

# CHAPTER ONE

## CONCEPTS OF MARRIAGE

### 1.1 Introduction

Simply, the term 'marriage' refers to "a union of male and female which doesn't cease with the out at procreation but persists after the birth of offspring until the young are capable of supplying their own essential needs" Marriage is a socially approved sexual and economic union between man and women that is presumed to be more or less permanent and that subsumes reciprocal rights and obligation between two spouses and their children (Ember and Ember 1944; 327) as well as marriage can be defined as institution admitting men and women in to family life that is to living in the intimate personal relationship of husband and wife for the primary purpose of begetting and rearing children.

Marriage as an institution permits men and women in to family life. it is called a further step towards allows the couple to have sexual intercourse and reproduce without any social restriction, according to malownowski, it is an accepted social process in which two or more people begin the establishment of the family ( Harton and Hunt1968;216) Marriage may be defined as a cultural approved relationship of one men and one women (monogamy) or one men and two or more women (polygamy) in which there is cultural endorsement of sexual intercourse between the marital pattern of opposite sex and generally the expectation children will be born of relationship (international encyclopedia of the social science(1973, p. 2).

Hindu philosophy has divided the human life in to four stages (Ashramas) "GARHASTHYA ASHRAM" or the stage of married life is one of them. One enters this stage only after getting married. Being social as well as spiritual tie. It is expected to continue till eternity. It creates a sense of true unity and thus, represents the human life in its true meaning. According to Hindu cultural belief, Marriage relation does not last in the represent life only; It is the

consequence of many previous lives to come. The religion has approved this institution in order to maintain spiritual identity and respect of the society and to save it from the evil effect resulted by the possible random sexual relationship. It creates a balance between physical and spiritual life of the couple by creating the feeling such as co-operation, sacrifice, sympathy, peace, prosperity and eternal love between them.

Marriage system in Tharu community there is no similarity between various communities, They have difference regarding the rites and rituals of marriage the Tharus of the east and the west do not perform marriage ceremony in the same manner, the main reason behind there are the regional, linguistic, economic and cultural differences, the Tharus of urban community are found to be much more modernize in this regard for ex- in the past, betel nut was distributed as a symbol of invitation. But now the card system is popular. Similarly, to solemnize the marriage the Tharu Brahmin was a must but now any maithaly priest can do so as well as Brahmin furthermore, The marriage ceremony in performed without any Brahmin priest, at all instead the presence of the wise and elderly people is required.

According to veda a man is physically incomplete until he enters the married life. He is as useless as a chariot with only one wheel. Ancient Hindu philosophy has stressed the need of marriage as a mean to need moral life after one completeness his education. The married couple has various duties to fulfill such as respect, love and service to the living members of the family as well as pay all due tribute to the deceased ones, we have the tradition of worshipping lord pashupati in the form of “ARDHANARISWOR” (half men half women). In Hindu scriptures marriage is considered to be the way to be the way to salvation; that is the ultimate goal in human life. The son that is born of a legitimate marriage performs the post death rituals of the parents. Similarly, marrying the daughter away is considered an insurance of the place in heaven.

## **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

There are two types of objectives:

The general objectives are to present the information on social, cultural and Specific Economic condition of the Tharus of Garamani VDC of Jhapa District.

The Specific objectives is to prove the district nature of the rituals of the marriage ceremony as well their significance, the following points are sorted out to fulfill this purpose:

1. To examine the marriage system in Tharu community.
2. To examine the marriage trend of social and cultural change Tharu community
3. To examine the influencing motivating factor of marriage system in Tharu community.

## **1.3 Rational of the Study**

The significance of the study is explaining out the situation of marriage system on Tharu people. The people of Nepal at present are not confined within the regional, ethnic as linguistic boundaries, but are united under a boarder common national culture. Thus to study the different culture on the basis of similarities and differences and preserve their uniqueness. There is further need of preventing the outside influence on culture which can be done only if the useful and healthy customs and tradition are maintained and unhealthy and unproductive ones are discarded in due course of time. It is essential that the people must be aware of both the virtue and vice of their respective cultures so as to preserve and maintained their values. It is only for this reason, a feeble attempt has been made here to bring into light the cultural habits of the Tharus of Garamani VDC of Jhapa district in general and their marriage practice and its social impact in particular.

This study is an attempt to popularize the significant of marriage among Tharu community in Garamani VDC on the basis of the people participation, the duration, the objects required and their significance and use in various rituals and the other side if significant to may help the future researchers to carry out the same type of issues as well as it will be useful in providing some information needed by the agencies concerned with similar problems.

The national culture of every country has its foundation base on the folk cultures prevailing in different parts of the country, similarity, the cultures of various tribes and ethnic groups constitute the most important part of the national cultural and the very identity of Nepal and the Nepalese, Though small in size, Nepal possesses a multitude of cultural variety without whose development and modification according to time we are likely to face identity crisis in future, though the very people belonging to the concerned tribes and ethnic groups must take the responsibility to maintain and uplift their respective culture and tradition , the scholars efforts will render a great contribution in this regard.

Our contemporary cultural habits must be dynamic and sound in order to maintain its progressive nature, here, it is not only a matter of concern for the respective tribes and scholars, the historians, economists ,sociologists must analyze the efficiency and usefulness and use the outcome to develop a national culture and the cultural identity of the people . Doing this has been major challenge for the researchers but it must be met with the equal effort and commitment. Equally difficult is the task of determining what is folk culture and what is not on the traditional way. So, any such study must involve the scientific method of collecting and interpreting the information. Such study should not typically base on any particular stream I.e. History, Anthropology ,culture or even sociology, but combine the knowledge of all in order to obtain a fruitful result this report, though it may not be able to disclose every aspect of the area and the subject of study is based as the hypothesis, such as:

1. The marriage practice among the Tharus is undergoing drastic change due to development in education and urbanization.
2. The conservative nation towards the traditional practice is still prevailing.
3. Some of the aspects related to the marriage practice are mere formalities as well as extravagant..
4. This report, on the basis of the above hypothesis, is an attempt to popularize the importance of marriage among Tharu community on the basis of the people's participation. The duration, the objects required and their significance and use in various rituals. At the same, the report deals with some negative sides of the marriage such as the unnecessary expenses, the effort of the welfare organization of the Tharus in minimizing the lost and labor in marriage have been highlighted and duly appreciated though highly commendable, these efforts have not gained expected success due to social economic cultural reasons however, the efforts are continuing, one can be hopeful about their very much positive outcome.
5. In the context of socially and anthropology. The task does not end merely by informing the socio-cultural condition of a tribe. Even more important is the suggestion and recommendation for their preservation. Taking about the significance of the study they can be summarized as the following points:
  1. Establishing origin of the marriage system and its rituals.
  2. Categorizing the rituals on the basis of their significance and effect.
    1. Raising awareness towards the evils of the child marriage and mismatched marriage so as to publicize their biological and social effects. Besides, the economic condition of the Tharus seems to be declining. There are very few exceptions to this fact, many Tharus, who were free holders of their own land have now become landless farmer due to social

as environmental advertises. This report attempt to the raise awareness about this Fact as well.

#### **1.4 Organization of the Study**

This study has been divided into 8 chapters. The 1<sup>st</sup> chapter contain general introduction .the second chapter is about review of literature .In the same way the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter is related to research methodology. The 4<sup>th</sup>chapter is the introduction of the study area. The 5<sup>th</sup> chapter contains data analysis an present socio-cultural condition of the Tharus .Chapter six and seven deals with the types of Tharus marriage in general and marriage ritual among the Tharus respectively. The eight chapters have the summary of the report, conclusion and recommendation and at the end references. The Questionnaire used and the map of the study area presented.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Marriage system is basic foundation of Tharu community that impacts overall their lives as well as it is more and crucial in the gyre system of life. Marriage is an important for the every community which is directly proportionate to the development sector, many researchers have made the attempts to trace the cultural system of Tharu community and this study is also trying to expose the marriage process in Tharu, for this study different journal, report published in different period of time, past research done in this field will be taken as reference. Also help from concerned community will be taken and primary and secondary data is must.

Many scholars have made attempts to trace the historical and ethnic origin in their books and research works Rajesh Gautam (1994AD) Bhatta(1977) natural history of Nepal (vol.2) Majumdar (1942) Macdonald(1969) Srivastava(1958) Rajaura(1978) Baral (2004BS) Rishikeshab Raj Regmi(2053) Janaklal Sharma (2039) Mohanlal Prasad (2035) Baburam acharya 2009, Bista(1968/ 71/72, Hudgson(1972) are few among others who have done a great deal in this regard.

The Tharus of Nepal are found to inhabit the southern belt of the country between Mechi and Mahakali River, However, the identity of their ancestors is still mysterious. There is a great conflict whether their ancestors were Aryan or Mongolians. Initially, who they really are and where they come from still remains unclear. (Hudgson 1972)

Prasad Mohanlal (2035) has tried to analyze the reason for the conservativeness and narrow minded attitude of the Tharu. In his finding, he has held illiteracy as the most important factor. He says that the Tharus are too much confident of their land and think that there is no need to educate the children as they are going to cultivate the land anyway this attitude has proved a great obstacle in

their social development and has caused further decline in their economic condition. But Mr. Prasad seems to be less concerned about solving the problem.

Mr. Regmi (2053) has also presented a descriptive analysis of customs, traditions and socio- economic condition of the Tharus much positively on the ground of acculturation, Assimilation and Modernization, but the very aspect of the recent change experienced by the community still remains to be deal with.

Sharma (2039) has exposed the cast and class division among the Tharus from Mechi to Mahakakli as the following:

1.Chaudhary 2. Katharia 3. Kanfata 4. Kochila 5. Kharel 6.Knos 7.Khun  
8.Kunaha 9. Khauria 10.Gaddar 11.Chilawania 12.Jogi 13.Dangoria  
14.Tabedaar 15. Thandaar 16. Danuwar 17. DAngaura 18. Dang 19.Dadhia  
20. Pariyaar 21. Bardia 22. Bahania 23. Vanth 24. Batar 25. Boksa  
26. Bore 27. Bhagat 28. Bhatgania 29. Majhaura 30. Mahanta 31. Matauta  
32. Majhi 33. Morangia 34. Rajudia 35. Bishwash 36.Sardar 37.Bhatgania  
38.Mardania 39. Rajghoria 40. Rajhottiya 41. Rana 42. Raji  
43. Saitaar 44. Lampujhawa 45. Lalpuria 46. Sunaha 47. Solaria 48.  
Hemjaliya.

However, his study too lacks the logics about the changes brought about in this community.

Rajaure (1978) has studied the present condition of the Dangora Tharu of Dang and Deukhuri. His presentation though much more analytical and descriptive, is very much limited in scope due to its limitation regarding the area. Furthermore, this report too does not deal with the recent changes.

MECHI DEKHI MAHAKALI SAMMA, Express the concern over the invasion of the Tharu culture by Hindu culture it specially exemplifies the Tharus of Saptari district by saying that due to their nature to mix up with other communities despite the fact that they are indigenous people, their very culture



and tradition are badly affected, As the Tharus, at present are outnumbered and completely dominated by the Hindus, It has put quite an adverse effect upon their original lifestyle. (HMG-2031 BS)

Gurung (1994) has presented an analytical respect on the Rana Tharu of western Kailali; in his report, he has expressed his opinion about their origin and development along with their relation with other tribes. Besides this, he has also featured about the system of bounded labouror KAMAIYA and the changes brought about in the community after the restriction of democracy in 2046BS though broader in scope , it is not free of the weakness caused by the limited study area.

Srivastava (1958) has presented a descriptive account of the social condition, tradition and custom and lifestyle of the Tharus of Agra (India) but again, without paying much attention to the changes .Also, it studies the Tharus at the context of studies the at the context of India so has limited scope regarding the study of the Tharus of Nepal.

Mostly, past research had done under the topic of CBOS which had focused only in the importance and priority of institution over the women but in my research work, how the different CBOS impact on the bucolic women lives and unveil their socio-economic position in the society will give the prime importance and that will be a focal point, for this study different books, journals, findings, reports, acts, articles, other published and unpublished documents related to subject are reviewed,

Bista Dor Bdr , (1972) has tried to analyze the arrival of the Tharus into Nepal on the basis of the hypothesis that is based on hypothesis that is based on various rituals popular in the Tharu community. This study does not deal with the changes in Tharu society and their language neither does it mention anything about the effect of modernization there upon.

Acharya (2029) has presented a much more reliable account the origin of the Tharus , He seems more determined about the origin of the Tharus, according to him the Tharus surely come from Rajputana and are kshytriyas though they bear Mongolian structure and speak kirati language in the past.

Majumdar (1942) has attempts to prove the origin of the Tharus more scientifically on the basis of their blood geoup and physical features. On the bases of his finding, he has concluded by saying that the Tharus belong to Mongolian race, but, due to lack of further similar research in the same field, his theory can't be totally relied upon.

Gautam and thapamagar (1994) have described about the origin , physical feature and 73 different casts of the Tharus , though their study includes almost every aspect of the Tharu's life, it too excludes the changes and their effects.

Bhatta (1977) in his book entitled natural history of Nepal has written about the Tharu tribe including their relation with jamin, jal, and jungle as well as, their habit and indebtedness he writes.

“ A Tharu is truly seen of the forest and to this day he retain freedom of mind and movement a rather uncommon feature among the tribesof Nepal the Tharus love fishing but it is the women who go on the big catch when they get respite from the field a Tharu is always happy with a jug, his brews coming from the many different sources rice, maize, banana etc. addiction to drink makes him an easy prey to the caprices of the landlord and to wander, therefore, he is always in debt.

After reviewing the above mentioned literature, it seems abvious that any existing situation must be studied keeping in mind the recent changes experienced there upon so, this study deals with the Tharus of a specific place regarding a specific aspect of their life, I.e. marriage practice the recent changes and their effects on the subjects are also considered while dealing with the subject.

## 2.1 Types of Marriage in Nepal

On the basis of the number of men and women involved, two types of marriage are found to be popular in Nepal,

a) Monogamy

b) Polygamy  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Polyandry} \\ \text{Polygyny} \end{array} \right.$

Although the law of Nepal has banned polygamy, it can be done in some extreme conditions. Regarding polygamy, in some northern mountaineer's areas of Nepal, polyandry or marriage of one girl with several males of the same family (brothers) is still popular. This system however, is very rare and is found in very few communities elsewhere; it is proving less and less popular these days and so, is on the verge of extinction. The reason that system is still prevalent in Nepal is easily understandable. The cold desert areas of the north are so infertile that the dividing the yield among the several breakaway families would result into a quite un-manageable share for each of them. All the brothers are married to the same girl so that they don't have any need to be separated and the property remains undivided and intact.

Polygamy or the system of marriage of one man with more than one woman was popular among elite classes. In the past, it was almost customary for the ruling class to have a number of wives and concubines. King Pratap Malla had 9 wives, Yognarendra Malla had 33 queens of Prithivi Narayan Shaha had gone sati or immolated themselves after his death. Even in the recent past, polygamy was a prestigious act among the elite Brahmins and Kshatriyas.. Though monogamy was considered an ideology of lord Rama, in case of infecundity polygamy was allowed. Even now, the lower class one the second marriage in case of proved infecundity after a certain period. Besides this, the Nepalese society is a male dominated one and the males, to fulfill their lust, have been imposing this system.

## **2.2 Forms and Rituals of Marriage**

Nepalese society consists of various ethnic groups. So, there is no similarity in the forms and rituals of marriage. The accepted rituals are that the groom takes a procession (janti) to and from the bride's house and the marriage takes place in their presence. One of the main rituals is putting vermilion (sindur) on the partition of the bride's hair, but, these too are not followed by every tribe; for example, there is no compulsion place in Newar community. No matter how the rituals are performed, the basic objective of the marriage remains to be to empower the couple with social rights and duties and to recognize their relationship.

## **2.3 Pre-Marriage Sexual Activities**

In Nepalese society in general, the social recognition to sexual activity is not the only objective of marriage many tribes and communities in Nepal are much liberal towards pre-marriage sex life, The mountain tribes such as Sherpa and mustang, mid hilly tribes I'e, rai, limbu, majhi, danuwar, terai tribes, I'e, Tharu, dhimal, rajbanshi, among many others the examples. In these tribes, generally these is no punishment such as by –cott or forcible marriage pregnancy, the responsible male can either marry the girl or pay some compensation. The same liberal view towards sex is held by most of the world's tribes and communities.

## **2.4 Joking Relations and Marriage Within**

In every community, some relationships are reckoned for the jokes associated with them. Some relations have greater privilege over others when it comes to marry a girl. The communities of our country are no exception. Tribes such as Gurung, Thakali, Tamang, Sherpa's and even some kshytria casts accept the marital relationship between the children of brother and sister's .In some tribe's such as Majhi, one has to pay fine for not fulfilling this, obligation .In many

tribes such as Tamang, Jirel, if one's wife dies, he has the right to claim his sisters in law. The same case applies in case of one's brother's death.

In rural areas of Nepal, such rights and privileges play a great role in the future marriages, The society does not even mind the extra marital affairs between these relations. These are the special sexual privileges which are not just bases of random sex, but the mental preparedness of the future married life beforehand.

## **2.5 Determinants of Marriage**

Cast endogamy is the ultimate determinant of marriage in Nepal. Even the most advanced, urbanized or westernized people hesitate to cross this barrier and marry the partner of some other cast, and Inter cast marriage is still looked down upon. At present different laws belonging to the some cast or the groups have relaxed this barrier in the name of linguistic similarity. It is bit inconvenient due to the difference in language though Brahmin and Kshytries found marital relation in different regions i.e., these belonging to hill do not hesitate to marry their children with ones from Terai the lower castes, who are less socially dynamic, still lack this tendency.

Though In Nepal. The commercial aspect is less influential in marriage than in India, the importance of financial status of either party in marriage or its significance as one of the most determinates cannot be denied. Generally the marriage takes place between the families of the equal social status and economic prosperity. The virtue and personal ability of the groom tends to compensate if the above mentioned conditions are lacking. If a boy is poor, but seems capable of rearing the family because of his personal talent, the parents of the girl do not hesitate to give the daughter away to him. His future prospects such as his chances of being successful. His share of the ancestral property etc. is the factors which add some opinions in his favor.

Among different Nepalese communities, the ones who belong to Awadhi, Bhojpuri and Maithili communities are very much conscious of the economic aspect of marriage. The girl's side there must pay the amount of money that was agreed upon prior to marriage or demanded by the boy's side during the marriage. The amount may range from few thousands to hundreds of thousands. This amount, popular dowry depends upon the economic prosperity of the boy's family, their social status and personal attainment of the boy. It is a common social evil, which after result into break up of husband, wife relationship. Whereas the less suitable girl's get married to much better's boy's then they deserve, the virtuous girl's either married to less suitable place or remained unmarried due to these monetary aspect.

## **2.6 Priorities and Restrictions in Marriage**

In traditional form of marriage priorities and restriction play a great role the traditional restriction applies to the marriage within SAPANDI (kin) SAGOTRI(CLAN) up to a certain extent, the clan system among Hindu's is effective among all other castes and sub-caste. This restriction is even maintained in cases of intercasts marriage. Here the restriction applies to consanguineous relation up to 5 contemporary levels from father and 3 from the mother's side that is called SAPANDI. The marriage between consanguineous relatives is banned in all other communities except Muslims.

## **2.7 Love Marriage**

At present, love marriage is getting popular day by day among urban and educated youth, The main feature of such marriage is the freedom from such bandages as cast, wealth, rationality etc. the law has fixed the age even for this as 21 year's for the boys and 18 years for the girls at least respectively as the marriage caused by immature love may result in to breakup of the relationship. The similarities in philosophical needs bring together the two marriage partners and leads to greater affection.

At last, marriage is the foundation stone of social and family life. It is also a symbol of social acceptance of the newly married couple. It is one of the chief social needs in order to regulate the social needs in order to regulate the social life and balance the size of the family by reproducing offspring's.

## **2.8 Origin and Development of the Tharus**

Tharus are one of Nepal's major ethnic groups. They inhabit the southern terai belt of the country. They are renowned for their hard work and simple lifestyle, on the other hand, their resistance to the harsh climatic condition and prevailing malaria is quite remarkable, they are originally believed to have inhabited the land between the Koshi River in the east to Sharada River in the west.

Today, they are found in majority in the districts of Jhapa, Morang, Sunsari, Saptari, Siraha, Rautahat, Bara, Parsa, Chitwan, Dang, Kailali, Kanchanpur, and Bardia, though they have proved their socio-cultural and historical significance, many aspects of their life still remain to be discovered. During Anglo-Nepal war (1814-1816 AD), they helped the Nepalese Army by tending the elephants as well as supplied the physical force and material support in the battles fought in Bara and Parsa district.

Different Anthropological and Historical opinions have been presented regarding the place of their origin. The available sources throw some light on it on the basis of the physical features; it is believed that they migrated from the north due to unfavorable natural and social conditions. They wandered about Terai region as nomads for centuries in the harshness of their new place.

Their physical features changed in accordance with the conditions of their new surroundings. Gibbs and Major too have considered Tharus as a mixed Mongoloid race. J. Morris has taken Tharus as pure Mongoloid. According to Risley, Tharus acquired their Mongoloid features due to marriage related with the hilly tribes of Nepal. W. Cook has related Tharus more with Dravidians than with Mongoloids on the basis of their skin color, hair and other physical features. So

for no sound theory has yet been presented regarding the origin of the name “Tharu” itself. Therefore it has to be analyzed on the bases of the available references. According to Awadhi Gudijetias. The word “Tharu” has derived from “TEHARE” Which means to come and settled here from elsewhere they are called “Tharu” cook has associated the word “Tharu” has derived from “TEHARE” which means to come and settled here from elsewhere they are called “Tharu” cook has associated the word “DARU” meaning alcohol . He is of the opinion that being impressed by the drinking capacity of this name. nesfield has described them as the people of thar (Juungle) . According to janaklalsharma , a fraction of the ancient shakyas of lumbini were called “STHAVIRAS” who later were known as Tharus, Brahmin Acharya has associated the word with Thar desert of India. However no trace of life has ever been found in this 500 miles long and 300 miles wide barren and infertile land. Even the author himself agrees with this and says that there was indeed a tribe having relation with Rajputana of Jayapur but they were called Dhats, not Tharus the Tharus of Nepal consider themselves having been originated from Rajputana and kill tribes who are still found in the area. Their language is also called villas are different from the Aryans. Traditionally, on the coronation of the king of Jaypur, the king put the blood from the toe of the vill on his head. So, the vills boast about their social importance .In return, they used to get one rupee and a bottle of wine. Even some earlier Nepalese rivers considered Tharus as vills . The rivers considered Tharus come from chittangrgrah of mewed, in India due to religions conflict between Hindus and Muslims. When Moharanapratap (the ruler of mewad) was defeated, the female members of the family escaped on the polonquins, to carry which, they had some males as well, they entered Nepal through south western terai in Tharu community, even at present, women exercise greater influence than males as a tradition the males can’t enter the kitchen and the females serve food pushing the plate with their toe, rather than by hand. However the history Rajputana dates back just about 500 years and the history of Tharu’s in Nepal is certainly older than that.



D.B. shrestha is of the opinion that Tharus entered Nepal from the terai region of India so their culture and tradition cbeare great similarities with Aryans, It is also possible that they discarded their own religion and adopted Hinduism due to frequent interaction with the Hindu majority around them.

Tharus as an indigenous people have living in Nepal close to chure and Mahabharat hills for many centuries. In Nepal, they inhabit the whole southern belt between Mechi and mahakali. In India, They are scattered between brahmaputra in east to Nainital in the west. Though diverse, in the lifestyle, ie, food, cloth language etc due to geographical difference, they all consider themselves belonging to the some tribe and origin . They appear Mongolid physically but are typically non-mongolian behavior. In future search of their social identity, Dr. Majumder has proved their closeness to mongolid on the basis of scientific experiments I.e, physical structure blood sample and Anthropometry though, they have their own language in the beginning.

On the basis of the available information the Tharus and their origin seem to have a closer link to Mongolians than that of Aryans or Dravidians they can also rightfully be called one of the indigenous tribal groups of our country, The reasons for their social and cultural ties with the Aryans and the closeness between Terai and India that resulted into Hindu influence on their culture.

In our country, the western districts of Dang and Kailali have the largest population of the Tharus, It was from here, the Tharus had spread eastwards various religious in our country are named after the majority population that lives there such as MAGARAT, KIRAT, LIMBUAN etc. the areas dominated by Tharus are also called THARUHAT OR THARUWAN. Dang district is said to be the first area to be settled in by the Tharus where they were called DANGORA THARUS. From here , they spread to Kailali and other places eastwards, At present, they are found to inhabit the census of 2038 B, S, the population of the Tharus was 5,45,685 of which 2,78,793 were male and

2,66,892 were female that was 36 of the total population .According to the census of 2048 their number is 1194224. 600534 are male and 49,3690 are female , this is the 6.46% of the total population of the country. In between these two census their number increased with 2.76%.

## **2.9 Historical Background of the Tharus of Nepal**

Tharus, as a community in Nepal, are found to have been in existence from the malla period no mention of them is found in kirata and licchavi period. The inscription of Bhadgaun, dated Nepal sambat 726 (1664 AD) by king jagajiyamallamentions the backwardness of the Tharu language. It acknowledges the presence of Tharus among other Nepalese communities of that time, they are even found to have been rules of some parts of Nepal before unification. The remains of the palace of the Tharu king DangaiBhusai are still found in Dang distruict.Tharu were given political recognition from the beginning of shah period. There are evidence to prove that early shah kings. I.e, prithivinarayan shah . Ranabahadur shah and rajendrabikram shah granted the Tharu leaders land oenership and several otherpoliticalauthority, so, their political influence seems to have increased since 1769 AD onwards,

During the Rana period, Tharus were declared the landlords of different districts in terai, During the prime minister ship of jangabahadurRana in about 1866 AD, the administration of the entire terai region was entrusted to the Tharus, due to the climate extremity and danger of malaria, the official of the center did not want to be appointed in the terai region. So, the Tharus themselves collected the land revenue and were granted the little of landlords but socially they were not counted as the higher class Hindus. It was only after Royal order of 1948A D, They were recognized as Hindu's yet, attempts are being made to raise their social prestige, and various NGOS are working for their cultural upliftment and ethnic identity.

## **2.10 Statement of the Problem**

Although, Tharu are indigenous habitant of Jhapa. They always remained apart from the activities of development activities of created by nation in the distrust is negligible (ICC 1995) their traditional customs, cultural values and economic stability is being affected by changing situation of their place very little and in sufficient study has been done about the changing livelihood situation of the Tharus of Jhapa in order to find out the causes responsible for it.

Many scholors specially sociologist have studies the Tharus mainly focusing on the habitant of occupations, economic exploitation and ethnicity but there is lack of sociological study on the marriage system among Tharus of Nepal especially on the Tharus of Jhapa.

Major studies of the Tharus of Nepal were started from 20-25 years before since then many changes have been occurred in the system Tharu community of Nepal . So, present study would pay its attention to the study of marriage situation of the Tharus of Jhapa .as stated earlier, there is no similarity in the marriage it's rites and rituals differ between various communities. The Tharus of urban communities we not only found to be much more modernized. In this regards but also impact in rural area.

Nepal has an agro based economy as well as culture and tradition. In general the Tharus too are no exception and mainly dependent agricultural. This research though has the main objectives of also analysis the general demographic trend the social and economic life of the Tharus of this area has under gone a lot of change in the cultural assimilation between the Tharu and the other people of the rest on the country their dependency and land in decreasing day by day as urban isolation increases. At present due to internal very difficult every tribe to maintain its original identity so it is most essential to bring in to light various aspect of their social and cultural life.

The social and economic life of the Tharus of this area has undergone a lot of change in the recent years, It has caused the cultural assimilation between the Tharus and the other people of the rest of the country, their decreasing day by day as urbanization increases international migration and the external influence, it is very difficult for every tribe to maintain its original identity. So it is most essential to bring into light various aspects of their social and cultural life.

Due to the marriage system an Tharu people have changed their traditional pattern of marriage system by considering this facts, There is no similarity in the marriage its rites and rituals differs between various communities. Tharus between themselves regarding the rites and rituals of marriage the Tharus of the east and west do not perform marriage ceremony in the same manner. The main reason behind this area is the regional, linguistics, economic and cultural differences. The Tharus of urban community are found to be much more modernized in this regard for example, in the past, betel nut was distributed as a symbol of invitation, but now, the card system is popular, similarity, to solemnize the marriage, the Tharu Brahmin was a must, but now any Maithaly priest can do so, furthermore, the marriage ceremony is performed without any Brahmin priest, at all, instead, the presence of the wise and elderly people is required. The Tharus here prefer have marriage relation within 4-5 miles for the convenience in travelling and besides the Tharus of jhapa consider themselves more superior other as for as possible they do not want to establish the relationship even with the Tharus of other districts. At present, an organization of the Tharus know as "Tharukalyamnkarinisabha\" (the organization for the welfare of the Tharus) is making attempts to bring the Tharus of the whole country together and encourage the intra-regional marriage between the Tharus . However, no mention is made in its constitution about inter-cast marriage and its validity as the Tharus of this district are found to have very conservative attitudes towards other castes and tribes. Intercaste marriage is still called a very serious offense and may even result into the

banishment of the concerned person from the community, The youths of the area are trying very hard to break this barrier, but , it is proving very hard to succeed due to the some narrow minded attitude of the people. This study focuses on the following research problems;

1. What is the degree of similarities between the marriage rituals among the present day Tharu with those of the past?
2. What changes has been caused by the modernization in the marriage rituals in Tharu community?

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Rational of the Selection of Study Site**

1. The command area of marriage system on the Tharu community in garamani VDC, jhapadistrict, has been selected as a research site for the proposed study where, Tharu people are living in the site and some major places of historic and cultural importance here, the economic condition of this area is rapidly changing due to the interrupting by near the Mahindra highway and its impact over the Tharu people. In this situation this study area will be suitable for researcher to get answer of the researcher question.
2. This area is settled by various indigenous Tharu, Brahmin, Chetri, Rajbanshi, Limbu, Rai, Santhyal, Newar, Gurung, Muslim, Magar, Kami etc, their custom and tradition have blended to some extent and the Tharus are under a pressure to maintain their true identity due to external influence, it is necessary to control this.
3. Due to the researcher's familiarity with the area and the people living here.
4. Though ,there have been many research works about the Tharu's but the Tharus of this area and their life are not much studied about,

#### **3.2 Research Design**

This study is descriptive in nature as far as the main subject i.e. the marriage ritual is concerned, however analytical aspect has been accommodated regarding the information on the socio-economic and cultural condition of the people.

### **3.3 Nature of Data**

This relevant data were collected by using both qualitative and quantitative techniques such as observation and questionnaire the study includes the data collected from both primary and secondary sources.

### **3.4 Source of Data**

The sources of data collection of this study primary as well as secondary data. The primary data used more than secondary data.

### **3.5 Sampling Procedure**

This study is done on the basis of random sampling method, in order to maintain a proper representation from each of 8 wards in VDC and out of them 24 families (at least) 3 families from each ward At first, The model families.

### **3.6 Methods of Data Collection**

This study involves different process in order to make it useful and informative, qualitative and quantitative techniques such as observation field visit, questionnaire, etc, are utilized to collect the information required.

#### **3.6.1 Observation**

As a holder of some paternal land in this area, the researcher is quite familiar with the economic, social and cultural habit of the Tharus the annual visit to collect the harvest have provided the researcher sample opportunity to study the changes experienced by Tharu community of this area.

#### **3.6.2 Interview**

The local people belonging to various walks of life such as businessmen social workers, teachers, students and unemployed persons were requested to fill a questionnaire asked their opinions regarding the demographic, socioeconomic and cultural conditions and the changes brought there upon, this questionnaire

was used to obtain information on the family size, economic and educational attainment and is divided in to 3 main parts.

### **3.6.3 Case Study**

This study based on study done in jhapa district where analyze the marriage system on Tharu community. I have conducted few case studies of Tharu people applying this method.

### **3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation**

It is certain that the success of any research depends upon the efficient analysis and presentation of the collected information. Various information's related to the study are categorized on the basis of their nature. Where necessary, they are presented on the table. Though, descriptive aspect has been dominant, analytical aspect is accommodated as per necessity.

### **3.8 Limitation of the Study**

These studies include only the Tharus of Garamani VDC jahpa district and are limited within their marriage practice only further the information collected are from only 24 families, selected as models an random sampling technique, so economic and cultural aspects of all the Tharus of jhapa district.

The scope of the study is further limited due to time and financial factors the widespread illiteracy among the people of the area made the collection of information even more difficult.

Marriage is a very complicated subject to discuss the Tharus is a very conservative society. It was seen that the youth, especially girls were extremely hesitant in discussing about marriage with an outside. Further hesitation among other people was also sensed when it comes to giving information away about their income and expenditure food and residence, etc.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY AREA**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This study is conducted in Garamani VDC of Jhapa district. It lies to the immediate eastern part of Nepal. Garamani VDC is situated in between the Haldibari of Jhapa district (Bhadrapur and the main commercial centre of the district), Birtamod linking to Birtamod - Bhadrapur main road. This VDC is surrounded by Chandragadi VDC in the east, Charpane and Anarmani VDC in the west, Haldibari VDC to the south, and Anarmani VDC in the North adjoining, its border to the latter. The main road that links this VDC to the Headquarter and Birtamod is Bhadrapur, Birtamod road. The other roads connecting to this VDC are: Netramarga, Chandramarga and Sainikmode which are especially connected to Goldhap road.

#### **4.2 Major Casts and Ethnic Groups**

This is inhabited by many casts and indigenous. The following table shows their respective position on the basis of number:

**Table 1: Population Composition on the Basis of Casts and Ethnicity**

<b>S.N.</b>	<b>Tribes/casts</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
01	Brahmin	8582	40.09
02	Cheetri	3201	15.2
03	Rajbanshi	1946	9.2
04	Limbu	1499	7.16
05	Santhyal	969	4.6
06	Newar	573	2.7
07	Muslim	546	2.6
08	Magar	518	2.4
09	Rai	385	1.8
10	Tharu	318	1.5
11	Damai	278	1.3
12	Tamang	256	1.2
13	Kami	284	1.3
14	Gurung	257	1.2
15	Baniya	15	0.07
16	Sunuwar	291	1.3
17	Bhujel	121	0.5
18	Sarki	91	0.4
19	Majhi	54	0.2
20	Dargi	117	0.5
21	Sherpa	12	0.05
22	Deb	3	0.014
23	other	616	2.9

Total =20,932

Source, VDC profile 2064

Thus, according to the above table, this area is inhabited by many casts among them Tharus of the total population. As Tharu are indigenous people of the area, at present, this area is one of the chief

Destinations for the settlers from the hilly region, the population is getting more diverse day by day. In this respect, a worldwide description of population is shown on the following table:

**Table 2: Population of Garamani**

Ward No.	Village	No. of Household	Male	Female	Total Population
01	Bhusabari	407	1037	1001	2038
02	Khalbari	743	1963	1753	3716
03	Harchana	353	889	880	1769
04	Deunia	305	764	765	1529
05	Katarbari	328	840	801	1641
06	Khamtelbari	296	756	725	1481
07	Kolatoli	391	1051	907	1958
08	Nadiyabari	188	468	467	944
09	sainik	1171	2389	3467	5856
Total		4,182	10,157	10,775	20,932

2064 source VDC profile

According to the above table, Ward no.5 kataharbari is populated area. This is because it lies on main bazaar.VDC. Such other health office, with adjoining head –quarter road, of this VDC and other ward around it.

#### 4.3 Population Distribution on the Basis of Age Group

**Table 3: Population Distribution on Age Basis**

Age group	Number	Percentage (%)
0 – 4	4726	22.5
5 -14	4318	20.6
15-24	3920	18.7
25 -34	3097	14.7
35 -44	2267	10.8
45 -54	1366	6.5
55 -64	732	3.4
65-above	506	2.4
	20,932	100

Source: Village profile: 2064

According to the above table , the largest section of the population to age group 0-4 (22.5%) as the age increases , the no.of people decrease . the elderly people of 65 and above are only 2.4% of the total population, due to still high child mortality rate,

The population here is increasing trend as still, the level of education and awareness, health and sanitation facilities are increasing more people are migrating into the area.

Regarding the population of the Tharus, the following table provides a vague idea about their distribution age wise.

**Table 4: Population Distribution of the Tharus of Garamani VDC on the Basis of Age Group**

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
0-14	99	31.1
15-59	184	57.8
60 above	35	11
Total	318	100

Source VDC profile.

According to table 4, the total number of the Tharus in this VDC is 75 of which (58.4%) are male and (41.8%) 54 are female. The population of 0.14 years is 99 (31.1%) the number of economically active population is 184 (57.8%) the least size is that of the age group 60 and above. They from 35 (11%) of the total population of the Tharus in this VDC.

#### **4.4 Level of Education**

The level of education in this VDC is quite satisfactory .there are 9 primary school.3 lower secondary school.2 +2 higher secondary school ,1 secondary school in this VDC . At present some English school opened by private sector

are further contributing to improve the condition of education in this VDC. A brief description of the educational condition of the people off this VDC in general and specially the some of the Tharus is given below,

**Table 5: Description of Education Tharu People in Garamani VDC**

<b>Level of Education</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Just literate	32	16.4
Schooling(1-5class)	62	31.7
Schooling(6-10)	30	15.3
Up to s.l.c.	12	6.15
Intermediate	8	4.10
Graduate/post graduate	6	3.07
Level not mentioned	45	23.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>100</b>

Source VDC profile

Of the total population of the Tharus in this VDC, 195 (61.3%) were found to be educated to different levels. The rest were just semi-literate or illiterate. The Tharus at present are found to more aware about the importance of education that is why the number of school going children at primary level is satisfactory, still, there must be further initiative in this regard.

<b>Level of Education</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Just literate	712	8.3
Schooling(4-5class)	3753	44.2
Schooling(6-10class)	2922	34.4
Up to S.L.C.	388	4.5
Intermediate	371	4.3
Up graduat/postgraduate	227	2.6
Level not mentioned	109	1.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,482</b>	<b>100</b>

Source:- VDC profile 2064

According to the table, the total no of the educated people in this VDC is 8,482 of this figure, 3753 (44.2%) go to primary school. As they approach the more mature age, the No.of school going children declines due to the economic importance of the children home. Very few people have pursued higher education; many people (especially girls) have had to leave school without completing a certain level. Their number is mentioned at the last column of the table. However, the educational attainment of the Tharus seems quite satisfactory on the basis of the table below:-

#### 4.5 Occupational Involvement

Altogether 6,364 people were found to be economically active. Their involvement in different occupation is shown in the table below:-

**Table 6: Description of Various Occupations Pursued by the People of Garamani**

<b>Types of Occupation</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Technical work	220	3.4
Sales	229	3.5
Service	55	0.8
Production	147	2.3
Fish farming	10	0.15
Farming	5,487	86.2
Not mentioned	216	3.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,364</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: VDC Profile 2064

A total number of 5,487 people were found to be involved in agriculture which includes production. The least percentage of people were found to be involved in service, (0.8%) this is because of lack of education among the adult population. The reason for such a high involvement in agriculture is the same

being the traditional occupation. Beside the soil here is quite fertile, so, agriculture still is considered a productive and profitable occupation.

Regarding the occupational involvement of the Tharus 67 among 318 were found to be economically active, this is 21.06% of their total population in the VDC. Their economic involvement is shown in the following table:-

**Table 7: Description of the occupations practiced by the Tharus in Garamani VDC**

<b>Types Occupation</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Technical work	6	9.5
Sales	7	11.1
Services	4	6.3
Fish farming	2	3.1
Production	40	63.4
No mention	4	6.3
Total	63	100

According to the table, the largest section of economically active population (63.4%) is involved agriculture which clearly proves their occupational preference. The least percentage (6.3%) is involved in service. Still due to lack of education among the elder section of the population .their involvement in other economic fields is increasing these days. However, the remaining as the chief economic practice is same as mentioned earlier below table 8

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SOCIAL CONDITION OF THE THARUS OF GARAMANI VDC**

The Tharus of Nepal reflect a very much distinct socio-cultural identity among various tribes and ethnic groups inhabiting different parts of Nepal. At present they seem to be developing a great negligence about maintaining this distinctiveness that has, in turn, been maintaining their identity so for it is rather a damaging factor from sociological and anthropological point of view and a great injustice upon the tribe to hide their distinct socio-cultural habits and practices so as to prove the dominance of Hindu culture over their existence. They seem to be struggling to save their own culture from the spread influence of Hinduism.

#### **5.1 Population**

Among the Tharus of this VDC, the number of males is greater than that of the females. The same was experienced among the model families. The difference between the no. of male and females in different wards is shown as following



**Table 8: Number and Percentage of Males and Females in Different Wards (Tharu Family):**

Ward	Total Num. of Family	Tharu Family	Model Tharu Family	Mem. in Model family	Male		Female	
					No	%	No	%
01	407	5	3	15	8	53.30	7	46.60
02	743	12	3	16	7	43.75	9	56.20
03	353	19	3	19	11	57.80	8	42.10
04	305	1	3	10	7	70.00	3	30.00
05	328	13	6	38	25	65.70	13	34.20
06	296	3	3	08	5	62.50	3	37.50
07	391	1	3	11	6	60.00	5	45.40
08	188	3	3	12	6	50.00	6	50.00
09	1171	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	4,182	62	27	129	75	58.40	54	41.80

Source: Field observation, January 2011

According to this table, 75 males and 54 females were found to be living in a total number of 27 households selected as the model families. They are 58.40 % and 41.80% respectively. The greatest difference was seen in ward no. 6 but it cannot be considered very seriously as due to the however number of members of the family only 8 represent this area. As the female members of the family are subjected to through or biological functions i.e. bearing the children, continuous Burdon of the domestic work and immediate involvement. There in after the birth of a child maternal dead rate is still very high. This is the chief reason for their number being less than that of the males.

**Table 9: Distribution of Population in Different AGE Groups in the Model Families**

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
0-4	14	10.80
5-14	25	19.30
15-24	15	11.60
25-34	20	15.50
35-44	17	13.10
45-54	15	11.60
55-64	14	10.80
65 above	9	6.90
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Observation January 11

A slight variation was experienced regarding the general trend of the population throughout the VDC and that of the model families. The percentage of the infants 1-4 years in the VDC in total population is 22.5% whereas among the Tharus it is 10.8% this proves the preference of the Tharus to produce few no. the children, At the sometime, the population percentage of the children between 0-14 age group is 29.10% which is much closer to the overall population trend of the country that shows near half of the same age group.

## **5.2 Surnames**

There are several popular surnames used by the Tharus of Nepal. In east, saptaria, morangia, khawas, tajpuria, gacchadar and chaudhari are the chief surnames whereas in cwest, Tharus are chiefly divided into sunaha, Rautar ,Bardia, Lampuchwa, Dangoraetc the Tharus of this VDC community use the surname of Chaudhari. No Tharus were found to have used any other surnames.

### **5.3 Family Structure**

The Tharus of this VDC live in patriarchal joint family. All the member of the household is recognized by the name of their father or grandfather during field visit. It was observed that most of the families have 4-6 members with an average 5 members or up to 3 generation were found to be living together in most of the families.

One of the most interesting things about the family relation among the Tharus is the importance of nephew (sister's son). His presence in his maternal home is a must during every religious cultural ceremony. He even has the authority to settle minor disputes in his uncle's family.

The Tharus here have developed on effective division of labor during to which the women are responsible for well keeping of the house and family ,. The males do manual labouran the field or elsewhere. it has maintained equal division of female .as for as possible, women are not encouraged to work outside the household or join any other occupation except domestic work.

There is no discrimination between men and women among Tharus. A fine example of equality between them is the popularity of widow marriage which is dealt with in detail in chapter 7 however, the women sometimes have to indulge in work during post natal period which causes physical weakness due to lack of proper rest. This has been one of the main reasons for the high maternal death rate in the area.

The following is the description of the number of the family members among the model families:

**Table 10: Number of Members in the Model Families**

<b>No. of Members up to</b>	<b>No. of Household</b>	<b>No. of Family Member</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
2-3	7	16	11.04
3-6	13	52	35.86
6-above	7	77	53.10
Total	27	145	100

Source: Field Visit, January 2010

During the field visit, it was seen that 1-27 model families. 35% are nuclear in nature. This proves that joint furthermore, 12 families were found to have more than 5members in them which is the total of 129 members 31% the reason that the Tharus still prefer to live in a joint family is requirement of a great deal of manual labour in the agricultural work. Besides, there is the concept that a larger family is economically more secure as there are more hands to earn. Other reasons are such as lack of the knowledge of family planning and high rate of infant mortality rate.

#### **5.4 Food**

The staple food items of the Tharus here are not much different from the same of others. They eat rice, bread, pulses, and curry. There are some ceremonial dishes I.e. BAGHIYA, which is a small dough of rice flour steamed for about half hour and THEKUWA (a rectangular dough of wheat. Flour and sugar fried in oil). During feasts, they consume meat, fish and alcohol.

#### **5.5 Dress**

There is no particular dress code for the males. The elderly people wear MARDANI or DHOTI (a piece of fine cotton about 8-10 yards in length) and kurta. The younger males wear the modern types of clothes. While at home,

they wear LUNGI. Normally, the females of the younger age wear common dress such as frock, blouse, skirt and shirts. The matured ones wear sari and blouse. Tharu women in the past used to wear only a white piece of cotton about 6-8 yards in length but the younger generation does not follow this dress code any more.

## **5.6 Ornaments**

Tharu especially women are quite famous for their ornamentation. Their ornaments are chiefly made of silver and thread. A necklace of silver coins and black thread known as TAKKA HAAR is made of silver only in the shape of a half moon. A thick anklet made of silver is called PAIRY and the set of silver bangle that weighs about half a kilo is known as DHOKA. They also put a chain of silver that dangles from neck to belly; this necklace is called CHAYAN HAAR. Their arm band is called JHAALAR.

The married Tharu women tattoo their limbs and other parts of body with different shapes of flowers, sun moon as well as the names of different Gods and Goddesses, some even print their own name. Tattooing is popular to some extent among the males as well.

The Tharu women however seem less interested in hair dressing. They do not wear headgear against wearing sandals as well, but the younger generation has started wearing them.

## **5.7 Education**

The Tharus of their area not very much conscious about education. They still seem to prefer their children to do farm work and domestic work than going to school. This case is even more serious when it comes to educating the girls. The Tharus here are still too conservative to send their daughters to school. Or anywhere else outdoor. However, there are some positive changes which show that such conservative attitudes are decreasing these days.

Poverty is another main reason for the backwardness of the Tharus in educational field due to poor economic condition many children were found not be attending the school despite their wish and desire. The availability of educational facilities in this VDC is not so bad. As stated earlier there are 11 primaries, 3 lower secondary and 2 higher secondary school, here but it does not seem to benefit Tharu community to that not great extent. Among 318 Tharus of this area 125 Tharus were found educational condition condition as found in model families is presented as below.

**Table 11: Educational Attainment of the Model Families**

<b>Level (Class)</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1-5	20	26.6
6-10	32	42.6
S l c passed	10	13.3
Intermediate	9	12
Graduate/postgraduate	4	5.33
Total	75	100

According to the table, a total of 75 persons were found to be family educated. The highest percentage (26.66) was in their primary level. It was in appointing to see the increase in the no. of student's specially girls as they approach higher standard. The no of girl's and boy's at the primary level do not have a great range, but after 5<sup>th</sup> standard, there is a tremendous increase in the no. of the girl's. In one co-ed school, even girl was found to be studying in 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> standard.

### **5.8 Religious Activities**

Although our country is known as the only Hindu kingdom in the world, religious tolerance has remained as one of the main features of our national culture. Every individual, tribe and community is free to follow their own religious, customs and social tradition. Tharus are no exception, amidst the

domination of the Hindu majority; they have still maintained their own religious and cultural heritage. The following some features which still make the culture the same of others.

The Tharus of this area are very much conscious of the good and evil actions which they think will determine their place in heaven or hell after death. The Tharus here worship almost all the Hindu religious deities and their religious ceremonies and rituals are performed by a Brahmin priest, but they also worship some of their own Gods and goddess such as Brahmin Devata and Gram Devata whose images are found to be different in different villages, otherwise they worship kali, Bhagawati, Gauri, (parvati) and satyanarayan Brahma Devata and Bhujhaar are the common deities for the whole village whose shrines are built at the edge of the village. Their family pattern deity KULDEVATA or Deuhaar is the room at the most interior part of the house, the chief of the family sleeps here at night, basil planted. It is offered water every morning sacrifice of the animal is a very important part of religious practice many rituals and festivals involve the sacrifice of goat, pig, duck and pigeons,

Tharus have a deep belief in sources and with craft. Due to superstition, for every sort of problem, they still consult the village wizard or witch doctor for the best possible solution. Almost everyone wears or carries a totem for the protection against supernatural evils that may befall onto them any time or any place.

### **5.8.1 Main Festivals**

#### **5.8.1.1 Siruwapabni**

This is the first day of the year, so it is called PAWANI (sacred day). As it falls into the first week of the month of Baisakh it is also called BAISAKHI. The Tharus clean their household early in the morning and themselves. Then putting on a new cloth, they go to the fair that is normally held in the temple

outside the village. Where they offer sacrifice of different animals and birds. This is an ideal day for they would be bride and groom to see each other for the first time.

#### **5.8.1.2 Fagu Purnima (Holi)**

This is one of the most important festivals that is celebrated with great enthusiasm. *It falls on the month of falgun. On this day, the friends and families get together and spread various colors on each other's.* Then in groups, they move throughout the village and play Holi. The feast begins after this in which, meat, sweets and alcohol are the chief items.

#### **5.8.1.3 Pawani of Maghi**

This is the first day of the month of magh. The people worship various gods and goddess on this day. There is custom of exchanging the sweets and other food items between the relatives. The married daughter and son-in-laws are offered various types of gifts.

#### **5.8.1.4 Dashain**

Although Dashain is not originally a festival of the Tharus, they have started celebrating it due to the Hindu influence in the same manner. Goddess Durga's is worshiped with the sacrifice of different types of animals and birds. This festival is rejoiced with a variety of food and new cloths.

#### **5.8.1.5 Tihar**

This festival falls in the month of kartik. It has also become popular among Tharus due to the Hindu influence. Depawali is the most auspicious day of Tihar. On this day, the houses are decorated with various designs and oil lamps or candles are lit to brighten the house in the evening. This day is celebrated with the flashes of fire crackers and the excitement of gambling.



### **5.8.1.6 Chath**

This festival is devoted to the sun God. It falls in the month of kartik just 3-4 days after Tihar. Mainly married women participate in this festival by fasting the day before and on the festival day; they go to the river to or pond early in the morning. Along with the first rays of the morning they worship the sun god by offering holy water of the some river or the pond. After this, they give away the Brahman priests money, clothes and food items, this festival in the terai region is somewhat similar to TEEJ of the hilly region in which, the married women prey for the long life and everlasting prosperity of their husband.

### **5.9 Chief Rites and Rituals**

Man, being social creature, most performs various social activities as prescribed by his tradition, norms and values, some of these activities are the rituals performed from the time of one's birth till death. These rites and rituals differ among different communities on the basis of their social and environmental surrounding.

The Tharus of this VDC, though the ways of performing their rituals have been widely influenced by Hindu culture, still have their own district rites and rituals. The main ones are described below:

#### **5.9.1 Birth**

During the child birth, the male members are not allowed to enter the vicinity. Generally, the female relatives or a midwife helps the mother to deliver the child. It is very rare to take the assistance of medical professionals, so, maternal death as well as infant death rate<sup>3s</sup> is very high.

#### **5.9.2 Naming Ceremony**

It is performed on the 12<sup>th</sup> day after birth. The child and mother are applied with mustard oil and are seated in front of fire; it is supposed to clean their body. All the members of the household and some relatives must be present during the ritual in which the baby is given a name either by the Brahmin priest or by the elder members of the family. The name conferred then remains the

legitimate throughout the baby's life, after the ritual, the family members and guests are made of rice flour and sugar.

### **5.9.3 Shaving of the Head**

This ritual is performed only on the boys of 4-5 years of age. This is a very important ritual as it is supposed to allow the boys into practical life. On this ceremony, the maternal uncle shaves the head of the boy. In case the uncle hesitates, the task is performed by the village barber. The presence of the daughter's family as well as the family of the boy's maternal name is required. After the ritual a feast is held which is participated by the family members and relatives.

### **5.9.4 Marriage**

Marriage is considered the most important ceremony not only in the concerned family, but the whole village. Most of the marriage is arranged by the parents who fix the marriage on the basis of the similarities in cast and social status. At the same time, they make sure that their families are not related by blood from the father or the mother's side a detailed description about the marriage procedure is given on chapter six and seven.

### **5.9.5 Death Rituals**

Death is the ultimate distinction of life and involves the last rituals due on the person. The death rituals performed by the Tharus are not very much complicated, neither are they very much inconvenient like the ones in typical Hindu community.

If child dies, it is taken by the family members to the river bank and is buried there. After burial the mourners return to the house of the bereaved and are fed on plain rice and curd. The male members of the concerned family shave their head.

In case of the death of an adult, the nephew daughter and her husband are informed first. After sometime (3-4 hours) the funeral begins and the dead

body is cremated fire is ignited by the son who performs other funeral rituals as well .no presence of the Brahmin priest is required then, as the 4<sup>th</sup> day of funeral, the Brahmin priest and village barber are called upon and sent to the cremation place along with the son who performed the funeral service. The remaining ash from the cremation spot is cleared and a basil plant is planted there. Some ash is collected to be spread in the river later on. In case there is no son, the funeral service can also be performed by the daughter such son or daughter is called “KARTA” or performer. This person remains in mourning for 13 days. He /she cannot eat salt and can even touch anyone. The homage is paid to the departed soul on the 10<sup>th</sup> day, the daughter and her husband as well as the closet relatives of the family carry various offerings to the concerned house and go to the river bank. Here, a ball of the rice called “PINDA” IS offered to the departed soul. The Brahmin priest performs this ritual. The relatives who are called “DAS DINIYA” (the ones who must mourn for 10 days) cut hair and nail in order to absolve themselves. Then they end their mourning and are free to follow their normal food habit by eating meat and fish on the evening.

This son is laws and the nephews end their mourning on the 11<sup>th</sup> say which is called PACHADAAN. Again PINDA is offered while the Brahmin priest chants mantra.

The mourning for the family members ends on the 13<sup>th</sup> day. On this day, the departed soul is offered 16 pindas in the morning and in the afternoon religious psalms are performed at the courtyard. It is called HARIKIRTAN. In the evening the family members along with the son of KARTA come out of mourning and start living a normal life.

Although originally there is no such custom as the annual death ritual or SHRADDHA, some prosperous Tharus are found to have copied it from their Hindu neighbors. Even other rituals of death are undergoing the similar changes at present.

## CHAPTER SIX

### TYPES OF THARU MARRIAGE

Various forms of marriage are popular in Tharu community. But in every type, permanents, consent is the most essential factor. Generally the bride or groom is not consulted before hand, but, how the younger generation is getting more conscious about the choice of their marriage partners. The following are the popular types of in this area.

#### 6.1 Marriage

It is one of the most prevailing forms of marriage. The Tharu community is found to have been practicing this from the time of the mogul rule in India. According to legend, the Muslim aggressors, during their raids, molested only the unmarried women and spared the married ones. This statement is further strengthened by s.k. shrivastava's above stated opinion. It is possible that this tribe started marrying the daughters at an early age so as to maintain their chastity as well as the purity of the tribe itself.

Even at present, this system is retained by the Tharus due to the belief that the children will be spoilt unless they are married at an earlier age. Due to lack of awareness they still think that giving the daughter away before she is six will ensure the parents a place in heaven. The system of DWIRAAGAMAN (second arrival) contributies a great deal in favour of child marriage. According to this system, the inaugural step of the bride into the husband's house takes place twice, first, immediately after marriage and second, 3-4 years after that. It is a kind of assurance that the girl will not remain unmarried when she gets mature. The Tharus, on one hand, consider marriage a sacred and very important duty. On the other hand they consider it a matter of great worry because it is extremely difficult to the daughter as she approaches the matured age. So, they rather hurry to marry their daughter away while she is still a

minor and there is still time in hand. Doing this, they get rid of the greatest burden.

The evil of child marriage was even worse in the past when it was combined with ill-matched marriage, ie, a boy of 9-10 years was married to a girl of 16-17 years. The factors behind this were domestic convenience i.e, an older girl proves much more useful in the possibility of infant mortality as a very young girl is physically not perfect to bear the child so, still in the cases of child marriage, it is preferred that the age of the girl is much higher than that of the boy. The above mentioned organization of the Tharus is working very hard to eradicate these evils of child marriage and ill-matched marriage. Though it has been reduced in number, it still continues. However, the spread of education and means of communication have played a great role in bringing about social awareness. So, it can be expected that the future generation will gradually discard it.

## **6.2 Polygamy**

Polygamy means plurality of wives at the same time. Though the civil code of the country as well as the organization for the welfare of the Tharus both have declared it illegal, it still survives specially in the upper class of Tharu society. It is widespread among the Tharus of Jhapa and Nawalpur due to the influence of hilly tribes. But it is relatively non-accountable in eastern districts of Saptari where it is practiced only in case of infecundity. In Jhapa district of Garamani also, the cases of polygamy are very low and the concerned people do not enjoy much of social

prestige either. However, it is approved in some extreme circumstances such as:

- a. If the wife is a leper.
- b. If she has a venereal disease..
- c. If she is insane.

- d. If no child birth has occurred during 10 years of married life.
- e. If she takes her share of property and lives separately.

### **6.3 Widow Marriage**

Widow marriage is well approved in very few communities of Nepal; Tharu community being one of them. It is not only approved, but is well reputed as well. To arrange marriage for a widow is considered a sacred task. Even our civil code has granted the provision of widow marriage. The widow, in Tharu community is not suppressed like other Nepalese communities. She is free to opt between staying at the deceased husband's house or marry again. In case the widow is too young to live as one, her parents and elders themselves start persuading her to marry again. If she disagrees, she can openly do so, if she remains silent, it is taken as her the proposal of the marriage of a widow is brought forward by the members of her maternal home only as such proposal, if made by her dead husband family members thought that they detest the widow's presence, also it seems that they want to deprive her of her share of property-such proposal, if made by the maternal side of the widow, is they grumble at the beginning for the sake of formality. Normally accepted by the dead husband's family members. However, occasionally, the expectant groom himself makes the proposal to the parents of the widow.

The restrictions about widow marriage are that a widow can-only are that a widow can-only marry a widower, not a bachelor but a widower can marry either a widow or maid. In case of re-marriage, the widow can take the children of her former husband (if any) with her. Such marriage is performed not at home, but at temples with simple ceremonies and feasts.

### **6.4 Arrange Marriage**

This is the most common form of marriage in Tharu community. Though child marriage is on the verge of decline, neither of the concerned couple is more than 19/20 years of age. As the couple has not developed decision making

ability, they have to rely on their parents' choice. Besides, all the expenses are borne by the parents; they take it for granted that it is their responsibility to select the best suitor for their child. Thus live in joint family. The decision of the senior most members is ultimate. He retains all the prosperity and makes decision pertaining to all the family members. The younger members of the family do not normally dare crossing his decision. The rebellious attitude towards the decision is looked down upon by the rest of the family as well as society, so, no matter what form the marriage is of, the consent of the parents is a must the marriage beforehand. But this is only as far as it goes.

First, the parents of the bride start searching for the suitable boy through their relatives or a mediator. When the boy is selected, the girl's parents go to the boy's home and talk with his parents, on this occasion, the father of the bride gives a certain amount of money to the boy. After few days the boy's parents go to see the girl and repeat the same thing. Only this time, the amount of money given to the girl is almost double. This rite is called FALDAAN. If after this, the marriage is cancelled, the money is returned immediately.

In spite of performing the above mentioned ceremony, the marriage sometimes does not take place. In such cases, the girl's side repeatedly invites the boy's side. If they do not accept the invitation, the marriage is considered cancelled and attempts are made elsewhere. On the other hand, if the girl father finds any sends the message saying so, the marriage is also cancelled if either party lingers on performing marriage. If none of these happens, both of side decides to invite the Brahmin priest to fix the date of marriage. This date fixing ceremony is known as THOKAI and involves a simple feast, after this, both the sides start preparing for pre-marriage.

### **6.5 Marriage by Exchange**

This is the form of marriage by the mutual exchange of sons and daughters between two families. In this, the groom's sister is wed to the bride's brother.

This is economic in a way that the concerned parents often agree to avoid exchanging dowry and other gifts between themselves. Such marriage is performed on the bases of mutual understanding. Besides, it is compulsory that both the concerned families must have the boys and girls of suitable age. This type of marriage can be further clarified by the following example:

Ruplal Chaudhary with Muna chaudhary

Ramesh Chaudhary with Geeta chaudhary

The above mentioned Ruplal Chaudhary is the brother of Geeta Chaudhary and Ramesh is the brother of Muna.

Such a type of marriage is called GOLAAWAT and is popular among the Tharus throughout the country. On the hand it is convenient but on the other. It leads to the unnecessary conflict between the families tend to treat the new bride in the same manner their own daughter is treated in her new home.

### **6.6 Marriage by Stealth**

Such marriage is common not only in Tharu community but in many other hilly communities as well. This is the marriage between a man and women who is still married to another man, commonly it is known as JAARI and the concerned men (the previous husband) are called JAAR to each other. In this, the women elopes with a new husband who, in order to have their marriage approved, must pay compensation to the previous husband. There is no expected that he pays the amount worth the one that was spent by the previous husband during his marriage with the women.



**Table 12: Number of Types of Marriage in the Families**

<b>S.No.</b>	<b>System of Marriage</b>	<b>Types of Marriage</b>
01	Arrange marriage	22
02	Love marriage	2

The above data shows that there are different types of marriage system among of marriage, arrange marriage is in the highest number that is 22 . there is less number for love marriage system which is only two. But other remaining five marriage system have no any number.so looking above table, it will be clear that because of the changing time, people have followed the new custom and culture in the modern society.

- a) According to 87 years saburlal chaudhary, the main cause of the change of Tharu culture is the high density of pahadia as well as their migration towards the Terai.
- b) 65 years old Mangali Devi looks upset she says that in the past days Tharu people used to enjoy marriage for 3 days but now a days they have forgotten their culture.
- c) According to 32 yrs old Asha Chaudhary from Sarlahi married to Jhapa resident says that there are more different in Sarlhi and Jhapa ultimately, she came to the conclusion that the high density of the people from different cast changes the customs and culture of minorities.
- d) 52 yrs old Bishunath Chaudhary from Bara originality says that the main cause of the loss of culture is the modernization.
- e) Likewise 70 yrs old Anandi Devi looks sad who is the origin from Rautahat district but now living in Jhapa for long time looks sad. She finds no respect of culture in Jhapa.

## **CHEPTER SEVEN**

### **MARRRIAGE RITUALS AMONG THARUS**

Like in every other community, the rituals of Tharu marriage are based upon traditional practice. All the rituals, though not same in every Tharu community, are greatly influenced by the socio cultural and socio-economic habits of the people. In this area the marriage ceremony is very long and involves many stages, though the marriage itself takes about 5 days to complete, some of the rituals begin early as from the day of the date fixing. Even after 5 days, the marriage is not complete due to the earlier mentioned system of second arrival of the bride to her husband's house. The bride returns to her husband house. The bride returns to her mother's home after spending 3-4 days at her husband place for 3-4 years or more. After GAUNA or the second departure from her mother house she remains at her bridal home never to return to her native place except on very special occasions. Thus, the married couple has to wait for a quite a long time to enjoy the thrill and excitement of married life though they get married earlier.

By and for, the rituals of a Tharu marriage are divided into 3 categories named as:

- A) Pre marriage rituals.
- B) Rituals during the marriage.
- C) Post marriage rituals.

#### **7.1 Pre-Marriage Rituals**

##### **7.1.1 First Encounter**

As permitted by the parents, they would be bride and groom see each other at some common place in the village or at the weekly village market. During each is accompanied by his/ her close friends. This is not a traditional system but is a

modern and optional one. Still it is preferred that the boy and girl see each other, at the girl's house. This event is known as BAHER CHAKE and the earlier mentioned FALDAAN is not exchanged thence.

### **7.1.2 Inquiring**

After the initial approach, the girl's side starts investigating about the boy's family, prosperity, caste, generational purity, age, etc. this is known as DEKHA SUNI. It is conducted through relatives or the mediator and normally kept secret. If the information thus obtained is satisfactory, the father of the boy sends message to his counterpart. Then the boy's family starts making similar inquiry about the girl. After their inquiry about each other satisfies both the sides, the father of the groom informs his counterpart about when they are meeting at the latter's house. On the given day, the boy's side go to the girl's house with few relatives where they are offered a warm welcome after they are seated, the girl is brought in front and asked some question her name and personal capability, then her father asks the boy's parents whether they like the girl or not. If the answer is affirmative, there is further inquiry so as to whether there is blood relation between the two families, they ask questions about each other's predecessors up to 5- 6 generation ago. This talk mostly takes place through the mediator and is locally called GOSHTHI (meeting) if they happen to be within the restricted blood relationship, the marriage is cancelled. If the mediator ultimately declares that there is no such restriction, the meeting ends and after a simple feast, the boy's side returns home.

The similar visit is made by the girl's side too. Some senior relatives of the girl come to the boy's home and ask the similar questions to the boy, then the boy's family offers some money which the girl's side may or may not accept (it does not have any significance on the decision made earlier). After this, the guest is fed with food and wine. Then they decide the date for another ritual "GHARDEKH" this ritual is considered mere extravagance at present and the Tharus are skipping it.

### **7.1.3 Visiting the Groom's House**

It is very important ritual and is called "GHAR DEKH" (see the house) after the inquiry completes, the bridal side along with their relatives go to the groom's house. The number of such relatives may range from 25-30. The parents of the bride distribute red coloured betel nut among the relatives and with them go to the boy's house carrying a variety of gifts. I.e. clothes , sweets, fruit, etc the boys side too invites their own relatives in order to welcome the guests. A special place is allotted for the guests to seat which is called BAS GHAR (place to ledge) first; the boy arrives, when the messenger gives them the news of the arrival of the guests, the hosts along with the boy have to cover their head with turban. Then the boy is brought in front with a plate in his hand and the guests start putting on. if the gifts they have brought along. At the same time, they go on asking the name of the objects and the boy goes on answering them. After this, the boy is asked by the guests the name of his forefather up to 3 generation ago. After answering these, the boy is allowed to leave the place.

After sometime, the boy reappears in front of the guests clad in the clothes they have brought for him. There, he has to pay respect to his future father –in-law and other guests by touching their feet. Then the visitors are offered snack and dinner. Such visitors are called GHAR DEKHA. While they dine, the women members of the boys house sing the songs, which are humorous and rather abusive. After dinner, guests are taken to the lodging place and the date is fixed for a similar ceremony to take place. At the girl's house, on the fixed date, the boy's side arrives at the girl's house in the similar way, and after all the ceremonies, the date for marriage is fixed. While fixing the date, both sides exchange 9 betel nuts each. These nuts are considered very important objects and are needed at yet another ritual during marriage at present, this ritual too is taken as an unnecessary and extravagant one, so it is generally done. Just before the marriage at the same stage.

#### **7.1.4 Flouring the Rice**

This ritual is performed at both boys and girls house but with a slight variation. Five female members such as sisters, aunts, of the girl and the boy perform this separately in their respective places. The 5 females who perform this ritual are called BIDHAKARANI (performs of the ritual). This is done at the center courtyard of the house at the evening time. During this the boy or the girl go to the ritual place with Bidhkarnis who carry on a tray a red cloth measuring about 2 yards, a small clay pot, Bermuda grass, paddy and cord. The five women stand around a mortar along with five large pestles. The lamp is lit on the clay pot that is put on the tray. First, the boy or girl puts some paddy on the mortar and the women do the same. Then the women start making rice out of that paddy, after clearing, the rice is further ground into fine flour. This rice flour is mixed is mixed with the oil and is applied on the body of the boy or girl respectively on the day of marriage. Sometimes turmeric is also mixed with rice flour and oil, this ritual is known as KASHAKUTI (grinding the rice flour)

#### **7.1.5 Proving the Chastity**

This is also a very important ritual. It is performed in boys and girls house both. It is performed in the late morning one day ahead of marriage. During this ceremony, first the patron god of the household is worshipped with a garland is made of 18 leaves of basil (Tulsi) is placed a round tray. The boy reaches the place with the above mentioned 5 performers of the ritual who, with them, carry some paddy with them on this occasion; the boy must carry a sword covered with a yellow cloth. Again the paddy is cleaned and the rice ground in to a fine flour and mixed with water. This paste is used to make a circle in which the boy puts vermilion (red colour) after this, the boy, along with the 5 performers put 5 fistful of rice in to the mortar and grind it with a pestle.

This ceremony is known as KUMARAWAN and is the symbol of physical chastity of the concerned boy and girl. It is associated with different songs which are sung every night for 5 nightstill this ceremony ends.

#### **7.1.6 Digging the Soil**

This ritual is done on same night of the say the previous ritual ends. It is also done in the boys and girls house respectively. The boy or the girl, along with the above mentioned 5 ladies, goes to the well. The same process of making the circle and offeringflowers and colours is repeated. This ritual is devoted to the goddess of water (KAMALAMAI). Close to it GODDESS GAURI is also worshipped. In the girls side the process, ends here but at the boys places, the boy plant locally known a SIKI is tied around with sacred thread and offered beaten rice which is scattered on all 4 direction. Then after, they dig some oil and with it return home. At the boys house the floor where the stage will be made. There is the system of making this stage known as MANDAP only in the girl's house and the soil is dug and brought for this purpose. The remaining soil is pressed in the fist. It is believed that the better the shape of the dough, the better the children will be borne by the couple. Then, the women who sang the songs are offered rice and gram before they leave.

#### **7.1.7 Making the Stage**

The stage that is popularity known as MANDAP is made in the bridal place only. It is here all the rituals from the time the groom reaches here up to the bride's departure are performed.

The soil that was dug during the previous ritual is used to clean and mop the floor and the stage is erected over here with the help of the villagers, it is 2-4 times. It is 4 times lengthwise and 3 times breadthwise the girls hand. It is decorated beautifully with colouredpaper and flower. To the north of it. 4 bananastumps are used to make a rectangular structure. This is called JAGBEDI, (place for holy fire). The ritual of coloring the bride's forehead

(SINDUR DAAN) is performed here. All other rituals are performed in the stage.

## **7.2 Rituals during the Marriage**

These rituals begin a same day of the wedding procession. Though all the rituals after they arrived of the procession are performed at the girls place, some rituals must be performed at both the boys and girls house separately before the procession. They are defined as below.

### **7.2.1 Symbolic Marriage with the Tree**

This ritual takes place aside a mango tree in the garden or grove. This ritual is similar to the IHI of the Newar community. The symbolic marriage of the girls is done with a word apple fruit (Bel) whereas among Tharus, it is a mango tree. Besides, in Newari community, only girls participate in the ritual whereas among the Tharus both, boy and girl perform it at their respective places with a slight variation. A mango tree is considered very sacred symbol in Vedic culture. The same applies to Tharu community as well the leaves and wood of mango tree are a must in almost every traditional religious ceremony nd marriage ceremony to respects this importance by using various parts this importance by using various parts of a mango tree.

At the boys place, the boy carries a sword and is accompanied by the aforesaid five performers. Reaching below the mango tree he encircles the tree rolling a sacred thread around. With each round, he has to embrace the tree. The women then clean the ground below and place a betel nut. Then the boy puts the vermilion an the nut, then the 5 performers scatter some beaten rice around the tree. The remaining beaten rice is distributed among the spectators. During this ceremony the girl, instead of a sword, carries a banana bud. The other rituals done at the girls place are similar to the ones performed by the boy.

The same rituals are also performed with a slight variation in some places. The boy and the girl, along with the performers, worship the religious deities in the village in the morning. Then after the bride and groom move from house to house where they are given the gifts in the form of rice and money. This gift is locally known as “BILAUKI”. The marriage with tree is done in the late evening with the some above mentioned ceremonies.

### **7.2.2 Ceremony of Paddy Frying**

This ritual is performed on the first day of wedding at both the boys and the girl’s house. Mainly the daughter and their husband are invited during this. In case there is no daughter, the aunts and their husbands are called. Only the married people can participate in this ceremony. The performer asks for some gifts in return for doing the job and is rewarded with cash, jewelry and even cattle.

This ritual is performed at the open courtyard and in the middle of the house. A big clay pot is put on the fire and in this the boy or the girl puts five fistful of paddy. The aforesaid 5 Bidhakarmi too do the same. Then paddy until they start stirring the paddy until they start popping. This person male or female is accompanied by the Bidhkoarni who repeat the task five times. While doing this, they joke and sing the product so obtained is called (LAWA) or popped rice.

After preparing Lawa, at the boy’s house, the boy is seated at the courtyard and is rubbed with the mixture of rice flour and oil. During this he keeps a sword with him. Being asked the significance of the sword, an elderly member claimed that the Tharus are related to Rajput and a Rajput must hold the sword throughout the marriage ceremony. This Lawa is carried along with the marriage procession and while the boy puts vermilion on the girls head, it is scattered around. The same ritual is customary among other Hindu casts as well.



### **7.2.3 Preparing for the Procession**

As the boy is about to depart, he worships the patron deity of the household in the praying room. Just outside the door, the Bidhkarnis clean the sword with water and vermilion and wrap a cloth around it. Then the boy puts five fistful of rice on the hand of the leader Bidhkarnis who asks him whose coffer he is going to fill. The boy answers by saying that he is going to fill the coffer of his parents. Then the procession begins. The groom is generally taken a palanquin whereas other travel by foot or bullock cart. There are no women on the procession except one who remains with the groom. It is believed that these women possess the power of GODDESS DURGA and as long as she is with the groom, she protects him from the evil spirits just before the procession moves ahead, the groom touches his mother's feet who blesses him for his success in bringing the bride home.

There are many items that have to be taken along with the groom. A sword is a must. The chief items for worshipping such as vermilion, rice, oil, turmeric, lawa, betel nut, incense stick and sandal pest are need to perform various rituals, besides there are gifts such as clothes, jewels and cosmetics for the bride.

### **7.2.4 Welcoming the Guests**

As soon as the procession reaches the girl's house, the boy is welcomed by the girl's parents and relatives with flower and rice, this ritual is known as "DWARPUJA" then the five Bidhkaenis of the girls side escort boy towards the stage that is set up for the marriage at the courtyard. Before entering the gate, the boy's guardians must put some money into the copper vases put thereon. The procession has to face some obstacles before entering the girl's doorstep. There are some of the relatives of the girl who hide in different places and throw paddy on the guests. The guests do the same in return. It is a symbolic war that results with a victory for the guests. This is a further

example of the Tharus attempt to prove their relation with kshyatrias. For the fear of the possible eye injury due to entering of the paddy, both the sides protect their eyes with one hand while they use the other to throw the paddy, after this, they are seated at the courtyard around the stage and are offered light snacks and refreshments. Then after the chief marriage rituals begin.

### **7.2.5 Chief Marriage Rituals**

The chief marriage rituals begin when all guests are seated around the stage (mandap) first; the 5 Bidhkarnis from the girls side help the groom to change his cloth on the North eastern side of the stage. The boy then is covered with a large piece of cloth all over. The leading Bidhkarni holds one end of the cloth which she moves around 3 times over the stage. Close to the stage, a barber draws a small amount of blood from the little finger of both the bride and the groom and mixes it. Then the names of their forefathers up to 3 generations ago are written on a mango leaf. This ritual is known as "lahachu" (drawing the blood). Then the Bidhkarnis touch the head of the groom with different objects such as a jug, a scale and a broom, after this the groom enters the stage where he is offered a set of cloth dyed in vermilion by the father of the bride.

After this, the groom is placed on his seat at the stage on one side with his family priest and the aforesaid symbolic goddess on the other side, the bride's father seats with the barber and his family priest. The leading Bidhkarni, who is married (not a widow) woman and one of the senior relatives of the bride and is called DAANPATI makes all the necessary arrangements at the stage while the priest performs different marriage rituals. The priest, who is a Brahmin, performs the rituals with chants of the verses from samveda. The following rituals are performed of this time.

## **A. Offering to the Five Popular Deities**

The 5 popular deities are as following;

### **1) Gramdevata (Village God)**

A remnant of the self-subsistent village of Hindus, every village had a deity to protect the village from calamities.

### **2) Ishta Devata (Protector God)**

In these cases flowers have then in some instances worshipped these individuals as is the devata.

### **3) Brahma Devata (Brahka)**

The brahma devata is a protected item that allows the owner to directly connect with the power of Lord Brahma. This is an item of great power and divinity.

### **4) Sarva Devata (All Other Gods)**

This is a stotram that addresses solutions to all gods and goddesses together best to have its recitation done.

### **5) Anga Puja (Worship of the Body)**

In Hindu worship there is a segment called angapuja or worship of the limbs of the body, this ritual is performed to remind us that each part of our body.

Various objects I.e. card, rice sandal, flower and vermilion are used as offerings to the above mentioned deities. This ritual is performed by the bride's father and is commonly known as PANCHA PUJA (worship of the five Gods)

## **B. Worshiping Gauriganesh**

This ritual is performed by boy and girl together after it ends the bride with draws from the stage and the groom alone performs some other rituals.

## **C. Vowing Ceremony**

This rituals known as “SANKALPA” is performed by the bride’s father who wets up some money and spreads turmeric, betel, rice and flower on it.

## **D. Return of the Bride to Stage**

Before the bride returns to the stage, a short ritual is performed with a set a mortar and pestle. The boy is handed a pestle by the priest and four persons each from the boys and the girls side approach the mortar. These people are called “AATH MANGAL” (eight good omens). The priest encircles the mortar with the sacred thread and the eight persons held the pestle. The father of the bride brings some paddy and puts into the mortar. The priest then orders the rest to strike, after this, all the eight people give fine grains of rice each to the priest who in turn, give each a betel nut. The priest then snaps the thread from the mortar, writes the names of the forefathers up to three generations of both the sides on a mango leaf, puts some grains of rice and ties it with the thread and makes a taken. He then gives permission to bring the bride back to the stage. The groom then makes the some requests to his father in law. Then the aforesaid Daanpati goes to”KORE” (bridal room) and brings the bride to the stage. When the bride is brought there, the ceremony continuous with “KANYADAAN” (entrusting the husband with his daughter).

## **E. Kanyadaan (Giving Away the Daughter)**

This is the most important of all the marriage rituals. During this, the father of the bride the groom and the bride herself place their right hands respectively, the grooms hand holds the brides and the father of the bride pours water and entrusts his daughter to the groom. This ritual too is associated with the singing

of songs. There are two of these. The first song reflects the feeling of the girl's parents as the second is the expression of the boy's acceptance. After completion of this ritual, the girl's relatives give her gifts such as cash, jewelries, and clothes. Then some objects, I.e. some rice, nine betel nuts, nine pieces of turmeric, nine blades of Bermuda grass (DUBO), and nine grains of paddy are mixed together and tied with the groom's cloth. After this, the bride and the groom are given turban by the girl's parents the mother of the girl puts turban on the boy's head and the father does the same to his daughter.

#### **F. Thread Ceremony**

This is the ritual of circling the bride and groom's wrist with sacred thread. The priest ties the thread on the right wrist of the boy and the left Wrist of the girl. After this, the couple move round the stage and the process of SINDUR begins.

#### **G. Sindur Daan (Coloring the Forehead of the Bride)**

This ritual signifies the couple's total acceptance of each other. The couple is brought outside the stage to the JAGBEDI (the place where holy fire is burnt) by Bidhakarnis. The bride there is seated on a piece of wood facing east. The groom stands facing her. The groom's relatives bring a touch and lit it then the Bidhkarnis part the hair of the bride and the groom puts vermilion or SINDUR in the gap with his fingers. The process is repeated five times.

#### **H. Making the Knat**

After sindurdaan, some rice, turmeric, sesamesid (Til), vermilion and some money are tied in a piece of red cloth. Then the boys and girl's father slowly tug it. It is symbolic testing their individual strength. This ritual is known as "LAGANGATHO"

## **I. Breaking the Fast**

After the above ritual, all the ritual of the Mandap come to an end then the groom allows his father in law, who has fasted throughout the day, to have some food. Then the guests are offered a feast as well. This ritual is known as “PANIGRAHAN”

## **J. Final Ritual**

The final ritual during the marriage takes place in a room with a painting of the sun and the moon in it. The Bidhkarnis take both the bride and the groom into the room where no other male than the groom himself is allowed to enter. The groom there puts the vermilion on the painting. During this, the Bidhkarnis ask the groom 3 times whom he is marrying with. The groom answers he is marrying with the sun and moon. The painting of the sun and the moon is known as KOHAWAR, after this, the Bidhkarnis leave the room. The bride and the groom are left alone there.

And the girl is left alone in a room. After this ritual, all the guests and the house folk retire for the rest.

## **7.3 Post Marriage Rituals**

The day after the marriage is not as busy as the previous day. The groom and his relative stay at the bride's place on this day as well. This second day of their stay is known as MARYAAD. On this day, after the breakfast, the bride and groom are taken by the Bidhkarnis to the place of the patron god of the village to worship. There, they are accompanied by some of the boy's relatives. This ritual is known as THANLAGI (visiting the place of God). The LAWAA that was made earlier is exchanged between the boy's and the girl's side and offered to the God as well. When they come out, the groom puts off his turban, worships it and puts it on again. Then the bride and the groom pay homage

aside the bamboo bush growing thereon by pouring a mixture of rice flour, clove powder and water. This mixture is known as GHORAN.

### **7.3.1 Farewell**

The day after the above mentioned rituals is the day of farewell to the daughter. There are two popular traditions of bidding the farewell the first involves the departure of the bride alongside her husband and the other does not. The people who send their daughter along with are called NAWAYUGIA. (Modern) and the ones who don't are called BUDHAYUGIA (conservative) they were given their respective names in the general convention of the Tharus in saptari district in the year 2022 B.S.

According to the modern custom, the bride departs with the groom and auto reaching house, the earlier mentioned LAHACHU ritual is performed. This ritual means that the bride is accepted by her husband's family as a member. Then the bride and the groom are taken to the courtyard and the ritual of presenting them the gifts (CHUMAAWAN) is performed. The interesting aspect of the marriage here is that the husband and wife do not live together or mate on this night, but are quartered at the bride returns with her escort to her mother's home to come back only after the earlier mentioned second arrival or **ADWIRAAGAMAN or GAUNA**

The conservative or conventional way is that the bride remains at her parent's place. Instead, a jug filled with water and covered with cloth, symbolizing the girl, is sent with the boy. In this case no LAHACHU ritual takes place at the boy's house. Since there is no bride to draw the blood from. However, the **CHUMAWAN** ritual is performed in spite of the bride's absence. In this system, the bride enters her husband's house only after DWIRAAGAMAN.

During farewell, the village women sing various songs expressing the duties of a bride at her husband's house or consoling her on the time of separation from her parent's house.

### **7.3.2 Dwiraagaman**

The re- arrival of the bride into the household of her husband is known as DWIRAAGAMAN. It is also considered as the second marriage between the same couple, also a more meaning between the same couple, also a more meaningful one as it is only after this ritual the couple is allowed to live together. This ritual is considered even more important than the ritual of farewell after the marriage.

The bride, as mentioned earlier, does not start living in her husband's house immediately after the actual marriage ceremony, but returns one day after her farewell to her maternal place where she lives for 3-4 years after which her husband takes her to his home to line theirthepermananetly. At present, some conscious Tharus have started performing both the farewell and dwiraagaman together on the day after the marriage and some do it within a year. This ritual is performed on some auspicious occasion such as Dashain, Holi, e,tc. The groom's parents take initiative for this ritual to prove their eagerness to bring their daughter-in law. They consult the priest and send two messengers to the bride's home to send their daughter on the prescribed day. Generally, such request is derived at the first time by the bride's parents lest it may seem that they are in a rush to send their daughter away. The same request, made twice is accepted and the ritual takes place sometimes the groom and his parents delay in making this request. It is a matter of great worry to the bride's parent's start making inquiries about the caue of such delay through their relatives.

On the prescribed date, the groom again comes to the bride's house with his relatives, after all the ceremonies similar to the ones which were performed back during marriage and a grand feast, the groom returns home with his wife. On the same date, the married couple is allowed to spend the night together.



On this occasion also, a lot of goft is given to the girl as dowry. The gifts include items of household use such as clothes, cosmetics, jewelries, utensils and furniture.

Though it is one of the most important marriage rituals, it seems very much unnecessary and extravagant one as the same ritual of farewell has to be performed twice, the expenses involved is double as well. It causes unnecessary economic burden especially on the girl's side. However, the marriage is considered complete and the newlywed couple enters the real and practical married life.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 8.1 Summary and Conclusion

Tharus are one of the leading tribal groups of Nepal on the basis of their number as well as the territory they inhabit. Tharus, who inhabit the terai region between China and Mahabharata range of hills, have been one of the main areas of interest for the native as well as the foreign scholar's researchers. The reason for taking Tharus of Garamani VDC for this research is that Tharus are the dominant people who have lived here for many centuries. Besides, though there have been many researches about the Tharus of different parts of Nepal. The Tharus of this area have not attracted much attention so far, so, the main objective of this research has been to analyze the difference between the social habits of Tharus here with the same of the Tharus elsewhere in general and draw the attention towards their marriage practice in particular.

Though there is vast difference in the opinion about the origin of the Tharus among the scholars who have studied in this field, all of them agree on the point that the Tharus are the major tribe of Nepal. In Garamani VDC they 1.5% of the population with 318 in number, the total no. of their household is 63 and in average, there are 5 members in each family. During the period observation it was seen that some family have 7-9 members whereas some have only 2-3 regarding the sex-ratio, the male population is slightly greater than that 5-14 years, the population has an increasing trend due to lack of awareness about family planning and preference to large number of children. Among other reasons are the need of manual labor in agriculture, illiteracy, lack of health facilities, high infant mortality rate and lack of means of entertainment.

The level of child literacy rate here is very much satisfactory here, among the total number of the children of school going age, 80% go to school of them 54.3% are in primary level and 32% are in secondary level.

Almost all the Tharus of this VDC use the surname off chauthary, the family accepts the eldest male member as the guardian of the family and respect is the main family value. Their dressing habit is slowly being changed from traditional to modern; the women wear the jewelries of silver and also prefer to tattoo various body parts with different patterns.

Generally, the Tharus follow Hindu religious tradition but have at least one deity of their own, which they call GRAM DEVATA (village God) besides, they also worship the chief goddess such as Bhagawati, Kali, Gauri, etc. Tharus spend a great deal of money in social and religious ceremonies. Their main religious occasions are Dashain, Diwali, Holi, Chaith, Maghesankranti and Shivaratri. Food items such as meat of chicken, goat, pig, and wine are used during these celebrations. To celebrate the social and religious occasion, they don't even hesitate to take debt.

In their social life, they appear to have maintained a bit of originality as in this aspect, they seem slightly different from other Hindus. Still, the child birth, lacks any assistance from property trained doctor, instead, the village mid wife performs the tasks. Due to this, the infant mortality rate is still very high. Naming ceremony is performed in their own distinct traditional way. Marriage ceremony itself has gone a lot of changes as some of the rituals are being reduced or even discarded. The death rituals are very much different from that of other tribes. However, due to increasing urbanization, the Tharus of younger generation are getting more inclined towards the modern life and it has posed a real threat to their indigenous culture and tradition.

Talking about their economic condition the majority of Tharus are directly dependant agriculture. The fertile alluvial soil and convenient irrigation facility have helped to retain people's indulgence in agriculture. As there are many industries in and around this VDC, the younger generations have started showing less and less interested in their traditional economic practice. There are very few off them in civil service or technical line. But, the economic

condition of the Tharus especially of the farmers is on declining condition because of the partition of the agricultural land into small plots, increase in population and the very extravagant nature of the Tharus.

The most prominent changes that the Tharus community of this VDC is undergoing through are the ones pertaining to their social structure and function, rites and rituals, fooding /dressing and dwelling habits, their view towards education and occupation etc. these changes are mainly caused by the rapid increase in the number of industries in and around the area, increasing number of immigrants from the hilly region and the increase in the facilities of communication and entertainment.

At last, it can be said that there is still a dire need of awareness in the Tharu community of this area. Though the infra-structure of development in this area and their use is much better compared to the same with other parts of the country, it must not be allowed to affect the indigenous cultural heritage of the people and the place. The concerned authorities must consider this aspect and work positively in this regard.

## **8.2 Recommendation**

1. Vocational and job oriented trainings must be conducted for youth specially girls of this VDC in order to generate self-sufficiency.
2. Educating the children of the downtrodden communities such as Satar, Damai, Kami, Arki, as the other casts seem to discouraging the children of these communities from mixing up with their own.
3. Malnutrition is widespread specially among the children of lower economic status and due to ignorance, infant death rate as well as maternal death rate are still high mobile health camps and public awareness programmers should be organized to inform the villagers about the importance of nutrition diet and sanitation.

4. Financial assistance should be provided to the village women to run some cottage industries. Similarly, campaigns about adult literacy and women literacy must be organized to improve the condition of education so as, to ensure a better future for the children of the community.
5. The farmers of the community must be provided financial assistance by the government at a convenient manner so that they can offered better farming techniques and improve the amount of yield.
6. The community must be informal about the evils of overindulgence of alcohol during their social occasions as it results into the scarcity of food crops due to their use in making liquor.
7. The local people should be informed about the modern methods of horticulture. If they utilize this knowledge they will be able to create on alternative source of income.

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## APPENDIX

### THE SPECIMEN OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE USED

A report on marriage rituals among the Tharus of Garamani VDC

Name of the villagers:-

Ward no:-

Village:-

Date:-

Dear villager,

I am doing a research on the above mentioned topic in which, your help is the most important requirement. You can help me providing as much relevant information as possible in this questionnaire. I assure you that the information provided will be used for no other than academic purpose. So, I request you to help me by sparing, some of your valuable time in answering the following questions.

Your's sincerely.

Lila prasad chaudhary

T.U. Departement of sociology/ Anthropology





10. Do you know about family planning?

a. yes            b. No

11. Have you been using /used the methods of contraceptives?

a. yes            b. No

12. Is yes, which?

a. permanent   b. Temporary

# भापा जिल्ला

