

**Impacts of Socio-economic Exclusion among the Musahars of
Chandra Ayodhyapur VDC of Siraha**

A Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of

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By

Kasindra Yadav



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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

This is to certify that Mr. Kasindra Yadav has prepared this Thesis entitled **Impacts of Socio-economic Exclusion among the Musahars of Chandra Ayodhyapur VDC of Siraha** under my guidance and supervision. He has studied at Chandra Ayodhyapur VDC of Siraha district. I therefore forward this dissertation for final approval and acceptance.

.....

Mr. Madhu Giri
Bhaktapur Multiple Campus
Tribhuvan University

APPROVAL LETTER

This Thesis work entitled **Impacts of Socio-economic Exclusion among the Musahars of Chandra Ayodhyapur VDC of Siraha** submitted by Kasindra Yadav has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree in Master of Arts in Rural Development by the Evaluation Committee.

Approved by

.....

Prof. Dr. Om Gurung
Head of the Department

.....

Dr. Binod Pokharel
External Examiner

.....

Madhu Giri
Supervisor

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BS	-	Bikram Sambat
CBS	-	Central Bureau of Statistics
GOs	-	Government Organizations
HHs	-	Households
GSEA	-	Gender and Social Exclusion Assessment
HMG/N	-	His Majesty's Government of Nepal
I/NGO	-	International/Non Government Organization
No.	-	Number
Sq.km	-	Square Kilometer
UNDP	-	United Nation Development Program
VDC	-	Village Development Committee
UNICEF	-	United Nations Children's Fund

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CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This study is socio-economic dimensions of Exclusion of the Musahars community of Chandra Ayodhapur VDC in Siraha district in central Tarai. The Musahars are the second largest Tarai Dalits caste group, with a total population of 1,72,434 (CBS, 2001), who inhabit scattered settlements in the Siraha, Saptari, Dhanusha, Sunsari, Morang, Udayapur, Mahotari, Bara, Parsa, Sarlahi, Rautahat and Nawalparasi districts of eastern and central Tarai Nepal. The Musahars are mainly landless agricultural laborers, largely remained on the periphery, and unnoticed so far. They were nomads of the Tarai with no fixed place to live, hence were landless (sukumbasi) (See Hamilton, 2009). But this nomadic activity has almost stopped now and the most of community now stay in government land or place where they work as daily labor for their land owner. Earth work, agricultural labor and digging ponds are considered their traditional livelihood strategies. They are highly excluded from state as well as non-state sectors.

Nepalese history is the history of exclusion, disregard and oppression of majority by minority. Many of Nepalese communities are still searching for their lost identity within their own homeland while Nepal is multiethnic, multicultural, multilingual society where there are more than hundred different caste /ethnic group. But only one caste/ group that is dominant in every sphere of state leaving other excluded from opportunity structure . There are mainly two types of major exclusion found in Nepal, one related to social-economic exclusion that is class, caste and gender relation affect the poor, women and disadvantage group and ethnic group and other is geographical exclusion related to the exclusion of people living in remote area.

Social exclusion is more severe in Nepal because it not only makes it difficult for socially excluded to access opportunity structure but also in

addition it deprived them from human dignity and societal justice. The caste system hierarchy is one major cause of social exclusion in Nepal where people are divided into four Varna, based on values of Hindu philosophy: Brahmans are at the top of this hierarchical order and Dalits are placed at the bottom, as they are considered ritually impure and inferior (Shah, 1994).

After 1990, Nepal emerged as more inclusive state. Nepal's Democratic constitution (1990) describe Nepal as 'multi-ethnic' 'multilingual' and democratic and declares that all citizens are equal irrespective of religious, race, gender, caste tribe or ideology. However, the dominant order has remained largely confined to male Brahmans and Kashstriyas (Thakuris and Chhetris) from the traditionally influential *parbatiya* or Hindu group, and the Urban the urban based and generally well-educated Newars (Unequal Citizen, 2006).

In recent year social inclusion has gained prominence in public discourse especially after it was included as one of the four PRSP (Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper) pillar. But at the recent time, after the success of mass agitation jointly launched by Maoist and seven party alliances against king, inclusion gained much more popularity in the context of restructuring new Nepal. Gender and Social exclusion assessment (2005) has identified major excluded groups- Women, Dalit and Janajati as three interlocking institutions that determine individual and group access to assets, capabilities and voice based on socially defined identity. The social structure, in which the caste system is an important element, is built upon the grounds of social stratification and exclusion.

Dalits are most excluded and less empowered group among excluded groups. The National Dalit Commission (NDC) defined 'Dalit' as communities identified who have been left behind in social, economic, educational, political and religious spheres and deprived from human dignity and social justice due to caste based discrimination and untouchability. Dalits are historically disadvantaged thus lag behind in income and assets level, in education and other human

development indicators. Their representation in various power structures is very low (Bhattachan et. al, 2002).

The exclusion and discrimination prevents Dalit from participating in political and public decision making process in various ways. The conglomerated effects of these variables determined the poor social outreach of Dalits in two ways. First, the discriminatory behaviors of other groups for generations have resulted the notion of superiority to non Dalit group. Contrarily, the Dalits themselves developed as interiority syndrome that subsequently affects their internal perception and sense of agency and hamper their access to assets, capabilities and voice. Poor access to decision-making level, lower social status and subsistence economic activities further perpetually moved them in the vicious cycle of poverty throughout history (Dahal et.al., 2002).

Nepalese society is stratified into hierarchical order based on Hindu philosophy. One placed on top are getting more privilege in many sphere of life. On the contrary, other placed at the bottom of hierarchical order. But one of the ironies of the situation of the Dalits is that, as part of Hindu caste structure, they historically practiced stratification amongst themselves. A recent addition to the general debate on caste discrimination centers on the ' internal discrimination ' among various Dalits castes, and the double exclusion of Dalits who are considered to be of low status by the other Dalits castes. Even today, rural areas, certain groups do not eat together or allow intermarriage (GSEA¹, 2005). Although there is no any clear picture of hierarchical order of Terai Dalit, some of the groups are comparatively much poor in economic and human development. In this way, they are more excluded than others.

The exclusion is very complex phenomenon and it is process as well as consequence of historical marginalization process. For this research the socio-economic exclusion is taken as the exclusion in education, health service, land ownership, sanitation facilities, and political participation, employment etc. As it is

¹ GSEA- Gender and Social Exclusion Assessment, a research report of The World Bank in 2005.

well established fact that the caste system is major cause of structural exclusion in south Asia which play the fundamental role in exclusion of dalits. In case of dalit it also functions as class system as it debar the dalit from access to resources.

1.2 Problem Statement

According to Census 2001, the total number of Musahar is 172434. Majority of Musahar people are landless and living in acute poverty. They are most illiterate people having only 6.9 percent of literacy rate. They are considered as untouchable and hence denied access to local restaurants and teashops. Moreover, they are denied access to common resources like sources of drinking water. They are marginalized from the mainstream of society still living in Dark Age. The Musahar community is such a group, which are lesser-known backward minority people of the country. They are still a major source of agriculture wage labor. In past, when there was *Jamindari* system, they were like bonded labor totally relying on *Jamindar* for their livelihood. Even at present time there seems no improvement in the pathetic condition of Musahar due to lack of better alternative sources of livelihood. They are excluded from the mainstream of society lagging behind day by day. Their exclusion does not only exist at top level of society but also within dalit community. Comparatively they are least empowered group among Terai communities. If the situation is not improved the existence of the existing problems of Musahar will be at stake. Although, the present study might not be sufficient to cover the problem existing in all aspect of Musahar community, it can be hoped that this study will be able to identify the fundamental institutions involve in social exclusion of Musahar.

Several NGO, INGOs and government agency are active in the development of Dalit and other excluded group from decade but they are not able to uplift these groups considerably. Still poverty and social discriminations among the Musahars are pervasive and income inequality are widening day by day. One of the core reasons for the failure the great effort done by several donor

organizations is due to the serving the disadvantage group without identifying the root problem. In these regards, following research problem has been identified.

1. What is the socio-economic status of Musahar relative to the other dalit and non dalit of Nepal?
2. What are main social and economic factors of exclusion of the Musahars? How have Musahar been marginalized throughout history?
3. How the caste system play role in socio-economic exclusion of Musahar?
4. What is role of landlord system in marginalization of Musahar?
5. What are impacts of socio-economic exclusion on the lives of Musahar?

1.3 Objectives of this research:

The objectives of this research are to:

Identify the social, economic involved in exclusion and analyze the processes of exclusion of the Musahar,

Examine the impacts of social exclusion on the Musahar community.

1.4 The rational of this study

The discourse on exclusion and inclusion have gained very prominent place in the political and social space in the Nepal at present in time of restructuring new Nepal where each community have equal access to the power and resource structure. But much of the attention have been paid at the structural exclusion that is on caste, gender and regional level but only few of them have seriously discuss about the issues at particular. The exclusionary process is very complex phenomenon and it varied across time and space. The meanings, and cause and consequences of exclusion very much rely on the context. In this regard this research has attempted to cover the gap and investigated on marginalization

Musahar. In other hand it enhanced the sociological knowledge on process of social exclusion of Musahar and how they got marginalized in historical process.

1.6 Organization of the Study

This Thesis has been organized into six main chapters in order to make the study more specify, precise and impressive. The first chapter is introductory chapter which includes general overview of the exclusive condition of dalit in Nepal. It also includes problem statement, the fundamental objective of study, rational of the study and organization of the thesis reports are incorporated in this chapter. The second chapter includes the literature review of previous scientific study findings as books, reports, ethnography writing or as the forms of published and unpublished dissertation, regarding the study of issue. This chapter comprises the strength and weakness the variable left by previous writing.

The third chapter is related to the Methodology of research project. Research design, rationale of the selection of study area, Sampling Design, Survey Design and different tools and techniques are included in this chapter. Chapter four deals the physical structure of study area which includes location, climate, and settlement pattern and population distribution by Ward. In the fifth chapter presents the general views about exclusion of Musahar and the impact on exclusion on the different sphere lives of Musahar people. It centered to study how the fundamental institution (caste system) involved in social exclusion of Musahar. The second part of this chapter present the impact of the exclusion on the lives of Musahar. The collected data are tabulated, analyzed and in this section. It lights on the several dimensions of social exclusion, these are economic, occupation and Employment, Social and political Exclusion. The summary of the study is placed in six chapters. Similarly, the conclusion of this study is included along with the recommendation for the proper Inclusion of Musahar people in mainstream of society. At last, references and appendixes are included at the end of research report.

CHAPTER -II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Various Ethnic communities inhabit in the Himalayan kingdom. They belong to the different castes, classes and tribal groups. Among these different ethnic groups, Musahar is one with distinct culture and identity. For this study, some of the literatures are reviewed. The review of literature basically covers general concept of social exclusion, caste system, dalit and Musahar.

2.1 Social Exclusion.

The terms social inclusion and social exclusion originated in the Europe in responses to the crises of the welfare state and the fear of social disintegration caused by social and economic crisis (Pardhan, 2006). In concept of social exclusion can be traced back to Weber who, using the concept of social closure, argued that social closure is 'the attempt of one group to secure for itself a privileged position at the expenses of some other groups through process of subordination'. Hence, Weber emphasizes the agency, or political aspect, describing social exclusion as a conscious act by one group to secure its privileged position (cited in Dahal, 2006). According to Durkheim "Exclusion was such as the result of the rapture of social and symbolic bonds between individuals and society and the failure of the state, reflecting the French emphasis on the organic and solidaristic nature of society.

It includes the breakdown of meaningful ties to the family and to local or national community associations. But it also very centrally involves the state and its failure to insure that all citizens have certain core economic, political and socio-cultural right which the state has committed to deliver (Bennett, 2003). Hillary Silver(1994) has categorized the social exclusion on three paradigm- Solidarity, Specialization and Monopoly- Solidarity paradigm defined as the rapture of social bond between the individuals (or group) and society that is culture and moral rather than economically interested.

In Specialization paradigm, exclusion reflects discrimination, that is, the drawing of group distinctions that denies individuals full access to or participation in exchange or interaction. In monopoly paradigm, based on the works of Weber and to some extent Marx and Marshall, view social order as coercive, imposed through hierarchical power relation. It describes exclusion as a consequence of the formation of group monopolies. Powerful group restricted the access of outsiders to valued recourse through social closure (cited in Pardhan, 2006).

Social exclusion is defined as the opposite to social integration which reflects the perceived importance of being part of society, being integrated. It is multidimensional concept. It refers to exclusion (deprivation) in the economic, social and political sphere. It goes beyond the analysis of resources allocation mechanism, and included power relation, agency, culture and social identity.

Social exclusion can refer to a state or situation, but it often refers to processes, to the mechanism by which people are excluded. The focus is on the institution that enable and constraint human interaction (de Haan, 1999). Atkinson (1998) argues that social exclusion has four components or characteristics: (i) Social exclusion refer to multiple deprivations and is not restricted to income poverty and lack of employment only. It often includes factors such as social interaction and social network. (ii) Exclusion is also relative in the sense that 'people are valued from a particular society in a particular place at a particular time' (iii) Moreover, Exclusion implies agency on the part of agents who are instrumental in acts of exclusion, and (iv) lastly, exclusion has an element of permanency to it. For the excluded there are no immediate solutions at hand; their situation is not temporary.

Steward (2006:4) defines social exclusion as multidimensional process and that agency is involved ("the behavior of particular agents and institutions leads to the exclusion of certain group"); that is a feature of groups rather than individuals (group are distinguished by their culture, religion, color, gender, rationality, migration status, caste and so on); that it is relational in its definition which

depends on what is normal in particular society. Lack of power or unequal power relations, is at the roots of every type of exclusion. According to Naina Kabeer (n.d.), the critical contribution of the social exclusion concept is that it draws attention to overlap between economic deprivation and cultural deprivation. Resources based as well as identify based or cultural disadvantages serve to circumscribe the opportunities and life chances of individuals. Social exclusion is seen as "institutionalized inequality." The analysis of social rules, relationships and process through which resources are distributed and values assigned in a society, but which is particularly considered with parties of 'access' and 'exclusion' which these generate (Kabeer, n.d:7). Institutions impact on 'access' and 'exclusion' through informal as well as formal rules.

Institution is defined by North (1990:3) as formal or informal "rules of the game in a society orthe humanly devised constraints that help shape human action" institutions are "the framework within which human interaction take place (North, 1990: 4)". Institution operates at the cognitive, normative as well as regulatory level (Scott, 1990). Cognitive elements of institutions have become 'taken for granted ' in specific arenas and contexts and are rarely questioned, as deeply ingrained cultural characteristics. They are the 'rules that constitute the nature of realities and frames through which meaning is made' (Scott, 1990). The normative approach to institutions examines how values and norms define how things should be done, or what constituted 'appropriate' actions in any given situation. Finally, others emphasize the explicitly defined rules and regulations that have evolved aimed at regulating the cost-benefit analysis of actors. The persistence of social exclusion, the elements of permanence, suggests that the different institutions are interlocked and may interface each other.

Kabeer (n.d.:20-25) discusses the mechanism of exclusion as a) a mobilization of institutional bias by dominant group (b) Mechanism of social closure i.e. restricting access to resources and opportunities to a limited circle of eligible, based on group identity. (c) The mechanism of 'unruly practice' that is, not implementing the official law, and instead observing unofficial norms or rules,

which determine access to resources and opportunities. Social stratification is socially constructed. According to Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman "social order is not part of the 'nature of things' and it cannot be derived from the 'laws of nature', social order exists only as a product of human activities" (1966:52). Social construction theory suggests that what we see as real (in this case, cultural categories of difference and system of inequality) is the result of human interaction. Through such interaction we create aspects of our culture, objectify them, internalize them and then take these cultural products for granted (Ore, 2000).

Marylyn Frye (1983) argues that the social construction of difference is initiated with the purpose of discrimination and oppression, a relationship in which the dominant group benefit from the systematic abuse, exploitation and injustice directed at a subordinate group. Thus, the construction of difference is not arbitrary but systematically created and transformed into systems of inequality in an effort to advantage some at the expenses of others (cited in Ore, 2000). The power as well as attraction and danger of law broadly defined lie in its ability to create and impose social reality, meaning and value and eventually to make them appear natural and self evident and thus uncontested i.e. as doxa in Bourdieu's (1997) term or hegemony is some interpretation of Gramsci, Lazarus Black and Hirsh (cited in Pradan, 2006). Social exclusion becomes easier when the excluded, for whatever reason, accept or pretend to accept or meaning imposed by dominant group.

2.2 Caste System as Genesis of Exclusion

Caste a word of Portuguese origin means a system of keeping purity of blood. This word, Caste, is considered as the origin of the English word "caste" which was borrowed from the French language. In the Spanish world, Casta (caste) conveyed a meaning of lineage or race of a 'mixed breed' those people descended from Europeans, east Indians and Negros. The earlier sociologists such as Risley and Nesfield defined the word caste differently. Risley (1908), on the other hand described a caste as a collection of families groups. Nesfield (1885) simply defined

caste characteristics: castes disown any connection with other castes through marriage, in food or in drink. V. S. Ketkar (1979), an east Indian living himself in a caste culture, succinctly brings these ideas together as he defined caste as a social group consisting of two characteristics: caste membership is confined to born members and caste members are forbidden by an inexorable social law to marry people outside the group.

Dumont (1972) reviewed both the India and non-India authors' point of view about caste culture. East and West are fundamentally different in their social principles. The East, a Homo Major, has a hierarchical society. This hierarchical society assumes that the human being is a collective institution and a person is a part of the whole society. But the west, a homo Minor, postulates a person is an indivisible biological being that requires liberty and equality. In this sense, the caste ideology of the east directly contradicts the egalitarian theory of the west. Without understanding these fundamental social differences, it is difficult for western authors to comprehend the caste system. A similar problem exists with eastern authors as far as accepting western perspectives on eastern contexts is concerned.

Dumont does not concern himself with the genesis of caste but with its stability in the present day. He believes that it is a self-reproducing phenomenon: marital relations, food consumption habits, and the occupation held always keep a person in a caste group. The process of power distribution in the caste hierarchy tightens the caste rule. In order to continue this process, there is a systematic division of power. A Brahman does ritual domination, Kshatriya does political dominating, and a Vaishya does economic domination. In Dumont's words "Brahman is spiritually or absolutely supreme although he is materially dependent; whilst the king (Kshatriya) is materially the master he is spiritually subordinate" (1972:259).

By using Dumont's phrasing, one can argue that a *Dalit* is a supreme trade person but materially dependent on Kshatriya, spiritually dependent on Brahman

and economically dependent on vaishya. Thus, in Dumont's understanding, the Caste system is an expression of social hierarchy with a distribution of power. These caste groups of people, he argues, are horizontally linked, vertically based on a linear or non-cyclic order, and ritually based on purity and impurity. This is an idea that one may not necessarily agree with though it has particular relevance in the modern socio-politico-economic situation.

Drawing more broadly on sociological theory on the origin and reproduction of the caste culture, there are three perspectives, functional, organic structural and Marxist. The functional perspective postulates caste culture as an ideological system to the smooth functioning of society. The varnashram system is an example of this perspective. The organic structural perspective assumes that the ideological system of the caste culture is a ritualized theory of pollution and purity. For example, a pure caste is always at her top and the impure at the bottom of the social hierarchy. The Marxist perspective contends that caste culture is a bi-product of a continued domination of bourgeoisie over the workers and poor by creating attribution categories such as land owner a landless, and intervention categories such as those based on power relations between caste groups.

Thus, one can think of a caste as a form of social stratification, expression of hierarchy and inequality. For Parsons, caste culture is a manifestation of political power, for Marx it is an economic exploitation, for Weber it is a combination of status and the distribution of power within a community and for Runciman (cited in Sengupta, 1979) the caste culture is an aggregate of class, status, power. Runciman's class model is based on economy, status model on occupation, and power model is a combination of both the caste and the status. But the Eastern scholars like Sengupta, on the other hand found hereditary status, diet, occupation marriage rules and Manu's code of conduct as the basis of caste culture.

K.L. Sharma (1980) assesses some empirical studies about caste culture in India and concludes that castism is a cultural as well as a structural system. As a cultural- universalistic system, he argues, caste is a matter of ideology and a value

system particularly that of hierarchy while as a cultural particularistic system caste is a social reality based on the ideology of pollution and purity. On the other hand a caste, as a structural universalistic system, is a general phenomenon of a closed form of social stratification while as a structural particularistic system, it is an institutionalized system of integration among hierarchically ranked groups for functional use such as marriage, occupation, enforcement of cultural values, norms, and other interactive modes of behavior.

2.3 Social Inequality and Position of Dalits in the Caste System

Dalit castes according to Hindu teachings belong to a caste group of the further stratified Sudra Varna, the God's feet-born person according to Hindu legend, a *Daas* (slave) or *Dasyu* (robber) or *Dravodan* (Prashrit, 1991), a black person or an oppressed person of a non-Aryan stock (Baral, 1993) are the people who belong to *Sudra* Varna. Now there are three caste groups under the umbrella term of *Sudra* Varna, *panichalne tatha chhunahune jat*, *Paninachalne tara Chhunahune Jat*, and *Paninachalne tatha Chhunanahune Jat* categorized as to the presence or absence of two characteristics, other castes being able to accept water from them and other castes being able to touch them. The *panichalne tatha Chhunahune Sudra* were again divided into *Masine tatha Namasine* during the *Malla* period (879-1767). The last category of *Sudra* whom Rishikesh Shah (1994) calls a "*pancham varna*" (fifth Varna) remained to be *paninachalne tatha Chhunanahune jat*.

Dalit is not a caste but a politically coined word used to refer to a socially backward caste community; it does not refer to an ethnic group or a social class, but a group of people who according to Borale (1980) suffer from social hate since traditionally they were the people characterized by *Adarshata* (unseeability, they were not to be seen by other castes), *ashokshata* (unteachability, they could not be taught), *asahasanasayata* (unseatability; they could not sit beside other castes), *Akshitadasyakaryata* (doing socially degraded work), and *smashanavasyata* (living only in or near burial grounds). There are Dalits scattered everywhere in

Nepal. On name some of the few, there are Damai, Kami , Sarki, and Gaine in the hills, pode, kasain, Duiyan and Chuame in Kathmandu the capital city and Dom, Dushad, Dhobi, and Musahar in the southern plain. They vary in the size of their population, literacy attainment, and political awareness but they receive a similar type of social treatment no matter whether they live in the hills, capital city, and southern plain of Nepal or they follow a Hindu or Buddhist way of life.

Caste is social group placed in a hierarchical order derived from certain Hindu cultural prescriptions. It originated as Varnas dividing society into four occupational groups- Brahmin (priest), Kshatriya (warrior) ,Vaisya (trader) and Sudra (laborers/peasant). It is also placed them in that order of social status. A large number of people who performed what were considered 'impure' task were called outcastes, earlier known as 'untouchable'.

Caste system is likely to function as both superstructure (as mentioned in Marxist framework) and infrastructure. Hence, the function of caste would not be limited to structuring only the relations between the pure and impure on the religious place. Caste would also perform certain crucial economic functions by determining access to land (the principle means of production) control over the labor process and the form of exploitation (or the means in which the surplus is appropriated from the direct produce (Chakrabarti, 2000). Indeed, Habib has showed on the basis of detailed historical evidence for Medieval India that the caste was 'an important pillar of the system of class exploitation' (Habib, 1995:76)

Meillassoux is another scholar who underscored material significance of caste by showing its role in organizing 'relation of production and reproduction'. In fact, he conceptualized caste in terms of class. From this standpoint, according to him, the dominant caste, as the principle landowning group, occupies an important position; its control over means of production confers on it the capacity to exploit a "laboring class" recruited from among low, unusually dalit, castes (Meillassoux, 1973:92,100-101).

Meillassoux also argued that the structure of exploitation underlying caste is rationalized by the ideology of caste: 'the repressive effect of the "caste system" is coherently related to the ideological and religious notions associated with (it) the notion of "purity"[reinforced] the pre-existing relation of subordination and alienation, since one must be alienated if one is accept being impure'(ibid :107). In fact, as pointed out by him, the assignment of impurity to lowest, laboring, castes in such a hierarchical assignment 'was one more weapon in the repressive ideological arsenal used in one direction only arbitrarily and opportunistically as a means of discrimination, operation and exploitation' by those who controlled the system ((Meillassoux, 1973).

According to Dumont, caste may be conceptualized as a 'religiously ordained hierarchy' (972:104-5), it is also equally a framework of material exploitation. Habib underscores the fact that 'untouchable' [Dalits] were barred from holding land and were compelled to work as landless laborers (1995:166).

An overwhelming proportion of the population continues to depend on agriculture for a livelihood; a person's class position would be the decisive factor conditioning the character of such dependence. To take two contrasting possibilities, whether a person can exploit the labor of other, or is subject to exploitation, would depend on access, or lack of access, to land. To the extent that caste and land control are closely connected, the material life chance of the landless in a predominantly agrarian economy would inevitably be controlled by the dominant castes (Chakravarti, 2000).

2.4 Social exclusion and Dalits in Nepal

Two thirds of the population of Nepal is made up of people who are generally considered to be socially excluded. They are commonly referred to as the *Janjatis* (ethnic groups), the *Dalits* (untouchable groups on the basis of caste) and Madheshi (from the Tarai: marginalization/ discrimination basis mainly in geographic location) (Dahal, 2000). Gender and social exclusion assessment has identified major excluded group women, Dalits and *Janajati* as three interlocking

institution that determine individual and group access to assets, capabilities and voices based on socially defined identity (GSEA, 2000).

Those at the very bottom of the caste hierarchy in Nepal, who were officially called *achute* or 'oppressed' up until the end of the Rana regime, now call themselves Dalit or 'oppressed'. Tamrakar et al (2002) and Ahuti (2004) write that the use of the term Dalit began in India when Jyotiba Phule and other religious reformers introduced it in the late 19th century. Studies of its rise in India are also found in Kisan (2002) and Biswakarma et al (2003[2060] V.S.). Nepal's Dalit rights activities began to use the term in the 1960s, but it did not come into wide use until in the post - 1990 era. Even now it is generally referred to as 'low caste,' 'occupational castes,' 'oppressed castes,' 'backward caste,' 'depressed castes,' 'depressed castes,' 'deprived castes,' 'marginalized' and 'disadvantaged groups'.

As a unifying framework, the caste system was inclusive in adverse terms; it was exclusionary in that it classified all these groups in a pyramid. The 1854 national code placed untouchable Dalits at the very bottom and was accorded harsher punishments than others forbidden to enter temples or to use water sources used by high caste groups (GSEA, 2005). The caste-based hierarchical system is one of the major sources of social exclusion in Nepal, where people are divided into four Varnas, based on Hindu philosophy. Dalits are placed at the bottom, as they are considered ritually impure and inferior (Dahal, 2000). The social structure of Nepal in which the caste system is playing a major role in the exclusion of Dalits, is built on the ground of social stratification and exclusion.

2.5 Musahar

Musahars believed that they are descendants of the saints and sages called "Rishis" (Jha, 1998). Jha emphasizes on the belief that some of them entered Nepal from Magadh (Bihar/India) and the other from the Tirhut /Mithila (partially in Bihar/India and partially in Nepal). Therefore, The Musahars are divided into

"Magadhia Musahars" and "Tirhutiya Musahar". Most of the Musahars have 'Sada' as their surname (Jha, 1998).

The Musahar is the second largest group in term of population size among the Terai dalits. Earth work and catching rats are considered their traditional occupation (Dahal, 2002). Traditionally, they also used to collecting leaves and medicines herbs from the forests and selling them in the market (Save the Children USA and INHURED International, 1999). Musahar are mostly landless or marginal landless in the Terai. Adult literacy is the almost nil and the literacy rate is lowest (4.2%) among all groups in Nepal (Dahal, 2002).

Sharma has depicted most pathetic picture about Musahar expressing that they are landless minority group known for their hard work as agricultural labors. As one of the most disadvantaged, backward and socially downtrodden strength of the population, they have been living in the poverty from generation to generation (Sharma, 1999). Article published in Himalayan times on February 9, 1996 stated that Musahar is such a caste who has no attitude to save their property. They have no tomorrow. There is one proverb about Musahar "Dhan huwe bala, ta Musahar se dil laga". This means, "if the property is burdensome to you, give it to the Musahar". Musahar are regarded as fit for doing difficult physical jobs. Traditionally they are expertise in digging so they are generally compared with rats.

On the basis of the mentioned literature, it can be concluded that many authors (silver 1994-6, De Haan n.d., 1998, Sen 2000; Kabeer n.d.; Peace 2001, Jackson, 1999) have noted the term 'Social Exclusion' is polysemic in that it has many meanings. Exclusion is "buzz word" and based on the locality. To examine the exclusion of Musahar is necessary to define the exclusion in local context. Social exclusion has been operationalized as the inability to participate in the normal activities of the society in which one is a resident, despite a willingness to so, due to factors beyond the control of the individual. Several institutions are interacting in different ways which reinforce exclusion (Bennett, 2005 & Hill,

2002). Furthermore, cognitive, normative and regulative institution may reinforce or weaker each other at the different levels.

Many studies have pointed that Caste- based discrimination is still rife in informal aspects of Nepali life: as Tamarakar said,"The Caste system is one of the most salient aspects of the cultural landscape of Nepal"(2002: vii). Bhattachan et al (2003) have identified 205 forms of caste based discrimination still commonly practiced in Nepal, relating to domination, atrocities, social boycotting and discriminatory attitude. The continuing widespread practice of excluding Dalits in restaurants and teashops, public taps, temples, and at public occasions such as feasts; and the fact that Dalits suffer human rights abuses in greater proportion than others.

On the basis of above mentioned literatures it can be said that structural exclusion based on the caste and gender is very prominent forms of exclusion in South Asia. Caste system has been working as major factor for the exclusion and marginalization of Dalit as it produced and reproduced multi-facet causes and consequences which deny them to access to power and deprive them from self dignity. In this research exclusion is treated as structural, process and outcome of interplaying of caste, class and power in many levels. In this regard some of literatures have reviewed to understand the role of caste system in social exclusion of Dalit. The Musahars have been facing exclusion and discrimination since their arrival in Nepal.

CHAPTER - III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with methodology adopted for the study. There are appropriate research design and scientific methods adopted for collection of primary data from selected study area. The methods for the analysis and interpretation of the obtained data from the study area, is also included in this chapter.

3.1 Research design

This study was carried on the basis of descriptive and analytical design to examine the exclusion of Musahar, a most disadvantage Terai dalit and identify the different types of institutions involved in it. Comparative method for analysis of field data with secondary data is used.

3.2 Rationale of selection of study area

To gather data and information on proposed research problem, Musahar community of Chandrayodhyapur VDC, Siraha district in eastern development region of Nepal was selected. The selection of study area was based on the following reasons.

Siraha district of Terai region is the natural homeland for Musahar community. The population of Musahar in Chandrayodhyapur VDC is the third largest population among all castes. The total number of household of Musahar is 171 in this VDC.

Historically this VDC, carries importance in study because, there are four settlements of Musahar located in this VDC which was historically connected with three big landlords (*Jamindars*). So it was easier to study the changing relational pattern in context of exclusion of Musahar.

3.3 Nature and Source of Data

This study was based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data was both qualitative and quantitative in nature. It was collected through field works. Similarly, secondary data was collected through published and unpublished materials such as research articles, reports, books, CBS, VDC and DDC profiles.

The primary data collected from the field is compared with data secondary data produced in the Gender and Social exclusion Assessment 2005 (GSEA) and CBS 2001. GSEA is the outcome of joint endeavor of many Nepalese and abroad scholars to assess the social exclusion in Nepal by their caste and ethnicity and gender. It examined the old hierarchies that continued to structure access to political influence and economic opportunity. It has taken gender, caste and ethnicity as three interlocking institutions that determine individual and group access to assets, capabilities and voice based on socially- defined identity. It is mainly about social exclusion of caste and gender. I compared field data with the baseline data of GSEA.

3.4 Universe and Sampling Procedure

The universe of the study was the total household of Musahar of Chandra Ayodhyapur VDC. The total household of this village (the study area) were 171. Out of them 50 household was sampled for the purposed study. The sample population constituted 29 percent of total household in Study Area. Simple random sampling method was applied to sample the household from universe.

3.5 Data Collection Techniques and Tools

In order to generate the primary data for the proposed study, household survey, key informant interview and focus group discussion were conducted.

3.5.1 Household Survey

The household survey was an important technique of data collection. In order to collect the data on the socio- economic (personal identification, occupation,

income expenditure, land holding, livestock practices and education etc) condition of household of Musahar.

Structured and semi structured questionnaire was prepared to gather the data from sampled household to find out the socio-economic and political status Musahar. The questionnaire was divided into parts these were: Introduction, Household Roster, economic status, employment structure, loan status, justice system, political system, services delivery, and social network. These were the sectors identified as dimension of exclusion and through this questionnaire it was gathered the data to examine the level of exclusion of Musahar.

3.5.2 The key informant Interview

The primary data was collected through key informant using semi or unstructured interview method. The interview was taken as cross checking for data obtained from questionnaire. This method of data collections was applied on obtaining information on sensitive issues such as structural relationship existing between Musahar and upper caste people. To gather the data and information, Key informant Interview Schedule was applied as research tool. Through this tool social relation of Musahar with upper caste was assessed. These informants were the educated Musahar people, Maizon or Dewan of Musahar caste, Local landlord or *Jamindar*, Dalit activist etc. They were both Musahar and people from upper caste.

3.5.3 Focus group discussion

The focus group discussions were conducted among Musahar people who were more informative about their community and their culture, structure of society. More sensitive information were obtained through this technique. In order to collect the data and information through this technique topic guideline was applied as research tool. Two Focus Group discussions were conducted among men and two among women only and one was mix.

3.5 Analysis of Data

The qualities of research output depends not only on the validity of information collection, but also on how the information collected is handed. Completed Questionnaires was checked immediately after the interview and correction was made wherever required. The data was converted into uniform and standardized units before data coding in preparation for data processing.

The quantitative analysis was done with the help of simple statically tools like percentage, graph, table etc. Computer program was also used to analyze the quantitative data. The qualitative data was interpreted without bias and presented with the help of graph, table etc.

3.6 Limitations of Study

The present study is based on and limited to one of the VDC of Siraha district. The study is specific due to conduct on particular community of particular geographical area so the conclusion drawn from the study is mere indicative rather than conclusive. The study does not disclose the whole problem but give a glance on the problem and it is significant in some extent to understand the problem of the most marginalized group of Madhesi Dalit community. It is hard to find the concrete historical evidences and has much relied on the memory of old aged Musahar and other to get the information on historical process.

CHAPTER-IV

Physical Structure of Study Area

4.1 Location

Chandra Ayodhyapur VDC is situated at the Siraha district Siraha district is located at the Eastern Terai region of Nepal. It joins with Saptari district to the eastern boarder and Danusha to the west. In northern boarder of Siraha meets with Udayapur and in south, it joins with Madhubani district of Bihar province of India.

Chandra Ayodhyapur VDC is the study area selected by the researcher. Chandra Ayodhyapur VDC is situated at north part of Siraha District. Chandra Ayodhyapur VDC is adjoining in the west with Sitapur. In north Mahendra Highway transects this VDC, in south this VDC meets with Barchhaba, Narha Balkawa and Debipur. In the eastern part there are chandralalpur and Asopur Balkawa VDC. Chandra Ayadhyapur VDC is easily accessible by means of physical infrastructure such as roads, water supply, telecommunication service, primary health care center, primary and secondary schools and electrification. These facilities are possible due to its viable geopolitical situation. Its viable geographical location has provided several opportunities to the people of the area.

4.2 Climate

Since, Chandra Ayodhyapur VDC is located in the Terai district; naturally, it is in tropical climate zones. Its climate is temperate in summer seasons, the temperature rises up to 38⁰ C. In winter, the temperature falls bellow 12⁰ C to 14⁰ C. Often the cold wind is problem in the January and February month of English calendar.

The monsoon starts form mid of June to extend to the mid of September month of the English calendar, at that time rich fall rain is occurred. Due to draught in the monsoon causes serious problem to the farmer, because there are no alternative irrigation facilities in this VDC. The temperature and climate of the

VDC is very suitable for the intensive agriculture practices. At the time of monsoon seasons, people of the area cultivate their land by planting various varieties of crops like paddy, wheat, maize etc.

4.3 Structure of Village

The village development committee is differentiated in different 9 wards each having special geo-graphical distribution. The each ward of VDC is with special features. Each ward consists of several small territorial localities in which people live. Each ward of the village have same (five to nine) small locality called '*tol*' in local language.

Based on area, ward no 1 of the VDC is larger ward in VDC and two and five are smallest ward. In this VDC, based on the population ward no one and ward no. two are the biggest ward, and the ward no five and ward no six are the smallest. Ward no. 1, 3, 4 and 6 are the wards of VDC where remarkable no of Musahar households can be found. Ward no one meets with Mahendra Highway and rest of ward meets with each other by graveled road constructed by the VDC.

There are three primary level government schools situated at ward no. 1 and 4, 7, and VDC have no secondary school. There are also two primary level private English schools. Each ward is connected by the electrification, which is implemented by seventh rural electrification project, Nepal electricity authority. There is a small village town situated at the ward no one where the people of VDC purchase their daily usages goods and sell their local product like vegetable, milk etc. There are some tea and grocery shops.

4.4 Settlement Pattern

Structure of settlement is interesting in the study area, which indicates the physical exclusion of Musahar. The clustered Musahar settlement is separate from that of other castes in the village. Generally, it is separated by a distance of an uninhabited area intending to proscribe commingling with them. This signifies the 'low' social position accorded to them.

The most striking feature of the Musahar settlement is its separateness, isolation or aloofness from the rest of the village as indicated above. Their locality is called Musahari, literally locality of the Mashers. They settle at a place, which is at a considerable distance from the houses of the other castes. In their locality, they live by themselves without even a single household of any other caste. This indicates not only a sharp caste division but also the low status that they have been traditionally given. The distance and exclusiveness of the Musahar settlement emphasize an important fact. The other caste groups assign the Mashers low and untouchable status; want to keep them spatially sufficiently away to avoid all kinds of contact with them. Since the Musahar, living at unusual distance, form a community of their own, even children of other castes do not have any chance to mix with and play with the Musahar children.

However, they live with other castes in same settlement area. Generally, they live in a separate corner of the village, known to every body but little visited by other caste members except when they need to hire a Musahar man or woman as a farm labours or for some other manual work. Their houses are clustered. One family's house touches the roof of other family's house. The houses are built of the most inexpensive and easily available materials. Bamboo, hay hay-made rope or string, etc. are the only materials they need for making their houses. The hay walls are plastered with mud. The earthen floor is at times cleaned with thin mud coating cow dung. In most cases, it is not necessary to enter the courtyard through the main entrance. There is a gap or a little passage and between the two households and children mostly use it.

Road accessibility or inaccessibility does not seem to be any consideration for a Musahar settlement. The principal consideration is its separateness, sufficient distance from the main village settlement to avoid contact and mingling with other communities prevent what might be caused cultural pollution. Quite a few 'lower' castes are treated as 'untouchables'. They are poor, illiterate and 'unclean' and considered culturally, 'inferior' than higher castes. Castes or communities not conversant with Vedic culture or whole socio- religious practices are not quite

compatible with the accepted 'higher' class modes of life are taken as 'Abarn' 'non caste' implying culturally decadent and hence unacceptable. Farther removed from Vedic way, greater is the considered the 'fall' from the cultural height and thus the categorization reaches the level of the category of 'untouchable' with Chamars, Domes, Halkhor and a few others. Musahar have been classified in this category. The separateness of Musahar settlement is suggestive of the low esteem in which they are kept. Traditionally no socio-cultural exchange is possible with them. Higher caste people do not accept food or water from their hand. The notion of untouchability has been extended to such as extent that they are not allowed to sit and eat with 'higher' caste peoples.

4.5 Population Distribution of Study Area

Chandra Ayodhyapur VDC is well facilitated with infrastructure facilities like road, transport, electricity, health post because of its viable geographic setting. Population dynamic (i.e. emigration) is remarkable. People, particularly Muslim and Musahar from southern part of district are migrating to northern part of district and such type of action is greatly affecting the Chandra Ayodhyapur VDC population growth.

Table 4:1 Ward Wise Distribution of Musahar Population

Ward	Population			Musahar			Percentage
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
1	955	907	1862	89	96	185	9.93
2	439	433	872				
3	441	414	855	102	101	203	22.23
4	355	367	722	142	154	296	40.99
5	293	285	578	18	17	35	6
6	302	288	590	55	50	105	17.79
7	399	382	781	18	22	40	5.12
8	420	412	832				
9	445	440	885	14	11	25	2.82
Total	4049	3928	7977	438	451	889	11.14

Source: Field Survey, 2011

From the table 4:1, total population of VDC is 7977 in which male population and female population is 4049 and 3928 respectively. Population of male is slightly greater than population of female.

It shows that the population distribution is different in different wards. Total population of ward no one is 1868. Among them 955 are male and 907 are female. Among them total number of Musahar are 181 in which there are 89 male and 96 female. But in ward No 2, there is no population of Musahar. There is large population of Muslim. Among them Musahar never like to cohabit.

Ward no 3 has 441 male and 414 female. Among them there are 22.33 percent Musahar that is 203 having 102 male and 101 female. Similarly largest numbers of Musahar household are situated in ward no Four. Total population of ward no four is 722 having 355 male 367 female. Among them, there are 296 Musahar having 142 male and 154 female, which are 40.99 percent of total population. Just opposite, there are only small number of Musahar are found in ward no five that is only 6 percent of total population. Total population of ward no five is 578 having 293 male and 285 female. Among them total population of Musahar are 35 having 18 male and 17 female. In ward no six there are considerable number of Musahar population. Total population of this ward is 590. Out of them, 105 Musahar constitute 17.79 percent of total population.

In ward no eight there are no any Musahar population. In ward no 9 885 is total population having 445 and 440 male and female respectively. Among them, there are only 25 Musahar that constitutes only 2.82 percent of total population.

For this study it is sampled 50 household of Musahar from ward no. 3 and 4 for survey 25 from each. The total population of sampled household is 234, 121 female and 113 male.

CHAPTER –V

Social Exclusion and Its Impacts on the Musahar

Social exclusion has been defined in a number of different ways which may include all or some of the following elements: disadvantage in relation to certain norms of social, economic or political activities pertaining to individual households, spatial areas or population groups; the social, economic and institutional process through which disadvantage comes about and the out causes or consequences for individuals, groups or communities.

Social exclusion refers to the multiple and changing factors resulting in people being excluded from the normal exchanges practices and rights of modern society. Poverty is one of the most obvious factors, but social exclusion also refers to inadequate rights in housing, education, health and access to services. It address individuals and groups, particularly in urban and rural areas, who are in some way subject to discrimination or segregating and it emphasizes the weakness in the social infrastructure and the risk of allowing a two tier society to become established by default.

5.1 Social exclusion of Musahar people

There are several kinds of institutions both formal and informal are involved in social exclusion of Musahar which are reinforcing each other. Among them caste and feudal (*zamindaari*) system that means the class structure, played the fundamental roles and produce many other kinds of institution such as economic, political, social etc. which interplay with each other and create the exclusionary structure. They are playing at several levels. In Hindu society like Nepal, particularly in rural area, caste system is playing a dominant role, which determines the birth based status of particular group. It does not only determine the social status of particular group but also determine the economic status and access to resources.

There is pervasive poverty among Musahar people. Poverty in general can not be treated as only economic phenomenon. It is also an outcome of the social interactions among various social groups. It is closely linked with the problems of caste system. Musahars like many other lower castes are treated as inferior being not fit for any higher social role except the traditionally assigned to them in the present social structure.

In Nepal, particularly in rural areas, it has several dimensions and at some level it is very severe. It is related to the ownership, control and use of land and other resources. Thus, it has proved to a major cause of inequality.

The upper caste people have several advantages over the 'lower' castes. The case of the 'untouchables' including the Musahar is worst. Traditionally those who owned larger land area generally belonged to 'upper castes' Brahmins, Bhumihars, or Rajputs or others of the same strata. The lower castes and 'untouchable' have always generally been landless. The non-cultivating owners of Land have usually been 'upper' caste people.

Various kinds of inequalities and exclusion are related to the inequalities of castes. Generally, landowning social groups are averse to manual work because they consider it as a taboo or something that militates against their social dignity. Musahar are employed for any manual work-planting rice, carrying sack of grain, cutting trees for fuel, ploughing field, digging land, leveling roads, carrying of palanquin, carrying various kinds of load on their back etc.

Poverty and various other inequalities result from inequalities of castes. The rural society gives exclusive important to caste. One becomes a member of the traditional elites by virtue of one's birth in an 'upper' caste family. Such a person is easily accepted in various situations and roles whereas a 'lower' caste person faces several impediments for acceptability and progress. The problems of the untouchable are more severe. They are discriminated in all walks of life as for example, in education, in cultural opportunities, at political levels and in social intercourse. This is the fact that they can not draw water from the same well in the

village and that 'higher' caste people refuse to take water from their hand because of the rigid notion of purity and impurity which has deprived them of any opportunity for development of personality.

In the present situation, political, social and economic leadership is in the hands of the 'upper caste' traditional village elites. Some lower caste people have tried to come up the ladder, but their effort has been little successful. No Musahar or for that matter member of a Terai 'untouchable' caste group is known to have acquired leadership position in any field-politics, government, education, industry or agriculture. All socio-politico-economic powers are interrelated. The caste or caste group, which owns land, is materially rich and acquires leadership in all fields. During Rana period Zamindars or Birtawal had all powers-economic, political, social and cultural. They had access to government machinery and by virtue of this; they were the powerful in the community. Though the land reform programme intended to break the landlordism and thus introduce some members of egalitarianism, it failed in many respects. Land property still holds the key to power pride in 'upper caste' blood has remained high. As discussed earlier social exclusion is multidimensional, these are economic, social, political etc. Different facets of social exclusion are interplaying with each other and reinforcing each other, which further makes situation more pathetic.

Beside caste system feudal structure of economic system prevalent in Terai has played major role in shaping of their lives and their marginalization historically. They are generally migrated from the northern part of Indo-Gangetic plain during the Rana period. In those periods the local landlord usually attracted the labors from across the border for agriculture affair. In that regard, Musahar emerged as major source of agricultural labor for landlord as they have very migratory in nature having no possession.

In Terai, they permanently settled in the land of landlord to whom they were entitled. They remained solo possession of related landlord until the end of feudal system. They had no freedom to choose their owner or work. They were compelled

work for their related landlord and had no right to complain against their injustice. As remained the sole entitlement of landlord, they had nothing as property and their body was only regarded as their property. They were highly depended on the related landlord for their livelihood until the eradication of feudal system.

After the end of feudal system, Musahar remained as the pure agriculture labor for other upper caste having no land that was “*Sukumbasi*”. Still they are mostly landless people and mainly settled in the government land or on the bank of river or jungle side.

5.2 Impact of Exclusion

5.2.1 Livelihood Assets and Living Conditions

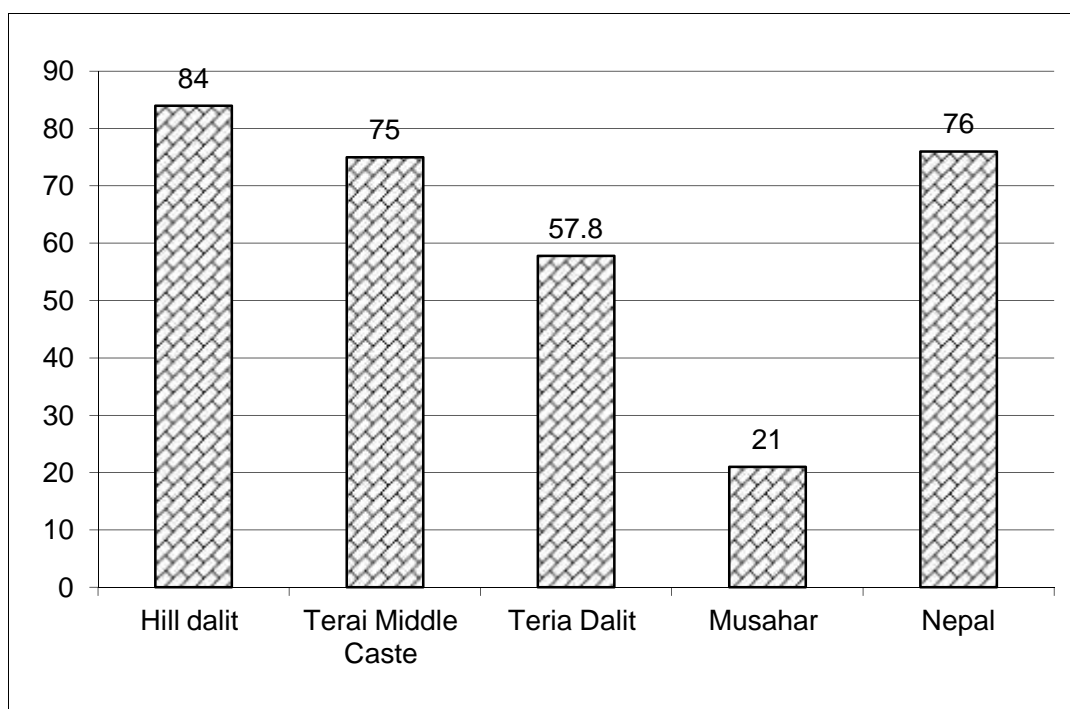
The section analyses the assets and living condition of Musahar comparing with other caste and ethnic group in terms of wealth a household owns or does not own farmland, livestock and a house. After examination of ownership and tenancy of land, it is also looked at the kind of living quarter's occupied (Housing condition) and the availability of facilities such as toilets and drinking water, electric connection and lighting and cooking fuel. Economic structures have also been analyzed through examining employment situation.

Land and livestock Ownership and Tenancy Pattern

In agrarian society, land is Major source of power and prestige. According to the 2001 census, most household (76%) in Nepal own their own farmland either owned outright or rented in and nearly 72 percent of the households have some livestock, either own or taken on a product sharing basis. The majority of households in all caste/ ethnic groups own some land. More than 70 percent of the Dalit and non-Newar/ Thakali group Janajatis in the hills reported owing some farmland. Nearly 80 percent of the Hill B/C + also own farmland. The Terai groups generally own less farmland. Seventy five percent of Terai middle caste groups owned some farmland. While 84 percent of Hill Dalits have their own farms, only 57.8 percent of Tarai Dalits have. The worst off among the Terai

Dalits in terms of land ownership are the Musahar that is almost 79 percent of whom do not own land (Cited in GSES 2005).

Figure 5:1 Percent of Agricultural Households who own land by Caste/ethnicity



Source: 2001 Census

The figure 5:1 shows that, in Nepal where majority of a people still rely on agriculture for their livelihood, caste structure embedded with class structure that means that caste determines the land ownership. In case of Terai, it is more relevant where the greater amount of land, a basic source of livelihood, is occupied by upper caste and middle caste, only small amount are hold by Dalit. Land possessed by Dalits is also lesser in productive quality. Even within Dalit, Musahars are extremely landless community.

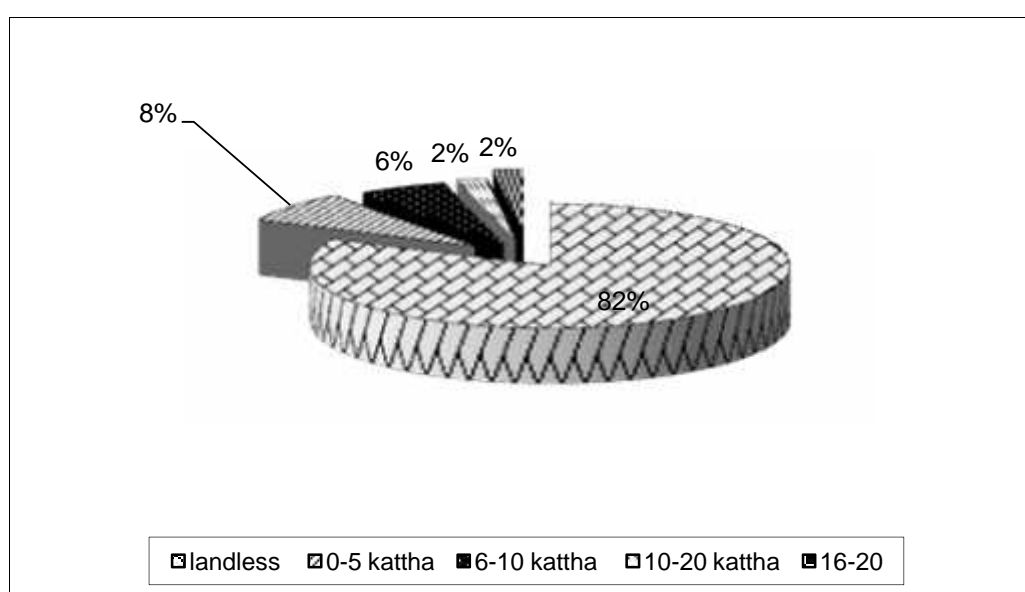
Table 5:1 Landholding size by Household of Musahars

Land lording	No of household	Percent
Landless	41	81
0-5 Kattha	4	8
6-10 Kattha	3	6
11-15 Kattha	1	2
16-20 Kattha	1	2
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2011

It is clear from table 5:1 that 82 percent household is landless. Since they have no lands registered in their own name. They are in habituating either in somebody else's land or government land. Though small number of household (18%) have small piece of land, these are insufficient for their livelihood. Eight percent HH have less than five Kattha, 6 percent have 6-10 Kattha and 2 percent have 16-20 Kattha and remaining have 2 percent had 16-20 Kattha.

Figure 5:2 Landholding size by Household of Musahars



Holding of Livestock

Livestock is an integral component of agriculture in rural areas. It is an alternative income source of rural people from which small landholders and even landless households may be benefited if they are provided with extension services and other essential supports. Hence, possession of livestock also reflects the economics status of the households to some extent.

According to 2001 census 72 percent of household have some livestock either own or taken on a product sharing basis. Animal husbandry is a source of subsistence of Musahar.

Table 5:2 holding of livestock by household groups and kinds of livestock

S.N	Number and Name livestock	No of household	Percentage Of HH	Remark (HH)
1.	Buffaloes (15)	15	7.5	12 Rented
2.	Goat/sheep (18)	41	82	17 Rented
3.	Cows (6)	6	12	4 Rented
4.	Chicken/Duck 202)	42	82	3 Rented
5.	Oxen (2)	1	2	

Source: Field Survey, 2011

The average number of livestock per unit of household is 204 However according to table, only 75% household have buffalo, in which 75 percent are rented from upper caste and big landholder. Almost, more than 80 percent of Musahar household have goats in which only 6.97% are rented on product share basis. Among total respondent only one household has two oxen, which is surely used for ploughing. Thus it is clearly revealed that majority of Musahar household have some kinds of livestock. Majority of they are rented from upper castes people.

The condition of poultry farming is very popular among Musahar community. Eighty-five percent of Musahar household have chicken whose meat is not only source of healthy food but also for cash income for poor household.

House-Ownership and Type of House Occupied

The 2001 census provides some information on people's living conditions including the type of house they occupy. The availability of amenities such as toilet and lighting facilities in the house, the kind of cooking fuel used and the sources of drinking water available. Analysis of census data relating to such amenities by caste and ethnicity reveals differences in levels of access to such basic services among different social group. This kind of comparative study reveals the relative deprivation of Musahar.

An overwhelming majority of people in Nepal live in their own houses. The percentage residing in their own house ranges in the high eighties for most groups with lowered levels of ownership being 77% for the Terai B/C + (GSEA 2005). 9.2 percent of Dalit and Terai middle castes households and 91 percent Terai Janajatis households live in self-owned houses. Low percentage reveals the greater mobility, urban residence and engagement in alternative occupations 94 percent of Musahar residing in their own houses shows lower mobility of Musahar.

Housing units are classified into four categories permanent (*pakki*²) Semi permanent (semi *pakki*³) or impermanent (*Kachi*⁴) and other makeshift housing. Almost 52% Hill / Terai B/C + household occupy permanent structures, whereas for other groups such percentages range between 3.2 percent (Terai Dalit) to 31 percent (Mountain and Hill Janajati other than Newar / Thakali groups). Among the Dalits, a much higher proportion of Terai Dalit occupy impermanent house than do hill Dalits. Ninety-one percent of the Musahar houses are impermanent

² Pakki house were defined as all dall and roofs cement mortan baked brick\ stone structured and with tiles/slate / tin.

³ Semi pakki houses include kanchi structures with pakki roofs or pakki structures with Kachi roofs.

⁴ Kachi houses were defined as mud wall, bamboo and other structures of similar materials with kachi roof)

structure. Generally, only a small minority (12 to 9%) of house occupied by Tarai Dalits and Tarai on Janajatis are permanent. Living quarters of Tarai dalits and Tarai Janajatis are of relatively of lower quality construction (GSEA: 2005).

Most of the Musahar have no land registered in their own name so that they have only temporary houses in field of governments land and some of them are made in landlord's land.

Table 5:3 Type of House occupied by Musahar

SN	Type of house occupied	No of HH	Percent of HH
1.	Pakki	-	-
2.	Semi pakki	4	8
3.	Kachhi	46	92
4.	Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey 2011

As shown in table 5:3, 92% houses are semi-permanent and no respondent have *Pakki* houses. Many people accommodated in a single room. In many instances, they shared the room with their livestock.

Sanitation, lighting and cooking fuel

Overall in Nepal, only 21 percent of household are reported toilets with any water-few facility. Even among the Hill/ Terai B/C + households, only 32 percent have toilets with water flow. Around 20 percent of Janajatis households have no toilet facility at all. Higher proportions of Terai Dalit (90%) and Janajatis (79%) households are without toilet facilities. Among Musahar, the availability of this facility is almost negligible.

Most of the Musahar households have no special toilets. They went to open field and banks of rive, bamboo-clump, bushes for latrine purposes. From the field observation, it was noted that many of the lower caste families, particularly the

children do not use of water. Most of them used leaves, stone, wood etc. for cleaning. Out of 50 households, no one had latrine facilities. The main reason is that they have no land of their own. Even if they have, that would be a very small plot so that they are unable to make toilets for themselves; therefore, they like to go to open field or bushes.

Drinking Water Conditions

It is true that human health is greatly shaped by the source of drinking water. Eighty- one percent of the population is reported to have access to relatively safe drinking water from either a tap/pipe or tube well. Almost 93% have safe drinking water. Three types of water sources were found in the study area that is well hand pump and pond.

Almost everywhere, the hand pump was popular and accessible in the study area. Pond was used for cattle and for bathing and washing the clothes of the villagers. Some of hand pump are provided by local NGO and INGOs.

Table 5:4 Source of Drinking Water

SN	Water sources	For drinking purpose household	Percent	Remark
1.	Tube well	42	84	Only six percent private
2.	Well	8	16	Public
3.	Pond	-	-	-
4.	River	-	-	-
	Total	50	100	-

Source: Field Survey 2011

In the study area 8 household were using well for drinking water. Pond's water was used for cattle by 26 Musahar household at the Chandra Ayodhyapur VDC. Most of Musahar used public hand pump as source of drinking water. Only 3 Musahar household have their own hand pump. It is shown in the table.

Lighting Facilities

In Nepal, overall 40 percent of the households have electric/bio gas lighting facilities and 57 percent use kerosene. Electric lighting is very unevenly distributed and is mostly restricted to urban centers and district headquarters. Nearly 82 percent of the Newar Thakali households and 70 percent of Terai B/C+ households have access to such lighting; however in spite of better connectivity in Terai areas, only 13 percent of the Terai Dalit households had such connection (GSEA: 2005). Among, Terai Dalits, only 4 percent Musahar have such facilities (Field survey). Through there was availability electricity, only some Musahar household have purchasing capacity. Landlessness is also major cause for low utilization of electricity.

Table 5:5 Source of Lighting in HH

S.N.	Source	No of HH	Percentage of HH
1.	Electricity	2	4
2.	Kerosene oil	48	96
3.	Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey 2011

Above table shows that 96% of Musahar have no electric facilities. They use kerosene oil for lighting. This demonstrates service exclusion of Musahar community.

Fuel use

The type of fuel used by different groups follows a similar pattern. Wood is the main fuel used for cooking by all households irrespective of ethnicity and caste. In 2007, overall, nearly 66 percent of household used wood for cooking. Among them overwhelming proportion of Hill Dalit household (89%) and Janajatis (70%) use wood for cooking. On the other hand, *Santhi* (piled Jute Sticks) and *Guitha* (dried dung of cow/buffalo) were main cooking fuel for 21

percent of Terai Janajatis, 39 percent of Terai Dalit, 37 percent of Terai middle caste and 28 percent of Musahar households, indicating the scarcity of fire wood in Terai area (GSEA: 2005).

Table 5:6 Source of fuel wood in household

SN	Source		No of HH	Percentage of HH
1.	Kerosene oil		-	0
2.	Fire wood Total	Jungle	30	60
		Purchasing	-	0
		Total	30	60
3.	Animal dung		20	40
	Total		50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2011

The above shows that 60 percent to Musahar household relied on firewood for their fuel, which is brought from the near by jungle and 40 percent household use animal dung as main source of fuel. Generally, women and female children fetch firewood from Jungle.

5.2.2 Economic activities of Musahar

This section is concerned in dealing with the general economic activities of the Musahar people of study area. Traditionally, Musahars are an occupational caste group. They have been working as an important socio-economic component of the village of their residence. Their services have maintained the caste/class structure well knit. Certain set of services are considered to be this exclusive working areas. Through exceptions can be found irrespective of the largeness of the population size and variety of castes and sub-castes in the village, occupationally there has been little or no change. The Musahar is one of them.

Musahar strong physical built and the nature of their traditional occupation have close connection. Where the hard physical work is required, they are almost

instantly remembered and their labor force is used. The fast occurring changes in intercommunity relationship and occupation have not affected their life or nature of their work. They continue sticking to their work as Manual labors.

There is unemployment and underemployment in the village. Musahar are landless and unskilled labor. Physical strength is their sole sources of livelihood. They have never been large landowners. They have received in kind or cash which earned their daily bread. Their ancestors were agricultural labours, their parents lived the same life and they know very well that their children will live and die as labours working in others field and others from generation to generation, the tragic and unfinished story of Musahar.

Though main economic activities of Musahar are agriculture, it is supplemented by trade, animal husbandry and wage earning. They are also engaged in other activities such as crafting, fishing and digging mud. In household, female members are engaged in works such as making the Chatai, Dhakki (bamboo baskets) etc. They sell some of the goods in the market and use some for themselves in their households. Beside this, some male member migrate to Panjab (India) and Kathmandu for employment in agriculture-off seasons. Usually they do hard work such as plugging or going to the forest and cutting wood. Even they migrate to city for employment, they only get chance to get work as manual labor due to lack of education or skill. Animal husbandry and domestic works such as cooking, washing dish and cleaning the house are women and children job. Majority of Musahar women and children employ as agriculture wage labor at local area. Some of Musahar children work as household servant at upper caste proprietor house. They also look after the animal of upper castes. Male member of household involve in both agriculture and non-agriculture wage labor.

Table 5:7 Economic Activities of Musahar People

S.N	Economic activities	No of person	Percentage
1.	Agricultural labour	132	65.02
2.	Animal / householder	15	7.38
3.	Servant	2	0.98
4	Wage labour	85	41.87
5	Trade business	-	-
Total		234	100

Source: Field Survey 2011

Agriculture

The distribution of land has always been uneven. Some people's own large areas of land; a few have enjoyed the privilege of inheriting large farms and agricultural estates while others are landless. The land ownership to the advantage of a few traditional rich village elites is complex; in fact, it is a very complex problem.

The above table shows that out of 234 economic active population of study area, 65.02% derived their livelihood as agricultural labour. Majority of them are landless (Sukumbasi). Some are tenant of the local landlord they belong to middle caste Yadav and high caste Brahmin. They become landless due to not getting opportunity to register their land in their own name during the time of the land survey because these Musahar people were not educated. Due to the lack of land, most of the Musahar people of the study area were found cultivating other's land on the basis of crop sharing as tenant.

Most Musahar as agricultural labors have their certain *Malik* (landlord). They get piece of land usually one to three/ four *katthas* from them on which they work and raise crops. In most cases, they keep the entire product to themselves. In return to this generous help, they work for master as permanent Jan (contracted

labour). They do not have option to work elsewhere. They can work for other only when their master has not work to engage them or when there is permission from their master to work at others farm. This system is aided by another economic measure, which helps its beneficiary, the Musahar to survive economically. If they succeed in pleasing their masters, they get a few katthas of land on contract. This system is called Bataiya, crop sharing, literally division of the product. Half of the produce goes to the master and as grower; they keep the half for themselves.

Wage labor

A remarkable section of respondent of Musahar community is wage labour in non-agriculture labour. More than 41 percent of Musahar as shown in table 5:4 were engaged in other economic activities such as wage earning activities, working as industrial labour, construction labour, tractor labour, sand and gavel collector etc. Their daily activities include doing a hard work in the agricultural fields of their masters. In return, they only get 4 kg paddy or 50-60 rupees per day. That is in sufficient for feeding their children so they try to earn some more money by working as a labour in the field of constructions and other kinds of work in the cities of Nepal and India, usually such kinds of work are done by the male member. Women and children are engaged in household works and sometimes children live as servants for the rich people. Though the Musahar people are not directly linked in trade, they sell their agricultural such as rice vegetables and other things in the market and buy cloths and other necessary items of daily use as such salt oil spices etc so their main source of subsistence is agriculture rather than trade.

Migration and remittance

Between 1996 and 2004, the percentage of households receiving remittances has gone up from 23 to 32 percent and the average amount received has increased from Rs. 625 to Rs 2100 per person per year. While in 1996 only 22 percent of the remittance income come from household members working outside

Nepal in countries other than India accounted for 53 percent of the remittance flow (CBS, 2004).

In Terai now, remittance from gulf countries is emerging as second source of economy after agriculture. There are only seasonal employment opportunities in agriculture sector. Almost 65.02 percent of respondents depend on agriculture for their livelihood. The seasonal employment are agriculture based such as ploughing and leveling the field for planting the rice, maize, millet, wheat, tobacco, farming , making ridge in fields , cutting and threshing the harvested crops etc. which is available only for 6 to 7 months from June to December. For the rest of period Musahar usually go to Panjab (India), Kathmandu and elsewhere in search of seasonal employment.

Table 5:8 Migrations for Employment

S.N.	Destination	No of HH	Percentage of HH	Remark
1.	In own district	-	-	-
2.	Other district	-	-	-
3.	Work in India	19	38	Male member work in Ag. Sect
4.	Work in other countries than India	2	4	-
	Total	21	42	-

Source: Field Survey, 2011

As shown in table 5:8 male member from 38 percent household of Musahar have migrated to India for employment where they work as agriculture wage labour. Only member of 4 percent of household has migrated to gulf countries for employment. Poverty and landless is major cause for low employment in gulf country because they have neither required money nor any property for mortgage.

Women and Children

Among the Musahar women, some of them were found involved in house and agricultural work and the rest doing seasonal work as laborers like planting rice, millet and other seasonal crops and harvesting etc. Usually they go to landlords home and make the cow dung cakes for fuel purpose. Their work include sweeping the courtyard, washing cloths of landlords families, carrying paddy, millet, wheat and other consumable goods for grinding , beating and threshing in local mills. Children also look after the buffaloes, cows, goats etc of the landlords and masters. They get food, clothes, and other consumable goods in exchange of their services. Some of them lived in the landlord's home as a servant on salary basis.

Some of Musahar women and children go to forest to cut trees and bamboos, collect firewood, leaves, and take them to sell in the market for extra income, whenever they have leisure.

Food supply situation

Table 5:9 presents the food supply situation in the study area. Among the 50 household of Musahar more than 82 .08 percent are suffering from insufficiency of food grain. Food grain needed to feed the family members for one year is not sufficient with any Musahar household. The percentage of household which less than 3 months are 14 percent of total likewise 4 percent have sufficient to feed 6 months. No household have sufficient food for whole year in study area.

Table 5:9 Food sufficiency among the Musahar

S.N	Food consumption	No of HH	Percent
1	Insufficient	41	82
2.	Sufficient for 3 months	7	14
3	Sufficient for 6 months	2	4
4	Sufficient for 9 months	-	-
5	Sufficient for 12 months	-	-
Total		50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2011

5.2.3 Human Development Dimension

Education

Learning is a weapon against poverty. It is route to participate and active citizenship (Kenedy 1997:4). For these reasons, educations and training play key role in the fight against social exclusion. In mist of other inequality, inequality in participation and achievement in education are significant. There is close relationship among social exclusion, labour market activities and success, and educational achievement. In addition, successful learning is crucial in developing confidence motivation and independence.

Education status of Dalits

In the past schooling system was based on the Varnasharm model during Vedic and post-Vedic period as well. There was deliberate denial of schooling to shudra especially 'Pani Chalne' and 'Pani Nachalne" groups in the Varnasarm system of education because of their prescribed duty as 'service to people of other higher castes". In addition, the Buddhist value based Monastery schools, which

were operating in Nepal since long time never permitted Dalits to enter into their school (Dhal: 2000).

Traditionally the educational opportunities were limited to some high caste people in Hindu and Buddhist society of Nepal. But if one observes carefully the literacy rate and educational attainment of people in Nepal over the decades, most people of Nepal were deliberately debarred from getting education and the literacy rate of people, was barely 2 percent up to 1950. This might be attributed to the little system of formal educational and more people were to acquire education informally with selected tutors (Gurus). Such informally expanded education system did prohibit Dalits from the opportunity. Therefore, no doubt, education was prerogatives of the high caste Hindu, particularly Brahmins (Dahal, 2002).

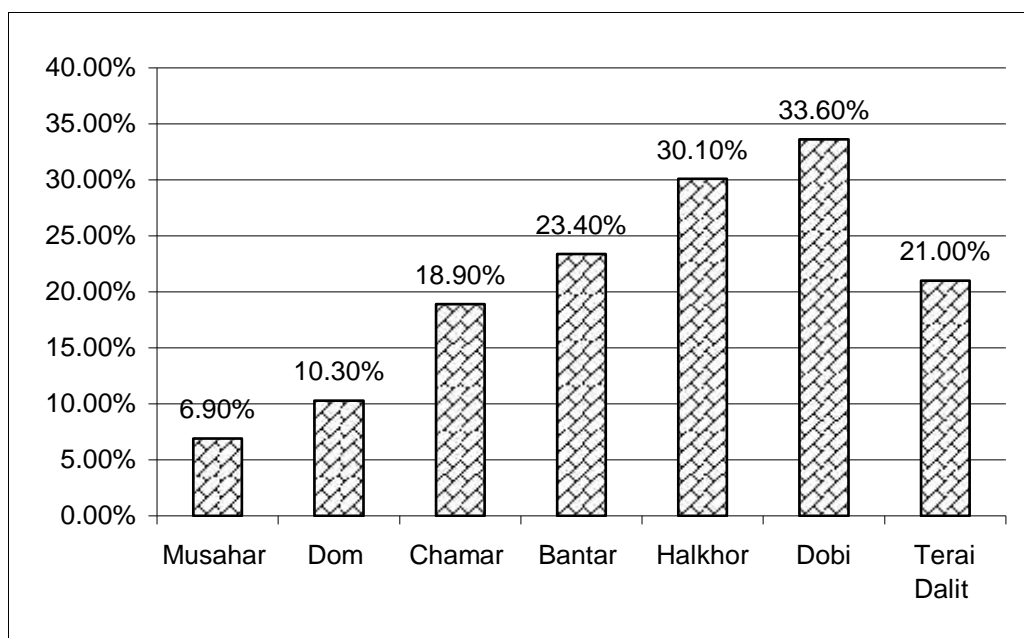
Only after the overthrow of the Rana regime in 1950, give access to formal education, particularly the western system of education to all groups, including the Dalits in Nepal. But, because of the deeply rooted Hindu value to all groups in Nepal for centuries, Dalits children faced number of problems while getting admission in the school and sitting and eating together with other students while at school.

Comparison of the literacy rate has been made to understand virtually the situation of Dalits with the national level as well as with the people who have the highest rate in Nepal recorded in the 2001 census. It clearly gives a picture of Dalits in terms of education.

According to census 2001, the literacy rate of Nepalis the 6 years and above age group is 53.7 percent. Male literacy, among the 6 years and above age group is 65 percent and 42.5 percent among female in 2001. The 2001 census documents wide variations in literacy rates among various caste/ ethnic groups. While slightly over 72 percent of Newar/ Thakali group and 74 percent of the Terai B/C + group are literate. Only 21 percent of the Terai Dalits have literacy skills. Dalits in general, Terai middle caste and Terai Janajatis groups lag significantly behind.

However all groups have made significant gains over decade. But even this progress is lowest among the Terai Dalits and Muslim (GSEA, 2005).

Figure 5:3 Educations within Terai Dalit



Source: Census, 2001

Certain Dalit Janajati groups in the Terai and a few Hill Janajatis are greatly disadvantaged in terms of education. While 21 percent of the Terai Dalits are literate, only 7 percents of Musahar can read and write even within Dalit, the inequality in literacy rate is wide. Where as the overall literacy rate of Hill Dalit is more than 40 percent only 21 percent of Terai Dalit are literate. There are also wide inequalities among Terai Dalit in literacy rate. Where the literacy rate of Musahar is only 7 percent, the literacy rate of Dhobi is 33.6 percent.

Educational status of Musahar in study Area

In study area, the respondents were asked whether they are literate or illiterate. The below table shows that out of total population 340 population (50 households) 91.02% were illiterate, only 8.52 were literate of while which no one had higher level only they have had primary and middle level education.

Table 5:10 Educational Status of Musahar People of Study Area

S.N.	Educational Status		No of people	Percentage
1.	Illiterate		311	91.47
2.	Literate	literate(informal)	6	1.76
		1-5	21	6.17
		5-10	2	0.05
		Above SLC	-	-
		I.A	-	-
		B.A	-	-
		Total	29	8.52
3.	Total		340	100

Source: Field Survey, 2011

Above table demonstrates there are higher rate of illiteracy among Musahar community. It indicates that the Musahars are very high illiterate. Their economic condition does not support all the children to be educated. Most of respondents complained that they couldn't send their children to school because without working they can't solve hand to mouth problem. They think that the alternate work are more beneficial and give quicker returns than the education. According to one respondent Chandeshwar:

"We need schooling for our children in order to make them able to understand what others have said, what is happening in the world, where can we get better living, but we are desperately poor to provide food for our children. So we could only send them to school until they become able to go for Majduri (wage earning)".

Therefore, drop-out from school rate is very high among Musahar community.

Usually the families keep their children at home for assistance in house hold activities, especially in the field and to look after the children. The most important perception among uneducated families towards girls that it is not necessary to

provide education to girls as they marry off and become property of other. Distance between home and the school has played a vital role in determining the girl's education in the study area.

The unemployment of educated Musahar is one of cause for unwilling of Musahar toward education. According to one of respondent Manish Sadaya:

"Most of the schooled people are star of "no where" from an employment perspective. They are socially alienated, economically failures, unable to cope with a market economy and unable enjoy or be satisfied with a subsistence village economy. In all the schooled person remains in a slippery place and the economy around them continues to limp."

In equalities in education have occurred as a result of a variety of factors that can be interpreted in a number of ways. There is clearly some debate as to the extent to which barrier to participation and achievements are individual or institutional. There is significant interaction between both the institutional and individual causes of inequalities and these tend to be mutually reinforcing. This interaction reflects one of the key characteristic of social exclusion itself. It is a dynamic process that results form a combination of factors including social, cultural and institutional ones, as well as those more closely associated with the individual as a result; intervention is required at a variety of levels.

Health Dimension

"Socio-economic inequalities in health reflect deferential exposure from before birth and across the life span to risks associated with socio-economic position. There differential exposures are also important in explaining health inequalities which exist by ethnicity and gender"(Atchison 1998:6).

The socio- economic status of Musahar is very poor. These factors directly effect on the health condition of Musahar. As for example, average life expectancy of Musahar in the Terai was 42 years. The average life expectancy in Nepal was 55

years in 1998 (NESAC 1998). Here, we examine the use of contraceptive methods consulting medical personal during pregnancy and delivery care practices.

Delivery practice

Most of the Nepalese children are delivered at home with the assistance of traditional birth attendants (TBA) or older women of this community. The majority of maternal death and much of the chronic morbidity resulting from childbirth are due to the failure to get timely help for complications at delivery. It is essential that delivery should be conducted under proper hygienic conditions with the assistance of trained medical practitioners. In this context, the respondents were asked about assistance of delivery. The available information is shown by following table.

Table 5:11 Delivery Care Practice

SN	Description	No of Respondent	Percent
1	Doctors		
2	TBA	14	28
3	Family Member	36	71
4	Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2011

The above table shows that family member assisted 72 percent births whereas TBA assisted 28 percent births. It is concluded that most of the mother's delivery cases were assisted by family member and relatives than that of the TBAs because of low socio-economic status and traditional culture. During the data collection most of the mother said that MCHW did not come their home due to lower caste and socio-economic status.

Use of Contraceptives Methods

In this context one who have knowledge about family planning were asked about use of family planning device. The available information is shown in given table No. 13.

Table 5:12 Use of Contraceptives Method

S.N.	Methods	No of respondent	Percent
1.	Male sterilization		
2	Female sterilization	5	10
3.	Temporary		
4	No uses	45	90
5	Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2011

The above table shows that only 10 percent respondents used contraceptives and 90 respondents did not use the contraceptive among those having knowledge about family planning. The above table also shows that all the areas used only female sterilization. No women used temporary methods.

It is concluded that most of the women did not use family planning devices as well as this community was unaware of temporary methods of family planning due to illiteracy. They have no knowledge about the advantage of family planning. This study shows that the majority of Musahar people were not familiar with contraceptives method of family planning.

Consulting medical personnel during pregnancy

Consulting medical personnel during pregnancy means to check up pregnant mother's health during pregnancy period. It is very important for the health of the mother and child.

Table 5:13 Number of Antenatal Consulting Medical Personnel

SN	Description	No of antenatal	Percent	
1.	Consulting	Yes	3	6
		No	47	94
2.	Total	50	100	

Source: Field Survey, 2011

The table 5:13 shows that 94 percent of total respondents did not receive any antenatal check up, where as 6 percent respondent received antenatal check up only one or two time.

This study found that most of the mothers did not check up service during pregnancy period due to the lack of knowledge about antenatal check up and due to poverty. During the period of data collection most of the mothers expressed that it was not necessary for it. In this condition, the focus should be given on decreasing maternal and neonatal mortality and morbidity.

5.2.4 Political Dimension

According to Anthony Giddens (1995:8) political exclusion is the isolation of poor people and communities from the mainstream of the political process, and the making of decisions about their lives elsewhere by others. Political exclusion is one of facet of social exclusion that is the disempowerment of socially excluded groups and individuals which results in their claims to have their social and economic needs met to bring voiced not being heard or not being acted upon.

Politically the Musahar are not so conscious community. Even major political changes have hardly affected them. The past 50 years have been a period of rapid political changes, innovations and experiments. Beginning with the dislodgment of the Rana oligarchy in 1901-51 the country has experienced several turmoil and various forms of government ranging from party less to multiparty system. Major political changes have been taken place due to 10 years Maoist insurgency and mass agitation by seven parties' alliance. However, these changes have meant little or virtually nothing for this community anywhere in any district. For example, no Musahar has been heard to hold any political or administrative position even at district level. No Musahar has ever been heard to register any party in any important sense. No one has ever been elected or nominated to government. They have exclusively been living in utter seclusion from socio-political arguments. Very few Musahar children have ever gone to primary school. The only intercourse they have had with the other communities is that of wage earners for daily bread. All these have added to their total indifference or ignorance to politics and political participation.

In Panchayat system needed nine member representing nine different wards in the village council called village Panchayat. In local election of VDC in 2056, two Musahar are selected as ward member representing ward no 3 and 4 on the mercy of upper caste village elites. Upper and influential people generally used the Musahar leader instrumentally on their behalf. Their votes have always been ensured by extra- political factors like instructions or threats from the village strongmen, material inducement and influence of the clever and skilled politicians. Usually they follow the instructions of their *Girhus* (masters) and can be led to any side with little or no difficult. Most of them are reluctant to go voting and they are equally reluctant to exercise their franchise. It means little to them. Therefore, it is the interested people who get their votes polled the way they like. This does not mean that they have not voted. Interviews indicated that almost all Musahar votes exercised their votes in the elections previously in both village /national Panchayat elections.

Now, a noticeable change seems to be obtaining currently. After the restoration of multi-party system (1990), signs are slightly different. In some village Musahar along with other manual labor castes show reluctance to work for their *Girhus*⁵ who are mostly belong to upper castes, relatively well of people. To the utter amazement of the establishment, they have persistently demanded a sharp rise in their daily wage. They have refused to accept the usual four kilos of paddy and have insisted for its increment to six kilos per day, which has been denied. This has generated tension in other wise placid atmosphere of the village. Through there is very possibility of their votes being used by the political interests of the village leaders, the atmosphere suggests that a promise or slogan that assures of affecting a general well-being in the life of working class people attracts Musahar voter.

⁵ Girhus in local term used for local landlord or master.

Caste Council

They have a council similar to *Jabber* or equivalent to '*Sabha*' in some Terai communities. The chief arbitrators of the Musahar community are called *Maizon* or *Deman*⁶. The members to it are drawn usually from different villages and community issues are decided upon by it. If anything that goes against their tradition and dignity of the community, it is referred to them or to the council, which takes needed decision and it ultimately, becomes a binding rule to all. Generally, the serious cases of development, excommunication or community feasts and such other cases are decided upon by *Maijan* or *Deman* of the council.

All such decisions are treated as collective decisions and they act like a strong cohesive force. In this way the council brings them together enforces its judgments and thus the community preserve the norm and value system which helps them to maintain their identity as a social-cultural group. At times, the opinions, decisions or judgments of the elders and the council have greater force than other kinds of laws. To them the community decision is of very high value and therefore, it is almost unquestionable. The authority of the council is inviolable in case of the Musahar as well other community. Traditionally this authority has been represented by village council known as *panchaiti*, members on which are drawn from various sections of the village population. These days, this authority is usually exercised by the relatively literate upper -class, well off landed proprietors and politically more aware local elites. Usually elderly people are on it.

However, economic factors, education, connections with political demonstrative power have begun to influence this traditional centre. Consequently, relatively younger people also can be seen engaged with elderly people in serious consultation. Traditionally there used to be a council of village elders representing different sections of the population in the village. They were called '*panchas*'. This all-powerful council had to resolve conflicts, decide on issues, and announce

⁶ *Maijan* and *Deman* is the head of particular caste of a village in the Tarai who look after the social affairs related with caste.

Judgments and suing the offenders. This meeting was called '*Panchaiti*'⁷. This system is still in practice among Musahar.

Like other communities the Musahar cannot ignore the authority of the village elders. Whenever there is a family quarrel, a dispute between member of the community or a dispute with members of other community, or any other such disputes it is referred to the authority of the council. The '*panchaiti*' of the elders is held to resolve the conflict.

Punishment

The disputants appear before the council and accept its verdict irrespective of the nature of the dispute. The verdict can go to the extreme of inflicting punishment on the defaulter ranging from simple fines though paying for damages to expulsion from the community. The principle forms of punishment are fine, physical chastisement, making the defamer pay the cost of a community feasts and not allowing him to sit and eat with other member of the caste. Sometimes all three punishments are imposed on the defaulter.

⁷ *Panchaiti* is the word used for the gathering of local people to discuss on the local dispute.

CHAPTER-VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1 Summary

Musahars are the second largest Tarai Dalits caste group, with a total population of 1,72,434 (CBS 2001), who inhabit scattered settlements in the Siraha, Saptari, Dhanusha, Sunsari, Morang, Udayapur, Mahotari, Bara, Parsa, Sarlahi, Rautahat and Nawalparasi districts of eastern and central Tarai Nepal. They are mainly landless agricultural laborers, largely remained on the periphery. As they have marginal access to resource and have been placed at the bottom of social hierarchy, they are one of the most excluded groups in Nepal.

Still in south Asia, caste system is playing crucial role in determining the status of dalit. In case of Musahar, caste system and feudal system are two most decisive factors which heavily impact on the exclusion of Musahar. In this research, the some problems are identified to research such as how they are marginalized or excluded throughout history? How the caste and feudal system interplay with each other to produce the exclusionary situation for Musahar and what is the impact of exclusion on the lives of Musahar?

In this regards, this study is aimed to trace out the condition of the social exclusion of Musahar and its impact on their overall livelihood. Musahar is little known and little studied group by both native and foreign anthropologist as well as sociologist. The objective of the present study is focused to understand the social-economic exclusion of Musahar.

Research is basically based on the primary data collected during the fieldwork and the secondary data collected from different published reports and Journal. During fieldwork, different data collection techniques and tools are used. Various books, article and reports relating to the social exclusion of Musahar have been either quoted or used as reference to support this research project.

Descriptive and analytical research design has been followed for the purpose of study. Musahar respondents are selected by using random sampling techniques for the data collection. Both quantitative and qualitative data are used. Data collection instrument are unstructured, semi structured interview, structured questionnaire. Data are analyzed by descriptive method and presented in table and chart. It is also present in percentage.

Both socially and economically, Musahar live in terrible plight condition. They represent a state of abject poverty in colossal proportion and severe deprivation. Living like bonded laborers throughout ages; they have virtually remained unaffected by the changes that have occurred in the Nepalese society during the past nearly six decades. Musahar are facing exclusion at multi level. The vicious circle of poverty malnutrition, disease and ignorance impeded their progress for any better future. In the existing socio-cultural-economic structure, their emancipation from poverty and social ills what they have been suffering is extremely difficult, if not impossible.

Musahar's settlements are separated, isolated or aloof from the rest of the village inhabited by other castes. Generally, their settlements are laid at the outskirts of village. These are separated by distance of an uninhabited area indicates the 'lower' social position accorded to them. They settle at a place that is at a considerable distance from the houses of the other castes. Lack of road accessibility is also one of considerable feature of Musahar settlement. Upper caste people only visit in the Musahar settlements at agriculture peak season in search of wage labor. This indicates the physical exclusion of Musahar.

Economically they are so depressed that they can not purchase required amount of food and others good for their basic need. The narrow circumstances of their life have bred several non-economic factors repressible for various kinds of deprivations. Reluctance to education is an outcome of this situation. To them education is irrelevant to their life, because as they feel, it is unproductive. In consequence, though primary education is free, they often do not send their

children to their village school. The literacy rate among Musahar is only 8.52 percent.

Musahar are virtually landless people. Even who own any piece of land is negligible. According to field study only 18 percent of Musahar have their own land. They are mostly *sukumbasi* that means they haven't their own land to build their house. They are generally rear the animal like buffaloes and cows on share basis. Housing condition is very poor and almost 92 percent of house of study is built from straw and bamboo (*Kachi*). The lighting and sanitation condition is also very poor. They work as laborers on other's farms and fields.

Most of the Musahar household relies on daily wages agriculture labor for their livelihood. 65.02 percent of population of Musahar of study area work as agriculture labor on others farmland. In agriculture based society like Nepal where land has been the source of all sustenance, social security, position and power, being landless with no reliable economic alternative to lean on and having no access to means of production is a serious disadvantage, which degrades and dehumanize man.

There is no gainful employment opportunity in the Terai villages. There is no income generating activities to engage them. There is some employment opportunity available only in Agriculture sector. However, such activities are seasonal. For the rest of the year a sizeable work force of the hard working Musahar community remain idle. They are mostly either unemployment or underemployed.

As daily wage earners with no asset to saving, they wholly depend on the meager wage they receive. Though they substantially contribute to the labour force of the village they have no bargaining capacity and have to remain consent with what is offered. The wage mostly in kind is insufficient for their two square meals. Wage payment in cash is equally small which they spend on food with nothing left in hands. Naturally, this situation leads to indebtedness. They borrow money for social and family purposes. In the first place, any amount even the smallest amount

is too big for them to manage which compels them to take loan and then this amount multiplies resulting in a long chain of indebtedness.

Illiteracy is one of the major causes of their miserable plight. Leaving one or two case here and there, Musahars are largely illiterate people. Only 8.52 percent of Musahar are literate. Illiteracy combined with economic misery has further impoverished and complicated their life. Ignorance of all kinds pervades the poor and illiterate. Superstition is deep rooted and unshakable faith found in every single individual of the community.

Caste based discrimination is one major cause of exclusion of Musahar. Musahar like other lower caste are treated as inferior being not fit for any higher social role. Caste operates at structure, superstructure and infrastructure level. It not only determines the social dignity but also determine the economic condition of people. Untouchability is one of facet of caste-based discrimination in Hindu culture, which exists in many forms. There is not only caste-based untouchability between Dalit and non-Dalit, there is also caste based untouchability among Dalit that is between higher Dalit and lower Dalit.

Politically Musahar are very much excluded. They do not get proper representation in local governance. Their voices are not heard in meeting. Their voices are unaffected in decision-making process. Mostly they have grievance toward representative of VDC but they have no courage to express before them. Due to lack of education, their fertility rate is very high. There are no uses of family planning measures to control the rampant population growth, which also causes the poverty.

Due to lack of technological knowledge and education, they cannot compete with other caste and community who have access to those facilities. Backwardness is the both ends and means of poverty. Social Exclusions create the poverty and it is also the result of poverty. Their exclusion is reinforced by the feudal upper caste Hindus, feudal aristocratic exploitation and now a day's peripheral capitalistic suppression.

6.2 Conclusion

Musahar people of the study area live in a terrible plight condition both socially and economically. They are victims of economic, racial and social discrimination. They are facing exclusion at several levels. Musahar people of the study area are marginalized from the mainstream of the developmental process of the nation. They have no access to any natural resources, technological knowledge, educational opportunities and political power and employment opportunity.

Musahar people of the study area have been suffering in the vicious circle of poverty. They are suffering from malnutrition, disease, illiteracy, landlessness, unemployment, low income and upper caste domination. Musahar people are backward people. They have been neglected in all aspect of social life. The backwardness is shaped or reshaped by the feudal upper caste Hindu, feudal aristocratic exploitation and now-a day's peripheral capitalistic suppression. Musahar people are least developed and lesser-known group of Nepal. But in the study area, they are in considerable number because they are more than 11 percent of VDC.

Social status of people is quite low and miserable and they are treated as untouchable. They are considered as dirty and inferior class of the society. They are placed on the bottom of social ladder by birth, where they stay blaming their fate as untouchable caste giving up all the hope of redemption and upliftment. Agricultural wage labor is the major occupation of the Musahar. Majority of Musahar people are engaged in this occupation. The alternative occupations of the people are industrial labour and handcraft, firewood collection etc.

The home based poultry farming is very popular among them because they have no adequate capital to purchase animal and invest in animal husbandry. The material condition of the people shows very poor situation and they often lack the essential material like utensils (cooking pot, plate, stove bedding) and other electric appliances like TV fan radio etc. Land holding position of the people shows that more than 80 percent of the total respondents are landless (Sukumbashi). They have settled down in '*aillani jagga*' near the highway or the bank of the rivers.

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