

# CHAPTER - I

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the study

This is an ethnographic study of the castes and ethnic groups and the inter-relation of multi-ethnic rural village Tudkiya in Siraha district, East Nepal. There are Tarai castes - Hajam, Yadav, Ray, Barahi, Mahto, Teli, Sudi, Kalwar, Dusadh, Chamar, Dom and Tarai indigenous caste group Mushar as well as hill castes - Bhandari, Bohara, B.K. and hill ethnic groups - Magar, Shrestha, Rai, Tamang of non Dalit and Dalit categories have been living side by side in a mixed settlement for many decades. Diversity in caste and ethnicity among them, have variations which make each group distinctive or separate to one another, are manifested in the domains of traditional occupations, commensal hierarchy, intra-caste or group divisions, caste rule enforcement agencies, marriage rules, own caste or group's self perceived ranking and other practices. Altogether with their differences, being an agricultural traditional community and local circumstances, at the same time unite them to each other through frequent social and cultural interactions, that can be observed during inter-caste or group invitation on different occasions, service- client relations, inter-caste marriage, ritual friends, village *panchayat* and at the time of common village territorial deity worshipping

Mainly, the castes i.e. Hajam, Barhi, B.K.(blacksmith), Chamar and Dom are still occupational castes who have been providing their caste specific services to village client circle on the basis of either piece work paid or annual grain paid that is locally called *khan* system. Rest of other Tarai castes -Teli, Sudi, Yadav, Mahto, Ray, Paswan and Mushar had to have their own caste specific specialization, which they have left and now are pursuing caste-neutral occupations like hill castes and ethnic groups. The larger division of commensal hierarchy is existed between non -Dalit and Dalit. However, non-Dalit castes or groups now have relinquished their previous hierarchical commensality in cooked food and water sharing but, within Dalit it is still

evident. There is no such sharing they even themselves treat Dom as most defiling caste. No matter caste or ethnic group, within an endogamous group there are either vertical or horizontal sub-divisions that play significant role to regulate marriage to which one's marriage is permitted or prohibited. To maintain caste identity or to enforce its normative rules by punishing transgressor particularly, in Tarai castes have brotherhood *jat samaj* but, hill ethnic groups and castes have lacked such structure. Furthermore, the hierarchy which is operating in two spheres during inter-group commensal contact and at individual caste or group's perception about other's given ranking is different; no one is prepared to accept own position lower than other. In taking up these issues to provide an ethnographic account, in and around throughout the thesis I will limit my discussion.

## **1.2 Statement of Problem**

In revised English edition of 'Homo Hierarchicus', Dumont has quoted Bogle's definition of caste system, in a society where this system exists "divides whole society into a large number of hereditary groups, distinguished from one another and connected together by three characteristics: separation in matters of marriage and contact, whether direct or indirect (food); division of labour, each group having, in theory or by tradition, a profession from which their members can depart only within certain limits; finally hierarchy, which ranks the groups as relatively superior or inferior to one another" (1998:21).

This book is based on macro-level structural functional analysis of caste system to Hindu India, even at micro-level within India, Dipanker Gupta (1991) says, the discrete character of castes make many caste systems rather single ideal system that encompasses all variants as Dumont suggest. To set apart this macro-micro caste system variations, some instruction of Dumont is still guiding principle for caste study. I see through above definitional caste proponents of Dumont in the context of Nepal, specifically to study village that what extent this caste community bearing such elements. And how these are operating where the caste and ethnic groups from both hill and Tarai differ than India, are tied up in complex relations.

Further, Dumont (1998:43) has suggested that these three characteristics of caste system can be "reduced to a single principle of the pure and the impure. This opposition underlies hierarchy, which is the superiority of the pure and the impure, underlines separation because the pure and the impure must be kept separate". Such separation of the pure and the impure in castes, are expressed through commensality, in which, the upper castes not to make contact (food, water and marriage) with lower castes whereas the degrees of pollution associated with all castes are defined by commensal rules (Mayer 1996; Anand 1970). I observe this separation of purity and pollution among and between groups that will be manifested during different spheres of commensal contact.

Hutton (1961) says that the effective caste group has control over its members in regard to social inter-course with other caste groups. Further, Atal (1968:17) adds that when caste customary rules are broken, "the culprit is dealt with by his caste fellows and punished according to the code of his caste". I see in castes of Tudkiya what are these controlling structures and what sort of rules are taken by particular caste members as violation and what kind of punishment that caste fellows are allotted to transgressor. Finally, I argue being a traditional village there is economic, social and cultural inter-caste relationships. Which I try to depict in the village context what are such spheres? When the inter-group relations are manifested?

### **1.3 Objectives of Study**

The foremost aim of this study was to furnish a systematic ethnography of multi-ethnic village. More specifically the study endeavours to focus the following objectives.

1. to assess the both intra and inter status division of caste or ethnic group.
2. to trace both traditional and non- caste specific inter-relations.
3. to examine how a caste identity is maintained.

## **1.4 Methodological Approach**

The researcher, a man from far western region came to unfamiliar multi-ethnic setting of east Tarai for research by own personal efforts would not be possible, if I was not being a member of qualitative research team for Measuring Empowerment and Social Inclusion (MESI-II). Besides that my thesis advisor's orientation to conduct anthropological research on new unexplored issues and in different socio-cultural environment that to own for avoiding research bias and to understand other's culture and people, which I considered this place will fulfill. My choice of field site in east Tarai was also the personal considerations that I had never been this part of country and the news in national magazine or radio about this part on exclusion from village to Dalit being his dug well touch, exclusion from caste due to inter-caste marriage, upper castes forced Chamar to throw carcass and so on. Further, my enthusiasm to choose these news issues were similar incidences of village that people had shared to me at the time of my initial field visit. Such disdainful happenings were thrashing of Dom household by Teli caste neighbours in response to common dug well touch and *bhoj cut* (exclusion from caste feast) from caste to Ray household while his daughter was eloped with Magar boy.

### **1.4.1 Fieldwork Experiences**

Apart from ten days initial field visit, the duration of my fieldwork was brought to end in eight months from October 2005 to May 2006 with three field breaks. Doing fieldwork for months by staying with an unfamiliar community was distressing and lonely until ethnographer has integrated to community and amusing afterward of rapport built up. Despite, the normal barriers of initial days felt cultural shock by observing new and unfamiliar things, to speak Maithili language and hot climate, I had confronted some additional hurdles in the beginning of my second visit. At first, it was difficult to assure subjects about my position as a research student due to suspicious environment and a new face during the ongoing Maoist insurgency and increasing number of Tarai outfit. Secondly, establishing rapport with different castes and ethnic group's people was troublesome.

On my second visit, when I reached Tudkiya, I had an image in my mind of earlier visit. While I had stayed and equally shared my kitchen with village well constructing staffs. They were living in a small room on the first floor which built under the village solar water collection tank. At that time I had also told them that in my second visit I will stay with you and pay for food until I manage other appropriate place. But, my arrival the local circumstances were different I saw the room locked and the key was held by the neighbour. The villager informed me that the well staffs only stay there when they have somwork. They gave me key, when I opened the room, it was dusty and there was no cooking stove and utensils. To manage it was almost dark. Being a new place and less familiar to villagers better I decided to stay in room and slept without dinner. It followed next two consecutive days I had neither lunch nor dinner during that time I maintained my appetite by beaten rice and *namkin* which I carried with.

Those days put me in quite stoical condition. Moreover, I had a hesitation to urge village people about my fooding and I misconceived that they are inhospitable or non-caring to outsider but, actually they didn't know about my fooding. My silence without food was discovered on fourth day morning when Sibendra Yadav a neighbour had come to my room and seen lack of cooking utensils. He also complained why I had not informed since three days. I replied, I felt hesitation to say, he further said, "If I luckily did not come to your room and you don't say anything, how can we know? You have been without having rice since your arrival." Sibendra's response was quite positive and he managed lunch for me in his house. When Sibendra shared this incident with his village people, I gained their sympathetic response, even the villagers whom I met they "you are our guest, don't sleep without food, better you have to say to us. If other people hear that we fail to manage food for single man in our own village, what will they think."

It was positive gesture of some people toward me but being a researcher and at the same time an outsider it was my prime duty "to establish trust and gain working relationship with the subjects" (Shah 2004: 34), through more acquaintance with the villagers. Like, other days after having Sibendra's offered

lunch I was on my way to next ward, where I met Bodhlal Shreshta, a government teacher, slightly known through my initial visit. I toned my 'namaste' he asked me to sit together for a while for my convenience rather walking around street in the mid of hot day that what I had aspiring. He offered tea and engaged me two hours discussion, same time, I requested him possible help for my adjustment of food as paying guest. From the same day evening he managed it near my stay at a tea shop of Sudi on monthly paid basis where I took my food till two months before I began self cooking on the advice of well wisher neighbours due to the suffering of gastroenteritis. After becoming a paying guest, I had faced other two difficulties i.e. food serving schedule and type of food items. Especially, food serving there was no fixed time but I had an obligation to reach at tea shop on proper time. Sometimes, worthless wait of one to two hours for mere lunch because household did not make food ready at time that hampered me to observe some ongoing specific events of village life. Next different cultural liking of food items that to my own often food providing household was more prone to spicy, oily, *kurthi dal* and boiled rice which repelled me during the time of eating, although my research ethics stopped me to say anything.

Despite these initial days difficulty to get entry in community life due to my newness, I had not faced major challenges in whole of my stay in field. Persistently, days were passed by my aim and newness to villagers was disclosed. Almost, within a month of my stay I had succeeded to establish social kin relations with many people in village as respective to their ages. In similar way they had begun to address me *bauwa*, *babu* and *bhai* as accord to my established kin relations to them. In addition, number of special occasions they had invited me to join, also offered dressed food dishes, among the delicacies the fried *taruwa* made by slice cut vegetables was essential part. Even, my presence or participation in village affairs like *panchayat*, *jat* meeting and gathering did not bother them. Because of my increasing familiarities with people the initial days felt both hesitant syndrome and loneliness was gradually surpassed and I became a part of village. A mid of community's sincere cooperation, my final day of detachment to community

had come. I felt a bit nostalgic, leaving the people whom I was a part for eight months. Just the previous day of leaving the field I walked to every door step of villagers, thanked them for their help, all had similar response "do not forget us, do come again".

#### **1.4.2 Tools and Techniques of Data Gathering**

The chief technique to obtain data of an anthropological fieldwork is 'participant observation'. "It involves getting close to people and making them feel comfortable enough with your presence so that you can observe and record information about their lives" (Bernard 1994: 136). When I succeeded to get entrée and established rapport with community and I became less and less of a curiosity, people took less and less interest in my coming and going. My role as participating observer, I observed on going village affairs in natural setting beside reflected caste or ethnic people's behaviour in public areas like, common dug wells, common sitting places, feasts, marriages, death ritual, *panchayat* as well as private sphere. At the same time, I have been observing participant because village people had invited me to join on occasions of feast, Puja, village *panchayat*, *jat samaj* meeting and marriage.

Along with this, as the requirement of research objectives I equally used other tools i.e. case studies about individual or organization both previous and current to display sufficient evidence why certain situation prevails. The key informants that I identified from different caste or group on the basis of their leading role and skill, were elderly, well informed and knowledgeable person as well as oral narratives and informal conversation. The data that were obtained through these tools and techniques were note forms which I had recorded in note book as both ways during or afterward of happening.

#### **1.4.3 Chapter Organization**

This study is arranged into eight chapters. Following this first introductory chapter (accounts to background of the study, problem statement, objectives and methodology), the chapter two is about review of literatures on caste to guide conceptual framework. Similarly, chapter three is concerned with setting

where I briefly explain district geography its more focus on study village which traces historical context of village name keeping, bio-diversity, agricultural land, caste-ethnic composition, religion, migration history, traditional occupation of castes, spoken language, available infrastructure and local commensal rules among and between caste/ ethnic groups. The chapter four deals with economic context which includes villagers previous outside village vegetable-grain transaction to cope with adversities of grain shortage, changing economic patterns, animal husbandry and its existing traditional sharing rule, castes of traditional occupations and their service-client grain or money payment system.

Chapter five where I try to show intra-caste or ethnic divisions and their ideal inter marriage rules. Besides their inter-caste or ethnic commensal hierarchical relations how it has been operating in past and present village context. The chapter six attempts to focus on the controlling instrument of caste identity *jat samaj* within particular caste and I portray it with the help of various case studies that *jat samaj* have taken as counter measure against breaching caste rule. Along with I define the causes of intra *jat samaj* differences and divisions. Likewise, chapter seven encompasses social and cultural inter-relations among castes or ethnic groups, where I show how number of occasions in village have been taking them closer and act as community even having many their differences. The eight and final chapter summarizes the thesis and make some conclusion in respect to set objectives of study.



## **CHAPTER - II**

### **Literature Review**

The literatures I have reviewed here focuses on caste and caste system. That suggest how it has been operated in three different countries like. Nepal, India and Srilanka. Irrespective to country, most of the them traced out caste has some common sharing features i.e. occupation, hierarchy, caste council, intra-caste division and sect. Which I reviewed in separate sub-heading accordingly.

#### **2.1 Defining Caste System**

The term caste, in a way different literature defines is debatable issue. "It has been used to mean different things by different people in a variety of situations. What people mean by caste in day-to-day life is different from the meaning it has in traditional literatures, or from what people considers to be its traditional and orthodox meaning." (Beteille quoted in Subedi 2008:13). Having situational meaning and differ interpretation, in majority castes that different scholars traced out, have common sharing features, as Berreman defines "Castes are ranked endogamous divisions of society in which membership is hereditary and permanent" (1963:198). To conceptualize castes they have some other additional traits that are traditional bases of occupation, hierarchy of occupation, intra-caste division, commensal restriction, sect, prestation or counter prestation (Jajmani system) and caste sanctity maintaining agency caste council (Mayer 1960; Dumont 1990). Further, to operate caste system in caste societies there are variation according to locality and region e.g. Pahari caste system is less rigid than the caste system of plain parts of India (Odegaard 1997; Berreman 1963).

#### **2.2 Caste and Occupation**

Caste, to some extent, is related to occupational specialization. "There is a definite relationship between caste and profession; this is not simply identity,

although, within certain limits one may have recourse to a livelihood other than that which is traditional for the caste of which one is a member" (Dumont 1998:93). He contends that caste is not a professional system as industrial trade guild in which the religious aspects are secondary, rather different taking a same stand like Hocart sees caste and profession are linked through the intermediary of religion (ibid). On the other hand, Yogesh Atal (1968) holds an opinion that the traditional division of labour is a peripheral attributes of caste system and rigid occupational stratification has never been the characteristics of caste. Considering the castes in respect to their occupations apart from a few exceptions, Blunt's (1968) study of caste system in Northern India, showed many castes were traditionally associated with specialized caste based profession which he distinguished as functional castes.

Similar study among Newar castes of Kathmandu valley in Nepal, Gopal Singh Nepali also traces caste based traditional specializations, in which two priestly castes - Deva Bhaju and Gubhaju officiate Newar ritual and religious ceremonies, upper lower castes - Pahari Jyapoo and Hale related to agricultural work, lower castes - Ghathu gardener, Nau hair and nail cutting, Khoosa prestily services to Kasai caste, Chitrakar painter, Cheepa cloth painting, Manandhar oil pressing, unclean Kasai caste animal slaughtering and selling of meat, and untouchable scavenger castes - Pore, Chyame and Hara Huru (Nepali 1965).

Such types of close link between caste and occupation is also observed by A.C. Mayer in Ramkheri, a rural village of central India, he explains "For each caste has a traditional occupation; not only do villagers say that it's member did this work in past, if not present, but their doing so proclaims their caste membership. This is clearly shown in the myth which explains, on the one hand, the very existence of many castes, and on the other hand their connection with a specific occupation" (Mayer 1960:61). Moreover, among the castes in Ramkheri, he finds out their caste based specializations as barber shaving and hair cut, carpenter wood work, blacksmith iron work, potter makes clay pots, tanner carcass throw, skinning and shoe making, drummer playing barreled drum at rite, sweeper clear away night soil from latrine and sweep the

ground or public buildings, along with village shrines worshipper castes Nath, Gosain and Bairagi (ibid). Such specializations are not only conspicuous in North, South and Central India, but also noticeable in lower Himalayan area of India. Berreman's ethnographic study in Sirkanda a village near Deharadun finds four castes have specialization namely, Brahman who works as priest and three low castes: blacksmith's main job is metal work, barber's function is shaving and hair cut, and bajgi (tailor) performs drum playing, tailoring and basket making (Berreman 1963). Moreover, these caste specific occupations are not regarded equally valuable in some cases being ritually distinguished, and others varying in the general prestige attached to them (Mayer 1960).

Leach (1960:5) rightly argues, "such division of labour patterning the network of economic and ritual inter-dependence"; that Blunt defined by "Jajmani System" in which the word jajman means "he who gives the sacrifice", i.e. the person who employs a priest to carry out a sacrifice for him: but it is now extended to include a client of any kind. He further adds, Chamar, Doms, Dafalis, Bhats, Nais, Bhangis, Barhis and Lohars all have their jajmani, or clientele, from whom they receive fixed dues in return for regular services; these jajmanis are valuable source of income, both heritable and transferable: they are strictly demarcated, and the crime of poaching on a fellow caste man's jajmani is bitterly resented (Blunt 1969:242). In his study of caste in 'jaffna', Michael Banks defines traditional specialist castes as "important castes", in this category he includes those caste which, by fulfilling a specific function on behalf of other castes, come to play a significant part in inter-caste relations (Banks 1960:64).

On the other hand, Berreman quotes the definition of 'Jajamani System' as "a number of essential activities in the village, especially those requiring particular skills or knowledge, are performed by specialists. Most of these occupations are thought of as caste monopolies, and the arrangements for work and payment are standardized in some form of traditional exchange, known widely in North India as the jajmani system" (Beidelman and Wiser quoted in Berreman 1963:57). But his ethnographic work with sirkanda villagers he traces, the use of term 'jajaman' they refer to one kind of exchange, that of the

Brahman's ritual services to one kind of exchange, that of the Brahman's ritual services to his client (jajmans); other services of occupational castes to clients, villagers use the parallel term 'gaikh'. And third category of exchange occurs between and among specialized artisan castes (Blacksmith, Nai, Bajgi) they do not see it as 'jajman' or 'gaikh' system, although, within among artisan castes there is agreement, for exchange i.e. Blacksmith provides his service to Bajgi at needed time and vice-versa (Berreman 1963). Louis Dumont sees 'jajmani system' as an expression of the division of labour in which specialist castes perform specialized task for client's disposal, "it regulates prestations and counter prestations in a way which accords with customs: for the usual tasks, repayment is in kind: it is not made individually for each particular prestation but is spread over the whole year, as is natural for a permanent relationship in an agricultural setting: a little food may be provided each day, and there is always the right to fixed quantity of grain at harvest time, and finally there are obligatory presents on the occasions of the main festivals of the year and above all, at the major family ceremonies, which are advantageous occasions for the 'Prajā' (specialist caste) of the house" (Dumont 1998:98-9).

Accordingly the study of A.P. Caplan in Western Nepal, she finds out the use of term 'jajman' is only restricted to the clients of a Brahman priest, generally, in this part the service rendering castes refer to their clients by 'bista', however, she notices 'jajmani' type of traditional relationships that existed among other castes as well notably between members of high caste clients and tailor or smith, in return for their specialized services they receive grain from clients on the harvest of crops (Caplan 1972). In a similar way, in his seminal study among the people of Eastern Nepal tarai village Mahamadpur, Surendra Mishra traced out the inter-caste relationships of exchange between specialized castes (Hajam, Lohar and Chamar) and non-specialist high and middle castes as 'Sali' system in which grains are provided by clients to specialist service renderer on an annual contact basis (Mishra 2005).

The traditional occupational specialization of castes are gradually weakening it's ground, except some, many such castes have changed their occupations to sustain livelihood because of the availability of new prosperous

opportunities or think to be certain caste specialized acts as defiling in modern context. This shift in occupation of specialized castes, E.A.H. Blunt sees the cause of that is "progress", he holds an idea that the progress killed the trade guild: progress has already weakened and is slowly killing the "functional caste", at all events on its purely occupational side; the road lies open to trade unionism (Blunt 1969: 246). Same stand holds by E. Kathleen. Gough, who sees the cause of castes lose most of their traditional caste based functions, is due to expansion of 'industrial economy'. According to her, the specialized function of castes is lost its significance in modern towns which is only evident in rural areas where the pattern of subsistence has not been too greatly modified; specialized castes have continued to function in a more or less traditional manner. Besides, the other reason of transition in traditional specialized occupations that she observed at Tanjore village in among the service giving castes because village could not be guaranteed to provide an exactly correct demand for the services of all the barber, washer man and carpenter (Gough 1960). Anand Chintaman Paranjpe puts forward two main causes to transition in caste specific occupations i.e. technology changes and meagre income that follows changing technology created new "occupational patterns" and loosened the "association between caste and occupation". Next, the castes members that bound to traditional occupations leading to a "meager income" could take up occupations earning more money (Paranjpe 1970:15). A.C. Mayer sees the cause of some castes detachment from their traditional occupations because they are polluting and lower commensal status. "When such castes wish to change their status, they first try to dissociate themselves from their traditional occupations" (Mayer 1960:90).

### **2.3 Caste and Hierarchy**

Leach (1960) rightly commented "a caste does not exist by itself, it can only be recognized in contrast to other castes" (Leach quoted in Atal 1968). One such contrast is hierarchy as reflects, in village context, Dube (1958) defines, "within a village the caste system manifests itself as a vertical structure in which individual castes are hierarchically graded" (Dube quoted in Atal

1968:20). These social hierarchies as Berreman explains have been expressed in "pattern of inter-personal interaction between and among the castes which symbolized superiority and inferiority". Such unequal hierarchical status in the course of interaction, he further argues, if, it is "birth ascribed" the membership of its component group is ideally stable, well known, and easily recognizable. Moreover, people are perceived by those outside of their groups almost wholly in term of their group identity rather than as individuals and in inter-group relations, therefore, one individual is substitutable for another in his group, for all are alike and interchangeable. Altogether, he sees, in Indian society these physical barriers of hierarchy to social interaction have been diminishing apparently because people of differing status, culture and religion are coming together through frequent and intense communication which diminished inter-group distinctiveness (Berreman 1979: 200-224).

Dipankar Gupta claims that caste hierarchy is only one kind of stratification where the strata are arranged vertically on the basis of their social differences with the help of a set of criteria or just a single criterion which ties the differentiated strata into a system. The cause of these set social differences are due to, he argues, mental constructions i.e. "ideological self image and notions of hierarchy" (Gupta 1991: 8-9-27). Louis Dumont argues, "the Indian caste based hierarchy backed by religion" as gradation of beings one above another according to their degree of dignity and he linked the principle of hierarchy with the opposition between the "pure and the impure" (Dumont 1998:65-6). With any caste the sense of being pure and the impure begets or shapes, George De Vos says, "by early childhood socialization, concern for the moral and immoral, what is clean and what is dirty, are represented in the moral code that child automatically learns from his mentor" (De Vos 1967:300). This caste based purity and pollution, he analyses from a psycho-cultural perspective and explains, "it is the characteristics of the social nature of man that he is highly dependent on some form of periodic symbolic reassurance of status; that help the individuals to maintain some form of self identity (ibid.: 302-3).

Smith (1986) defines pollution in *MacMillan Dictionary of Anthropology* that the pollution in caste system is not primarily a matter of danger to the person, though; it has wider implications for the social status of individuals and groups. The impurity of some people is a condition for the purity of other's contacts and transactions between unequal are necessary. Anand Chintaman Paranjpe makes distinction such pollution two types i.e. "temporary and permanent". According to him, the temporary pollution is supposed to be caused by an evil omen, birth or death of a member of the family, menstruation, etc., whereas being born in a particular caste is supposed to bring a degree of pollution permanently associated with caste and no amount of purificatory ritual can ward off this ascribed pollution to a given caste. Further, in course of inter-caste pure pollution based relations, he argues, "untouchability is the most extreme form of pollution" in which certain castes were supposed to be so polluted that even their touch would invite elaborate purificatory ritual for member of the upper castes (Paranjpe 1970: 8-11).

S.R. Bakshi (2001) argues untouchability, is the notion of defilement, pollution, contamination and the ways and means getting rid of that defilement. Another Dalit leader as well as social reformer, B.R. Ambedkar relates this extreme form of untouchability in Indian context to low castes as "once impure always impure", he holds the idea that hereditary untouchability is specific to Hindus abundantly recognized from "Manu Smriti", is full of taboos and don'ts besides it recognizes physical defilement and also notional defilement. Further, he argues, "the impurity of the untouchables of India quite unlike the impurity arising from birth, death etc, is permanent and there is not purificatory rite which can make the untouchables pure. They are born impure, they are impure while they live, they die the death of the impure, and they give birth to children who are born with the stigma of untouchability affixed to them. It is a case of permanent, hereditary stain which nothing can cleanse" (Ambedkar quoted in Bakshi 2001:60). Rather different to Ambedkar arguments about untouchability of low castes to touchables, Robert Deliege has noticed untouchability in relation to untouchables he sees, it as a non homogeneous category, they themselves divided into a multitude of castes which are more less hierarchised

and, in any case, strong differentiation where between and among 'pollution' is evident (Deliege 1996).

Max Weber writes under *class, status, party*, the evolution of status group due to a closed 'caste' that follows status distinctions are then guaranteed not merely by "conventions and laws, but also by rituals". This occur in such a way that every physical contact with a member of any caste that is considered to be 'lower' by the members of a 'higher' caste is considered as making for a ritual religious act (Weber 1991:464). Such religious act is practiced among strict Hindus, J.H. Hutton given the name of purification ceremony in which involves drinking the 'panchagavya' that is, the five products of cow-milk, clarified butter, curds, urine and dung all mixed together, than which no remedy is more efficacious for purifying the body from defilement. An often case of external defilement cow's urine is a potent cleanser (Hutton 1963:88).

Throughout above discussion the dichotomy between purity and pollution is because of apparent status differentiation among the castes, H.N.C, Stevenson (1954) makes a distinction between secular status and ritual status. To him, the secular status is determined by criteria like wealth, education, occupation, skill and so on; while ritual status is determined by the concept of purity and pollution. It is argued that the secular kind of status is universal while ritual status seems to be an exclusive characteristics of the Indian caste system (Stevenson quoted in Paranjpe 1970:8). A.C. Mayer's ethnographic study among the castes in Ramkheri, he observed, the clearest expression of ritual status is through the criterion of commensality which is based on the theory that each caste has a certain quality of ritual purity which is lessened, or polluted by certain commensal contacts that include the cooking of food and it's consumption, drinking and smoking with castes having an inferior quality (Mayer 1960: 33).

Similarly, Barnard Barber (1968:20) holds an idea that the manifestation of caste ranking is expressed through "ritual behaviour dimension", though such behaviours, as Berreman argues, have contrasting patterns in two different rural-urban setting of India. According to him, in rural villages, where most of people are familiar to their fellow villagers in terms of family, group



memberships, and personal qualities, they knew exactly the kind of behaviour which is appropriate to each person in each situation. On the contrary, in the city, where ethnic diversity is great and social relations take place with strangers as casual acquaintances and little known about individual's caste and family history. So, limited information to one another, urban people, therefore, relate to other in highly specific and impersonal situations, rather the responding upon the basis of through knowledge and consistent statuses as occur in village (Berreman 1979).

The contrast of caste's ritual behaviours is not only observable in rural and urban settings that also within village, which A.C. Mayer has observed among the castes in Ramkheri double standard ritual behaviour that were distinct in public at the occasion of feast and private day to day spheres (Mayer 1996:44). The caste rank in the hierarchy, S.N. Srinivas says may vary from village to village, some extent hierarchy is also local and castes are mobile over a period of time (Srinivas 1991: 32); Berreman (1979) holds the idea that within caste system it contains seeds of change which make dynamic despite their static ideology and Blunt (1969:200) sees caste system is not rigid, but mutable, and it's evolution is still proceeding: new castes and sub castes come to existence, old customs fall into obeyance. But, J.H. Hutton argues differently to Blunt's above said nature of caste and says, "no doubt, is true enough, but it is not the system that is changing so much as caste details within it, caste, no doubt, keeps changing, and customs come and go; the pattern alters, but the principles that govern it, the frames that hold the pattern so to speak are exceptionally constant for a human institution" (Hutton 1963: 123). Santokh Sing Anant finds, the factors affecting inter-caste relations are socio-economic that include spread of education, industrialization (bringing the members of different caste together in labour union), increase in mobility leading to less visibility of caste distinctions, and adoption of a democratic way of life at the national level (Anant 1972:28).

## 2.4 Caste and Caste Council

E.A.H. Blunt explains about caste council as, in every caste there is some authority charged with the duty of compelling obedience to customary laws. He explains most castes possess regular system of government, of which the ruling body is a council or assembly, known as a *panchayat*. The powers of this body vary both in nature and extent, the group which a *panchayat* rules is not the caste as such, but the endogamous independent local section of that caste or sub-caste. In other words, he argues the *panchayat* is not of the 'zat' but of the 'biradari'. The local boundaries of the jurisdiction of each such *panchayat* are clearly demarcated: some times it covers part of a village or town, sometimes a whole village or town, occasionally a group of village (pp.104-105). He notices in council or *panchayat* most brotherhoods, there is a headman who is permanent official: sometimes the office is hereditary, sometimes elective, and if so, generally for life; their duties vary from vice-president to orderly. And the council meets in three different occasions (i) at a feast of the brotherhood (ii) on the special summons (iii) on fixed occasions (Blunt 1969:107-112-113).

Most tribal offences of caste rule breaching that came to caste council jurisdiction, Blunt has made an attempt to find out from the Indian census report of 1911 by different *panchayat* as follows: "(i) Breaching of the commensal law, and of restrictions on eating, drinking, and smoking (ii) Breaches of marriage law, a) seduction of a wife, or adultery b) immorality or concubine c) refusal to carry out a marriage after agreement (breach of promise of marriage) d) refusal to carry out the guna ceremony-to send a wife to her husband the proper age e) refusal to maintain a wife (restitution of conjugal right) (f) marrying a widow without permission (when permission is necessary) (iii) Breaches of caste custom in the matter of feasts. (iv) Breaches of the trade custom of the caste. (v) Killing of certain animals, the cow, sometimes the dog or cat. (vi) Insulting a Brahman. (vii) Criminal or civil cases that might have come before the regular courts, such as assault or debt. (viii) Retrial of criminal cases decided by the regular court" (ibid.: 115-116). The most common form of punishments to breacher from council are fines, feasts to the brotherhood or to Brahman, and outcasting temporary or permanent: for some kinds of offence,

pilgrimages, begging, and various forms of degradation are imposed. But, if the fine is large, it usually goes to fund, which is expended on such public objects as the recitation of a 'Katha', the feeding of Brahmans, or the purchase of vessels for the use of community. He further says the procedure at *panchayat* closely follows that of a court of law. The charge is made: the culprit is called on to plead guilty or not guilty. A plea of guilty is followed by immediate sentence: a plea of not guilty is followed by the hearing of evidence, discussion, voting, and a verdict and sentence. All evidence is oral: every brother who is present has the right to speak and vote (Blunt 1969: 117-113).

J.H. Hutton (1961) argues, the effective caste group is one which has control over its members through restriction in regard to choice of mates and social intercourse with other caste groups (Hutton quoted in Atal 1968). "When these rules, whatever they may be, are broken, the culprit is dealt with by his caste fellows and punished according to the code of his caste" (Atal 1968:17). Anand Chintaman Paranjpe writes, in his book *Caste prejudice and the individual* that the caste council is a feature of traditional caste system in which breach of ritual rules would call for punishment through it (Paranjpe 1970). However, in this ethnographic context of Ramkheri, A.C. Mayer defines, the *panchayat* is a new type of inter-caste formal elected assembly presided over by four or five influential villagers, in Dumont's (1998:167) words "notables of dominant castes" that coordinate all aspects of village life. Rather different council is the traditional who concerns with the single endogamous sub-caste, deals with particular sub-caste rules infringements and controlling the behaviour of members within sub-caste. He further says, the deliberations of councils cover infringement of both secular and ritual sub-caste rules.

Mayer says that "the ritual infringements of rules include inter caste commensal relations like, eating, drinking or smoking with forbidden castes, or allowing to enter one's house, violation of sub-caste's dietary rule, contracting marriage or sexual affairs within forbidden degrees of kin or forbidden castes and killing of certain animals. For these all ritual offences one needs to require purification by pilgrimage or the hearing of holy recitation as well as a punishment that may be a fine or the feeding of fellow sub-caste members. And

secular offences which do not need to be reported to authorities that include-disputes between men of the same sub-castes over land, non-cognizable assaults, non-payment of debts by sub-caste mates, the breaking of an engagement of marriage" (Mayer 1960: 251).

On the other hand, Berreman sees, *panchayat* or council at Sirkanda different, what Blunt and Mayer write about, there is no sub-caste specific council rather inter-caste *panchayat* which holds at critical time between and among the castes of inter village or intra-village as the nature of disputes. The *panchayats* are non permanent bodies. In village it is made up by local men, the membership varies with circumstances but traditionally it is confined to the high castes. Generally, decisions of *panchayat* are made up by mutually agreeable compromise, if disputing parties unable or unwilling to compromise; the *panchayat* can impose sanctions under the threat of physical punishment, social ostracism, or legal action. However, on the part of villagers there is little confidence about the neutrality of *panchayat* because they are thought it is heavily influenced by caste, clique and kin group loyalties and to be easily swayed by money and favors. As he quotes one Rajput's saying "Whoever treats the council to the best feast win the case" (Berreman 1963: 280-283).

Louis Dumont defines, caste assembly or *panchayat* is the highest authority within a caste, which acts as a protector and modifier of custom to that particular caste, it deals with the issues of caste rules violations or disputes either by "arbitration or passing judgement against what is contrary to custom" (Dumont 1998: 173). J.H. Hutton argues, the caste council is commonly spoken as a *panchayat*, literally, that is, a body of five men, but in practice it is usually very much larger. It may be a permanent institution with a continuous existence, or it may be an intermittent one only called into being when circumstances demand it and dissolved again its work is done. Similarly, the officials who perform its executive functions, as well as sharing its judicial ones, may be appointed ad hoc for the particular purpose in hand, or for a much longer period, or they may be hereditary, or some may be elected while other are hereditary (Hutton 1963: 99). He further explains, the caste council can only act for a limited area, an area small enough for the member of the council

to assemble and for members of the caste within the area to have some knowledge of each other as a general rule. The members of the caste in such an area will usually form a nearly related group and are spoken of collectively, in Northern India, as a biradari or as bhaiband, that is, as a brotherhood, an association of Kinsmen. They may, indeed, actually constitute an exogamous unit within the embracing endogamous caste but nonetheless act for the caste as a whole in enforcing sanctions on the members within their sphere of action (ibid.:98).

Besides caste councils or *panchayats*, in some castes of India they have own caste shabhas; Blunt makes distinction between caste sabha and *panchayat* - a sabha is merely an association of person united by some bond of common interest. He sees in India there are a number of caste sabhas which are essentially a modern product. They differ from *panchayats* in that they always have a much larger scope, and that they handle, not the cases of individuals, but questions of general interest (Blunt 1969: 130). In a similar way, J.H. Hutton says, a sabha, an association of whole caste may, that is, with branches all over India and even a central headquarters. But such an organization, if it exists, must be a recent development subsequent to the introduction of a cheap postal system and rapid communications of various kinds and it may represent the caste for purpose of social and political agitation (Hutton 1963: 98). G.D. Berreman sees caste association as an effort to unite several endogamous caste or Jatis of similar name, occupation and rank of desperate groups. Such association provides a mechanism for political or economic activity and status enhancement of caste (Berreman 1979).

In his pioneering study about Newar castes of Panga village at Kathmandu, Gopal Singh Nepali (1965:191) finds, "Socio-religious character 'guthi' institutions" through which Newar "caste or sub-caste sets limits to the general status-position of a person in the total society and his ritual and social life is regulated and controlled"; for violating any 'guthi' rule "a defaulting person or household results three tier sanctions - complete social boycott, through the denial of participation in the group events and feasts and services to be rendered by these respective institutions." Besides 'guthi', he further talks

about caste council of Manandhar (Salmi), which he says "ethnically organized people among the newars", is made by regional sub-councils, each headed by own 'Kaji' and at the top presiding 'Chief kaji'. The succession of 'Kajiship' is executed by two ways, in some cases hereditary the eldest son inherits after father and other it revolves among caste members on the basis of seniority of age that deals the matter of caste and social disputes (ibid.:172).

## **2.5 Intra-caste Division, Marriage and Sects**

Louis Dumont has suggested that "the caste is not a niche or a block but is generally subdivided, at least at a primary level, into different sub-castes, and there are often many further sub-divisions" (Dumont 1998:61). He further quotes, Sanskrit scholar Senart that it is sub-caste rather caste which bears most of characteristics of caste, being a member of particular caste one cannot marry within caste but within sub-caste, moreover, the judicial institution (caste council) is belonged to sub-caste, not a whole caste. He again states G.S. Ghurye's views, though it is the caste which is recognized by society at large, it is the sub-caste which is regarded by the particular caste and individual, so, we should recognize sub castes as real castes (ibid).

J.H. Hutton states, the endogamous caste is subdivided into number of exogamous groups, generally, known as "gotra or got, which theoretically derived from the gotrakara rishis of Vedic time or from the gotra of some Brahman who has ministered to non Brahman caste. These gotras, however are often in reality exogamous unit of various kind, territorial, occupational, totemistic and very often spoken of by quite a different term - illam, kul, mul, phaid, pal, pangat, bani, that, nukh, kuri, khel and what not" (Hutton 1963:58).

A.c. Mayer argues that the sub-caste alone cannot be effective without relation to caste because both caste and sub-caste are not separate entity and at the same time, every individual is possessed the membership of both caste and sub caste with appropriate role. The divisions of caste into sub-castes is not end here, it is furthermore divided into exogamous clans or gotras and within the clan various decent groups of extended family with nearity to three or four generations of same patriline known as kutumb or lineage (Mayer 1960).

According to Blunt, marriage is an imperative duty and religious rite for a Hindu, although, there are various customary restrictions which make it difficult to choose mate. Such as: (a) the custom of endogamy which compels to marry within a certain group it may be either caste or sub-caste, (b) the custom of exogamy which forbids to marry within a certain group this exogamous groups is a sub-division of endogamous, (c) the Hindu table of prohibited kin, various castes have various such tables; in some of it replaces the restrictions of exogamy, in some it reinforces them, the effect in generally to forbid marriage with certain kind of relative who are not included in the exogamous group, (d) the custom of hypergamy, by which a bride may not marry a man of lower social rank than herself, (e) the custom of virgin marriage, which forbids a man to marry a widow (Blunt 1969:36-7). In good status castes there is sapinda rule in which marriage is prohibited between any two person who possess a common ancestor within a certain degrees on both father's and mother's side. The actual number of prohibited degrees varies in different castes and in different part of India-seven degrees on the father's side or five on mother's is sometimes given as rule; six on the father's side and four on the mother's is a frequent standard but the degrees on the mother's side prohibited under the sapinda rule are sometimes as low as three (Hutton 1963: 60).

Louis Dumont also talks other provision of prohibitions in higher castes as positive criteria of hierarchical status like widow remarriage, divorce and marry girl after puberty. He further makes distinction to castes on the basis of widow marriage that the castes who forbid and castes who allow the woman, if her first marriage is ended by widowhood or divorce and names widow marriage as secondary marriage of inferior status which also includes the custom of levirate that allows the widow to marry younger brother of her husband (Dumont 1998: 111). Moreover, within some castes the causes of separation is made by the practice of widow marriage, Blunt adds, the Byahut sub-castes in several castes, such as the Kalwar, Lohar, Nai and Teli, is the result of the abandonment of the practice of widow marriage (Blunt 1969: 53). Berreman further shows geographic ceremonial distinction of the nature of

marriage between pahari and plains, he explains - the traditional plains wedding complete with dowry in which bride's family pays agreed sum in cash to the family of the groom (Berreman 1963).

Louis Dumont defines, Hinduism is together with presence of sects, each have specific cult and doctrine to follow for followers. Its main emphasis is to connect between sect and institution of renunciation and the link between both sides is provided by spiritual master 'guru'. Instead of the renouncer alone having his 'guru', he serves a 'guru' to whoever wishes it and the initiation sect entering rite is carried out by a chosen 'guru' through whispering a mantra in the ears to new comer follower. He further states, sect is a democratized institution holds single doctrine, the principle of unity among followers, unlike conservative Brahmanism there is multiplicity of gods (Dumont 1998: 284). Hutton describes, the origin of Buddhism and Sikhism were due to groups defiance and in protest against the caste system which such groups had aspired to reform. A typical instance he argues, the religious sect turned to caste is that of lingayat, a caste which started as the follower of Basava, a teacher of the twelfth century who preaches his follower to repudiate caste and wear a stone phallus as the symbol of their faith containing small silver box. A similar sectarian caste is possibly to be found in 'Kabirpanthi's, followers of Kabir. Who addressed himself to both Hindus and Muslims, is particularly popular among weavers. Somewhat similar sect of satnami, largely recruited from chamar, is careful not to override the demand of caste (Hutton 1963:117-8).

Above these majority literatures on caste from India and Nepal have suggested caste is more or less Hindu phenomena and sharing some sort of common characteristics i.e. traditional occupation, hierarchy, intra-division, each have distinct marriage rule and within the caste informal identity maintaining body council. Although the circumstances in which caste system has been operating India and Nepal are not equally similar, It is because Holmberg argues, "Indo-Nepalese have encountered with Tibetan and other Tibeto-Burman speaking group that has resulted mutual accommodation of contrary culture in to uniquely Nepalese" (of cited Shah 2004: 19); in this mutual accommodation Shah argues, two directional cultural flows from Hindu



caste to Tibeto-Burman and vice-versa that makes "Hindu caste practices in Nepal are significantly different from those in India" (Shah 2004:19). Even such difference reflects within Nepali society, Gaize (1975:3) says, " Hindu in hills differ from those in the plains in number of respects"; i.e. "religious tradition, language, caste system, food, style of cloths, form of entertainment and personal mannerism". (ibid:12). In light of above literatures guideline I will try to give an outline of my ethnography of multi-ethnic village in east Tarai.

## CHAPTER - III

### The Setting: The Place and the People

Tudkiya is a rural village, which comprises three wards of Lalpur VDC. It lies some five kilometers graveled road north towards chure hills from West-East Highway small urban centre Golbazar in Siraha district. Out of six districts of Sagarmatha Zone, Siraha has the lowest land area (122796.9 hectares) and the highest population density ( in total 552551 population, 490.13 people per square km). The continuous slopping from north to south, the land of Siraha is almost flattened but largely unirrigated. Due to the lack of proper water management of rivers like - Kamala, Mainawati, Guguna, Khutti, Bulan, Kylan and Budahara, make majority farmer's dependability on rain water for irrigation and it further cause the place prone of flood and draught. The climate is similar to the rest districts of eastern development Tarai region i.e. tropical and sub-tropical, the maximum temperature ranges 40<sup>0</sup> c and average humidity is 20<sup>0</sup>c. The greater part of rain comes with monsoon which starts from beginning of june and remains till mid October. Administratively, Siraha is divided into 106 VDCs, 20 municipalities and 17 regions. It has five parliamentary election seats and it's political boundary terminates in east with Saptari, West Dhanusa, north Udayapur district and South with Indian state Bihar (Information and written record centre DDC Siraha 2008/2009).

Particularly, about the study village the name Tudkiya has come into being as village people known by old generation's oral narratives and say, before the settlement here in Tudkiya was fully covered by Forest. In middle of the present day village there was a common track for pedestrians which was especially used by hill people across Chure hills of Udyapur district to purchase needing household utensils like - salt, molasses and cloths from nearer Indian border market Ladniya. The hither and thither of the track that had passed through the village lacked drinking water, mostly, passer by on that track quenched their afflicted thirst from water dripping tree (not found now) by making leaf *tudka* (leaf folded bowl), later *tudka* became Tudkiya and now Todke also.

Until 1960-1970 Tudkiya had abundant vegetation, including precious timber trees - khair (*Acacia catechu*), sal (*Shorea robusta*) and sisham (*Dalbergia sisso.*). In order to get the land cleared and smuggling of timber across the Indian border has caused enormous deforestation. Now, that previous abundant forest has only been restricted to two community forestries namely, Gagan Khola (74.8 hectare) and Indreni (15.8 hectare) which was also conserved under the afforestation programme by district forest office. The devastation is not only observable in standing big trees but also in other species of flora and fauna, that old people say- now has stopped to seen in vicinity of the village forest. To sum up the causes responsible for biodiversity depletion as I observed are deforestation, excessive animal grazing and settlement expansion. Moreover, the accidental exposure of wild animals to village vicinity, due to the loss of habitat faunas like Ratuwa (deer), Nil gai (Antelope) and Badel (wild boar) around the village neighbourhood concentrated forests have faced hostile response from villagers often by killing and chasing. The soil-erosion is other environmental degradation village has been facing by north flowing torrential Gagan rivulet, each year's inundation claimed 'Bighas' of attached bank land into sand. Further, the rate of erosion has been quickened by ecologically unmanaged D.D.C's (District Development Committees) contract to pick boulders and sand from Gagan *khola*.

Except, few small areas of land near the three newly constructed rain water collecting ponds they too have partial supply of water, the large portion of village agricultural land is unirrigated and rainfall is only the source of irrigation. To mitigate villager's demand of irrigation water, the government had made two attempts of deep boring which were failed due to unavailability of proper water layer. The rainfall at cultivation time is not always certain which has a great impact on crop productivity that is gradually inspiring village people to replace grain crops by sugarcane and vegetables. Excluding some households, the village neither before nor now is self sufficient in essential grains - wheat, rice. So villagers purchase it from road head Golbazar or twice a week organized *hatiya*. The village has services like - sub-health centre, additional post office, primary school, dug wells and solar pump drinking water, and electricity. Particularly, the electricity in two wards has extended from grid just previous year of my stay in field by the initiation or interest of

wards elites on the basis of self expenditure. The needed money to pay for extension electricity grid has collectively compensated by selling of 'Sisam' wood from 'Gagan Community Forest.'

Some households of new settlers who has made their houses randomly, the settlement pattern in Tudkiya is made in cluster according to own caste or group. This is a village of 1531 people in which are 797 males and 734 females. It is heterogeneous in terms of caste and ethnicity, comprising population as Teli/Sudi (45.67%), Ray (13.2%), Yadav (3.89%), Rai (5.80%), Tamang/Magar (11.82%), Dalit including Chamar, Dusadh, Dom and Mushar (12.75%) and other Chhetries, Shrestha, B.K. Muslim (6.79%) (Fund Board Survey 2005). Such heterogeneity is equally reflected in other spheres of their life, the spoken languages, religious practices, caste specific occupational specializations and commensal rules. In local circumstances, there is no single spoken lingua franca, it varies with the people of hill and Tarai. During inter-group communications, Maithili is common among Tarai castes and Nepali among hill-groups. When people of these two communities are met, both Nepali and Maithili are equally used as hill people have extra command in Maithili and majority Tarai people speak in Nepali. Besides, Tamang and Magar continue to be spoken their respective mother tongue in homes, whereas Shrestha and Rai's new generation cannot speak in Newari and Rai language..

In terms of religion among the residents of Tudkiya, all Tarai castes, hill Chhetris, Shrestha and B.K. have already been owed to Hinduism, although, they are different in many their ritual practices, God, Goddesses, worshipping manner, for example - except Chhetri no touchable caste from Tarai and Shrestha wears holy thread. Among other hill ethnic groups, the Rai an elderly man Matuklal Rai has told that his group people have abandoned their previous animistic practices like *chendum*, *dewa*, *machhacma* and now follow many ways of hill Hinduism. Despite some people in Magar who have owned Christian faith besides hill Hinduism Tul Bahadur Thapa said that his group has certain extra practices i.e. *gotha puja puschemeli puja* and *diwali puja* to perform but, now these practices are near to stop and remains only as a Hindu practice. Unlike Rai and Magar, the Tamangs still practice Lama Buddhism. As if not out of the influence of hill Hinduism, some *thar* also worships Hindu

*Bhagwati, Nagpuja* and *Bhimsen*. There are other sects, specifically, *santabhekh* in Magar *thars* like Thapa, Purbachhane and Aale, and *baishanav* in Tarai castes. In *santabhekh*, the follower himself does not carry out sacrifice of animal and bird, instead he worships separately constructed rectangular shape *dhuni* (secret fire place where household food cooking prohibition). At one corner a red cloth piece tightened trident and tongs, is erected, at different occasions *puja* is performed there.

Particularly, sects followers in Tarai castes of village are some old generation men commonly known by the term of addressing *baishanav*, who symbolize vegetarian food habit. Within *baishanav*, there are three sects *ramaut, sampradaish, and kabirpanthi*. All followers of these sects have joined in respective sect by initiation ritual that has accomplished in the presence of Guru who provided each *mantra* and *kanthi* (The piece of wood made up by plants - Karbir, Beli, Sarhar and Tulsi which follower wears either in arm or neck). The *ramaut* follower worships God Ram, *sampradaish* worships God Krishna along with other Hindu idols of God and Goddesses but *kabirpanthi* takes material approach, denies the presence of Gods or Goddesses except the precepts of great rebellion Guru Kabirdas. There is similarity in dress pattern all wear white *dhoti* and *kurta*, although, differences in practice as way of saluting, word of greeting, forehead *tika* stripe number and colour, bearing of *tupi*, feast custom, hierarchy, Guru's teachings to pupil, Guru's feet washing and oil massage prevail. Owing *kanthi* in these three sects that followers say - only makes them plane *baishanav* who can stay with family life, however, *aarbikopi* the second stage of devotion if someone takes who must leave family and it's bonding, and he becomes a member of the sect rather family.

In Tudkiya among hill people except single Dalit caste B.K, no other have traditional occupational specializations, that is characteristics of mostly Tarai castes, although, now it only remains to two non-Dalit castes-Hajam and Barhi and two Dalit castes - Dom and Chamar. These occupational castes do perform certain own caste specific functions for the sake of clients either under annual grain payment *khan* or piece work paid basis. Other Tarai non-Dalit castes - Yadav, Ray, Koeri, Teli, Sudi, Kalwar and Dalit castes - Dusadh and Mushar once each were known by own caste specialized activities in which

their caste members were involved. Such castes now have not remained to these specialized activities which are equally pursued by other castes as well. The Yadav caste locally addressed by *gwar* means 'cow herders' was traditionally specialized for dairy items production and playing wrestling. The Ray caste informants all have claimed their previous caste specialization was agricultural work but, other caste's said - majority of them were involved in *khawashi* and *tahlu* of hierarchically landlord upper castes - Rajput, Brahman, Chhetri and Yadav. The service of *tahlu* had included the duties - cleaning of house and houseyard, washing of clothes and utensils and *khawashi* was related to carrying water pot of landlord during way to latrine and massage of body or feet while landlord seeks. In traditional sense, Koeri caste was related to growing all kind of vegetables, however, 'turmeric' growing and selling was restricted to Koeri caste.

By traditional caste based specialization, Teli (Oil pressure) was involved in oil business, until 15 years ago when the first oil pressing machine had arrived near road head Golbazar. He extracted oil from Mustard, Philinge, Aalash and Til by revolving wood oil pressure, locally said *kolhu* which was dragged by single bullock. That extracted oil, mostly, was exchanged with oil containing seeds, sometimes, it would be sold either from the house or walking around the village. Sudi is *baniya* caste, traditionally, had taken part in different sort of businesses but grains business was his caste specialization. Even today, other caste people in village taunt him by calling *dhankuta* because of his caste people's massive involvement in husking rice and selling it. On the other hand, Kalwar's claims similar specialization like, Sudi. In past, the Dusadh caste was involved in activities i.e. *haruwa-charuwa* (bonded labour of land lord), village messenger of *patwari*, *gorait* (village guarding from outside thieves) and inborn Mastery in thievery which village Dusadh sees it as a caste attached stigma brought to them by their caste people's massive involvement in thievery on other places. Finally, two menial tasks - digging of pond and leveling of unflat agricultural field was specialized for Mushar caste.

In many respect to previous time, the commensal rules within and between hill and Tarai castes on groups have been transformed. Once food and water non-sharing castes or groups now have begun to share each other's

cooked food. The big commensal division exists between touchable and untouchables which reflects in public life at common dug well and feast. Interestingly, within untouchables there are commensal hierarchy and they themselves restrict Dom to common well, and treat as most defiling caste. On the contrary, in private sphere as confidential manner no matter of caste or group the commensal prohibitory rules are not always pursued by all members. There is breaching in sharing of food, water and sex but, it does not cause pollution until the matter becomes public outcry. The other division in village is political. The village has an influenced of four parties i.e. CPNUML (Communist Party of Nepal United Marxist and Leninist), RPP (Rastriya Prajatantra Party), Janmorcha (People's Front) and Maobadi (CPN Maoist) but, CPNUML is in dominant position which leads by village teachers, educated people and Government or non government employees. This political party's dominance is also seen in official means of control, the resource either in village or comes from outside it has first authority to allocate according to their wish for own party supporting people first. Rather different, opponent parties of village are mere passive observer, their opposition stand on common issues are not obliged dominant *UML* due consideration.

Before the settlement in Tudkiya began, it was densely covered by forest, Aaitimaya Tamang, now 89, heard from her father that the earliest people used to come since half of 19<sup>th</sup> century from north hills for seasonal cowherd grazing and who later cleared the forest and settled. Tamang's oral narratives suggest that the second phase of settlement was started from last quarter of 19<sup>th</sup> century mostly, Rai, Magar and Chhetri from north hills, besides some households of Teli, Sudi, Ray from across the border and Mushar from Subba Audi had arrived in Tudkiya. The rest of the majority of settlers are Tarai castes have gradually reached onwards 40 to 50 years through the relations with previous settlers either inside Nepal or across the border.

Among them, the residing Yadav households of Tudkiya are not old inhabitant of this place. They have in migrated from places - Kadharuwa, Khajanpur and Itari belong to both Laxminiya and Pipra VDC of Siraha district. Before they settled here, Yadav households of above places at every rainy season had come with cowherd and Lalpur (Tudkiya) was the regular place for making their cowherd cottage (*gwali*). The reason behind

rainy season cowherd migration was at their places during the time - excessive water deposit, dipped grazing land, acute mosquito bites and water filled cowshed due to flood. Tudkiya had not such adversities besides co-operative villagers, in course of their cowherd migration they had bought land, built houses and some of them permanently settled here, some still have dual residence in former places.

As like, Dom who came here from Itari (within Siraha district) three generation ago for bamboo work because there were no Dom caste around the village and get settled. The Barhi caste who had in migrated from Subba Audi (within Siraha District) to Tudkiya at 2024 B.S. because of strong oppression of Yadav caste feudal lord. In this phase of settling, a household of Kalwar, some Teli and Paswan households had also come to Tudkiya across the India border on the basis of either doing work or family kin relations in village.



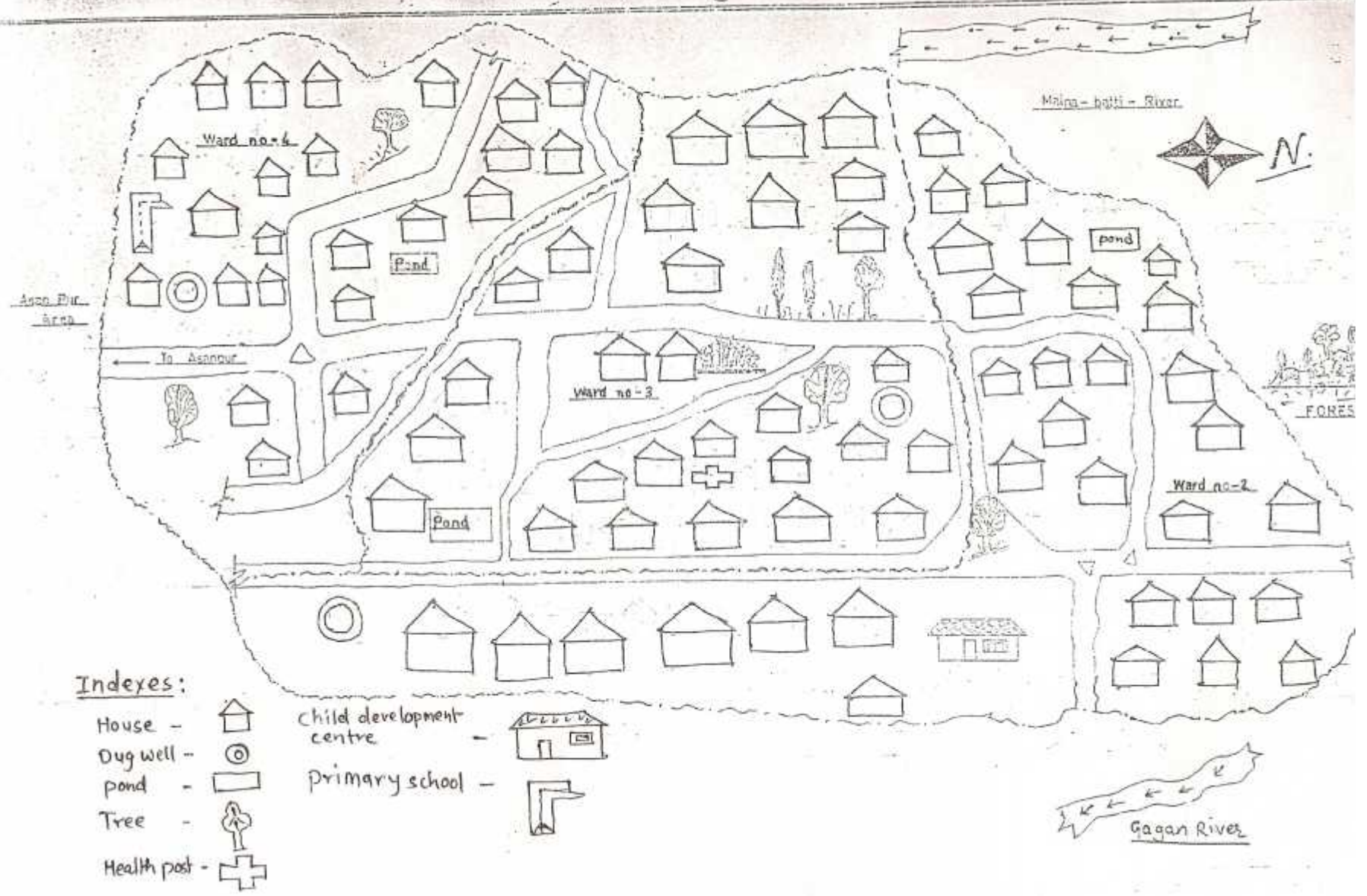
# SIRAHA



Area: 1,188 Sq. Kms.

Elevation: 76 m. – 895 m.

# Layout map of study area



## CHAPTER - IV

### Economy

#### 4.1 Conventional Domains of Economy

Unirrigated agricultural land leads to low crops production, most of the families in Tudkiya were not self sufficient in grains to feed their families whole year by own field farming. In their diverse means of livelihood (mainly caste-based occupational service, *bhauri*, illegal wood selling and share cropping), agriculture and animal husbandry were the shared practices of majority members of all castes or groups. Irrespective of poor harvest and uncertain monsoon rain, previous farmers in villages grew usual crops - wheat, paddy, *Asu* (one kind of rice), maize, *Maruwa* (Millet), *Phapar* (Buck wheat), Tobacco (surti) and oil seeds - *Aalash* (linseed), Mustard, *Philenge* (a kind of oil seed), *Sarso* (Mustard), *Til* (Sesamum), and Pulses- *Masuri* (lentil), *Kurthi*, *Udat* and *Lahari*.

Second to agriculture in the conventional economy of village was livestock although that was not in numbers as now. The people say that most important animals of their's were bullocks which pulled the plow because during the time there was no tractor available around the village. Next to bullocks, there were cows and buffaloes, kept for their two product manure and milk. Unlike, Yadav caste owned large number of milch cows and some buffaloes who sold milk product around the village. Rest other castes reared it for own house consumption.

To tackle such adverse grain shortage condition, deprived families of this village were involved until seven to eight year's ago in reciprocal barter transaction with north hill places, often said *khonch*, Sughare, Patane, Riscu, Murme, Galta, Geruwa, Ganitar, Shirwani, Thakle, Shikarpur, Balaute, Chhatmaine and Gerkhe of Udaypur district. As likely, in his ethnography at Dolpa district James F. Fisher (1985: 88) explains - how a people of Tarangpur were connected for their "own subsistence needs" with two different ecological cultural system of north Buddhist Tibetan Tichurong and south Hindu Nepali regions through grain, salt and rice transaction. He further describes, how the surplus grain produce of Tarangpurian

has " satisfied the demand for salt and become the basis for a long established grain, salt and rice trading system". (Fisher 1985: 7). When we contextualize this 'trading system' to *bhauri*, the circumstances and type of bartering goods are different but the central notion of transaction that Fisher suggests north south cycle, I argue, is similar.

At that time, both males and females of the village were involved in *bhauri* business; they had taken cauliflower, potato, brinjal, tomato, green chilly, garlic and surti from Tudkiya, and had exchanged with unhusked rice, maize, *maruwa*, orange, ginger and potato. These vegetables sometimes own grown often, bought from near south road head, that had been readied at previous day for tomorrow's early morning journey to *khonch*. Such vegetable's load males carried *bhar* on shoulders and females carried on head. Generally, they returned from *bhauri*; the next day. Sometimes, that was only possible on third day, if *bhauri* going persons were large that needed to scatter at distant places. To exchange carried vegetables with grains, there was no standard scale, people said that it was depend on circumstances and bargaining capacity, often as follows:

1 weight cauliflower - 4 to 5 time unhusked rice

1 weight cauliflower - 3 time maize

1 weight potato - 3 time unhusked rice

1 weight brinjal - 3 time unhusked rice

1 weight tomato - 2 time unhusked rice

1 weight chilly (green) - 4-6 time *maruwa* (millet)

1 weight cauliflower - 4 time *maruwa*

1 weight chilly (green) - 4 to 6 time maize or *maruwa*

After house to house collection of exchanged grains, village people returned from *bhauri* with a heavy load that people say - because of downward path, was easier to carry than earlier upward hill track walking. The grain shortage households who had involved in *bhauri* did not sell all the exchanged grains but equal the grain amount that required to maintain principal money for next trip. The Golbazar and Katari were the places of their selling of exchanged grains, preferably maize or

unhusked rice rather *maruwa* which they had used for own household consumption. Kshetilal Sah, 50, had spent thirteen years in *bhauri* and he made success to balance money for opening this current odd article shop in village, shared to me "those days my family condition was poor, as an elder son of household the responsibility was on me to manage the family. During the time, *bhauri* was common in village and I also started to go *khonch*. The beginning four years I had carried vegetables by *bhar* on shoulders which I exchanged to *khonch* people by asking house to house, when all carried vegetables were over I had collected grains from previously vegetables bartered houses. Then, it was transported to Katari, from where either I hired mule or labour again for Golbazar. Meantime, I bought a pony that made me easy to carry new articles - salt and rice, besides grain I had exchanged it with ginger, seed potato and orange had great demand and high rate across the south Indian border. But it would not go further when Bardibas to Katari road was opened."

Together with *bhauri*, some people of village were involved in legally banned acts - marijuana cultivation and catechu wood selling. When the cultivated marijuana was ready for harvest, Indian smugglers themselves had to come in village and bought it. However, the selling was only possible if the police had not raided the secret cultivation sites. Such police raids, most often at the time of marijuana harvest, the former cultivators say, carried out to pretend government as well as locale. Police rather slashing or destroying it at the cultivated spot they had loaded on own truck, later themselves sold to smugglers. Next, catechu wood smuggling since 2040 B.S. to 2053 B.S. was in its climax, people say, during the period most of the planted or self grown catechu plants in village vicinity and lower Chure hills were cleared up. The catechu wood kernel, perpetrators themselves had transported to Indian border market Jainagar and Ladniya.

Dev Prasad Rai, 55, who paid five years jail sentence when police had caught him from the spot of cutting catechu plants in lower Chure hills, told about those days "I was not only a single person involved in catechu transportation, there were also others in village. Before heading to Chure, our group used to make a plan, at

early morning we walked from Tudkiya to lower Churiya with light foods for snacks. Two-three guys were to guard the movement of police around the forest and remaining were to cut the plants. When it was prepared to carry, at evening, we began to walk through secret path and reached across border selling spot at 3 or 4 in the morning. The businessman where we sold catechu had to manage our accommodation, next day we weighing catechu, took payment and returned back to Tudkiya and made preparation for next trip." On his released from the jail, in village there was no more catechu smuggling. However he desired once to visit his former catechu buying people across border, he says, he get astonished by seeing their progress, they all had already established own factories. In place of their former small shops huge buildings were erected through smuggled catechu of Nepal.

Before the government had launched community forestry programme around the lower part of Chure hills, the Tudkiya besides neighbouring villages were the frequent places for seasonal cow herder 'Gwars' had available sufficient milk, from which they used to make curd and clarified butter. Those seasonal cow herders now settled in Tudkiya recollect those days and shared that they used to sell curd by carrying in clay pot in village and around the neighbouring places. Whenever, there were feasts or rituals people of other castes themselves used to come to the village and buy milk or curd as their wish. The large stored quantity of clarified butter at *gwali* was bought up by businessmen who came with three or four porters from both nearer urban centre of Nepal as well as across border places - Ladaniya, Jainagar and Madhubani. The main cause of other castes to come at *gwali* for buying dairy products was that Yadav caste's ethic who did not mix dairy items.

#### **4.1.1 Animal Sharing (*Damposhiya*) and Bullocks Sharing (*Harbhaji*)**

The animal sharing is a conventional activity of poor households who have not enough money to possess their own. In such sharing, the owner gives his premature animal i.e. cow, she goat, she buffalo and pig to another interest party for rearing them and the produce benefit is shared between two according to on going traditional

rules which are distinct in respect to animals. For example-in the sharing of cow and she goat that always belong to owner, in a case of cow the rearer has additional benefit he consumes milk, rest rule in both is similar at the time of selling a born calf or lamb, the price is equally shared by owner and rearer. Rather price sharing, if one party desires to put born calf or lamb at own house then the price of it is decided by *panchmole* (informal committee of four to five persons of neighbourhood who evaluate the price) and prescribed money is paid to either party who relinquishes the ownership. During *panchmole* the sex of born calf or lamb is crucial, people give more value to male than female, even the price evaluation is adjudicated in similar ways.

In she buffalo sharing its milk and born heifer is equally shared between owner and rearer. But, the owner has not full ownership over she-buffalo, only on principle money that is determined at the same day of transferring to rearer. If its selling takes place the net profit divided into two halves locally said *phat* and the owner gets principle money plus extra one *phat*. Rather different in pig sharing, the rearer has to have half ownership from the first given day and born piglets are also half shared. In all these types of animal sharing there is common rule if any shared animal is dead of natural cause, the rearer has no obligation to pay money to owner.

The bullock sharing locally known as *harbhaji* is the main business of share cropper, small landholder and landless quatters. The first type of bullocks sharing that is taken place between land holder and share cropper if share cropper has not possessed own bullocks in which land holder himself brought pair bullocks for share cropper with an agreement to return invested money in a reasonable time frame (mostly time of crop harvest) to land holder. As if, share cropper has failed to pay money in given time either he pays interest or land holder himself tells share cropper to sell bullocks at *hatiya* for realization of a bullock investment. If, the sold price is higher than previous investment, the net profit is equally shared by land holder and share cropper, if lower, the loss amount is compensated only by share cropper. In other condition neither the share cropper would have money to pay interest nor

would bullocks have sold at animal *hatiya* than fulfills the interest by his share crop produce i.e. three part goes to land holder and one part to share cropper.

Next type of sharing each has single bullock, have taken place between two small land holders those have not sufficient cultivating land of pair bullocks. In both the sharing households if each has own ploughman, as existing *harbhaji* rule ploughs own land on alternate days, if not, then, available ploughman ploughes two days for own and third day for other single bullock sharer. This alternate days ploughing can only be possible if both households have nearly equal size of land, in most cases that is less common. During the agricultural peak one sharer has beforehand finished his cultivation and next has remained three-four days field work. In such condition, the work remained sharer compensates other for bullock's extra work burden by Rs. 125 each day. Even sharer can plough to needing man, at such time that day work paid amount's three parts goes to ploughman and one part to other bullock sharer.

#### **4.1.2 Caste-Based Occupations**

Dumont (1998) notices the relationship between caste and occupation, "within certain limits one may have recourse to a livelihood other than that which is traditional for the caste of which one is a member". The cause to exist such traditional association between caste and occupation , Gough argues that "where the pattern of subsistence has not been too greatly modified, castes have continued to function in more or less traditional manner" (Gough 1960: 13). Now, in Tudkiya five castes have occupational specialization and have been continued to function. They are Hajam and Barhi of touchable caste, and three untouchable castes: Chamar, B.K. (hill) and Dom.

Among these occupational castes Hajam, Barhi and B.K. are bound with annual grain paid system locally said to be *khan* system and remaining two Dom and Chamar who already left some own caste functions that they think defiling works, are providing services to clients as piece work paid basis. To provide his occupational service, unlike Chamar now has no demarcated client circle, rest other castes in



village have defined circle of traditional clients. Particularly, among the castes who are tied to service-client relationships one thing is common if, household is being separated the clients are also allocated to each brother whom they had been providing their services at the time of joint family.

#### **4.1.2.1 Hajam**

Tudkiya Hajam provides the clients both his caste based non-ritual regular services-hair cutting, nail cutting and shaving and ritual services in death, birth and marriage. Besides, his caste's presence in religious festivities i.e. Satyanarayan Puja, Athajam, Nava and Bhagwat is essential. For his services to client circle, there is variation in paying system, the non ritual regular services are under annual grain paid *khan* system and rest his ritual services are remunerated in occasion by *sida* (uncooked things i.e. split peas, rice, vegetables, salt and chillies), cloths (rarely unsewing cloths) often *dhoti* and *gamchha* and *dakshina* (no fixed amount that depends on will and economic prosperity of client). To provide regular non ritual services, Hajam generally visits his clients thrice a month for beard shaving and once in one and half or two months for hair cutting, sometimes, clients do not wait for Hajam's arrival and themselves visit to his house for such services.

The frequency of client's hair cutting that Hajam said vary with season, in winter it sharply falls down but beard shaving has no impacts of season. At his regular visit, he has no exact place to serve his clients that depends upon their availability. Most frequent in common gathering places of village teashop or tree shade but he may equally go to client's dwellings. The Hajams of Tudkiya who involve in clientele relations, their clients most often from Tarai touchable castes are not only the village people but also his client circle is extended in neighbouring villages as well. Further, as I observed some Hajams in village also provide non ritual caste services to Rai, Tamang and Magar men out of grain paid system as piece work paid basis on occasion. In village, except Dom and Chamar the Hajam thinks defiling castes, to other Dalits he provides his non ritual services, in opposition to their

market Salon or Hatiya salon as informants say, same services to Dom and Chamar is not objectionable.

Especially, clients who are annually bound under grain paid *khan* for Hajam's regular services, the paid amount of grain to Hajam is determined by the number of whiskered or unwhiskered males who are taking services from Hajam in one household. One whiskered man who takes both hair cutting and beard shaving (nails cutting is complimentary) services of Hajam has to pay annually 16 k.g. grain (4 *paseri*), if only beard shaving or hair cutting of unwhiskered boy then annually paid grain is reduced by half i.e. 8 k.g (2 *paseri*). Hajam's grain collecting procedure is not always steadfast, it depends on common understanding between Hajam and client. The Shukdev Thakur, 42, of Teliyani tole is one among *khan* working village Hajams, provides his regular services to clients in village as well as neighbourhood, shared to me that he makes one man free from grain paid obligation suppose there are four men taking his services from one household and further, he considers one small boy if same man having two boys in single household.

Despite, Hajam's regular services either under *khan* or piece work paid basis, the hill caste or group is does not need Hajam's services in death, birth and marriage, however, in Tarai touchable castes of village his role and presence at such occasions is indispensable. On funeral rituals of deceased client, Hajam is encountered to client's household from first death occurred day before the corpse heading to cremation, he prepares *dada* (two separate ropes made by cotton cloth and *kush* plant leaves) for tightening in the waist of deceased and pyre fire giving kin; 4<sup>th</sup> day death ritual *chhodjhappi*, 7<sup>th</sup> day *satlahan*, 10<sup>th</sup> day *nakesh*, 11<sup>th</sup> day *shrad*, 12<sup>th</sup> day *pitarpachha*, 13<sup>th</sup> day *durga akshet* and *satyanarayan puja*, and one years completion death ritual which is less common *barkhi*. On each day Hajam's participation in death rituals, except first day the client pays him only *sida*, rest on other occasions he gets *sida* and *dakshina*, Sometime clients also offer him virtuous food like beaten rice, curd and sugar. For his carrying *daliya* (basket) to pond in fourth day death ritual as Shukdev Thakur said, previously his caste ritual service providing Hajam has gotten

Rs. 1.25 from the client, than it has been increased by Rs 5, Rs 10 and now Rs. 25. Mainly, the 12<sup>th</sup> day *pitarpchha* and 13<sup>th</sup> day *durga akshet* death rituals where client's offered items are larger than before ones, by established rule along with *sida* and *dakshina* the Hajam shares these offered items with Brahman at the end of ritual's accomplishment.

On his client's child birth, the Hajam is needed for 6<sup>th</sup> day ritual *chhatiyar*, acts as a ritual purifier of birth giving mother he cuts her nails, sometimes, Hajam also gives the name to new born child. Some years ago such nails cutting services was restricted to female Hajam, but now, this service is often provided by male Hajam. On occasions, Hajam is also paid by *sida* and *dakshina*. However, one Hajam informant has told me about client's *chhatiyar* given *dakshina* that if child sex is male then his clients pay more money to 'Hajam', if female the given amount is heavily reduced and even client less care of his service. The *chhewar* initiation hair cutting rite of boy that is carried out in Tarai castes between the age of 3 to 7 years which people say, equal to sacred thread wearing caste's *bratbandha* rite also Hajam is needed.

In client's marriages, no matter it belongs to boy or girl the role of Hajam is crucial, at the time, Surrendra Thakur of Teliyani tole explains to me that he acts as a co-assistance of Brahman prepares the altar, manages required items for *puja* and serves the sacred ashes (*tilak*) to the bride and groom and he further accomplishes three marriage rituals- *matkor* also locally said *homiyat*, *chauka pujan* and *lahachhu*. The *matkor* is one kind of bathing ritual for both bridegroom and bride which takes place the previous evening of marriage in their respective houses. Next, *chauka pujan* ritual that is performed at the houses of bride groom and bride on same day of marriage while Hajam cuts their nails on *chauka* (wooden seat) and colours the tips of fingers and toes. During the time of nail cutting no matter bride or bridegroom Hajam trickfully cuts skin to take out few drops of blood and soaks small piece of cotton which is required for further *lahachhu* ritual. That takes place at bride's house when both bridegroom and bride after having dinner together about to chew *pan*

(Betel leaf) Hajam of both side secretly exchange this blood soaked cotton and puts inside the *pan* i.e. bride to bridegroom and bridegroom to bride, in doing so, generally people believe, it makes couple extremely intimated and blood-tied. Along with, in girl's marriage before bride's departure from patrifocal household, the bride's side Hajam transfers *dala* (basket)containing cloths and money to bridegroom's father.

Unlike, regular non ritual services the paid grain amount is already allotted, in other occasions of Hajam's ritual services they are not satisfied with the in return paying behavirours of majority clients. Some ritual occasions Hajams decide the paying amount of *dakshina* money if clients wish to pay then no resentment on the part of Hajams if not, that may cause to grow cool relations between Hajams and clients. One such incident that occurred on the marriage occasion of Kasendra Yadav's elder brother's daughter while Hajam had demanded fifty one rupees and *dhoti* but, his elder brother only gave him twenty five rupees and *dhoti*. Hajam refused to take it, tension boosted up and threatened us he would not visit our houses again. From that day we didn't call *khan* Hajam for both regular and ritual services which we hired from bazaar at needing time." On the other hand, ritual service providing Hajams in village often see client's ritual paid *dakshina* is less in comparision of their time investment to perform ritual and further told "we never obliged poor clients to pay us more money, we accept the *dakshina* as they wish but, if clients are economically better off then, what is the reason of underpaying." Even Hajams are not satisfied with client's offered lower quality cloths and items at ritual occasions just for obeying formality. Rather lower quality cloths or items, they prefer aggregate *dakshina* money to support Hajam's discontentment, the Hari Ballab Thakur, 55, has told "I have piled up clients given 'Dhotis' and 'Gamchhas' at my house, what I do all these things, cos clients gave us money rather lower quality cloths it can be used for day to day means."

Biswanath Thakur, 65, one remaining Hajam of old generation in village, recollects previous time clients when they used to offer cow for Hajam's services in

death ritual and he compares with now a days clients, for them, cow offering to Hajam is an old saying. They have become closefisted, even unwilling to pay properly, although they expect from Hajams to carry out ritual performance in its full traditional way. The old generation Hajams in village are still clinging in traditional caste services to clients which they think their 'caste religion' and they will continue it till capable to serve either their sons or not. But, for young generation Hajams it is outworn practice, less eager to continue it like their own father or forefather in village yard rather open a salon in market or other business than traditional occupation.

#### **4.1.2.2 Barhi**

During my field work, as much not closely I got a chance to observe day to day occupational activities of Barhi than other functional castes. By coincidence, the house compounds of my stay and Barhi were attached, while I was in bed the early morning frequent sounds from smithy alarmed me to start up village life. In my waking up when I turned eyes to Barhi's Smithy that was built under small thatched shed at front side of the house he was busy repairing or sharpening agricultural equipments of farmer clients. My often presence at smithy, I observed that the repairing services were related to wood implements i.e. plough, yoke, handle of axe and handle of sickle. The needing wood piece, generally clients had provided to Barhi, if they wished to get from Barhi would pay money for it. His other service to clients was sharpening their iron tools i.e. the nib of plough (either new or old), axe, spade, sickle, *khurpi* (small pruning knife), *khukuri* (Nepalese knife) and *gadasa* (grass cutting knife). These services of Barhi to other castes including dalit clients are his regular duties that annually paid by grain which locally called *khan*. Along with above, Barhi has extra expertise to make furniture, bullock cart and wooden house construction which are done for cash. Except, minor always going day to day works of client, the Barhi's Smithy is more pre occupied during the time of peak agricultural activity.

In spite of different status in caste hierarchy, in Tudkiya both Barhi and B.K. castes are provided with similar services to clients, even clients have paid them similar quantity of annual grain often paddy or equal the price of grain money. The quantity of paying grain in return of their services to client, is determined by client's owning number of ploughing bullock, if household possesses one plough (two bullocks) they get 40 k.g. paddy, if half plough (one bullock) then household pays 25 k.g. paddy annually. Moreover, this current client's paying annual grain has increased from the previous year of my stay in village, before each client was annually paid per plough 32 k.g. paddy and half plough 20 k.g.

Except making small sickles, Barhi has not much skill to make new iron implements that *grihats* (clients) are bought from market. In Tudkiya, there are three Barhi households of separated brothers. Some years ago currently working middle and his elder brothers were worked together for clients under *khan*. Now, elder brother has stopped for working clients and restricted himself in furniture work at market because, people say that his son and daughter in laws have a government jobs and good income, so, he no more needs client's work at his smithy. The single working middle brother, Kapuleswar Thakur, 50, himself is less interested to carry on caste service, if he has viable economic alternatives to run family. He also is not pleased with client's cheating behaviour, shared "when I visit client's houses to collect my annual grains, they never wish to give me fine quality grains. The given part of grains they have already separated for me which is mixed up with husk and particles." To run smithy, even after grain cheating clients and suffering backache, he further says, is his obligation being in poor economic condition. At least, the clients given grains helps him to rescue six months grains need because, to him, it is not possible to buy whole year needing grains from market through small household income.

#### **4.1.2.3 B.K. (hill)**

Before the Barhi settled in Tudkiya at 2024 B.S. the whole farmer clients in village were served by single B.K. caste. Having similar traditional caste based occupation like B.K. after his arrival in village farmer clients were divided into two groups one with B.K. and next to Barhi. The segregation process of clients either side as people said, was further fastened by that time village exiting two political party supporting rival factions of fourth assembly and *panchayat*. Due to the reason, fourth assembly supporter clients had drawn toward B.K. and rest *panchayat* supporter with Barhi. Politically, now among the village clients there have been many changes, however, such past division of clients is not yet eroded. Likewise single household of Barhi in Tudkiya, a B.K. named Kishnalal, 56, is involved in his clientele service and rest other his caste households have different sort of businesses then by caste they specialized. Even he blames, still his attachment in caste occupation to own poor economic condition. In traditional sense B.K. caste was specialized in metal works, Kishnalal's forefather and father had made iron tools, weapons and some were also skilled to construct fine ornaments of gold or silver. But, he said, that he has not much skills except making small tools .

#### **4.1.2.4 Chamar**

Except beating of musical drums in marriage on piece work paid basis, the Chamar caste in Tudkiya now has left their traditional specific services- drum beating to inform villagers about village meeting *panchayat* or incoming festivals, carcass throw and Chamar women's *parsauti* service on client's child birth that once they had performed for clients in exchange with annual grain or money. Of late, to perform these tasks Chamar perceives it as a defiling function which made them lower caste (Dalit) in the eye of so called touchable caste's for whom they worked from generations. Until recent past, in village other higher caste people obliged Chamar's to throw the animals carcass. A middle-aged Biltu Ram of Asanpur poured his anger on the higher caste villagers who still regard throwing carcass as Chamar's obligatory

duty. "When the cattle is alive and well they use it recklessly and as it dies they oblige infact pressurise us as if we were the son who has an obligation to bury his dead parents. They should rather throw the carcass themselves as it does not belong to us".

An old Chamar woman Bina Ram previously involved in *parsauti* said that it included the services - assist birth giving mother for easy delivery, to cut placental connection, to throw umbilical cord, to clean the blood of delivering room and oil massage of delivered mother and new born baby as per the wish of clients till the 15<sup>th</sup> day to one month after delivery. At that time, in return to her service, the household paid half k.g. rice at morning and half k.g. at evening from the sixth day of child's birth till her service and at last Chamar woman would get *hairani* aggregate money and cloths. This custom was evident in Tudkiya just before the government policy to train females as *sudeni* (women who assist mothers in child birth) and *swayamsebika* (female health volunteer). Meantime, some Chamar women of village who involved in *parsauti* had also taken such government provided training of *sudeni* and served to birth giving mother's around the village for a while, later they stopped it on the advice of their caste males regard it as a defiling task. Contrary to Chamar caste's claiming of abandoning other traditional practices, the skinning of dead animal is also still secretly going on..

Excluding Chamar no other caste in village is specialized to play musical instruments on auspicious occasions. Since 6 years ago most of Chamar's playing musical instruments were traditional it is replaced by modern instruments with an effort of save the children (USA) who had provided Rs.26,000 fund and training to twelve members of Chamar at Golbazar. From given money, the trained group had bought *bajas* (musical instruments) like - cassio-1, Hommike-1, Alphulium-3, Trumpet -2, Dhol-3 of different size, Jhunjhunna, group's dresses and 12 v battery. To make their performance eccentric, at the same time this orchestra incorporated new item *maruni* dance (male dancer dressed up as girl). On the advice of personnel, the group had also established instruments maintenance fund that each participant of



orchestra must contribute Rs 5 each after taking part in marriage ceremony. However, it could not go longer after its establishment due to internal disagreement within the group. Until now, this group is joining marriages through these instruments which is need in immediate maintenance, but the group members are paying less attention to manage it.

The playing of musical instruments by chamars are not always going business, Sibal Ram, 25, a chief vocalist and an expert of *maruni* dance of this newly established orchestra has told me that his team members are more occupied during the peak marriage months i.e. Marg, Phalgun, Jestha and Asad, while sometimes, it is hard for them to manage high numbers of marriage invitations. In these peak months, he adds that they attend 20 to 22 marriage, generally paying amount to orchestra is already agreed between two parties that ranges Rs. 4500 to Rs. 5000 from their each marriage participation. Even in some marriages, the prescribed amounts can be considered below two to four hundreds if their client's economic status is poor and wish to reduce.

#### **4.1.2.5 Dom**

The bamboo work along with pig rearing is still traditional occupations of Dom caste. To pick up leftover food and leaf plates at the end of feast of all other castes including Dalits in village was common before 10 or 15 years now. They think those defiling acts, once was their caste duty. Further, Dom caste has an authority to sell initiating fire at cemetery if, mourner wishes to invite him on the occasion. This custom locally said to be 'buying fire from Dom'. It is less frequent practice but who seeks such fire either past or now should be economically better and religious. In response of his fire selling, Dom gets money or land, the current house built on three *katha* land was also gained in return to fire sell from his rich client of neighbouring village Ashanpur 30 years ago while his father was died. Of late, if anyone wants to buy fire from Dom they give money rather than land as Maneswar Mallik shares "most of our clients are Teli and Sudi, by caste business people are more prone to

earning and saving. They are not courageous enough to buy fire form our caste's for religious merits because it needs money to pay."

About Dom caste's previous habit of picking up feast leftover food, other caste informants have said, during the time he took it own house, dried it up and later, consumed. Now Dom caste refuses of such practice and he claims it was for pig feeding rather than own consumption. No matter what was his habit, the pig rearing either past or now is his frequent practice, even though, he does not make it systematically. Even out numbered pigs and piglets are crammed in a narrow cage without sufficient fodder. Further, unhygienically everyday morning he sets free his pigs from cage and roaming around the places of open defecation to feed on the night soil of villagers. Moreover, his pig rearing business, Maneswor Mallik thinks, is threatened by village increasing numbers of toilet construction because that reduces the ratio of open defecation which at least helps him to feed his pigs single morning diet and in coming time it will not be possible to rear all pigs by expensive market fodder. Along with Dom caste's custom of slaughtering own reared pig on his caste guest's occasional visit and to offer him pork with brew that's taken as a symbol of warm welcome or good hospitality; the rearing is also the good source of his income. What Maneswor said, "It has a good demand in Kathmandu and near road head but I am incapable to supply as per the demand." Again, he told, "What you Kathmanduites have generally taken pork as *dharane sungur* or *harra badel* is same variety of pig as I rear in my house which also supplied by our caste here in Tarai." Dom sells adult pig and piglets, sometimes, himself butchers it for local *hatiya* besides, odd piglets that resemble to wild boar piglet which female pig hardly bears one or two in each foaling has high demand and good price each ranges from Rs. 1500 to Rs. 2000 for two or three weak old piglet.

Nevertheless, Dom caste's traditional skill about bamboo work has not much advanced with the time, although still it is a prime source of his livelihood. Mostly, he makes things from bamboo things like - *dhaki*, *changeri*, *fan*, *seive*, *thek*, *supa*, *doko*, *nanglo*, *koniya*, *taraju*, *dal*, *khop* and *tat*. Among his other leisure time bamboo

works that he makes on people's demand or for market selling, particularly, to make *khop* (small plant's protecting bamboo made cover) and *tat* (bamboo made house fence), however, it also paid as piece work basis, are confined under defined circle of his duty in village and neighbourhood. At needing time, the client themselves invite Dom to own houses for work, also provides required bamboo and during his whole day work they manage breakfast and lunch to Dom. In return of client's bamboo work, he gets money on the basis of per *khop* Rs 15 and *tat*, there is standard size i.e. 10 hands length and 4 hands breadth for Rs. 150. The wage of each day depends upon his working efficiency as much he can work makes more money, generally, in one day bamboo work if a Dom separately prepares *khop* then he makes 15 to 20 and as like, *tat* one and half of standard size. Besides, Dom has an obligation to provide *sakhari* (decorated basket) in marriage and simple basket in 13<sup>th</sup> day death ritual of the clients, also paid at occasion by money and grain, although, Dom says, these customs are near to stop because of his client's less interest to have basket from him.

For his bamboo work in demarcated client circle, Dom caste has a strong authority because no other caste or even Dom can carry out bamboo work without his permission. The encroachment of each other's client circle often less common can be a serious cause to open fight, even separated father and son, have no such right. The unilateral authority of Dom over his client's bamboo work does not only end here. Further, he can also sell or mortgage client circle to other Dom caste man, if both parties agree on dealing that is locally said 'village selling or buying'. The process of selling, buying or Mortgage of client circle by particular Dom is not carried out by oral assurance, he must give hand written attested note to other as a proof that later he does not claim sold client circle again. In Dom's own terminology such transferring note of client circle is said *ramchhap*. That is why rest caste people in village jokingly told "Dom has a great authority over us, even he can sell or buy us without our permission."

No matter his authority rest castes placed him in lower rung of hierarchy and treating as most defiling caste. Sometimes, his lowest position he entertains and uses it as a device to threat when other caste individual beings to provide similar bamboo

work in his clients circle for the sake of money. In such case, he does not tolerate it and perceives as a encroachment of his caste specific occupation and client circle. One incident of same sort had occurred in Tudkiya when Sibji Sah (Sudi), 38, of Baluwa tole made an attempt to nit *tat* and *khop* for his neighbouring household on paid basis. When Dom heard the matter, it made him furious, the very next day morning he approached in the house yard of Sibji for ridiculing him. Sibji still remembers his words and shared with me "*Samdhi yau! Bahar aao, hum yahake bhansa gharne ja ka kha sakaichhi, hamara yaha me ki pharak bhelei, jab hamar kam yahan karait chhi ta, yah hamar jat bhele*" (Hello father in law! come outside, I can dine in your kitchen, what a difference then remains between you and me, if, you start to work my traditional task). Like client's bamboo work, now Dom has further practicing authority over toilet safety tank cleaning of client circle where no other Dom can go for the job without his permission.

#### **4.2 Changing Economy and New Opportunities**

Declining with the north-south transaction due to the growth of urban centres and expansion of transportations, new opportunities have benefited the people of Tudkiya. The previous mode of subsistence like-bartering, growing of usual crops and animal husbandry have shifted toward market demand oriented economy. Which is further assisted by new opening of animal *hatiya*, goods selling *hatiya* and dairy collection centre at near roadhead Golbazar. At the same time, people's working mobility in sectors like-public, private and foreign employment have also increased. These new changes in make village economy diversified and the livelihood of particular household or caste is not remain to confine single specific work to cope his subsistence need.

Easy to market access and availability of new verity of less water needing seeds, the village farmers have been replacing their conventional crops and vegetables growing. Even some have turned their land into gardens of mango and jackfruit. Now they grow all kind of vegetables, but the large portion is occupied by

*parwal* which village farmers say that has two benefits-first, good market price and second, perennial plant different to other vegetables it gives three years regular harvest. To sell grown vegetables or fruits *hatiya* is the frequent place that is organized twice a week at near road head Golbazar. People's access of *hatiya* to near village as I observed have made them more by selling the home grown products rather sharing with neighbours, usually, a traditional village has. If a household owns large garden then there is no burden to sell its fruit at *hatiya* rather he sells whole garden to fruit contractor. The day of *hatiya* both male and female of village are seen busy selling home grown items that they have carried in bamboo basket either on head or bicycle and it is also the day to purchase household needing items as well.

Though vegetables and fruits are the regular source of income to villagers, but they have not been conducting it with paying attention to the health hazard of consumers. I observed, contract given mango gardens, the contractors start to spray insecticide from the first flowering stage of fruits which alternately goes two three times. Further, to make off seasonal profit they pluck fruits before its natural maturity and again use fruits ripening chemical. The vegetables growing farmers are more prone to use different inorganic pesticides while spraying on vegetables without waiting the days of its expiration of the susceptible effect of poison, immediately have sold their vegetables to market for instant economic benefit. Besides, to keep vegetables colour green or to delay its harvest often farmers use in *parwal* plants hormone activating and deactivating chemicals.

Seven to six years onwards, the land holding farmer of village had started to cultivate sugarcane as cash crop. However, it is not carried out massively, the cultivation area has been increasing than before but still it is restricted certain pieces of land of cultivation. The further cultivation expansion in village agricultural land, as people say, is hindered by uncertain price of molasses at the time of harvest. The farmers who involve in sugarcane cultivation are not allowed to sell it to sugar mill rather they hire sugarcane pressing machine at cultivation field and make molasses locally said *sakkar*. Then cooked *sakkar* is stored in house for some weeks if market

price is not appropriate. Being in a liquefying nature of *sakkar* at stored place, no farmer wait long for up price and sells before it gets rotten. Mostly, this village produced *sakkar* has been collected by businessmen either from the village or near road head, is used for liquor producing industries.

Due to the easy availability of sugarcane in village, it inspired one Teli caste man to establish small *sakkar* mill in village where he produces bit more large scale *sakkar* by purchasing sugarcane from farmers. And eight person in village have sugarcane pressing machines respectively owned by caste as Teli-4, Koeri-2, sudi-1 and Muslim -1. Except Muslim he is still in debt of machine loan, rest sugarcane machine owners have made success to accrue good profit from it. The machine owners say that each single machine if, it is in proper working condition and fully occupied by available work, then earns fifty to sixty thousand rupees in one season. As a charge of machine, farmers prefer less to pay in cash money rather prepared *sakkar* i.e. machine owner gets 10 k.g. stuff *sakkar* out of 100 k.g. as his machine work for farmer. During my stay, the average price of one k.g. *sakkar* in market was 20 rupees.

Second to vegetables growing, to support people's livelihood in Tudkiya is livestock, mostly, there are cows, buffaloes, bollocks or oxen and goats. Especially, cows and buffaloes are reared for their valuable products, milk and manure, and oxen. Except the seven eight people of hill caste groups, the rearing business is carried in majority by Tarai castes Teli, Sudi, Koeri, Ray and Yadav. Despite, one household of Yadav, has dual resident owns 20 local breed cows and comes to Tudkiya with his cows at rainy season, in three wards a second person Koeri holding large 6 milch animals (3 jersey cows and 3 buffaloes), rest of each have one or two such animals.

The lack of irrigation that leads to poor production of straw and to grow grass, in village makes people to keep low number of animals. In comparison to cows, the number of rearing buffaloes in village are large the reason as people say - it produces more milk besides this milk is more preferred in market and it has also high degree of

lacto for selling in dairy collection centre. For milk sellers, the near road head Golbazar is a frequent place where they often sell or more desired to sell in tea or sweet shops because there is freedom to add extra water rather dairy collection centre where the money per litre is provided according to the level of 'lacto' in milk. There is common trend among milk selling households, they always try to save more milk by minimal house consumption. Even evening milk was boiled up to mix with morning milk for carrying to market. Every morning each milk seller sells in average 4 to 7 litre milk. Most often, the duty to carry milk at road head is household male bicycle rider if, male is not present at home than females do carry to market by walking which consumes three hours per day in comparison to their male counterpart's 45 minutes bicycle travel.

Along with milk, the rearing of cow is equally important to bear oxen that are necessary to draw cart and in ploughing field. However, in local context the jersey oxen due to lack of hump does not get much importance or caring like local breed oxen. Further, according to cow herder or non cow herder caste, there is difference in early age calf treatments, Kesendra Yadav, 42, owns 20 local breed cows, says that he totally leaves one time milk of his cows for calf drinking, this sufficient milk to calf that he believes makes good physical oxen and have good price in animal market. Rather other different caste people have one or two cows but they do not sell its milk like Yadav nor do they leave one time udder milk for their calves feeding. At the time of my stay, a one year old white colour well healthy calf price was Rs. 9,000 to Rs 10,000 in Choharba animal *hatiya* which held once a week. For villagers, this animal *hatiya* is the common place of animal dealings like selling, exchanging and buying of buffaloes, cows or bullocks. At the day of *hatiya*, the people from the village go with selling animal or free hand to buy needing animal, but the dealing is not always sure to finalize in one *hatiya*. In *hatiya*, as people say, there is heavy presence of animal brokers than buyers or sellers, they act as a mediator between dealing parties and indirectly supporting one and cheating other through fake descriptions of animals.

Next to milk and oxen selling, in village economy are bullocks work both i.e. pull the plough and drag the rubber tyre cart. The possessing number of bullock does always depend upon particular household's land holding size, some have couple of bullocks, remaining other either one bullock, sharing or hires it at needing time who possess bullocks. There are seventeen persons owning have bullock carts i.e. six from Sudi caste, seven from Teli caste and four from Yadav caste, who have been involved in both irregular village available transportation works of fodder, firewood, and field harvested grain to needing person on paid basis and their own regular bamboo business which they buy from village or neighbourhood and transport by own cart to sell it in Jainagar or other places. On the other hand, economically poor and small land owning less work occupied households of Ray, Mushar and Dusadh have own bullocks for share cropping or ploughing to other's land on daily wage.

In comparison to other livestock, in village, the number of goats is large, if, any family has not raised cattle he must own goats. Often goat are raised for mature castrated goat (one and half year to three year) selling, in time of economic emergency of household she goat or premature lamb can be sold. The regular place of goats selling is *hatiya* in Golbazar, occasionally, the goat businessman also come to village. As I observed in village people who rears goats have tactfulness to make good weight he goat, each one year old he goat often less preferred to sell because they think premature, has Rs 3,000 Rs to 4,000 price is allotted. The people who have been involved in livestock raising are not always theirs own which they have carried out on sharing basis. The sharing traditional rule of each livestock there is different, for example between sharers of cow or buffalo each has distinct rule to be followed.

#### **4.2.1 Foreign Employment**

My frequent interaction with village youths have shown that as possible no one wants to stay at home, all are hurried to make their passports. It again becomes more lively because they see their foreign employed colleagues have either returned



with good money or regularly sending income to own houses. Even their fathers wish to send sons in foreign employment because of boosting talks of local manpower agents who time and again visit the village. For majority youths the affordable countries to go are Qatar, Malaysia and Saudi Arab. The required money to pay manpower agency i.e. all men have not available at house, it is managed from village lenders as loan. Even these lenders are rather less interested to invest in other topics in village. They are more willing to provide loan to foreign employees because of it's easy appropriation in time frame. Further, the interest rate for foreign employee is 3% per hundred per month which is lower by 2% than on going common interest rate 5% per hundred per month. As though, this loan is not equally entertained by all wishing men, the lenders only give loan to whom they have faith or possessed collateral.

Upto my stay in Tudkiya, two post graduate students of Rai group respectively were studying in Austria and America, rest 32 persons of village were in foreign employment. One person of Rai group in South Korea, remaining others were in destinations like - Qatar, Saudi Arab and Malaysia, among them 5 persons of Magar, 2 of Rai, 17 of Teli, 1 of Koeri, 3 of Ray, 1 of Chamar, 1 of Kami and 1 from Bhandari caste. Eight persons that belong to three men of Sudi, five Teli and one Kalwar, in village had already returned from Malaysia but one man of Teli caste had unfortunately returned within a month due to the fraud by Manpower agency.

The majority of these returned people who had spent their full working term in above Arab countries all have similar bitter experiences and they said, the work was not as per agreement. Poor accommodation, short lunch break, low salary, excessive overtime work burden to save money and stayed their full work term without caring about harsh working conditions only the realization of lender's loan and economic hardship at home. Excluding Korea, from these Arab countries, each single good saving man in one successful term if he has a proper facility of overtime earns back home upto 3 to 4 lakhs money. Most of these foreign employees either working or returned, their investment prioritised in new brick house construction or purchasing

land in village or near road head. At the time of my stay in village, most of the new brick houses under construction belonged to foreign employees.

Nevertheless, the foreign employment is risk-free business. The male migrants in Tudkiya village were lucky enough, no human casualties on their part but three daughters from village have lost their beloved husbands, who did not return with money like village brothers as expected rather their coffins were brought to the family. The news about human casualties in foreign employment around neighborhood was frequently heard during my stay in field. This news always hounded the wives at home who's husbands were abroad. Again, their annoyances increased when wives of returned employee in village shared their husband's acrimonious working situation.

Mainly the means of communication from village to abroad or vice-versa are telephone, letter, oral message and audio cassette from abroad. Along all these means, the place of audio cassette in village is incomparable, the listeners at home are not much excited by other sources as the strong heart touching address from foreign employees. Mostly, these audio cassettes come to family by returning foreign employees of village or neighbourhood. I observed one such hearing session while I was on my regular walk in village street. I saw few men and women flocked in front of the house compound of a Teli around the tape recorder, they were preparing to hear cassette. What raised curiosity in me as it would be a special one, however, the cassette had recorded voice of a foreign employee son of this household. Meanwhile, the tape recorder was switched on, the foreign employed son had serially begun to address his parents, wife and kids, kin and neighbours that came to an end by closing words to own family "my work is not difficult, do not worry about me".

Until, some years ago while other countries were not legally opened for working to Nepalese, India was the sole place of work for unemployed villagers. Now, India does not remain the attractive destination, the people of the village who work in India are either middle aged men or who lost the hope to go to other visa needing countries. The working mobility to India is in decreasing order but it is not

fully stopped yet. During my stay, there were 32 people, comprising 6 persons of Magar (in which two households settled in Kanpur), 2 Tamang, 20 Ray, 3 Sudi and 1 Mahto working in adjacent Indian places- Hariyana, Punjab, Faridabad, Gudgaon and Delhi. Where majority of them have worked as transport company labourers, secondly, agricultural labourers and third, least people have inside company work on contract basis.

For his work, each transport labourer is paid i.c. Rs 1800 to Rs 2000 per month, the agricultural labourer especially works in Hariyana and Punjab earns i.c. Rs 5000 to Rs 6000 in his three months seasonal stay and inside company work each man is paid i.c. Rs 3000 to Rs 3500 per month. The people in village who used to go to these places are not pleased with Indians affront as they have been treated like *Bihari* and *bhaiya* of U.P. Often, these transport workers from village do not reach there by own effort for searching work rather labour suppliers or transport contractors of village or neighbourhood help them to reach there. Among these suppliers, one Sudi man belongs to Tudkiya and next Yadav man of neighbouring VDC Kasah, as people say, since 15 years both have been succeeding to accumulate large money through this lucrative business by exploiting the cheap manpower of villagers who have been working or have worked in these industrial hubs.

#### **4.2.2 Government and Non-Government Employments**

The variations in employments with respect to particular caste or ethnic group in Tudkiya signify the actual education status of that group. For example - higher the employment rate represents higher level of education distribution, in opposition, lower the employment frequency shows lower education accessibility. This disparity in education according to caste had been followed from the past, and it is still evident in village. There are governmental, non-governmental and private sector employees, although the large number of these jobs are secured by hill people than Tarai castes. Their distribution in government sectors is as below:

Caste/Ethnic group	Number	Male	Female	Government Job status of employee	Institution
Rai	2		2	Permanent teacher	Primary School
Bohra	1		1	Temporary quota teacher	Primary "
Rai	2	2		Permanent teacher	" "
Shrestha	1	1		Permanent teacher	" "
Tamang	1	1		Permanent teacher	" "
Teli	2	2		Permanent teacher	" "
Sudi	1	1		Temporary private resource teacher	" "
Ray	1	1		Temporary teacher	" "
Rai	1	1		Permanent teacher	Lower secondary School
Tamang	1	1		Permanent teacher	" "
Rai	3	3		Permanent teacher	Secondary School
Barhi	1	1		Permanent teacher	" "
Barhi	couple	1	1	Sub-inspectors	Nepal Police
Rai	1		1	Section Officer	Nepal Electricity Authority
Ray	1	1		Sub-veterinary assistant	District Veterinary department
Ray	1	1		Veterinary assistant	" " "

Rest of the other employments that comprise in private sector-three boarding school teachers of Magar, Tamang and Koeri, and a Ray sub - overseer and an acting assistance of Yadav both are working in private firms. Along with some are working in non-governmental sector i.e. a civil engineer of Shrestha, a Hajam social mobilizer and other two are female teachers of Rai and Tamang in NGO funded village kindergarten.

### 4.2.3 Local Retail Business and Other Economic Activities

In Tudkiya, 29 people of different castes have possessed their own shops in which eight shops are existing in village and remaining other are either in near road head Golbazar or other places. These shops are not similar in type and scale i.e. village shops are smaller with odd articles than who own shops in Golbazar. Among these shops, the larger number is owned by Teli and Sudi caste as locally known by *baniya* people. The Teli caste has only two small shops in village, rest other, five medical shops four in Golbazar and one in Ghurmi, four odd article shops in Golbazar and one person has a vegetable business in Kathmandu. The Sudi caste has five shops in village in which four shops are small odd articles, one is refreshment tea shop and rest two shops are one vegetable in Golbazar and one odd article in Bastipur.

Different to Teli and Sudi caste, the Hajam has five shops. Four shops are related to his caste based occupation, hair cutting salons two in Golbazar, two in Kathmandu and one ready made cloths shop in Golbazar. Other two electrical shops belong to Ray caste of same household brothers, one at Narayanghat and next in Golbazar. In comparison to Tarai castes, the hill caste or group have least involvement in such shop keeping business. There are only three shops of hill people i.e. one B.K. household has a machine workshop in Lahan and two Tamang brothers, one has small odd article shop in village and the other has a paint work in Golbazar.

The odd articles shopkeepers in village also buy grain from people. In village context - the villagers themselves come to shop with their small amount of grain to sell, which they often spend on occasion to buy necessary items. Such sort of day to day grain selling at village shops always goes on. Similarly, these shopkeepers also go to other neighbouring places to purchase grain by carrying sacks on bicycle. In these shops, on the day of *hatiya* the collection of grain is higher than other days because people of other villages who come through the village way to join *hatiya* sell their grains. By taking certain profit, these grain collector shopkeepers again sell it to market businessmen. Except, one Dusadh man, the liquor manufacturing and selling

is an enterprise of few hill ethnic households of Tamang, Rai and Magar, generally, who have no better economic condition or employment. Despite, two men (one Dusadh and one Rai), liquor manufacturing is a job of women who often sell from the house. Sometimes, the women carry it to small hotelers of Golbazar. Through, liquor selling as people say, one Rai has good earning and invests his money on interest to seeking villagers. Others have no such money exposure. There is no caste boundary for liquor drinking. Mainly, the consumers are village men and occasionally neighbouring village people also take part. Liquor drinking there is common, according to the villagers saying "the poor drinks the more."

#### **4.2.3.1 Rickshaw Pulling and Fire Wood Selling**

Rickshaw pulling, and fire wood selling works in village belongs to economically poor households. Rickshaw pulling is a less common activity that has employed two Dusadh men and one Ray. These rickshaws, are not self financed by them, but by women's saving credit group on monthly installment paying as their wives are members of this group. Occasionally fire wood transportation from village to *hatiya*, Golbazar is the frequent place of work for rickshaw pullers where the road is often coated. By each day works, it is not certain how much one will earn that depends on availability of work in market that is, approximately 100 to 150 rupees through rickshaw pulling.

For poor families of Tudkiya the firewood selling in *hatiya* is not only the regular income source but also for surrounding villages. The collection of firewood is a hard task, everyday journey from Tudkiya to lower Chure forest ends up about 20 k.m. by carrying fire wood bundle especially by male either on shoulders, *bhar* or by bicycle whereas female carry it on head. The people who involve in this business, often eat evening cooked stale rice the next morning before heading to jungle. For lunch they carry sugar mixed beaten rice. At *hatiya*, each bundle of firewood price according to its size and wood type. It ranges from 70 to 130 rupees. The availability of durable quality fire wood in Golbazar *hatiya* has a high demand from

confectioners and hotelers of Golbazar, Lahan, Dhalke and other places. These people have regularly come the day of *hatiya*, buy firewood from individual sellers, loaded on hired two or three lorries in each single day *hatiya*, and headed to their own destinations. Lack of other alternatives to sustain livelihood, the poor household's dependence on fire wood selling has been increasing day by day. One can imagine the intensity of deforestation by this. Every single day 150 to 200 fire wood collectors of village and around have been rushing to Chure through village route of Tudkiya.

Besides, managing family bread and butter for some household's only the source to earn extra money is firewood-selling. Certain fire wood sellers in village whom I talked, have also given the reason behind their restless fire wood selling at *hatiya* is additional burden of daughter's dowry because they haven't other viable source from which that can be managed at a time. A Teli man, Ramlal, 38, of ward no-4, had migrated here in Tudkiya across Indian border through affinal relatives 20 years ago. Like his two brothers, he has not yet owned citizenship card, as I see him always busy carrying firewood on common village way. On his forest returning trip, while taking rest under the tree, shared to me the cause of his regular firewood selling that his compulsion to deposit Rs. 30,000 for daughter's dowry because he has no other source rather firewood selling. If he will not work hard and does not manage it, his daughter will be remained unmarried.

#### **4.2.3.2 Village Available Work, Transportation of Cassia leaves and Jackfruit**

The available village works are related to roof thatching and agricultural tasks. Especially, in roof thatching one needs to have specialization that only certain people in village have such skill. To perform these tasks, they are open for males, however, in female's context the allocation of works according to sex, for example - roof thatching, ploughing bullock and playing spade in field are males' work, and light works like paddy plantation, playing *khurpi* (small purning Knife) and playing *hasuwa* (sickle) for cutting grass are female's duties. To join these available works in

village, caste is not a hurdle but economic hardship is the sole reason. Although, villagers have not seen all works similar, there is variation as the type of work in respect to remuneration, working hours and meal provisions. For instance, the roof thatching and playing spade both works are paid similar wage (Rs 100 per day) and similar working time (7 am to sunset), and the *grihat* (employed household) is provided similar three meals i.e. breakfast, lunch and dinner, Rather similar working time, the tasks like - paddy plantation, playing *khurpi* and *hasuwa* have paid different wage (Rs 60 per day) and only two meals - breakfast and lunch. The *bani* (wage) for each day his/ her labour there is not always the money, sometimes, equal the wage amount grain is also provided. Unlike above works, to plough other's field, if bullocks belong to ploughman the working time is 7 am to 12 pm and *grihat* only provides him single meal (breakfast). The paying wage of ploughman, there is seasonal variation, in rainy season his job is tiresome and difficult due to wet land and he gets Rs 200 for each days work. But, in dry season, his work is comparatively easier and the wage is also reduced that ranges from Rs 125 - 150. Besides village available works, for majority labourer's and artisan's the frequent place of working is near road head Golbazar.

The involvement in cassia leaves and jackfruits businesses are restricted to unemployed village courageous stout men. Because, it is not a easy task to ride on loaded bicycle of 80 k.g. to 125 k.g. weight, to cover up 40 k.m. distance over 3 to 5 hours continuous journey in a muddy road from Tudkiya to Indian border market Jainagar. Each bicycler in his single trip earns average Rs 500, this money can be up if the market price is good going. For them it's a profitable source of income although, they are not pleased with harassing attitude of Indian police and Jainagar businessmen. Futuk Lal Rai, 45, is one among these bicycle riders who has been in this business since 15 years, told that police often rebuke, put obstacles on border entry and demand money. When they cross this first step of hindrance and reach to businessmen who intentionally devaluate the taken items and make delay of its weighing for creating pressure on them to sell items in lesser price. These businesses



are not running all the months, particularly, at peak rainy months it is rarely possible to transport things.

The jackfruit transportation is their seasonal work that these bicyclers are bought around the villages but, cassia leaves are not a production of this place or even Tarai, that hill people from Lekgaun, Okhale, Barre, Dhungre, Laliya and Sishapani of Udayapur district themselves carry to neighbouring village Mukshar. Where purchasers of cassia leaves before my arrival in field as I know have directly bought from hill people, now, Maoist have made dealing systematic which hill people sell to contractor co-partners namely Madan Lama and Ram Nath, and again, contractor to these purchaser with certain margin. The cause of Maoist intervention in dealing that the purchaser's cheating to hill cassia leaves sellers by weighing leaves through under stone weight or over welded iron weight and along with higher *sukti'* (reduced weight of leaves from net weight at the time of weighing because, to compensate loosening weight of leaves by it's day to day drying). In both *sukti'* and under weighing as people say - a hill man has lost aggregate 8 k.g. to 10 k.g. in his single *bhari* (one carrying weight) which was three to four fold greater than current 2 or 3 k.g. *sukti* in one *bhari*.

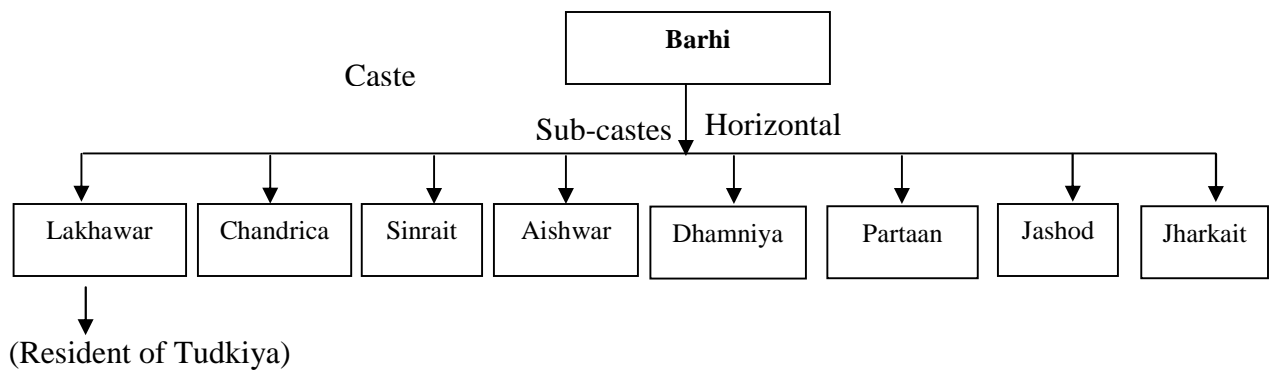
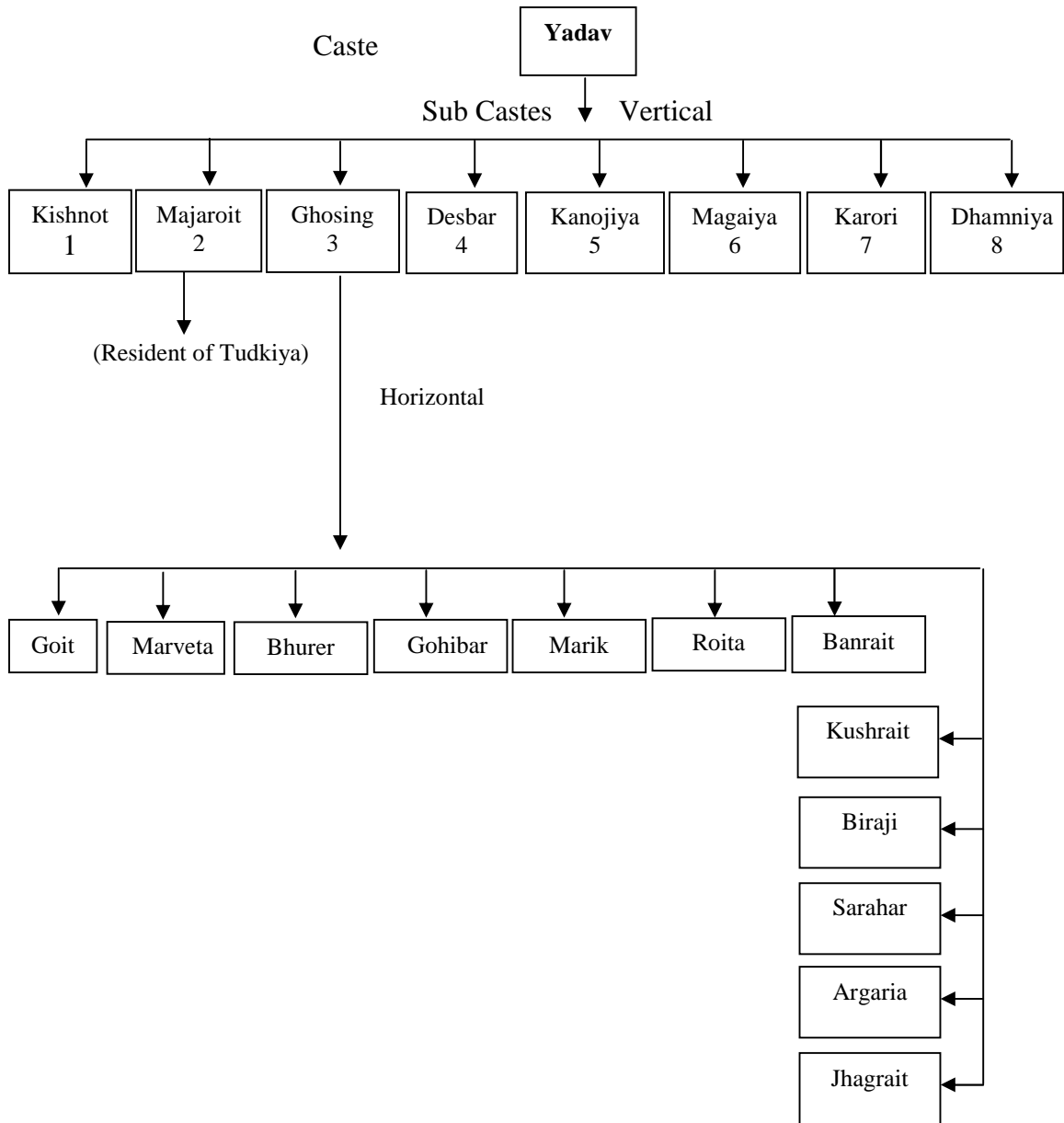
This chapter has attempted to show economy and livelihood of villagers. Where I explain how previous time grain shortage people of this southern village Tudkiya had maintained their grain need through *bhauri* i.e. vegetable - grain transaction with the different places of northern Udayapur district. Declining of *bhauri* due to the growth of urban centres and expansion of means of transportation brought them to new opportunities which diversify pattern of subsistence and made village economy mixed. Besides this, further I trace- on going traditional inter-caste economic relations that contribute large part of regular income source to those households of occupational castes- Hajam, Barhi ,B.K., Dom and Chamar who provides own caste specific services to other castes village clients and in return either annually paid by grain (*Khan*) or piece work paid at occasions.

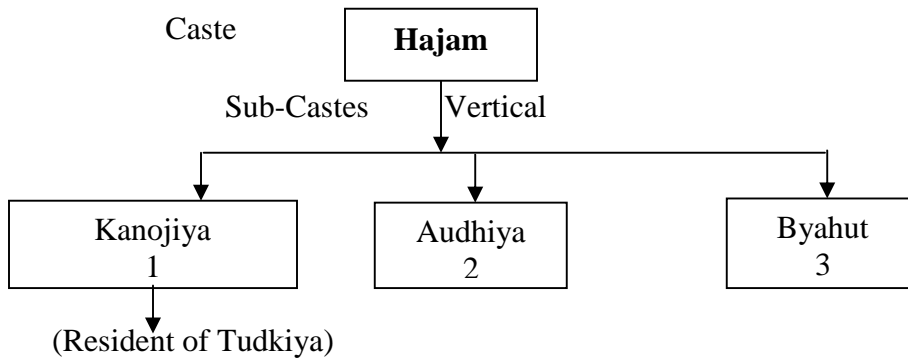
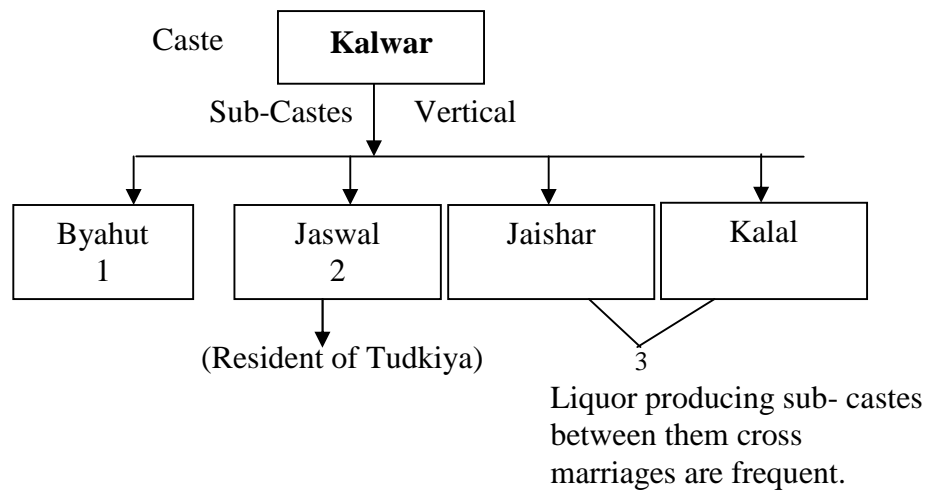
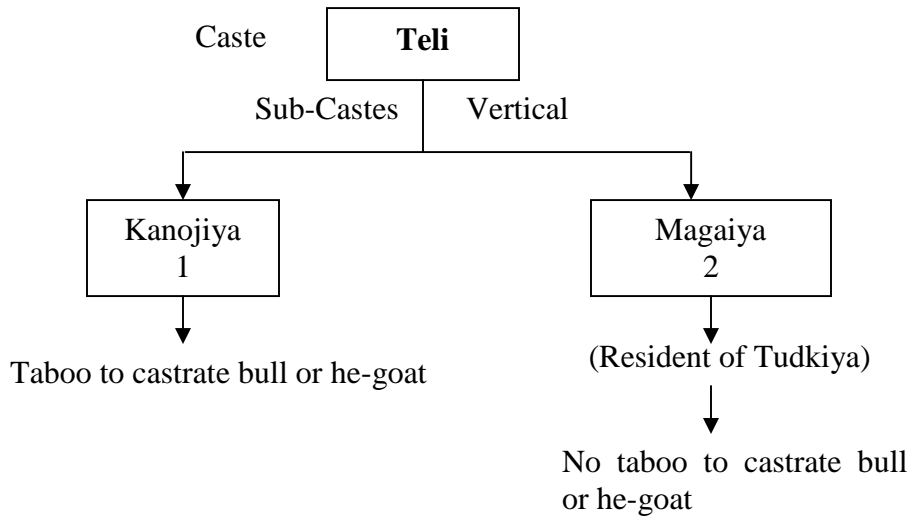
## CHAPTER - V

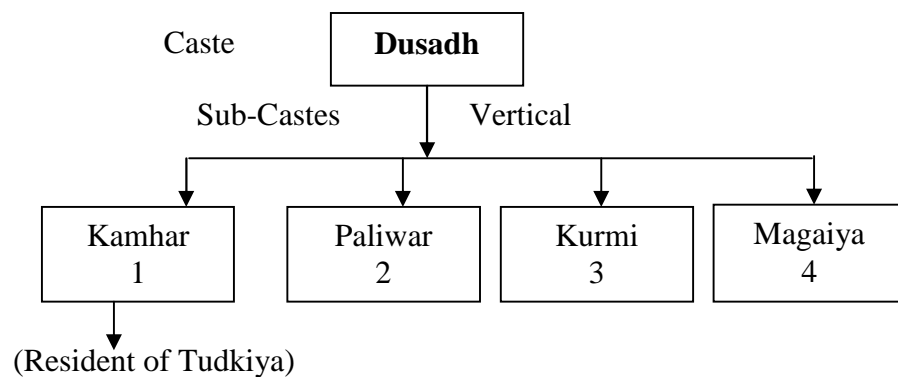
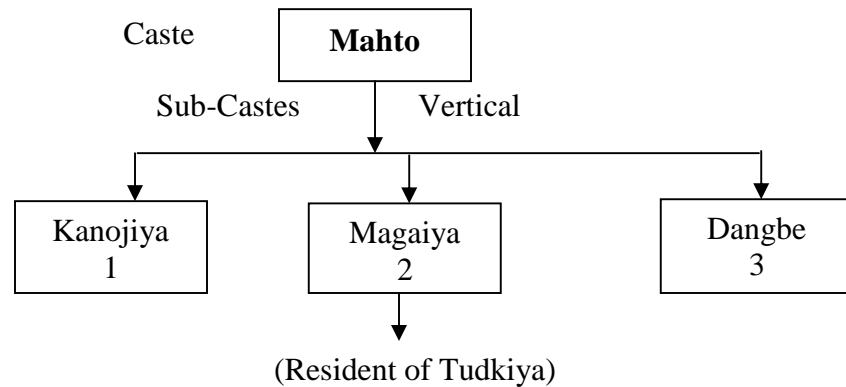
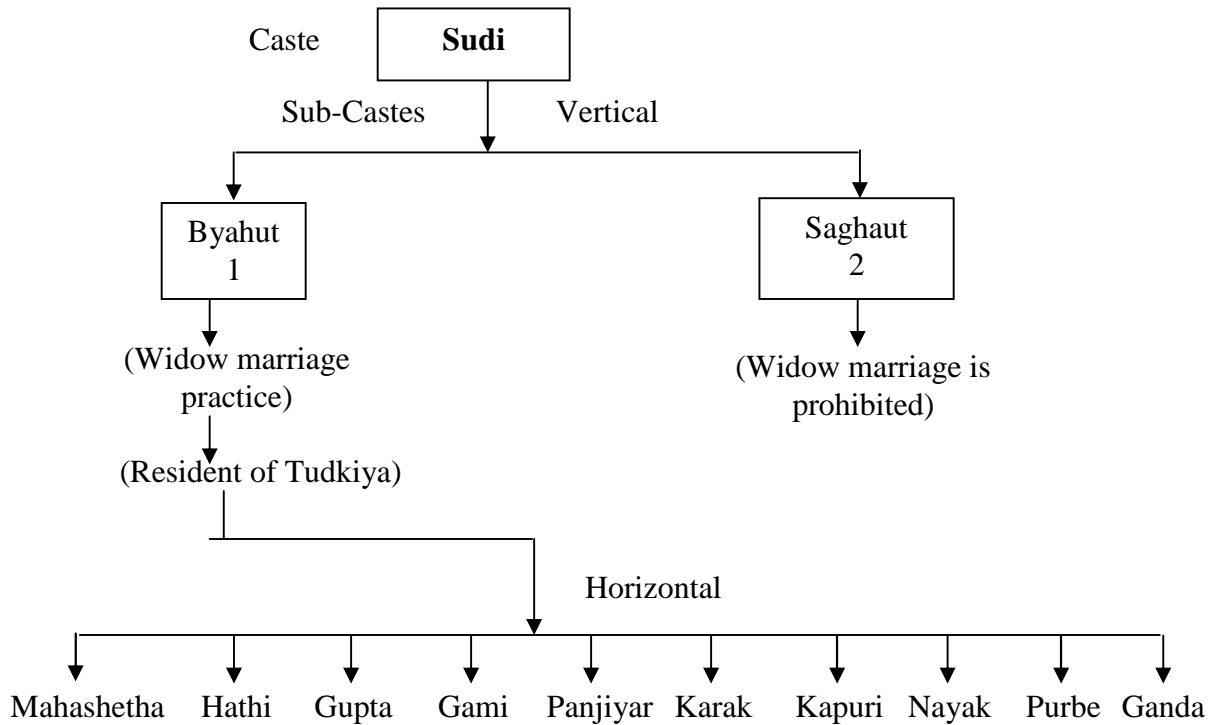
### Intra-Caste Division and Hierarchy

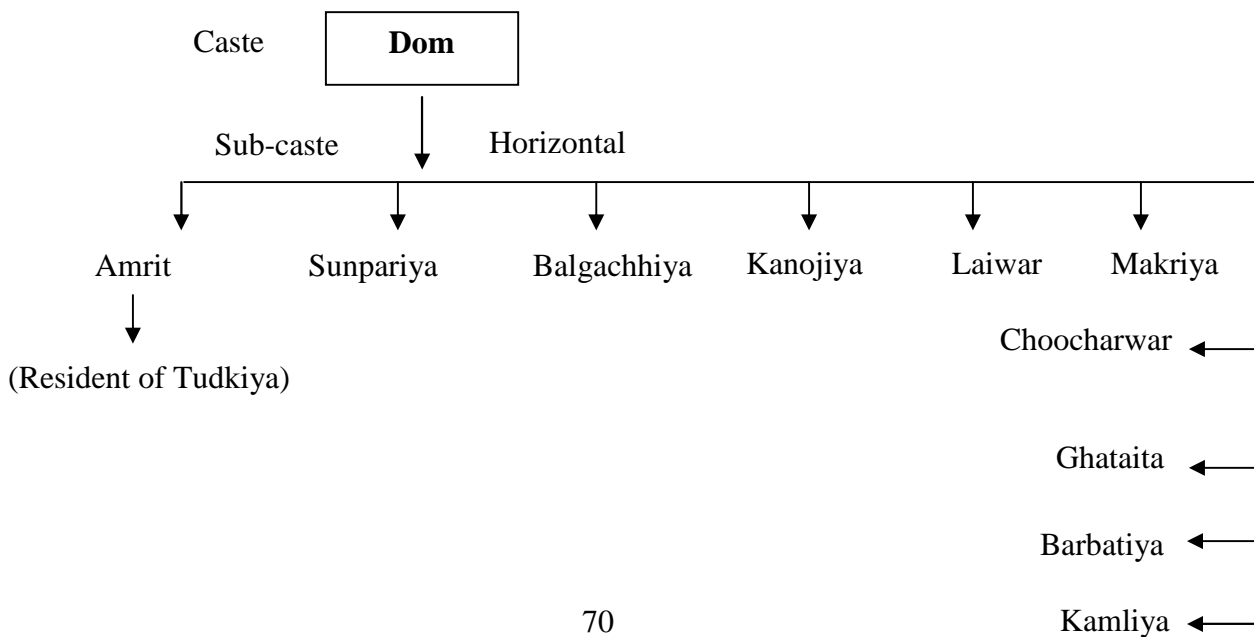
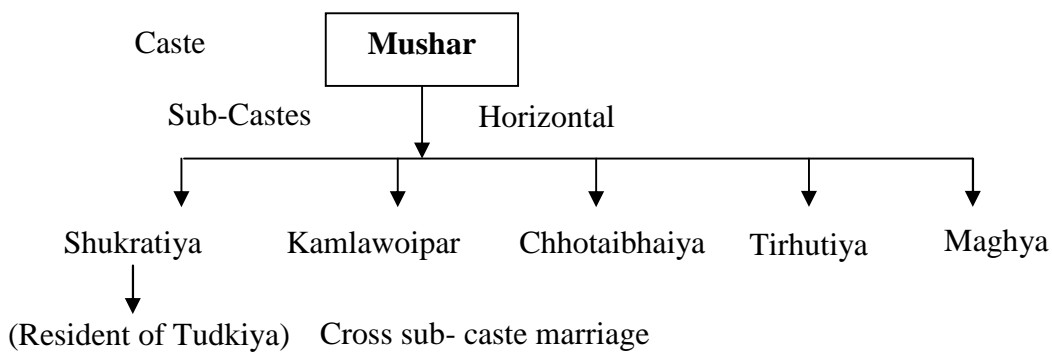
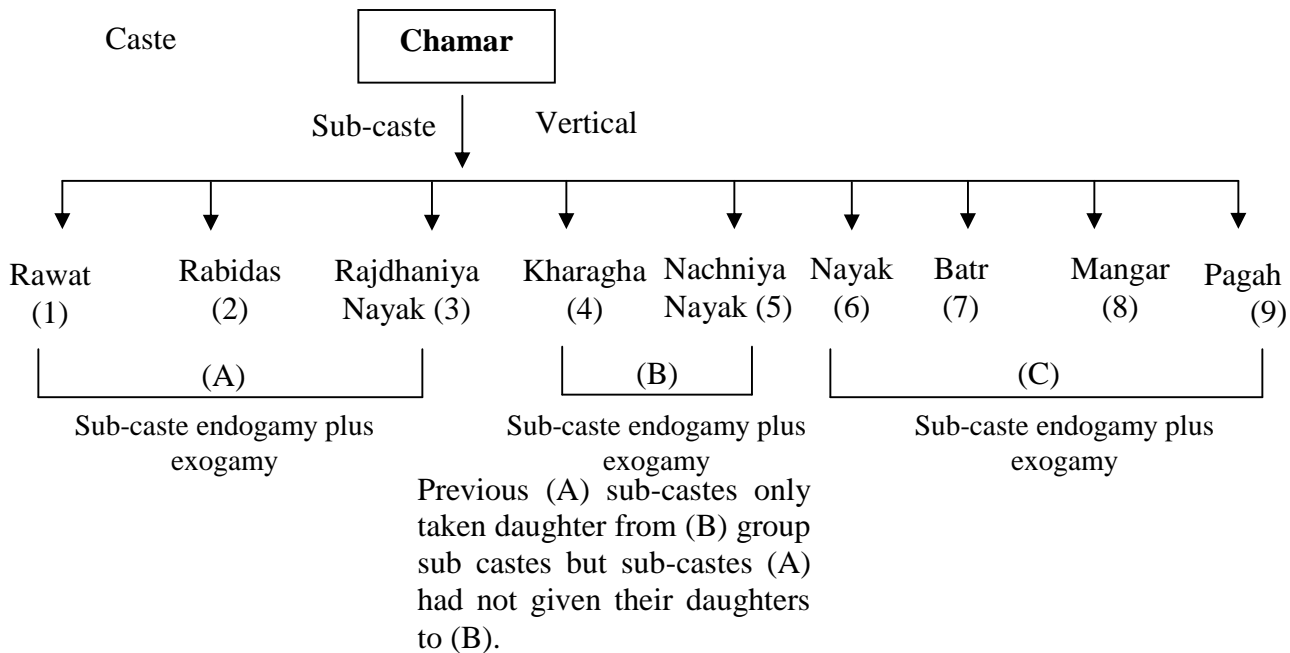
Louis Dumont (1998: 34) rightly argues that "the caste unified from the outside, is divided within; at least once and often several times, and marriage, for example, takes place only within one of the sub-divisions". A.C.Mayer (1960) further states that these sub-castes are broad divisions within the caste, it only represents part of large unit, which shares the common characteristics of the caste to be a caste like because they practice often endogamy, in some cases hypergamy, hypogamy or reciprocal marriage and commensal restriction between sub-castes. As like the actual caste title of particular group in Tudkiya only shows large type of distinction between exclusive castes in relation to each other from outer look. Moreover, within particular caste there is further either horizontal or vertical divisions and sub-divisions. Such divisions of Tarai castes locally said *panghait* or *khut*, in ethnic groups *thar* and hill castes *gotra* that defines a circle of persons within which one's marriage is permitted or prohibited according to normative caste marriage rules.

Although, in contemporary context such rules are gradually loosening its fluency but not fully lost its strength. The sub-caste mobility is also observed among intra-vertically divided Tarai castes due to three reasons, first, their caste's unification efforts which defy intra-status segregation, second-relatively lower sub-castes who has high economic strength to pay dowry to his daughter for the sake of marrying with relatively higher sub-caste and third, to free from dowry burden relatively higher sub-caste himself gives daughter to lower sub-caste. These intra-divisions of particular caste or ethnic group are as follow:

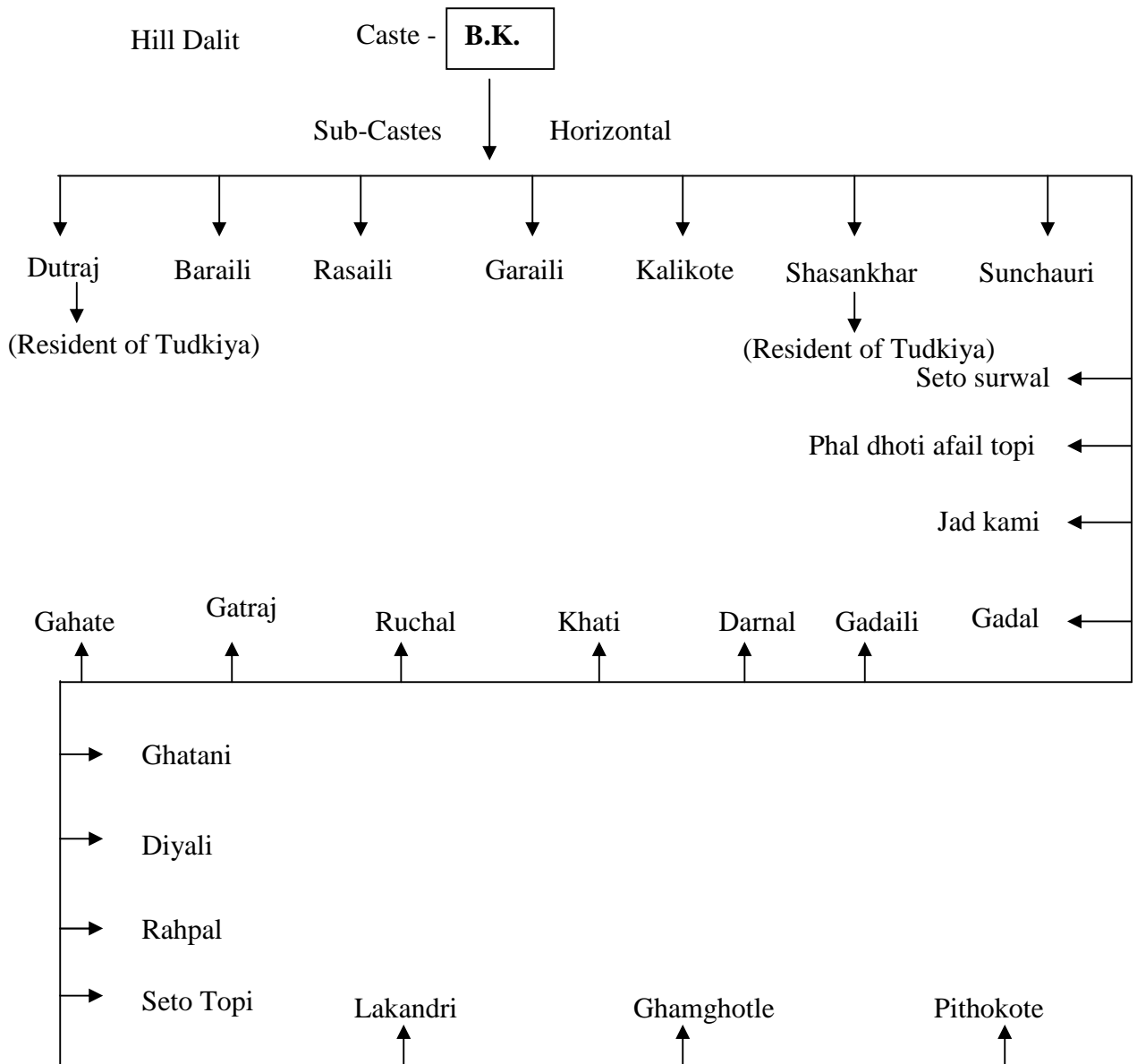




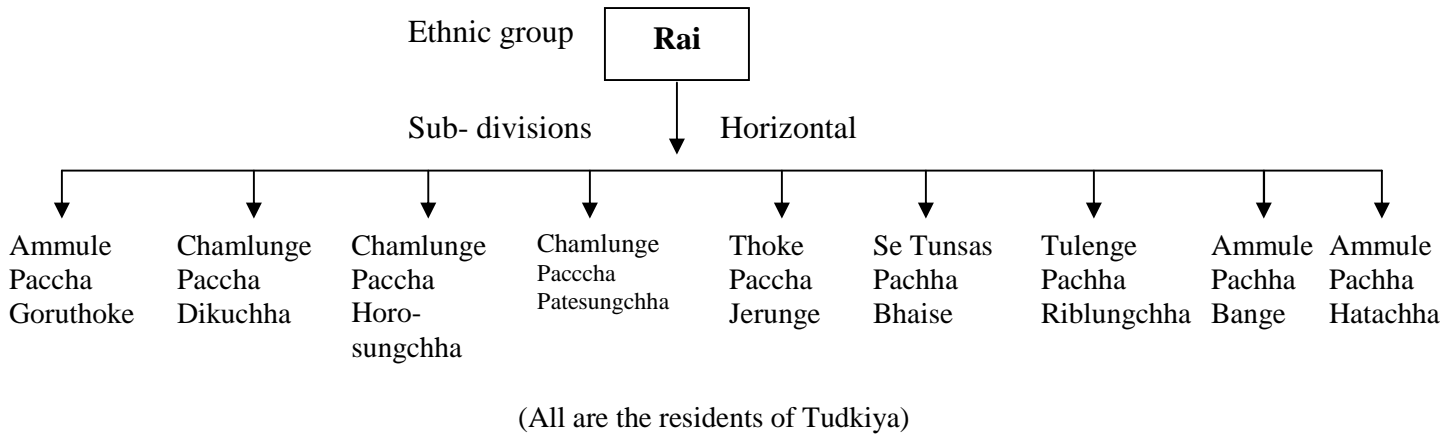




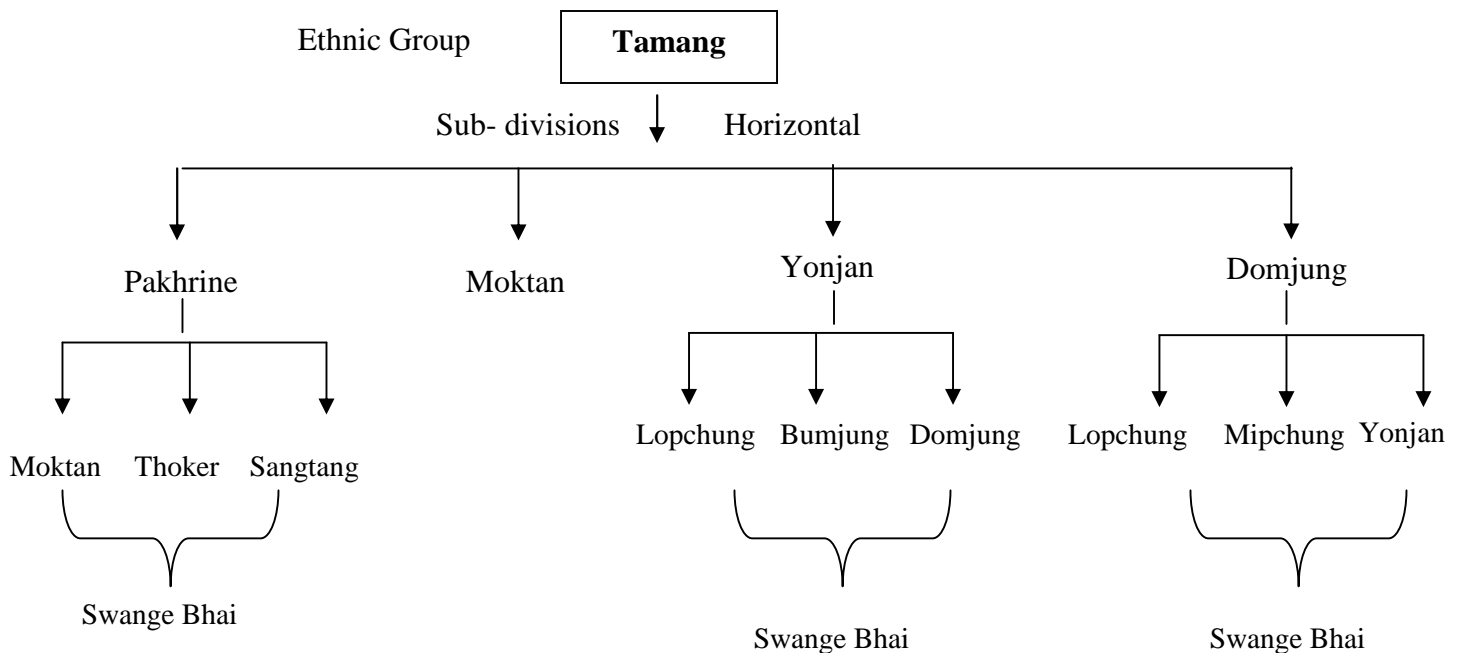
According to normative marriage rules generally, in Tarai castes who have primary vertical division of sub-castes all follows similar sub-caste endogamy and castes who have horizontal sub-castes all follows sub-caste exogamy. Even if, the Ghosing sub-caste of Yadav and Byahut sub-caste of Sudi both have secondary horizontal divisions that follow district marriage rule in which they marry with different intra *khuts* of own sub-caste so, both have endogamous exogamy. Next caste Chamar has vertical group sub-caste divisions, as caste informants divide these nine sub-castes into three status groups (A), (B), & (C) and within own particular group previously they practiced both sub-caste endogamy and exogamy. Besides they had hypergamy marriage practice that only operated between (A) and (B) groups, in which relatively higher sub-caste (A) took wives from an inferior (B) group.



Out of 160 sub-castes (thars) of B.K. the caste senior Tirthalal B.K. could only provide 24 names, these sub-castes are egalitarian have *gotra* exogamy marriage. Among the resident two thars, of Tudkiya Dutraj belongs to Riu Riu Shakha Dudhauri *gotra* and Shasan Khar, Shiv Shiv Shakha Kausilya *gotra*.

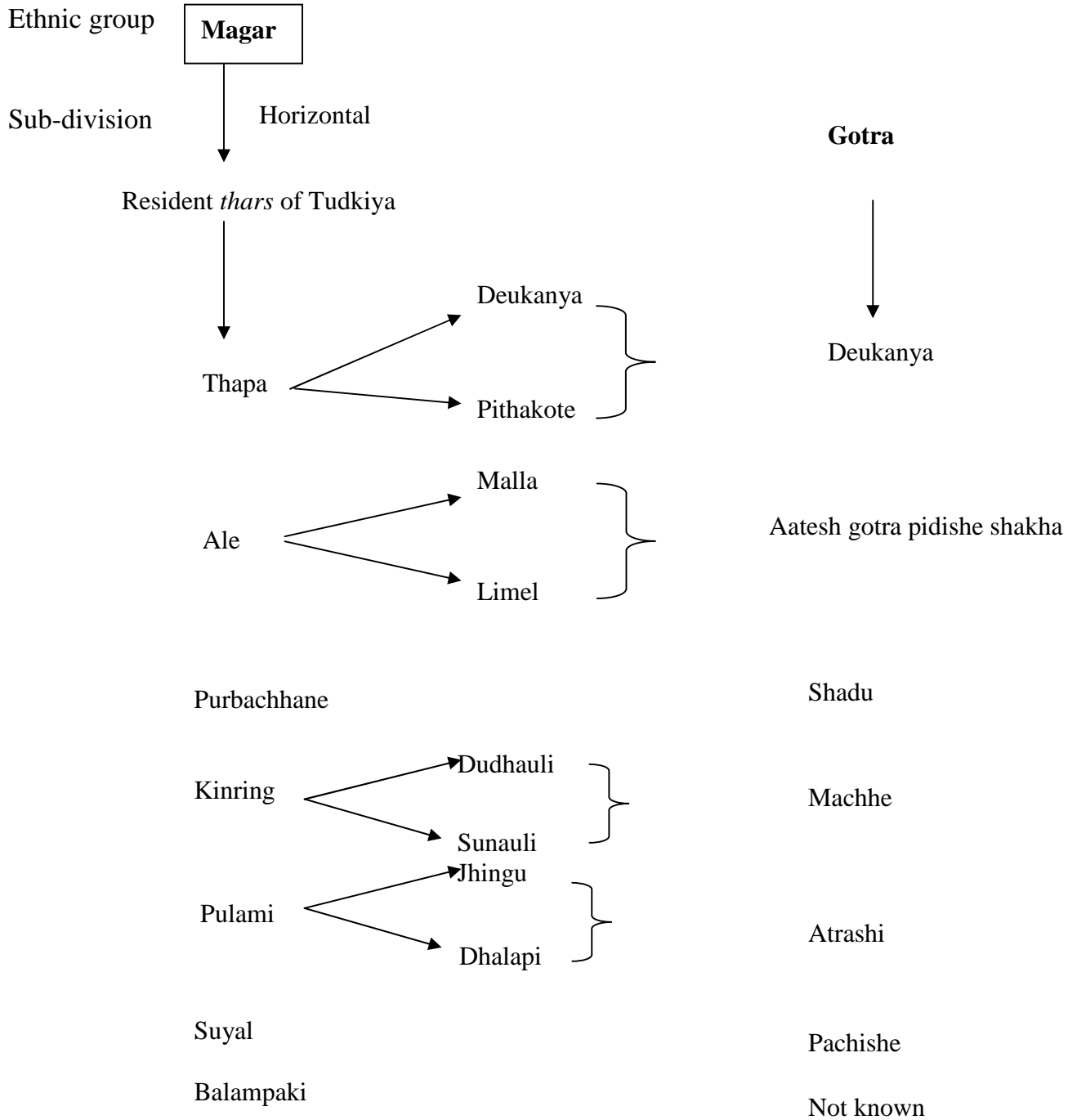


The sub divisions within Rai group are not status *thars* like vertically divided sub-castes of caste that refuse to marry with lower status category. It has a normative rule of marry to different pachha *thar* pertain category. For example-Ammule can marry with Ammule but one should have distinct pachha *thar* Goruthoke and next have Bange, this rule is same for all *thars*. And cross-cousin marriage i.e. Maternal uncle and Father's sister children is prohibited.

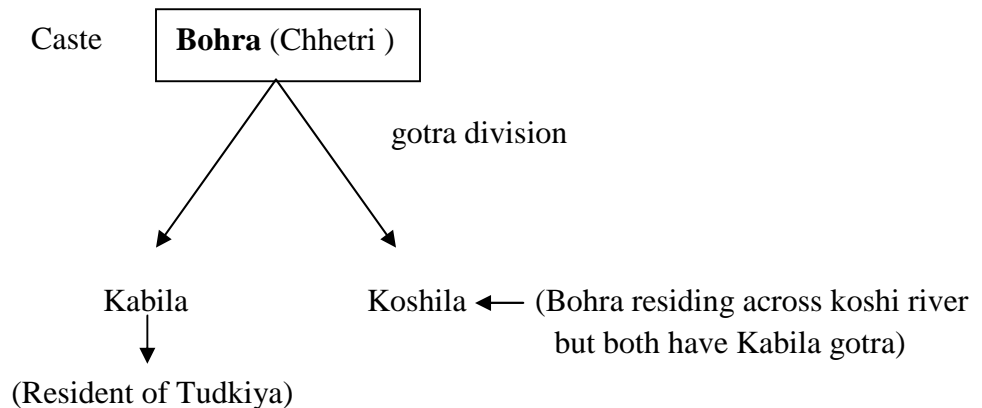
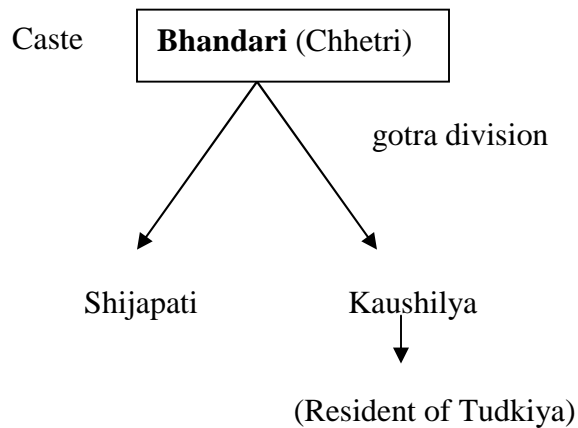




These four resident *thars* of Tamang in Tudkiya all have similar normative marriage rule i.e. within same *thar* and with *thars* of *swange bhai* marriage is prohibited. Cross-cousin marriages are highly preferred by traditional marriage rule, however, current generation educated people are less likely to do so.



Magar has both same *thar* and same gotra marriage prohibition. Besides it has levirate marriage practice locally said, *ghar samalne* by which a younger brother takes his elder brother's widow to wife. I have recorded two such marriages in Magar, one was held 40 years ago and next was last year. In both marriages the previous kids of widow also look after by new husband. Next, cross-cousin marriage with distinct rule, only marry with maternal uncle's daughter as one way process rather two way process in Tamang.



The caste people of Bhandari and Bohra, both say, have similar marriage rules that their marriages are prohibited within same caste even if it contains different *gotra* and other castes if it bears similar *gotra*. Besides they avoid cross-cousin marriage and seven generation maternal and paternal blood relations.

## 5.1 Commensal Hierarchy and Its Previous Operation

Mayer (1960:33) states, "the commensal hierarchy is based on the Hindu pollution concept, which lies at the root of ritual status that each caste has a certain quality of ritual purity which is lessened or polluted by certain commensal contacts with castes having an inferior quality". In many respects such pollution concept of castes in Tudkiya have been altered, now it is not as decades ago. Which only remains on the part of so called ritually superior status touchable castes toward ritually an inferior status untouchable castes and within ritually different status untouchable (Dalits). Even the reason to exist commensality within this low castes category of untouchable, Deliege (1996) finds in a Tamil village because it do not form a homogeneous category, they themselves divided into a multitude of castes which are more or less hierarchized and, in any case, strongly differentiated.

To practice commensality, even in the castes there are public-private dichotomy but it manifests during commensal contacts of food, water and smoking while superior castes deny to take or share such things from those castes they regard as inferior status. The existing commensal hierarchies of castes in relation to each other, people say, are different than previous while that had operated distinctively among and between Tarai and hill touchable castes or ethnic groups. To assess such change in food and water commensal relations with respect to previous and now, I made an attempt to lay down general model of previous commensal hierarchy how it had operated, through oral narrative of elders who had experienced or seen around the village over the time.

*Previous food and water commensality of Tarai castes*

### **Touchable castes**

- |    |        |   |                          |
|----|--------|---|--------------------------|
| 1. | Hajam  | } | 1 <sup>st</sup> category |
| 2. | Yadav  |   |                          |
| 3. | Ray    |   |                          |
| 4. | Barhi  |   |                          |
| 5. | Koeri  |   |                          |
| 6. | Teli   | } | 2 <sup>nd</sup> category |
| 7. | Sudi   |   |                          |
| 8. | Kalwar |   |                          |

### Untouchable castes (Dalits)

9. Dusadh }  
10. Mushar } 3<sup>rd</sup> category  
11. Chamar }
12. Dom } 4<sup>th</sup> category

### Muslim

13. Khaje Mansuri } 5<sup>th</sup> category

On the basis of food and water commensality, elders of village have divided previous Tarai castes in two major touchable and untouchable groups, and five categories. In which 1<sup>st</sup> category of five castes were mutually shared water and cooked food. The 2<sup>nd</sup> category three castes were shared water but not cooked food. Next, untouchable castes the 3<sup>rd</sup> category of three castes had similar right to access public well but they were neither mutually shared water nor cooked food from each other due to extreme status dispute. The 4<sup>th</sup> category Dom treated as most defiling, was not allowed to touch public well like 5<sup>th</sup> category Muslim.

When we talk about inter-category commensality, the 1<sup>st</sup> category castes did not share cooked food and water from 2<sup>nd</sup> category castes, but in reverse 2<sup>nd</sup> category castes accepted both cooked food and water from 1<sup>st</sup> category. During inter-invitation if 1<sup>st</sup> category castes had invited to join feast to 2<sup>nd</sup> category the food and water were served separately in broken line. In opposition if 2<sup>nd</sup> category invited them for feast either he had provided cooking materials for self cooking or virtual food like beaten rice, curd, sugar and banana would be managed. On the other hand, descending three categories 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> who had accepted food and water from above categories but not vice-versa. The 4<sup>th</sup> category caste Dom shared cooked food and water from 3<sup>rd</sup> category but not with 5<sup>th</sup> category Muslim, even Dom treated Muslims as untouchable of the untouchable. Further, Muslim had also refused to take food and water from 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> category Dalit castes.

*Previous food and water commensality in hill caste and ethnic group*

**Touchable**

1. Chhetri
  2. Magar
- } 1<sup>st</sup> category

3. Shrestha
  4. Rai
  5. Tamang
- } 2<sup>nd</sup> category

**Untouchable (Dalit)**

6. B.K.
- } 3<sup>rd</sup> category

Hill people are not an exception, within them there were also commensal division, an elderly man, Tek Bahadur Pulami has separated these previous castes and ethnic groups of Tudkiya, on the basis of inter-commensality into three categories. According to him, the 1<sup>st</sup> category included Chhetri and Magar, during that time both had a custom of sacred cooking *chulokhane*. Despite those people who did not share cooked food and self cooked, rest others frequently shared cooked food and water. And 2<sup>nd</sup> category of three ethnic groups, had mutually shared water but cooked food sharing there was status disagreement, the Shrestha would not be accepted cooked food from Rai and Tamang but they easily shared from Shrestha. Similarly, Rai refused to take cooked food from Tamang, however, on the part of Tamang they had no objection to accept cooked food from Rai.

In respect of inter- category commensality, the 3<sup>rd</sup> category caste B.K. was a universal acceptor of food and water from all above categories but not vice-versa. The 1<sup>st</sup> category Chhetri and Magar had prohibition to take water and cooked food by 2<sup>nd</sup> category although these three 2<sup>nd</sup> category groups had no such restriction who easily taken it from 1<sup>st</sup>. During inter-invitation of 2<sup>nd</sup> category to 1<sup>st</sup> either materials were provided and self cooked, or virtual food similar to Tarai castes was served.

*Previous food and water commensality between hill and Tarai caste or ethnic group*

**Tarai Castes**

1. Hajam }  
2. Yadav } 1<sup>st</sup> category  
3. Ray }  
4. Barahi }  
5. Koeri }

6. Teli }  
7. Sudi } 2<sup>nd</sup> category  
8. Kalwar }

**Dalits**

9. Dusadh }  
10. Mushar } 3<sup>rd</sup> category  
11. Chamar }

12. Dom } 4<sup>th</sup> category

**Muslim**

13. Khaje Mansuri } 5<sup>th</sup> category

**Hill ethnic group and castes**

1. Chhetri }  
2. Magar } 1<sup>st</sup> category

3. Shrestha }  
4. Rai } 2<sup>nd</sup> category  
5. Tamang }

Dalit }  
6. B.K. } 3<sup>rd</sup> category

Excluding untouchable caste B.K., rest other hill castes as well as ethnic groups previously were thought to be own commensal status upper than Tarai touchable castes. They had only accepted water and dry food from 1<sup>st</sup> category Tarai castes and disallowed cooked food from them. With 2<sup>nd</sup> category they had completely forbidden commensal contact of food and water. Rather contrary, Tarai 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> category castes had no restriction to getting food and water from hill touchable people. Between hill and Tarai Dalits, except Dom who only accepted food and water from B.K., in other castes inter-commensal food and water sharing were prohibited. Above these are the previous glimpses of commensal hierarchies that had operated relations between and among hill and Tarai castes which I have tried to recover

through the oral narrative of people. The leitmotiv behind this is to show the changes in commensal relations over the time and what respect current commensality is differed from past practices.

### **5.1.1 Commensal Hierarchy at Present**

My observation in village has shown that the previous hierarchical commensal inter-relations have been altered by many respects, not only within Tarai castes (except Dalits) or hill people (except Dalit) but also between Tarai and hill people. Similar as, Mayer (1996) sees that the potential factors caused change in commensality relation as a result of political, education and enhanced professional status. Within Tarai castes once treated as water unaccepted second category castes by 1<sup>st</sup> category castes now have no hurdle to share cooked food and water with each other and there have been frequent inter invitation for feast, festival and in occasion of ritual without caring about their previous commensal rule. But, for joining in these inter occasions no matter of caste (either first or second category) the invitation is crucial. For example-if anybody's close relative dies you do not get a call from either caste then on his part there is no obligation to participate in procession. Same belief also holds to join for other festivities.

During my stay in Tudkiya, I also got an opportunity to attend death feast of Koeri and marriage feast of Sudi and Ray where other touchable castes people of hill and Tarai previously had superior or inferior commensal status have equally participated. The cooked food items served on participant's leaf plates but rice unhygienically served by hand, in unbroken line. At feast, I observed there is no commensal restrictions, although, participants have obligation to follow feast rules, first - one can't stand up until whole row people have not finished dining, second-feast row sitting arrangement must be organized face to face manner i.e. one row can not show own back to other row.

Within hill caste or group except to Dalit rest have uplifted commensal hierarchical rules. During inter-invitation, among them the cooked food and water is equally shared without paying attention to previous self cooking custom. Although,

some remaining old generation people from Chhetri and Magar whom I have talked to are still rigid about commensal rule, but it is not bother many. This profound change in commensality does not only confine among hill groups but also in Tarai 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> category castes. Now, hill caste or ethnic groups have been easily sharing cooked food and water with other counterpart castes of Tarai (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> category) in unbroken line at feast. This change in commensality has took place not abruptly but gradually, as people of both hill and Tarai say. At first they began sharing cooked food sharing from water accepted castes and at the same time water sharing from prohibited castes. The frequent inter-dine among touchable castes or ethnic groups were only possible afterward of 2046 B.S. political change.

Within Dalits no matter if from hill or Tarai the ideal commensal modus operandi is not much changed, as if, there is dichotomy in which it has been operating differently in two spheres i.e. public and private. The commensal behaviors that Dalits show in public during inter-invitation feast while water is self carried and self cooked, at public well is not allowed to touch, also each other's pot that not always show in private spheres. Mostly this dichotomy in private sphere is seen at individual levels either those are close neighbours, ritual friends or relations. It is because to maintain commensal behaviour in public as Dalit informant Rampukar Dusadh told me that, to show own caste people as well as other we are firm in own caste commensal rules and not violating it even after the participation in feast of other Dalit caste. He further said, if violation occurred and their caste people of neighbouring place be heard then they exclude them from *jat bhoj* that make them difficult to marry their boys and girls.

Different to manifest commensal rules at public arena among the Dalits, in private concern the meat, liquor and delicacies are shared between close relations and friends by hiding oneself from the sight of others. For example, in public the Dom is treated by other Dalits as most defiling caste but in private life, as Maneswar Mallik, 23, in village who rears pig at his house shared to me "whenever I slaughter a pig at my house, my friends from other Dalit castes secretly come to me, share pork and



liquor together. But in front of other people in public same people even refuse our caste to touch well and they treat us lowest caste."

### **5.1.2 Commensal Relations between non-Dalit and Dalit**

In Tudkiya practicing commensality restriction by so called touchable caste or ethnic groups toward Dalits are ever changing but not it's ending edge as Dalit aspire. Birwal Paswan, 54, recollecting his commensal restriction prone child days when so called touchable castes washed the Dalit given money and not allowed to enter their house yard, and he compares his today's tea drinking session in Sudi's village tea shop with touchable castes and money paying. Next, Asha Ram Paswan, 25, was astonished when first time in 2056 B.S. in Teliyani tole, while Teli caste two persons namely Madhu Sau and Ramji Sau had served food to Dalit on metal plate rather banana leaf. Although to practice commensality toward Dalits among touchable in village, there is no uniformity, further within particular touchable caste or group some individuals have shown their private-public duality.

For touchable caste, the previous commensal restrictions towards Dalit like-restriction in touch, prohibition to enter house yard or temple, prohibition to sit together with touchable on platform on same level, obligatory saluting and derogatory addressing by name or caste title without caring age seniority now have renounced by touchable. Besides previous prohibition of sharing of milk (unboiled) and slaughtered goat meat, candy, sugar, beaten rice, boiled rice from Dalit castes do not prohibit them. Meantime, they have dispelled commensal practice, in which if mistakenly Dalit has touched the water filled mud pot of touchable caste at dug well s/he at once either smashed the mud pot or given to Dalit who touched it on provision to pay equal price for that mud pot. Dalit informants further told me "during that time water filled mud pot was not only considered impure by our physical touch but also on entering at well fence circle where touchable castes had placed their water filled buckets." On the other hand, different provision for Dalit pollution made water filled

metal pot that touchable only poured away water and again filled water like now days.

Rest other stipulation of commensal restriction toward Dalits i.e. eating, drinking, smoking and avoiding to serve food on metal dishes are still evident in village, although, implementation of such avoiding provision are not vigorous as before. Even in touchable, there are variations according to caste, ethnic group, generation and individual's education. In comparison to Tarai touchable castes, village Dalits see, hill touchable caste or ethnic groups are far more liberal in commensality. Bikhu Paswan, 26, works as agricultural labourer in village shared that when touchable households hire him for work to their houses until now in Tarai castes exception to some educated or government job holding persons, majority of them, serve food outside house on banana leaf and give aluminium bowl for drinking water.

Rather different, he says that no hill people now treat Dalit in this manner. All allow to sit inside house barricade and serve food on metal dish. Moreover, in some households there is no compulsion to wash their own plates in which they ate. When I asked Dalits to categories village touchable caste or ethnic group on the basis of their day to day experiencing commensal sensitivity, in Tarai castes they put first Teli and Yadav are highly commensal prone, second less prone castes Sudi, Hajam and Mahto, and third most moderate caste is Ray. The next category of touchable hill peoples the first grade is comprising Chhetri, Shrestha, Magar and Tamang and second among touchable in village the least commensality practicing ethnic group is Rai.

Through my frequent interaction with village Dalits often they give the example of Rai tole is the most liberal in practicing commensality toward them even after educated, well economic status and diverse profession comparison to other Tarai commensality prone touchable castes who are still rigid. At Rai tole Dalit informants said that no check to enter in house and kitchen, even sometimes, on the availability of Dalit at Rai house he helps in the tasks like water fetching and spice

grinding. That's why some people of touchable caste of Tarai joke to Dalit, if anyone has seen to Rai tole man carrying meat "will you not go to Rai tole for grinding spice." For my query to know more about I asked to Rajkumar Rai, 50, is a high school Nepali teacher said that he does not believe in Dalit commensality but, fetching water and spice grinding whenever Dalit comes to his house they themselves voluntarily aspire to do so because their conception to enter touchable caste's kitchen is a matter of high pride and glory. On the other hand in Magar and Tamang households wise variation i.e. the liquor producing household Dalit say are more flexible in commensality than non-liquor producing households. However, kitchen entering and touching of water pot is still not allowed but their other day to day treatments to Dalit is far more moderate than Tarai touchable castes.

Generally, in Tudkiya the most frequent place to observe commensality toward Dalit is at common dug well. Where excluding Dom other Dalits (Dusadh, Mushar, Chamar and B.K.) fill their water vessels at own turn without touching other's body and vessels. In opposition, I observed some Pahadiya households filling their water vessels together with Dalit at dug well without making any discrimination. However, this bothered to Pumpa Rai, 75, resented to me that her tole young generation touchable Tamang, Rai and Magar are least practicing untouchability towards Dalit. Even her own daughter never maintains distance to fill water with Dalit although it seems her bothering because being a person of old generation. But she can not check it and nobody listens her around rather she has to use the same water, carried by her daughter because she is not capable to fetch water.

In contrast, no touchable castes of Tarai agree to fetch their water vessels together with Dalit at public dug well. The reason for maintaining such commensality to Dalit, Ram Swarup Mahto, 42, former UML village president says that the enforcement of *jat samaj* and compulsion to show their own caste in village or outside that we are steady in caste prescribed forbidden commensal behaviour and following the similar standard as they been practicing. It helps them to regulate their marriages within own caste in different villages. If commensality violation is made

and that is heard by their caste people in other villages they would stop to abide marriage relation i.e. giving or taking girls.

Smoking is the other area of reflecting commensal prohibition on the part of touchable castes. To share *chilam* (small smoking mud pot) with touchable the Baluwa tole resident, Kishna Lal B.K., 56, says that during his father's time it was completely prohibited. Of late, he easily shares *chilam* with touchable caste and vice-versa. However, condition is there neither touchable nor Dalit exchanges mouth piece wrapping cotton of *chilam* to each other. Particularly, smoking people of touchable castes except close coeval others do not share cigarette from Dalit which they still think impure because it comes in direct touch of lips and spit. Excluding other touchable castes, the Yadav, Dalit says that its still a taboo to share Dalit prepared Tobacco, the reason behind water mixed lime but, at the same time borrowing tobacco leaves from Dalit is not considered impure.

In Tudkiya at Baluwa tole, I have come across an incident while tole males from both touchable (Sudi, Ray, Bhandari, Yadav) and Dalit (Mushar, B.K.) playing cards on the cottage balcony after their lunch. Meantime, Ram Sada, 75, owner of this cottage also one among the card players gave his card to hold to an on looker for playing and started filling *kankar* (Tobacco) on his *chilam* and lit fire. At first he himself puffed then circulated *chilam* to other people of Sudi, Ray, Bhandari and B.K. Just after *chilam* session a Yadav boy asked to B.K. man for tobacco box, even if, he only took leaves from it rather lime which he put out from own lime containing Tobacco box.

Ram sada gestured me and said that you see this Yadav boy who has only taken tobacco leaves not lime because he thinks he will die at once if he shares lime from Dalit. Further Mimicked to Yadav caste's commensal conservatism and made remark on the boy and said, do you know about this boy, he is planning to go for foreign employment however he can't properly write his name, even he doesn't know the way to school but well familiar how to maintain commensal distance with Dalits. No matter I am Dalit, I send my grand daughter to school but his sister contemporary

to my granddaughter is caring she-buffalo at house, it does not bother him but lime does. Ask him, in his caste in village how many doctor, engineer, lawyer, teacher and educated men, his caste has nothing all these although his caste thinks to be superior. Rather different Rai group has all this even economically better than Yadav although they do not practice commensality towards Dalits, you tell us, either his caste people know more or Rai."

### **5.1.3 Commensality: Dom Versus other Castes**

Dom caste is treated by both touchable and untouchable (Mushar, Dusadh, Chamar and B.K.) as most defiling caste and deny to entertain similar right of access to common dug well as other Dalit castes have. Rameshwor Mallik, 30, does bamboo works in village and has resented to those people who put him in single Dalit category. Other Dalits think and treat him polluting caste and interdict to his caste's access of well like touchable castes which they have already been entertaining. Now, he has a separate well, now he does not have compulsion to drink or bathe from contaminated pond water as before, or requesting at other available well touching castes to pour water into his buckets. He told, requesting other for pouring water was time consuming as all the touchable castes were not always readied to assist him if he requested one person pointed to another person. That caused heavy loss of time waiting for someone to pour water in his bucket. Eventually, hours of wait sometimes turned futile, as he returned with empty bucket and the ultimate source of water was village pond. Due to neighbour's non-cooperation and their excessive commensality prone attitude toward Dom, he said "Makes his caste distressing and as a mere spectator watching other caste's fetching water from his house". However, Dom caste has separate dug well, even though they have not yet dismissed desire to entertain by self-drawing water through same dug well as rest Dalit do.

The allocation of current using separate dug well by villagers to Dom caste was also the cause of his most defiling commensal status. This happened and obliged to do so villagers without many requests and a rebellious foolhardy attempt held in

2055 B.S., worth to mention here by Dom woman to draw water from common dug well to quench her immediate thirst in a hot mid day while water was not available at her own house. Such breaking commensal rule was proclaimed in neighbourhood which Teli caste considered Dom's an act to pique their pride. In response, they took retaliatory measures, the son of that woman, Maneshwar Mallik, 25, still freights while remembering that tribulation and shared "Just after my mother touched the well, both men and women majority of them were Teli poured in our house yard. Some furious women took hold of mother and tied her by same *dol* rope (the rope containing small bucket that has placed at the common well) rope that she had touched for drawing water and was also beaten up. Meantime, my father arrived, actually he didn't know what was happening. At once, the Teli men grabbed him and ordered women to set free mother and they tightened father by the same rope. We were in an awful situation, by leaving our father as rest of our family members escaped from village to *diyad* in Choharba. After our escape, later neighbours had also thrashed father and released him next day from captivity when he confessed meeting's decision of committing mistake and Rs. 551 fine."

However, the matter was resolved at village level but it got a media hype. It became a news on T.V., Radio and journal that had further shaken those retaliating neighbours. Before journalists could meet Dom household a group of neighbour contacted to Dom and threateningly wheedled him - "don't say anything to outsiders this or that because you have to stay in same village together with us, if they ask to you, do your neighbours allow to drink water from common well ? You reply, yes; so on". After the incident, time and again many journalists came to village, met the Dom household but, he never had the courage to say about the incident and physical assault from neighbours. Moreover, the water of woman touched well Dom informant said that his neighbours had not used until they pursued the treatment to throw away some buckets of water from it. Being a single household of Dom amid majority neighbourhood of high commensality prone Teli caste, for him, neither

before nor now it is a difficult task to go against their set standard to avoid touching the well.

Despite legal right Dom caste had not courage to defy neighbours, once made in return they suffered severe beating instead of negotiations with them to provide access to common dug well. Although, result was not fruitful but Dom had not given up his effort in this direction. One such extensive meeting was organized by Dom in 2056 B.S. Just before his grand daughter's marriage which caused sensation in village. The participants were beside neighbours of Teliyani tole, people of other two wards including village political activists, elites and teachers. In meetings, the teachers, intellectuals and political activists had criticized to Dom's ward neighbours that you always promised in front of gathering, of providing water to Dom but later you never followed it. And these elites further said to neighbours that how many time they would linger on the same issue? Previous year's beating of Dom had made their village reputation worse. So, today they would finalise the issue, Dom will himself fetch water from common well and will pour to their hand cup and they will drink it.

As Maneshwar shared to me that was a radical decision of meeting mediating elites and had also astonished his neighbours. Without defying the meeting's decision, the neighbour had put forward a condition that if Dom would touch their well than elite had to do same in his ward. Elites had agreed the condition, at first, they moved toward previously Dom woman touched well, Dom pulled up water, poured to the hand cups of elites and they drank. Then headed to elite's ward well and while they were doing the same, the ward people resenting approached the well, vituperated the inspiring act of elites and Dom. In revenge to Dom's touching of the well, angry crowd polluted the well water by throwing dung, banana stems and other available dirts.

This counterblast to elite's effort, once again crumpled Dom's access to common well. Even Dom caste touched these two wells as village people said to me that the neighbouring users had not used it till four months. After this incident, RWSS project had launched it's well scheme in village and these despaired elites had

advocated to allocate separate well for Dom to circumvent his water problem, if neighbour denied his touch to common well. In response, villagers accepted the proposal of elites rather compromising with the most defiling commensal status of Dom.

## **5.2 Contested Hierarchy**

Different to commensal hierarchy, no matter caste or ethnic group in Tudkiya , each claims own position higher than other. The ground in which such logics have been made are legendary proof, ritual significance, defiling occupation, food habit and mythical tales. In Steven M. Parish words, there are the strategies "to expose the arbitrary foundations of the caste hierarchy through narratives or stories", to which , "low castes critique or mock the pretenses of hierarchical ideas and values that, construct their own place and identities within the caste system" (Parish 1996:116-7). It is because, they "seek to reveal a radical gap between a person's social role (place in the caste hierarchy) and a person's moral worth as judged in terms of alternative moral concepts." (ibid:119). In Tudkiya comparison to non-Dalit, within Dalit there are higher hierarchical status dispute. Except Dom who takes water and cooked food from rest Dalits does not even think lower than them and among other Dalits till now publicly inter-dine is prohibited. Ram Sada, 75, thinks his caste is above than Dusadh, Chamar, B.K. and Dom, the reason he gives "Sada caste is mentioned in holy books i.e. Nitisastra and Ramayan."

On the other hand, Dusadh does not agrees to Sada and he claims hierarchically in top position among Tarai Dalits and sees other Dalit castes as lower and defiling. Aasha Ram Paswan, 25, of Teliyani tole, explains his caste superiority like this "Dusadh only does agricultural work and does not eat rats. But, Chamar works like skinning dead animal and throwing it, Sada eat rats, Dom eats leftover of feast, how can these castes be equal to us". In contrast Sada caste rejects his logics, one day during my discussion with caste senior Ram Sada, I asked to him that Dusadh Man was telling me, your caste is inferior than him because your caste



people eat rats. He gently replied - Yes! We do eat rats but now its difficult to find because land owners do not allow us to dig their field. For his concern which made us inferior, counter questioned to me you better have to ask him why his caste became lower than Teli even as Teli also eats rat.

To the contrary, Chamar caste dismissed all above claiming of Sada and Paswan rather it claims own rank upper than rest Dalits because of Brahmanical root. To justify and make claim convincing Chamar caste has a mythical story about how it became lower caste by none of the great reason. One elderly man Uttim Mahra from Ashanpur shared to me this story as such "in the past, there were seven brothers of Brahman, once early in the morning they had gone bathe in the river. At the bathing spot dead body of animal had laid down, the brothers made discussion to remove it. However, the duty to throw had come to the youngest brother and he accomplished the job, after the incidence other brothers had discarded him from caste for defiling act and he became Chamar and his holy thread had transformed to *amarlati* (rootless creeping plant)".

Dom sees own caste's position ritually higher than rest Dalits because by caste he has an authority to sell cremation fire to other castes who wishes for the peace of deceased person's soul. And he has resentment toward rest Dalits that they underestimate his caste value and treating as most defiling caste in village. How powerful Dom caste authority, Maneshwor Mallik gives to me the example of Hindu sacred place Baranasi where at crematorium without the permission of Dom no Hindu caste can burn the dead body. At, the violation of Dom's authority, it is generally believed to send dead body's soul into hell.

Unlike Dalits, among other touchable castes in Tudkiya there is no food, water commensality. Although, they are not free from undecided hierarchical position in relation to one another. For example - Yadav sees own caste upper than Hajam because it's his occupation to rear holy cows, but Hajam not ready to accept it, claims upper than Yadav because of his castes ritual significance. The Teli holds the opinion his caste is upper than sudi because previously sudi caste fanned the bridegroom of

Teli at marriage ceremony. On the other hand, Tamang claims upper position than Magar for the reason of having own caste priest *lama* but Magar has different caste priest i.e. Brahman. The Magar caste sees Rai and Tamang lower by their meat consuming habits i.e. previously Rai ate buffalo meat and Tamang ate dead animal beef.

This chapter has begun to focus on intra-division of castes and ethnic group which is shown through diagrams. Whether divisions are vertical or horizontal I further traced their normative marriage rules of sub-caste endogamy, exogamy and hypergamy. Next, commensal hierarchy which I have assessed on the basis of inter-group commensal food and water contact either of the particular group or groups accepted or refused it from other group or groups. While accepting food and water served by another group denotes commensal equality, and not to accept denotes inferiority or status dispute. Further, this commensal hierarchy within and between hill and Tarai groups ever changing, to show this change I also traced previous operated commensal hierarchy as well. Finally, I have shown how the caste or ethnic groups have contested to claim own hierarchical position higher than others.

## CHAPTER - VI

### Jat Samaj, Behaviour Control and Maintaing Caste Identity

In caste society, a caste can exists as distinct entity in relation to other caste because within it, there is an (informal) enforcement agency that controls the behaviour of it's members what caste's normative rules do not allow to pursue. As such, Blunt says "every caste there is some authority charged with the duty of compelling obedience to customary laws ... a regular system of government, of which the ruling body is a council or assembly, known as a *panchayat*" (Blunt 1969: 104). The council of smallest scale, in Mayer's words "is made up of some or all of the population of particular caste in village and it concerns with the dealing of secular offences which do not need to be reported to formal authorities" (Mayer 1960:251-52). Similarly, Tarai castes including both touchables and untouchables in Tudkiya each have similar intra-caste functioning council locally said *gawadi* or *jat samaj* which deals with two things a) infringement of own caste customary rules and b) to provide assistance in management at ritual occasions (death, birth and marriage) of own caste feast organizing household.

This *jat samaj* of particular caste has two dignitaries orderly *mangen* and *dewan*, they may be in village or neighbouring villages that depends upon the caste's household number. The appointment of these two dignitaries as people said to me that all castes have similar process are accorded by both ways through hereditary succession or elected among the caste men for lifelong if he doesn't make mistake to own caste normative rules. In village I observed, the *jat samaj* meeting (*baithar*) of particular caste is set in two occasions i.e. one beforehand of organizing rituals to discuss about how to manage preparation and next, if someone of caste has breached the caste customary rules. In every *jat baithar* of castes the presence of these two dignitaries is essential, or as per availability. Sometimes, it can go ahead without the presence of one dignitary. Who ever is available for taking part leads the *baithar* but, major decisions are not made in absence of one.

Above these two occasions of organizing *jat baithar*, I will mention only the second type that sits for resolving the issues of breaching caste rules to maintain particular castes sanctity. Which is invited on the request of a guilty party where the participation of that caste people is greater than usual *jat baithar*. Especially, it is organized for particular issue but hardly restricts around it and also provides the forum to discuss other sort of issues among the caste people as a manner of public hearing.

During my stay I got an opportunity to participate *jat baithar* of Ray caste which was organized for the next day's death ritual. Just after the meeting starts I observed, it had deviated from death ritual to inter-caste marriage, love marriage and some caste member's breached commensal rule i.e. privately dine with Dusadh caste. People say, *baithar* is the place where *jat samaj* either makes decision of breacher's exoneration through one or all measure like, confession of default, fine and feast to brotherhood, or, penalize him, sometimes *bhoj cut*, his whole family by exclusion from brotherhood feast. Until his expiation, *jat samaj* neither invites him to join in death, birth and marriage rituals nor they take part at his house for rituals. According to elderly people some decades ago there was also a provision to punish defaulter by severe disapproval like *jat cut* (exclusion of caste) life long..

Feast to *jat samaj* by defaulter is a remedy to his made violation who once punished through brotherhood feast exclusion. For reinstatement in caste the defaulter besides *bhoj* there is chances to add fines but no less than the punishment as organizing *bhoj* to *jat samaj* is accepted. Especially, among Tarai castes informants have said that the *bhoj cut* is provisioned for the violation of following caste rules like inter-caste marriage, elopement, adultery within or between the castes, infringement of the dietary rules i.e. inter dine with the forbidden castes or allowing them to enter one's house. Defiance of *jat samaj* decision and if someone from particular caste is regularly take part in his caste fellows feast but he left to invite anyone member from the group at the occasion it may be the reason to avoid him from the caste as *bhoj cut*. The *jat samaj* imposition of caste rules over breacher or family does not come to an end here by dealing above issues but it also

holds further watch on issues like, a married girl not willing to go paternal house, if the married girl refuses to stay with her husband or want to marry with other person, if marriage engagement is broken before marriage and if the daughter is poorly treated even after the proper dowry paid.

These above possible causes of *bhoj cut*, now only remains on elopement and inter-caste marriage. The issue of secret dine with forbidden castes is equally raised by some caste fellows in *jat baithar* but it is not paid much attention. For adultery or unrecognized sexual relations during recent year's village history according to my observation, there is no decision of *bhoj cut* made by *jat samaj* (intra-caste) or *Panchayat* (inter-caste). This means such things are not happening in the village. Chumuna Sah of Teliyani tole holds the opinion "not all these privately going adultery come to the hearing of *jat samaj* or *panchayat* but only few cases which becomes public and that needs immediate action from people". Mainly, these actions of *jat samaj* or *panchayat* that have been taken against the illegal sexual affairs depend upon its nature of seriousness such as - beating, warning, compensation to victim, money contribution to *jat samaj* fund, feast, if already married man or woman is married again through illegal affair the marriage is disapproved or separated.

In village, the datas related to adultery from several years shows that many incidences within or between castes come under the surveillance of *jat samaj* or *panchayat*. Generally, the cases of adultery within the particular caste is dealt by his or her *jat samaj* and if between two castes then it is a matter of *panchayat* where breaching two castes or other caste people sit together and resolve the issue. The illegal affair within the caste come to close scrutiny of *jat samaj* are an incestuous and avoidable affinal relations. During the time of my stay I did not encounter with adultery hearing but people said that there were numbers of similar cases which had come in offence against the *jat samaj* or *panchayat*. It is not worth to mention all cases but some which gives the actual scenario of the different type of decisions that had made by *jat samaj* or *panchayat* on various time (also see annex cases 1 to7).

For any sort of violation to customary rules of particular caste, the *jat samaj* in village or its above tiers do not always carry out impartial decisions against the transgressors. These decisions that caste body makes, are directly or indirectly influenced by the condition of defaulter's economic status, political access, family power and so, on. Moreover if anyone within the caste who does not have all the above access and commits mistake he feels more pressure and hard decision from *jat samaj* than others. Even such households always have more fear and vigilance about the violating of own *jat* rules. In different time, previously or now there are several cases of caste rule violation which come to *jat samaj* for hearing almost in every Tarai castes but the treatments are different for similar cases, it is because the disparity in distribution of above variables according to defaulters.

A Gauwa (village council) *Mangen*, Faluli Sah (Teli), 60, from Tudkiya who was one of the participant in *jat* meeting at Golbazar that was held 16 years ago to resolve the case of inter-caste marriage. In which a land lord *dih*i (Upper body of *gauwa jat samaj*) *Mangen* Surud Sau's (Teli) son, a leftist politician of Janmorcha party Bishwanath Sah had married a Brahman girl (pahari). The informant shared to me that it was a hard time for *Dih*i *Mangen* who previously punished many others for same reasons as *bhoj cut*. Being a caste authoritative person now, the time had come to decide his own son, curiosity within the caste people rose because already two person were facing *bhoj cut* for similar cause in his village. The *jat* meeting was started, all three issues had widely discussed. To make final decision on it, among the participants five persons i.e. from same village and other neighbouring *gauwa* were nominated. They had announced the punishment that all three defaulters must organize feast to *jat samaj* and some fine to *jat samaj* social fund for their inclusion in own brotherhood like as before. He further told me that this decision was only implemented by two already *bhoj cut* ordinary persons, the third son of *Mangen* who once accepted the decision at meeting later defied, neither he had excluded from *bhoj* nor 'Jat Samaj) made any enforcement

## 6.1 Jat Samaj Prosecution to Inter-caste Marriage and Elopement

Many literatures that deal about caste see it as a close system and there is less chances of mobility in marriage. Even caste is characterized by the "obligation to marry with in the group by endogamy that regulates marriage is an expression of the principle of separation: castes separate themselves from one another by prohibiting marriage outside the group, just as they forbid contact and commensality between persons belonging to different groups" (Dumont 1998: 109). The cause of his separation Dumont (1998) argues, is rooted on principle of caste hierarchy, however, this definition is only valid for normative sense to understand caste.

In caste society, it is common that every caste or group either it has *jat samaj* or not, wants to maintain it's purity. The multi-ethnic setting like Tudkiya no longer in real practice every person of particular caste or group has always followed the own marriage governing rules. Further, these rules of any sort are not as straight forward that cannot be violated by some. Preferably, people of every caste wants to marry within own recognizable caste circle but my data contradicts to normative what informants of different castes said, for example we can marry to this group and we can't marry to that group. There is deviation in normative rules of every caste is also seen in other areas but it does not get a public fluency as in inter-caste marriage and elopement.

In Tudkiya, the total cases of inter-caste or ethnic marriages are 31 that comprises 29 marriages as hypogamous and 2 marriages are hypergamous. According to their nature in which we further say, three marriage are extreme hypogamous that have taken place between untouchable men with touchable women and two marriages are extreme hypergamous while touchable men have married with untouchable women. In these marriages only 11 married couples both male and female belonged to this village and remaining others either village women eloped or married with village outside males, or village men took their wives from neighbouring village or distant places in course of their job or work. Generally, the inter-caste marriages are not likely to be organized by caste people, the base of such

type of marriage is love affair. Usually the couple elopes and spends some days or month outside the village to hoodwink from the sight of family or own caste people and returns back to village after the matter cools down. Sometimes the hoodwinking of couples is not necessary if the couple both belong to touchable castes.

The inconvenience caused by inter-caste marriage does not have similar effect on Tarai castes and hill ethnic groups. Among Tarai castes such marriages are highly resented by *jat samaj* but in ethnic groups lacking such enforcement agency and holds far more liberal stand. Next, for inter-marrying couple's respective caste it is a matter of status, if the lower caste could succeed to marry with upper caste form him/her or caste it's a matter of pride rather sufferer is only the higher caste who thinks to be upper in hierarchical order.

Particularly, in Tarai castes unlike their endogamous engagement marriage, the inter-caste marriage is not accompanied by festivity. For marriage rule breacher's family no matter either girl eloped or taken wife during the time until *jat samaj* provides recognition they have been excluded from brotherhood feast and rituals of that particular caste. Even this recognition is only possible when breacher accepts the decision of *jat samaj* to manage feast and fine. Though, this fortune of recognition or accommodation in own caste or community is only attained by the inter-caste marriage of touchable castes or groups no matter hill or Tarai. On the other hand, if one mate from inter-caste marrying touchable caste either boy or girl is married with untouchable then his reinstatement in own caste or community is not possible no matter either breacher residing in same neighbourhood. Moreover, such type of locally perceived odd marriages and *jat samaj* prosecution to breacher or his family is more severe than rest inter-caste marriage.

within the village five such inter-caste marriages that have taken place between touchable and untouchable castes. Among them, the one elopement of Ray girl, Kushum, to outside village untouchable boy, Ram Pukar Khatwe, just a day before her engaged marriage which was fixed 5 years ago. This incident created problem to her maternal family and *jat samaj* because next day marriage was about to come. At the same day of elopement, the *jat samaj* meeting of Ray caste was held in



village, Bishe Kumar Ray, 25, was one among the participants of this meeting had shared about the proceedings that at first, *jat samaj* asked to eloped girl's father to inform next party that his daughter died. Then, it further made consensus on next party's possible blaming of breaking marriage agreement, if this would occur, they decided to provide other girl from own caste in village. By the third day of girl's elopement, the father of marrying boy had come to Tudkiya and concerned to Ray *jat samaj* when known all about, he returned his already taken Rs. 10,000 *tilak* money to eloped girl's father. The *jat samaj* had also requested to see other girls for his son's, even he accepted the proposal but he would not find appropriate matching girl in village and went back to own village Betuna.

His return without any girl's engagement from village had again made *jat samaj* worried of their future marriage ties with his village. To resolute breaching marriage rule, the fifth day of girl's elopement, as Bishe Kumar Ray said, second *jat samaj* meeting took place where *mangen* Shivlral Ray and *dewan* Baleshwar Ray were also present. Meantime, *jat samaj* had strongly advised to girl's father Bilekshan Ray, to denounce all his family's kin relations with eloped daughter and as a punishment to his daughter's act he must organize *bhoj* for own *jat samaj* people. Besides, *jat samaj* was also threatened to fine and exclusion from *jat* if his family disobeyed the decision and contacted with eloped girl. Bilekshan had accepted the decision, at once, he told *jat samaj*, his girl had died for his family and he would not put any ties with her in further days. He removed his hair and dummy of his eloped daughter was made up with straw and burned it at near torrential *khola*. When so called death ritual was accomplished, at the same day the feast was organized to *jat samaj*. From that day, villagers say, this girl Kushum has not come to her parent's house. Although, she still comes and go through the street of Tudkiya for firewood collection, however, other people speak to her but her matrilocal family members never do so.

Rest four Dalit and non-Dalit inter-caste marriages that took place within village, only B.K. girl who had married with Teli boy six years ago was the first hand marriage, remaining three marriages were already married women eloped with

villages boys. In which a Hajam woman eloped with Paswan five years ago and the Ray woman eloped with Paswan justly two and half year ago before my field work. The third case happened in 2040 B.S., a Paswan woman had eloped with Magar to Lahan by leaving her four helpless children at home. The story of these four couples did not close here by their elopements but it also invited further complications for themselves, their family and caste. The toughest measures of *jat samaj* have been faced by two Paswans from the caste people of women. Just the next day of their elopement (both couple's time of elopement is different but shares the same sort of treatment), in village the quarrel with Paswan families had started, women's caste people infrequently hounded them to demolish their houses and threatened to kill their sons on their return to village. .

Due to such intimidating situation at village, both the eloped couples did not make an attempt to return their own house from their hide outs i.e. relative's houses in neighbouring villages. In both cases couples returning in village were only possible when Paswan families of Tudkiya had complained to local Maoist cadres Uttimlal Ray and Srawan Kumar Lama and requested them to intervene from their party. Meanwhile, party had issued a circular on eloped women's caste people to stop intimidation or threat of killing couples on their returning. The local party cadres further told people not to neglect their circular, otherwise party would take action. At the same time, party had assured Paswan families about the security of eloped couples on their return in village. After the Maoist intervention, the open impeachment and threat to Paswan families stopped but real sense of harmony that existed before the elopement between the families of inter-caste marrying touchable and untouchable has not come back. Even, today two quarreled parties neither exchange nor conversation is held.

The Hajam woman, Shyamu Kumari Thakur who had eloped from here her maternal uncle's house to Shupal Kumar Paswan of neighbourhood is a early age orphan, she was looked after by maternal uncle and later he himself had managed her marriage with own caste person. People say that she got unmatching husband because being an orphan her maternal uncle showed unwillingness to pay proper

dowry, so, she no longer could entertain with her husband and returned to maternal uncle's house after the marriage, from where her escape to Paswan happened. Once I got a chance to talk with this former Hajam woman about the circumstances she is confronting after her return in village, she told "now, people of touchable castes treat me as untouchable caste. Especially Hajam of this ward, all are separated household of my maternal uncles and aunts they have no interest in talking with me. Whenever, we meet on the way they look at me with glaring eyes and turn their faces. I was brought up in their houses, I miss them very much, I always aspire to talk but they never do. How callous they have become, they have not yet excused me. I have compunction about my mistake, it's all by my fate".

The third case of inter caste marriage is different than the previous one, in which Deneswar Sau (Teli touchable caste) and Sunita B.K. (hill Dalit) had eloped from Tudkiya to Rolpa, where the boy had a temporary job as a sub-health assistant in government health post. When his job was brought to an end while spending two and half years in Rolpa the couple returned in village without the warm welcome from his caste people who already cut his family from *bhoj* and also out casted him as a punishment for breaching the caste marriage rule just after his elopement. Moreover, the couple's arrival in village again provided the momentum to unresolved matter. Even, he himself and his family were eager to settle the issue which secluded them from *jat* and *bhoj*. On the request of breachrer's family the *jat* meeting in village was held, at meeting the issue was explicitly debated through every angle because it was not a common incident of breaching. At the end of meeting the caste people finalized the issue through expiating breachrer and family by contributing Rs. 10.000 for caste fund and one *bhoj* to *jat samaj*.

The reinstatement in caste to breachrer and his family was only resolved in village level but it had not gotten approval from upper body of caste. Even, upper body of caste had threatened the village caste people either they withdraw the decision of reinstatement or face a caste boycott. Again the issue was fueled when the dwellers of other villages were not ready to give their daughters to younger brother of breachrer for marriage. The breachrer's father worried of his son's marriage

that avoided by caste people then how it could be possible to marry remaining daughters. He called *jat* meeting for second time, now the decision was different, only out casted the breacher couple and rest family members were recognized in caste circle. Then after, his second son's marriage was conducted without the hurdle from the corner of caste. Due to fussy attitude of caste people the breacher was fed up by village situation. In response, the couple had left the village and headed to Ghurmi, Udayapur district where they have been opened a medical shop.

Different to odd inter-caste marriage, in Tarai touchable castes the prosecution of *jat samaj* has less severe treatment for inter-caste marriage if it is held within touchable castes. In such type of marriage the feast to own *jat samaj* by breacher is enough for his re-inclusion in brotherhood feast. Now even this caste provision is not equally followed by all, three households of Ray along with one Barahi all carried out their inter caste marriage in three to four years duration yet to be not organized feast for own *jat samaj* people. However, the issue of their remained feast own brotherhood are always raised in occasion among caste people but they are not excluded from the *bhoj*. Among Tarai touchable castes, the first inter-caste marriages in Tudkiya was carried by Rajbir Ray to ethnic Rai girl before 20 years. During that time he faced *bhoj cut* from *jat samaj* and threat from girl's family to kill as his return in village because it was his second marriage. Although, later the issued had normalized, he returned to village and organized feast to own *jat samaj* and withdrawn the decision. His inter-caste born daughter, Somi Ray, 18, also eloped with Magar boy just before my arrival, Somi's mother told me her husband caste *jat samaj* has been asking to offer a feast for excusing her daughter's violation of own caste marriage rule. She shared to me that she herself was already set up her mind to organize *bhoj* to *jat samaj* rather marry her daughter within her husband's caste circle. Although, she had got plenty of marriage proposals from Ray caste as her daughter was good looking and fair skinned but she repudiated all. Because, further said "I am familiar with Tarai castes around the village, often, they mal treat daughter

in laws. As a mother I imagined my daughter will be treated likewise, so, I did not dare enough to throw my girl in harsh condition".

The fourth case of inter-caste elopement is different than above ones, in which a Magar boy who had escaped from Tudkiya with the wife of a Paswan and not returned in village to live as other couples of same sort after their elopements. Just after his elopement, village people say that he had settled in Lahan, until the second marriage of eloped woman's former husband, by confidential manner he used to come in village to meet own family. Now days, occasionally the couple come to village even there is no restriction from Magar and Paswan but Magar's neighbouring people say, on his coming to village he does not talk to people like before the elopement because he himself is facing inferiority complex for eloping with a Paswan's untouchable caste wife. In Magar, lacking of enforcement agency like in Tarai castes there had been no decision of *bhoj cut* or exclusion from group carried out even after the accomplishment of such odd marriage. Despite, having hesitation as the part of Magar in this single marriage, in hill ethnic groups more prone to inter-caste marriage are easily accepted without any protest from own group circle if it is accomplished within touchables.

Moreover, in hill ethnic groups some inter-caste marriage born sons and daughters of Rai have again married inter-caste in Brahman and Chhetri castes. Even, they hold liberal attitude toward inter-caste marriage than Tarai touchable castes, Bharat Rai, 45, an English high school teacher is also seeking daughter in laws for his Brahman wife born doctor son, Barun Rai. He gives priority in his would be daughter in law's education and *sanskar* rather than own ethnic group, preferably Brahman caste. He has also to got a proposal from Koirala family of Biratnagar and Rai girl of Dharan but he takes less interest in Rai girl of Dharan because majority of them are freaked out and do not have a proper *sanskar*.

Above these are some examples of *jat samaj* prosecution for breaching marriage rules. That shows severity of punishments are very with the nature of inter-marrying caste while its highly resented if marriage is taken place with untouchable.

Even the made decisions of *jat samaj* are not impartial that might be influenced by defaulter's economic status, political access and ties to upper caste bodies, in most cases the decision followers are poor households who do not have all these things. Further, some defaulters have also been defying the decisions, in this situation *jat samaj* seems to fail to enforce them to follow it. No matter, the *jat samaj* in Tarai castes is still a strong enforcement agency to maintain caste sanctity, it puts pressure on caste members to abide the rules and not to violate it otherwise they are punished. In contrary, in hill ethnic groups they have no such *jat samaj* like agency to check their marriage behaviour and are more prone to inter-ethnic caste marriage.

Besides that in Tarai castes the hurdle for male's inter-caste marriage is their perception toward dowry. Because no dowry can be accrued if, the marriage is inter-caste. The majority of sons and daughters have less freedom to choose own partner even within own caste, often the marriage decisions are made by parents. Mostly, parents are calculative, they usually talk we gave this amount to daughter and we will return this amount in son's marriage. It becomes more difficult if inter-caste married son is unemployed or uneducated and depends on parent's income. So, no self sufficient man make an attempt to inter-caste marriage; even my data shows in touchable Tarai castes who have taken their wives of different castes (often hill caste) all are self sufficient and were not depend on parents for their economic need at the time of marriage.

## **6.2 Differences within Jat Samaj**

The *jat samaj* has other synonymous names like *gauwa* or *gawadi* is the lowest informal governing body of particular caste in village. But it is not always necessary to every residing caste has own *gawadi* in village which is determined by appropriate household numbers that's generally not fixed. Together with caste rule enforcement, in village context this *jat samaj* is also needed at different occasions of brotherhood's rituals, sorrow and happiness. No, household's life can go smoothly without the attachment to own *jat samaj* in village or outside.

In Tudkiya castes like Teli, Sudi, Mahato, Hajam, Ray, Paswan and Chamar have sufficient households population to form own *jat samaj* in village although other castes Kalwar, Dom, Mushar and Yadav do not have those population, so, they have joined either same caste of neighbouring villages or own clan people of previous village where they had in migrated. Literally, single *jat samaj* encompasses one feast sharing group within the caste. There may be one or more such *jat samaj* exists within a particular caste which depends upon integrity or dis-consensus among the members. Sometimes increased household numbers of a caste also lead to form new *jat samaj* to make it manageable size. For example - in village within Teli and Sudi caste each have two separate *jat samaj*, people says that the cause of partition was internal dis-consensus or faction.

The single household owing Dalit caste in study site, Ram Sada an aged knowledgeable person, his father had in migrated from Subbaudi (within Siraha district) to Tudkiya 70 years ago have been not yet detached his relation to his own caste *jat samaj* there. He sees the significance of being in *jat samaj* that his caste people have come to assist in different ritual occasions during household God worshipping and carrying corpse to burial ground whenever, death has happened in his house. Generally in Tarai castes if someone's death occurs in village and his/her own caste people are available then no other caste people touch the corpse. Like Sada, Barhi is still affiliated to own caste people to the previous place of migration Subbaudi Kalwar to his caste people of across border and Dom caste to Itari. Distinct to these castes, the Yadav migrated here from five different places like - Pipra, Kadharuwa, Khajanpur, Itari and Laxmaniya participate to both brotherhood of previous place as well as Yadav community of neighbouring village Musharniya. With many compulsions to be unite, sometimes, there may be division within *jat samaj* as people say, due to internal feud between factions, biased decision of *jat samaj*, dispute about land and dealings, political and so on.

No matter, it may cause division from any of the above reasons, when single feast sharing group of caste is divided into two, new one is also elected its own two dignitaries to head the *jat samaj* proceedings. Although this new formed *jat samaj*

does not get recognition in own larger caste circle by self claim, it needs approval from, upper body of that caste. Occasionally, disapproval of new formed *jat samaj* by upper body has greater consequences. It can have influence on marriage exchange i.e. other *jat samaj* of same caste in different village are not ready to give or take daughters from disapproved *jat samaj*. Often, in Tudkiya such *jat samaj* division is not a common phenomenon, however, I have recorded two such incidents which are not recent. It took place in Sudi and Teli caste respectively the causes were political and disparagement of elder.

In first case of Sudi, Natuni Purbe, a member of new formed *jat samaj* at Baluwa tole told "before the referendum of 2036 B.S. the village contained the supporters of fourth assembly communist party, all households of sudi believed in same ideology and shared the single feast on occasions. Meantime, one local leading party member of fourth assembly of Rai ethnic group had entered in *panchayat* and gave his nomination for village *panchayat* president. And he was defeated in local election, the *panchayat* supporters intimidation and extortion on fourth assembly started. We were beaten several times, even in such gang beating our caste people had also involved. Then, we decided no obligation remains to live together with opponent faction and got separated from previous 'Jat Samaj and formed a new one of only fourth assembly supporter household".

Next incident of partition within *jat samaj* occurred in Teli caste. The disconsensus had begun with a minor cause while a Teli youth disparaged an own caste influential elder during inter-caste *panchayat* in village. This youth Uttimlal Sah now 43, has been leading new formed *jat samaj* one Teli caste faction as a top dignitary *mangen* besides government primary school head teacher, also the main player of that partition has shared "at the time of incident, I had just passed my S.L.C, I was filled with ego and glory as being passed because during that time it was a difficult task, only few countable boys can have chances to succeed exam around locality in Madhese castes. Instantly, I got an opportunity to take part in *panchayat* together with one of my caste elder. The *panchayat* began to discuss on matters, specifically, at elder's turn to speak, many times I had intervened him, dismissed his



logics as he talked illogically. Due to my timely intervention, he felt humiliating or misbehaving, internally it made him furious but at the time being he could not express his anger. The *panchayat* adjourned we had returned to own tole, by the next day this elder had invited our *jat samaj* meeting for my misbehaviour he also asked me to participate in meeting. Due to biased decision I had to confess my mistake and to beg excuse from caste elder in front of *jat samaj*. I refused to do so and replied to them - I have not committed any mistake, then *jat samaj* has made second decision to exclude me by *bhoj*. It disgraced me very much and I thought to counter this decision by constructing a new parallel *jat samaj*. On the same night, I met with the opponent households of my caste who were already felt compelling to adhere with it, they all assured me of support for making a new *jat samaj*. On the second day, I organized the 'Jat Samaj' meeting of opponents where 40 household's delegates of Teli had taken part to show their support to me, I declared myself a *mangen* of new *jat samaj* and denounced the attachment of all these 40 households to former one".

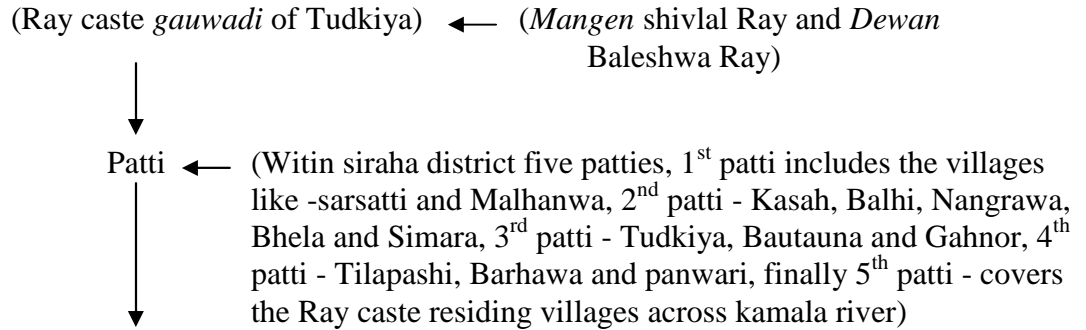
The story not closed here after the mere announcement by one agitating faction, the debate began among other *jat samaj* of Teli caste in neighbouring villages whether the decision it had made was proper to caste rule or not. At the same time, this new formed *jat samaj* had an urgency to get approval through upper body of their caste, without that there was no recognition as *jat samaj* status within own caste circle. For this recognition or approval, the new *mangen's* personal channel of acquaintance with the dignitaries of upper caste bodies helped. He further told "during the time of this new *jat samaj* separation my father in law was an influential personality in our caste and *gauwa mangen* of Sakarampur, he had intimate relation with *patti mangen* of Titriya to whom we must need to approve as separate *jat samaj*. I requested my father in law to make his best effort in favour of us with *patti mangen*. Meanwhile, he succeeded to persuade him. When the former *jat samaj* delegates had arrived at *patti Mangen* to denounce our new claim *jat samaj*, he condoned them and provided us approval as separate *jat samaj* within same village which until now I am leading."

Having two caste authorized 'Gauwas' within single caste in one tole had provided option to people to join either former or new in minor disputes. As a result, in first lot people say it was large one, 10 households from new formed *gauwa* (*jat samaj* in village) had withdrawn their affiliation and again joined to former one. Thereafter, in Teli caste for some households changing from this or that *gauwadi* had become common, even it was aspired and backed by village caste dignitaries to make own *gauwadi* larger through combing new households. This shifting from one to another due to small causes put an impact on *jat samaj* solidarity that resulted instable *gauwadi* and showed an abated effect on customary rule to enforce. This instable situation had drawn the attention of *patti*(two steps upper body of Gauwa) who immediately called for *baithar* to both 'Gauwadies' responsible to make control over frequent shifting and made it rule bound. Through consensus, the *patti* had established the rule that one could shift the *gauwa* no matter to which it belonged must feed the *bhoj* to both village *gauwadies* on occasion. Then after, "the shifting incidents had been reduced because it is economically burdensome who wanted to change *gauwa* to feed to households in one time rather adjust his minor grievances within *gauwa jat samaj*", Teli caste people added.

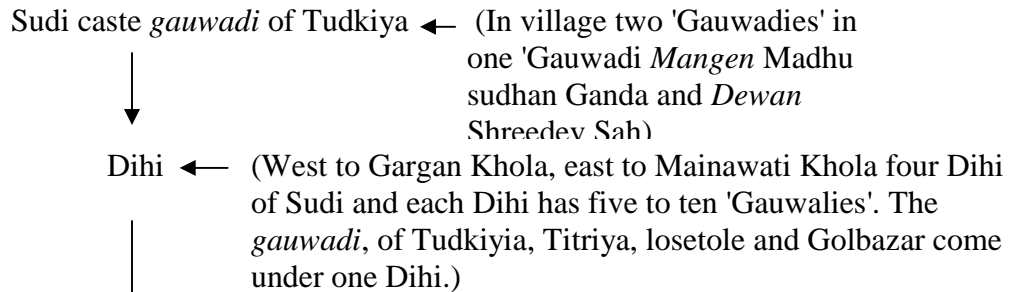
### **6.3 Jat Samaj Tiers**

In current village circumstances, *gauwadi* within a particular Tarai caste is a most effective enforcement agency to govern behaviour of it's members. However, above than this there are other governing structures each is well demarcated and defined authority. Which is very according to the *jat* that often ranges from two to four in numbers. Each encircles the living population of a particular caste in specific territories either it comes inside or across the two countries border line. Such expansion of horizontal ties, due to, as Dube argues that "a caste group living in one village has strong link with it's counterparts in other villages, and in several spheres of life members of the same caste living in different villages tend to act together" (Cited in Atal 1968:20). Now, these horizontal ties between enforcing structures i.e. lower village level *gawadi* and to that of upper bodies are weakening. Only few old

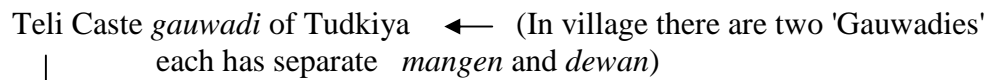
generation informants of Teli, Sudi and Ray, even they have short information about their own castes such above structures as follows:



Shava ← (Five patties are collectively governed by Shava)



Shava ← (These four Dihies are governed by single shava)



Dihi ← (Five to eighth *gauwadies* govern by one Dihi)

Patti ← (Five to eight Dihies come under one patti)

↓

Chaugamma ← (Five to eight patties in one Chaugamma)

↓

Shava ← (Three to six Chaugammas has made one shava and it has sardar *Mangen* and *Dewan*)

Similar to village *gauwadi* these above structures each has two dignitaries *Mangen* and *Dewan*, those are either hereditary or elected. If election is carried out then it is elected within the dignitaries of lower structure to upper structure. Sometimes, one dignitary accomplishes two duties of lower and upper body, for example - the *dih* *mangen* of Sudi caste of Tudkiya is also the *gauwadi mangen* of Lose tole. The utility of these informal caste bodies of particular caste is to monitor violation of caste customary rule by its lower structure and to maintain solidarity within own caste. However, in present context foresaid uses have been gradually loosening its ground and always cannot put watchful eyes on all its lower components. In other words, more the distance of upper bodies from *gauwadi* lower the control on it and less the information about on going circumstance of different village.

I observed in village, *gauwadi* is the effective mechanism and tool to maintain caste identity rather other caste upper bodies. During my stay, no caste violation cases have gone to upper body rather it is settled in *gauwadi*. The function of these upper bodies previously and now, people say that to show caste solidarity by joining a *bhoj* together with own caste of different 'Gauwadies' in one place. The *bhoj* above than 'Gauwadi is less common, if it could happen that depends on the economic strength of host what range of *bhoj* either *dih*, *patti*, *chaugamma* or *shava* he can afford which often is organized at the last perfunctory day to any of his deceased family member.

According to *Bhoj* range, people of that specified territory take part. It is also the occasion for host to show own economic might by feeding the caste people i.e. more richer the person more upper grade feast he organizes. In local term the pride to feed *bhoj* to own caste is measured by the net weight of cooked rice in *man* (1 Man equal to 40 k.g.), even day to day discussion people boost the imaged of *bhoj* provider by giving his example he cooked this much *man* rice. Madan Lal Yadav, 50, among the one who has been remembering such type of big *shava bhoj* which was organized some years ago at Gol bazaar by Dharmanath Yadav on the occasion of his

mother's death ritual. On the other hand, Uttim lal Sah (Teli), 47, sees now in his caste such a big *bhoj* is rare, in his whole life he got only once an opportunity to join *chaugamma bhoj*. To him the cause of reduction in such big *bhoj* number at first, caste people have now become thrifty, the big *bhoj* needs much money because caste populations has been increased, second-gradually loosening intra-caste ties and bond among the one umbrella population.

In this chapter, I examine about Tarai caste's own identity maintaining intra-caste enforcement agency of *jat samaj* that's locally said *gauwadi*. It always keeps pressure over caste members to abide it's normative rules of commensality food, water, marriage and sex. It tries to control their deviant habaviour via different forms of sanctions i.e. *bhoj cut* from brotherhood, fine or warning to defaulter. No matter *jat samaj* enforcement, on the part of some caste members they have disobeyed the rule and faced sanctions that vary with the nature of violation. In most cases of violation, the sanctions of *jat samaj* to defaulter can be withdrawn and he is reinstated in caste after managing feast to brotherhood, however, similar treatment he/she does not get if touchable caste is married with untouchable. Such *jat samaj* in Tarai caste is still a strong force to regulate caste behaviour. As if, it has gradually been loosening it's grip over members because there are incidents of defying the decision. Above *gauwadi* there is further *jat samaj* tiers, but those are not seen as effective as *gauwadi* to deal the matter of caste rule violation.

## CHAPTER - VII

### Social and Cultural Space for Inter-caste Relations

Caste or ethnic group each has been presented in the preceding chapters as distinctive category where the inter-caste relations have been only operated on the basis of ritual commensal status. In a village where caste system prevails, Berreman (1963:262) argues that "this is only part of picture, there is other inter-caste bonds that makes village effective cohesive force". In the context of Tudkiya, despite their many differences in respect to each other, among them, there are other areas of frequent social and cultural inter-caste relations. In his study on inter-caste relation in multi-ethnic Tarai village Mahamadpur at Rautahat district of Nepal, Surendra Mishra (2005) finds that the different ritual status castes cooperate or invite to each other on certain occasions such as feast, wedding, funeral, festival and worshipping of village deity. Similarly in this village there are occasions such as marriage, *chhewar*, death precession, *satyanarayan puja*, *ghar puja*, *kirtan*, *bhandara* besides some festivals - *chhath*, *chaurchand* and *judsital* often inter-caste invitations take place. During the time, if anyone is going to organize something at own house he cannot be overlooked to invite neighbouring households along with *diyad* (Consanguineal relatives), *kutumb* (affinal relatives) and close relations.

#### 7.1 Marriage

During marriage invitation to other caste's people the host either gives pieces of betel nut or paper card to inform about the invitation. Such invitations are two types i.e. if single person is invited from one household to join marriage occasion locally said *hakaar* and if all family members are invited than it is *chulilebar*. The frequency of such invitations as Kapuleshwar Thakur (Barhi), 48, says that come higher from other caste's on their girl's marriage rather than boys. According to him, the cause of this, for host it is profitable to invite more households because every

participant has compulsion to contribute money in *dali* but in boy's marriage invitation the participant only consumes *bhoj*.

Even these inter caste invitations are not only frequent among touchable castes but also between touchable and untouchable if the neighbourhood is in mixed population. At the occasion of *bhoj* they respect each other's caste commensality, for example, if it is organized by touchable caste the participant untouchables share cooked food from touchable which is served in a separate row. Rather it is different in untouchable's invitation to touchable castes the host provides cooking materials and touchable castes combinely cook by themselves. Generally, the cooking place for touchable caste on invitation of untouchable is not his house yard but separate, it may either be other touchable caste's compound or near by uncontaminated place.

Three years ago one such inter-caste invitation had carried out by Kishanalal B.K. in Baluwa tole on his daughter's marriage. At that time he had invited all his neighbour castes Yadav, Ray, Sudi and Sada. Being only three households of B.K. in tole for him it was difficult task to manage both people from village and the coming marriage procession of the groom. So, he asked to touchable castes to prepare food for themselves and the member of upcoming marriage. According to the request, they prepared the food, while they distributed to the marriage participants. Meantime, four households of touchable caste of neighbourhood had refused to take food because they blamed some people of upcoming marriage of touching the water pot. To please these four neighbouring households, Kishanalal said to me that after the accomplishment of marriage, he again had separately provided cooking materials for their self cooking.

Such untouchable to touchable marriage invitation, on outgoing boy's marriage no all touchable caste but some close friends of bridegroom who join procession with a desire to tease girls of marry making village. Their participation to honour his invitation, as I observed in Binde Paswan's marriage, on the second day of it's return where at his house yard males and females from Teli, Sudi, Ray Yadav, Rai and Tamang were gathered for ritual *kaniyamiranchhan* (first face seeing ceremony of newly bride). In the midst of his house compound a basket was kept for collecting

money from bride's face viewers. At the scene majority of males didn't see bride's face even after contributing their money into basket but females had less fortitude to see bride's face and hurried. The gathered people of touchable caste has informed me that the people who have been contributing money are invitation given people rest standing are viewers. This invitation to touchable caste neighbours were not finalized here, I observed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of marriage Binde providing cooking materials to invitation given touchable caste people of neighbourhood, at the same day they organized *bhoj* for themselves.

## 7.2 Death

The death procession locally said *kathayari* is also the time to participate for other caste's people. Although, no man of other caste even *diyad* or *kutumb* join in death procession without the invitation or call from death occurred household. Such inter-caste participations are more frequent among touchable castes or groups, moreover, between touchable and untouchable caste that only have been restricted to close relations, ritual friends and neighbours. For death occurred household as people say, to invite own *kutumb* or *diyad* on occasion is compulsory but for other castes it depends upon economic strength of mourn family how many people they are capable to feed in death feast.

During my stay, I got an opportunity to join death procession of long cancer diseased Mahto man of my neighbourhood while he hanged up himself nearby his own cowshed. His *jat samaj* people had made consensus and declared it natural death. The cause inspiring him to do so, as people say, his mother's defamation in next day *panchayat* which her wife discussed previous night with him that she was going to organize it in village to make public about the cause of his long illness was her mother-in-law's witch practice. Even today in village it is believed among conservative people, that a witch craft practicing woman at first must have applied her skill either on own husband or elder most son while the ultimate result of applying is death.

On the way to the burial ground, I observed, no other caste participants of death procession touch corpse, they only provided their company. At burial ground



they assisted together with *diyad* for piling up wood sticks and sat around till the corpse had turned to ashes and they returned to own houses. The *bhoj* to other castes Teli, Sudi, Ray, Yadav and Magar participant of death procession that mourner organized at fourth day after cremation while he accomplished the death ritual *chhorjhappi*. The specificity of this fourth day death feast is that other caste participants have not taken salt containing food items, preferably mourner household offered them either rice pudding or beaten rice, curd and sugar, or *jeri*, *puri* and curd. On this day *bhoj*, if the mourner suppose to be left anyone to invite from other caste participant of death procession or deserve not to feed all of them same day, then he must invite them on 12<sup>th</sup> day death ritual *pitarpacha*. Although, there is a custom in Tarai castes that the fourth day *bhoj* required materials expenditure is borne either jointly or separately by sister or daughter of deceased if they are economically capable to maintain it.

### 7.3 Chhewar

The first hair cutting ceremony of boy *chhewar* is accomplished on propitious day, often, people want to arrange it at the household god worshipping day. Except, Mushar who avoids this ritual, among Tarai touchable castes if the *chhewar* is *kabula* (promise to deity made to offer something or worship, with a condition on fulfilling certain things of desire) then it is a big celebration that to ordinary *chhewar* and also the occasion when inter-caste invitations are made. Three years before my arrival in Tudkiya, such *kabula chhewar* feast was organized by Jagdish Ray on his son's *chhewar*. During that time, he had invited his tole residents Rai, Tamang, Magar, Yadav, Teli, Sudi, own *diyad*, *kutumb* and close relation households of Dusadh. At the occasion, he told that the food was not cooked for all participants of castes in one kitchen because the participants were large and it was hard to manage. So, Tarai castes cooked for themselves in one place, Magar's separate in next place and Tamang in their house compound which was attached with feast giving household. Although, Rai tole people could not attend the *bhoj* at same day because they had to attend other feast. For them, the Jagdish Ray had organized next *bhoj* on third day of the main *bhoj* at his house.

## 7.4 Ritual Friends

In Tudkiya, some men and women both have made their inter-caste ritual friends either inside village or outside locally said *dosh*. They show greater degree of attachment or ties than ordinary circle of friends. The local people makes distinction between friend and *dosh* like "friend can be of same caste but *dosh* always belong to different caste. Further, at the occasion of their boy or girl's marriage on the part of each *dosh* has obligatory responsibility to pay his tribute *bhar* to next *dosh* by offering cloths, cosmetics, husked rice and curd. In return, at the end of the arrangement the marriage making household honours them either by money or cloths, or both. For joining in occasion, the invitation is crucial and there is less chances to be left out. *dosh* invite each other on occasions of death, birth, marriage, household god worshipping and other 'pujas'. If one *dosh* belongs to untouchable caste, no matter he respects other's caste commensal rule, however, that does not mean he gets lesser respect or honour. It has been an established rule about ritual friends that man can only make man and woman to woman, besides avoiding rule i.e. no *dosh* can touch the body of his *dosh's* wife and vice - versa. People said "several yeas ago there was a custom that *dosh's* wife neither showed her face (veiling) to her husband's *Dosh* nor she talked with him", however, now these taboos are lifted but, body touch rule is still intact.

During the time of making ritual friend, in some exceptional cases the exchange of *tika* and minor feast is organized, most often, the inception of making ritual friend between two individuals is only the verbal agreement. There are less chances to suspect on ties strongness and affection between two ritual friends but they are, as people say "pollution free because one does not remove his hair at each other's death like *kutumb* and *diyad*. Among members of ritual friends in village, the Birwal Paswan and Moti Sah (Teli) are now in their fifties, they became ritual friends when they were small boys and cow herding together. The exchange of invitation to each other is frequent in every occasion of festivity or ritual at own house. Three years ago, Birwal had got an invitation from Moti on his daughter's marriage, as being a *dosh*, on Birwal's part it was responsibility of *bhar*. At that time Birwal told that he took only clothes and unhusked rice, no curd because his *dosh* Teli caste

people do not take water from Paswan. To honour, *bhar*, after the accomplishment of marriage his *Dosh* had provided one dress for him. On the other hand, whenever, Birwal invites his touchable caste *dosh* in occasions he comes to his house to honour invitation but he does not take cooked food. For him, Birwal manages uncooked required materials which either he takes to own house or later Birwal himself brings materials to his *dosh* house.

## 7.5 Faguwa

The *faguwa* (holi) a colour festival is most popular among the Tarai castes. The variance of caste is not an obstacle for playing colour between and among castes or ethnic groups. During the occasion, the systematic way of celebrating *faguwa* as informants say - at first people put forehead *tika* to each other, then hugging and exchange greetings. Generally, there is rule of putting *tika* except joking relations no man can put *tika* to female and vice-versa. Even in joking relation, the players of *faguwa* old people say, is not rule bound sometimes it crosses the limit of normal social recognition. These joking relations in Tudkiya are not only confined within the circle of caste, family or kin rather, it is extended with other caste of neighbourhood, who have also the similar right to play colour. At the time men make tolewise group for playing colour and they roam through the houses of own and other's in tole by chanting holy songs. In opposition, the females have less exposure and their celebration is limited among the women of close neighbourhood.

In Tudkiya, every tole has more or less mixed caste population. In the occasion of *faguwa*, the tole residing different castes have formed a single group (majority of them are youths) with the motive of entertainment and collecting money for tole's social fund by chanting holy songs from house to house. However, it is not always sure this collected money will go to social fund because of the disagreement among the members of group.

Since two years the Ray tole youths had stopped playing *faguwa* in group basis due to the disconsensus within group members about the use of raised money i.e. one faction desired to buy *dafera* (Musical instrument) and other wanted to organize picnic. Although, picnic faction had ruled other and made unilateral

decision of picnic that caused discontent to *dafera* faction and they left to enroll with *tole* chorus. Next, the Baluwa *Tole faguwa* chorus has exemplary story, it is still active during the time of *holi*, *tole* people said, they had already donated Rs. 8000 for own well platform construction in 2056 B.S. from their years of *faguwa* raised fund. From 2056 B.S. up to now this group has raised Rs. 775, through which they are planning to buy breeding he-goat.

Particularly, in *faguwa* there is no inter-caste feast is organized, although, close relations of neighbourhood and friends either exchange or share delicacies by inviting one another at own house. The chorus who walk from to houses chanting holy songs, besides money every household also offers variety of cooked dishes. Sibji Sah (Sudi), 38, is a leading member of Baluwa *tole faguwa* chorus and also an expert of *jogira* has told "now a days chorus people take more interest in liquor rather cooked dishes that household offer them." In Tudkiya, except one Paswan, Tarai castes have not manufactured liquor and it has been only available in some houses of Rai, Tamang and Magar. So during the *faguwa* time at first the chorus starts to chant from above ethnic people's houses to quench the liquor thirst, Sibji further added, "there are chances to leave behind houses of Tarai castes to chant *faguwa* but rare chance for chorus to leave liquor manufacturing household."

Besides this, the other way of making fun to chorus at *faguwa* is *jogira*, a kind of questioning and answering through the medium of songs between two *faguwa* choruses. They can belong to the same village or one from village and next chorus from other village. To play *jogira*, Sibji Sah says that the chorus must have both competence and skill which always all choruses do not have. In course of playing *jogira*, he explains - two chorus group comes face to face, one chorus initiates song and dances, the next chorus replies by songs and dances. Mainly, these songs that are made during *jogira* as people said, previously all have only taken from the verses of holy books such as Ramayan and Mahabharat but now choruses are also used own versions. The decision of one winner in two *jogira* playing choruses is made when opponent chorus fails to return logical reply and the heavy hand chorus is declared winner.

## 7.6 Bilauki Ritual

The ritual *bilauki* is performed by Tarai castes on the occasion of boy's marriage it also manifest inter-caste social relations. In which before the marriage procession heading to bride's house, the bridegroom along with his caste female folk visits at least five neighbourhood households that may not always belong to same caste for taking their benediction to bridegroom and proper accomplishment of marriage. Being a mixed castes neighbourhood, in *bilauki* the transaction among touchable castes are common, to the contrary, no touchable caste has been visiting the untouchable's house. Rather different, for untouchable castes to visit neighbourhood houses of touchable caste on the occasion of marriage *bilauki* is frequent. During my stay in field I got an opportunity to observe *bilauki* ritual on the marriage of Binde Paswan. It was two days marriage, about to 3 p.m. when I entered the compound of Binde, the bridegroom, was ready to walk for *bilauki*, he wore *maur* (a special type of decorated upright cap nearly about one and half feet long made up by head shape skeleton of wooden pieces joined and it enwrapped by bright colour papers with small glittering mirrors attached) on head.

Meantime, Binde along with chanting female folk all his kin came out from the gate, he sat on bicycle carrier that was guided by his elder brother in law and they began to move. Among the chanting females, one held mango leaves containing water pot, next carried bamboo basket, inside the basket unhusked rice, betel nut and sachharum were placed on towel. At first *bilauki* group reached near by Yadav's house, the household senior lady came out and she put Rs 20 in basket, then they moved to other seven houses of Barhi, Teli, Sudi and Ray where also the money was placed in basket. After completion of ritual the group has returned to bridegroom's house.

## 7.7 Village Territorial Deity and Temple

Having various differences between castes or ethnic groups, sharing a common territory, the best way to manifest a sense of community is *dhamini puja* also known as *ashadi puja*. A routine worship of combined castes as an obligation to participate every household being a resident of village is carried out at *dhamini thans*

once in a year within *ashad* month preferably 1<sup>st</sup> *ashad* before paddy cultivation. The rationale behind this yearly conducting *dhamini puja* that village people say, "first, to please the village God for providing sufficient rain in paddy cultivation and second, for the betterment of village dwellers i.e. protection from danger, calamity from both man and animal diseases". However, old generation people in village now a days have been seeing less effect of *dhamini puja* on rain fall since two, three decades, they say, it is not sure there will be rain after conducting *puja* and they remembered previous year there was certain rain fall either on the same day or second day of *puja*.

In Tudkiya, there are three such *dhamini thans* but only two *thans* are used by two village inter-caste combined groups for yearly worshipping. The divisions between these two groups have already been made on the basis of their segregating pattern of settlements in which two wards are included in one group and rest one ward is in another group. Particularly, *dhamini* is a name of Goddess but it represents the collection of all personified Gods and Goddesses at *dhamini than*, the prefixed *dhamini* is not bothering. These two separately *dhamini puja* organizing groups, the first one is made up by single ward no - 4, has castes like Teli, Sudi, Magar, Dusadh and Dom, and the next two wards 3 and 4 comprising single group has Rai, Tamang, Yadav, Mahto, Ray, Shrestha, Bhandari, Bohra, Teli, Sudi, B.K., Mushar and Dusadh. These two groups have been performing *dhamini puja* in different *thans* but in similar way by sacrificing (goat or bird) or only offering items, or both according to the nature of *than* inside Gods or Goddesses.

At the time of my stay in field I observed all the preparation and a *puja* session of two wards inter-caste combined group. A week before *puja* some active people had gathered at village tea shop and formed a five members inter-caste committee of Rai, Ray, Sudi, Barhi and Yadav to make preparation of *puja* with allocated responsibilities. Mainly, to raise money from every households of two wards and through this collected money to purchase he goats (uncastrated), she goat (chaste), pigeons, cocks, hens, lawa (fried husked rice) and other indispensable offering items. At the same day, two *kumars* boys below the age of 10 chosen to collect worshipping items like rice, incense, mustard oil and milk from the houses as the availability.

The amount of raising money that was Rs. 120 same for every participant household because all households share equal part of sacrificed meat at the end of *puja*. Except, milk that was collected as I observed only from touchable castes at the same day morning of *puja* the other needing requisites for *puja* the committee and *kumars* had managed at previous day. On the day of *puja* early at 7 p.m. along with committee and *kumars* the people of both wards (men and children) starting to pour in *dhamini than* compound. Among the attending mass I saw only the certain people mostly from touchable castes were active in *puja* preparation, remaining other were the distance lookers, meanwhile, at the temple compound five mud hillocks were made in arc arrangement and water was sprinkled inside the temple and on hillocks, then cow dung coating was carried out.

To conduct further ritual steps, a knowledgeable person locally said *pujegri* or *khalifa* is needed, in the case of this group such duty had executed by an ethnic Rai old man, Dharmalal Rai, 73, who took out only nine tridents each symbolized distinct God or Goddess from erected place of the inside temple then, he serially erected on previous made mud hillocks of temple compound. And equal the number of tridents that *pujegri* had left erected inside the temple which he said, "Inside Gods" can't be worshipping in open space as outside the temple. Successively, the *pujegri* placed *tule* flags (bamboo sticks tightened red and white colour cotton piece) along with mud hillock erected tridents but, for inside Gods each representing trident was only tightened by a piece of *tule* on it. Thereafter, *pujegri* and his assistants had made twenty three *kunds* (bowl made by cow dung to pour milk during ritual performance) and these were accordingly placed close to each trident of both inside the temple and its compound.

However, there were not equal number of tridents as made *kunds* and the remaining *kunds* were placed besides temple compound erected tridents that were separately worshipped. Just after placing the *kunds*, the *pujegri* had initiated consecutively items offering to *devatas* (Gods). At first step, he poured milk, second, put two fistful rice, third, *laddu* (sweet) on betel leaves, fourth, vermilion, fifth, *lawa* (Fried paddy), sixth, betel nut and finally, he served rice pudding to each *devta* on leaf. Then, *pujegri* had made *dhup* (fumigation) in a vessel by lighting small pine sticks, market incense and locally available specific herbs. Gathered people of

different castes had come around the *dhup* vessel, basked their hand palms to fume and rubbed their palms to own face and head, in doing so that they believe to make them disease free.

The next session, was sacrificing of goats and birds which *pujegri* not slaughter by himself, for this purpose committee had already appointed Rajendra Ray, 25, who carried out all sacrifices on the occasion. Even these sacrifices would not go without the acceptance of God to whom particular species is going to be sacrificed. Generally, the acceptance of God was judged after sprinkling water on the animal's body, if it shook its body then it was considered as accepted, if not, rejected. The God's rejection of sacrificing goat or bird that people say, may cause by two reasons either God displeased or sacrificing species is impure or deformed. At the spot, I observed that after water sprinkling, most of the species were easily shook their body but in some cases it was a hard job for gathered people to persuade them for body trembling. Nonetheless, all Gods and Goddesses of *dhamini than* had been preferred sacrificial, rather some of them are vegetarian (non-sacrificing) and only offered worshipping items. The Names of God or Goddess and their preferring as follows:

<b>God or Goddess</b>	<b>Preferential Sacrifice</b>
Dhamini Mata	She goat
Jungle Dhami	hen
Dihwar	he goat and liquor
Kohelni Devi	She goat
Gagan Thakur	Pigeon
Sikari and Sikarni	Pigeon
Aaitwar and Aaitwarni	Pigeon
Jhakri	Pigeon
Kashai and Kashenni	Pigeon
Sansari Devta	Pigeon
Bhimsen	Cock
Sime Bhume	Pigeon
Hanuman	Worshipping items only
Bishara	Milk and lawa



Anharbat

Worshipping items

(laddu, pan & betel nut)

Gaiya Devta

Swan egg

Aghori

Liquor and roasted liver of sacrificed he goat



After the completion of the sacrifice, the members of organizing committee had distributed *prasad* (*laddu*, rice pudding and sweet) to gathered people. Instantly, the mutilated heads of sacrificed goats and birds were allocated according to existing norm, in which one head of goat to committee, one head of he goat to *pujagri*, one head of he goat to slaughter man and two *kumars* each had got single she goat's head along with all birds heads. After distribution of heads, the *puja* participant youths had carried sacrificed bodies in village where without mixing each other's flesh cut down into fine pieces. Then, according to the equal number of participant households in *puja* share parts of meat were made. However, sharing part of meats must be balanced by the sight of mixing flesh of all species and quality i.e. flesh of different body parts, if mistake was made in meat sharing parts that may cause quarrel. Similar

to Yester years, even this year *dhamini puja* the majority of money contributing households of this group complained that they got more bones less flesh in their meat share parts and also blamed organizing committee for embezzling raised money through purchasing lower weight he-goats and she-goats. But, committee members had big refusal rather they blamed and alleged to these households as "meat greedy, never satisfied people".

Nevertheless, the disagreement about meat quality on the part of people afterward of *dhamini puja* is sufficient reason to stop their participation and to break a sense of community. No matter of caste, ethnicity and mutual differences, at the time of *puja* all households came together and contributed money. Even untouchable castes, however, has no ritual officiating right, contribute equal money and participate like other caste counterparts. Different caste or ethnic group's distinct practices does not cause hurdle, whenever, it has raised, resolved through reciprocal consensus. Some years ago during the time of *puja* in this group the disagreement aroused between Tarai and hill ethnic group about the sacrificing pig to *aghoris* was frequent practice. Tarai touchable castes besides Mushar considered a taboo to consume pork but equally contributed money for buying pig, had resented that they would not contributed money for pig and requested to committee for subtracting the money from their parts which they had extra paying for pork consuming people.

To resolve the matter before *dhamini puja* discussion was held between pork consuming group and non-consuming castes, finally, they reached in agreement to replace sacrificing pig by he goat because goat meat consumption was not a taboo to both sections. In similar incident of next *dhamini* group in which majority of them until now are Teli by their caste rule rearing of hen and it's meat consumption was thought to be taboo, even if, they had contributed money for sacrificing cock and hen but after sacrificing it taken by Magar ethnic group. Teli raised this issue later and reconciliation was made and cock and hen, was substituted by pigeon or goat. Currently, these previous caste specific meat consumption taboos are not common in

private life but, that time established consensus to respect each other's different consuming practices are continuing until now.

Having already talked about traditional service-client inter-caste relations in 4<sup>th</sup> chapter (economy) in this chapter, I have discussed some social and cultural domain of inter-caste interactions when different caste or ethnic group in village come together even after many differences and they act as community, where I traced out social occasions of inter-caste invitation like marriage, death, chhewar and cultural contexts of inter-caste interaction like Faguwa, ritual friend, Bilauki ritual and during village deity worshipping. In following chapter, I will summarize the thesis conclusions.

## CHAPTER - VIII

### Summary and Conclusion

On the guideline of discussed caste literatures, it is worthwhile to examine obtained materials which I seek to answer some raised research questions, and to assess main objective of this study in the context of multi-ethnic village, Tudkiya of east-Nepal. As Dumont (1998) mentioned specific characteristics of caste system i.e. hereditary endogamous group, separation in matters of marriage and contact, division of labour and hierarchy are well observed among the village resident Tarai castes.

Each caste in Tudkiya, is hereditary endogamous group who bears certain degree of ascribed status either high or low that determine his inter-relation to other castes. The ways to manifest such status segregation is during inter-caste or ethnic group commensal relation, the group who thinks to be higher is refused to make marriage contact or share food and water with lower castes. Although, in relation to touchable castes such inter-caste commensal relations have been altered many folds. Once food and water non-sharing castes for who thought to be upper, are now become sharing castes to them. Further, between them inter-group marriage are also taking place. The previous commensal inter-relations in touchable that was distinctively operating within ethnic groups, between hill castes and ethnic group, within Tarai castes, and between hill groups verses Tarai castes now is completely dispelled. There is secularization is taking place. In comparison to touchable, the commensal behaviour of Dalit castes is not much changed. They themselves treat Dom as most defiling caste who only takes cooked food and water from other Dalits. Among rest Dalits they share water but cooked food sharing is still prohibited.

Even, current practicing commensality between non-Dalit and Dalit, or within Dalits, there is public-private dichotomy. Some members of caste or group, not always do behave as their prescribed commensal rules of sharing food and water with forbidden castes. Next type of hierarchy I observed in caste or ethnic group's self perception about own rank. All claim own hierarchical position upper than rest, the caste or group is not ready to accept other's given classification of his rank no matter either his commensal status is lower. To justify reputed origin as own position

superior and other's lower they given example of religious relic, mythic story, ritual practice and food habit. This hierarchy is yet to be undecided among and between castes or groups and highly contested.

The link between caste and occupation is also observed in Terai castes. They are known by their certain traditional specialization. Among them majority castes have left their traditional caste function because of meagre income or they think defiling job. Some says-opening of new road head market and technology has also threatened their caste-based functions. Now, only five castes in village remain to such traditional specialization who provide their services on behalf of other caste clients either by piece work paid basis or annually grain paid which is locally said *khan*. This service-client relation plays a significant part to establish on economic inter-caste relation. Although, these relations are not going without the resentment on the part of service providing castes because clients are becoming closefisted. Further, these some *khan* service pursuing households of village said to me that they no longer want to stick it if they have viable economic alternatives like their other own caste people who already left caste occupation.

Hutton (1961) argues that the effective caste group is one which has control over it's members. In Terai such control as I observed within each Terai caste, is carried out by *jat samaj*. That enforces prescribed do's and don'ts of normative rules upon it's own caste members. It deals altogether with two issues-infringement of caste customary rules and provides managerial assistance to own caste members in different ritual occasions. It has two dignitaries *mangen* and *dewan* that can be hereditary or elected. Mainly, the issues of infringement that come to *jat samaj* surveillance are inter-caste marriage, breaching of commensal rule, adultery, elopement and marriage agreement breaking.

Further, it adjudicates punishment to defaulter often either to one or both, as a fine to contribute money for own caste fund or exclusion from caste feast until he/she organizes feast for own caste. Although, the jurisdictions of *jat samaj* against offences, is not always free from biases, it's decision can be impacted by ties, polity and economic strength of defaulter. Sometimes, bias decision might raise differences within *jat samaj* which can lead to it's division. Either to strengthen the grip of caste

authority over spreading own caste population in different villages, or to show caste solidarity, or for maintaining uniformity of practicing customary rules, in Tarai castes above than *jat samaj* they have three to four tiers. However, in the present context of village these are not much in function and *jat samaj* in village is only seen effective controlling informal body within particular caste.

Louis Dumont (1988: 61) has argued that "the caste is not a niche or a block but is generally subdivided, at least at primary level, into different sub-castes, and there are often many further sub-division". To agree with Dumont, in Tudkiya not only the castes but also ethnic groups are subdivided into either vertical or horizontal sub-caste divisions. Even the castes like Yadav and Sudi has further secondary subdivisions. As if, to address these sub-castes among the village people there is variation, in hill castes and Magar that is said *gotra*, in Tarai castes *khut* and ethnic groups *thar*. For particular caste or group the significance of such intra-caste division, is helpful to regulate its marriage whether that is sub-caste endogamy, sub-caste exogamy, or sub-caste hypergamy. So, the marriage of caste or group is taken place in the level of sub-castes rather caste.

Despite each caste or ethnic group's many features to make separate in relation to each other, in the context of Tudkiya these do not put hurdle to act them as community. There are social and cultural occasions like-marriage, death procession, 'Chhewar', feast, festivals and common village deity worshipping when frequent inter-group invitation and inter-group gathering are taken place. Worshipping village deity when all residents have an obligation to join for common well being, the rest occasions 'invitation' is crucial without it no person of other caste or ethnic group voluntarily take part. Excluding Dom both Dalit and non-Dalit still treat as most defiling caste, such invitation are frequent among non- Dalit groups and between two commensal extreme Dalit and non-Dalits. Further, there are inter-caste ritual friends and inter-caste marriage that are helpful to establish new social kin relation between two different groups.

After summarizing the main features of studied multi-ethnic village Tudkiya, I would like to conclude my thesis by some major conclusions.

## Conclusion

Caste or ethnic group's main title is only represents a major endogamous category within which there is either vertical or horizontal intra sub-divisions. So, no caste or ethnic group can only be understood by single undifferentiated category.

It is not the caste or group but, sub-caste who carry most of its characteristics where the marriage is regulated.

It is *thar* or sub-caste that makes sense within own caste or group, it is main group title which makes sense to other caste or group people.

The notion of hierarchy actually the caste or ethnic group perceives about self position and other given classification about his rank is highly contested, the perceptual hierarchy is different than what operates in day to day commensal sphere.

The commensal hierarchy between touchable castes or groups have been changed many fold but within Dalit it is still intact. Further, practicing commensality between Dalit and non-Dalit and within Dalit there is duality what people say about normative commensal rules and what they practice in private sphere. This duality is observed an individual level i.e. close friends, ritual friends or neighbours.

For maintaining caste identity, in Tarai caste each has own caste rule regulating body *jat samaj* that enforce its customary rule to follow own caste members and make them rule abide. any breaching of caste rule is punished by *jat samaj*. Further, this *jat samaj* has above tiers each includes defined range of geographical territory where members of that particular caste reside.

In village two type of inter-caste relations are observed, one is based on traditional service- clients relation locally said *khan* system in which certain occupational castes are involved, second, in the social and cultural domain no matter their many differences there is frequent inter-group invitation and interaction that can be observed during different occasions and festivities.

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## Annex

### **Case: 1**

22 yrs ago, a good land holding married Teli man was caught on the spot by villagers while he was active with the wife of a sudi neighbour. The next day *panchayat* was held, at first warnings to both was given not to indulge again and the decision was made to punish the man by constructing a new pond in the village. Until now this pond is known around the village as *Bhuli pokhari* on the name of the involved sudi woman. Now both defaulters are alive, living side by side as previous neighbourhood without the bothering from village people.

### **Case: 2**

5 yrs before, 60 yrs old married Barhi man was captured by village youths in the incident, while he was seducing the first wife of Ray caste neighbour. The happening was aired around the village, voices from the villagers come out for the sitting of *panchayat* and the day of *panchayat* was fixed. Meanwhile, just before the *panchayat* to hold the woman fled to matrilocal house (She was not returned after the patrilocal house and now she married else where) and only the accused man remained to attend at the day of hearing, which decided to punish him by holding ears, standing up and sitting down several times in front of *panchayat* participants. And later, the matter get normalized.

### **Case: 3**

6 yrs ago, a sudi boy had eloped with his own elder brother's wife who had a one daughter. A year later after the elopement *jat samaj* meeting was held at village that permission couple to return only by offering *bhoj* to his caste people. He organized the *bhoj* and marriage was accepted by his caste people.

### **Case: 4**

An effort to make illicit physical relation get recognized by *jat samaj*, 3 years ago, one incident had occurred in the village. In which, people say that a sudi boy who had frequent physical contact with his own elder brother's wife. Due to his attachment towards elder brother's wife and to make her own wife, one night he put vermilion (*sindur*: symbol of marital status) on the forehead of his sister in law. By the next day, the matter spread in village, this family head had invited own *jat baithar*, the caste people did not approve the marriage and decision was made elder brother would accept the wife and illicit couple would be stopped to talk each other even staying in same house. The *baithar* further threatened the couple if they indulged again they will be severely beaten and excluded from caste as well as village too.

### **Case: 5**

Few years ago, a Teli married man was incidentally caught by neighbours while he was fornicating his physically deformed cousin near by the animal's shed. It was a matter of seriousness than other cases and also provided the spice to rival faction within caste. They were not ready to dismiss the case without the exploitation of situation. By the third day of the incident at night secret *jat samaj* meeting was held and the decision was made to compensate the victim by Rs 21,000, later this money was used for her marriage and the matter get finalized without *bhoj cut* (exclusion from brother hood feast) or *jat cut* (exclusion from caste).

### **Case: 6**

The next incident was committing adulteration in avoiding relation. An elder brother of Teli caste was seen by his father while he was physically indulged with his own younger brother's wife. The father was quite disturbed by this odd scene because in Tarai castes no elder brother can touch the body of younger brother's wife and he could not digest the matter, he himself had shared it with the younger son. After hearing, the quarrel between brothers and their wives erupted. Then, *jat samaj* people were invited to resolve the case, it decided that either elder brother face *bhoj cut* (previously for same default *jat cut* was provisioned) or contribute money to social 'Jat Samaj fund'. Finally, when he agreed to donate Rs 17,000 for his default the matter was resolved. After this contemptible outburst younger brother felt humiliated living together so, he built a new separate house and shifted his residence along with base character wife. Even after the penalized by *jat samaj* for breaking the sex rule, some people in the village who put close eyes on his elder brother's activity told me that he has not yet stopped physical contact with his sister-in-law, which is going on against the *jat samaj* ruling.

### **Case: 7**

Final example of such happening was the rape attempt by a drunken elder brother on his cousin's (brother's) wife while she was sleeping in her house at 8 O' clock in the night. When he abruptly tried to stroke her sensitive body parts, she feared and cried out to people. People gathered and asked her reasons behind her crying. She hastily replied that her neighbouring elder brother in law fondled her and just ran away. At once the mob gathered and moved to search him around and caught him . The gathered people of *jat samaj* had pronounced the punishment that his son would hit 7 slippers on the head of lust blinded father.