

**Socio-Cultural Change in a Chepang Community :**  
**A Sociological Study of the Chepang in**  
**Siddhi VDC in Chitwan District**

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**Submitted by:**  
**Prem Prasad Poudel**  
**Exam Roll No. : 2800176**  
**Regd. No. : 43655 - 95**

**Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology**  
**Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur**  
**Kathmandu, Nepal**  
**2009**

**Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology  
Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur,  
Kathmandu, Nepal**

**LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION**

This is to certify that Mr. Prem Prasad Poudel has completed this dissertation entitled "**Socio-Cultural Change in a Chepang Community: A Sociological Study of the Chepang Community in Siddhi**" under my supervision and guidance. I therefore, recommend this dissertation for final approval and acceptance.

.....

Dr. Krishna Bhadur Bhattachan  
Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology  
Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur,  
Kathmandu, Nepal

Date:-12-5-2009

**Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology  
Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur,  
Kathmandu, Nepal**

**LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE**

This dissertation entitled "**Socio-Cultural Change in a Chepang Community: A Sociological Study of the Chepang Community in Siddhi**" submitted by Mr. Prem Prasad Poudel has been accepted as the partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in Sociology.

Dissertation Committee:

Head of the Department

.....

Dr. Om Prasad Gurung

Supervisor

.....

Dr. Krishna Bhadur Bhattachan

External Examiner

.....

Dr. Om Prasad Gurung

Date: .....

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**Prem Prasad Poudel**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study is mainly based on socio-cultural, economic and ecological change of Chepang people. This study shows change in social life, cultural traditions (use of natural resources) and economic activities of the Chepangs of Siddhi in last five years. The Chepang are viewed by observing their life cycle ceremonies, feasts and festivals, cultural practices dressing pattern, production and selling craft, source of income, healing practices, education, language, housing pattern in past and present. The current study covers several aspects, focusing on economic, ecological and social cultural changes and problems at Chepang communities. Since the concept of Politico-Economic perspective has been constructed to address the process of development in Chepang societies, it is unsuitable for Chepang Communities, because of primitive economy diverge qualitatively from the economy of complex society. Chepang people are considered as living in unapproachable steep and hill areas, having therefore experienced less interaction with other peoples. The modernization process has a different meaning among these peoples. It means to raise their economy to subsistence level, including the introduction of a certain amount of technology and the modification of the culture to adopt new economy.

The study clearly shows that livelihood security of these people have become precarious due to multiple factors, mainly from the practices of the state not recognizing their traditional rights of using resources for their occupation. These people are basically fisherman, gatherers, swidden cultivators using the forests located in their culturally defined territories. These areas also link to their life as they needed them

to gather various products required for their religious rituals. But their rights have been curtailed by various resource management policies and regulations of the state. Recently, government started new policy of giving up to a half of the income from the national forest to the people living in the vicinity. Yet there is another serious problem. A large proportion of these people also did not have citizenship. They are also not aware of the modern system. Now the ownership of land is required to get the citizenship, which is also necessary to get ownership on land, traditional livelihood opportunities have also been declining because of general degradation of natural resources. Over the last 15 years; 90 percent household have converted to Christian. Community forest is one of the most successful programmed of the government of Nepal, but there are many conflict in indigenous people (Chepang) are the customary users of Chiuri forest have alienated.

This thesis pay special attention on ground reality of Chepang hills area, main reasons for underdevelopment, and geographical exclusion. This area has mainly lack of access of public basic services like transportation, communication, employment, health, education and market. This inaccessibility has to lead to capability deprivation among the general mass of Chepang area. This has further led to their exclusion from national social and political arenas.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Recommendation Letter</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>Approval Sheet</i>	<i>ii</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>Abstract</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>Table of Contents</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>List of Table</i>	<i>xiii</i>
<i>List of Figure</i>	<i>xiv</i>
<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>xv</i>
<i>Glossary</i>	<i>xvi</i>

### CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1	Background of the Study	1
1.2	Statement of the Problem	4
1.3	Objectives of the Study	7
1.4	Rationale of the Study	7
1.5	Theoretical Framework	8
1.6	Flow Chart	10
1.7	Organization of the Study	10

### CHAPTER TWO REVIEW OF LITERATURE

12

### CHAPTER THREE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1	Research Design	21
3.2	Rationale of the Selection of Study Area	21
3.3	Universe and Sampling Procedures	22
3.4	Nature and Sources of Data	22
3.5	Data Collection and Research Instruments	22



3.6	Tabulation, Analysis & Interpretation of Data	24
3.7	Difficulties of Data Collection	24
3.8	Limitation of the Research	25

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA**

4.1	Brief Introduction of Chitwan District	26
4.1.1	Geographic, Demographic & Climatic Condition of The Chitwan District	27
4.1.2	Topographical Distribution of Land of Chitwan District	27
4.1.3	Forest Distribution of Chitwan District	28
4.1.4	Economic Distribution of Chitwan District	28
4.1.5	Chepang Population in Chitwan	28
4.2	Introduction of Study Area	29
4.2.1	Physical Settings of Majhwang Area	29
4.2.2	Population Distribution of VDC in Majhwang	29
4.2.3	Age and Sex Distribution of Majhwang	30
4.2.4	Population by 5 Years of Age Group and Sex	31
4.2.5	Linguistic/Ethnic Tribal Population of Majhwang	32
4.2.6	Education Status of Majhwang	33
4.3	Socio-Cultural a Description of Chepang	34
4.3.1	Family	35
4.3.2	Marriage	36
4.3.3	The Deities	37
4.3.4	Life-Cycle Ceremonies	38
4.3.5	Festivals	40
4.3.6	Pande	41
4.4	The Economy of Chepang	43
4.4.1	Livelihood Strategies of Chepang People	44
4.4.2	Distribution of Landholding	45
4.4.3	Categories of Land and Major Crops	46
4.4.4	Food Sufficiency	47
4.4.5	Involvement of the Chepang in the Different Occupation & Income	48

4.4.6	Source of Loan in Chepang	48
4.5	Ecological Condition of Study Area	49
4.5.1	Forest and Chepang	50
4.5.2	Housing Pattern of Chepang	51
4.5.3	Major Occupation of Chepang & Natural Resources	51
4.5.3.1	Agriculture	51
4.5.3.2	Livestock Raising	52
4.5.3.3	Horticulture	52
4.5.3.4	Hunting Gathering	53
4.5.4	Shifting Cultivation	53

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **RECENT CHANGE IN THE CHEPANG COMMUNITY**

5.1	Socio-Culture Change in Chepang	55
5.1.1	Major Ethnic/Caste Groups Following Christianity	55
5.1.2	Religious of Majhwang	57
5.1.3	Positive and Negative Impact of Christianity	57
5.2	Economy Change in Chepang	58
5.2.1	Chepang and Market Relation	58
5.3	Changing Patterns of Forest Resources Consumption on the Basis of Chepang People	59
5.4	Changes in Occupations and Their Wishes for the Future	60
5.5	Changing Herd Composition	61
5.6	A New Innovation Development activities	63
5.7	Community forestry	65
5.8	Chepang Involvement in Literacy Class	67
5.9	New Tourism in the Chitwan Chepang Hills	67

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **MAIN PROBLEM FOR SURVIVAL OF CHEPANG PEOPLE**

6.1	Impact of Liberalization/Urbanization/Globalization on the Indigenous Knowledge System	69
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6.2	Chepang Loss Over Traditional Lands & Forest	71
6.3	Most Effected Chepang People From National Forest/Community Forest	73
6.4	Context of Food insecurity Poverty, Illiteracy, Bad Health in Chepang Communities	74
6.5	Lack of Protect Mother Language in Chepang Peoples	75
6.6	Lack of Participation of Chepang Peoples in Formulation of Policy, Plan And Program	76
6.7	Citizenship Problem of Chepang Communities	77

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

7.1	Conclusion	79
7.2	Recommendation	82

### **References**

### **Appendix**

## **LIST OF TABLE**

Table 4.1 :	Topographic Distribution of Land	27
Table 4.2 :	Forest Distribution of Chitwan District	28
Table 4.3 :	Economic Distribution of Chitwan District	28
Table 4.4 :	Chebang Population in Chitwan	28
Table 4.5 :	Population Distribution of Siddhi VDC	30
Table 4.6 :	Age and Sex Distribution of Respondents	31
Table 4.7 :	Population by 5 Years of Age Group and Sex	31
Table 4.8 :	Linguistic/Ethnic Tribal Population of Majhwang	32
Table 4.9 :	Education Status of Chebang Community	33
Table 4.10 :	Family Types of the Respondents	35
Table 4.11 :	Livelihood Strategies of Indigenous People of the Country	43
Table 4.12 :	Livelihood Strategies of Chebang People	44
Table 4.13 :	Distribution of Land Holding	45
Table 4.14 :	Categories of Land and Major Crops	46
Table 4.15 :	Food Sufficiency	47
Table 4.16 :	Involvement of the Chebang in the Different Occupation	48
Table 4.17 :	Source of Loan in Chebang	49
Table 4.18 :	Housing Pattern of Chebang	51
Table 5.1 :	Major ethnic/caste group following Christianity by number and percentage 2001 census	56
Table 5.2 :	Religious of Majhwang	57
Table 5.3 :	Changing Patterns of Forest Resources Consumption on the Basis of Chebang People	60

Table 5.4 :	Changes in Occupation and Their Wishes for the Future	61
Table 5.5 :	Comparison of Livestock size of Two Different Period	62
Table 5.6 :	Change in Nepal's Forest Area 1954 - 2007	66
Table 5.7 :	Chepang Involvement in Literacy Class	67
Table 6.1 :	Poverty in Nepal	74
Table 6.2 :	Causes of Non Participation in Formulation of Policy, Plan and Program	76

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 4.1 :	Economic Distribution of Chitwan District	28
Figure 4.2 :	Education Status of Chepang Community	34
Figure 4.3 :	Livelihood Strategies of Chepang People	44

## LIST OF ABBREVIATION

CAED/SEACOW	=	Central for Agro-ecology development/School for Ecology Agricultural and Community Works
CBO	=	Community Based Organization
CMP	=	Chepang Mainstreaming Programme
DDC	=	District Development Committee
CBS	=	Central Bureau of Statistics
CFUGS	=	Community Forest Users Groups
EFA	=	Education for All
CF	=	Community Forestry
FORWARD	=	Forum for Rural Welfare and Agriculture Reform for Development
HMICS	=	Highly Marginalized Indigenous Communities
HDR	=	Human Development Report
NPC	=	National Planning Commission
HHs	=	Household Survey
NEFIN	=	Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities
TAK	=	Traditional Knowledge
NCA	=	Nepal Chepang Association
SNV	=	Netherlands Development Organization
PRSP	=	Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme
WTO	=	World Trade Organization
UNDP	=	United Nations Development Programme
MOFSC	=	Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation
LSGA	=	Local Self Governance Act
PCDP	=	Praja Community Development Programme
FECOFUN	=	Federation of Forest Users of Nepal
PVP	=	Praja Vikas Programme
RBA	=	Right Base Approach
NFDIN	=	National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities

## GLOSSARY

- Access : The opportunity, right or means to approach or use something.
- Adhiya : A system of sharecropping in which the landowner appropriates half of the produce as rent.
- Bari : High land lack of irrigation facility on which only dry crops such as maize, several crops, oil seed are grown.
- Cagune : A variety of millet cultivated and eaten as a cereal.
- Chhonam : Chepang's tribal festival for eating new crops. (It falls on the full moon during the month of August-September)
- Chiuri : A fruit tree widely grown at higher altitudes area of sub-tropical regions. Edible oil is also extracted from its seeds.
- Dhindo : Maize or millet porridya.
- Doka : A big basket made up of bamboo.
- Daijo : Dowry
- Ghatta : A small stone mill powered by water through wooden turbine-like devices.
- Ghaiya : A kind of rice grown on dry land.
- Jand : Liquor made from fermented rice.
- Juhelo : A kind of long millet.
- Khoriya : Slash and burn upland where shifting cultivation is practiced.
- Kachhad : A loin cloth used by villagers at the hill.
- Kachharv : A remote or interior part.



- Kipat : A system of communal land ownership prevalent among the limbus and other Mongolia communities as Tamangs, Sunwars, Chepangs, Rais and Yakhas in the hill areas.
- Muri : A volumetric unit equivalent to about 2:4 bushels, one muri consists of 20 pathis.
- NTEP : Non-timber forest products or minor forest products as some time called.
- Pathi : Traditional Nepali measure of volume, equivalent to 8 manas.
- Pandey : Traditional Chepangs healers.
- Praja : Official Nepali name given to the Chepang by the king to denote that they too are his subjects.
- Yo : Chepang name for Chiuri.
- Rin : Loan for which interest has to be paid.