

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Nepal is a small country which is considered as a multiethnic and multilingual country. Various ethnic groups inhabit the different geo-climate region of the country. There are more than 69 different tribal groups in the country with their own unique custom and language. These ethnic groups have developed their own culture based on the available natural resources connected with the country's high level of biological diversity. Their social, cultural, economics and ecological practices are in one way or the other linked to natural resource products. So, within Nepal, there is a remarkable ethnic and biological diversity and wealth of indigenous knowledge about resources with economic value (FAO, 1982 CITED BY Dannigels, 1984). The life was of an ethnic group is shaped by multiple dimensions of their niche (Barth 1981). History, available resources, socio-cultural and economic practices, ecological and political organization, absence and presence of other groups in and around their community, technology, etc., are such dimensions that play a crucial role in shaping the niche of an ethnic group. Environment is the prime moulder of human life (White 1959, Boas 1988, Harlesty 1577) the life of the Chepang is shaped by the available natural and socio-cultural environment. Occupation, food, education, festivals, land and services are dependent on the available natural resources and form their socio-cultural practices. Exploiting the available forests resources, the Chepang are involved in farming along with animal raising, hunting and gathering. The long interaction of the Chepang with the available natural resources in absence of other people made their socio-cultural and economic practices distinct from other non-Chepang groups of their surroundings.

Change is a universal and continuous phenomenon which is found in all societies at all times. The present study is an attempt to observe socio-cultural, ecological and economic changes through which the Chepang have been alienated from their resources which were their part of livelihood. The focus is given on the Chepang community of Siddhi VDC in Chitwan district. Hence, this study will investigate and analyze how the Chepang have witnessed and experienced socio-cultural, economic and environmental changes over the past few years, and how they have developed adaptive mechanisms to adjust in present situation. The socio-cultural, economic and religious practices of the ethnic groups are in one way or another linked to the natural resources and forest-products. In Nepal there is a remarkable ethnic diversity and wealth of traditional knowledge about natural resource management practices. This tribal concept is fast changing due to urbanization, industrialization, acculturation in the country and goes along with the consequent loss of traditional knowledge. The habitat and the environment as well as the tribal experience and learned useful folklore better: traditional knowledge is also fast disappearing because of deforestation, intensive farming and modernization. It is therefore, important that before the oral folklore about traditional knowledge and lost forever, it must be preserved and properly documented. The indigenous knowledge, cultural traditions, innovation, spirituality and management practices of indigenous people, and traditional practices of farming are an essential basis for both sustaining biodiversity and sustaining human life.

The Chepang are a marginal ethnic group of mid hills that hold 0.2 percent of the total population of Nepal. According to the 2001 census, the total population of the Chepang is 40,000. The Chepangs are a minority ethnic group, considered marginalized economically and politically which inhabit the hilly areas of Chitwan, Gorkha, Makwanpur and Dhading districts. Most Chepang settlement is clusters at altitudes between 2500-4000 feet above sea level. The Chepang territory looks like a *chautara* around which the highways, Prithivi Rajmarga to the north, Muglin

Bharatpur highway to the south, Tribhuvan Rajpath to the east & east-west Mahendra Highway to the south have been constructed. The land is situated to the west of Kahtmandu valley (Bista, Rai and Chaudhary, 1997). Most of the Chepang are landless and still practicing hunting and gathering for their livelihood. Usually, they build a small hut on the edge of a hill or gentle slope. The Chepangs do not have any certain occupation. Some Chepang, who engage in the production of handicrafts also do wage-labour for the neighbouring landlords or in the past worked as bonded labour. From time to time they keep roaming in the jungle to hunt beats bears and collect *kandamulas*, *githa*, *vyakur*, *tarul*. They eat fruits like "*chiuni*", "*Newaro*", "*Bhorla*", "*Jamuna*", "*Kafal*" etc. which are available in the forest (Rai.N.K, 1985). The forests are intimately connected with the life of the Chepangs. The Chepangs have consisted as a forest-tribal community but slowly they developed as simple agriculture system. They may be categorized as neo-peasants. Those Chepang which lived in isolations with their own mythology, customs, rituals and life style for centuries are now confronted with the problem of massive social change resulting from the opening of their isolated country through the introduction of development and education plans, new technology in short, process of modernization. So this enquiry is concerned with the problem of the direction of social changes. The Chepang communities of Chitwan are in a backward condition. They are socially, economically and politically marginalised and their major production of grain, as stocks of food is only backed for three to six months. Forest products like "*githa*" and "*Vyakur*" support the remaining days of the years.

"Poverty is more than a percentage of people living on less than a dollar a day. We have experienced that helping small groups of poor to earn more and to eat and drink better doesn't fundamentally change the structural causes of their poverty. We have learned that poverty exists because society and its institutions fail to correct exclusive socio-political and economic inequalities and inequity, leading to injustice and exploitation". (2002, SNV)

In 2007, Nepal was transformed from a Hindu absolute Monarchical kingdom better: constitutional Hindu kingdom, Hindu monarchy to a secular state. Right now the country is undergoing further change and will be transformed into a Republic, as a result of a decade long conflict, the so called people's war waged by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), which concluded in a popular people's movement against the autocratic rule of King Gyanendra. These recent changes have resulted in the fact that the demand of an inclusive democracy is now at the top of the national agenda which will be established through the constituent assembly by writing a new constitution. One of the major contributory factors to the conflict is the deep-rooted, ongoing inequality amongst Nepal people. Nowadays, as changes are emerging, the discourse about the creation of an inclusive democracy is overly characterized by an emerging debate over identity and diversity.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The Chepangs have lived a semi- nomadic existence, as hunter and gatherers, who additionally involved slash and burn cultivation. They rely considerably on the forest for much of their food and other necessities of life. Living in poverty amidst plenty, they are among the most backward communities of the nation. They are god-feariry, honest and humble ridden with superstition and ignorance, having no apparent affinity with the civilized races of that country (Gurung, 1989). The forests are closely connected with life cycle of the Chepang. But those areas once densely covered with forest and grass are now seen as the unending curves of bare hills with no blades of grass around. The over exploitation of forest resources has caused intense deterioration of the Chepangs. Forest is main resource for their development. Community forestry and leasehold forestry is a proven way. If forests are conserved and developed as community and leasehold forests with intensive agro-forestry on

farms, all daily needed forest products for the Chepang communities could be provided.

The plain and fertile lands are snatched by elites groups. They are living in steep hills which are unfertile land. The entry of outsiders introduces culture contact but even though the Chepang are marked by inequalities and socio-economic and economic backwardness. The Chepang are not divided or subdivided into castes among themselves, all the equal status. There are not grouped either socially or economically. Their whole life is centered on very little agriculture including hunting, fishing, and goods gathering. They may freely interline and intermarry. It seems that they maintain some kind of hierarchy among themselves. In the context, the study attempts to document ethnography of the Chepang in order to provide the information particularly about socio-cultural and ecological change and the mobilization conditions of the Chepang community, such as the impact of education, marriage, process, religion, life style, agriculture and income. Another focus is lead on how to bring the Chepang into the main stream of national development, not only politically but also socially, culturally and economically. No society remains unchangeable because of the direct or indirect impact of elements of modernization such as transportation, communication, education, government plans and contact with the outside world. In spite of their poverty and backwardness, the Chepang are undergoing change. However the pace of change has been very slow and certainly not as rapid as among other neighbouring communities. The contact with outside world started, as the Chepangs for the first time got an opportunity to work as wage labourers.

Above all what underpinned asymmetric power relations was land and forest. The Chepang often were landless, or more importantly were not very interested in low-land areas since their main traditional interest was in the forest where they could

enjoy natural resources. Therefore, migrants easily settled on low-land took ownership of the best quality plots in those areas. In turn, the Chepang were pushed to the periphery to live on marginal lands higher up the slopes. Only later they recognized the importance of this type of land when they become more interested in farming. Their access to forests, to pursue their hunting and gathering life style, was restricted following the nationalisation of the forests in 1956. New developments in the area conditioned primarily further benefit to privileged people. The improved road connectivity to the area, following the control of malaria in the 1960s provided more benefits to the migrants who were already familiar with state. As a result, the Chepang become increasingly indebted into the migrants communities as they tried to cope with a more monetary dominated economy. Moreover, since interest rates on loans were exorbitant, it was not surprising that many Chepangs became "bonded" to their creditors, sometimes over generations. As an indigenous group, they have own language and spiritual beliefs. Yet a dominant and persistent Hindu and Nepali language ethos better: national discourse or discourse about national identity attempted to define their traditional knowledge and values as insignificant. Moreover, the marginalization of the Chepang by the Nepali society continued even after the reinstatement of a multiparty democracy in 1990. Over the last ten years, the younger generation in particular have steadily rejected the name Praja which for them symbolizes subservience and dependency. In 2004 His Majesty's Government of Nepal maybe better the government of Nepal, agreed to apply the term 'Chepang' together with 'Praja' for citizenship certificates.

Thus this study is important to see that the socio-cultural and ecological characteristics of the Chepang community are changing their social-cultural life.

This study has mainly focused on the following fundamental question related to the topic.

- 1) What are the present adaptive practices of the Chepangs?
- 2) What are the factors and circumstances that brought the Chepang in the present situations?
- 3) How was the traditional subsistence pattern of the Chepang of Siddhi VDC (Village Development Community)?
- 4) What strategies have the Chepang developed in the changing context and impacts on their life style?
- 5) What are their major problems, livelihood strategy and its sustainability?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The major focuses of the study are the socio-cultural, economic and ecological change of Siddhi VDC in Chitwan.

The specific objectives are:

- 1) To analyse the socio-cultural change with focus on economic and ecological aspects in the Chepang community.
- 2) To assess a strategy concerning a solution of the problems of survival of Chepang people.

1.4 Rationale of the Study

The present study is very important because the Chepang are one of the underprivileged and marginalized groups of Nepal. The Chepangs belong to those groups of people in Nepal who have been almost neglected by the government. They are facing many problems and becoming poorer and poorer day by day and increasing Christian. Is it connected with the fact that they are getting poorer and poorer? If not so, better to leave it out here and write about Christianisation later on. So the purpose of my study is to analyze this problem and suggest measures to uplift their livings. It

is a descriptive study with the objective of presenting a social profile of the Chepang tribe interims of their ecological setting, family, economy, religion, and social organization

This study will add something to the existing knowledge of the social, cultural, economical and political condition of the Chepangs in Chitwan. The Chepang having their own social identity, which is characterized by a changing modernized lifestyle. So, it is necessary to bring the Chepang into the national standard than other cast group and to upward their economic and social condition.

This study provides a detailed description of the life style of the Chepang and points out social, cultural, and ecological aspects of the Chepangs in relation to the need for changes and direct development.

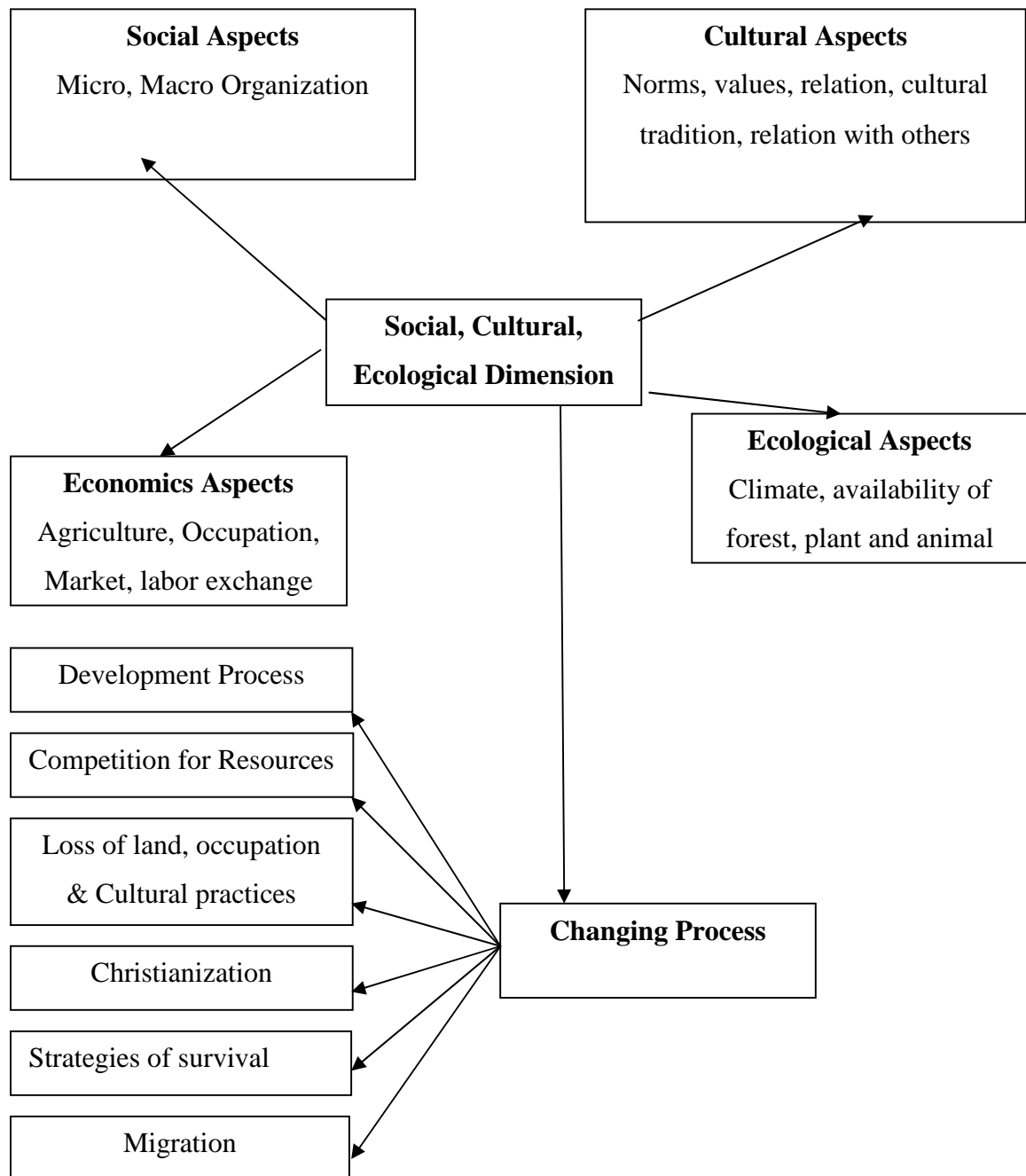
This study may be useful for policy makers, researchers, anthropologists, sociologists, Governmental organisation (GOs), Non governmental Organisations (NGOs) and International Non governmental Organisations (INGOs).

1.5 Theoretical Framework

This study presents a theoretical framework of analyzing human-environment issues that examines shifting, dialectical relationship between social and ecological relations, cultural beliefs and practices and ecological processes to allow an interdisciplinary, complex assessment of economic and environmental change in the Chepang communities. Drawing from political ecology and political economic perspective, this framework brings together scholars on aspects of human-environment issues that are often pursued in isolation. Yet all three processes, social, economic relations, cultural practices and ecological conditions, have been acknowledged as important in shaping the trajectory of social and ecological change. The theoretical arguments are illustrated between the political economy of land use,

livelihood and the ecological effects of natural resource extraction. Resource management has been around much longer than the formal term for it. In Nepal, the various ethnic groups had their ways of conserving, sustaining, and reproducing the resources that provided the base for their subsistence according to each one's culture. These problems are experienced by the Chepangs of Siddhi VDC; the Chepang have been influenced by their natural environment since their origin. They have been dependent on the forest and the forest has been the center of their culture. Those forests have been a part of the group's identity and a resource for their subsistence. But with social and political changes such as the fall of the Ranas, the introduction of the Panchayat system and other social reforms, the Chepang have been losing their traditional privileges. While researchers have defined these as relatively self-contained, drawing clear boundaries between them is problematic because they are co-constitutive and embedded within each other. Change in one domain can not be understood in isolation from the relationship with other domains. This is partly the reason why human-environment issues are so complex and difficult to theorize, and so hardly solved. This becomes particularly evident in the inchoate boundary between social and ecological relations and cultural practices. Here researchers use relationships between social-economical, cultural and ecological dimensions to provide an analytical starting point to explore some of the contradictory and multifaceted dynamics of natural resource management. It is crucial, however to keep the fuzzy boundaries between these analytical domains in the forefront of the analysis to highlight the complexities and unpredictability of the society-culture-environment nexus. Also, by focusing on three domains instead of two (i.e. society-culture and ecology), this analysis attempts to disrupt the binary thinking that can plague dialectics (Harvey 1996, p. 46-60, Shields 1999 p. 109-126, 160-163, Soja, 1996, p. 52-82).

1.6 Flow Chart



1.7 Organization of the Study

The study is divided into seven chapters. The first chapters deal with the introduction of the study. Similarly the chapter addresses the statement of the problems and sets the research question, the objectives and rationale of the study. In

the second chapter a literature review i.e. a discussion is given on the concepts used, the theoretical framework and previous studies on the Chepangs. The third chapter deals with the research methodology applied to generate the necessary data for the study and the method of data analysis. The fourth chapter presents a general introduction of Chitwan district, a brief introduction of Siddhi VDC ward no-6 Majhwang where the field for the present study was conducted. Beside that the culture of the Chepang will be discussed. Chapter fifth provides information on socio-economic features and the ecological condition of changing patterns by the respondents during the conducted interviews. Chapter six discusses the major problem of survival and livelihood strategies. The seventh chapter contains a brief summary, a conclusion and the recommendation of the study. Besides these chapters, questionnaires, a checklist, maps, and a bibliography has been included in the annex.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, a review of the previous works will provide a theoretical base to the study. An extensive review of literature was based on a holistic approach to the problem. This study is about social change and vicinity of the Chepang people. The general concept of the ethnic community has been focused on indigenous groups.

Ethnic have influenced political ecology on their livelihood pattern of the Chepang. In a multi-ethnic society assimilation theories have been useful to study the diversity of ethnic communities of Nepal. Chepang are extensively inter-related to other ethnic culture and economic exploitation by the feudal class. This study attempts to investigate the social and cultural change of the Chepang people in the present context. It is observed how the every day situation of the life of these people has changed along with different socio-cultural patterns due to the impacts of environmental factors in their VDC. After the restoration of democracy in 1990, they better: the Chepang have begun to participate in social fields ? in the political field and they have become conscious of the process of social change. Over the decades, peoples of these communities have witnessed various relevant socio-cultural and economic changes. Their socio-structural co-existence has been influenced by other ethnic groups like Magar, Tamag, Gurung and Hindu groups (Brahman, Chhetri).

The word change denotes difference in anything, which we observe and see for some period. Social change therefore is understood as a social pattern that is changing any social phenomena over any period. Here are some important objectives concerning social change in the Chepang community.

Some sociologists describe a linear theory of social change. There are three stages of social change: Theological, Metaphysical and Positive scientific process of social change (Inkels, 1979). Durkheims contribution in the sociological field is a change through mechanical solidarity on the based conscience for collective and civilized society. Further, he added that social change emerges through the organic solidarity based on the division of labour. According to the above mentioned points,

social change is a universal phenomenon and occurs in all societies. No society remains completely static. It is true better: According to Durkheim all societies. That all the societies are primitive as well as civilized.

Cultural develop with ecology to maintain their basic needs that is called social change? Regarding this concept Chepang groups analyzing their life pattern has changed a bit more than before for sustain life. Recent political ecology has played a crucial role to social change at present. Over the concerning the subject of social change a further example is given about the Naga community in India (Rao, 1948). The culture of the Naga is largely based on 'animism' and Christianity. They came into contact with Christianity (when?) and are gradually getting conscious about Chrsitianity? And free from traditional bondage. New generations have observed changes also through transportation, media, and education. Their traditional religious practices have imbibed some new ideas and values of Christian religion in their way of life. Similarly, Chepang people do not like doing traditional practices.

In every community, in the world, people struggle to sustain. Ecology has played an essential role in this context. A person, who is brought up in one place, may find it difficult to carry on life in another fundamental different environment because the livelihood of the people there might differ. For instance, the daily household chores of the Chepang people in the hill and the tarai regions are quite different livelihood patterns of ecological subsistence. The Chepang also start abandoning their traditional practices. They have been a good farmer following agriculture, animal husbandry wage labour and horticulture.

Environments determine human livelihood patterns. Hunter gathers cultural practice livelihood pattern development in North America; there are suitable ecological zones for settlement (Steward, 1955). Check that again, one can't understand what you mean with that If the environment is suitable there are fundamental processes of their cultural pattern of life span. Men can start their livelihood creating the similar ecological environment within that new eco-environmental society for they are adoptable creatures on earth (Ralph, 1936). In East Africa there was vast arid Mooreland where people had settled scattered around and they spent their life as shepherds producing meat & milk. Those people were more advanced than of those people in North America who hunted and gathered in the

preys (Herskovit, 1947). People of Kwakiutls tribes had a system called "Potlatch", in which, they invite their relatives to delicious food. This is the way; those tribal peoples pass livelihood patterns of life there.

Ecology creates an indispensable culture in society (Boas, 1987). The above mentioned focal gists are the livelihood history of today's men and women. After the experience of hunting people turned to a pastoral stage and then further to agricultural sectors. So human kind further moved in progress and prosperity and then became settled doing agriculture and horticulture according to the ecological environment. According to this the dwellers in the hill and tarai regions of Nepal follow cultivation, animal husbandry, small cottage industries and business according to the suitable environmental livelihood pattern for their life span. As such, the Chepang community too, in Nepal, compel such an occupation which is apt in the precise way and in exposure the livelihood patterns of Sherpa. They specially those who have stayed in hilly regions, like Rai, Limbu, Gurung, Magar and Tamang people sustain their life by trekking and guides in the tourist industry. Following the main livelihood pattern of farming another way to sustain life is to join the British or Indian Army. Brahmins engage in government services, agriculture and pandit as main livelihood occupation. The Chepang people also earn some money by selling crafts, roots and fruits or through wage labour as their main livelihood patterns.

The history of labour came into practice in colonialism of super political, religious succession where Christianity had been both imperialist and expansionist force in its own right and made servants of the empire by subjugating all the defeated people and organized them under community as labour force where they could be exploited for three centuries, the African people were brought to England through missionary agencies for wealthy people to work for them as servants and industrial labour, the first industrial labourers to arrive in masses to England arrived in the 1950s from India and the Caribbean... (Kessing, 1976). Low ranking people who subsist in all societies are being exploited as labourers. These groups always have to struggle for a hand to mouth solution. Moreover, they are politically and economically exploited. The political ecology has created inequalities within the bond of humanity. Labour was of use in primitive societies where the warfare used to be the most common source of labour (Murdock, 1949). India's Apa tinis (That's the name of the

group?) groups in the highlands of Arunachal Pradesh give an understanding upon the subject of labour origin. During the days of warfare many men, women and children were captured and kept as slaves and changed for preparing food in the house. So they lost the name of their clan and later they were adopted in new circumstances (Führer-Haimendorf, 1982)

Modernization is understood as a process of rapid social change. Besides this term is defined as "[...] total transformation of a traditional or pre-modern society into types of technology and associated social organization that characterizes the advanced economically prosperous and relatively politically stable nations of the western world" (Moore 1965: 95). In other words modernization has the connotation of indoctrination. It is generally meant as a process of socio-cultural change in which less developed societies come into possession of characteristics common to more developed ones. So the basic theme of the discussion about modernization is changes in economic aspect as well as the cultural ones.

Since the concept of modernization has been constructed to address the process of development in underdeveloped societies, it is unsuitable for primitive tribal societies. This is because primitive economy diverges qualitatively from the money and market economy of complex societies. Tribal people are considered as living in unapproachable forests and hill areas, having therefore experienced less interaction with other peoples. The "modernization" process has a different meaning among these people. It means to raise their economy to a subsistence level, including the introduction of a certain amount of technology and the modification of the culture to adapt to the new economy.

"social relationship, culture and social revolution bring great change in society," Social Change in Indian Society" (R, Singh.1975), "Theories of Social Change"& "Technology and Social Change"(Delbert Miller, 1974). Margaret S. Archer defines the definition of kinship structure may occupy a household. A household may have co-residents who are not family members. A family was reside in several houses such as in the modified joint family, while the probability is high in three phenomena co-residence, family and domestic function. Lucy Mair (1995) describes marriage religion and social change. Marriage creates new social relationship and reciprocal rights between the spouses of each and the kin of the other.

It establishes rights and status of the children that are born. Woman mentions that marriage lays the legal foundation for the family, but a family can also exist without marriage. A Family is a domestic group in which the parents and children live together. The crisis that faces Nepal "... the current economic and ecological crises that faces Nepal has its origin in the distinctive pattern of development that the Nepalese political economy has undergone over the last two centuries, and how the social and material deprivation of the mass of the Nepalese people today is a function of the persistence of structures of economic and social inequality" (Seddon, 1995, page-120,185). Based largely on secondary data and analyzed from a dependency perspective, Seddon (1995) tries to examine the conditions in case of a crisis persisting in Nepal. So, he gives only a macro level picture of Nepal in general. "Political ecology has played a most crucial role in understanding environmental degradation by pointing out inters linkages between degradation by underdevelopment and poverty in Nepal, these considerations has been taken up in the new forest act-1993 which aims at environmental protection and at the same time at securing basic needs for production products.

Social change differs in demographic, economic and political spheres between high caste Brahmins and so called (or even better Sarkis from a Dalit community- as untouchable is a biased word) untouchable Sarki in a Hindu-village in western Nepal. Ethnic has paid special attention to political institutions, particularly in terms of social change, and illustrates how then Panchayat politicians utilized low caste groups such as Sarkis for their purposes or to gain power. She has shown the antagonistic relationship between the two groups and the accusation of cobblers towards Brahmins for taking their land by any means which is the basis of the very real conflict existing between them (Patricia Caplan, 1972).

According to Elvira Graner the Melamchi Khola region in Sindupalchowk district is one where the community forestry program reveals so that it is basically the economically better off people who participate and have access, others cannot participate and loose access to common property such as forests. The recent strategy is to form user groups for joint forest, including poor. However a detailed analysis of village studies reveals that it is primarily better off people who become members of forest user groups whereas economically disadvantaged groups as for instances,

ethnic minorities and occupational castes, are usually not included as members. Above all some of them lose actual access to common property forests when these forests are handed over to use groups because the members exercise a strict control over those forests (Elvira Graner, 1997).

Literature on the Chepang

"At midst the dense forest of the central region of Nepal, to the west-ward of the great valley, dwell, in scanty numbers, and nearly in a state of nature, two broken tribes, having no apparent affinity with the civilized races of the country, and seeming like the fragments of an earlier population....."(B.H. Hodgson 1848). 'People of Nepal' the Chepang do not possess artisan or artistic skills of any-kind except the weaving of baskets and leaf umbrella for protection against rains (Dor Bahadur Bista 1967). In the context of Chepang, development is meant to solve their basic problems of poverty, illiteracy, poor health, superstition, low agricultural production, and lack of transportation and communication. Likewise, he says on the attainment of foodstuff, they eat maize and millet for six months of the year and subsist on roots, fruits and forest products for the remaining of the year. Their whole life is centered on very little agriculture including hunting, fishing and food gathering. They are experts in extracting honey from the domesticated and wild bees. The Chepang still resort to barter system. They exchange lemons, oranges, *Chiuri*, tobacco etc. for their necessities (via) salt, cloth, oil, rice etc. They produce 'Nanglo' (winnowing fan), 'dalo' (a kind of basket) and 'doko' (a kind of latticed Basket) and sell these products at the nearest market. Chepang people inside or outside the area have not attested the poverty of the Chepang, based partly upon their simple material possessions and economic status of the Chepang, (Gurung, 1989). It is also true that even by the average Nepali standard of living, Chepang don't acquire wealth. The relatively isolated villages of this region of the Mahabharat Range have perhaps always been dependant on the Chitwan Valley for grain. The Chepang have been exploited economically and socially by their neighbours and neglected to some extent by the local and central government. They borrowed loan from money lender when they can not get any work. When they borrow, they will not get rid of it in the future. Some of them stay at the money lender home as the interest of the capital, if they couldn't return the loan. Chepangs have little bit land but it is in the steeply hill when the

rainfalls, the land will be swept. On the other hand, the land is not so fertile that they cannot get good crops. When they harvest their crop, it will lead only 3 or 4 months of the year. The rest of the year will be spent on Kandamuls (N.Rai, 1986).

The Chepang are living nearly in wilderness. Only a few years ago they made steppes towards agriculture. But they are not yet successful to gain benefits from agriculture. So they are poor. They have no good and plain land but steeply and rocky. They make their own land cutting down the woods. Chepang's meal is generally *dhido* and *tihun*. When they haven't enough grain (foodstuff), they eat *dhido* and *tihun* and drink *jand* when they finished foodstuff, they boil and eat the leaves of *sisnu*, *tanki*, *siplighan* etc. They also boil and eat the *flowers of banana, koiralo, kaiy* etc. They fry and eat the seed of some plants like *bhorla, tanki, katus*. They eat the fruits like *Chiuri, Kaphal, thakal, Jamuna, Khanayo* etc. The Chepang eat some insects like hornets, wasps and other kind of insects. They also eat frogs, crabs, snails, rats, etc. They hunt too, and kill birds, jackals, deer, bears, porcupines etc. Chepang don't have any certain occupation. But nowadays, they have begun to manufacture some kits like *doko, basket, nanglo, (explain!) string, brush* etc. and collect herbals. They supply it to near villages and buy in exchange foodstuffs and clothes. Chepang were in existence of primitive stage for many years. They spent the days by hunting and survived in the jungle and NTFPs. Now a day, Githa, Bhyakur are scarcely found in the jungle Because of the lack of cultivated land. So the Chepang spend days and night with both left Githa and Bhyakur or work in villagers at low wages. Sometimes, they struggle with starvation 10 or 12 months. They were far from education and awareness of the modern new world. Because of their low economic status, they have difficulties to make economic progress at all. Until now, they are exploited by the neighbours. If the Chepang are in still condition, they will not be to exist after 25 years. Better to write that differently or skip it. As the ethnic group of the Kusundas is going to disappear, the Chepang will also disappear. If we want to protect the Chepang, we should preserve them and projected a new programme in our country. That sounds strange, like those people would be objects. I know that you don't mean it like that, so better write it different (Adhikari, 1998)

The problem of the indigenous people in Nepal presented by Mr. Bijay Kumar Singh vividly pictures the demographic composition of the indigenous people. The

indigenous people's population of Nepal is actually about 60 percent of the total country's population but the government thoroughly downsizes it. The Government officially recognizes 61 groups of indigenous peoples. According to the manufactured data of the government, there are 86 percent Hindu, 7.8 percent Buddhists, 3.8 percent Muslims and 6.2 Christians. Despite, Nepal is declared a secular state. There are 125 languages; some of the languages spoken by indigenous people are disappearing. The demand for declaring local languages as official languages in local autonomous bodies was rejected by the Supreme Court. As many as 80 percent of the policies and civil services are held and controlled by the upper caste groups such as Brahmins and Chhetris.

The main issues of concern for the indigenous peoples of Nepal are the following:

- 1) Many indigenous people's languages are on the verge of extinction and need to be protected.
- 2) Out of the approx: 70 groups of indigenous people as many as 37 are totally unorganized and many community organizations are very weak barring.
- 3) The ethnic group has secured strong base in indigenous people's habitation and this is leading to the wrath of the security forces. At times harass the I.P, Thousands of people and killed, hunted are disappearing and many more are displaced in the crossfire between the two. Are you talking about the Maoist conflict? Please check that passage again, as it is really hard to understand.
- 4) In the name of national parks and wild life preservation, many hilly indigenous peoples were evicted from their ancestral abodes and pushed down to the hot plains from where they are spread. It difficult to know about their status alone improving it. The case study of the Chepang people of Nepal, presented by Bijaya Kumar Singh, gives many details of the plight of these people. As much as 95 percent of the Chepang are *Jhum cultivators (Khoriya Kheti)* but they do not have the rights over the lands they cultivate providing enormous scope

for forest authorities' exploitation. The *khoriya land* on which they depend is fast shrinking in size and its fertility is declining. They are totally helpless and there is no one to voice their concerns, organise them and mediate on their behalf with the state.

SEACOW (*School of Ecology, Agriculture and Community Works*) and SNV (*The Netherlands Cooperation Agency*) had jointly organized a three-day workshop in 24-26 Magh, 2052 B.S. (7-9 February 1995) to explore various aspects of interventions in Chepang communities and to learn from them. The book, 'Chepang Resources and Development' is the outcome of that workshop. This compiles papers as well as oral presentations made in the workshop. The papers presented in the book are basically organized into seven broad headings including General Presentation, Presentation of Praja Development Programme (PDP), Topical Presentation and Focus on Resources and Listening to Praja. They give sample opportunities to those who are interested in the Chepang community, covering socio-economic, political and many other aspects of their life. 'Chepangs: Status, Efforts and Issues: A Syo's Perspective' (Syo means outsider in Chepang language) by Teeka Bhattarai provides a broad review of the efforts of development interventions made so far. He has also raised several issues regarding those interventions. Cultural homogenization, imposed inferiority, disappearing culture, economic vulnerability, tribal autonomy, concept of sustainability are the major ones.

Political Economy and Chepangs' raises the issue of social empowerment positive. They are in a transitional period losing their own community structure, he says. But, they are unable to cope fully with the present realities (Bimal Phunyal2006). Some General Thoughts on Empowering Praja People' focused on the need of educational and material inputs to empower the Chepang communities (Shree Ram Lamichane2005). "The Churi Tree in Chepang Society. Chiuri : An Optional Source of Bee Keeping amongst Prajas " show direct and indirect advantages to improve the economic condition of Chepang. (T.R.Bhattraai2001).related of understanding the health problem by the Chepang and outsiders should be bridged in communities (Saroj Dhital 2003).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For this study, the required information was gathered during two months of field work in Sept to Oct. 2008. The researcher employed various tools and techniques for collecting primary and secondary data. In order to explain the changes that have occurred in the livelihood strategies of the Chepang, a combination of demographic and ethnographic data which can effectively supplement of each other, is needed. In addition to these, qualitative information on changing aspects of the village environment was also collected to explore the changes that have taken place, as perceived by Chepang themselves. The following shows the general outline of the methods and techniques the researcher has made use of at various points of the study.

3.1 Research Design

This study is based on a mainly descriptive and exploratory research design. In its descriptive part, it will provide a short ethnography about the socio-cultural, socio-ecological conditions and practices in term of change affecting the Chepang people in their different aspects of life. The analytical research design is also used to analyze the changes and problems concerning the Chepang communities as well as their own perceptions about the changes.

3.2 Rationale of the Selection of the Study Area

The Chepang is an indigenous tribe and one of the most backward communities of Nepal. Chepang mainly settle in Makwanpur, Chitwan, Dhading, Gorkha, Tanahu and Lamjung districts of Nepal. Among these districts Chitwan is the district where most of the Chepang reside. The researcher selected the area because there was no research regarding the life of the Chepang of Siddhi VDC done yet. This area has witnessed a number of significant and influential changes on the environment and on economic and socio-cultural believes of the Chepang in recent years. Due to this, the Chepang are affected more by these changes than any other communities of the area. They have their own type of social-cultural norms, values and practices. Due to recent changes, their old socio-cultural norms and values are about to sweep away and are

being replaced by new ones. Secondary, the village is mostly inhabited by indigenous ethnic groups (95%), namely Chepang and Tamang. Thirdly the place is easily accessible for the researcher. Fourthly but most importantly, Siddhi VDC is one of the representative village in terms of ethnicity and population among over 4000 VDC of Nepal. So this effort will be one which, at least, would be helpful to understand the socio-cultural change of the Chepang of Majhwang area.

3.3 Universe and Sampling Procedures

The study area is covering Siddhi VDC of Majhwang was selected purposively for this research. There are 110 households inhabited by Chepang in Majhwang. 27 households among them 30 percent of universe were selected. I did not include children because they are not able to explain their culture. For the purpose of the study was not possible to get information from the whole Chepang population of the study area during the specific period of time. I adopted non-probability sampling, a specifically purposive sampling method. Two local teacher, 2 Nepal Chepang Association Member and 2 social workers (of the Chepang community) selected as key informants. The Local youth club Member and the women group Member were selected for focal group discussions.

3.4 Nature and Sources of Data

This study is derived mostly on qualitative data. This study is based on both primary data and secondary sources of data. Primary data were collected directly from the field through interviews, field observation, group discussions and case studies. Secondary data were collect from books, journals, articles and reports.

3.5 Data Collection and Research Instruments

Data is the foundation of all fieldwork research. Data may be obtained from various sources by applying different methods. The following techniques instruments were adopted to collect the required information's.

a) Household Survey

A set of questionnaires were prepared for the household survey. The questionnaire was used to acquire data about demographic features, like the socio-

economic-cultural status, land size, food security, cattle farming and tradition of Chepang, their customs, beliefs and attitude toward conservation, management and the problem of livelihood strategies. The structure of the questionnaire used in this study is given in the Annex.

b) Observation

Observation methods were used to get the relevant information for the study. It was used to observe food consumption, housing structure, occasions like traditions and rituals (birth, initiation, marriage and death), agricultural practices, dressing patterns, food gathering, fishing and various activities related to socio-culture behaviour of the Chepang community.

c) Key-Informant Interview

Several people were selected as key informants. They were from different backgrounds like elderly people, educated, young people, both male and female. Conducting interviews, data related to the ethnic history, socio-economic organization, occupational activities, availability and access to natural resources, economic relation with other areas and problems of Chepang community are collected. Elderly people provided information related to their ethnic history, life in past, changing patterns of livelihood strategies and their attitude towards change. Some younger and educated interviewees stated their opinion on traditional occupation, utilization NTFPs and the changing livelihood were also important for the research.

d) Case Study

A case study is a qualitative analysis involving a very careful and complete observation or a holistic study of a person or an institution (Young, 1949). This method aims to collect a continuous and complete picture of the feelings of people under study, who are subject to change in their socio-cultural, economic and environmental spheres. This change affects their ideas and relations with others. The case study method is useful to come to know about the distinct characteristic of an individual or group and to understand the complexity of factors that are affecting here the Chepang community as an integral totality. Since only few documents are available on the Chepang, further explorations are important. By focusing on the

intensive study an attempt has been made to present a detailed and holistic picture. Five cases were studied with three male and two female individuals regarding their ethnic history, changing economic status and their feelings towards change. The research is presented in case studies on individual level of suffering and the experience of the Chepang concerning changing cultural process and the impact on their livelihood condition.

e) Group Discussion

Group discussions were made to get information which generally an informant will not say in single face to face conversation. Such discussion result in common feelings and attitude shared by most of the members of a community. Group discussions were used among groups of family members and neighbour of the Chepang community. Informal discussions were conducted within groups heterogeneous in age, sex educational status, and social class. This was done to generate important sets of information about a particular problem, which was not generally shared by the community people in the group discussion. Informal chat in teashops and hotels also took place.

3.6 Tabulation, Analysis & Interpretation of Data

Simple statistical tools such as frequency distribution, average and percentage were used to present the data in tabular form. All questionnaires were checked and transformed into a preliminary data sheet. The collected data were classified and tabulated to make them more scientific. So, simple tables will be derived from the sheet.

3.7 Difficulties of Data Collection

Every research work has its own difficulties. So it is also in the case with the present study. It is a fact that every social research has to face difficulties and constrains during field work. Such difficulties and constrains faced by the researcher in this study are as follow:

- 1) **Limitation of Time:** Since socio-cultural change is a very complex topic, it became impossible to explore it in detail in such limited time.

For detail exploration and documentation of socio-cultural change, enough time should be provided.

- 2) **Language Problem:** Since the researcher had no knowledge about Chepang language, he had to face language problems because respondent and informants especially women and elder community members couldn't speak and understand Nepali language completely. The researcher had to hire a mediator in order to conduct the interviews.
- 3) **Problem of Superstition:** Due to believe in Superstition some communally members did not want to share their traditional knowledge.
- 4) **Problem of Statistics:** Since concern VDC and haven't maintained their various types of statistical data through village profile, researcher had to face statistical data problem in local level.

3.8 Limitation of the Research

Every study has its own limitation. The main limitations of the present study are:

- 1) The study has been under taken to meet the partial fulfillment for the Master's Degree in Sociology.
- 2) A detailed study of the Chepang was not possible within the few months of study carried out by a researcher who faced lack of time and financial support.
- 3) As this study was carried out on a small Chepang community of Siddhi VDC in Chitwan district, its conclusion can not be generalized. Results might be different in other communities as well as in the same community in other parts of the country.
- 4) Only 27 households of the study area are taken as sample households. It is assumed that this sample provides a representative picture of the sample VDC.

CHAPTER FOUR

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA

In this chapter, an introduction of the Chitwan district and an overall scenario of the place of the study, Siddhi VDC ward no. 6 Majhwang is given. A brief description on geographic, demographic, climatic, resource status etc. and a brief introduction on the socio-cultural, economic and ecological aspects of Chepang community of the study are presented.

4.1 Brief Introduction of Chitwan District

From the 19th century, the Chitwan valley was a centre for the hunting trips that British and Nepali aristocrats conducted for reasons of entertainment. King George VI and his son the Prince of Wales, later Edward VIII, never made it to Kathmandu, but they did find time to hunt wildlife in the Chitwan forests. In only 11 days in 1911 they killed 39 tigers and 18 rhinos. Until the late 1950s, the only settlements in the Chitwan valley were scattered Tharu villages. The Mahabharat Range was inhabitant by Chepang communities. However, after the successful eradication of malaria in 1954, land-hungry people from the hills were quick to see the potential wealth of the region and the jungle was rapidly transformed into farmland. Of the estimated 700,000 people of Chitwan 90% immigrated since 1960 AD when malaria was eradicated by a United Nations programme. Along most of the Terai the Gangetic Plain runs from the foot of the Churre Hills (which then merge with the higher Mahabharat Range) but here the Someshwar Hills from the Chitwan valley. Chitwan has three basic vegetation types: open grassland, ravine vegetation, and hardwood forests that are dominated by sal trees. Tree species contain trees like shisham, kapok, palash, pipal etc. Chitwan has over 50 different species of mammals, 400 different birds' types, 67 different types of butterflies. Some of the most interesting creatures to be seen in Chitwan include elephants, rhinos, tigers and crocodiles.

4.1.1 Geographic, Demographic & Climatic Condition of the Chitwan District

Latitude = 27⁰21 to 27⁰46' north,

Longitude= 83⁰55' to 84⁰48' east

Boarder:-East = Makwanpur & Parsa, West = Nawalparasi & Tanahu,

North = Gorkha & Dhading, South = Bihar & Uttarpradesh of India,

Area = 2238.39 sq. kilometre (68.76% Terai & 31.27% Siwalic),

Elevation = 144 meter to 1947 meter from mean sea level,

Climate = Tropical & sub-tropical, Average rainfall = 1270 mm.

Average Temperature 17.5⁰c to 34.5⁰c, Minimum temperature = 7.7⁰c,

Maximum Temperature = 42.2⁰c.

Total population=472048, Male = 235084 (49.2%), Female = 236964 (50.8%),

Sex ratio = 99%, Total households = 92863, Average household size = 5.08,

Literacy rate = 71.1%, Male = 79.3%, Female = 63%. (Low literacy

Chandivanjang VDC 27.03) & (high literacy Fulbari VDC 81.15%).

4.1.2 Topographical Distribution of Land of Chitwan District

Table 4.1 : Topographic Distribution of Land

Physical Condition	Agriculture (he)	Paster(he)	Forest (he)	Others (he)	Total (he)
Mid Mountain	10940	8793	20750	471	40954
Siwalik	12240	6313	52561	7690	78804
Terai	23714	3716	73211	5441	106082
Total	46894	18822	142422	13602	221800

Source: District Profile of Chitwan, 2064

4.1.3 Forest Distribution of Chitwan District

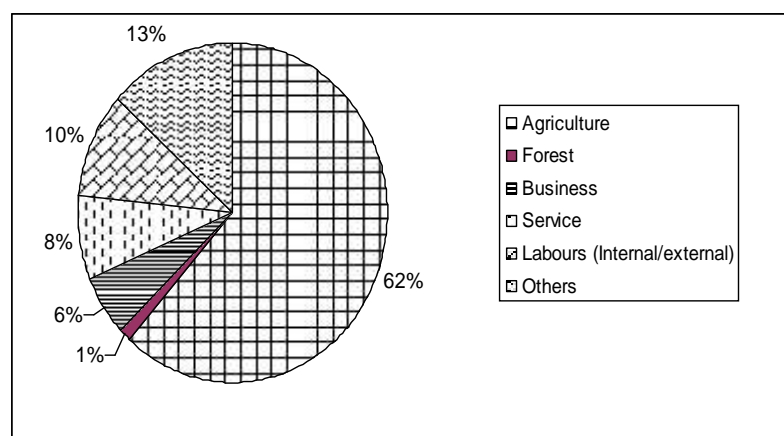
Table 4.2 : Forest Distribution of Chitwan District

Type of Forest	Number	Area	Remark
Chitwan National Park	1	93200	Buforzone area
Community Forest	36	13621	Target population (72622)
Lease hold forestry	283	121.21	Chepang region: (Korak, Shakikhor, Siddhi, Kaule, Darechwok, Chandivanjang, Dahakhani)
Private forest	203	151.46	
Conservation Forest	1	20936	

Source: District Profile of Chitwan 2063/064

4.1.4 Economic Distribution of Chitwan District

Figure 4.1 : Economic Distribution of Chitwan District



4.1.5 Chepang Population in Chitwan

Table 4.4 : Chepang Population in Chitwan

Particular	Number
Total households	2,623
Total population	25,000
Family size	8
Total Literacy household	655
S.L.C. pass	112

Source : District Profile of Chitwan 2063/064

4.2 Introduction of Study Area

This chapter briefly discusses the general features of the study area especially physical, environmental, demographic, ethnic and educational features.

4.2.1 Physical Settings of Majhwang Area

The study area is situated in the central Mahabharat range in Chitwan district and connected to the village of Tandi Bazaar by 13 km motorable road. It is about 26 km from the city of Narayanghat and 160 km from Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal. The study area "Majhwang" of Siddhi VDC can be divided into two categories namely lower belts and upper belts. The lower belt is easily accessible by transportation and other facilities but not the upper belts. Shaktikhor, Kaule and Korak VDC are all adjoining in the Siddhi VDC.

The Chepang region lies approximately at 27⁰55' lat north and 84⁰30' long east and it has an average annual rainfall of 5.5mm. The climate of the area is temperate with deciduous forest typical of Nepal's mid-land region. The temperature seldom rises above thirty seven degree Celsius from December to February. During the monsoon season or rainy season, these hills are completely covered with clouds. The climate of the region is wet and humid during this season (June - September) and dry and cold during winter (October - March). However, because of the varying elevations and different topographical conditions, the exact figures differ throughout the districts.

The main occupation of the people living in Majhwang is agriculture, animal husbandry, business, wage labour, etc. Agriculture, being the main occupation, is subsistence of nature people of different ethnic group like Tamang, Magar, Newar, Damai, Kami, Chhetri, Brahmin, Sarki etc. living here. There are two (better: to write numbers up to 10 in words) lower secondary school, six primary schools and one church and one Buddhist temple (gumba) and one sub-health post. There are no electricity facilities in the Siddhi VDC.

4.2.2 Population Distribution of VDC in Majhwang

There is no separate census of the Chepang population. However according to the *Praja Development Program*, their population is nearly 80,000; their number in

Chitwan is 25,000, Makwanpur 15,000 in Dhading 20,000 and Gorkha 8,000. Some of the Chepangs have also settled in Tanahu, Bara, Parsa, Nawalparasi and Banke districts. According to the census of 1998, the total population of Siddhi VDC is 8776. The average family size is 6.63 and the sex ratio is 96. The table below shows the number of ward-wise households and population according to sex.

Table 4.5 : Population Distribution of Siddhi VDC

Ward No	Name of the Ward	HHs	Male	Female	Total Population
1	Kalyan chour	138	423	601	1024
2	Nebuatar	173	481	592	1073
3	Khirk	121	550	609	1159
4	Gaimi Dung	131	491	520	1011
5	Chorang	101	414	585	995
6	Majhwang	110	550	610	1160
7	Deujar	160	300	430	730
8	Paima range	110	440	420	860
9	Cherbang	150	310	450	760
	Total	1194	3959	4817	8776

Source : Field Survey, 2008

The study area, Majhwang lies in ward number six of the Siddhi VDC. Out of 110 households of the Chepang people of Majhwang village, 27 household have been selected for the field survey. The selection of the sample households was made on the basis of probability proportional to size.

4.2.3 Age and Sex Distribution of Majhwang

The analysis displayed that majority of the respondents were male. Among 27 total respondents, 14 (55%) were male and 13 (45%) were female. Out of 14 male respondents, the majority, seven (25.9%) of them were from a young aged class (18-

35 yrs), followed by four (15.8%) from a middle aged class (36-55 yrs) and three (8.3%) from an old aged class (above 56 yrs). Among the 13 female respondents, the majority, six (22%) were from a young aged class followed by five (20.7%) from a middle aged class (36-55 yrs) and two (2.2%) from an old aged class.

Table 4.6 : Age and Sex Distribution of Respondents

S.No.	Age	Male	%	Female	%
1	18-35 yrs	7	50	6	51
2	36-55 yrs	4	26	5	40
3	Above 56	3	24	2	9
4	Total	14	100	13	100

Source : Field Survey, 2008

4.2.4 Population by 5 Years of Age Group and Sex

Table 4.7 : Population by 5 Years of Age Group and Sex

Age Group	Male		Female		Total	%
	Number	%	Number	%		
0-4	60	9.07	70	8.34	130	3.66
5-9	85	12.85	80	9.53	165	11.00
10-14	81	12.25	85	10.13	166	11.06
15-19	76	11.49	80	9.53	156	10.14
20-24	50	7.56	57	6.79	107	7.13
25-29	56	8.47	58	6.91	114	7.60
30-34	48	7.26	42	5.00	90	6.00
35-39	52	7.86	51	6.07	103	6.86
40-44	38	5.74	37	4.41	75	5.00
45-49	32	4.84	35	4.17	67	4.46
50-54	28	4.23	30	3.57	58	3.86
55-59	25	3.78	27	2.62	47	3.13
60-64	21	3.17	18	2.14	39	2.60
65-69	19	2.87	20	2.38	39	2.60
70-74	15	2.26	18	2.14	33	0.024
75+	18	2.72	21	2.50	39	2.60
Total	661	100	839	100	1500	100

Source : Field Survey, 2008

From the total of 110 surveyed households, the effective ratio of male/female 0-9 yrs category shows the birth control is succeeding at Majhwang. Although only the 15-59 age group is regarded as economically active population, in case of Chepang of the study area this is not applicable. Even the children and elderly people were actively involved in economic activities. The elderly population above 60 years contains 45 percent male and 55 percent female reports the world's highest difference in the life expectancy rate for women compared to men. There is need to create same age group marriage culture or need to teach the effective of marriage education.

4.2.5 Linguistic/Ethnic Tribal Population of Majhwang

The linguistic, ethnic, tribal population of Majhwang are made up as follows: Total 1160 population (DDC, 2004). Majhwang village has a mixed ethnic/caste groups and is rich in cultural heritage. There are Chepang, Tamang, Gurung, Magar, Newar, Kami&Damai. The village is dominated by Chepang (90%), Tamang are in second position (6%), Magar (1%), Gurung, Newar, Damai&Kami are (0.5, 0.5, 0.5, 0.5) Chhetri/Brahmin (0.5).

Table 4.8 : Linguistic/Ethnic Tribal Population of Majhwang

Linguistic/Ethnic Groups	Linguistic Population	Ethnic Language status
Chepang(Praja)	1044 (90%)	Ethnic communities use their own language
Tamang	70 (6%)	
Magar	10 (1%)	3 tribes aren't using their own language
Gurung	6 (0.5%)	
Newar	6 (0.5%)	
Damai	6 (0.5%)	Nepali/National Language
Kami	6 (0.5%)	
Brahmin/Chhetri	6 (0.5%)	
Others	6 (0.5%)	
Total	1160 (100%)	

Source : Field Survey, 2008

Among the total ethnic tribe of Majhwang, 1114 (96%) people are using the tribal language and cannot read and write Nepali (National Language). 68 percent of

the Chepang are using Chepang and nepali language. They are living in the jungle and depend on hunting and gathering roots and jungle fruits. It is very hard to literate those ethnic groups like Tamang is living in the study area. Out of 65 percent of them are also using only Tamang language. Most of them are living with the Chepang and Tamang in their villages inside the jungle. But Tamang are little bit civilized than Chepang.

There are 6 ethnic tribes residing at Majhwang village, among the total population 1160, 1137 people confess Chepang and Tamang as their caste or tribal identity. So we can say the Majhwang is the tribal village. It is needed to create ethnic tribal community, development care groups to remove the racial discrimination.

4.2.6 Education Status of Majhwang

The overall status of literacy in Chitwan is 71.1 percent in which female literacy is 63 percent and male in 79.3 percent. The native of poverty and backwardness is also influence by the literacy status. There is positive relationship between income level of households and education status.

Chepang people have no economic capacity to send their children to high school at all. Mostly after primary education, schooling is stopped. The government is not supplying sufficient budget for the teachers as many schools take limited registration. This leads to a forcefully decreasing number of enrolments at high school due to poverty. Poor family can't manage the expenses for the education of their children. Rather they involve their children in labour, household work and other sources of income.

Table 4.9 : Education Status of Chepang Community

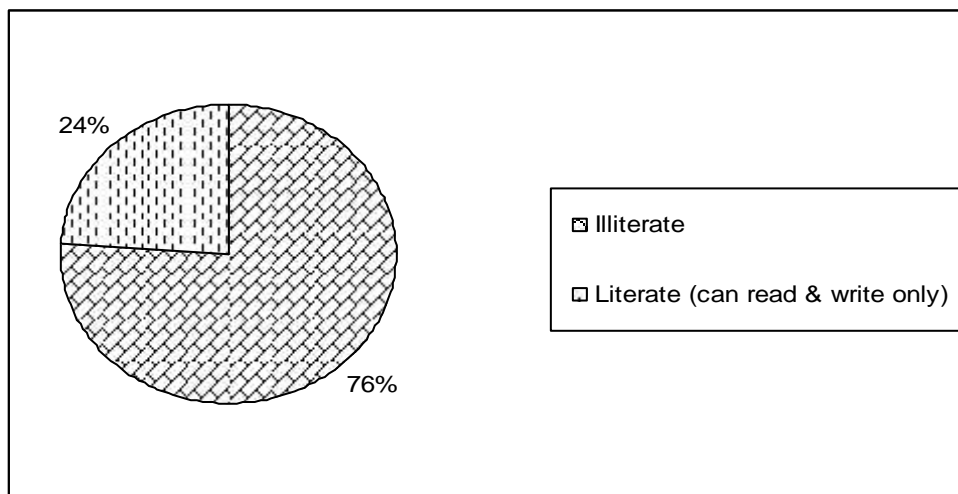
S.No.	Level of Education	Number	Percentage
1	Illiterate	20	76
2	Literate (can read & write only)	7	24
3	Total	27	100

Source: Field Survey, 2008

From the table, it is clear that from the total 20 (76%) respondents are illiterate and 7 (24%) respondents gained only primary education. So the literacy rate in

Majhwang is very poor. There is a need of more investment for educational revival. Literacy programs for children (Schooling) and elderly people (night classes), need to start immediately. (I think it is better to have the recommendation of things to be done in future for the development of the region at the end of the thesis under recommendations. In case you already mentioned that I think it is better not to mention them here in the analysis of your data. Otherwise you have too many information double and triple.

Figure 4.2 : Education Status of Chepang Community



Source: Field Survey, 2008

4.3 Socio-Cultural Description of the Chepang

The Chepang, like the people of many other ethnic groups of Nepal, believe in a supernatural world. They have evolved a system of beliefs and practices through which they have established a close relationship with the spirits who are believed to influence the destinies of mankind. They have inherited these beliefs and practices from their ancestors through which they enter into relation with various details and spirits for their livelihood, security and prosperity. Check that again! These beliefs and practices help to strengthen their social unity and contribute to the maintenance of problems of survival for the ethnic communities like the Chepang.

As the case with other ethnic communities, the Chepang are preoccupied with and predominated by their have own faiths and beliefs. They believe in invisible supernatural beings and powers. Their beliefs in these powers and the ways of entering into relations with them constitute their religion. Their relationship with these

supernatural spirits is one of veneration, fear, meekness, dependence and propitiation. Concerning that topic Caughley et al (1971) writes: "They believe in a type of religious magic, and by beating drums they call on their dead ancestors and their gods, both good and evil. They believed that the destinies and fortunes of mankind are influenced by supernatural spirits" (1971: 85). For the Chepang the world is a vast sacred amphitheatre in which men, spirits, and impersonal powers are closely interrelated. "They are known as the most advanced exorcists (*Jankris*) among all the communities of Nepal. Their superstitions go to such an extent that any malady, physical weakness, natural calamities like droughts, excessive rainfall, damage to crops, and so on are supposed to be the result of either the evil desire of the witches or that of the evil spirits. To do away with all these evils they beat drums throughout the night, chanting incantations and jumping up and down" (Varya, 1971). It is evident that these various beliefs and practices are related to every aspect of their life and help strengthen their social unity. They believe that mountains, rivers and trees are inhabited by various powers. It is very important for every household and village community to cultivate friendly relations with such supernatural powers which is done through oblations and sacrifices. So the sole object of their worship is to avert disasters. When the spirits are pleased they bring delight and happiness to them.

4.3.1 Family

The family is the primary group of social organization. A Chepang household consists of a group of persons related by blood. In the study area three types of families were found among the Chepang : Nuclear, joint and extended family.

Table 4.10 : Family Types of the Respondents

Family Type	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Nuclear Family	18	66.67
Joint Family	5	18.52
Extended family	4	14.81
Total	27	100

Source : Field Survey, 2008

In the study area 18.52 percent of the families are joint and extended while nuclear families consist 66.67 percent. The Chepang prefer to stay in nuclear families

rather than in joint families. The major factors responsible for the preference to live in nuclear families are considered to be termination, modernization and to some extent communication and transportation. The family size among the Chepang also varies ranging from four to eighteen persons. The present study shows that the average family size of the Chepang is 7.9 against a national figure of 5.6. Generally, among the Chepang, the eldest male member of the family wields control and enjoys respect and authority to device the social, economic and cultural affairs of the family. However, other family members are often consulted. Mutual coordination and cooperation are Characteristics among the Chepang households. The system of inheritance in the Chepang community is based on the principle of ownerships by birth. All brothers enjoy equal shares of their parents' property.

4.3.2 Marriage

In the Chepang community marriage fulfills the basic needs for men and women and is understood as a step in life to provide security, companionship and stability. The Chepang regard marriage as an important family affair. They have their own customs, rites and rituals in this matter.

According to Chepang customs marriage relationships established by blood and kinship which bears lineal ascendants and descendants are restricted. But in practice this is not observed strongly, as marital relation among the Chepang are found to be established within the off springs of six and seven generation according to Rai(1975: 24).

The formal marriage is settled through negotiation. This is more elaborated and usually planed by the parents. The parents of both parties come together and discuss about the occasion of marriage on a stipulated date. However final approval of the boy and the girl is sought by their respective parents. This shows that the Chepang youths enjoy a certain degree of freedom as far as their marriage negotiations are concerned. After the settlement of marriage both parties celebrate with *jaand* (home made beer). On the appointed date the marriage procession takes place. The short and very simple party returns with the bride to the house of the groom. No priest is required to solemnise a marriage. The whole night the occasion is celebrated by mass singing and merry making by the friends and relatives at the bride's house.

The informal marriage is the most popular form of marriage among the Chepang including elopement, capture and exchange too. But elopement is more frequent than the other forms. Informal marriage is usually the outcome of an inheritance between the boy and the girl working together in the fields, herding the goats and gathering food in the jungle together and meeting together in the socio-religious occasions. When they come to love each other the boy takes the girl to his house on an appointed day. If the parents of the girl get angry the villagers pacify them but this rarely happens as this type of marriage is very common there.

The other more indirect way for getting Chepang girls is to elope with the help of other friends and relatives. Usually the aunts, sister-in-laws or neighbouring women help in this elopement. They speak very high of the boy and narrate highly colourful stories and inspire the girl to marry the boy. Sometimes they arrange a situation for their meeting in a lonely or solitary place, where they then elope. Most Chepang prefer an endogamy marriage within the tribe. But nowadays because of their growing interaction with people of other ethnic groups or castes and the influence of Christianity inter-caste or inter-ethnic marriage is also practiced.

4.3.3 The Deities

The Chepang worship a variety of deities. Of these the worship of *Namrung* (the god of hunting), *Bhumi Puja* (the earth deity) and *Gaidu Puja* (worship for livestock) are considered the most important ones.

Namrung is the god of hunting. As the Chepang are hunters, hunting is essential for their survival. Besides, it is believed that hunting should be done at least once a year otherwise the god *Namrung* may get infuriated and hurt people by bringing miseries. On a stipulated date after offering a chicken a group of Chepang sets out for hunting into the jungle hoping for a successful hunt. After their successful hunt, they propitiate *Namrung* by offering blood from the heart of the animal for their well-being. This adoration with offerings is performed to tranquilize the god of hunting. So the pleasure of *Namrung* facilitates hunting pursuits, provides the hunted object with tease and protects people from epidemics and other calamities.

The Chepang observe *Bhumi-Puja*, the earth deity, before they sow maize in March. This propitiation is an agricultural festival which is to be observed by all to

ensure a rich agricultural production. The expectation of successful agricultural harvest in the coming year is the underlying belief of this ceremony. Unless the earth deity is appeased it is believed that crops will be ruined, and also misfortunes of various kinds will be brought upon them. During the ritual they make two small holes in the ground and fill one with the blood of a rooster and the other with water. They believe that if the substance of the holes remains for a long time, they can predict favourable agriculture outcome in the coming year. If the substance dries up soon it shows a negative impact in the agricultural production. So a good agricultural cycle is the sole desire of the Chepang while worshipping Bhumi-Puja

The Chepangs observe Gaidu and Aaitabare-Puja. The Gaidu-Puja is observed by the Chepang for the security and prosperity of cattle. It is observed during October-November. Aaitabare-Puja is observed to keep them safe from epidemics, and it is observed around August-September. Both of them are supposed to be done to benevolent the gods. So they are considered important. Propitiation takes place generally with offerings of fowls, handfuls of rice and vermilion.

The worship of the above mentioned deities such as *Namrung*, *Bhumi-Puja*, *Gaidu*, and *Aaitbare* are seen as essential for the survival in the infertile hills and inspire the Chepang to live in the midst of epidemics, wild animals, sickness and other calamities.

4.3.4 Life-Cycle Ceremonies

Rites of birth, marriage and death are the main rites de passage (or life cycle rituals). In Hinduism, these are called the *Sanskar*. "The word, *Sanskar* means religious purification rites and ceremonies for sanctifying the body, mind and the intellect of an individual so that he becomes a full member of the community" (Dahal 1985 :83). Among the Chepangs there is no such term for *Sanskar* which is observed from the moment of the garbha-dhana (conception) to antesthi (death) of the individual. ??? However, they also observe some of the ceremonies related to birth, nomenclature, first rice-feeding, head shaving, marriage, and death. After the performance of some of the ceremonies such as name-giving, rice- feeding, head-shaving, and marriage, a child acquires a definite status in the village and among its

kin-folks. Besides, the funeral rites help the departed spirit to liberate itself from the underworld and to finally join the abode of its ancestors.

On the nomenclature day, the Chepang sprinkle cow's urine (Where?) to purify the house and family members. The name of a child is chosen by the parents and a yellow thread is fastened around the wrist and waist of the child to protect it from evil spirits. They observe a simple ceremony at the time of the first food-giving (rice feeding) to the child. On this occasion, the parents of the child and others relatives give then tika (dashian festival) on the forehead of the child and wish it a long and happy life. They observe a first hair-cutting ceremony: The hair of the child is shaved by his maternal uncle. A man in the Chepang community achieves full status after his marriage. They consider marriage as indispensable and very much essential for fecundity.

When a person dies, before carrying the dead body to the burial ground, it is ceremonially placed on the ground and oil is rubbed all over its body. Coins are placed by sons on the mouth of the deceased. This is done in order to help the soul to pay the fees while crossing the river on the way to the land of the dead.

During the observation of these rituals and ceremonies, villagers get together and worship their ancestors, deities and spirits, to entertain and to enjoy various food items. On the last day of a funeral ceremony, villagers, especially the relatives of the polluted family, attend the ceremony with various food items such as *jaand* (local beer), fowl, pickle, and bread. The offerings such as beer, balls of boiled rice, meat, and cigarettes are put on banana leaves for the soul of the deceased. It is widely believed in the Chepang community that the departed soul comes and eats the offerings. This death ceremony brings the world of spirits into their affinity. Besides, it promotes the feeling of co-operation, discipline and interdependence among the members of a community.

The above-mentioned life-cycle ceremonies possess specific, protective and purification purposes, and are essential for keeping, continuing and strengthening the relations of mutual harmony, peace and dependence between the individual and the whole community.

4.3.5 Festivals

The Chepang observe various seasonal festivals which are considered helpful for ensuring the safety and prosperity of the individual and the village community. Many of the Chepang festivals are similar to the major Hindu such as Dasain, Dipawali and Samkranti.

Saune-Samkranti is an important festival and has a separate and indigenous identity among the Chepangs. Almost all the Chepang suffer from hunger each year from Falgun to Asad. (Feb-July) During this period they depend mainly on jungle Roots and Leaves products such as pas (vyagur), hung (Bharlang), goi (yam), lak (Githa) and Jyar (Chuinya). Their agricultural production is expected to be sufficient for hardly six months from Srawan to Paush (July-December). However, the new crops are ready for harvest around Saune-Samkranti. So this festival, which falls on the 1st of the month of Sravan (July-16), is observed each year as a happy occasion of their triumph of keeping themselves alive despite problems of acute food shortage, famine and distress. So this festival is observed with a nice preparation of buffalo meat and *jaand*. On the other hand, Maghe-Samkranti which is observed on 1st Magh (January 15) is just the opposite of Saune-Samkranti because it is connected with their coming of sorrowful days of famine and distress. The Chepang believe that, since that day their food stock is supposed to be exhausted, they are supposed to go to jungle for food-gathering. They enjoy themselves by feasting with their sisters and brothers, as they are not sure whether they will meet together again in the coming year. This festival anticipates their coming sorrowful days of famine and distress which last from Magh to Sravan (January-July).

The Chepang observe *Chhonam (nwagi)* as a concluding rite after their main agricultural activities but *Bhumi-Puja* as an introductory or inaugural rite before agricultural activities. *Chhonam (nwagi)* is the most important festival of the Chepangs. It is related to their agricultural activity. *Chhonam* is the auspicious occasion on which the first part of the new harvest is eaten. The Chepangs are prohibited from eating some of their agricultural products such as *ghaiya*, *pindoula*, *ghiroula*, and *sour fruits (nibuwa etc)* without making an offering to their ancestors. This festival falls on the full-moon during Bhadra (August) and is generally observed on a stipulated date according to their convenience. Generally, each member of the

clan gathers at the house of the oldest member in the village to observe the festival. This gathering is arranged at the house of the Pande, a Chepang priest, to offer with a bunch of rice, fruits and *jaand*. One corner of the house is smeared with a mixture of cow dung and soil and many offerings like rice plants, bananas, rice and other things are put on the ground. They offer incense and diyo (oil lamp) better: and perform a light-offering. The Pande, starts beating his *ring* (one-faced drum); sitting on a sanctified mat. Then he begins his *falakne* (muttering) incoherently. He shudders and invites the ancestors to a feast prepared from the new harvest. The next morning the Pande stops beating the drum and sacrifices a cock for the ancestors. (So he beats the drum the whole night?) The Chepang consider ancestors to intermediate between gods and the living. An intermediary role is played by the Pande. The invitation to a feast from the new harvest and prohibition from eating certain agricultural products before offering them to their ancestors are the main features of this festival. So this festival is considered to be one of the factors which contribute towards ensuring the safety and prosperity of the individual and the village community.

The ancestor worship among the Chepang is full of rituals in honour of the dead. They look up to their ancestor's spirits with filial love and intimacy. Like most indigenous people they believe in the survival of the soul after death. So they propitiate the spirits of ancestors, treat them with veneration and believe in their rebirth. In fact, their mediation for reconciliation is sought. They keep the memory of the dead alive. Among the Chepang the living and the dead of the same lineage stand in a close relationship, forming one family. The dead are believed to assist in times of crisis. It is believed that conventional tributes must be paid to them. Failure to do so may result in those generally benevolent becoming malevolent. It is almost a duty of the spirits of the departed to supervise the well-being of their living family members. So ancestor worship is a strong factor in the Chepang social solidarity and continuity of family life and tradition.

4.3.6 The Pande

For the Chepang a Pande is just like a Jhankri (shaman or ritual healer) of other ethnic groups of Nepal. He is a key-person among the Chepang, because his presence in most of the social and religious activities such as the nomenclature ceremony for a new baby, worship of a clan deity, purification day, and many other

significant occasions, is a must. If anybody is ill, the Pande is invited to find out which god or ghost has caused the sickness and to cure it by beating his one-sided drum. This beating continues for the whole night preventing the patient from sleeping (Caughley et al. 1971: 85). According to the instruction of the Pande, one offers fowl, pigs, and even goats wishing one's well-being. If a person falls sick the consultation is done soon with the Pande and his instructions are accepted whole-heartedly. Not only are his services indispensable for propitiating gods and spirits, but also he himself is endowed with superhuman powers. His magic and religious practices come into operation for the diagnosis and treatment of all kinds of illness. The Chepang believe that sickness is caused by certain deities, such as spirits of witchcraft. They counteract it by exorcism. For all those purposes the Pande invokes and propitiates various deities and ancestors. He is supposed to cure a patient by his spiritual incantation. In addition to this, he spells some incantation to poison the river water which helps the Chepang to fish. If necessary he retrieves the effectiveness of poison if it is not strong enough with the touch of an impure woman or glance of an evil eye. Besides, his participation in hunting is lucrative and is honoured by an extra share after the group's successful hunt. (Information from interviewer, If its from literature, you should mention the specific texts)

A Pande has a filial affection with his one-faced drum called which is made from the wood of *buchiko-sing*, a kind of tree and the skin of a goat. According to the Chepang belief, the Pande and his *ring* work as husband and wife who have promised to devote themselves to the well-being of the people. A Pande is a self-made, Personality with blessings from god. "Exorcism is, however, neither taught nor learnt by anyone, as the teaching and learning of such arts are totally tabooed. They learn them by themselves when they are in bed in dreams, they are taught by their deities" (Varya, 1972).

A Pande is an interrelated between the dead and the living, a mediator between the Chepang community and supernatural powers and a central figure among the community members. His presence brings? Most of Chepang prosperity and unity among the His magic-religious performances are helpful and essential in maintaining social solidarity and to connect the present with the past and inspire members of the community to live together harmoniously. (Reference)

4.4 The Economy of Chepang

The local people say that century ago, the Chepang were nomadic and wholly dependent on hunting, gathering and fishing (Caughly et al. 1971). Chepang started agriculture life only about 120 years ago. Before that time they used to live partly in the forest and in caves. The Chepang hunters and gatherers must have been compelled to begin a settled life due to the problem of deforestation. In any case, their settled agrarian life is hardly a century old. Resulting most probably on contacts with agrarian castes on the one hand and the vanishing scope of hunting and gathering in increasingly exploited jungle on the other hand made them into simple cultivators. Consequently their natural economy was increasingly replaced by simple agriculture.

The socio-economic and political status of various indigenous populations is not same. The use of natural resources and their importance of livelihood have been illustrated in the following table.

Table 4.11 : Livelihood Strategies of Indigenous People of the Country

Indigenous People	Foraging	Horticulture	Pastoral	Agriculture	Industrial
Raute, Kushbadia	+	–	–	–	–
Kusunda, Bankariya, Chepang	+/-	+	–	+/-	–
Majhi, Bote, Mushar	+/-	–	–	+	–
Unomi, Holmo, Dolpo, Bhote, Lhopa	–	–	+	+	+/-
Gurung, Byansi, Magar, Tamang	–	+	+	+	+
Danuwar, Kumal, Tharu, Rajbansi	–	–	–	+	–
Chairotan, Newar,	–	–	+/-	+/-	+
Tin-Gaunle Thakali Marphali, Thakali	–	–		+	+

Source: IIDS (2002 : 72) [Note : + means main strategy, – does not mean main strategy, +/- some groups or group member are involved in this strategy.]

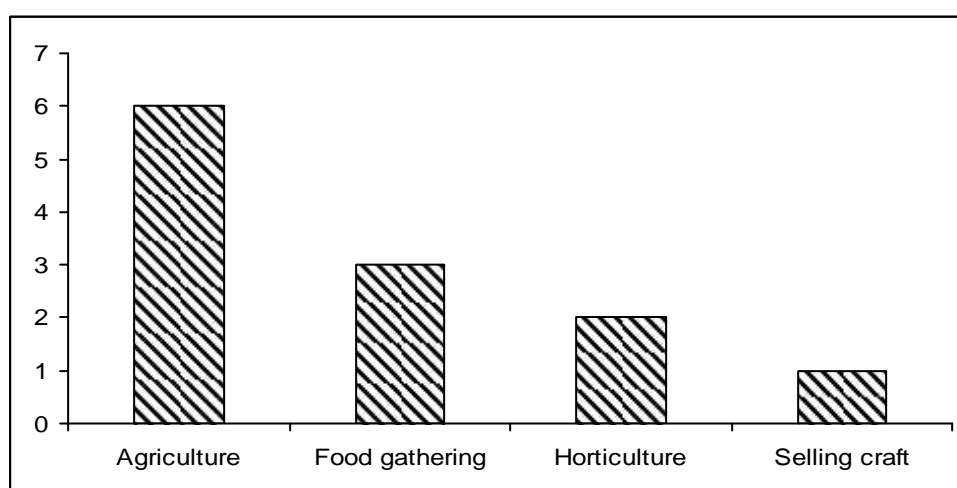
4.4.1 Livelihood Strategies of the Chepang People

Table 4.12 : Livelihood Strategies of the Chepang People

Particular	Months
Agriculture	6
Food gathering	3
Horticulture	2
Selling crafts	1
Total	12

Source : Field Survey, 2008

Figure 4.3 : Livelihood Strategies of the Chepang People



Agriculture alone is not sufficient for the livelihood of the Chepang while food gathering is limited by the over-exploitation of the forest products. In addition Chepang need cash to purchase non-indigenous households requirements such as salt, clothes, etc. and for the payment of land revenue. In this regard their subsidiary economic activities are mainly livestock, grazing, horticulture, food gathering and hunting and selling crafts.

In general hunting and slash and burn cultivation play a significant role in the lives of the villagers, but the Chepang of Siddhi and Shakatikhor VDC are in better position than communities in the VDC of Kaule and Korak. They shifted to sedentary cultivation. Over the last year of research, some fundamental alteration has occurred in the surrounding milieu. Consequently such serious of alternative has

ultimately led to converting of the survival strategies of the Chepang. The researcher traces out the economic strategies, economic activities and condition of Chepang. In the study area out of the 27 households 25 households (96%) occupation is agriculture and 2 (4%) households had adopted non-agriculture occupations.

4.4.2 Distribution of Landholding

The land use pattern in these areas is very traditional, based on indigenous knowledge and technology. The people have knowledge about their native environment and have adopted friendly livelihood practices in the ecosystem. The rugged and sloped area has been utilized to produce dry crops, cash crops and vegetables. The marginal land has been utilized to produce dry crops, cash crops and vegetables. The marginal land has extensively been utilized as pasture, and shifting cultivation for planting taro, yam and shoots.

In the agrarian economy of the Chepang community land is a vital source of agriculture. The size of land which Chepang people hold is not only small but in addition to that the productivity of the land is also low. They have no land for paddy cultivation, only *pakho and khoria* land. *Abal, doyam, sim and chahar* (see above) which is the fourth grade according to the state classification based on. After the abolition of the *kipat* system all the land in the area has been converted into *Raikar* tenure. Explain the different systems of land and land holding!

Table 4.13 : Distribution of Land Holding

Size of land (in Kathatta)	Household	Percentage
Landless	5	18.52
1 – 10	18	66.60
10 – 20	2	7.41
20 – 30	2	7.41
Total	27	100

Source : Field Survey, 2008

Among the 27 households covered in the survey, 5 (18.52%) are landless, whereas 2 (7.41%) respondents are medium land holders and 2 (7.41%) respondents large land holders. It is evident from the above data that the majority of the chepangs do not have above average land holding family units in Majhwang.

4.4.3 Categories of Land and Major Crops

At the present the ownership of land is required to get the citizenship which is then again also necessary to get ownership of land. The Chepang are thus found on a vicious circle. On the other hand, traditional livelihood opportunities have also been declining because of degradation of resources. Land has been classified as *khet* (Paddy field), *pakho* (dry land) and *khoriya* (dry land in the higher altitude). The agriculture economy of the Chepang of Majhwang (Siddhi VDC) has been based on such dry lands known as *pakho* and *khoriya*. *Pakho* is generally a dry land which can be ploughed for growing millet, maize, buckwheat, ghaiya (english), barley. On the other hand *khariya* is a rocky and steep land in high altitude of shrub and even plants which need to be cleared for cultivation and the used for growing cereals/pulse, black grams, kaguno, mustard and potato etc.

Table 4.14 : Categories of Land and Major Crops

Crops	Types of Land and Production Crops					
	Khet	Murri	Pakho	Murri	Khoriya	Murri
Paddy & ghaya	****	45	*	10	-	-
Maize	*	15	***	35	*	10
Millet/wheat	*	15	***	32	*	10
Cereal/pulse	-	-	**	18	***	10
Junelo/kaguno	-	-	*	10	****	50
Mustard/potato	-	-	**	12	*****	90

Source :S.N.V., 2006 [Note :- * - low production, *** - high production]

Farming depends on traditional knowledge and simple technology. Irrigation is not easily accessible in the area. This is why Chepang farmers have selected dry crops, either millet or maize. Maize is the main crop, though millet has been used as food grain and it is used also to prepare liquor. People normally do not plant paddy or wheat because it requires irrigation, which is not possible during winter and spring. There are no flourmills in the area. Only few water mills are available on riverbanks, which are distantly located and the cost for grinding is also high.

The above table shows that the cultivable area is largely used for the production of millet and maize followed by wheat, yams/potato, paddy, dry paddy (*ghaiya*) and *kaguno/junelo*. Only a few households in Majhwang grow more than 40 muri (20 quintal) of maize and millet. The majority grows only 15-35 muri(8-17 quintle) of maize and millet which indicates their poor economic condition. On an average only a few households grow paddy crops and able to meet food requirement for 9 to 10 months, where as majority grows enough food for six to nine months only. Thus food gathering plays a major role for survival. In the present study 94 percent of the Chepang households live below the subsistence level.

4.4.4 Food Sufficiency

Most of the Chepang households of the study area have been found to be landless. They have been facing the problem of survival for all seasons. Due to these reason they are facing problems of food scarcity.

Table 4.15 : Food Sufficiency

Feed sufficiency	Household	Percentage
Less than 3 month	14	60
3 to 6 month	9	25
6 - 9 month	3	16
1 year	1	5
Total	27	100

Source : Field Survey, 2008

The average food entitlement is very low because the majority of the households are food deficient where majority (93%) are Chepangs. This indicates a composite index of poverty, deprivation and exclusion because there are no social safety nets and food distributions from organizations working in the name of development. To cope with the situation the Chepang either migrates for wage labour to mitigate the needs. In 10% of the total households, it is obvious that people are more dependent on wild food items such as tubers, vegetables, birds and animals.

The analysis of the study displayed that a majority of the respondents were in food deficiency. The majority, 14 (60%) households fall in the group of having food sufficiency for less than 3 months followed by 9 (25%) households, having 3 to 6 month food sufficiency. 3 (10%) household have sufficient food for 6-9 months, only 1 (5%) household has sufficient food for a whole year.

4.4.5 Involvement of the Chepang in Different Occupations & Income

Table 4.16 : Involvement of the Chepang in the Different Occupation

Occupation	Household	Percent	Income per year
Seasonal labour	17	62	36850
Wage labour	5	20	33000
Selling craft/fruits	3	13	20200
Business/Services	1/1	2.5/2.5	35400
Total	27	100	

Source : Field Survey, 2008

A significant number, 17 (62%) households conduct seasonal labouring as a major source of income. Those numbers are increasing. It is followed by 5 (20%) households doing wage labour, 3 (13%) in selling crafts, 1 (7.5%) & 1 (2.5%) in business and government services occupation.

The annual per capita income of Chepang of the area is NRs. 10,276. Similarly the per capita expenditure of Chepang household was comparable. The above table shows that 62 percent of the total income is accrued by seasonal labour, wage labour and selling crafts/fruits/livestock.

4.4.6 Source of Loan in Chepang

Despite their hard efforts in agriculture and other income generating activities some households do not have enough resources to survive. When there is a sudden need of money, for instance, when some one in the family became ill, it is a difficult for the family to pay the expenses of the medical treatment. Because of their limited source of income, they prefer the following sources of credits and loans.

Table 4.17 : Source of Loan in Chepang

Particular	Household	Percentage
Sana Kisan Bank	5	15
Local Person	8	30
Chepang Sewa Samiti	5	15
Women Group	9	41
Total	27	100

Source : Field Survey, 2008

The table shows that 9 (40%) people borrow loan from women groups, 8 (30%) households borrowing from local persons, 5 (15%) households from the *Sana Kisan Bank* and 5 (15%) households from the *Chepang Sewa Samiti*. Many Chepang people borrow loans from *local persons* and *women groups* because they do not have a land certificate and a citizenship card. Due to that they have to pay high interest rates. There was yet another serious problem. Many Chepang peoples also didn't have citizenship. They were also not aware of the modern system. It is because none of the households has surplus to lend money to somebody else. Reciprocity in lend and borrow money for short periods in common, but the interest rate was high. One has to add 20kg (five pathi) of any cereal crop as an annual interest for a loan of Rs. 100 (The conversion is 12.5 kg of paddy, 15 kg of maize, millet or wheat). The price of cereals per pathi during the harvest-time is Rs. 20 for paddy, Rs. 25 for wheat and maize and Rs. 30 for millet. At this rate, the interest amount would be more than double of the amount of the borrowed money within one year. The weight of wheat, millet and maize remains the same as before grinding or processing, but the weight of rice remains only seventy percent of paddy after de-husking it. It is interesting that borrowing and lending money from a bank is rarely practiced in the community.

4.5 Ecological Condition of Study Area

The regions of settlement for the Chepang lies on the hilly and steeper slopes of Chitwan, Dhading, Makwanpur and Gorkha district at elevation between 2500 and 4000 ft. above sea level. The Chepang region has approximately at 27.55 at north and 84.30 log east verb ist missing! And it has an average annual rainfall of 5.5 mm. The temperature seldom rises above 37⁰c from April to September and falls below, 5⁰c

from December to February. During the monsoon, the hill area is completely covered with clouds. The climate of the region is wet and humid during the monsoon (June - September) and dry and cold during winter (October - March). However because of the varying elevations and the different topographical conditions, the exact figures are different throughout the districts. The soil found in the low lands like Shaktikhor is brown, black, and white. Whereas upland soils in Majhwang of Siddhi VDC are brown and black. You already mentioned that before

4.5.1 The forest and the Chepang

The forest provides an important source of food and forest products for Chepang households. For Chepang households in the hill regions, the collection of forest products (such as fuel wood, roots, mushrooms and medicinal herbs) provide a vital and customary source of food and income particularly during the difficult months from February to April. In the Majhwang area, Chepang households also draw on forests and fish from the rivers to supplement their diet and to earn additional cash by selling fuel wood.

Prior to 1957 most of the forest were under the control of local community. The traditional forest management strategies followed the principle of considering the needs of local people. Before 1957 nobody could cut trees to thatch or collect fodder from the forest without local indigenous organization permission. To cut down fuel wood, collect forest products and fodder was granted depending on the household size. Gathering of thatching grass was allowed in proportion to the roof area of a house. Hence, the forest utilization behaviour was largely controlled by local organizations in the past. The process of deforestation started just after the nationalization forest.

The forest provides the Chepang with fire wood for fuel, timber for shelter, laves for manure, raw materials for making baskets, ropes, bags, fishing traps bat hunting nets, arrows for hunting wild animals, medicinal herbs for curing ailment and vegetables. The Chepangs rely considerably on the forest for much of their subsistence. The forest for the Chepang was equally important for the construction of shelter. Timber is considered an important building material for the housesof the Chepang.

4.5.2 Housing Pattern of Chepang

The Chepang have developed suitable criteria for settlement as part of their adaptation to local surroundings. Most of them attempt to settle only in places where cultivable land, drinking water, springs, pasture and forest resources are available. The settlement is then conditioned by certain adaptability, reflected through a particular kind of house design which primarily serves to overcome severe winters.

Table 4.18 : Housing Pattern of Chepang

Types of House	Household	Percentage
Thatch roof	15	60
Tiled roof	7	25
Strip roof	5	15
Total	27	100

Source : Field Survey, 2008

The above table shows that the majority 15 (60%) of the respondents have thatch roofs followed by 7 (25%) respondents have tiled roofs and 5 (15%) respondents to have strip roof. The settlement of the Chepang was separate from that of other castes groups. Their settlement were either isolate or in periphery of village. Their locality was generally known as Chepang houses were simple and made by locally available materials like bamboo, hay, straw, rope, mud etc.

4.5.3 Major Occupation of the Chepang & Natural Resources

4.5.3.1 Agriculture

Agriculture has become the main source of the Chepangs since they began to live a settled life. The food gatherers and hunters must have been compelled to begin a settled life due to the problem of deforestation. What over are the observation, the known fact is that their settled agrarian life is hardly a century old, most probably they started this life when they came into contact with the land owning castes. Besides, in face of a precarious and insufficient food-gathering in the jungle, the Chepangs had to become simple agriculturists also preserving their tradition activities as food-gathering, hunting and fishing. They had to accept agriculture in their way of life

because agriculture, cattle breeding or livestock breeding, animal husbandry, basket making and carpentry were the nearest alternatives and supplement to their traditional economy nomadic to settled life and from crude forest life to peasantry life.

The whole paragraph you mentioned before, better to think about whether it is needed to write it again....

4.5.3.2 Livestock Raising

Livestock raising is considered important among the Chepang. The objectives of animal husbandry are cash income and manner. Goats and fowl are very important for cash income and cows and ox are used for milk and to plough the fields. The animals are needed for various purposes: the oxen for ploughing, pigs, sheep, goats, and chicken for meat. The raising of animals is directly related with several factors such as, economic importance, the availability pasture and fodder etc. The numbers of seeps and goats are decreasing due to shortage of grass and fodder restricted by the community forest and national forests management. Meanwhile the number of pigs and chicken are increasing. The number of animals is also connected to the economic status of a Chepang family. Some animals like pigs, goats and chicken have cultural values because they are scarified to the gods and ghosts.

4.5.3.3 Horticulture

Growing fruits and vegetables for commercial and household purposes are also found among the Chepang of Majhwang in Siddhi VDC. Local and wild fruits bananas, lemons, mangos, oranges, *chiuri*???, berries etc. and vegetables like chilli, radish, yam, bean, ginger, turmeric etc. are grown. The Chepang indigenous fruit *chiuri* has been ground in forest in the study area. Chiuri fruits are also the primary source of income of Chepang. If the Chepang have no food grains, they eat only *chiuri* fruits to sustain their livelihood. They make ghee from the seeds of *chiuri*, used to eat and also used to make soap. They purchase salt, oil, cloths, spices etc by selling the ghee of the chiuri seeds. Mostly Chepangs have their own chiuri trees. The Chepang also give *chiuri* trees to their daughters as a dowry in their marriage. Chepang people collect different fruits in the forest such as *Katush* (alsae), tanki

(gotrai) *bananas* (maisai) and *koirala* (jyasai). They give up food-gathering from the last of June for the reason that jungle products should not be eaten when the trees bear new buds, which is also related to the taboo of *chhonam* (new crops eating ceremony). Three to four months in a year the Chepangs of Siddhi in Majhwang dependent on the jungle fruits, roots and tubers, insects and other kind of wild product.

4.5.3.4 Hunting Gathering

Hunting is another traditional source of subsistence for the Chepangs of Majhwang VDC. They are conversant with the use of bows and arrows and their hunting consists mostly of trapping and sharing Animals with the assistance of dogs which accompany them on the hunt. The indigenous tools used by them for killing animals are bows and arrows, *bhuwajal*, *dharap* (snane, trap) *sole* (a short trap) and *guleli-mateen-gra* (value-angher). The animals which the Chepangs prefer to hunt are *ghoral* (wild Himalayan goat) *mirga* (deer), *banel* (wild pig). The main season for hunting is from February to June.

The Chepangs also have different ways and various implements for fishing. Some of the fishing implements are *shohara* (a kind of fishing basket-made of spilts of bamboo) *dhadiya* (almost-similar to shohara) *sipring* (a finally woven wicker basket) which are positioned in the river etc for fishing. The Chepang eat and exchange all varieties of fishes.

4.5.4 Shifting Cultivation

Rotational agro forestry, a farming system also known as shifting cultivation, is common across the lower and medium altitudinal ranges of the hill areas in Nepal. It is common policy approach to discourage shifting cultivation. In the Chepang area as much as 65 percent of the land is covered by forest, extending to 80 percent or more in the hilly areas. On the other hand, there are thousand of farmers whose livelihoods and cultural identity depends fully or partially on shifting cultivation on

the steep slopes. Most shifting cultivators of the Majhwang areas fall into the group (14-38 percent) of the very poor who live on less than US \$ 1 a day, and almost all of them belong to the Chepang community for whom land management practices are strongly interlinked with their culture and their identity.

The literal meaning of slash and burn cultivation "plant with a knife and grow with fire" and has the connotation of backwardness. The academic term of "land that is cultivated with follows" is much more neutral. The most negative term is slash and burn, which focuses attention on a mere land clearing method, which is also used by non-shifting cultivators to permanently clear the land of forest and these ideas are not inter changeable. During that process, traditional practices are discouraged, while the alternative livelihoods provided so in many ways, the forced conversions have been counter-productive, alienating the poorest farmers from their land and the forests and causing degradation of the natural resources.

CHAPTER FIVE

RECENT CHANGE IN THE CHEPANG COMMUNITY

5.1 Socio-Cultural Change in Chepang

During the last two decades, Chepangs have experienced certain changes in their social-cultural milieu. The discussion below illustrates some of the most important changes articulated by the informants.

The conversion of the Chepangs from their traditional religious practice to Christianity over the last thirteen years was seen in Siddhi VDC in Chepang community from about 90 percent of households have converted to Christianity. There is one church in the middle of Majhwang village. Every Saturday, they are gathered in the church from 10 am to 3 pm and pray. Every household should pay 10 percent of one's total income for the expenditure of the church and the pastor. The church collects grain and money for church house maintenance and provides help for poor Chepang community.

5.1.1 Major Ethnic/Caste Groups Following Christianity

One of the interesting features in Hindu country Nepal is the increasing number of Christians over the last one decade. In fact 70,696 Christian populations have increased between 1991-2001AD, an increase of 226 percent over the period of one decade. Table 5.1 lists the dominant groups in Nepal following Christianity by number. It shows that Majhwang Chepang people followed Christianity.

Table 5.1: Major ethnic/caste group following Christianity by number and percentage 2001 census

Ethnic/Caste	Total Population	Followers of Christianity
Tamang	1282304	24235
Rai	635151	13069
Magar	1622421	8314
Chepang	52237	4589
Limbu	359379	4228
Sarki	318989	3228
Damai/Dholi	390305	2483
Santhal/Satar	42698	2466
Total	4703484	62613
Total followers of Christianity	-----	62613

Source: Population Census (2001) CBS, Nepal

Table 5.1 confirms that only eight ethnic/caste group combined account 61.4 percent of total Christian population. Though Tamangs follow Buddhism & Chepangs are animist by tradition (See Rai 1985), they are gradually converting themselves into Christianity as they find more attraction in Christianity than their respective religion. It is already mentioned above that lower Hindu caste groups such as Sarki, Damai and Kami find Christianity more congenial in their day to day life than the Hindu religion. In the British Raj in India, a large number of ethnic/tribe populations were converted into Christianity and santhal/satar was one of them of large number of these populations entered into Nepal as Christians from the santhal praganna, India.

5.1.2 Religious of Majhwang Area

Table 5.2: Religious of Majhwang

Religious	Population	Percentage
Christianity	696	60
Hinduism	232	20
Buddhism	174	15
Others	58	5
Total	1160	100

Source: Field Survey, 2008

The study shows that Christianity was the main religion of the respondents. Majority 696 (60%) respondents were Christian followed by 232 (20%) respondents Hindu, 174 (15%) respondent and 58 (5%) in others religious.

Nepal has long been hidden away and forgotten by most of the world. Sincerely opposed to any form of proselytizing, government restrictions and subsequent penalties for Christian witnessing have been harassed. Many believers have spent significant periods of time in prison of their beliefs. It seems that while some of the Chepang may have heard of Jesus Christ. They still do not have a concept of create God or of sin. Many have never seen a Bible and there were only a handful of believers. All kind of religious leaders were co-operating with each other for the community development activities.

5.1.3 Positive and Negative Impact of Christianity

The conflict for and against Christianity has been emerged between the Pandes and Pastor. The number of Pande's clients has been decreasing, which means that the main source of income has been off. Because of highly acceptable humanitarian measures of Christianity, the wave of conversion seems rather strong not only in the Chepang community but also among other ethnic groups (Tamang, Magar). The number of Chepang adopting Christian people said that Chepang culture made us poorer and poorer due to over consumption of Jand from maize and millet. But when someone becomes the followers of Christianity, they stop drinking Jand (beer) and the custom of offering goats and fowls to the pande, which directly affects their economy and health, save the food-stuff (which supposed to be not sufficient for four months),

increased the literacy of the Chepangs children, charity for school's fees, food and dressing/stationeries goods. No hesitation without sides due to their continuous group meeting, discussions and progress in the church. Change in life style and improvement of economic status.

The negative impact remains and continuity of question of the preservation and continuity of their cultural identify. Because, when they become followers of Christianity, they are subjected to change their socio-cultural beliefs and practices associated with the entire birth-death life cycle. The Chepangs today are confronted with fundamental choice to follow Christianity or to remain their ethnic identity by rejecting it.

5.2 Economy Change in Chepang

5.2.1 Chepang and Market Relation

Market force exerts strong influence on the use of natural resources and distribution. Even though the areas, where indigenous peoples are living, are still far away from the market centres. They are never the less increasingly exposed to outside markets. Their interaction with market forces in terms of buying of outside products and selling of their products is growing. Moreover, the influence of cash economy is growing, which is slowly replacing the exchange and moral economy of the past. The natural and moral economy of the indigenous peoples is breaking down as a result of influence of market economy. But in most cases, indigenous people have not been able to reap benefit from the external market. The imperfection of the market, lack of information about the market-like price, and the market places, ability to bargain, and the distress sale, interpersonal relations with the traders make them most valuable. The case of credit market is the same there so imperfection, lack of information and of sheer cheating. A case study conducted for this purpose clearly reveals these facts. Because of this exploitative market relation resources of the indigenous peoples were adversely affected. There was high exploitation of the valuable resources, but the income was not high because "the terms of trade" was just not favourable for them Dependency on outside market was growing and so is the food insecurity as they lacked ability from internal resources to purchase goods from outside market.

Chepang lived in the hills and foothills, from their different niche they produced various valuable products (foods, herbs, honey, pulses, goats and chicken and the like). Their production declined as they did not have access to much productive land. They depended on khoriya cultivation and because of population growth and restriction on its cultivation they reduced its cultivation. Moreover, some of the khoriya have become permanent lands, some of the khoriya lands are out of cultivation as they are not permitted in the forest areas their other occupations included foraging/gathering in the forest for various non-timber forest products (NTFP) and hunting bats and other birds.

Chepang usually had personnel relationship with the money lenders and trade. They sell products like buckwheat, gahat, Chiuri (oil/ghee), herbs (Gurjo, harro, barro, amala etc) and NTFPs (like amliso, babiyo), birds (wild bird like beats, goats, pigs, chickens) and the like to the traders. The "term of trade" was very unfavourable for the Chepang in the past, traders bought these commodities very cheaply or exchanged with food grains like rice very unfavourably. For example, the low quality rice was exchanged with blackgram. For other products also, Chepang usually ask the traders to fix the price and purchase or exchange with rice and other necessities. Despite high quality of the commodities of Chepang, they would always get very poor price, because they totally depended on few traders with whom they had informal and personal relationship.

5.3 Changing Patterns of Forest Resources Consumption on the Basis of Chepang People

The per capita forest resources consumption rate has significantly decreased in 2008 compared to 1992. As mentioned in 1998, people had access to all forest areas of the village. Now people are depended only on forest to collect the resources. The Chepang shared the highest percentage of forest resources both in 1998 and 2008. However, the ratio of consumption has declined by 50 percent of among the ethnic/cast groups, the households Chepang and Tamang consume the highest proportion of firewood collected from the forest.

Table 5.3: Changing Patterns of Forest Resources Consumption on the Basis of Chepang People

Ethnic Group	1998			2008		
	Firewood (kg)	Fruits, roots & Herbs (kg)	fodder (kg)	Firewood (kg)	Fruits, roots & Herbs (kg)	fodder (kg)
Chepang	180	200	180	600	120	100
Tamang	700	150	160	500	100	80
Chhetri	400	120	120	400	80	20
Kami	600	120	100	400	100	50
Damai	600	100	80	400	100	60

Source: Field Survey, 2008

As deforestation has been occurring rapidly, meeting of the basic needs of the Chepang like forest roots and barriers, fuel wood, timber and fodder has increasingly been difficult; the growing scarcity of these things has seriously affected their livelihood. They have to go far away from their villages in search of forest products, which are sometimes not available due to over exploitation of the forest.

5.4 Changes in Occupations and Their Wishes for the Future

In their circumstances of insufficiency of food grains during most months in year, the Chepangs are worried from their shaken and transitory off farm economic activities. The following table shows that the changes in their occupations over time and their wishes for the future.

Table 5.4: Changes in Occupation and Their Wishes for the Future

20 years ago	Present	Wishes for the future
Agriculture	Agriculture	Government services
Parma	Wage labour	farming
Handicraft selling	handicraft selling	craft selling
Wage labour	Pottering/trekking	foreign wage labour
herding	herding/farming	Agriculture
roots/fruits selling	roots/fruits/timber selling	-

Source: Field Survey, 2008

The table 5.4 shows that the one that comes earlier in the respective column denotes the higher degree of economic significance and wide range of practices in the Chepang community. The above table shows incapability of feeding people at the top and the decline of “Parma” to the last in hierarchy during these twenty years, whereas the “Parma” system has totally been collapsed. This depicts the UPS and DOWN in their economic activities. Dissatisfied with the trend up to present, they wish for a different future. They prefer something new and have placed agriculture at the bottom of the hierarchy. Government services are the top in hierarchy because of power, prestige, and the security it provides for the livelihood as a stable source of income. Lahure (Army and labour in India/Arab) also has social prestige, money and glamour. This may a reason why most of the youths want to become lahure (India/Arab).

5.5 Changing Herd Composition

Livestock are essential to the livelihood of the study area. Animals are kept for several purposes such as milk, manure and draft. They used to maintain large number of animals in 1990. As recorded in 1990, the average size of livestock holding per household declined to 5. The community forestry had restricted the animals grazing in the forest freely. The respondents of the study area would collect the fodder only on seasonal basis. In 1990, fodder (leafy grass) from forest was the main source of

animal feed. After the formation of forest user groups, crop residue (straw) was the major source of fodder. To cope with the fodder scarcity, the respondents started to grow fodder trees at their agricultural land in 1990. Only 17 households independently provided year round fodder for their animal. Now the number of independently fodder supplier household reached 25 in 2001. This size of livestock of two different periods is presented in table 5.5.

Table 5.5: Comparison of Livestock size of Two Different Periods

Type of Animal	Total number in 1998	Total number in 2008
Ox	150	92
Cow	10	50
Goat	250	180
Chicken	350	420
Pig	90	100

Source: Field Survey, 2008

The number of all animals except the chicken had increased. The census of increase were several such as restriction on forest, lack of manpower at the family etc. They kept fewer animal on stall-feed basis. Similarly, the local breeds of buffaloes and cows were gradually replaced by improved ones. The reasons would be the restriction on grazing in community forest. The other reason would be that in the past herding was the duty of children. Most of children of sample households went to school, restriction on forest and lack of manpower at the family are the major factors to change the herding practice of the people. Change on herding practices created new social involvement.

Chepang Community Drawn Towards Animal Husbandry

The economic condition of Chepang community, living in eastern side of Chitwan district, who used to offer wine to the god, goddess and guests in the past, have started to welcome guests with milk after they were attracted toward animal husbandry. Chepang, who used to depend on brewing local wine and sell in the villages, have now started to sell milk in the villages "we can make four fold incomes from milk rather than brewing wine." Said 62 years old Bhim Bahadur Chepang. "That was the day, I was very happy in my life" Bhim Bahadur Chepang said. "I am very proud of my business and I could do a lot from this", he added. "There is no need to extend hand of money lenders from other, I started the milk business. It is enough for the livelihood and to pay the school fee for the children." He is able to live happily with his 5 member's family. "The production has increased by at least four years, due to the fertilization for the cow", he said. Though drinking liquor is normal in the Chepang community, no one of his family member's drinks wine.

There is change in the lifestyle of the Chepang community, who believe milk business is better than selling wine.

5.6 A New Innovation Development activities in Community Forestry

In recent decades, increasing demand for forest products has contributed to forest loss and degradation (Rao/Yadav, 1984/1987). This has directly affected rural farmer especially in the developing countries, whose livelihood is dependent upon forests and natural resources. This has led to the emergence of different approaches such as social forestry, community forestry, farm forestry and agro forestry of these approaches, social forestry as an umbrella term includes the practice of planning or using trees to pursue social forestry as on umbrella term includes the practice of planting or using trees to pursue social objectives through delivery of benefit to the

local people. Community forestry, farm forestry and leasehold forestry are all forms of social forestry. Community forestry refers either to patch of national forest land handed over to communities or to the use of public or communal land for tree growing which is later handed over to the community for the purpose of management. Agro-forestry is a collective name for land use system and technologies involving trees combined with crops or animals on the same land management. Private land Researchers have often used the terms farm forestry and agro forestry synonymously. In the content of Nepal, the practice of growing trees on farmland is also referred to as private forestry. Farming or agriculture is the main source of livelihood for the people of Nepal. Trees on farmland form an integral part of the forming system. Timber, firewood, fodder, grass and nutrients all come from both farmland and forest. Continuous increasing of human and livestock population has generated enormous pressure on the forest and arable land. As a result forest based resource are dwindling day by day in quantity, quality and diversity. It has been estimated that in 1964 the forest in Nepal covered more than 45 percent of its land area and by 1998 this had fallen to 29 percent (NPC 2001). Farmers saw in 1998 that the trees in a farming system as a part of their livelihood needs and strategies. In this context, farm forestry is a vehicle for providing diverse forest products for sustaining rural livelihood needs.

Leasehold Farming Empowers Landless Farmers

Santaram Praja is 45 years old and lives in ward no. 7 of Siddhi VDC in Chitwan. He lives in a small thatched hut built in public land with his seven family members. He does not have land to farm, five years back, Santa ram had migrated to Kathmandu to work as a seasonal labour, but return to home two years ago to work as a daily wage labour. He made NRs. 60 (\$ 0.46) per day, barely sufficient for his family's needs. As a result of this financial situation, his children have been dropped out of school. Ward no. 6 is mainly inhabited by poor and landless Chepangs people. The project inhabited its activities here in August 2006 by farming a group of seven farmers including Santaram known as "Siddhartha leasehold group". The project has helped this group by providing financial support to lease 14 Kathas of land from a local owner, the project was

provided training on improved methods of vegetable cultivation, seeds, fertilizers and pesticides, "Initially, I was not convinced as I never cultivated vegetables. Now I am confident that I can support my family through leasehold farming" he said. Santaram's life has changed significantly. He has now leased additional 600 square meters (2 kathas) of land as rent NRs. 2000. He grew vegetable round the year and with the increased income he has observed changes in his family's livelihood including improved health. His two sons, who had dropped out of school, are now rejoining in school. He has also managed to deposit NRs. 6000 in a bank for his daughter's engagement.

Before the leasehold forestry programme we worked as labourers for our livelihood. Forty year old Maya Chepang, who lives in Majhwang village in Chitwan district in central Nepal, said women are now raising goats, sheep and chicken and earning cash. "Our lives have changed for the better" she said "Women in our community are more active today than the men. We have been able to speak to other groups, and have learned to read and write".

5.7 Community forestry

The history of participation of local people in the use and management of forest in Nepal dates back to ancient time. Most of land under forest was managed by the local communities for their use and is the main source of daily essential supplies such as fodder, fuel wood, agricultural, foods, and other forest products. Local forest management practices or community management practices that are passed through generations can make a critical difference to the socio-economic sustainability of rural populations. Nepal government initiated process of planned development 1956, with emphasis on agricultural production and collecting more revenue from forestry sector. To achieve this target, government of Nepal enacted the national forest act (1957) and brought all forestland under government control. There are now around 12,000 forest user groups formed in Nepal during 14 years which covers nearly 1-2 million household members (20 percent of national population). They have taken over responsibility to managed about 850,000 ha. Forest area as nearly 16 percent of the total forest land of the country

Table 5.6: Change in Nepal's Forest Area 1954 - 2007

Base Year	Forest Area (ha)	Percent of Total Area	Source
1954	6478000	47.60	FAO, 1954
1964	6402000	45.60	HMG/USAID
1977	525934	35.70	LRMP 1986
1987	421200	34.70	FDMP 1997
1997	411000	31.20	DFRS 1997
2007	400200	29.00	DFRS 2007

Source: Field Study, 2008

The Chepangs from the study area have access to community forests, which is Indreni Community forests; Indreni C.F. User groups were registered in 2050 B.S. Now the condition of forest has improved, almost naked land has been converted to green area. The forest in Majhwang consists of mostly hardwoods like sal. There are rules regarding the usage of forest products. The forest is opened during the winter season and the users have to pay some amount of money to extract fuel wood, fodder, fruits etc. This is not the full story behind the community forestry of the forest as such other several questionable consequences are found there. Exclusion from the users groups has curtailed the access of Chepangs to the forest around the area. It is increasingly difficult for some of them to acquire wood, fodder, fruits. Because of the restriction on moving timber, they have to buy from those who do the illegal buying and selling they have.

There is an executive forest user's group committee of which the high caste Chhetris. The participation in the executive committee is limited to the elites only, regardless of their caste/ethnic affinity. The growth of the forest and problems related with it were increasing. According to the above analysis, it seems that there were problems of access, distribution, and participation in the community forestry.

Chiuri Evolved From a Buffalo

Long time ago, a buffalo escaped from her shed at night and grazed on millet farm until she was full. Since it was dark the buffalo could not find the way and fell off a dangerous precipice and was huge half way though. Nobody could pull the buffalo up. So, it died and it had been rotten. On that place, the Chiuri grew.

Hence, Chiuri fruit has white juice, which is the milk of buffalo, and the oil obtained from seeds is buffalo butter. The small black grains found inside the fruit are the millet eaten by the buffalo at that night. Chepangs still say "Chiuri is like a milking buffalo for us".

– Chepangs folk tale

5.8 Chepang Involvement in Literacy Class

The effort of government/NGO for educational development has seen in the field. The night classes run by NGO has increased literacy rate. Mostly female have benefited from such program. Out of 27 people literate 16 (67%) were female and 11 (33.40%) were male. Table 5.7 shows the number of people who were involved in night class.

Table 5.7: Chepang Involvement in Literacy Class

Age Group	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
0-25	1	3.7	4	15.11	5	18
26-35	7	26.00	3	11.11	10	38
36-45	2	7.30	6	22.34	8	29
46+	1	3.70	3	11.11	4	15
Total	11	40.70	16	59.67	27	100

Source: Field Survey, 2008

5.9 New Tourism in the Chitwan Chepang Hills

Chepangs of Chitwan, who were pursuing their traditional occupations of fishing, hunting, bird catching and farming at jungle edges, now have attempted to

seek new avenues of income by displaying these originalities to tourists. The tribal people with their domination in mountainous VDCs of the Chitwan district-Kaule, Siddhi, Korak and Shakikhor had been compelled to live on wild tubers, fruits and hunted animals till the last decade. It is no doubt that additional income can be made and the tribal existence preserved provided the original arts, cultures, customs and identities of the Chepang people were presented before tourists visiting the area. This awareness, though lately developed, has given new hopes and enthusiasm to the people towards tourism. Aiming to improve the livelihoods of the people through tourism of rural poverty Alleviation Programme (TRPAP) has been launched in the area for the last two years, which has been running different programs and activities.

“The tourism programme has not only encouraged us to preserve materials, customs and old handicrafts that were on the way to extinction, but also has inspired us to protect our tribal identity”, says Ramji Maya Praja of Chepang culture group. This has helped in making income for living as well as encouraging the coming generations towards the protection of tribal heritage.

Recently, a Chepang museum has been set up at Shaktikhor with the view to preserve and promote the primitive cultures, originalities, customs, and life style of the people. It also aims at making known these aspects to the world. Different materials used by the Chepangs and relics like catapults used in killing birds, slings and bows used in hunting animals, crushing devices, dhiki and janto (traditional stone tools for beating and grinding grains); pots, wooden containers, drums have been kept in the museum.

Assisted by the TRPAP, Som Bahadur Praja of Siddhi-6, Majhwang has started home-stay services for tourists at home and also a grocery, which help him make a good income. “It used to be hard to support my family by working on wages at other's houses or lands, but now I work for myself and the income is sufficient to keep my families.” says Som Bahadur.

CHAPTER SIX

MAIN PROBLEM FOR SURVIVAL OF CHEPANG PEOPLE

This chapter focuses on the problem of marginal indigenous people to ownership and control over natural resources (land, water and forest), priming their livelihood and traditional occupation and knowledge. Chepang people continue to suffer from the state, structural & cultural violence and rapid destruction of Chepang language. Landlessness, poverty, illiteracy and poor health, least representation on development activities, state policy and program.

Nepal is a diverse society but the rights of the indigenous population to their traditionally used resources have been curtailed through various policies, regulation and practices, which further marginalized them. In the past they had their own system of property ownership, which some times differed with the main stream private property ownership system. In many cases, they had been using the resources without any formal property ownership, but through understanding and traditional practices. They derived their cultural meanings and identity from their living in a certain location and using certain natural resources. Even for the management of these natural resources, they had their traditional system to which they had found meaning and thus had given commitments. But now their whole life and livelihood security have been threatened because of restrictions on the use of their traditional resources, evictions from their ancestral lands, and due to lack of proper policies and legislations to ensure their traditional and alternative livelihood opportunities.

The policies, legislation or regulations and practices related to land, water and forest and then identify the problems and opportunities inherent in them. The impact of the provisions on these policies and regulations on the livelihood of the highly marginalized indigenous groups is then analyzed. As there is also a wide range in the wealth and development status within Chepang people, the case study is limited only with marginalized ones, as their livelihood are threatened by the practices of the state, market and main stream society.

Further, the concerns of indigenous group are also different according to the situation of their marginalisation in the society. For example some of the ethnic leaders consulted during the study period share that the concerns of influential and larger ethnic groups are more directly related and larger ethnic groups are more directly related to politics, such as equitable share in political process, governance etc where as the prime concerns of Chepang people are access to natural resources and protection of the traditional rights and ensuring means of better livelihood. A broad generalization of this pattern can be depicted as follow.

There are many legal provisions that discriminate against Chepang people. The new orders circulars, acts and directivities of the government have infringed upon the traditional rights of these people. For example, the private forest Nationalization Act, 2013 (1957) included under the government ownership all the forests that had been used from the past under the traditional rights as well as uncultivated lands lying within its boundary. Ethnic groups did not receive any compensation for these forests and the uncultivated lands lying there in. The ownership of this forest was only with indigenous people, which has been transferred to the government's ownership. The forest act of 2049 (1993) brought the ownership of the lakes or the rivers and banks within the forest area, thus making these peoples further resource-less, groups like Raute, Bankariya, Chepang, Kasunda, Tharu, Danuwar, Santhal (Satar), were totally dependent on forest. But with the control on forest by the government authorities and various restrictions imposed on these peoples, their lifestyle itself came under severe strain. Chepang used to depend on shifting cultivation but their regal ownership was not established. As state had no category of property rights that recognize customary use, the land which was used for shifting cultivation has slowly been converted to private land and owned by other people than Chepang community.

6.1 Impact of Liberalization/Urbanization/Globalization on the Indigenous Knowledge System

The Nepal the nature of both Nation (State)/urbanization on the process of globalization/liberalization have been predatory. Due to the impact of modernization they have been forgetting the valuable IK system. The Nepalese state has been predatory since 1763 and market has been predatory since the fifties but with more intensified effect since the mid eighties. The Nepalese Hindu Religious state is work

but as far as destroying the tribal livelihood is concerned, unfortunately, the powerful process of globalization and liberalization has affected negatively to all the Nepalese people but more forcedly to the Chepang tribes. It is believed that other problems faced by the tribes of Nepal are just the offshoot of these problems.

Chepangs are rich in indigenous knowledge system. They possess very precious tangible and intangible cultural heritage that has been passed from one generation to another. Chepang communities have their own mother tongue, folk culture, including folk literature, folk beliefs and practices, folk dance & music, folk art and artefacts, folk tools, folk games, folk food, clothing and housing, fair and festivals and life cycle rituals and traditional healing practices. Some of these were already lost. Indigenous knowledge system is disappearing most rapidly due to lack of proper attention of new generation toward it through effect of modernization.

They depended on foraging and hunting in the forest for survival. They used to obtain a part of food supply from these activities. But now increasingly, the food grains from wild fruits have declined, the decline of khoria was also a reason for this. Khoria not only produced food, but also a variety of other things like taro, yams and other root crops, and the like. They also had their own medical system in which they used to use their wild herbs for treatment. It was told that they could treat even the fractured bone from these herbs. But such knowledge is disappearing fast as Chepangs also buy modern medicines. They move away from home for wage employment and do not know what is there in the forest. The loss of this knowledge would also make them dependent on external market for which more cash is required.

The knowledge of resource management also had been decline among the younger generation. In the past, household farm, khoria and forest were interlinked, and the people had developed a harmonious relationship. But now it is increasingly separated and concentration is only in home farm land.

6.2 Chepang's Loss over Traditional Lands & Forest

In Nepal although the concept of statutory rights in the land had developed long before the political unification of the kingdom during the later part of the eighteenth century, there still existed areas and communities where traditional concepts of customary rights in the land persisted. Such rights were generally of a communal

character and were known as kpat. In the kpat form of land tenure, however, communal authority superseded any claim that the state might extend on grounds of internal sovereignty of state landlordism. A kpat owner derived rights in kpat land by virtue of his membership in a particular ethnic group and their location in a particular area. Land ownership under the kpat system was limited to certain communities of ethnic tradition in the eastern and western hill areas of Nepal (Regmi, m.c. 1997).

After 1768 until 1950s, including 104 years old autocratic Rana rule, the rulers made fortunes by implementing birta & gagir land tenure system that allowed them to own or transfer land on their discretion. Kpat land tenure system was finally abolished through the backdoor in late sixties in the name of land reform program. Since then the Limbus began to lose their land very rapidly and by now many of them are either landless who migrate to various parts in Nepal. But the Chepangs have neither any written document nor Lal mohar (royal seal) as an evidence of kpat. The Chepangs were the first settlers in this forest region which is geographically isolated. Land is the primary means of production for the livelihood of Chepang of the total land about 21 percent is under cultivation with an average holding size of 0.96 ha; and 32.1 percent of household are land less out of the total land holding, 1.4 percent landowners own 14 percent of arable land of the total cultivable land, about 9 percent under tenancy system. The land use system in Nepal is not based on the principle of equity.

It is very difficult to obtain citizenship by people who have no land ownership certificate and it is impossible for citizen to buy land without citizenship certificate. Obtaining most of the state sponsored benefits requires citizenship certificate. Four examples, people cannot take land if they have no citizen certificates and if they have no land they can not get citizenship certificate. Such vicious cycle is excluding poor ethnic groups from opportunities provided by the state, and is also threatening their identity in society. The issues of land right became a political slogan of political parties. However, the marginal indigenous communities, Dalits and poor farmers did not get benefits form high sounding land reform.

There are still few indigenous peoples, homely Route, Chepang, Kusunda, Bankavia, Tharu, Raji and Bote/Majhi who makes their living in the forest. Among

the settled forest dwellers, Chepangs live in the central and western hill, in the past Chepang lived in the caves or temporary huts in the huts in the forest and made their living by gathering wild food and wood and hunting in the forest. Many of them still continue it but some of them have settled down in agriculture and some labour works in near by development projects and landholder elite groups (Brahmin) for making their living. Chepangs like other forest dwellers collect taruls, vyagurs, taro, forest fruits chiuri etc. Although their main source of livelihood is khoriya these lands are not registered in their names. Customarily these lands are owned by the Chepangs but legally it is owned by Government of Nepal. They lost their land ownership because of their ignorance of law, bureaucratic procedures and marginalization by the rulers. As they do not own land, they do not get citizenship certificate.

Chepang Rights Over Chiuri Forest and Traditional Lands

Chepangs have been distributed in four districts, Makawanpur, Chitwan, Dhading and Gorkha central region of Nepal. Some Chepang still lives in forest caves. One of the special characteristics of Chepang is close attachment with chiuri (butter tree) forest and trees. Where there are Chepang community there were a lot of chiuri forest and chiuri trees in their private lands. Chiuri both in forest and private land have been well protected by the Chepang communities. Unfortunately, they do not have legal rights over chiuri forests. On the other hand, many Chepang families do not have official land title of their private lands.

6.3 Most Effectuated Chepang People from National Forest & Community Forest

An assistant district forest officer working in the Chepang is state since the nationalization of forest in 1955. Chepang community lost interest in protecting forest because they lost the ownership but subsequently he blames the victims thus", their slash and own practise expanded over forest to feed the increased population. This resulted in environmental degradation and triggered vicious circle of poverty. "... The community forest failed to address Chepang's immediate needs, government formulated the concept of leasehold forestry considering community forest unsuitable for forest based communities. Nepal government forest policy is not suitable for indigenous communities.

Group	Affected Activities
Chepang	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Collection of forest tubers, roots, fruits etc for livelihood collection of basic forest products due to prohibitions. ➤ Collecting of agro products grown in shifting cultivated area, due to bans on entering forest. ➤ Indigenous right to use forest shelter and using timber to build Theki (wood pot) which they sold for livelihoods.

Forest dependent people like fire woods collection (who sell the wood in nearby market in order to feed their families) and animal grazers were most affected by the prohibition issued by the government. Chepang people, who depend on forest products like fruits, tubers, NTFP and leaf litter also were heavily affected.

6.4 Context of Food insecurity, Poverty, Illiteracy, Bad Health in Chepang Communities

Nepal is among the poorest countries in the world with an annual per capita income of approximately US \$ 200. The level of absolute poverty is among the highest in Asia. Despite improvements in economic and social indicators over the past two decades, human development indicators remain low. The human development index (HDI) rank of Nepal in 2004 was 135 out of 175 countries indicating a low life expectancy at birth, low educational attainment and a low standard of living (UNDP, 2004)

Table 6.1: Poverty in Nepal

Human development Indicator	Nepal	High Caste	Janjati	Medeshi	Marginalized people(chepang)/ Dalit
Life expectancy	55.8	60	53	58	50.30
Adult literacy	38.72	58.60	35.20	32.50	21.80
Per capita income (\$)	240	35.09	210	280	150
HDI	0.325	0.441	0.229	0.313	0.180

Source: www.worldbank.org. (2004)

The problem remains widespread and most indicators suggest that it is on the rise. About 80 percent of the working population live in rural areas and depend on subsistence farming for their livelihoods. In these study area household food security and poor nutrition are still major concerns. Most Chepang households have little or no access to primary health care, education, clean drinking water and sanitation services. Rural poor people are generally illiterate, have large families and are landless or have very small landholdings. Small fragmented subsistence farming is a characteristic of Chepang people. The average Agricultural landholding is only 0.8 hectares. Life is a constant struggle for survival. They dependency of Chepang on food grain produced in the terai has been growing. Now most of them meet only 3-4 months food supply from their own cultivation. For the rest of the food supply, they depend on local money lenders and traders, who are mostly recent immigrants. The income sources to purchase the food are the commodities produced in the hills and wage employment a way from the house. Usually, at least male member of Chepang household works in other areas on a seasonal basis to earn cash income needed to purchase food.

6.5 Lack of Protect Mother Language in Chepang Peoples

Nepal is rich in its cultural and linguistic diversity. Nepalese belong to 103 caste and ethnic groups (CBS 2001) who are largely Hindus, Buddhists, Kirants, Animists and Muslim and speak around 92 language officially recognized by the state (CBS 2001, Yadav and Turin 2007). As a result, Nepal has evolved as a unique cultural space with numerous religious and philosophical values, customs and practices. Despite being a multilingual nation, a single language, i.e. Nepali has been given power, recognition and prestige while, the remaining minority language and their communities were impoverished and marginalized. As a result, linguistic minorities have remained socially excluded from harnessing national benefits in fields such as politics, economy, education, employment and so on. It is, therefore necessary to address these issues of linguistic minorities in the context of inclusive democracy in Nepal. There is neither conducive environment nor course curriculum, books and trained teachers available to take education in mother language. It is thus recommended that the government should support to educational institutions to provide education in mother language not only at primary level but also up to higher education. Moreover, the governments draft has targeted to focus on those ethnic

groups which have literacy rate below 24.5 percent. It is further recommended that the focus groups should be all indigenous and disadvantaged communities less than national literacy rate. While providing education in mother language, the script and content of the indigenous people should be indigenous one.

6.6 Lack of Participation of Chepang Peoples in Formulation of Policy, Plan and Program

Table 6.2: Causes of Non Participation in Formulation of Policy, Plan and Program

S.N.	Cause	Number	Percent
1	Uneducated	13	50
2	No one informed	10	40
3	No interest	3	10
	Total	26	100

Source: Field Survey, 2008

The table shows that 50 percent uneducated, 40 percent of people no one informed and 10 percent no interest.

The monopoly of high caste in education and resource is well reflected in their entrenchment in administration and policies. The social structure of power elites has changed only marginally since the evidence of an increasing stranglehold of high castes in the bureaucracy. The data shows that 82.9 percent were Bahun-Chhetri and 3.7 percent ethnic groups (Janajati). This indigenous people and lower caste remain subjugated in governance.

The participation of Chepang communities in political and civil engagement is very low. The main thing about civic participation is political engagement. The local level participation of the Chepang people in civic and political rights is negligible. Political participation and actuation of citizenship rights is also determined by the

level of affiliation in political parties, candidacy in election, post election achievement and barriers to participation. Research shows that affiliation to political parties is low, candidacy in election is low and post election achievement is also perceived to be low. Lack of education, finance and networking were cited as the biggest barriers to participate in the civil political and developmental sphere. At present, Nepal is a secular country that embrace multi cultural and brings the issues of minorities to the forefront with a view to complying with the ratified ICERD 1965 and constitutional spirit regarding right to equality, the government of Nepal has recognized caste distrainable as those who are most deprived and needing state intervention programs and policies.

6.7 Citizenship Problem of Chepang Communities

Citizenship certificate is proof of national identity of a citizen and at the same time, it is also permanent right of a citizen. It is required to get government job, to acquire land, to participate as a candidate in election, and to join formally in any government and non-governmental organization. 50 percent Chepang people do not have a citizenship certificate. The situation of Chepang women is more severe. 65 percent of Chepang women do not have citizenship certificates.

The concern on the issues of Chepang communities, especially in term of exclusion and capabilities deprivation is serious. What exists now is an outcome of systematic exclusion that began in the past caste system introduced for national integration and consolidation during the time of active monarchy. Citizenship is one of the major issues among the Chepang community as it is not just a legal identity but significant for ensuring accessibility to resources. Chepang communities are more affected by the different ill practices like inhospitality, caste based discrimination and gelatinization which, they feel, are pushing them to the brink of social exclusion than by lack of their citizenship certificate.

Chepang's Problems and Intervention Areas:

Problem	Intervention
Cultural 1) Religious discrimination 2) Linguistic discrimination	1) Secular state 2) Official language of indigenous people
Political 1) Poor representation 2) Subjugated governance	1) Proportional representation 2) Ethnic autonomy
Economic 1) Landlessness and lack of access to traditionally used resources 2) Low literacy 3) Unemployment and unhealthy condition	1) Increase access to resources preserve traditional rights over resource. 2) Educational targeting

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

7.1 Conclusion

The study was conducted as a case study of socio-cultural change in the Chepang communities. Majhwang village of Siddhi VDC, ward no. 6 was chosen as the study area. Majhwang village consists of 90 household, having total population 806 among which 700 (80%) were Chepangs. Chepang people of the study area were economically poor and illiterate in comparison of other societies due to various reasons. Major conclusion of the study have been summarized as: Sample size of the study was 27 household with 112 populations. The average family size is 6.5 people per household. Among above 5 years population and literate, women were more illiterate. Chepangs practise their tribal religion dominated by Christianity in the study area. They have strong belief on mystical power. Early marriage, widow, polygene, surrogate, love marriage and others capture and elopement are the interesting features of marriage in the Chepang culture. Dual festival practices observed in Chepang communities are: Christmas, maghe samkranti, saune samkranti, chhonam, dashain & tihar. Occupational status is of 80 percent in agriculture, 10 percent wage and seasonal labour, 5 percent selling crafts and others 5 percent. Housing pattern is, 75 percent thatch roof, 18.51 percent tiled roofs and strip and concrete roof 5 percent. With regard to land holding pattern, 18.51 percent were landless, 66.66 percent have up to 10 katha, 7.40 percent with up to 10 to 30 katha. Agriculture production is not sufficient for fulfillment of basic needs. Only 5 percent could be fulfilled from agriculture production and 95 percent have no production to fulfill their basic needs. Source of income of respondents is, 44 percent were animal husbandry, 30 percent were wage labour, 11 percent were NTFPS selling and 15 percent other source of income. Sources of loan of respondents, 34 percent were borrowed loan from women groups, 30 percent from local persons and 18 percent from bank and Chepang sewa samaj.

In the present study, 95 percent of Chepang households live below the subsistence level. The agricultural system practise among the Chepang is a response

to the challenges of their traditional livelihood. The agricultural activities of the Chepangs are largely regulated by the seasonal cycle. The major climatic seasons are rainy and winter. The cultivable landholding are small, a short productive agriculture season and traditional technology. Chepangs have to put much manual labour input to grow crops for their mere subsistence. The cultivable area is largely cultivated by millet and maize followed by wheat, paddy, mustard, pulse, ghaiya, kaguno and sama. Only few households grow paddy. Very less number of the Chepangs of Majhwang has been found hardly to meet food requirements for nine to twelve months, whereas a majority of them grow food enough for six to nine months only. In this regard, the subsidiary economic activities, mainly livestock and horticulture are practised by them. Among the Chepangs, goats, fowl, oxen, cows and pig are of special importance. Goats and fowl are very important for cash income and manure. Growing fruits and vegetables for commercial purpose is very popular among the Chepang of Raksirang. Both men and women are engaged in wage labour, an important form of economic activity of the Chepangs. Wage labour is done either within the periphery of or out of their settlement. The cottage industry, as their second main occupation, leaf umbrellas, wicker baskets and big basket are sold mainly in Tandi and Narayanghat bazaar.

Agriculture, which has always been the primary economic activity but never provided sufficient food grains throughout any year to most Chepang, has also undergone several changes. In addition to getting food grains, Chepang are also acquiring money in the form of short-term loans by mortgaging their land, which ultimately leads to land losing. The "Adhya" system, however, has contributed or made distribution of the resources. Through the "Parma" system, although it is confined only in the agricultural activities, they are managing their multiple occupations. The collapse of traditional occupations and the inability of agricultural activities have compelled the Chepang to find other income earning activities like wage labouring, pottering, herbs & NTFPs selling but none of these occupations has been found to be a reliable source of livelihood. Because of the recent changes in their socio-economic situation, some of these off-farm economic activities are shaken and are only in transition.

Almost all respondents experienced that deforestation contributed to the formation of gullies and occurrence of debris flow. Due to the reduced availability of forest products in the nearby forest, rural people had to buy their daily requirement of fuel wood, fodder, fruits and tubers (roots) from elsewhere.

Nepal is a hilly and mountainous country (80% of national area) with difficult terrains, rugged topography and many remote localities (IVES, 2004). Chepang regions of the country have poor access to the governmental institutions and no access of roads and infrastructures. Hill region has least access to land with low land productivity due to its steepness and un-irrigated khorla land. Therefore, the deficit in agricultural practices is higher in this region.

Chepang people own produce seldom covers their annual food requirements. They need loans to retain the difficult periods. On the other hand, farmers are unable to get formal credit from the bank since they do not have the right of the lands. Land ownership or right of the land are the key criteria of the banks to provide loans to the farmer. The farmers cannot get loans from the formal system due to a lack of payback security required for the bank. The bank usually does not provide loans without trustworthy collateral. The marginal Chepang farmers do not have trustworthy asset to pledge. Informal credit that comes mostly from moneylenders is their only option. The household constantly borrows money at high interest rate, which ranges from 36 to 60 percent per annum. The excessive interest rates further aggravate the poverty situation.

Among the Chepang, an elderly person, usually the eldest male in the family, wields control and enjoys respect and authority to decide the social, economic and religious affairs of the family. The headman has dominant position over the rest of the family members. Women are considered comparatively incompetent to control the family affairs. However, they are free to select or elope with a man of her choice. So marriage by elopement, divorce and widow remarriages are permissible. Levirate and surrogate marriage are approved by the community and per marital sex relations are tolerated. On the other hand, more informal marriage is popular among the Chepangs.

The number of Chepangs adopting Christianity has been found to be gradually increasing in Siddhi VDC. The Chepangs in the recent times are confronted with

fundamental choice to follow Christianity or to retain their ethnic identity by rejecting it.

Particularly the Chepang areas are characterized by inaccessibility and marginality in terms of markets, mainstream politics, education, skills, diversification, and growth. In fact, most of the line agencies are present in the district headquarters only. Accessibility to an already scarce infrastructure is particularly difficult in mountain districts. Fortunately, primary education has become increasingly common among Chepang households. However, children are often employed for labour once they are 12 or above. There are health posts, but they are poorly equipped, have less service staffs or expertise and do not have enough medicines. Many parts of the hills, where Chepangs are living, do not have roads and telecommunications services. There is no easy accessibility of various daily mechanisms for livelihood. Security has been abandoned due to government policies as well as by modernization??.

The study illustrates the loss of off-farm income from collection of herbs in the national/community forest area due to the government policy. Lack of effective access to newly generated resources like community forests. Chepang people have also not been able to take up alternative livelihood strategy because of various socio-economic and political reasons. They lack land for the production of food and settlement of their life. They also lack education, skills, social network and access to the market. The impact of threatened livelihood is mainly seen on children's health. It is considerably poor and child mortality is quite high in the Chepang population. Many families were considerably large loss of land to recent immigrants through unfair credit market, unfair terms of trade due to lack of awareness.

7.2 Recommendation

On the basis of the conclusion, it is recommended that Chepang peoples have cultural and spiritual values of land, forest, trees, rivers and other natural resources other than their physical uses. They are closely attached with these resources. Unfortunately, the Chepang people in recent years have been alienated from their resources which were their part of livelihood. Due to deforestation and community forestry program, their livelihood and way of life has been threatened. They are facing

serious problems for conserving their culture. Now they do not have legal right to access and control over forest where they have been residing for generations.

It is believed that the main causes of poverty are exploitation of resources, limited and unproductive ownership of the land and distribution patterns. The programs against those limiting factors to the livelihood of Chepang can provide the empowerment, awareness, self-confidence and strength to fight against their injustice, resource and cultural exploitation. The constructive programme should be promoted for their own development. The following suggestions have been recommended for the improvement of the livelihood of Chepang and marginalized indigenous people:

- 1) Nepal government must rectify the ILO Convention no 169, as soon as possible as it recognises the rights of Chepang and other highly marginalized indigenous people.
- 2) Inclusion of Chepang people in the process of state restructuring and ensuring their various rights.
- 3) Chepang language is gradually disappearing dominated by Nepali language. Conducive environment for study in mother language should be created providing trained teacher, course, curriculum, books and context. It is thus recommended that the government should support to educational institutions to provide education.
- 4) Chepang peoples have been gradually estranged from customary use rights of natural resource. It is recommended that customary use rights of Chepang people to access and to control over natural resources should be re-established.
- 5) Traditional occupations of the Chepang peoples have been dying. Traditional occupation and skills of Chepang people should be sharpened and promoted for these employment opportunities. Both in educational and government jobs, certain quota should be forced for the Chepang peoples focusing those who are far behind.

- 6) An educational center should be established for the study of Chepang people's knowledge, skills and culture. The knowledge and skills of Chepang peoples should be registered at local and national level reserving their collective rights and benefit sharing on the commercial utilization based on these rights.
- 7) There are a number of issues related to women and children of Chepang, people (Girl trafficking, employment of Chepang women, child labor and education of Chepang child) who should be seriously taken into consideration by the government and civil society. Focuses programmed should be launched to address these burning issues of Chepang people.
- 8) Chepang people also did not have citizenship. They were also less aware of the systems outside their localities. Enhance awareness of policies and legislations, increasing the role of civil society and social mobilization to develop understanding by Chepang people about policies and practices, increase public pressure and improve the practices and give feedback to policy makers.
- 9) Electricity, transportation and communication facilities should be expanded in the study area because these facilities can develop the market for local production and these facilities can also help to establish the cottage industries which can raise the living standard of the poor.
- 10) Similarly, the status of Chepang people in the study area is worsening due to the illiteracy and unemployment. Non formal education and vocational training must be provided to uplift their condition.

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Annex
Social-Culture Change Household Survey

Respondent: M/F Age Occupation

Family Type: Nuclear/Joint Family

Detail about the family number of the respondents:-

S.N.	Name	Age	Sex	Relation to the Respondent	Education Illiterate/literate (class/level/degree)	Occupation
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						

Use of forest resources by household

Type	Total uses per day	
	Now	Before 20 years
Firewood		
Fodder		
Food gathering		
Hunting (Wild animal)		
Fishing		
Others		

Information on the land

Types of Land	Own land		Ailani		Landless	
Khet						
Pakho						
Khoriya						

Types of production/livestock

Types of Production	Total Production (k.g.)	Livestock	Number	
			Now	before 20 years

Source of income for livelihood

Types of Income	Annual Income
Agriculture	
Horticulture	
Livestock	
Wage labour	
Traditional Craft Selling	
Others	

Questionnaire Regarding Livelihood Strategy

- 1) How many months of food shortage?
 - a) 3 months
 - b) 6 months
 - c) 9 months
 - d) 12 months
- 2) How does family manage in the food deficient months?
.....
- 3) What are the other sources to fulfill for this deficiency?
 - a) Selling of craft
 - b) Livestock raising
 - c) Seasonal Labour
 - d) Servicee
 - e) Others
- 4) Was there been any change for your with regard to the access of forest products?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
- 5) If yes, what factors do you think have influence such change?
 - a) Nationalization
 - b) Privatization
 - c) Community forest hand over
 - d) others
- 6) Do you have sufficient forest products?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
- 7) If no,
 - a) Which products are in sufficient?
.....
 - b) How do you manage?
.....
- 8) What are the main sources of income of your household?
.....
- 9) Is the income from these sources enough to meet the subsistence needs of your household?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
- 10) If No, How do you manage the money, you need?
 - a) Sapati
 - b) Bank
 - c) Local money lenders
 - d) relatives
 - e) Others

- 11) Did you face any problems in getting the loan?
.....
- 12) Are any members of your household working elsewhere?
a) Yes b) No
- 13) If Yes
.....
- 14) Does he/she send any remittance?
a) Yes b) No
- 15) If yes, how does it compare to your local income?
a) Same/equal b) Less c) More
- 16) Which change has occurred on the following since then?
a) Forest condition
.....
b) Availability of NTFPs
.....
c) Income of local people
.....
d) Soil, erosion, landslides, rainfall patterns.
.....

Issues of Development and Difficulties

- 1) What types of facilities are you getting from state?
 - a) Road construction
 - b) Tourism
 - c) Building Construction
 - d) Bazaar expansion
 - e) Schools
 - f) Health post
 - g) Others (Specify).....
- 2) Which state activity in particularly has affected your occupation the most?

.....
- 3) Has it improved your economic condition or made it worse?
 - a) Improved
 - b) Worsened
- 4) In what way, promoted livelihood traditional occupation?

.....
- 5) Which language do you use while speaking at home?
 - a) Chepang
 - b) Nepali
 - c) Others.....
- 6) Involvements in Development institution.

.....
- 7) Do you want any other development in your village?

.....
- 8) Any NGO/INGO is working in your village?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
- 9) If yes, which are has support?
 - a) Road
 - b) Electricity
 - c) Drinking water/Sanitation
 - d) Empowerment
- 10) What are the difficulties to get it in your village?

.....
- 11) What are the benefits of community/leasehold forest?

a) Yes

b) No

- 12) Are there any negative affects of community forest?
.....
- 13) Is it necessary to preserve of traditional practice? Why?
.....
- 14) What are the existing problems of Chepang community?
.....
- 15) What should be the Govt. policies & progrmme have to take
action to conserve the successful or failure cases?
.....
- 16) What are the external impacts on the livelihoods through
sustainable natural resource management?
.....
- 17) How can we preserve indigenous knowledge system? What
would be the role of GOs, NGOs & local people?
.....

Checklist for Interviews and Observation with key Informants

1. Socio-Cultural Features

- Religion changes impact of Christianization
- Marriage system (Changing patterns)
- Life cycle ceremonies and their expenses (Factors of change & impact)
- Inter cultural relationship
- The way of adaptation sustainable livelihood strategies.
- Causes of exploitation in an indigenous identity.
- Indigenous knowledge system vs modern technology.
- Native language.
- Traditional occupation.

2. Economic Features

- Source of income and expenditure.
- Problem of traditional business system.
- Labour migration (factors & impacts)
- Saving/deficit, investment/loan
- Types and pattern of agriculture cultivation

3. Ecological Features

- Uses of forest resources past and present
- Problem of community forest act
- Food gathering/hunting activities
- Changing pattern of cultivation.
- Major effect of ancestral lands & territories.