

# CHAPTER – I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The Study Context

Social change, in rural development, the alteration of mechanisms within the social structure, characterized by changes in cultural symbols, economic condition, rules of behavior, social organizations, or value systems.

Throughout the historical development of their discipline, sociologists have borrowed models of social change from other academic fields. In the late 19th century, when evolution became the predominant model for understanding biological change, ideas of social change took on an evolutionary cast, and, though other models have refined modern notions of social change, evolution persists as an underlying principle. Other sociological models created analogies between social change and the West's technological progress. In the mid-20th century, anthropologists borrowed from the linguistic theory of structuralism to elaborate an approach to social change called structural functionalism. This theory postulated the existence of certain basic institutions (including kinship relations and division of labour) that determine social behaviour. Because of their interrelated nature, a change in one institution will affect other institutions (Form, 2016).

Various theoretical schools emphasize different aspects of change. Marxist theory suggests that changes in modes of production can lead to changes in class systems, which can prompt other new forms of change or incite class conflict. A different view is conflict theory, which operates on a broad base that includes all institutions. The focus is not only on the purely divisive aspects of conflict, because conflict, while inevitable, also brings about changes that promote social integration. Taking yet another approach, structural-functional theory emphasizes the integrating forces in society that ultimately minimize instability.

Social change can evolve from a number of different sources, including contact with other societies (diffusion), changes in the ecosystem (which can cause the loss of natural resources or widespread disease), technological change (epitomized by the Industrial Revolution, which created a new social group, the urban proletariat), and population growth and other demographic variables. Social change is also spurred by ideological, economical and political movements (Form, 2016).

In this Context Nepal is also being Change in various sides. We know Nepal is Multilingual, multi-cultural and multiethnic country. The way of life, dress, language, socio-economic and cultural identities and conditions of the people are apparently different. Therefore, each group of people has their own identities; they do their own cultural practices and other numerous characteristics (Shrestha, 2014).

Geographically, Nepal is divided into three broad ecological regions stretching from the east to the west. On the high Himalayan region snow covers all the year round; the hill consists of Mahabharat and Churiya ranges and the Terai is plain which is supposed to be a granary of food grains. The Himilayan region, which is to the north of the Mahabharat range is largely an Archic Wasteland and been a marginal area for human settlement. Sherpas, Lomis, Topkes, Golas, generally known as Bhotiyas, are the dwellers of this region. The population is still sparse and the main economic activities are barter, trade, pastoralism and shifting cultivation. The Hill region also known as mid land lies between the Mahabharat and the Churiya range. It is a sub-tropical belt and has been the traditional population zone of Brahmins, Chhetris, occupational caste groups, Newars, Rais, Limbus, Gurungs, Magars and Tamangs. Subsistence agriculture is the basis for the hill economy (Gaije 2013).

The Terai region is divided into two regions i.e. outer Terai and inner Terai, where Rajputs, Danuvars, Tharus, Majhis, Satars, Yadavas, Brahmins, Chhetris, Muslims, Chamars, Doms, Musahars, Halkhors, etc. dwell. The Terai consists of forest and was once unhabitate due to malaria. Now it has acquired greater economic importance with new shelters and reclamation of agricultural by clearing forest.

It is needed to identify the community to which Dalit groups belong to caste system; and refers to an occupationally segregated, hierarchically and ritually discriminatory social system based on heredity of an individual or group of individuals. They are economically exploited, politically voiceless, socially humiliated and treated as “Untouchables”. In essence, the victim of caste-based discrimination and untouchability can be considered as Dalits. The Dalits have been placed at the bottom in the Hindu caste system. The major Dalit caste groups in the Terai are Musahar,

Chamar, Dom, Tatma, Dusadh, Khatwe, Bantar, Dhobi, Chidimar, Patharkatta/Kushwadia and Halkhor while such caste groups in the Hills are Damai, Kami and Sarki. In the Kathmandu valley, the major Dalit castes include Poda and Chyame. The Dom is concentrated more in districts like Morang, Jhapa, Sunsari, Siraha, Saptari, Dhanusha, Mahottari, Sarlahi, Bara, Parsa, Rautahat, Rupandehi, Kapilbastu, Nawalparasi, Banke and Bardia. The total population of the Dom in Nepal is 13,268 where the total number of male is 6,668 and female is 6,600 (NPHC, 2011).

The Dom is considered the lowest untouchable caste groups of the Terai. They are not allowed to fetch water either from the private or public tube-wells. They have separate tube-wells for their own use or go to the nearby stream/pond to fetch water.

Making a variety of baskets from the bamboo is their traditional caste occupation. In addition, grave-digging and cremating dead bodies are also considered their traditional occupation. These are their main source of earning a livelihood.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Nepal is one of the poorest countries of the world. According to the national statistics, 24 percent people are below absolute poverty line (CBS, 2011). In this condition, there are such castes and ethnic groups, who are bounded to give up their traditional occupation because they could not meet their basic needs (food, clothing, shelter etc.) by doing their traditional occupation in the changing condition. Development programs implemented by governmental and non-governmental agencies could not reach where the backward and poor people live.

Dom people belong to one of the poorest and backward caste in Nepal. Although their traditional work is making a variety of baskets and they are giving up their traditional occupation as cremating the dead bodies and grave digging because they cannot fulfill their basic needs by their traditional occupation. Therefore, how they can maintain their basic needs? Are they changing their Occupation, lifestyle and traditional thinking? These are the basic Question of this study.

In Nepal, every day, twelve women die due to pregnancy related causes; poor maternal health which not only affects maternal mortality, but also has a severe impact on neonatal mortality rates. Even in a year almost 8 million babies die globally in pregnancy, or soon after birth due to poor maternal health care and inadequate management of pregnancy related complication.

The failure of the health system to meet the needs of woman is the central concern of the pre-natal health care. Comprehensive and reliable national, regional level data on morbidity, prevalence rates and mortality patterns are scare in Nepal; as in such information by population group.

From researcher point of view, the study also seeks to study as to what extent Doms social organization, clans, family and marriage system has changed and to what extent Dom have been sanskritized. Attempt has made to study their present socio-economic condition, cultural and demographic conditions and the present situation of their traditional occupation. It has also attempted to find out their new sources of livelihood and whether they have benefited from the development activities in Nepal. So, the main problem of the present study is to seek answers of the above mentioned questions.

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

The general objective of this study is to find out the changing socio-economic cultural and demographic status of the Dom community. The specific objectives of the study are:

- a) To examine the social status of the Dom community.
- b) To analyze the economic status of the Dom community.
- c) To find out the changing pattern of Dom community.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The socio-economic status of a community shows the living condition of people in that community. With the great changes in the field of technology, communication, transportation, education and interaction with different cultural groups, they must have undergone certain changes. Similarly, urbanization, modernization, acculturation, enculturation, migration and population size have also affected the socio-economic condition of any society. Thus, the Dom community is also affected by these factors and is going to change in their subsistence economy, changing occupational composition, changing social and cultural patterns and life style of Siraha in Dom community. It has also tried to examine their success or failure in the changing circumstance. The information derived from this study will be useful for development plans and programs and for further study of the Dom community. Thus, the finding of this study will be useful to understand the changing socio-economic status of the Dom community in Nepal.

#### **1.5 Limitations of the Study**

Since the study was conducted only in few wards in Municipalities of the Siraha district of Nepal. Siraha municipality wada no. 19 & 21. So, the result obtained cannot be generalized for the lowest caste groups of the entire country due to vast difference in the cultural, social and anthropological aspects.

#### **1.6 Organization of the Study**

The study has been presented into seven chapters. The first chapter deals with Introduction including study context, statement of problem, objective of the study, conceptual of the framework and significance of the study. The second chapter deals with literature review. It includes previous study and background of Dom community. In the same way, the third chapter describes the research methodology.

The fourth chapter deals with setting of the study site, which includes location, climate, natural resource, and others descriptions. The fifth and sixth chapters include socio-demographic characteristics, lifestyle and economic status. The last one is related to summary and conclusion.

## CHAPTER – II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review is one of the most important parts in each research. The main objective of literature review is to gain familiarity with the subject matter. Keeping this into mind literature has been reviewed for the above mentioned purpose in this study. The detail about the reviewed literature is given below:

#### 2.1 Previous Studies on Dalits

Different researchers have carried out various Dalit studies in Nepal. Among them, Aahuti is one, who has given a lot of contribution on the field of Dalits study.

Indian and Nepalese Dalit movement has established the word 'Dalit' as a common name and identity. According to Aahuti who opines that the word Dalit is not named by ruler, instead emerged from its community movement and awareness process, Dalit does not refer to acceptance of being below but it refers to accepting the fact of being dominated and exploited and to establish common identity of being untouchable by Khas pahadi, Madhesi and Newari community with respect to caste system, (Aahuti, 2067: 2). The leaders of Dalit movement with this common identity believe that if the domination and exploitation on Dalit ends, this Dalit identity is certainly to be a dignified identity (Aahuti, 2067: 3).

According to Aahuti Madhesi Dalit is more than 4% of total Dalit. It occupies 41.44% of total population in Nepal. Kakaidiya, Kori (cloth washing work), Khatwe (cloth knitting and thread waving work), Dhamal (leather work), Chidimar (bird killing work), Dom (Bambo work), Dushad (informer of social work) are Madhesi Dalit. The poverty rate is very high of Madheshi Dalit scattering in your village. According to servey of 2003, The Madhesi Dalit's poverty rate is 49.2 percentage and literacy rate is 6.9 percentage. Whereas the literacy rate of Madhesi and total Nepali has crossed the 50 percentage and hilly Dalit's Literacy rate has reached to 41.9 percentage. Madhesi Dalit doesn't have approach more than one percentage in higher education (Aahuti, 2067: 85-86).

According to Dr. Harka Gurung, Dalit community is skilled caste group of Hindu. The term Dalit has been used as an alternative word for denoting the lowest untouchable and humiliating meaning. They are socially rejected due to caste discrimination and they are economically poor and politically marginalized (Gurung, 2003: 4).

D.R. Paudel, the editor and writer of the book "Dalit in Nepali society" suggests Dalit community to unite with conscious of emancipation in his article "Feudal Caste System and Dalit Community in a monthly magazine Dalit Sandesh". He writes 'Class and class based state is the main cause of untouchability. The amount of Discriminated behavior is imposed on how much inferiority a person remains in the social hierarchy. In previous, those who used to clean garbage, burn the dead body and do the work that nobody did were called untouchable. The right to economic and religious of their were deprived of. The system of caste discrimination which was initiated and flourished to strengthen feudalist class interest is getting weak at this time when it is in about to end. However, its severe effect is still in the society (Paudel, 2068: 28).

Avoiding to entering house, food and marriage; the existence of Dalit has been attempted to finish by doing more neglected and hated behavior than other castes. Even some castes are allowed to entering house, but strictly prohibited to food and marriage. They are not named as untouchable. But some are considered as untouchable prohibiting entering house. In this way, it is not appropriate to keep feeling of hatred by one caste to other caste (Paudel, 2068; 2).

It is nice that conscious of emancipation is getting raised in Dalit community. A portion of educated society has also supported to it. Dalit Emancipation Movement will be able to achieve its goals by enhancing supports with co-operation among them. For this, the vital thing is unity with awareness (Paudel, 2066; 29).

Dhirendra Premarshi, A writer and social campaigner of Madhes, explains the seven causes clarifying why the condition of Madhesi Dalit is getting unchanged. According to him, '1. Poverty, 2. Uneducation, 3. Racial discrimination and untouchability, 4. Lack of political awareness, 5. Lack of awareness of sanitation, 6. Ignorance of hilly Dalit and 7.

Bios perspective of government towards Madhes. These are the causes of miserable condition of Dalit community. He writes, 'The word Dalit refers to caste rather than group or class. Or, now the word Dalit has become common caste identity untouchable made by Hindu epics (Premarshi, 2062: 121-133).

Speaking about Madhesi Dalit, they have been socially and economically backward for ages. Because of education, awareness and conventional social relationship, it might be more or less, but practice of ignoring Dalit is also in Madhes like in other part of country. They are compelled to live as an untouchable. The rulers, who are protector of religions, are very conscious in the sense that no unity could be maintained in the Dalit community. So, they apply 'break and rule' policy. The influence of this policy on Madhesi Dalit also seems to be obvious. The practice of superiority and inferiority even in Madhesi Dalit itself is still prevailed. In Madhes, Teli and Kalwars consider Musahars and Khatwes as an inferior caste than them. They show their untouchable behavior to Chamar and Doms. Dushad and Musahars treat them as untouchable and marriage, food and water are not allowed to touch to them (Premarshi, 2062: 121-133).

Likewise, Ruplal Bishwakarma, a leader of Dalit movement, lays emphasis on occupation and livelihood of Dalit community. (Biswakarma; 2062: 9-15) He writes „Nepal is an agriculture country and a number of people made as an untouchable have lived in rural areas. They have to depend on agriculture. They have involved in metal work, tailoring, leather work, stone work, pottery, farming, labour and other service works. In this way, in total, they have been serving to superior cast people, feudal, exploiter in village as well as city.

Gautam, R. and Thapa Magar, A.K. (1994) have traced about some untouchable castes of Nepal. Badi, Dom, Gaine, Kami, Musahar Sarki, Halkhor etc. untouchable castes are tried to describe in their book. Sharma, Chhetri and Rana (1994) have stated about caste based discrimination and its related matters.

Some heart touching types of discrimination based on caste are given in the book. For example one is given below:



An untouchable teacher in Kailali District was sent away from his village school to Dangadi on deputation because he ordered students of higher caste and untouchable caste to sit together in the luncheon provided under the Nutrition Food Program. The school inspectors were satisfied with his teaching quality, but the headmaster a Brahmin, who did not accept this value, influenced the District Education Officer against the teacher. Later, the luncheon program itself was dropped (Sharma, Chhetri and Rana: 1994)

The above example shows that there are so much discriminations against the untouchable and study should be done about them. But unfortunately, this is not happened. Unless their real situation is carried out, the exploitation and discrimination on untouchable remains forever.

Some, foreign writer has tried to write about untouchable caste in Nepal. Caplan (1972) is an example which is a study of about a social change in a Hindu village of western Nepal. Similarly, Macdonald (1975) has written a book in some untouchable castes.

Chhetri (1985) has prepared a thesis on “Gaine” a singing people of Nepal. Subedi (1995) has written on his thesis “Badi” an untouchable caste whose traditional profession is prostitution. Sah (2005) has prepared a dissertation on “Chamar” a leather working people of Nepal and Yadav (2005) has also written on the “Musahar” a cat eating people of Nepal.

## **2.2 Previous Studies on Social Change**

Social change, in rural development, the alteration of mechanisms within the social structure, characterized by changes in cultural symbols, rules of behavior, social organizations, or value systems. Throughout the historical development of their discipline, sociologists have borrowed models of social change from other academic fields. In the late 19th century, when evolution became the predominant model for understanding biological change, ideas of social change took on an evolutionary cast, and, though other models have refined modern notions of social change, evolution persists as an underlying principle. Other sociological models created analogies between social change and the West's technological progress. In the mid-20th century,

anthropologists borrowed from the linguistic theory of structuralism to elaborate an approach to social change called structural functionalism. This theory postulated the existence of certain basic institutions (including kinship relations and division of labour) that determine social behaviour. Because of their interrelated nature, a change in one institution will affect other institutions (Wilterdink, 2016).

Various theoretical schools emphasize different aspects of change. Marxist theory suggests that changes in modes of production can lead to changes in class systems, which can prompt other new forms of change or incite class conflict. A different view is conflict theory, which operates on a broad base that includes all institutions. The focus is not only on the purely divisive aspects of conflict, because conflict, while inevitable, also brings about changes that promote social integration. Taking yet another approach, structural-functional theory emphasizes the integrating forces in society that ultimately minimize instability.

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### **2.3 The Dom Community**

The exclusive study on Dom community is not done in Nepal. On the basis of little study, the terai of Nepal seems to be one of the historical settlement. But the process of their migration from northern India to the terai of Nepal and inner side is still found to be continue. Baburam Acharya had guessed that the Dom came when Lichhavi along with Brahmins, Chhetriyas, farmers, Dusad intered into Nepal. According to him, Kumal, Darai, Dhobi of tharu class who had come from Bihar had already adjusted in Newar society. In this process, Dom and Dusad considered as Poda and Chyame respectively (Acharya, 2054 : 72) In this sense, the interrelationship and variation among dom of terai and dalit and other caste in hilly area is a matter of further research and study.

In Nepal, untouchables are found to have considered as Dom by other castes. In addition, the practice of saying Dom to Damai and Dangra to Kami while scolding is still prevail. It is not strange for those castes to accept such humiliate word even that are their previous identity. They could break the relation with Dom after other began to say them Dom due to intimate relation with them.

The various castes which are considered as the Dom are still found throughout Nepal. In far western Nepal, some caste people consider lower castes as the dom. Mahesh chandra Regmi has mentioned the fact that untouchables are considered as the Dom in western Nepal (Regmi, 1970: 102). Harka Gurung opines that the great influence of Hindu Caste System is seen in the western society of Nepal, and especially in discriminated behavior on Dalit. Making comment on fossils of previous Hindu Nepal, he claimed that the exploitation on Dom is still like what was done to Dom of Kumau and Gadhawal a century ago (Gurung, 2003: 4). His tough comment is rightly appropriate in the context of Medhesi Dom at present.

G.W. Brigs and K.P. Chattopadhyay also have kept Badi community in sub- caste of Dom. They mentioned from the list of Braen Hudson that Dom, Bhad castes have forced their wives to sell their body for surviving (Macdonald, 1983 : 289).

Kantipur, Daily a newspaper (5 May, 2015) has stated the Doms are occupational caste. Their traditional norms and customs allow to marry in childhood. They eat meat of pigs and drink wine necessarily.

Kantipur, Daily Newspaper (6 June, 2015) has stated the Surname of the Doms is Mallik or Marik. They are living in Terai regions. They are doing early marriage now. But some NGOs/INGOs are working to promote the lifestyle of the Dom community by doing different programs like as counseling to do marriage in adult, educating programs etc.

Govrnment of Nepal (2012) has stated the Doms are considered the lowest untouchable caste groups of the Terai. Any other caste member of the Terai except Halkhor does not accept water and cooked food from them. If any member of the high caste Hindu group is ever touched accidentally by them, he/she must purify either by sprinkling “gold water”

or taking bath in the pond as well. Even today, Doms are not allowed to fetch water either from the private or public tube-wells. They have separate tube-wells for their own use or go to the nearby stream to fetch water.

Making a variety of baskets from the bamboo is their traditional caste occupation. In addition, grave-digging and cremating dead bodies are also considered their traditional occupation (Save the Children US and INHURED International, 1999). This is their main source of earning a livelihood.

Gautam, and Thapa, (1994) have stated „Doom, „Domra and sometimes „Chandal are some of the names attached to the Dom, but their true origin is still a matter of differing opinions. The remarkable paragraphs:

The Doms are short in stature, dark skinned, have long and loosely kept hair mostly unplaited, and the most peculiar feature is their strange glass-like eyes. Dom occupy, in the rank of untouchable, according to the Hindu caste system. Although they are minority in number, they can be found all over the Terai. They are Sudras and occupational caste.

After the invasion of the Dravidians these people seem to have escaped into the Northern hills and forests, while some sheltered in the Kumaon where they were made permanent slaves. These slaves Dom are supposed to have lived lives worse than animals and were sold from one master to another to live as chattels. Since ancient times, the settlement of these Dom is alleged to be towards the north of Ganga. It is near Rohini in the east and touches the area of Bihar, where the many ruins of ancient forts are evidence of their identity. The names of their founders have remained till today in places such as Dom diha or Dom gad to prove this point. Situated in Rohini, Ramgad and Sahan Kot, are some Dom forts, it is claimed. A scholar has put forward the idea that Domgad was actually Prabalgad which belonged to the slowly deteriorating Rajputs. There is also a suggestion that a person Domar or Donewar from the Dom family could have been the founder of these forts. It is also possible that they became locally powerful and joined the Rajputs as their slaves. The governor of Ramlawad, Ali Bux Dom stated that such people were enrolled as musicians, from which position, they rose up to higher levels. Though these Dom are not mentioned in Nepalese history, as those people inhabiting the Terai or the

border areas between India and Nepal in particular, if further research is carried out, then it should provide a chance of presenting them in a new light.

Thus, we cannot get a sufficient literature about Nepalese Doms. There are some literatures written in Indian context. Singh (1993) has given some account about Doms. The remarkable paragraphs:

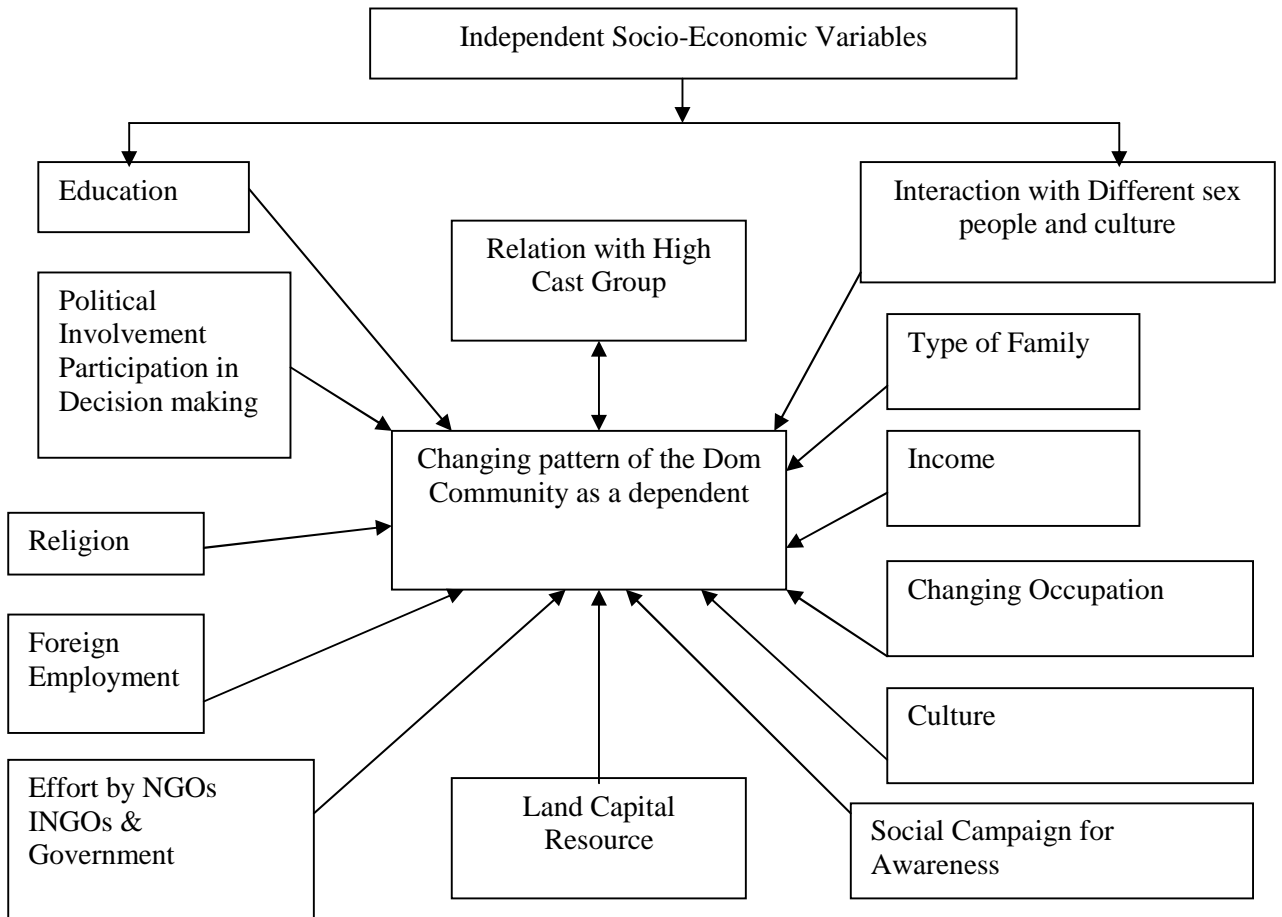
In Bihar, the Doms are also called Bhangi or Dhangad and claim to be Bansmalikes. The Doms are distributed in places like Barh, Mokameh, Bakhtairput, Fatuhan, Bansghat, Khojkallaghat, Kurjighat and Gulabighat and their habitations are mostly on the banks of the Ganges and around the cremation grounds. In Bihar, they are notified as Dom, Dhangad and their total population, according to the 1981 census, is 200, 827. The Indo-Aryan language, Magahi, is spoken among themselves and Hindi is spoken with others. The Devanagari script is used. They are non-vegetarians and eat pork. Rice and wheat, their staple cereals, are taken with common pulses like Urad, Moong and Masur along with roots and tubers. Alcoholic drinks are consumed by both the sexes. They are fond of smoking and chewing Khaini with betel leaf. Domar also known as Bhangi and Mehtar, most Domars in Uttar Pradesh belong to the Turahiya or Tunaiha subcaste. The Domar are divided into seven subgroups, namely Turahiya or Turaiha.

These above mentioned literatures have given much useful knowledge directly and indirectly. Therefore, the research has felt a great value of these literatures during the preparation of this thesis.

## **2.4 Conceptual Framework**

In this study, the status and the changing pattern of the Dom community is defined and measured by selecting socio-economic, cultural and demographic indicators such as education, occupation, religion, residence, income, health, type of family and the social campaign. All of these indicators are independent variables.

Analysis of this study is based on the conceptual framework as to how the socio-economic variables effect on the changing socio economic condition of the Dom community. The figure below tries to show the impact of independent socio-economic variables on changing condition of the Dom community as a dependent variable.



**Figure No.1.1 Conceptual Framework**

## **CHAPTER – III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter presents a discussion on the research methodology that is used to collect qualitative and quantitative data for the study. The chapter is further divided into many sub-sections such as site selection, research design, nature and sources of data, sampling procedure, techniques/instruments of data collection, reliability, and method of data analysis.

#### **3.1 Study Site and Its Rationale for the Selection**

Considering the ward no. 19 and 21 of Siraha municipality siraha district were selected from each, two places were purposively selected where the Dom population is high.

The study site is very suitable to study for the researcher. The reason is that the area is a historical place of Dom. The community has settled here for a long time. The recent changes can be seen apparently in the community. The researcher has been living nearby the place of community, so it became easy to study for him.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

This study is based on descriptive research design which may consider as appropriate and the best for the analysis of this type of research study. It is descriptive because it describes the ethnography and the socio-economic status of the Dom community.

#### **3.3 Nature and Sources of Data**

This study is based on the consideration of primary as well as secondary data. Primary data were collected through field survey. Similarly, secondary data were collected through published and unpublished materials such as research articles, related books, CBS and related profiles.

### 3.4 Universe and Sampling Procedure

The total population of Siraha Municipality is 65225 (AMDP-2017). The total population of the Dom community of Nepal is 13,268 (0.05%) where male is 6,668 and female is 6,600. Similarly, the total population of the Dom community in Siraha district is 1507 where male is 738 and female is 769 according to NPHC-2011. The study site has been selected purposively. Considering the Ward no. 19 and 21 of Siraha municipality of Siraha district were selected, from each two places: ward no. 19 and ward no. 21 were purposively selected where the Dom population is high.

There are 40 households and 247 individuals of Dom community in Study site. So, the universe population of this study is 247 and 40 households. Census method was applied and data were collected from only 20 households. Among 20 households 12 is from Siraha Municipality Ward no. 19 and 8 is from Ward no. 21 . There are 96 Individuals from that 20 households which is sample unit.

### 3.5 Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

It is the most important part for getting reliable information. The techniques/instruments of data collection were used as follows:

**Table No. 3.1: Data Collection Techniques and Instruments**

S.N.	Techniques	Instruments
a.	Interview	Questionnaire
b.	Observation	Checking
c.	Interview with key informants	Schedules
d.	Focus group discussion and meeting	Interview guide

#### 3.5.1 Interview

Interview was taken to collect primary data in the field. For this, A semi structured questionnaire was used to elicit socio-economic and demographic information from the respondents.



### **3.5.2 Observation**

Observation is the basic sociological/anthropological tool for the data collection methods. This method was used by the researcher to collect information about dress pattern, food habits, settlement, ceremonies, talking style and behaviour.

### **3.5.3 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**

It was used to collect qualitative data from the study sites. It helped to collect the information through group interaction on a topic determine by the researcher. In FGD separately male and female group consisting 12 persons were carried out to find the changing condition of socio-economic in Dom community.

### **3.6 Method of Data Analysis**

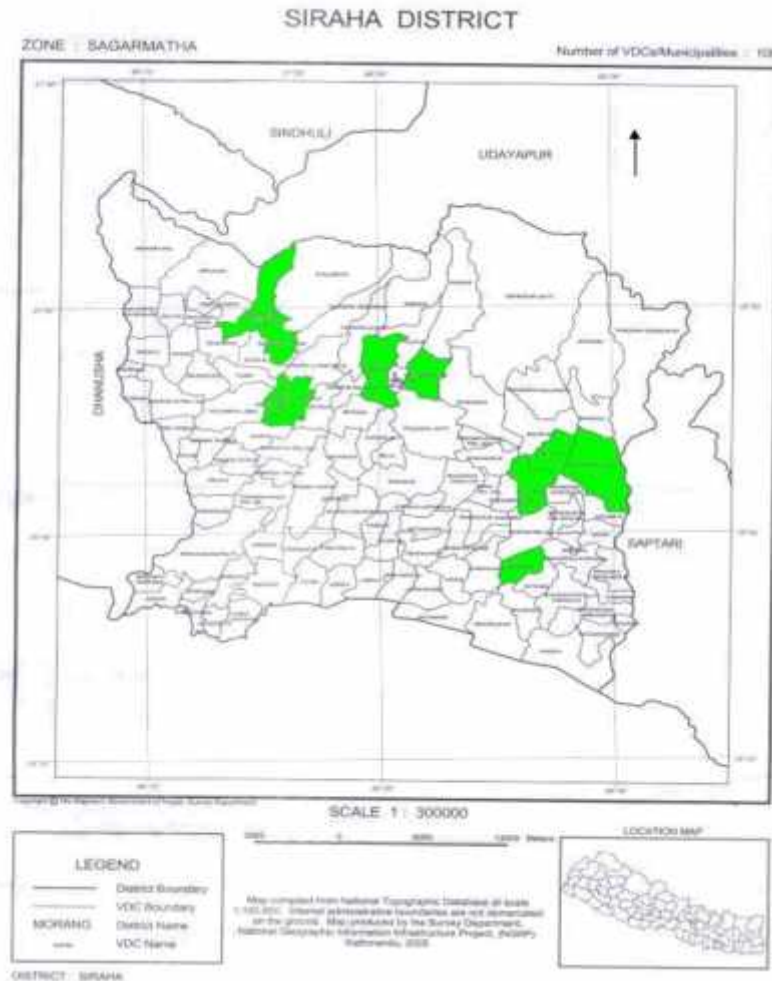
The collected data of the research study were analyzed descriptively and statistical methods were also applied where necessary. So, different statistical methods (table, pie-chart, figure and simple frequency) and logical tools were used to analyze data in this study. The nature of data are both qualitative and quantitative.

## CHAPTER– IV

### SETTING OF THE STUDY SITE

#### 4.1 Location

Siraha Municipality are the rising city of Siraha district. Siraha is located in central side of Siraha district touching the Mahendra highway is in 18 k.m.so far to the south from highway. Siraha is bounded with Kamala-river to the west and Balan khola to the east Saptari District ,Siraha is bounded with Kamala river to the west and Balan to east,Siraha municipality lies in the central of the Hulaki highway in the east rural municipality Aurahi and in the west Kamala river near Dhanusha district,in the south Indian boarder Jaynagar is 10 km so far and north Rrural municipality Naraha 12 km so far ,East of Siraha municipality warda no 19 and 21 lies named Sanahaitha and Hakpada.



## **4.2 Climate**

Siraha lies in Terai which has tropical and sub-tropical climate. The maximum recorded temperature is 42<sup>0</sup> C in the month of May and June, and the minimum recorded temperature is 8<sup>0</sup> C in the month of January. Rainfall, mostly starts from the end of May and lasts for three or four months till August and sometime still September in accordance with extent of monsoon. Study sites receive approximately 1467 mm rainfall annually (District Weather Record: 2015).

## **4.3 Natural Resources**

Generally, land, forest and water are important natural resources of Nepal. Most of the population of the study site depends upon land for its subsistence production. The Dom community depends upon forest also.

### **4.3.1 Land**

Land is one of the most utilized natural resource in the study site. Since the most Natural resources are inseparable from the land, it is the basic resource of the people of the study site. Type and quality of soil are major concerns of farmers and they invest a great deal of labour to maintain and enhance it. Land is generally classified as “Bari” (dry cultivated land) and “Khet” (paddy cultivated land) on the basis of types of crop cultivated and irrigation facilities.

### **4.3.2 Forest**

Forest is an important natural resource of Nepal, but it is not available easily at the study site. Therefore, it cannot be counted as a main natural resource of the study site. The people of there fulfill their needs of jungle from their own tiny gardens. People plant “Aanp (*Magnifera Indica*)”, “Sisau (*Dalbergia Sisoo*)”, “Neem (*Mellia Azardirachata*)”, “Bakainu (*Meliea Azedarach*)”, “Masala (*Eucalptus-Camal-Dulansis*)”, for their consumption. They use mostly dry animal dung as a fuel for cooking.

### **4.3.3 Water Resource**

Most of the rivers of Siraha district originates from the Mahabharat range and they contain considerable amount of water only during the rainy season. In the study site, there are Kamala River, Minawati River, Sahaja Khola and Balan Khola, etc.

### **4.4 Settlement Pattern and House Structure**

Settlement is also an indication in Nepal of the ethnic compactness of the different communities. The settlements of Dom community are generally situated outside the settlements of other high caste people. It may be owing to the ethnic compactness untouchability and lack of land.

Though, the settlements of Dom community in Siraha District are in compact in nature and most of the houses are built closely but the clustering of houses have no any particular direction as other ethnic groups like, Tharus, Telis, Yadavs etc. Due to population increase in the settlement areas, it is now going to be insufficient for the construction of new houses.

### **4.5 Background of the People of the Study Site**

Before 1920, Terai (Siraha) District was considered the Kalapani due to prevalence of deadly malaria disease. The settlement in the area had been avoided by the hill people because of the presence of the malaria. Only the Terai ethnic group Tharu existed mainly much longer as they have developed strong natural immunity against malaria.

The launching of “Malaria Eradication Programme” in the late 1950s had encouraged a heavy migration of hilly people to the Terai. Hence with arrival of hilly people who brought new culture and technology of intensive farming, trade and business have changed a lot in the nature of the entire socio-cultural and economic activity of the area.

The Dom community originally came to Nepal from India many centuries ago (Mechhi Dekhi Mahakali Samma, 1974). The key informants responded that their forefathers had migrated to Nepal because of a great starvation. Due to hunger, they were compelled to move from India.

#### **4.6 Caste Hierarchy in the Study Site**

Caste hierarchy is quite unique in Hindu society of Nepal. In general, Nepalese society is based on caste hierarchy where people are divided into different caste groups. The caste structure of the society is characterized by hierarchy on system of Sub-ordination held together by relation of superiority and inferiority at the apex of which are Brahmins and at the lowest rank are Sudras.

Under this caste system, a large number of people in Nepal, that is about 12% of the total population of Nepal (Population Census: 2011) are classified as untouchable or Sudras.

In the history of Nepal, King Jayasthiti Malla brought into practice the caste system which was virtually based on the occupation of the people in the name of social empowerment. Even after him, the king like Ram Shah and Prithivi Narayan Shah followed the same caste system. The “Old civil code” of Nepal promulgated by Surendra Bir Bikram Shah in 1953 A.D., stratified Nepali society into four groups: Tagadhari (sacred thread wearing caste), Matwali (liquor consuming caste), Pani Nachalne Chhoi Chhito Halnu Naparne (touchable caste, from whom water is not accepted, and Pani Nachalne Chhoi Chhito Halnuparne (untouchable caste). The Dom caste belongs to untouchable group.

Our caste system is characterized by social inequality and rigid system of a scripted hierarchy. The whole caste system is based on the principle of pollution and purity. This principle is the main rule of our society. The relationship between people and their behavior towards each other are governed by Hindu norms and values. Untouchability is the main characteristics of Hindu caste system.

Although the caste based discrimination has been legally abolished since 1963 with the promulgation of “New civil code” (Naya Muluki Ain). It still exists as an important reference point for all individuals and constituents, the fundamental social structure of Nepalese society. Majority of the untouchables are accepting the discriminatory practice in rural areas and they believe that it is God made. Traditional caste-based discrimination is the main factor responsible for the social and economic backwardness of the

untouchable or other tribal communities in Nepal. They lag far behind the higher caste people.

As generally in Nepal, the castes of the study site are ranked according to a scale of ritual purity and pollution. The system of ranking draws heavily on ideas which are parts of village Hinduism. A symbolic basis for this system is the application of a localized version of Hindu concept of purity and pollution. Brahmins rank highest in the system because they are the priestly caste, as a member of high varna, they wear „Janai sacred-thread, which is a symbol of their ritual purity and a mark of their spiritual second birth.

Chhetris are next in hierarchy to Brahmins and are member of warrior order of the varna system. Telis, Yadavas, Koiris etc. are lower in caste hierarchy than Chhetris. They are not allowed to wear „Janai“ but they are touchable castes. They are the member of "Vaishya in the varna system.

#### **4.7 Population/Ethnic Composition**

Siraha is known as heterogeneous district in terms of the caste ethnic composition. The total population of Siraha District is 637328 (Male: 310101 & Female: 327227). The caste/ethnic groups: Yadav, Muslim, Musahar, Koiri, Teli, Tharu and Chamar are larger in number respectively but the dominant caste/ethnic groups are Yadav, Muslim, Teli, Tharu, Chhetri, Brahman-Hill, Brahman-Terai, Newar and Koiri. The total population of the Dom Community of Siraha district is 1507 which occupies 0.24% of the total population of the district (NPHC-2011).

##### **4.7.1 Language and Dialects**

The study site is more heterogeneous in the nature of language. The major languages spoken in the Siraha district, on the basis of Nepal Population and Housing Census-2011(NPHC 2011) (Caste/Ethnicity & Language) is given in the table.

**TableNo.4.1: Percentage of Population by Major Spoken Languages**

S.N	Language	Number	Percentage
1.	Maithili	506,696	80.73
2.	Urdu	45,582	7.26
3.	Nepali	34,958	5.57
4.	Magar	12,199	1.94
5.	Tamang	8,794	1.4
6.	Tharu	6,693	1.07
7.	Magahi	5,621	0.89
8.	Others	18017	1.14
Total		627,580	100

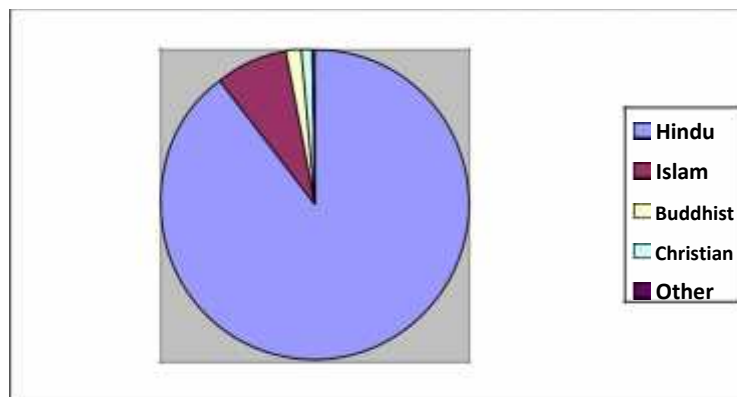
Source: NPHC- 2011

Generally, Maithili is the main language in the study sites. However, different castes of this area use Nepali language as lingua franca despite their own native language/dialects in their households.

#### **4.7.2 Religion**

The study site is more religious. Hinduism is the main religion followed by different caste/ethnic groups. However, they follow their different cultural practices.

**Chart No. 1: Percentage of Population by Major Religion in Siraha**



Source: Municipality, Siraha 2017.

The above table reveals that there are four types of major religions in Siraha District. However, in the study site we found different Data. Hindu is the main religion of the study sites (i.e.95.83 %) and there is no Buddhist, Christian and Islam.

**Table No.4.2: Households & Population of Dom by Major Religion in Study site**

S.N.	Religion	Households	Individuals	Percentage
1.	Hindu	19	92	95.83
2.	Other	1	4	4.17
Total		20	96	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2018

#### 4.7.3 Occupation

Agriculture is the main occupation of the Siraha District. A vast majority of the people have to supplement in with either caste based occupational work or wage labour or both.

**Table No. 4.3: Percentage of Population by Main Occupation in Siraha**

S.N.	Occupation	Percentage
1.	Agriculture	63.59
2.	Foreign Employment	20.5
3.	Business	7.0
4.	Governmental Service	5.20
5.	Industrial Works	1.07
6.	Contract Labour	1.00
7.	Others	1.63
Total		100.0

Source: District Profile, 2017 DDC Siraha.

The above table shows that agriculture is the main occupation of the Siraha District. Similarly, foreign employment, business, industrial works, governmental service and contract labour are other means of occupation of Siraha district.



## CHAPTER – V

### SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTIC

This chapter and the following chapter consists of the main part of the study. It tends to focus on the analysis and discussion of empirical data obtained from the field survey. Demographic features of the study site and socio-cultural life of the people are analyzed in detail. This section includes age and sex structure of the total population of the Dom of the study site and their marital status, educational status and occupation respectively. The following tables (Table 5.1 and Table 5.2) gives socio-demographic characteristics of the sample population of the Dom of the study-sites.

**Table No. 5.1: Occupational Status of the Surveyed Households & Individuals**

Age	Occupation	
Groups		
	Primary	Secondary
0-4	-	-
5-9	-	-
10-14	Domestic Works	Bamboo Works
15-19	1-Sweeping in COs, 5-Bamboo Works,	PT HT
	2-Labour & 2-Works in India	
20-24	2- Sweeping in COs and GOs, 3-Bamboo	PT HT
	Works & 2-Works in Gulf	
25-29	1- Sweeping in GOs, 3-Works in India & 3-	PT HT
	Bamboo Works	
30-34	3- Bamboo Works & 2-Works in Gulf	PT HT
35-39	1- Labour, 1-Bamboo Works, 1-Works in	PT HT
	Gulf & 2-Works in India	
40-44	2- Bamboo Works & 2-Works in India	PT HT
45-49	2- Bamboo Works	PT HT
50-54	3- Bamboo Works	PT HT
55-59	1- Bamboo Works	PT HT
60+	4- Bamboo Works	PT HT

Source: Field Survey, 2018

LEGEND: COs = Corporate Offices, GOs = Government Offices, PT = Pig taming,

HT= Hen taming

**Table No. 5.2: Marital Status of the Surveyed Households by Sex**

Age	Sex		Total %		Marital Status
	Male	Female			
0-4	8	10	18	18.75	-
5-9	12	7	19	19.79	-
10-14	5	6	11	11.46	6-Married
15-19	4	6	10	10.42	All-Married
20-24	4	3	7	7.29	All-Married
25-29	5	2	7	7.29	All-Married
30-34	2	3	5	5.21	All-Married
35-39	3	2	5	5.21	All-Married
40-44	2	2	4	4.16	All-Married
45-49	1	1	2	2.08	All-Married
50-54	1	2	3	3.13	All-Married
55-59	0	1	1	1.04	All-Married
60+	3	1	4	4.16	All-Married
Total	50	46	96	100	

Source: Field Survey, 2018

In the general measurement of five years of age groups (0-4, 5-9.....60+) have been maintained in the above table No. 5.1 and 5.2.

The total population in the age group 0-4 was 18 (i.e. 18.75%) which is known as children. This age group has occupied second position in number of the total population of the study sites. This age group cannot help in any productive work. The total

population in the age group 5-9 was 19 (i.e. 19.79%) which has occupied first position in number of the total population. Only 10 children were going to school to read in primary level.

The total population in the age group 10-14 was 11 (i.e. 11.46%) which has occupied third position in number. This age group was pre-productive because only 4 adolescents were going to school and joining household works/domestic works also. The 6 adolescents have got married in this age group.

The total population in the age group 15-19 was 10 (i.e. 10.42%) which has occupied fourth position in number. All the population of this age group has got married and bamboo work was the main occupation of this age group. Only 2 adolescents of this age group were found going to read in secondary level.

The total population in the age group 20-24 and 25-29 were 7 and 7 respectively (i.e. 7.29%) which occupied fifth position of the total population. Only one male person has passed S.L.C. in this age group. They all are involved in Bamboo work, Sweeping and Foreign employment.

The total population in the age groups 30-34 and 35-39 were 5 and 5 (i.e. 5.21%) respectively which has occupied sixth position in number. These age groups have got married and have followed bamboo work as their main occupation.

The total population in the age group 40-44 was 4 (i.e. 4.16%) which has occupied seventh position in number. This age group has got married and has not any access in education. The bamboo work was the main occupation of this group. The total population in the age group 45-49 was 2 (i.e. 2.08%) which has occupied ninth position in number. This age group has got married and has not any access in education. The bamboo work was the main occupation of this group. There are one widow in this age group.

The total population in the age group 50-54 was 3 (i.e. 3.13%) which has occupied eighth position in number. This age group has got married and has not any access in education. The bamboo work was the main occupation of this group.

The total population in the age group 55-59 was 1 (i.e. 1.04%) which has occupied last position in number. This age group has got married and has not any access in education. The bamboo work was the main occupation of this group. There are a widow in this age group.

The total population in the age group 60+ was 4 (i.e. 4.16%) which has a l s o occupied seventh position in number. This age group has got married and has not any access in education. The bamboo work was the main occupation of this group. There are one widow and one widower in this age group.

The above facts reveal that child dependency is greater than old (aged) dependency but old (aged) mortality rate is high.

**Table No. 5.3: Educational Status of the Dom Community**

	Male	Female	Total	Percentage %
Illiterate	32	35	67	69.80
Literate	7	5	12	12.50
Primary Level	7	5	12	12.50
Lower Secondary Level	2	0	2	2.08
Secondary Level	1	1	2	2.08
S.L.C. Passed	1	0	1	1.04
Total	50	46	96	100

Source: Field Survey, 2018

The above table shows that 69.80% of the Dom community was illiterate of the total respondent of the study site. Similarly, the respondent who have got literacy, primary, lower secondary and secondary level were 12.5%, 12.5%, 2.08% and 2.08% respectively. 4 woman are study in primary level and one is in secondary level.

## 5.1 Family

Family is a universal institution. It is found in every society. It fulfills emotional and physical needs of its members. It is a biological unit composed by group of persons and

Kens who are related through blood and marriage. It usually begins when the partners marry because marriage is the basis of family.

The family system is divided into three categories: nuclear, joint and extended. In a nuclear family, there is a couple with or without their unmarried off springs. But there can be found completely nuclear type of family system in Nepalese society as in European society. It is only nuclear in matters of separate residences.

Another type of family is extended one where married sons live together with their parents. Joint family system is that one where two or more nuclear families live under a single roof sharing common property, common residence and common kitchen.

It is generally believed that majority of families in Nepal are joint in nature. It is also because agriculture demands many labour during seeding and harvesting period. And the head of the family, who is usually the father, exercises control over the family members and family property.

In the Dom community, it is found that they are patrilineal families. Their descendants are traced through the line of father i.e. to sons and not the mother like other matrilineal community. The male Dom is the functional head of the family who does outer activities. After the death of the family head, his position is taken by his eldest son or his wife.

In the Dom community, family property is commonly shared and managed. When the family breaks up, the property is equally divided among brothers. There is no any rigid rule of family separation. According to respondents the causes for the breakdown of the joint family are: conflict between two brothers, conflict between a mother-in-law and daughter-in-laws, conflict among brother's wives etc.

When asked about the main reason of family separation, most of the respondent's response is that after marriage, they want to live with the income which they earn. It means that because of the lack of the sufficient income sources, physical labour and skill of person are the major means for livelihood. So, after marriage a person wants to live separately from this parent.

### 5.1.1 Distribution of the Households on the Basis of Family Type

Among the total sample (20 households) of the Dom community in the study site, basically two type of family, nuclear and joint have been found. The family type of Dom community are shown in the table No. 5.3 below.

**Table No. 5.4: Distribution of the Households on the Basis of Family Type**

S.No.	Family Type	Household	Percentage
		Number	
1.	Nuclear	12	60
2.	Extended	8	40
Total		20	100

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Above table shows that out of 20 households, only 7 households (i.e. 35%) were extended and 13 households (i.e. 65%) were nuclear. It shows that the joint family system is undergoing change gradually. The Dom community of the study sites prefers to live in nuclear family.

### 5.2 Rites of Passage of the Dom Community

Everybody's life passes through different stages in different periods. In every stage, he/she performs different ritual ceremonies. Rites of birth, marriage and death are the main rites of passage in Hinduism and these are called Sanskar. The word "Sanskar" means religious purification rites and ceremonies for sanctifying the body, mind and intellect of an individual so that he/she may become a full-fledged member of the community. These Sanskar also create an awareness of social status and privileges of the individual.

The processes of the performance of rites of passage are different in every community. Therefore, their ways of performing rituals and some elaborate of these rituals and

institutions are necessary to know how they are helpful in the substance of the community. And on the other hand, it should be necessary to know to what extent are they preserving or changing their traditional rituals, which are maintaining the social structure of a society. The Dom community is also found performing these Sanskars according to their own culture.

### **5.2.1 Birth Rite**

Birth is the universal fact of human life, when a man and a woman get married; they are socially permitted to have sexual relations. After the conjugal life, they give birth to children and their social life start.

Among the Dom community, when the member of the family know that one has become pregnant they begin to prepare for the day of delivery. They start to collect more chickens for feeding to the mother after delivery. During pregnancy, no special care of mother is taken. With regard to food, there are not set rules. The pregnant woman is required to eat enough rice, meat, pulses, green vegetables, milk, ghee etc. but because of poverty, they could not get special type of diet.

In matter of sexual intercourse, no ritual restriction exists during the period of pregnancy. According to key informants a man may continue to cohabit with his wife till the delivery time. During the time of delivery, they take help of a woman called Sudeni (a local chamar woman) who knows something about delivery, but not about special health care and who gives birth to a baby is called Sutkeri and her family and clan members observe birth pollution for 6 days.

### **5.2.2 Chhaithi (Sixth Day Ceremony/Nwaran /Naming Ceremony)**

Chhaithi is performed on the sixth day after the birth of the child. This ritual is performed believing God writes the fate of the child on that day. At the same time (sixth day of birth) the naming ceremony (Nwaran) is celebrated. The name of newly born baby is given by relatives of the baby. The purification of birth pollution is also done on the same day.

### **5.2.3 Bhat Khuwai (First Feeding)**

There is no classical rule for any rituals in the Dom community. A baby is given food after 5-6 months of his/her birth. There is no special ritual for first feeding purpose like as Hindus other caste's society.

### **5.2.4 Mundan (First Shaving)**

When the child's hair is cut first, it is called Mundan. The child is placed on his mother's lap and the hair is cut by a barber. While the hair is being cut the mother makes sure that the hairs do not fall on the ground, so she collects them in the anchal or tip of sari, spread out under the child's head. The collected hair is taken and thrown into a river. This ritual is performed in very simple manner. No other work is performed on that day.

### **5.2.5 Marriage**

Marriage is a socially recognized institution for having legitimate sexual relationship between a man and a woman for the protection, upbringing, maintenance and socialization of the children through establishing a family. It is a strong institution in Hindu society and perhaps every other society. According to social rule and regulations and their belief system, types and forms of marries vary widely. In the Dom community, especially three types of marriage systems are in practice.

1. Magi Bibah (Arrange Marriage)
2. Jari Bibah (Payment of Compensation)
3. Inter-caste Marriage.

#### **5.2.5.1 Magi Bibah (Arrange Marriage/Traditional Type of Marriage)**

In the arrange marriage system among Doms, the initiative is supposed to take place from the bridegroom's side or bride's side both. When the parents of a boy or girl want to marry their son or daughter, they request to other parents who has a son or a daughter. Generally the Doms marry their children at the age of adolescents.



They practice marriage by negotiation and elopement. Marriage with one's mother's brother's daughter with one's father's sister's daughter and with one's elder brother's widow is permissible.

Marriage rituals are performed at the bride's residence and the marriage feast is hosted by the bride's party. The marriage rituals include sagun, lagan, kalsa, samdhi, dhoti and bidai. The nuptial ceremony is performed at the bride groom's residence. Vermilion, glass-bangles and bindi are the marriage symbols for women. They practice monogamy but polygamy is also allowed. Some clothes and utensils are given to the bride as dowry and cash, pigs, different kinds of assets etc. are given to the bridegroom as dowry.

On the occasion of wedding ceremony the janti and other Doms enjoy and quarrel to each other by taking domestic wine and eating feast. Another day the janti returns grooms home with bride. On this happy occasion in the groom's home, all their kins and neighbors are invited to a feast (domestic wine, pig's meat, rice and other items provided for a feast).

#### **5.2.5.2 Jari Bibah (Payment of Compensation)**

The Dom community practices and accepts polygamy one after another or simultaneously. A man can marry with another woman if he dislikes his first wife and keeps more than one wife but if a woman dislikes her first husband, she elopes with other man. Her previous husband cannot compel her to live with him rather he can claim an expenditure he made while marrying her, from her new husband. This cost paid by a man to his wife's previous husband, is called Jari, such practice exists even today. The cost of Jari may comprise cash.

Nowadays, though the term Jari itself is not used in legal term, give and take is considered as the compensation for the expenditure of the first husband. The amount of such Jari or compensation is determined by the respected persons of the community or by neighboring community. There is no fixed rules for it. It depends upon the whim of decision makers who belong to the dominant part of people of the community.

### **5.2.5.3 Inter-Caste Marriage**

In the past, if someone married with other caste person, he would be out of the caste. Water and other things touched by him were not accepted by others. If the rule breaker wanted to enter in the caste, he had to be whipped and also he had to pay some money, decided by the community members as compensation.

Nowadays, especially after 2046, the situation has changed a lot. Education, mass communication, state law, close interaction with other caste people etc. are playing a vital role in minimizing the caste based discrimination.

In the Dom community there is also a trend in favour of the inter-caste marriage from older to younger generation. From the in-depth observation, it was found that there was one Dom who had got married with Halkhor's girl who had four children but no one of other castes had got married with the Dom's girl.

### **5.2.6 Murtuary or Death Rites**

When a person dies, the dead body is cremated in any area or at the side of the river called Kamala khola and Ggan khola by sons and other relatives. At that time, the dead body is tied with white cloth. All the relatives and close neighbours participate in the funeral procession. If the dead person is old or adult, he/she is burned but if the dead person is a baby or child, he/she is buried. The burning process of corpse initiated by his/her sons and some other relatives too, and by finishing the burning process all the participants of the funeral procession take bath in river, pond or tube well.

Family members and clan members associated with deceased are also ritually polluted. No Pooja (Worship) or any religious function can be performed during polluted period (12 days). Death pollution, in Dom community, is purified by son-in-law (Juwai) or Nephew (Bhanja) on 13<sup>th</sup> day of death. On the 13<sup>th</sup> day of death, the sons and male clan relatives shave their head and cut their nails.

On the purification ceremony (13 day of death), the family gives a feast to the members who participated in funeral procession on that day. Before eating the salt on that day, the purification is employed.

The higher caste people don't participate in funeral procession as they may be the neighbours.

### **5.3 Divorce/Separation**

According to the Hindu Sanskar, the marriage is sacrament and sacred union. It does not dissolve easily. The man and his wife are supposed to be found to each other even after the death of either of them. Therefore, whatever the situation exists, they have to comprise and readjust with each other. But nowadays this view has been undergoing change. When there is no good relationship between wife and husband, they got divorce.

Although social opinion is against the divorce, it continues to exist in every society.

In Brahmin's and Chhetri's family, the social status of a divorced woman is not good.

She is considered as a bad woman.

Marriage bound in Dom community can be dissolved in two ways, first by resorting to regular divorce procedure and wife run away with her lover as the second. Under the system of formal divorce, both the parties mutually agree to break the marriage bound by signing the divorce papers called chhod-patra. But none of the parties can affect a divorce by his or her own unilateral decision. But the second method is given enough liberty to the woman to dissolve marriage. A woman, when dissatisfied with her husband, picks up a new lover and runs away to live with him. This method is more prevalent among the Dom community.

### **5.4 Remarriage of Women and Widow**

In the past, remarriage of a woman/widow was not considered as a good. But in untouchable castes, it has been existed since a long time. In the Dom community it was not allowed in the past but now it is being practiced. Today if a Dom woman's husband

leaves her or dies, she can set marriage with another man. But the social status of the remarried woman is not better than once married woman. Similarly, widow marriage is also being practiced, although it is not considered good.

## **5.5 Festivals**

Nepalese people celebrate various festivals according to their culture and tradition. They worship various Gods and Goddesses and enjoy themselves by eating, drinking and dancing. So it can be said that Nepalese people know how to live in pleasure. The festivals which Nepalese people celebrate are associated with one or other of the divinities, held sacred either in the Hindu, Buddhist or Muslim theology.

The Dom community of the study sites celebrates festivals as other Hindu do. Dashain, Laxmi Pooja, (Deepawali), Maghe Sakranti, Chhatha etc. are main festivals of the Dom community of the study site. The ways of their celebrating is given briefly as below:

### **5.5.1 Dashain**

Dashain is the greatest festival of Hindu. The Dom community also celebrates it. Dashain is celebrated for two weeks, which is performed with different kinds of religious task. In preparation of Dashain, every house is ceremonially cleaned with animal (Cow, Ox) dung and freshed for the visitation of Goddess Durga and long waited return of distant and nearby family members.

On the occasion of Dashain, they buy new clothes (Dresses) and eat delicious food with pahur's meat and taking domestic wine.

### **5.5.2 Laxmi Pooja (Deepawali or Tihar)**

Another festival of the Dom community, as other Hindus is Deepawali which is also known as Tihar. This is celebrates for five days. Goddess of wealth, Laxmi, is worshipped on this festival, specially on the third day of Tihar which known as Laxmi Pooja. On this day, light is lit on every window, door, courtyard and wall. It means to please Laxmi, who loves light.

### **5.5.3 Chhattha Parva**

Chhatha Parva is the greatest festival on Terai region which is celebrated for six days. It is performed with different kinds of religious task. People pray with sun and moon for good health by providing different kinds of sweets, fruits and green vegetables plant in this festival. As other Hindus, the Dom community also celebrate Chhatha Parva.

### **5.5.4 Maghe Sakranti**

The first day of Magh is celebrated as Maghe Sakranti. On the occasion, they like to eat Khichari (A kind of dish made by mixture of rice, pulses and til. The festival is celebrated as a belief of long life. The Dom community eat pig's meat, Rice and drink domestic wine.

### **5.5.5 Jur Sital**

This festival is celebrated on the first day of Baishakh. Baishakh Purnima is the main day for this festival. They welcome the New Year and farewell the past year. On this day, elder people give blessings by sprinkling fresh water on the head to those relatives who are younger in relation as well as in age. They celebrate this festival happily and hopefully to get happiness. They cook rice, pulse, vegetables, curd, meat etc.

### **5.5.6 Naga Panchami**

This is devoted to the worship of the Nagas, the divine serpents. Pictures of the Naga are stuck over the doorposts of all the houses in the morning as protective spells. On this day, Dom people use cow-dung to make model of serpent and display on the wall of their house and worship by offering flowers, incense, milk and apply paste of red power and „laba of paddy. One of the important aspects of Naga Panchami is that, if the snake goods are well fed and their images are widely displayed on this special day it is believed that family will be blessed and protected from drought and famine, death from snake bite and disease, loss of processions and calamity the collapse of names and buildings.

### **5.5.7 Chaurachan**

Chaurachan is celebrated with great enthusiasm with an unflinching belief of being blessed with son, have his/her wishes fulfilled and wealth as per one's desire. Also during this festival, people worship moon in the late evening and take food like rice pudding, puri, etc.

### **5.5.8 Faguwa (Hori or Holi)**

Holi is the festival of flying colour in the day of full moon of the Falgun. The Dom community observes this festival as one of the most important festivals with the religious significance of Holika's death on this particular day and celebrates this each year. Everybody, young or old, boys or girls celebrate this festival happily using different types of colours. They put coloured on each other's body and face, this festival also signal to the beginning of spring season. They eat special sweet dish. Malpuwa (made from flour, sugar and milk), sel, puri, and also drink alcohol and other drinks mixed with "Bhang and Dhaturu". They reach door to door of relatives or friends with dancing singing Hori song and colouring each other.

### **5.6 Food Habits**

Every community has its own food habits. Though the Dom community has no any distinct food habits, they usually take two principal meals. The first is taken at about ten o'clock and the second after the sun set. Though they prefer to eat rice but their food items may be any things (rice, wheat etc.) because their food items depend on what they get from their occupation.

The Dom community is non-vegetarians. They keep cock, pigs and goat for income and meat, when their relatives or guests visit their home, rice and chicken are cooked. They even borrow rice from neighbours in such occasions. People feel ashamed if they have to serve wheat. Smoking beedies/cigarette, drinking wine and chewing betel leaf are quite common among the Dom community. If some relatives visit a family, the family feels necessary to treat him nicely offering him wine, beedies/cigarette and betel leaf.

## **5.7 Dress and Ornaments**

According to the key informants, the traditional type of dresses of male Doms are Kurta, (a type of shirt), Lungi or Dhoti and the female Doms traditional dresses are sarees and blouse. The female's traditional ornaments are silver or aluminum earrings, nathiya (a silver bangle wearing in nose) etc.

Nowadays, shirt, Dhoti is worn by old Doms and Pant, Shirt, T-shirt, Shoes are worn by young male Doms. Blouse, Maxi, Sarees are worn by married women and Mini-skirts, T-shirt, Maxi, Suruwal, are worn by unmarried girls. Because of the poverty, the quality of clothes and ornaments are always low. The female Doms wear Earrings, Phuli, Tilhari etc. which are made of brass, silver, aluminum and plastics.

## **5.8 Education**

Education is an essential factor for accelerating the development of any community. If people are educated, their living standard also improves. Thus education plays a vital role in developing knowledge and skill of the people.

In the past, the Dalits did not send their children to school. Before the establishment of democracy in 1950, no Dalits were given a chance to enter the school education. Therefore, the majority of the Dalits and lower caste are still far behind in the field of education.

Hence, the Dom community is Dalit (backward and depressed) caste. The community was deprived of education before the promulgation of New Civil code 1964. Even today, they lag behind in the field of education.

## **5.9 Language**

The language of the Dom community at the study sites is Maithili Maghi. It is different from Nepali and other languages. Most of the Doms of the study site know to speak Maithili language as their native language but they use Nepali and Hindi languages as lingua franca.

## **5.10 Religion**

Religion is a part of culture. Each and every community of the world does have its own religious tradition. The religion of every ethnic group is interwoven with their religious processes.

The Dom community of the study is strongly said that they are Hindu. They worship Hindu Gods and Goddesses like Laxmi, Sita, Ram, Krishna, Vishnu, Durga, Kali etc. They also worship their own Kul Devata (Deities). The deities are Goraiya, Gahil, Kali, Banni, Khatma, etc. They worship their deities in the night of Navami of great festival Dashain. They think that pleasure and misery are directly related with the religion.



## **CHAPTER – VI**

### **SOCIO-ECONOMIC LIFE AND ITS CHANGING PATTERN**

World is changing. In fact, change is inevitable. Thus, Nepali society and its components too must be in course of change and that's going on. Due to which Dom community also does not remain unchanged. The socio-cultural and economic life of Dom community is apparently changing. This chapter focuses on this concern.

#### **6.1 Traditional Occupation of Dom Community**

It is already mentioned that traditional occupation of the Dom community is grave digging, cremating dead bodies and making a variety of baskets from the bamboo. But the situation has changed a lot. The Dom community is related with making a variety of baskets from a bamboo leaving grave digging and cremating dead bodies now. Nowadays young Doms does not like to do traditional occupation, they like to do work as a sweeper in GOs, NGOs, or INGOs and some of them are working as a sweeper in GOs.

#### **6.2 Occupation of Dom Community**

In absence of occupation and sufficient income sources, people cannot meet their daily needs and demands for the family. Occupational status plays vital role in the promotion of individual and community's status.

The following table gives a glimpse of the occupational status of the Dom community of the study site.

**Table No. 6.1: Distribution of the Respondents by Their Occupation**

S.N.	Occupation	Individuals	Percentage
1.	Bamboo Work	35	36.45
2.	Foreign Employment (India and Gulf)	15	15.62
3.	Sweeping	5	5.20
4.	Agriculture, Domestic Work & animal husbandry	11	11.45
5.	Do not working	25	26.04
6.	Contract Labour	4	4.16
	Total	96	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2018

The above table shows that the main occupation of the Dom community was the work of bamboo which has occupied the highest number (i.e. 36.45%). It was followed by foreign employment (service in India and Gulf countries), which has occupied (i.e. 15.62%), similarly Agriculture, Domestic work and animal husbandry (i.e. 11.45%), sweeping (i. e. 5.20%) and contract labour (i.e. 4.16%) of the total respondents. The huge numbers of respondents are Children (i.e. 26.04%) and they cannot do work

### **6.3 Land Holding of Dom Community**

In an agrarian economy, the extent of ownership of land is the main indicator of relative economic status of people. The following table gives the land holding pattern of the Dom community.

**Table No. 6.2: Land Holding Pattern of Households of the Dom community**

S. No.	Agricultural	Cultivated	Rented out	No. of	Percentage
	Land(in kattha)	Ownself		Households	
1.	Landless completely	-	-	18	90
2.	<5 kattha	-	Yes	1	5
3.	<10 kattha	Yes	-	1	5
4.	<25 kattha	-	-	0	0
	Total			20	100

Source: Field Survey, 2018

The above table shows that most of the Doms are landless. Among 20 households, 18 households (i.e. 90%) were completely landless and 1 households (i.e. 5%) among them had less than 10 kattha. Similarly, 1 household (i.e. 5%) had less than 5 Kattha.

During the observation it was found that the land which was with the Dom community was low quality and had no any access of irrigation. Therefore the productivity was always very low.

#### **6.4 Food Sufficiency of Dom Community**

**Table No. 6.3: Distribution of the Households by Their Food Sufficiency**

Food Sufficiency Months	No. of HHs	Percentage
Below 3 months	1	5
4-6 months	1	5
No food sufficiency	18	90
Total	20	100

Source: Field Survey, 2018

The above table shows that among the total households of the Dom community, only 1 households, (i.e. 5%) had to meet less than 3 months of their food requirement form their own agricultural production and only 1 household (i.e. 5%) had to meet upto 4 to 6

months of their food requirement from their own agricultural production. Out of the total 20 households, 18 households, (i.e. 90%) had no any agricultural production because they had not agricultural land.

Thus, it is clear that the Dom community can't survive only on their own agricultural production.

### **6.5 Livestock of Dom Community**

Livestock is also an important source of income of rural people. It supports the farming activity. It is also a source of protein for people. The importance of domestic animals is not limited only to economic aspects. Some animals are socio-culturally and religiously more important in Hindu society.

In the Dom community, they tame different types of domestic animals but in very few numbers. The number of domestic animals and birds is given in the table.

**Table No. 6.4: Livestock Keeping in the Dom Community**

<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Livestock</b>	<b>No. of Households</b>	<b>No. of Livestock</b>
1.	Pig	20	65
2.	Hen	16	120
3.	Duck	12	34
4.	Goat	7	12
Total		-	231

Source: Field Survey, 2018

The above table shows that the number of livestock per household was limited. Four different types of domesticated animals are tamed only for domestic consumption but not for commercial purpose.

The number of domestic animals was not large because from the observation, it was found that there was no forest nearby for cattle raising. Some respondents explained that for cattle raising, the limited landholding is a severe constraint. It was also found that

livestock products like milk and ghee will not be bought in market from untouchable people like Doms. So, the Dom community does not like to tame domestic animals in large scale.

Thus, it appears that the animal husbandry in some extent is directly influenced by the limited landholding and their being untouchable caste.

## **6.6 Citizenship Status and Doing vital Registration**

All the people of the country have to the right to get their citizenship to be a real citizen of the country. Citizenship is a real certificate of the citizen of the country which plays vital role in daily activities as well as academic and administrative fields. Similarly, all the people of the country have the responsibility to register their marriage, birth of children, death of family members in government office (V.D.C/Municipality).

**Table No. 6.5: Distribution of the Respondents by Their Citizenship Status**

<b>Citizenship Status</b>	<b>No. of the Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Got Citizenship	34	35
Not Got Citizenship	62	65
Total	96	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2018

The above table reveals that out of the total 96 respondents of 20 household of the study site, 35% respondents had got citizenship but 65% respondents had not got citizenship yet due to different reasons: Age factor (out of 96 respondents 48s (i.e. 50%) are below 15 years old), not availability of related documents, lack of money, lack of awareness, tedious administrative procedures, being cancelled citizenship certificate on 2054 B.S. by government and so on.

## **6.7 Relation of the Dom community with Other Caste People**

According to Hindu caste system, the Dom caste belongs to untouchable. So, they cannot get all social opportunities in the Hindu society. None of the clean castes get food or

water from them and avoid physical contact where possible. But the constitution of Nepal 1963 and 1990 theoretically forbade caste based discrimination in Nepal.

However, it is found a satisfactory relationship between the Dom community and other castes. The other castes people had have necessity to come in close contact with the Dom community for various reasons (i.e. to buy basketry products).

In the democratic system a single vote is also valuable for election. So many political parties were in close contact with the Dom community in the election period. In this way, the relation is being nearer and nearer with other caste people in the study site.

### **6.8 Social status of the Dom community in Society**

The Dom community belongs to Hindu religion. But they are untouchable. The high caste people do not take food and water from them. The Dom community has its own tube-well.

But after 1990, the situation has changed a lot. The feeling of untouchable among young generation is being limited (reduced). During the interview, some Doms told that some male Tharu of the village come to their home and drink wine and eat chicken meat made by their hands.

Although, the position of the Dom community in caste hierarchy was still low, the feeling of untouchability is not rigid as it was in the past. Therefore, it can be said that the social status of the Dom community in the society is gradually improving.

### **6.9 Contemporary Adaptation Problems of the Dom Community**

Feeling of untouchability is not so rigid as it was in the past in the society, but the Dom community is still facing adaptation problems. First of all, they are sudra and their traditional occupation are grave-digging, cremating dead bodies and making a variety of baskets form the bamboo which are known as the dirty works.

In the Dom community “drinking wine” and “quarreling” among themselves are very common. During the field work, the researcher also observed their quarrels many times.

Researcher found that most of the Dom community people was taking domestic wine, beedies, cigarettes, betel leaf and so on. The Dom community has divided works on the basis of gender/sex. The male Doms only can control economic resources of the family but females have to be done domestic work and other works including their occupation. It is found that the Dom community is doing marriage to their children in babyhood also but this trend is gradually reducing now. It is also found that this community can say the surrounding villages to other Doms in terms of money or other assets. Seeing their such types of bahaviours, other caste people hate them.

In this way, other caste people do not like to give them equal status as themselves. Therefore, “adaptation” is being difficult for them is a society. Good education and awareness generating programmes are very essential for them.

#### **6.10 Reaction Against Social Exclusion**

Generally, social exclusion means discrimination among different castes concerning with activities which are directly or indirectly associated with a society. The Dom community considered that social exclusion is our problem in the ways of improving and enhancing their life style. The reactions of the Dom community against social exclusions are:

- a) Social exclusion should be changed.
- b) Government should take policy against social exclusion. Government should give more rights to minority groups and Dalits in different fields.
- c) It is not good trend/process of development, so we all communities take policies against it.
- d) COs, NGOs, and INGOs can take policies and strategies which lead to reduce social exclusions.

#### **6.11 Changes in Socio-Cultural and economic Life of the Dom Community**

Change is universal fact, so socio-cultural and socio-economic life of the Dom community is being changed gradually. In the past, the Dom community used to live in

joint family, but the joint family system is now being declined at the study site. Only 8 families out of 20 families live in joint family and rest of all (i.e. 12) families live in nuclear family.

The cause of breaking joint family system is mainly economic. During the field work, it was asked them why they liked to live in nuclear family, they replied that they liked to live in nuclear family because they liked to live with income which they earned. They do not like to give their income to others. Similarly, marriage system is also changing. In the past, early marriage (babyhood marriage) was in practice but now it is reducing gradually.

Rites of the Dom community are also changing today. Due to the poverty, they are leaving to celebrate Chhaithi or Nwaran. The father or mother himself/herself gives name to the baby.

Murtuary or death rite is also changing. Nowadays, the Dom community of the study site prefers to bury rather than burning because burning is expensive there. Poor Doms cannot afford the wood for burning purification ceremony of death rite is being simple because of poverty.

Celebrating different festival is a character of Nepalese people. The Dom community also celebrates different festivals, but the celebrating style is changing. Nowadays, the Dom community of the study site is too much affected by the neighbouring castes. They celebrate Dashain, Deepawali, Chhatha, Maghe Sakranti, Holi, Jur Sital and Chaurachan.

Dressing pattern and ornaments are also changing. In real, more changes can be seen in dressing pattern in Dom community of the study site. It is very difficult to identify the Dom community both male and female at the study site seeing their dresses. They now wear as upper castes. Shirt, Pant, Jacket are popular among male Doms. Saree, Blouse, are popular among married females and Suruwal, Kurta, Shirt, T-shirt and Maxi are popular among unmarried females. But because of their poverty the quality of dresses is always low.



Ornaments are simple although they do not wear traditional types of ornaments. Female Doms wear Tilhari, Mangalsutra, Ring, Earring, Bindi, Nail polish, Cosmetic powder, Bangles as ornaments. But because of their poverty, they are made of silver, aluminum and plastics. They wear cheap and low quality ornaments.

Educational status of the Dom community is being changed at the study sites. School enrollment is being started. Now, the parents like to send their children to school.

Change in the study sites can also be seen on the religion. Now, their ways of worshipping of Gods and Deities has become quite flexible. They do not follow their religion more rigidly. Although they are still Hindu in religion, but changes can be seen in performances. Young Doms are not interested in worship of Gods and Deities.

Dom community is being changed due to its changed occupation, approach to education, efforts of NGOs and government policy. Especially they began to go to abroad to earn and send their children to the school. The concept about Dom is getting changed in other community.

At the present, huge changes have occurred in traditional occupation and life style of Dom community. In previous, they were known as carrier of dead body but today they are changed into agent of sanitation of the city. Similarly, they used to sustain on Bamboo work and pig rearing but today they are used to living standard life by getting employed in foreign employment.

Political awareness is also being increased in the Dom community. They are involved in vote casting and aware of their right and getting forward in their participation in social and political movement as well. The Dom being deprived of land and citizenship due to lack of awareness are also now taking step on the work of gaining own land and citizenship. Not only that, changes are seen in their speaking and clothing too. There is not the condition of keeping them far as it was in the past. Due to the political change, the Dom and the other communities are living in the same place and have begun to cooperate. In this way, the further more changes are likely to occur in the days ahead.

## CHAPTER – VII

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 7.1 Summary

The National Dalit Commission noted 15 distinct cultural groups within Terai Dalits but the 2001 census identified only 11 groups within them. They are as follows: Tatma, Khatwe, Paswan, Musahar, Bantar, Dhobi, Chamar, Chidimar, Patharkatta/Kushwadia, Dom and Halkhor. They have the plural cultural identities: each cultural group has its own culture in terms of performing life cycle rituals and maintaining the closeness and distance to each other in their day-to-day life. The common features among the Terai Dalits are: i) They are Hindus and ii) They speak Maithili as their mother tongue. The Nepali, the national language of Nepal, is the second language for most of the Dalit groups of this site. Within this larger Terai Dalit category, the Dom community is living in the Terai areas, especially in the eastern and central region of Nepal. Detailed sociological/anthropological or cultural study on Terai Dalits is virtually non-existent.

From Rural and Development point of view, the study also seeks to study as to what extent Dom's social organization, clans, family and marriage system has changed and to what extent Doms have been sanskritised. Attempt has made to study their present socio-economic condition, cultural and demographic conditions and the present situation of their traditional occupation. It has also attempted to find out their new sources of livelihood and whether they have benefited from the development activities in Nepal. So, the main problem of the present study is to seek answers of the above mentioned questions.

The objective of this study is to find out the changing socio-economic, cultural and demographic status of the Dom community.

This study is based on descriptive research design which may consider as appropriate and the best for the analysis of this type of research study. It is descriptive because it describes the ethnography and the socio-economic status of the Dom community.

## 7.2 Major Findings

The major findings of this study are mentioned respectively in the below:

- ) The Terai Dalits are the poorest group in Nepali society. Throughout history, they have lived in symbiosis with other sections of people who are generally higher in social, economic and political status than them. In the study site, most of the households (i.e. 90%) are landless. In terms of food sufficiency 90% of the Dom community of the study site has got chronic shortage of food throughout the year.
- ) The Dom community has its own traditional caste occupation. This community is used to make basketry products and sell them. This community sells surrounding villages within the caste in terms of money and other assets. This community also tames pigs, hens, goats and other domestic animals. Women do more household work and basketry work than men. The wood and domestic animal-dung are the main fuel resources even today. Attitude towards saving is minimal. When they earn little money some portion of that money goes to drinking domestic wine and so on.
- ) As a whole the Dom community is the poorest group among the Terai Dalits though it is the larger single Dalit group numerically in the Terai, Nepal.
- ) Though untouchability has been abolished by law in Nepal in 1963, our study shows persistence of untouchability in relation to the exchange of water and food with communities considered to be higher in social hierarchy. In some cases the commensal norms have been weakened at public places such as market areas, etc. There is virtually little discrimination in schools in sitting together or while sharing and drinking water to each other. the intra-Dalit caste - based discrimination is very high, keeping intact their own vertical nature of caste hierarchy and maintaining strictly their own sense of superiority and inferiority in dealing with people of different communities.

- ) The process of sanskritization, however, is showing effects to the Dom community, the community started giving up their family names which is considered derogatory and put family names which are respectable locally. For example, the Dom prefer to call Mallik than Dom or Domra.
- ) Except for the other Terai Dalits the Dom community has no level of education as a whole but it is moving towards the positive trend. The literacy rate of the Dom community is the lowest than other Terai Dalits and thus poses a great challenge for the government to provide education for all.
- ) The Terai Dalit women are the least educated group, but culturally they are more free, open and receptive group than the high caste Hindu women of the Terai. A widow among the Terai Dalit can remarry without problem and there is less social stigma attached to mix up with men within or outside of the community.
- ) Social change can evolve from a number of different sources, including contact with other societies (diffusion), changes in the ecosystem (which can cause the loss of natural resources or widespread disease).
- ) Women are more sufferers than males within the Dom community. As the Dom community is systematically integrated in the patriarchal model of the Hindu caste structure, their social and economic status is much lower to that of males.

### 7.3 Conclusion

Nepali society and its components are in course of change and that's going on. Due to which Dom community also does not remain unchanged. The socio-cultural and economic life of Dom community is apparently changing. At the present, huge changes have occurred in traditional occupation and life style of Dom community.

The National Dalit Commission noted 15 distinct cultural groups within Terai Dalits but the 2011 census identified only 11 groups within them. They are as follows: Tatma, Khatwe, Paswan, Musahar, Bantar, Dhobi, Chamar, Chidimar, Patharkatta/Kushwadia, Dom and Halkhor. They have the plural cultural identities: each cultural group has its own culture in terms of performing life cycle rituals and maintaining the closeness and distance to each other in their day-to-day life.

The common features among the Terai Dalits are: i) They are Hindus and ii) They speak Maithili as their mother tongue. The Nepali, the national language of Nepal, is the second language for most of the Dalit groups of this site. Within this larger Terai Dalit category, the Dom community is living in the Terai areas, especially in the eastern and central region of Nepal. Detailed sociological/anthropological or cultural study on Terai Dalits is virtually non-existent.

According to the 2001 census, the population of Dalits as a whole stands at 2,675,817 which constitute 11.6 percent of the country's total. Of the total Dalit population the population of Terai Dalits is only 886,839 or 35.4 percent. Among the Terai Dalits, the Musahar and Chamar are the largest groups in population size; the population size of these two groups combined account 49.8 percent of the total Terai Dalit population. The Musahar is the largest population group (number: 269,661 or 30.6%) and the Dom is relatively a small group (8,931 or 1.0%) among the Terai Dalits. The average household size is higher (6 members and above) than the national level, suggesting high fertility in the Dom community. The sex ratio is also high, indicating a high female mortality in the study site.

## **7.4 Recommendation**

The major issue of concern is poverty of the Terai Dalit communities in Nepal. Poverty has wide ramifications in the life of the Terai Dalit groups as it is systematically tied with landlessness, lack of enough food, education, health and participating in politics, particularly in the local government bodies. In addition, the caste-based discrimination is paramount and observed in all the study site. Despite all efforts in the fields of education and health by the government and various NGOs/INGOs the impacts of these programs are still minimal in the areas of study. So recommendations are out lined here on five major areas: caste-based discrimination, economy, health, education and political representation.

### **1. Caste-based Discrimination**

Dalit discrimination is identified as the primary are of concern in the study site. Recommendations for gradually minimizing the caste based discriminations are:

- i. Putting both the Dalit and non-Dalit groups together and creating awareness among them. The lesson is: Caste-based discrimination is harmful for the development of society as a whole. This has to be done bringing a lot of illusions from the different parts of the world, b) punish all those people who discriminate people in their day-to-day life, endorsing strong legal measures.
- ii. Intra-caste based discrimination is also widely observed in the study site and this has effected the larger goal of Dalit solidarity among Terai Dalits. Culturally they are deeply ingrained in caste based discrimination and there is a strict hierarchical order in terms of food, marriage and rituals among the Terai Dalit. In other words, culturally all of them are endogamous groups and one group does not accept food and water from the other member of the different Dalit group. Recommendations for this issue are: a) increase dialogues among the various Dalit groups of the Terai which should focus on accepting food and water from each other; ii) increase inter-caste marriage among the Terai Dalit groups. These both activities can be done gradually with the help of "Mainjan", the traditional headman of each community in the area. The dialogue should start among the Mainjans of various cultural groups.

## **2. Economy**

As most of the Dom community is landless or marginal landholders, it is not wise to focus their attention on agriculture and animal husbandry. The Dom community only raises pigs. The only alternative available to improve their economy is to sharpen their traditional skills. The Dom community of the study site possesses some level of skill in their traditional occupation, but this skill has yet to develop fully to compete in the market with other groups. This needs both: better technology to utilize their skill fully and the market of their finished products. The NGOs/INGOs and the government can play significant role to improve their skills further while providing of guarantee for the finished products. For example, this community has an excellent skill in making bamboo baskets.

## **3. Education**

Though the education is gradually not taking a good shape among the Terai Dalit communities, there is need of concerted effort both by the government and the NGOs/INGOs to improve the level of education by sex and age in the study site. Recommendations for improving the present level of education by age and sex are:

- i. Include the skills of Terai Dalit, especially the Dom community in the informal, formal and vocation level educational program so that Dalit children are prepared mentally to upgrade their traditional skills; other children will also be largely benefited from this skill enhancement training program; it will further improve interaction between the Dalit and non-Dalit students.
- ii. Make the quota system for Terai Dalit children, especially to the Dom community for getting admission and provide financial support for getting all levels of education, including the technical courses such as the medicine and engineering. The Dalit parents will be more motivated to send their children to the school when they know that the government has reserved the quota for their children, including the areas like medicine and engineering.

## **4. Health**

Recommendations for improving health situations of three communities are:

- i. Create awareness among the Terai Dalits (the Dom community) for the use of private latrine and its benefits in avoiding diarrhea and other diseases.
- ii. Enhance the knowledge and practice of family planning services to both the eligible females (15-19 years of age) and males so that fertility rate of these groups could be curtailed gradually.

### **5. Political Representation**

There policy should be changed in such a way that some seats at the higher level should be reserved for the Terai Dalit groups, especially the Dom community so that they can come to the power which ultimately influences to the district and local bodies.



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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX – I

#### Caste/Ethnic Composition of Siraha – district, Nepal

Caste/Ethnic Groups	Total	Male	Female	Percentage
Chhetri	7588	3865	3723	1.33
Brahman – Hill	7664	3920	3744	1.34
Magar	7045	3566	3479	1.23
Tharu	27252	13669	13583	4.78
Tamang	6238	3219	3019	1.09
Newar	7559	3962	3597	1.32
Muslim	41478	20939	20539	7.27
Kami	2734	1428	1306	0.47
Yadav	137622	71866	65756	24.14
Rai	1825	932	893	0.32
Gurung	315	153	162	0.05
Damai/Dholi	786	391	395	0.13
Limbu	765	405	360	0.13
Thakuri	1038	546	492	0.18
Sarki	2517	1238	1279	0.44
Teli	28186	14507	13679	4.94
Chamar/Harijan/Ram	26670	13507	13163	4.67
Koiri	31453	16334	15119	5.51
Kurmi	7061	3608	3453	1.23
Sanyasi	1008	525	483	0.17
Dhanuk	22138	11210	10928	3.88
Musahar	31519	16032	15487	5.70
Dusadh/Paswan/Pasi	15775	8131	7644	2.76
Sherpa	649	348	301	0.11
Sonar	2136	1111	1025	0.37

Kewat	12539	6280	6259	2.20
Brahman – Tarai	4589	2364	2225	0.80
Baniya	7375	3821	3554	1.29
Gharti/Bhujel	610	328	282	0.10
Mallah	12107	6194	5913	2.12
Kalwar	2784	1411	1373	0.48
Kumal	785	406	379	0.13
Hajam/Thakur	8852	4584	4268	1.55
Kanu	111	56	55	0.01
Rajbansi	48	20	28	0.00
Sunuwar	2706	1409	1297	0.47
Sudhi	16217	8445	7772	2.84
Lohar	441	225	216	0.07
Tatma	10301	5215	5086	1.80
Khatwe	7984	4148	3836	1.40
Dhobi	4176	2150	2026	0.73
Majhi	437	230	207	0.07
Nuniya	101	54	47	0.01
Kumhar	1714	868	846	0.30
Danuwar	6677	3320	3357	1.17
Haluwai	9563	5028	4535	1.67
Rajput	2102	1078	1024	0.36
Kayastha	2607	1312	1295	0.45
Badhae	3062	1570	1492	0.53
Marwadi	667	356	311	0.11
Santhal/sattar	165	71	94	0.02
Jhagar/Dhagar	1177	609	568	0.20
Bantar	1341	654	687	0.23
Barae	5207	2660	2547	0.43
Kahar	6	4	2	0.00
Gangai	3	0	3	0.00

Rajbhar	1128	599	529	0.19
Thami	1	0	1	0.00
Dhimal	17	6	11	0.00
Bhote	486	240	246	0.08
Bing/Binda	759	372	387	0.13
Bhedyar/Gaderi	535	289	246	0.09
Nurang	32	15	17	0.00
Yakkha	13	4	9	0.00
Darai	8	2	6	0.00
Tajpuriya	9	3	6	0.00
Chidimar	5	2	3	0.00
Pahari	4	2	2	0.00
Mali	741	385	356	0.13
Bangali	342	174	168	0.06
Chhantel	1	0	1	0.00
<b>Dom</b>	<b>1266</b>	<b>652</b>	<b>614</b>	<b>0.22</b>
Kamar	1536	785	751	0.26
Bote	7	0	7	0.00
Brahmu/Baramu	4	2	2	0.00
Gaine	4	2	2	0.00
Jirel	6	0	6	0.00
Adibasi/Janajati	209	109	100	0.03
Dura	1	0	1	0.00
Churaute	96	55	41	0.01
Meche	48	20	28	0.00
Lepcha	5	0	5	0.00
Halkhor	316	169	147	0.05
Punjabi/Sikh	198	109	89	0.03
Kisan	12	6	6	0.00
Raji	2	0	2	0.00
Byangsi	15	9	6	0.00

Dhunia	47	23	24	0.00
Jaine	33	15	18	0.00
Raute	1	1	0	0.00
Kusunda	2	0	2	0.00
Unidentified Dalit	1201	611	590	0.21
Unidentified Caste	15315	7736	7579	2.68
<b>Total</b>	<b>569880</b>	<b>292679</b>	<b>277201</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: CBS, 2001



## APPENDIX - II

### Population Composition of Dalits by Terai Region/District

District	Population	Percentage of the District Total
		<b>Population</b>
Saptari	84,429	18.1
Siraha	82,334	17.9
Parsa	62,180	16.7
Bara	68,105	16.4
Mahottari	71,808	16.3
Danusha	76,419	14.1
Rauthat	56,913	13.7
Sarlahi	61,101	12.4
Sunsari	27,877	6.0
Rupandehi	28,612	5.5
Kapilbastu	20,115	5.4
Nawalparasi	22,202	5.1
Morang	29,542	4.4
<b>Total</b>		





8. What are the main sources of cooking fuels?  
a)                    b)                    c)                    d)
9. What is your source of drinking water? .....
10. If you need indebt, where do you go to take indebt and in which rate of interest?  
.....  
a) formal sector and interest rate;.....  
b) Informal sector and interest rate:.....
11. Are you following your caste-wise occupation?  
.....  
a) Yes                    b) No
12. If No, what was your past occupation? .....
13. Why did you change your previous (past) occupation? .....
14. Do you smoke/drink?  
a) Yes                    b) No
15. Where do you go to take health service?  
a) Traditional Healer                    b) Medical  
c) Clinic                    d) Governmental Health Offices



23. What is the condition of your family in terms of work division, market approach and control in resources on the basis of sex? .....

.....

24. Is social exclusion your problem?

a) Yes                      b) No

25. If yes, what is your reaction about social exclusion? .....

.....

26. What are the reasons of doing early marriage in your caste? .....

.....

27. Why and how do your caste sell a village within the caste as an asset?

.....

## APPENDIX - IV

### Checklist for Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

1. Please, say about your origin place? .....

  - a. Inter-caste relationship.....
  - b. Caste-based discrimination.....

2. What are the main causes of your backwardness?  
.....
3. Do you want to change your traditional occupation?  
.....
4. If yes, why? .....
5. Have you seen any changes on what? In what sense? After 1990?  
.....
6. What is your reaction about social exclusion? Do they understand the term social exclusion? Better to simplify the term so that they can understand what you asking?  
.....
7. What can be done against (reduce) social exclusion? .....
10. Please evaluate what to evaluate? As whole.....

## **APPENDIX - V**

### **Checklist for Observation**

1. Settlement Pattern (where it is located):
2. Types of Houses:
3. Sanitation:
4. Condition of Children (cleanliness):
5. Location of Animal Shed:
6. Assets they have:
7.
  - a. Cleanliness of kitchen.
  - b. Cleanliness of bed room:
  - c. Cleanliness of source of water:
  - d. Cleanliness of drain.