody, 1990). The simple belief of the Tamang community as per the respondent is ‘‘girl needs to go to another family after marriage for sure then why should delay this’’ (S.T. Tamang, personal communication, June 18, 2024). The psychology of community is ‘‘if marriage is arranged at an early stage then they will have dependent/child sooner’’. The elderly generation also has thrust to see their grandchild sooner. Having seen the grandchild, the elder generation thinks that their life came meaningful and they accomplished the fullest goals of their life. When the elder generation sees their child; son or daughter get married and their child running their household independently, then they consider them as having well settled, and they feel calm and quite satisfied. The elder generation feels secure and satisfied just seeing their child as a couple and having their child’’. It is also accepted in the Tamang society that with marriage and having their children, individuals become more responsible and do not act irresponsibly. Therefore, Tamang society prefers early marriage for their children to prevent them from being irresponsible. They think early marriage can make their children more responsible citizens and they would be bonded by their social responsibilities with the marriage.

Further, it seems that early marriage has attained a kind of social sanction in the Tamang community. During the field visit, it was found that nearly all generations of

a household were children when they had married. The grandparents, parents and their children all married in their childhood. It was found that a respondent (bride), her parent-in-law and her grandparent-in-law all were children when they married. They all have accepted early marriage as a social tradition and accepted practice and normal as usual and legal marriage. There is also societal readiness for arranging marriage at an early age. Especially since there is societal readiness to accept the marriage proposal quickly for daughters even if they are at an early age, daughters are sent away with marriage in the Tamang community. The parents think that if they can arrange the marriage for their daughter means now their daughter will run their personal life with her husband and they will be secured for their whole life and there will not be any social trouble for their daughters.

4.6.1.2 Illiteracy/Low Awareness/Education

The low level of awareness, prevailing illiteracy and lack of education are also found as vital factors that cause early marriage in the Tamang community. Tamang community resides isolated from the rest of the community due to their geographical settings. According to Kafle Mana (2008), “the main causes of child marriage were lack of awareness among elders and parents”. It was found that the elderly generation was completely illiterate whereas the parental generation became literate and the current generation still struggling to attain higher education. Numerous research revealed that “girls' lack of awareness of reproductive health and how they should protect their safety is one of the reasons why early marriage continues to occur” (Suyanto, Sugihartati, Hidayat, Egalita, & Mas'udah).

It is found from the respondents that due to the burden of domestic work in agriculture, and livestock, both parents and children do not get much time to obtain awareness-raising information relating to the harm and disadvantages of early marriage. Respondents were not aware of the disadvantages associated with early marriage. None of the respondents (parents, children) were aware of the negative impacts of early marriage that caused issues with their mental health, physical health, and education interrupting their life as a whole. This lack of awareness and education leads high prevalence of early marriage among the Tamang community in Dupcheshwor Rural Municipality.

4.6.1.3 Peer Influence/Elope/Personnel Choice

According to the research report of Kafle, Mana (2008) ‘‘Child Marriage Practice among Tamang Communities of Lalitpur district in Ichangu, Narayan VDC’’, there is an increasing trend of elope and love marriage where children choose their partner and elope as a couple without the consent of parent or family. While undertaking the focus group discussion with school children in Shree Maphle Secondary School among the 8(3 boys, 5 girls) students of class 10, they said that early marriage is taking place due the peer influence. They said that they can see most of their friends having affairs and love in school and are eloping and getting married early. They see them happy with their partner and enjoying their life. Due to having love affairs of many students in the school with opposite genders, it also influences the desire of other students in school to make their partner at an early stage which ultimately leads them to have marriage at an early stage. The researcher also found that most early marriages held recently not because of parental choice but because of their children running away from home and choosing partners on their own. These days, children are becoming close and intimate with the opposite gender in school, through mobile phones, and using various social media and ultimately they are choosing each other as life partners at an early age and eloping for marriage. The trend of eloping marriage also continues like a tradition. Because of the growing nature of the love and elope marriage, it was found that half of the respondents had eloped and married themselves first without parental consent. Elope marriage is very common and widely accepted by society. Since children cannot see the negative impact of child marriage at the later stage of their life, most of the children of teenage are influenced by their schoolmates and peers and this contributes to the prevalence of early marriage among the Tamang community.

4.6.1.4 Lack of Legal Enforcement and Easy Family Acceptance

Respondent also said that lack of legal enforcement is another factor which leads to early marriage in their society. Although they heard that marriage below 20 is not considered illegal and is punishable, they have not seen any instance where anyone is punished under such legal provisions. Respondent said that they heard a little that it is illegal and prohibited by law but they have not heard anyone getting punished and faced legal consequences for having early marriage. Neither parents nor children have

been asked by legal authority as per respondents so far in their locality on grounds of having early marriage and therefore, they think early marriage is not an offence by law and it is accepted by all.

Furthermore, when girls and boys escape from their homes to marry each other at an early age, they are normally accepted by the family later without any reservation. It is seen currently that most couples are running first from home without parental consent but afterwards, parent of both sides accept their elopement and marriage is arranged in social forms with similar practice of arranged marriage. According to the Marriage Act Nepal, both boy and girl should attain the age of 20 years for the marriage registration certificate. The office of Rural Municipality can't issue marriage certificates unless they attain 20 years of age both bridegroom and bride. However, in practice, their marriage is registered legally in the office of the Rural Municipality once they attain the age of 20 but their marriage is not invalidated by authority. Therefore, it shows that there is not any practical reservation from anyone against early marriage and hence this has increasingly influenced the prevalence of early marriage in the Tamang community in Dupcheshwor Rural Municipality.

4.6.2 Cultural Factors

Cultural relativism posits that the values, knowledge, and behavior of individuals are strongly influenced by their culture. This theory can be used to understand how marriage decisions in the Tamang community are shaped by local cultural norms and traditions, as well as how personal choices are either aligned or in conflict with these norms. As a member of society, an individual's perception, beliefs, norms and values are always influenced by the social atmosphere where that individual resides. According to Stephanie (Psaki, 2021), ‘‘child marriage may be driven largely by social norms’’.

Several cultural factors persist which caused an increasing number of early marriages in the Tamang community as follows;

4.6.2.1 Desire for Maintaining Family Lineage and Structure

The elder generation/parent of the Tamang community prefers early birth and to maintain the family lineage and structure. The parent of the Tamang community is

strongly tempted to see their grandchildren sooner possible. When they see grandchildren of their son or daughter then they feel that their family is now well formed and it will sustain without any interruption. As per the respondent, the parents think that with grandchildren, their children will be more responsible and they will be tied up with social responsibilities and therefore, they will become more mature and grown. Therefore, with this strong desire of grandchildren, they prefer early marriage for their children and this leads high prevalence of early marriage in the Tamang community as explained by respondents. (B. M. Tamang, personal communication, June 18, 2024).

4.6.2.2 Perception Related to Social Honour/Fame

According to Socialisation Theory, “people learn behaviours and norms from the community around them through observation, imitation, and modelling”. As per the respondents, the Tamang community considers the marriage of their daughter as an honour/prestige issue. There is a strong belief that if their daughter runs away with a stranger and out of their ethnicity then they will lose their social prestige within society and community. They mostly prefer their daughter to marry her ethnic group/community and not the outsider. They also want to see their daughter close to their village so they can see, meet her very often and can invite daughter at every social and cultural occasion to celebrate together. Even parent prefers their boys to marry girls from their ethnic group and not outsiders. Therefore, they prefer the marriage of both son and daughter as an issue of honour and social practice and therefore, they organize early marriage for their children to avoid any possible act that may defame their social prestige within the community. (S. M. Tamang, personal communication, June 17, 2024)

4.6.2.3 Samdi/Samdini Marriage (Cousin Marriage)

The cousins from *Angi* (Fupu in Nepali, paternal aunt) and *Aseng* (maternal uncle *Mama* in Nepali) are called *Samdi*(boy) and *Samdini* (girl) and marriage is still mostly preferred among them. This form of marriage is also responsible for early marriage in the Tamang community. However, they do not organize marriage among cousins from maternal aunt and paternal uncle. They also strictly avoid marriage among *Swage* (kinship in the blood). However, some new generation refuses such marriage

these days and prefers such marriage among extended cousins from maternal uncle and paternal aunt and not with immediate cousin from their own paternal aunt for maternal uncle. However, existence of such practice has also increased the emergence of early marriage in the Tamang community. The respondent said that word “Samdi and Samdinee” itself is such appealing among the teenagers that it increases attraction to each other and that leads to early marriage. Respondent said that even the relative tease them from very start that he or she is your *samdi or samdini* and both of you are made for each other. They hear such statement from villagers, relatives and family members from very childhood and then also build perception that they are made for each other and they need to marry. This increase their attraction to each other from early age and that causes early marriage among the Tamang community. It is also found that though not all but a bulk of respondents who arranged early marriage had their Samdi/Samdini relation to each other before their marriage. (LTamang, personal communication, June 18, 2024)

4.6.3 Economic Factors

4.6.3.1 Poverty Issue

“Child marriage in Nepal is attributed to factors like lack of education, poverty, and low social status. It leads to early pregnancy complications and school dropouts. Mental health is impacted by homework and isolation. Raising awareness and employing women can help address this issue”, (Seta, 2023). According to Seta (2023) “poverty is the major factor that causes early marriage”. It also found similar responses from the respondents while conducting the interviews in the field of Dupcheshwor Rural Municipality. Respondents; both early married couples, parents and other key informants said that the poverty issue is the main factor responsible for the prevalence of early marriage in the Tamang community. Most households still opt for agriculture as the main source of their livelihood options. Due to the overall national poverty issue, and lack of advancement in agriculture technology, farmers of remote areas still depend on the traditional ways of agriculture and hence their income is limited. Since they cannot earn enough and hence their income is only enough for their minimum survival. Even they cannot meet their basic needs such as health, education and other necessities for their children with the income they earn from their agriculture and livestock occupation. According to H. Tamang, personal communication, June 18, 2024), the poverty, and illiteracy of their parents lead to early marriage among the Tamang community.

They still rely on monsoon rain for harvesting their crops plant and for irrigation purpose. Their crop production is limited and not sufficient for their family to eat for the whole year. These days, youngsters go abroad for labour work including in India. However, because of their limited livelihood options in village and with their entire family, their remittance is mainly used to afford their food and other basic necessities for their survival. Because of this, most parent prefers to arrange marriage for their children at an early age so they can start working responsibly and evolve in agriculture and livestock so they can start earning from a very early age instead of wasting age for a long studying. In addition to this, due to their poverty, parents are more encouraged to arrange a marriage for their girl at an early age. If a marriage proposal comes from the bridegroom for their daughter even at a very young age, and if the bridegroom has a strong economic condition with more land size, more livestock and good earnings compared to others in the community, the marriage proposal will be always welcome and accepted by daughters side. The parents of the daughter's side always worry about the economic insecurity of their daughter and prefer to arrange marriage with a son-in-law with a strong economic background in the community. Economic insecurity of parents towards their own daughter and poverty issue therefore ultimately leads to early marriage in the Tamang community. Similarly, due to ongoing early marriage from the very beginning and from their parent' time, there are more children in the households and the family cannot afford the basic needs required for all members of the family hence marrying a daughter at an early age can be a safe option for the parent to transfer the financial liability of their daughter to son in law and his family. (D. Tamang, personal communication, June 17, 2024)

4.6.3.2 Labour force contribution

Most households of the Tamang community opt for agriculture as their means of livelihood. Respondent said that another factor responsible for early marriage is the contribution of labour by the daughter-in-law. The Tamang community will have more livestock and be required to work mostly at the farm to cultivate. According to D. Tamang (personal communication, June 17, 2024), said her elder mother decided to marry her to a boy whose family was comparatively wealthier than her family. The boy's parent possessed more land and livestock and they were economically stronger

than her family. D. Tamang says that the belief of her elder mother in economic well-being after my marriage with that family led to my early age marriage. Therefore, she believes that economic factors are mainly responsible for child marriage in the Tamang community. The daily life in the hill/mountainside where most of the Tamang community resides is difficult and they are always busy. Therefore, there is a common understanding that if a daughter-in-law is brought after marriage then she will be added to the labour force in bridegroom households. Jack Goody (1990) has highlighted several reasons why young brides are preferred in traditional societies: “They have a longer period of fertility before them; and they are more likely to be obedient and docile, necessary qualities to learn and accept the rules and ways of her new household (Goody, 1990). The bridegroom side thinks that by arranging marriage with a young daughter-in-law, she can learn all housework and field work more obediently than a daughter-in-law compared to a senior in age. Further, with the wife, even the son will work at the farm more responsibly together with his wife or at least the wife will deal with all household chores such as preparing meals, and breakfast and looking after light household work and this will allow other household members to work at field more freely and they can devote their full time in farm work.

Table won't be appropriate for data presentation. Think about in all the tables you have prepared.

4.6.4 Educational Factor

4.6.4.1 Low Level of education/low Performance in Study

As per there respondent, it is found that the Tamang community still struggling for educational advancement. Respondents said that most of the parents do not have an education and thus they are not aware of the negative impact of early marriage on their children. Lack of education, they are not aware of the legal information related to child marriage which prohibits early marriage. Parents, families and villages do not know about the harmful results of early marriage due to lack of education. With this, parents and the entire community are guided by traditional practices and social beliefs which promote early child marriage in the Tamang community. Further, it is also known from the respondents that the Tamang community speaks their language and it is difficult for them to study in the national language “Nepali” which obstructs them

from pursuing their education efficiently as compared to other non-Tamang Nepali-speaking communities. The lack of an education system with the Tamang mother language also leads the Tamang community to perform weaker in education. This ultimately leads to weak performance of Tamang students in their study leading them to drop out. It is found by the respondents that the majority of children prefer to get married instead of struggling for education. Since they get very difficult to study due to a lack of proper command of the Nepali language, they perform very poorly in their exam and hence do not see much prospectus career in the day ahead and hence they think marriage is a better option for them to get rife of educational struggle. It is found that most the respondents whom interviewed, most of them had dropped out of School before their marriage. Once they drop out of school due to their poor educational performance, they prefer to marry to settle their life with their husband and have their own family. According to Seta, 2023, “Child marriage is attributed to the factors of lack of education, poverty, and low social status”. The participants interviewed also responded with similar views.

4.6.4.2 Lack of Proper Educational Environment

Some respondent said that the lack of a proper domestic environment for the study leads to an increment of early marriage in the Tamang community as opined by the respondent. The Tamang community parents are mostly illiterate and cannot help their child to complete their homework or school assignments. Further, the children have to walk along to and from school and then they becomes very tired physically and mentally and hence cannot complete their homework. Furthermore, they have to assist their family with agriculture and other domestic work before and after school which also leads to their poor performance in the study as they cannot fully concentrate on study as compared with the students of other communities. They will also be questioned by teachers at school on grounds of not completing their homework. This finally increases reluctance among the children of Tamang community to go to school and continue their further studies resulting ultimate option for early marriage. According to K. Tamang, personal communication, June 18, 2024, lack of education, and poverty are the main reasons for the prevalence of early marriage in the Tamang community. The socio-cultural norms that encourages early marriage as essential for family settlement are also responsible for the number of early marriages in the Tamang society.

4.6.4.3 Poor parenting

According to S.T.Tamang, (personal communication, June 18, 2024), a lack of awareness among both parents and children leads to early marriage cases in the Tamang community. The main reason for early marriage in the Tamang community is poor parenting. Due to a lack of education and awareness and guided by traditional beliefs and perceptions, most of the Tamang parents lack proper knowledge of parenting. They cannot monitor their children properly specially in teenage and cannot provide mentorship. When children get into the later stage of teenage, they require emotional support and strong guidance. They should be informed about many life-skill-related information to address their teenage-related quarries and enthusiasm. However, due to a lack of education and awareness parents cannot provide proper guidance and mentorship and thus children get misguided and they do perform weak in their studies. This ultimately deprives children of the right information for the betterment of their own lives and then they act irresponsibly and engage in teenage activities which leads them to early marriage ultimately. (B. M. Tamang, personal communication, June 18, 2024).

4.6.4.4 Drop Out from the School

It is also learnt from the respondents that due to a lack of interest in education, most of the boys and girls of the Tamang community drop out of school at an early age and in class. They don't think they are capable of perusing their education for a higher level and thus they give off studying. Once they drop out of school then their family involves them heavily in agriculture work. With the heavy workload in their agriculture, they feel much pressure and want to get rid of the work burden. Therefore, especially the girl will elope for marriage thinking of getting rid of the workload. However, it is learnt from the respondents that they will not get rid of the workload even after marriage but rather they have to work much harder in the groom bride home as daughter-in-law. Similar way, if a boy drops out form his school then parents will arrange his marriage in order to prevent him from being misled. The parent thinks only marriage is an alternative for their children to make them responsible if they drop out of school. (FGD, June 28,2024)

4.6.4.5 Lack of Role Social Model

Focus group respondents said that it is due to the lack of role models in society who have studied and obtained secured jobs, that the children/students in the research area are reluctant for the study. They have a strong perception that there is no career prospect after having studied. . Most of parent and also students prefers to get marry at early age and going for urban area or abroad for study as they don't see any prospects with education.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

Child marriage prevails in Nepal rooted with deep cultural, socio-economic factors and also due to lack of awareness /education. In Nepal, child marriage affects approximately 33% of girls prior to the age of 18, and 8% of girls by the age of 15. The practice has various causes, which include a lack of education, poverty and societal norms (Seta, 2023). The Tamang community is a major ethnic group in Nepal who resides mostly northern hilly region of the central and eastern region of the country. The Tamang community faces various social challenges due to their rooted socio-economic and cultural background. The Tamang community struggles with low education, lack of access with health care and livelihood opportunities causing many social obstacles. The child marriage prevails highly in the Tamang community and this obstruct their entire social advancement process.

According to National Census Report 2021, there are total 21,005 population in Dupcheshwor Rural Municipality. Tamang language is mostly spoken in Dupcheshwor Rural Municipality, a total of 7774 people have married before the age of 20 years in Dupcheshwor Rural Municipality. Within the Tamang Community of Dupcheshwor Rural Municipality, the prevalence of early child marriage has significant implications for the wellbeing of individuals and the community at large. Due to child marriage, school dropout tendency is higher. It also increases economic and health related vulnerability among the population who marriages before attaining the legal age. It also contributes negatively to literacy growth and as a whole to the entire aspect of the social life of the Tamang community residing in Dupcheshwor.

The researcher has tried to explore the underlying cultural, socio economic factors of prevailing child marriage among the Tamang community of Dupcheshwor Rural Municipality with a qualitative and descriptive research method. Checklist with open ended questionnaires were developed with indicator and sample respondent having child marriage were interviewed. Similarly, parents whose children had married at early age were also consulted for interview purpose. Key informants such as school teachers, government officials of local body and social workers of the study area were

also consulted. The secondary data such as scholarly work on child marriage and relevant literature were reviewed. The data collected from the field are presented in explanatory form.

The major finding of the research is several factors such as socioeconomic factors, low level of education, lack of social awareness and cultural practices, and traditional norms and beliefs which have long-rooted social background. Further, there are some cultural factors responsible for early age. Lack of awareness and education, geographical locations of their village settings also influence their connectivity with other communities of the country making them isolated from the wider community as a whole and resulting in them to practice many social customs which is not beneficial for the society and themselves. The personal choice of the girls and boys while making marriage decision does not get much space. Whereas the family influences their children for marriage in numerous ways. Some couples especially in this current time elope choosing each other and leaving home and later they also arranged marriage fulfilling their cultural practice. In fact, there is always limitation on the personal choice while making marriage decision in the Tamang community. The marriage decision of the Tamang community is heavily influenced by parents or elderly members of the family despite they have a culture of obtaining girl consent mandatory for marriage purposes. The family influence on marriage decision always dominates personal choice on grounds of various socio-economic reasons and this has led immense occurrence of child marriage in the Tamang community.

5.2 Conclusions

The prevalence of early marriage in the Tamang community of Dupcheswhor Rural Municipality has multiple responsible factors; Culture, personal choices and child marriage among the Tamang community have interlinked and influenced each other. The findings suggest that poverty, social norms and values, and educational factors influence the prevalence of child marriage among the Tamang community. The study also elaborates that the prevalence of poverty, illiteracy and lack of awareness among the parents leads the Tamang community towards child marriage. The study also shows that such a school dropout trend is highly responsible for the prevalence of child marriage in the Tamang community. Studies found that those who drop out of school at early ages were found married at their early age. The desire of making

family lineage, grandchildren also played a pivotal role for the occurrence of early marriage in the Tamang community. The form of agrarian society has also led them to organize child marriage as they need added members in household for agriculture work in their farm. The prevalence of child marriage in the Tamang community is passing from generation to generation and they don't see this as social issue. Therefore, the limitation on the personal choice while making marriage decision in the Tamang community and broader role of family and social structure has also played subsequent role for the occurrence of child marriage in the Tamang community.

The researcher also found that most early marriages held recently are not because of parental choice but because of their children running away from home and choosing partners on their own. These days, children are becoming close and intimate with the opposite gender in school, through mobile phones, and using various social media and ultimately they are choosing each other as life partners at an early age and eloping for marriage. The trend of eloping marriage also continues like a tradition. Because of the growing nature of the love and elope marriage, it was found that half of the respondents had eloped and married themselves first without parental consent. Elope marriage is very common and widely accepted by society. Since children cannot see the negative impact of child marriage at the later stage of their life, most of the children of teenage are influenced by their schoolmates and peers and this contributes to the prevalence of early marriage among the Tamang community.

However, the marriage decision of the Tamang community is heavily influenced by parents or elderly members of the family despite they have a culture of obtaining girl consent mandatory for marriage purposes. The family influence on marriage decision always dominates personal choice on grounds of various socio-economic reasons.

According to Socialisation Theory, "people learn behaviours and norms from the community around them through observation, imitation, and modelling". The Tamang community considers the marriage of their daughter as an honour/prestige issue. There is a strong belief that if their daughter runs away with a stranger and out of their ethnicity then they will lose their social prestige within society and community. They mostly prefer their daughter to marry her ethnic group/ community and not the outsider. They also want to see their daughter close to their village so they can see,

meet her very often and can invite daughter at every social and cultural occasion to celebrate together. Even parent prefers their boys to marry girls from their ethnic group and not outsiders. Therefore they prefer the marriage of both son and daughter as an issue of honour and social practice and therefore, they organize early marriage for their children to avoid any possible act that may defame their social prestige within the community. Therefore, the personal choice regarding the marriage decision is always influenced by parent in the Tamang community.

According to Cognitive Behaviour Theory, Jean Piagets describes that socialization influences the cognitive development of a human being. An individual and specially children learns from the socialization process. An individual learns through his regular interaction and social environment. An individual personality is constructed based on his social norms, values and perception. As such this theory explained how the children in Tamang community learns from their society in regards to marriage decision.

. In the case of the Tamang community, cultural capital influences the traditional norms and values, thereby shaping the prevalence of child marriage. For example, different forms of cultural capital - such as embodied capital (personified by an individual), objectified capital (in the form of cultural goods), and institutionalized capital (like educational qualifications) – determine the marriage decisions in the community. The personal choices is influenced by their embodied cultural capital and the dispositions they have internalized from their family and community. Objectified cultural capital, including possessions that represent cultural sophistication or status, t also plays a role in such marriage decisions among the Tamang community.

There are some cultural factors responsible for early age marriage among the Tamang community. The factors include socioeconomic factors, low level of education, lack of social awareness and cultural practices, and traditional norms and beliefs which have long-rooted social background. Lack of awareness and education, geographical locations of their village settings also influence their connectivity with other communities of the country making them isolated from the wider community as a whole and resulting in them to practice many social customs which is not beneficial for the society and themselves.

The parents of the daughter's side always worry about the economic insecurity of their daughter and prefer to arrange marriage with a son-in-law with a strong economic background in the community. Economic insecurity of parents towards their own daughter and poverty issue therefore ultimately leads to early marriage in the Tamang community. Similarly, due to ongoing early marriage from the very beginning and from their parent's time, there are more children in the households and the family cannot afford the basic needs required for all members of the family hence marrying a daughter at an early age can be a safe option for the parent to transfer the financial liability of their daughter to son in law and his family. Most importantly, lack of interest in education, most of the boys and girls of the Tamang community drop out of school at an early age and in class. They don't think they are capable of perusing their education for a higher level and thus they give off studying. Once they drop out of school then their family involves them heavily in agriculture work. With the heavy workload in their agriculture, they feel much pressure and want to get rid of the work burden. Therefore, especially the girl will elope for marriage thinking of getting rid of the workload. However, it is learnt from the respondents that they will not get rid of the workload even after marriage but rather they have to work much harder in the groom bride home as daughter-in-law. Similar way, if a boy drops out from his school then parents will arrange his marriage in order to prevent him from being misled. The parent thinks only marriage is an alternative for their children to make them responsible if they drop out of school.

The application of Theory of structural functionalism can facilitate an analysis of the ways in which social structure, such as the institution of family and religion and cultural impact the incidence of child marriage in the Tamang community. This idea emphasizes how structural inequality affects social norms like marriage. Durkheim explained that the social structure determines human action (Durkheim, E. 1984).

Theory posits that the values, knowledge, and behavior of individuals are strongly influenced by their social structure. This theory enables a researcher to understand how marriage decisions in the Tamang community are shaped by local cultural norms and traditions, as well as how personal choices are either aligned or in conflict with these norms. Culture also plays an important role in shaping the social behaviour of an individual or society as a whole. As a member of society, an individual's perception, beliefs, norms and values are always influenced by the social atmosphere

where that individual resides. It was found during the interview with respondents that social factors consisting of social values, norms and customs also plays a vital role in causing early marriage among the Tamang community. As per the respondent, the Tamang community, especially the elder generation considered early marriage as beneficial for them and not hazardous. The simple belief is ‘‘girl needs to go to another family after marriage for sure then why should delay this’’. The psychology of community is ‘‘if marriage is arranged at an early stage then they will have dependant/child sooner’’. The elderly generation also has thrust to see their grandchild sooner. Having seen the grandchild, the elder generation thinks that their life came meaningful and they accomplished the fullest goals of their life. When the elder generation sees their child; son or daughter get married and their child running their household independently, then they consider them as having well settled, and they feel calm and quite satisfied. The elder generation feels secure and satisfied just seeing their child as a couple and having their child’’. It is also accepted in the Tamang society that with marriage and having their children, individuals become more responsible and do not act irresponsibly. Therefore, Tamang society prefers early marriage for their children to prevent them from being irresponsible. They think early marriage can make their children more responsible citizens and they would be bonded by their social responsibilities with the marriage.

Further, it seems that early marriage has attained a kind of social sanction in the Tamang community. During the field visit, it was found that nearly all generations of a household were children when they had married. The grandparents, parents and their children all married in their childhood. It was found that a respondent (bride), her parent-in-law and her grandparent-in-law all were children when they married. They all have accepted early marriage as a social tradition and accepted practice and normal as usual and legal marriage. There is also societal readiness for arranging marriage at an early age. Especially since there is societal readiness to accept the marriage proposal quickly for daughters even if they are at an early age, daughters are sent away with marriage in the Tamang community. The parents think that if they can arrange the marriage for their daughter means now their daughter will run their personal life with her husband and they will be secure for their whole life and there will not be any social trouble for their daughters.

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ANNEXES

Annex-I: Checklist (In the form of Questions)

I sincerely thank you for your time. I am going to interact with you in order to explore the “causes and impact of early marriage in Tamang community of Dupcheswor Rural Municipality” for my research dissertation of M.Phil. studies. This information I received from you will be utilized only for academic purposes and not for any other reasons. All information obtained will be kept highly confidential and the respondent's name will not be disclosed anywhere. I also like to take permission for photos in between.

Questionnaires;

1. To access the personal marriage choices in the Tamang Community of Dupcheshwor Rural Municipality.
2. To identify the cultural, social, economic, and educational factors influencing child marriages in the Tamang community.
3. To explore the social, psychological, and economic impacts of child marriage on individuals and families within the Tamang Community.

Demographic Information;

1. Name/Surname
2. Contact Number:
3. Adress:
4. Sex
5. Age
6. Means of livelihood: Salaried Job/Seasonal Job/Labor/Business/Abroad work
7. Main Source of Income in Household: Self/Husband/Son/all family/other
8. Annual Income: 10-30 K NPR/31-50K NPR/51-100K NPR/101k-above
9. Education at the time of marriage:
10. Current Education: When dropping out of education: Before /after marriage
11. Age when married:
12. Parental status: Single mum/father/both parent
13. Land size of parent
14. Any cultural relation with the partner by custom other than the husband?

Section A: Personal Choices of Marriage

- How marriage process is decided in the Tamang community?
- Does the groom/bride get involved in the decision-making process?
- Who makes the final decision regarding marriage in your community?
- What age do most Tamang people prefer to get married?
- Who initiated your marriage and who finally decided?
- How do you perform your marriage (process steps/manage)?
- How did you meet your partner for the first time (school, cultural ceremony)?
- Was it forced marriage or your personal choice?

Section B: Cultural, Social, Economic, and Educational Factors Influencing Child Marriage

Social: Indicators: 1. Peer Influence 2. Influence by elders 3. Custom/practice 4. Belief system (Family honour/reputation, purity) 5. Social Pressure 6. Limited enforcement of law 7. Family dynamics

1. What social factors influence the prevalence of child marriages in the Tamang community?
 - Was there any peer influence?
 - Was there any influence from elders/senior family members or members of society?
 - Are there any customs/practices that enforce early marriage in your community?
 - Are there any belief systems that enforce early marriage in your community?
 - Was there any social pressure that encouraged you for early marriage?
 - Do you think that the limited enforcement of the law is responsible for early marriage in your case?
 - Was there any family dynamics that influenced your early marriage in your case?

2. What are the other remaining social reasons for early child marriage in your locality?

Economic:

Indicators;

- 1 Poverty (limited land, family income) 2 Economic burden (Loan for medical, to perform social rituals/ceremonies, to meet other domestic necessities)
- What economic factors influence the prevalence of child marriages in the Tamang community?

- Was there any reason related to poverty (limited land and family income) that influenced you to early marriage in your case?
- Was there any economic burden (Loans for medical, to perform social rituals/ceremonies or to meet daily necessities) that enforced your early marriage?

Education

Indicators; 1. Lower education level of family parents 2. Lower education level of groom/bride 3. Lack of awareness in society regarding the demerits of early marriage

- What educational factors influence the prevalence of child marriages in the Tamang community?
 - Do you think that it was because of your lower education that influenced you to early marriage?
 - Do you think that it was because of the lower education of your parent that influenced you to early marriage?
 - Do you think the lack of awareness among you and your parents led to early marriage in your case?

Section C: Social, Psychological, and Economic Impacts of Child Marriage

Social:

Indicators: 1. Low education 2. Lower social status 3. Health-related issue

- What are the social demerits of child marriage in the Tamang community?
 - Did you continue your studies after marriage?
 - Did you accomplish the intended job that you aimed at your childhood?
 - Did you think early marriage causes health-related issues?
 - Do you think early marriage causes social demerits and if so how?

Psychological:

Indicators: 1 Stigma 2. Anxiety/depression 3. Low level of confidence 4. Sense of humiliation 5. Lack of happiness

- What are the psychological demerits of child marriage in Tamang community?
 - Do you think early marriage causes stigma?
 - Do you think early marriage causes anxiety/depression?
 - Do you think early marriage causes a lower level of confidence?
 - Do you think early marriage causes a sense of humiliation?
 - Do you think early marriage causes a lack of happiness in life?

Economic:

Indicators: 1. salaried job 2. Business/entrepreneurship 3. Income 4. Capacity to meet necessities fulfilled

- What are the economic demerits of child marriage in the Tamang community?
 - Do you have a salaried job?
 - Do you have any business or entrepreneurship?
 - Do you think early marriage causes an inability to afford the family's necessities to be fulfilled?
 - Do you think early marriage causes economic demerits and if so how?

Annex II: Demographic Profile of In-depth Interview Respondents

Code of the Participants (Interview Date(First Initial and Surname))	Sex	Age at Marriage	Education	Drop Out before Marriage	Drop Out after Marriage	Continued Study
S.Tamang, June 17,2024	F	18	10	No	No	Yes
P.Tamang, June 17,2024	F	17	4	Yes	-	-
M.Tamang, June 17,2024	F	17	3	-	Yes	-
D.Tamang, June 17,2024	F	16	12	-	-	Yes
B.Tamang, June 17,2024	F	17	8	No	Yes	-
S.M.Tamang, June 17,2024	F	16	4	Yes	-	-
P.M.Tamang, June 17,2024	F	14	3	Yes	-	-
B.M.Tamang, June 18,2024	F	16	4	Yes	-	-
K.Tamang, June 18,2024	F	16	4	-	Yes	-
H.Tamang, June 18,2024	F	16	3	Yes	-	-
S.T..Tamang, June 18,2024	F	17	5	Yes	-	-
L.Tamang, June 18,2024	F	16	9	-	Yes	-
U.L.Tamang, June 18,2024	M	15	-	Yes	-	-
BM.Tamang, June 18,2024	M	17	4	Yes	-	-
S.Tamang, June 19,2024	F	-	-	-	-	-
N.Tamang, June 19,2024	M	-	-	-	-	-
F.Tamang, June 19,2024	M	-	-	-	-	-
B.Tamang, June 20,2024	M	-	-	-	-	-
RR.Tiwari, June 20,2024	F	-	-	-	-	-
D.Tamang, June 20,2024	M	-	-	-	-	-
B.Tamang, June 20,2024	M	-	-	-	-	-