

**PRACTICE AND PERCEPTION OF TAMANG WOMEN  
TOWARDS CROSS-COUSIN MARRIAGE  
(An Anthropological Study of Tamang Community in Kavre)**

**A Thesis**

Submitted to the Department of Anthropology,  
Prithvi Narayan Campus, Tribhuvan University, Pokhara  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the  
Master's Degree of Arts in Anthropology

**By**

**Rukmangad Poudyal**

Roll No: 6/2070,

T. U. Regd. No.: 25472-1987

Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara, Kaski

Nepal

2019

## **KNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This dissertation entitled **“Practice and Perception of Tamang Women towards Cross-Cousin Marriage (An Anthropological Study of Tamang Community in Kavre)”** has been prepared for the partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Master's Degree of Arts in Anthropology, and submitted to the Department of Anthropology, Tribhuvan University, Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara.

First and for most, I am very much indebted to my thesis supervisor Dr. Prakash Upadhyay, without whose help this work would not have been possible. So, I would like to express my sincere gratitudes and thanks to him owing to his excellent guidance, continued inspiration, support and encouragement. I would like to thank Mr. Janardan Thapa, Head of Department of Anthropology, P.N. Campus, Pokhara for his valuable guidance, support and encouragement. I would like to thank all of the faculty members of Department of Anthropology, P.N. Campus, Pokhara for their valuable suggestions, support and kind regards.

Similarly, I would like to thank for the respondents of Madan village, Chaurideurali Gaupalika, Kavre district and all the key informants for providing full support during the data collection process. I also appreciate and thank to all of my friends and colleagues who supported me throughout the process. I cannot resist thanking my beloved wife Mandira Ghimire as well as daughter Aastha for their understanding, support and encouragement during the whole process.

At last, once more, I feel proud of all respondents and supporters who gave me valuable information and time which helped me to complete this research work in due time.

.....  
Rukmangad Poudyal  
M. A. Anthropology  
Roll No. 6/2070  
Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara

## ABSTRACT

Marriage is a universal phenomenon which existed in every society from tribal to civilized society. Marriage makes stability and continuity of the social order and for a regulation of kinship relations. In Nepal all ethnic groups have their own cultures and traditions. Some of them practice cross-cousin marriage which is not taboo in their respective community though they know it is taken as the taboo in some other societies. *Tamang, Gurung, Thakali, Chantyal* are some of the ethnic groups which practices cross-cousin marriage even to date and Thakuri is an exception in the caste group to practice cross-cousin marriage. Therefore, it is not as easy as presumed to find the real reason behind the practice without annoying the community. Many educated youth of ethnic groups practicing this practice are afraid to speak out clearly in the fear of wrong interpretation, as it is taken as a taboo in other society.

There are limited studies on cross-cousin marriage practice among Tamang community. In fact, only few studies have been done on Tamang marriage system. Therefore, this research study endeavored to study cross-cousin marriage practice which is helpful to explore the changing pattern of marriage practices among Tamang community. This study has attempted to address the research questions-Why Tamang's prefers cross-cousin marriage? What are the impacts of cross-cousin marriage in Tamang society? What are the perceptions regarding cross-cousin marriage practices among Tamang women? The general objective of this study was to find out the marriage practices of Tamang women and specific objective was to examine their perception towards cross-cousin marriage in Kavre district of Nepal. The design of this research is descriptive as well as explorative.

This study describes the practices of marriage among Tamang and explores the perception of Tamangs towards cross cousin marriage practice. Primary and secondary data is used in this study. Primary data was collected from fieldwork using various methods, tools and techniques. Both qualitative and quantitative data are used in this study. The study was carried out at *Madan* village of Kavre district among the 30 cross-cousin married Tamang women. To answer the research questions, 30 married Tamang who got cross-cousin marriage were selected as respondents. There are various forms of marriage however love, arrange and capture marriages were

mostly practiced in the research area. Interestingly, all the respondents were cross-cousin married either they got love or arrange or capture marriage.

Regarding perception of majority of respondents desire to continue cross-cousin marriage. The fact is revealed that cross-cousin marriage makes the paired relation of the couple, legally and socially acknowledged, relatively permanent bond, secure rights of offspring and other members of the kin network in Tamang community. It provides a formal and legal link to Tamang extended family, or kinship relatives, and thereby establishes property rights and stable lines of inheritance from generation to generation. Cross-cousin marriage is a taboo in most Hindu societies. However, it is sacred and popular in Tamang community even in 21<sup>st</sup> century. The main concern of cross-cousin marriage was not to divide the resources. Tamang people want to keep all properties including labour, resources, cash and other equipments etc. under own family tree. They want to escape from the unfair financial competition between two families. So the cross-cousin marriage is popular and alive in Tamang community of Madan village. In Tamang community, the right of dowry property belongs to his/her daughter as a *Pewa* but it is not mandatory. This system has helped to empower the daughters economically because any other family members could not sell and transfer such property without her consent.

The young generations of Tamang are aware of their environment and have begun to choose marrying partner of their choice rather than parental which is creating conflicts between the generations though there is socio-cultural significance of cross cousin marriage system in their community. In broad-spectrum some members of Tamang community are rigid on traditional norms and practices which signifies the differing perceptions of cross-cousin marriage. Hence, anthropological significance on cross-cousin marriage system in Tamang community is worth explanatory.

It can be concluded that in the age of modernization and globalization, Tamang communities are succeeding to preserve their traditions and customs. For instance, they have succeeded to make alive their traditional cross-cousin marriage practice which is playing significant role to unite and make harmony among the Tamang. Therefore, the roles and responsibilities of the nation is to preserve this unique identity, beauty and harmony.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Letter of Recommendation</i>	<i>ii</i>
<i>Letter of Acceptance</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>Acknowledgement</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>Contents</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>List of Table</i>	<i>viii</i>
<i>List of Figure</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Abstract</i>	<i>x</i>
<b>CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1–6</b>
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	4
1.3 Objectives of the Study	5
1.4 Rationale of the Study	5
1.5 Organization of the Study	6
<b>CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE</b>	<b>7–12</b>
2.1 Theoretical Review	7
2.2 Review of Literature	9
2.3 Conceptual Framework of the Study	12
<b>CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>13-16</b>
3.1 Study Site and Rationale for Site Selection	13
3.2 Research Design	14
3.3 Nature and Sources of Data	14
3.4 Universe and Sampling Procedure	14
3.5 Techniques of Data Collection	15
3.5.1 Interview	15
3.5.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	15
3.5.3 Interview with Key Informants	15

3.5.4	Case Study	15
3.6	Data Processing and Analysis	15
3.7	Limitations of the Study	16
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: HISTORY AND SOCIO-CULTURE OF TAMANG</b>		<b>17-31</b>
4.1	Introduction	17
4.2	The Tamang People of Nepal	17
4.3	Societal formation	21
4.4	Religion	22
4.5	Festivals	22
	4.5.1 Buddha Jayanti	23
	4.5.2 Lochhar	23
4.6	Language	24
4.7	Music	24
4.8	Kinship	25
4.9	Rituals	26
	4.9.1 Birth Ceremony	26
	4.9.2 Feeding Ceremony	27
	4.9.3 Chhewar Ceremony	27
	4.9.4 Death Ceremony	27
	4.9.4.1 Cremation	28
	4.9.4.2 Ghewa	28
4.10	Marriage System	28
4.11	Economy	31
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: Introduction, Practice and Perception of Respondents</b>		<b>32-44</b>
5.1	Information of Respondents	32
	5.1.1 Family of Respondents	32
	5.1.2 Age of Respondent	33
5.2	Marriage Practice	34
	5.2.1 Types of Marriage	34
	5.2.2 Marriage and Education	35
5.3	Perception towards the Cross-cousin Marriage	35
	5.3.1 Significance of Marriage	36
5.4	Kinship	40

5.5	Family Conflict	41
5.6	Dowry System	43
5.7	Labor and Resource Exchange	44
<b>CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, MAJOR FINDING AND CONCLUSION</b>		<b>45-50</b>
6.1	Summary of the Study	45
6.2	Major Finding	47
6.3	Conclusion	49
<b><i>REFERENCE</i></b>		<b>51</b>
<b><i>ANNEX</i></b>		

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
4.1	Types of Societal Leader	22
4.2	Tamang New Year	24
5.1	Types of Family	32
5.2	Age Group of Respondents	33
5.3	Types of Marriage	34
5.4	Marriage and Education	35



## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figure</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
4.1	Population of Tamang	20
5.1	Perception towards the Cross-cousin Marriage	36
5.2	Significance of Cross Cousin Marriage	37
5.4	4 Family Conflict	42