

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter of Recommendation	i
Letter of Acceptance.....	ii
Acknowledgement.....	iii
Abbreviation.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	v-vi
List of Tables.....	vii
List of Figures.....	viii
CHAPTER- I.....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	3
1.3 Objective of the Study	4
1.4 Significance of the Study.....	5
1.5 Limitation of the study	5
CHAPTER- II	6
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	6
2.1 Occupational role and caste division	6
2.2 Caste system, roles prescription and hierarchy	8
2.3 Dalit reformatory and development programs.....	9
2.4 Constitutional provision against untouchability.....	10
2.5 Organizational role against discrimination.....	10
CHAPTER- III.....	12
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	12
3.1 Rational of Site Selection	12
3.2 Research Design	12
3.3 Nature and Sources of Data	12
3.4 Universe and Sampling.....	13

3.5 Tools and Techniques of Data Collection	13
3.6 Analysis of Data	14
CHAPTER- IV	15
SOCIO-CULTURAL CHARACTERSTICS OF DAMAI	15
4.1 Brief Introduction of the Study Area	15
4.2 Damais; a Brief introduction	16
4.3 Social Characteristics of Damai	17
4.4 Cultural Characteristics of Damai	22
CHAPTER- V	27
ECONOMY OF DAMAI AND THE WITHIN IT	27
5.1 Main Occupations of Damai Groups	27
5.2. Secondary Occupations of Damai Group	28
5.4. Types and Numbers of Livestock	29
5.5 Traditional Occupations of Damais	30
5.6 New Occupation Adopted by Damai Groups	32
5.7. Income from Other Occupational Work	32
5.8. Annual Income of Damais	33
5.9. Expenditure of Income	34
5.10. Satisfaction with Current Works	34
5.11 Factors of Change in Traditional Occupation.....	35
CHAPTER- VI.....	41
CONCLUSION	41
ANNEXES	43
Annex-1	43
REFERENCES	47

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Size of Population under Different Groups.....	18
Table 2: Distribution of Households by Family Size and Structure.....	19
Table 3: Religion as background of people by households.....	20
Table 4: Respondents' View towards Untouchability.....	21
Table 5: Factors according to the Respondents that can abolish Caste-based Discrimination.....	21
Table 6: Educational Status of Damai Family Members.....	22
Table 7: Types of Marriage in Damai Community.....	24
Table 8: Occupation Distribution of Sampled Households.....	27
Table 9: Secondary Occupation of Sampled Households.....	28
Table 10: Land Holding of Damai Households.....	29
Table 11: Livestock Population Holding by Damai Households.....	30
Table 12: Annual Income of off-farming Occupation of Damais per Households....	32
Table 13: Economic Status of the Damai Community.....	33
Table 14: Satisfaction Status of Damai.....	34

LIST OF FIGURES

Figures 1: Economic Status of the Damai Community.....	33
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CHAPTER- I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Nepal is a country, which exhibits ethnic and cultural mosaic and cultural plurality. Nepali society possesses the various religious, cultural, ethnic and linguistic constituents, which has sought shelter here at various periods of the history. Caste system is the basic foundation of the Hindu society. Caste system is based on the Varna system. Nepalese social structure is based on the Varna system, where different caste groups and individuals interact and are interdependent upon each other. The caste or Varna system is based on five primary social classifications. These are the Brahman (Priest), the Kshatriyas (Warrior or administrator), the Vaysha (Trader), the Sudra (Labour) and the untouchable or polluted (Chhetri, 2010).

The traditional Hindu society had been hierarchically structured and the concept of lower or polluted caste like Damai, B.K. known as dalits (inferior) caste and Brahmin and Chhetri are known as malit (superior) caste which had been constructed in the ancient Nepal during the king dome of king Jayasthiti Malla of Kathmandu. Brahmin and Chhhetri belong to higher strata and remained as dominant class and Dalits are remained as subordinate. Castes are superior, more or less equal or inferior. This view is not limited, it extends to gods, foods, animals, clothing, occupation, and social respects of *Darshan and Namastey*, etc. (Thapa, ND). However still in the context of Nepalese society the caste hierarchy of superior and inferior exists and dalit people are excluded in the main stream of development and compelled to do their lower class work which always prohibit improving the life standard of dalits and remaining in the line of poverty (Chhetri, 2010).

Dalits have been relegated to do caste-based work as black/goldsmith, tailors, shoemakers and street cleaners, all are considered of low social status. Poverty and lack of other means of livelihood force the Dalits to continue their traditional occupations. Dalit women and children are also forced to work in the households of their landlords. They do not get justifiable wage for their labor. If they do not work for others, they work as help of their husbands in the traditional jobs of Dalits. Those

working in *Haliya Pratha* (bonded labor) or *Khala Pratha* (forced labor) are not even earning from their work. They may get food grains (Ojha, 2003). Dalits people are highly marginalized and neither have they accessed to education, good job, nor can they have improved their lives standard. In spite of less access to education, less job opportunity, less status in the society, and highly subordinated by the Brahmin and Chhetri in various parts of Nepal, dalits people are try to get rid of these all discrimination against them and have made effort to change their traditional occupation that belong to gold/black smith, leather work, and shoe making etc. and dalits are oriented toward new occupation like, foreign employments, their own business, working in the markets, and their own tailoring as well as wage labor according to their desire and freedom (CBS, 2011). Though dalits have been changing their livelihood strategies from their tradition occupation to different works of making money, the relationship to the Brahmin and Chhetri is remained in the form of highly discrimination.

Hindu scriptures reserve certain coveted occupations for 'upper caste' people, whereas 'lower caste' people are relegated to perform occupations that bring little income. Thus, most Dalits are forced to earn their meager living from traditional occupations and wage labor. Occupational mobility to more gainful jobs is limited among Dalits. Employment in Nepal is still strongly linked to various networks of caste or ethnic relations and political affiliations. For example, the government and other sectors are dominated by personnel belonging to .upper caste. Groups and they tend to favor individuals belonging to their own groups when the matter concerns hiring or promoting personnel. Such networks and affiliations are very weak among Dalits because of their low socio-economic, political and educational status (Cameron, 1995). Consequently, the Dalits of Nepal have not been able to make inroads into social, economic, political and other sectors, unlike Brahmins, Chhetris and Newars, who have *afno manchhe* (one's own people) in every position that matters to capitalize on and benefit members of their own social groups. As a result, Dalits fare the worst in virtually all conceivable indicators of socio-cultural and economic participation. Furthermore, the participation of female Dalit population in these spheres is almost non-existent (ILO, 2005).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Nepal, three major occupational castes the Kami, Damai and Sarki are traditionally artisans. These three castes have their specific work in the villages. Damais are the tailors and they sew the clothes of the village people. Sarkis are the leather workers. They make and repair the shoes. Lastly the Kamis are the blacksmiths and goldsmiths of the village. In case of the Untouchability among Dalits, a Kami does not allow a Damai to enter his house and would never accept '*Bhat*' (rice) and '*Pani*' (water) from him, similarly, Damai as well as Sarki has similar type of restrictions within their caste.

Dalit refers to a group of people who are religiously, culturally, socially and economically oppressed, who may belong to different caste and occupation. He believes that Dalit is not a caste group *per se* but a politically coined word used to refer to a socially backward caste and community in Nepal (Dahal et.al. 2002). Similarly they are defined as unit they live both in the Terai and in the Hilly areas. The major Dalit caste groups in the Terai are Musahar, Chamar, Khankhatwa, while Kami, Damai (Pariyar), Sarki are of Hilly areas. The major Dalit caste groups in the Kathmandu valley are Poda and Chame within Newar castes (ibid). Changes are the natural phenomenon going on in our daily lives. Therefore, it has become the important issue for Sociological studies and hence has become the interesting field of inquiry for the researchers. A lot of literature has been published about the changes but has not much focused on the occupational changes particularly (Pokharel 2000). On this Chhetri (2006) has given his view as: The changes in the environments and livelihoods of the poor and marginalized people are among the central issues of concern today among those involved in development program in Nepal. Therefore, here too the researcher has tried to raise the issue of change focusing particularly on the occupation of Damai in Raspurkot VDC.

The Change has been highlighted as a prior issue. People of this group are able to maintain their distinct language, culture and identity as it is a continuous phenomenon. But continuity in culture also tends to be a rule. Empirical reality has made it evident that even a numerically small in spite of living within a single social, physical and economic environment with other kinds of people. How different groups of people live together, interact with each other in certain spheres and are still able to

maintain their key social and cultural features (while at the same time undergoing changes in some other spheres) demands further attention from sociologists and anthropologists (Chhetri, 2006).

There are different caste group who changes their traditional occupation and adaptive new occupation to cope with a new environment. In these sense different groups of people respond differently to different socio-cultural and economic settings, presumably, because of the social, cultural, national and religious backgrounds (Chhetri, 1990). Based on these arguments it is argued that Damai in Raspurkot VDC have developed new economic strategy to cope with different ecological setting. They may be gradually giving up their traditional caste based occupation and adapting new occupation. In this sense, it is essential to seek the relation between giving up traditional occupation and adapting new one in their environment. Therefore, this study tries to find out the cause of changes in the traditional occupation.

Research Questions:

The present study attempts to seek the answers of the following questions:

1. What are the socio-cultural characteristics of Damai people?
2. What is their traditional occupation?
3. What are the main causes to change in their traditional occupation?
4. What are the present occupations adapted by them in their changing context?
5. Why do they adapt the new occupation?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to find out and examine the traditional occupation in changing context along with their socio-cultural aspects of Chourpani Damai community of RaspurkotVDC-8, Pyuthan district. However, the specific objectives of this study are following:

1. To explore socio-cultural characteristics of Damai people.
2. To analyze the traditional occupation of Damai group and changes within it.
3. To find out the causes of change in traditional occupation and its results.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Changing occupation is an important subject matter for Sociological study. In this regard, this research is theoretically and methodologically importance. This study was oriented occupational change of Damai people at Raspurkot VDC. I have already mentioned that there are very few Sociological studies on occupational change. This encouraged me to conduct the study for describing occupational change in a heterogeneous society. Therefore, this study will be supplementary source of information to understand the process on changes occupation and socio-economic life of Damai. In this sense, I hope that this study may be able to investigate the occupational change among the Damai of Nepal. This research will be helpful for the future researchers and readers who are interested in this field.

1.5 Limitation of the study

This study was conducted in Chourpani Village of Pyuthan district. Since the study was focused on a small area of Mid-western Nepal, the conclusion might be difficult to generalize in the wider context of Nepal. The limited time and resources for the study have also constrained the study.

CHAPTER- II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of literature is a part of any research that helps to gain useful and background information about problem over the study. For the proposed research work of journals, previous research works are reviewed.

2.1 Occupational role and caste division

Nepal is one of the poor countries ranking 136th in UNDP 2005. Rural areas dominate Nepal about 85 percent of the population lives in rural areas. Rural areas are poverty ridden and about 35 percent of the rural people are poor and 48 percent Damais are poor in Nepal. In the caste based society the social status and occupation are determined by birth for an individual. Lower castes have been providing various services such as smiting, skinning dead cattle, blacksmithing, carpentry, gold smiting, cobbling. Similarly in return of these services people of the high caste have been providing them cash and food grain. Such relationship can be mutual occupational linkage (Caplan, 1970).

Jayasthiti Malla was the most popular king of the Malla period. He divided the society in four different castes and thirty-six sub-castes along with the division of their occupations. According to Malla, Brahmin can carry on religious performances and worships; Kshetri can be rulers, warrior-chiefs; Vaishya can live on trade and agriculture; and Sudra can do servile. He grouped all recognized castes in to four categories that are as follows:

According to Bista (1972), during the modern period, Prithivi Narayan Shah addressed the Nation, “Nepal is a common garden where four castes and thirty six sub-castes blossom forth”. To describe the caste hierarchy code formulated as the *Muluki Ain*, the totality of this caste universe has been paraphrased in the code as Char Jat Chattis Varna (four Caste and thirty six sub-castes). This phrase shows the familiarity of the Nepalese with the Varna model and it's being the main basis of

social division. But the multiplicity of caste has already replaced the validity of the Varna model for all functional purpose.

The caste organizations namely Brahman, Chhetri, Vaishya, Sudra and untouchable castes are included in the Nepalese society as described in the myths of Hindu religion, the Brahman were divinely created from the mouth, Chhetri from the arm, Vaishya from the waist and Sudra being created from the foot of God. Brahma is considered to be lowest as possible. Later on this category of the Varna system took the form of caste system (Parajuli, 2000).

Occupation was prescribed according to their castes such as Brahman (worship), Chhetri (rulers, warriors-chiefs), Vaishya (trade, agriculture), and Sudra (servile, servants). These were the social rule of the Nepalese society. Among these castes Damai fall in the category of Sudra considered to be lower, untouchables and impure. Each caste under caste system tries to maintain its hold over its members and controls their behavior. Castes provide rules of social behavior, which cannot be violated. In the context of Nepal caste system is interdependent, rigid, commensality and co-operative. The function of Brahmin is to perform various religious and ceremonial rituals, birth rituals etc. Brahmin gets money, food grains etc. in return for his service. Chhetri were the ones to provide service as warriors to protect the country, work in administration. Vaishya did the trading work. Sudra e.g.: Dum, Damai generally carry the work of cloths making, repairing which related to cloths (Dahal et al., 2002)

In the existence of the society and its continuity all castes perform their work in a co-operative manner. This system divided Nepalese society in too many layers earning some merits but in the other hand even larger amounts of demerits. The described status is the one, which an individual gets at birth. It is conferred to him by his group or the society. It is impossible to change ones caste. Within the caste group it is easy to communicate, do work but lower caste groups are prohibited to enter the high caste group. There are boundaries for them, hatred and suffering to the Sudra. The characteristic of caste system stratified people in to various ranks who live and work in the same society (Chhetri and Pokhrel, 2006).

In Nepal three major occupational lower castes, the Kami, Damai and Sarki are traditionally artisans. These three castes have their specific castes work in the village. Damais are the tailors; they sew and mend the clothes of the village people. Sarkis are

the leather workers they make and repair the shoes. Lastly the Kamis are the blacksmiths and the Sunars are goldsmiths of the villages. The blacksmiths forge and repair all kinds of forms, implants and household utensils. All the untouchable castes the Kami occupy the high position with the traditional caste hierarchy. The Kami (blacksmiths) and the Damai (tailors and local musician), for example, regard bodily contact with each other as polluting. The same is true of sexual intercourse between the 'Kami' and 'Damai'. A Damai does not allow another Damai to enter his house and would never accept 'bhat' (rice) or 'pani' (water) from him (CBS, 2011).

2.2 Caste system, roles prescription and hierarchy

In our social structure caste system is the basic social foundation of society. Bista (1990) explains how the caste system came into existence in the Nepalese society. He states that before the 13th century Brahman migrated from the North East of India when the Muslims and Hindus invaded India as a result Brahman brought the Hindu culture with them. It was acculturated by other ethnic groups and end of the Licchavi period Shankaracharya was able to convince the Nepali King, Shivadev to have Brahman appointed with exclusive privileges to act as priests at the Pashupatinath temple in Kathmandu, which gave them high ritual status at the political level, and they were endowed with land grants. They were economically independent and had the supreme power with their ritual practices attracting other ruling elites. Both Brahmans and ruling elites called as have high prestige. The poor lower castes, Sudra was dominated by the high caste and was dependent on them for their livelihood. Vaishya or Sudra saw no advantage in becoming part of the caste system and none among the shoe makers, blacksmith, goldsmith, tanners or tailors were willing to accept the position of untouchables. However, recently the people of Kathmandu valley do not treat most of the occupational classes as untouchables. The increase in investment in construction projects and the development of industrial infrastructure has created more jobs for the lower castes, which is slowly decreasing their economic dependence on the higher caste. Some Damais blame their fate for being an untouchable and are far behind from taking a first step opposing this social stigma. Professor Bista (1990) states that the development of Nepalese society is only possible when the caste system is set absolutely free of its fatalistic tendencies. He concludes that fatalism and development are correlated terms as the former one is

mainly responsible for underdevelopment status of Nepal in the modern context. Even though Damais are the inhabitants of Nepal, it is impossible to state when they actually did settle here. Damais are mostly found to be residing along the hilly regions. Bista's writing has in depth about caste system which was very helpful to have a through idea about the caste system in Nepal (Bista, 1990).

2.3 Dalit reformatory and development programs

Now a day's government and various agencies have initiated many Dalit reformatory and development programmed over the last four decades. While considering constitution of Nepal after the 1950 is revolution, five constitutions were made and in each constitution, it is clearly mentioned, "All citizens are equal before law, no discrimination of people will be made on the basis of religion, race, sex and caste etc."(2007, 2015, 2019, 2046, 2063BS).But at the time of practice it is not follows the above principle about discriminations.

At the program level National Planning Commission (NPC). Made special provisions for Dalits in the Eight Plans (1992-1997), Ninth Plan (1997-2002) and tenth plan (2003-2007) and 3 years interim plan (2007-2010). The eight plan of Nepal (1992-1997) conceived the essence of Dalit reformatory programs such as social security, scholarship schemes grass root level based project, social awareness campaign etc. Similarly the ninth five years plan not only outlined five major objectives for Dalits up liftment but also put forward a vision of 20 years programs for elimination of all forms of discrimination likewise, it has focused on Dalit empowerment and development program (NPC, 2002).

According to the tenth plan "in the title of Dalits and Neglected Communities" depicts the condition of dalits who have been back ward from every aspect viz; socio-political, economic issues because of the prevalence of constant poverty and social deprivation. In this section of population could not get social respect in practice due to existence of caste system and in human behavioral because of in effective enforcements of acts, which categorically has made the caste system punishable. In this way we can easily say that dalits are poorest of the poor in many aspects in Nepal.

Bhattachan, (2003) has described the most shocking practice of untouchability in Nepal that prevails in the Dalit community itself. Even in their community someone classifies as being a higher caste Dalit and others as the lower caste. Thus they refuse to touch each other and the practice of untouchability goes on. Despite Dalit being exploited, they failed to make direct approach in this regard to the higher caste people. Corruptions too have been largely done in the name of Dalit. In the name of various Dalit programs, large amount of budget were brought and the people from the ministerial level officers involved in the corruption (Bhattachan, 2003).

2.4 Constitutional provision against untouchability

The constitution of Nepal of 1990 has guaranteed against discrimination based on caste, ethnicity and untouchability. The National Dalit commission was formed in 2001 with an eight points program to stamp out the practice of untouchability in Nepalese society, to provide equal opportunity, and allow them to enter all religious and public places, as would any other citizen. There is also other organization working for the Welfare of Dalits. Feminist Dalit Organization (FEDO), Dalit Welfare Organization (DWO), and *Jana Utahan Pratisthan* (JUP), Nepal National Depressed Social Welfare Organization (NNDSWO) are some of the major organizations working for the Dalit populations in awareness raising, literacy, livelihood etc. Besides donor organizations like, Plan Nepal, UMN, UNDP and Lutheran World foundation working for the welfare of Dalits in Nepal (From http://azeecon.lwf.com/lwf/burning_issues/dalit.mail).

2.5 Organizational role against discrimination

After establishing the Democracy there had been some efforts on the welfare of Dalits and a significant emergence of NGOs activities has taken place. Many international agencies were supporting them and increasing unawareness on Dalits. These organizations acted to investigate and lobby against any incidents of cast- based discrimination throughout the country and provided necessary supports to the victims to establish a database of the Dalits discrimination. Educated active Dalit youths were engaged to motivate them to work for their community and to explore possible employment opportunities for them. A review of GoN's approach to Dalit development shows that although various social welfare programs were directly

targeted to these communities. These programs did not benefit the targeted population. Even though working government, various organizations and institutions on Dalit Welfare could not achieve satisfactory gain on it as of not studying properly the socio-economic variables, which direct or indirectly affect Dalits lives.

CHAPTER- III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, number of methods and techniques will be used collect and analyze research information as mentioned below:

3.1 Rational of Site Selection

Damai are traditionally settled in the western part of Nepal and this study was focused on the Damais of Raspurkot VDC- 8, Pyuthan district. The Damais of this VDCare in close contact with the Brahman and Chhettri over many years. Damai have been changing their traditional occupation and started to work in the market as wage labor, watch man etc. Hereby, Raspurkot has been selected as research site.

3.2 Research Design

This study was carried out mainly being based on descriptive research design. Descriptive research design describes socio-economic condition of people. It was useful for this study to get the data like, qualitative and quantitative data. Survey method is also useful for this study. Other methods of methodology techniques used for research are data collection, key informants interview, interview& observation.

3.3 Nature and Sources of Data

Data collection is important part of research work qualitative and quantitative data has been used to analyze the related subject that has been success to achieve the objective of this study from both of these data we can get social & economic variables.

In this research both primary & secondary nature of data has been used. The sources of primary data were interview, key informants interview & observation. The sources of secondary data were different publications of Districts Developmental Committee (DDC) , National level surveys (Census) & National as well as international journal related to social science.

3.4 Universe and Sampling

Research site has been selected purposively; the sampling within the site has been done by simple random sampling. For the present study data has been collected from Chourpani village of Raspurkot-8. The data has been collected from all the 28 Households and its 210 population. Therefore census method was applied for collecting the required data in this study.

3.5 Tools and Techniques of Data Collection

This study is based on primary as well as secondary data. Both quantitative and qualitative data were used in this study. Information was collected through key informants interview, interview and observation. At the time of fieldwork more emphasis has been given to collect accurate data based on the ground reality of respondents as far as possible.

3.5.1 Observation

Non-participation observation technique was used to collect the relevant information relating to the study such as food preparation and consumption habit. Direct observation was used to observe the village settlement pattern, agricultural practices, dressing pattern, their various activities such as traditional, occupational and socio-cultural. Eating habits, living standard, hygienic condition and working style in different types of occupations was studied through semi participant observation.

3.5.2 Key Informants Interview

Key informants interview was conducted without checklist because respondents in selected site are not so much literate and professional. This method was also used because we can explore the knowledge and past memories of those respondents in convenient environment. The selected respondent for key informants interview were Dalit leader, old and valued people within them, female group leader of them and some youth who had recently changed their traditional occupation. I would also like to mention about Damais according to the organizations which directly work with Damais such are VDC, DDC etc.

3.5.3 Interview

Both structured and non-structured interview was used to get information about original stories, economic organization and social organizations of the Damai people of Chourpani Village of Raspurkot VDC. Interview has also been used as a source of information about socio- cultural taboos and rituals and their changing patterns of traditional occupation.

3.6 Analysis of Data

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected for this study. The quantitative data about population, economy, educational status and occupational pattern distribution are presented in tables and pie chart. While the qualitative data related to cultural practices, religion food habit and other socio-cultural features related to my study have been thematically analyzed.

CHAPTER- IV

SOCIO-CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF DAMAI

This chapter deals with the introduction of study area and Caste/Ethnicity, Population and Religion and language are the main variables considered in this study.

4.1 Brief Introduction of the Study Area

This study is confined to the Raspurkot VDC of Pyuthan district. Pyuthan lies in the Mid-Western Development Region of the country. The total area of this district is 1365square km. According to the Census Report, 2011 the total population is 2, 28,102and males 1, 00,053 and1, 28,049females are respectively in the Pyuthan district (CBS, 2011).

Out of the 49 VDCs in Pyuthan District, Raspurkot VDC is selected as a studied area. This is situated to the Eastern part of the district. The geographic range consists of Mahabharat range. It is located between 27° 52' N to 28° 25' North altitude and 82° 30' to 83° 6' East longitudes. It is bounded by Bijulee VDC from Eastern, Baraula VDC in Southern, Khaira VDC in Western and Dharampani VDC in Northern (CBS, 2011).

In the field observation, I found that, most of the people in the study area speak Nepali language. They do not have their own particular language. Since, the land has less capacity of fertility as well as limited area for agriculture; it is very hard to live on the production of the land for people. Although Damais (Pariyars) are also searching for their own traditional occupation as well as the other professions now, only few people are engaged in other sectors these days like service, business, laboring and so on. Therefore, the income of the Damai people in Raspurkot VDC is less than the expenditure.

The major agricultural productions of this VDC are maize, wheat, millet and vegetables which are insufficient for the Damais to run the families.

Since the VDC has a Secondary school, the Damai children study within this school, but they are not getting the further education. The adults and the aged population including males and females from Damais families are uneducated. Almost all these Dalit families let their children go to school, but even though, the children are not properly ahead in case of education. As the discussion goes on a step ahead, the main source of income is based on agriculture which has poor capacity to hold the families. Moreover, the present situation and the economic status of all these Damais are not limited within the agricultural traditional occupational, services in different sectors such as army, police and works in foreign countries are the occupations now they are adapting.

The present study attempts to trace out the social life, cultural activities and occupational status of 30 household Damais people of Raspurkot VDC-8. There are not only the Damais but also other various caste groups such as Kami, Sarki, Chhetri, and Brahman. There are 30 Dalit households in this study area. Among them 2 households are Sharkis and other 28 households are Damais but Kami household is not found within the Dalits. It is believed that this study may play valuable role for other researchers for the further study.

4.2 Damais; a Brief introduction

Damais are the followers of Hinduism. The people of this community are identified as Dum, Pariyar, Nepali, Mijhar, B.K. Darji, Suchikar, Nagarchi, Dholi etc. The Damai whose sub- caste is Dum are the higher among the other Damai caste. These are the sub- castes of the main castes group of Damai (Kafle, 2002).

Mostly Damai rear pigs and hens but upper castes keep cows, goats etc. According to the Encyclopedia of religion (2009 AD) within the Aryans, few groups of people were poor who did not have systematic agricultural process and kept under the Sudra to serve the Aryans. Khas is one of the branches of the Aryans. Brahman, Chhetri including lower caste Damai, Kami, Sarki are also included within that branch of the Aryans. Khas entered in Nepal from hilly areas through Gadwal, Kumau crossing Mahakali River instead of going to Sindhu Ganga of India (Sharma, 1977).

The numbers of caste existing in Nepal are 125 (CBS, 2011), whereas in the Malla period, King Jayasthiti Malla divided inhabitants of the human community in-to seven hundred and twenty four classes. The Damai also falls within this division. Damais are mainly living in the hilly areas but can be seen in all district and urban areas as well as in small numbers. From the demography statement of 2011 the total population of Damai caste will be 12, 58, and 554. Out of this the population of Damais living in Pyuthan district is 1250. Male is 520, and female is 730 (CBS, 2011). The Damais people are deprived of leadership and other fundamental rights and their indigenous knowledge skill is replacing for other purpose day by day. Thus their voice could not reach the level of the policy makers. Due to this, the Government plans and policies that are made are not focused well in the interest of the Dalit Damais people for promoting their traditional occupation and socio-economic condition.

4.3 Social Characteristics of Damai

Although Damai people had their own traditional identities not only their following their traditional occupation due to their illiteracy, they are heighly influenced by environment which have brought drastic changes in their culture. Damai people are classified into two different groups, *Purbia* and *pashima*. This research is based on *pashima* Damai group and they like to identify their caste by saying ‘Pariyar’.

4.3.1 Age and Sex composition

The total number of households in this study area is 28. This research shows that maximum number of population under this study area has the age group of 5-9 years as minimum with age group above 65 years. The cause behind the larger age group (5-9 years) is the higher birth rate and the next is that the youths go out for different employments. The total population of this study area is 210. Among them the males are 100 and females are 110. The distribution of population under different age groups of the Damai group is given in table 4.1.

Table 1 Sizes of Population under Different Age Groups

Age Group	Female	Percent	Male	Percent	Total
Under 4 Years	8	7.27	7	7	15
4-9	10	9.09	10	10	20
10-14	12	10.90	12	12	24
15-19	13	11.82	15	15	28
20-24	10	9.09	11	11	21
30-34	15	13.64	10	10	25
35-44	15	13.64	9	9	24
45-54	9	8.18	7	7	16
55-64	5	4.55	3	3	8
Above 65	3	2.73	2	2	5
Total	110	100	100	100	210

Source: Field Survey, 2013

This table shows that 20 people are under age group 4-9 years whereas males are 10 and females are 10. This research shows that 180 peoples are economically active and rest is inactive. However, as regarded to the sex-wise distribution of people male covers 47.62% and female 52.38%. This indicates that the ratio of female population is higher than male in Damai group due to their desire of son in the family. There exists the deep rooted psyche that the gate of heaven gets opened for those parents who have a son. Therefore they give- birth too many girl-children in the futile hope of having son. Thus, the women population rises in a large scale.

4.3.2 Family Size and Structure

The family is a social and economic unit consisting of minimally of one or more parents and their children. Members of family always have certain reciprocal rights and obligations towards each other particularly economic ones. Family member usually live in one household but common resident is not defining feature of it (Ember and Ember 1994). So, it is a universal institution in every society, which fulfills emotional and physical needs of its member. The family is regarded as the primary agent of the socialization where every child learns the norms and values of family as well as society. Family is the primary social institution of the society. Family plays

the vital role and has tremendous influences on the individual's behaviors and actions. There are two types of family viz. nuclear and joint. Nuclear family consists of husband, wife and unmarried child and the joint family consists of the members from same blood relationship of large number of family members. The distribution of households by family size and structure of the Damai group is given in table 4.2.

Table 2 Distribution of Households by Family Size and Structure

Family Structure	Number of HHs	Percent
Nuclear	13	46.43
Joint	15	53.57
Total	28	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Table 4.2 shows that among all 28 households, the nuclear and joint families hold 46.43% and 53.57% respectively. The joint family is the traditional type of family which is changing into the modern nuclear family structure in the Damai of Raspurkot VDC-8, Pyuthan chiefly because of the impact of westernization and urbanization. They want freedom from traditional bond of society and its practices such as unusually over respect to aged people. Moreover, males in large extent and females in less extent leave home for job opportunities, and some families split so as to provide good education to their children.

4.3.3 Religions

Hinduism, is the major religion followed by the Damais of Raspurkot. Beside Hinduism, Christianity has become their new religion for a few households because the latter does not practice untouchably. The major belief of Hinduism is the life after death whereas the same condition can be found in Christian religion but the major premises are different. The followers of Hinduism worship the Hindu Gods and Goddesses early morning and they occasionally go to the temples to worship for their betterment. Altogether the Three families are following Christianity which shows that the Damais have strong belief towards both the religions Hinduism and Christianity. They believe in Hinduism because it is their traditional religion, and they believe in Christianity because it does not belief in untouchablity, the traditional religious practice from which they want to be free. Another reason for them to follow

Christianity is the Christian people visit these poor villagers and toil to convince them that this religion is better than their traditional one. Both the religions have been followed in the village. The Christians had also the root religion Hindu before the shift from Hinduism to Christianity. Those 3 family members shifted towards the Christianity because they came to the information that this religion cures their ill children free of cost. These Christians pray Jesus Christ before starting any work and before the meal. Every Saturday, they go to nearby Church for praying. The distribution by households is given in the table 4.3.

Table 3 Religion as background of people by household

Family Structure	Number of HHs	Percent
Hindu	25	89.28
Christian	3	10.72
Total	28	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

The above table and figure clearly show that out of 28 households, 25 HHs (89.2%) are Hindus and 3 HHs (10.72%) are the Christians. This data clearly deals that Raspurkot VDC-8's Damais have the majority in Hindu religion. But it explains that the Christianity is also in existence lately even though it has a few followers among the Damais.

4.3.4 Untouchability

Untouchability is deep rooted in the Nepalese societies. Despite the 'New Civil Code of 1963' that abolished the caste-based discrimination. However, the feeling of untouchability still exists between inter caste as well as within the same caste groups. In course of my field study in the remote villages like Raspurkot VDC-8. I found that the Damais are not allowed to use the same water tap which is the daily necessity for all the people. But they are deprived from this facility. They have only the option either to make one separate tap or make a long wait for their turn to fetch the water. Almost all Damai families reported that they are discriminated while fetching water from the same source. The views of Damai family towards Untouchability are given table 4.4 below.

Table: 4 Respondents' View towards Untouchability

View	Respondent	Percent
We have accept caste-discriminations because it is a tradition and has been accepted for a long time	18	64.28
Everyone is equal- No one should be discriminated based upon caste group.	10	35.72
Total	28	100

Source Field Survey, 2013

Among them, 64.28% of the household members report that this is a traditional value based on fatalism and is very hard to abolish from the society. The majority of the Damais people are found against fatalism. It may be possible to remove their conservative belief of fatalism by their own efforts spreading the light of education about laws and rules prepared for the welfare of all people either for the low caste or high caste rich people.

Table 5 Factors according to the Respondents that can abolish Caste-based Discrimination

Description	Respondent	Percent
Through Education	12	42.83
Alleviating Poverty	10	35.75
Strict Law	6	21.42
Total	28	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Out of total respondents, 42.83% feel that the deep rooted caste-based discrimination has been decreased due to education. Education helps spread awareness about caste-equality enlightening the people. It has empowered them at the logical level. Poverty has been alleviated by 35.75% which shows that the number of rich population has increased. Rich ones automatically raise their voice against discrimination in terms of

caste. Moreover, formulation of strict law by the government and its implementation has helped reduce the caste-based discrimination by 21.42%.

4.3.5 Educational Status

Education has played the vital role in the development of people. Most of the family members of this community are uneducated. Even though, the children of the present generations have become a little bit educated but the number of children educated is also not satisfactory. On the other hand, the adults and the olds have illiteracy almost in half of them. But others can hardly read and write in this Damai community. The educational status of Damai family members is given in table 4.6.

Table 6 Educational Status of Damai Family Members

Literacy Level	Number of Persons	Percent
Illiterate	100	47.62
Literate	110	52.38
Total	210	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

The data presented in table 4.6 reveals that the literate people of the selected households are found to be 52.38% whereas illiterate are 47.62% in sampled household's members. Majority of family members did not pass SLC due to poverty and lack of awareness about achieving higher education. Yet the literate population in this study area was found little more than illiterate population.

4.4 Cultural Characteristics of Damai

Culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (Tylor E.B, 1967).

4.4.1 Language

The Damai of Raspurkot VDC-8 speaks Nepali (*Khas*) language. When asked about their mother tongue, they clearly said that, Nepali. They used it to communicate with other caste /ethnic groups in the study area. In term of language, I did not find

difference between Brahmin, Chhetri and Damai (pariyar), Kami, Sharkis language in the study area.

4.4.2 Food Habit

In the study area, Damai consumed rice, lentils, vegetables and meat as their food items. Generally, the local produce maize and millet, main food item of Damais. It is their main source of living. On the other, the liquor is common for all—males, female, child, old etc. They offer liquor in their ritual and religious activities as well as gusts. Thus, it is an integral part of their life.

4.4.3 Cloths and Ornaments

In the study area, I found quite different in cloth and ornament used by Damai people. The elders wear *daura suruwal*, *east-coat topi* and *sandal* while the new generations wears *shirt*, *jeans pant*, *coat and sweater*. The women usually wear *dhoti*, *patuka*, *sari* and *cholo* while the young girls wear *kurtha suruwal*, *skirt*, *myaksi*, *sari* and *blouse* etc. They also wear various golden and silver ornaments such as *Tilhari*, *Ear/ Nose Rings*, *Bangles*, (*Chura*) and *Pote*.

4.4.4 Ritual Passage

In the study area, majority of Damai People followed Hindu religion. As a result, they arranged ritual religion practices which are guided by Hindu Principle. In Hindu holy book *Dev Karya*, *Pitry Karya*; have been given more priority in *Puran* and *Manusmirti* (Prasid, 2001). Damais also have followed all ritual practices done by high caste people in Nepalese society, but use more alcohol productions following these rituals. Here is some description of rituals, which is practiced by Damai community in Raspurkot VDC-8. These rituals festivals helped Damai of this community unite together in the socio-cultural, religious and economic life.

4.4.4.1 Nawaran

Damai of this study area also have some restrictions when the child is born. They do not touch the delivery woman without doing *nawaran*. If the baby is boy, *Nawaran* is performed on 11th day and if the baby is a girl *Nawaran* is performed on 9th day. Damai people select a priest from their own caste from another. After the baby is born the

near family members are forbidden to perform any holy until *Nawaran*. The period between baby births to *Nawaran* is known as *Sutak (pollution)*. The ceremony is *Nawaran* that purifies the family and kins. The priests read some holy scripts to purify the house and gives name to the baby. Cow urine is often sprinkled along with water washed by gold.

4.4.4.2 Marriage

Marriage is not only important for reproducing child and but the important for managing the house of the husband and continuing the lineage(Lewis Morgan) In my study areas, Man and women are regarded as mature, responsible when they are married. Unmarried people are called immature and incomplete. The forms of marriage are arranged marriage and love marriage in the Damai group of the study area. Nowadays, love marriage is higher than arrange among the younger generations but still most of the families do not accept love.

Table 7 Type of Marriage in Damai Community

Type of Marriage	Respondents	Percent
Monogamy	24	85.72
Polygamy	4	14.28
Total	28	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

It has been found that small numbers (14.28%) of Damai people have practiced Polygamy marriage in this study area where as (85.72%) respondents are found to have done monogamy marriage. But it has been seen inter-caste marriage in some respondent with Kami caste too.

The process of marriage is followed by engagement where the bride and bride-groom receive rings from each other. After this, the most important thing is that the groom places *Sindur* on the forehead of the bride then they are Pronounced married. The next day, both the parents of the husband and wife meet together. They give and receive money as gifts. Usually, during these feasts, various types of food items are quite popular like meat; rice, liquor, and curry are taken. The musical band of Damai plays different types of folk tunes where others dance and celebrate the special day.

4.4.4.2 Death Rituals

Death ceremony is also one of the essential ceremonies of the Damai group in this study area. When someone dies, every relative, friends, brothers and neighbors are called. They help to take the dead body towards the cremating place where the last rites take place. The dead body is placed on top of the piled dry woods, where the sun lights the body by placing fire on the mouth of the dead body. This is known as *Dagbatti*. After the body is cremated all the people who come to assist take a bath in the river. Then the priest shaves the sons' head and gives them white clothes to wear. At home the females bath themselves and put on *Dhoti* without *Blouse*. The men who are staying and conducting various ritual activities after shaving their head are called *Kriyaputris*. They perform these activities with the belief that this will satisfy the gods and the dead will enter heaven. They are very strict about diet and stay away from other people, if touched, they are considered impure and their rituals fail. Their diets consist of one course meal without salt and take various types of fruits. This goes on for 11 days, and then the priests come and purify the *Kriyaputri*. During this purifying process, all the relatives and friends who accompanied cremating process are all fed with good meal.

4.4.5 Festivals

The Damai community, in this study area, celebrates various Hindu festivals such as Dashain and Tihar as Brahamans and Chhetris do. They say they do not have any separate festival. These festivals are also performed by other caste like the Brahamans and Chhetris.

4.4.5.1 Dashain and Tihar

All the Damais celebrate both the festivals Dashain and Tihar in the study area. Almost all these Dalits celebrate these festivals by spending much more of their income. Both the positive and negative consequences appear in the Damais families with the entrance of these festivals. As a long and the main festival, Dashain brings a lot of them together once in a year. On the other, Tihar also creates the condition of love and understanding between brothers and sisters.

4.4.5.2 Teej

The much more important Hindu festival of married women is Teej which is celebrated by the females in Damai families by going to the mothers' home. Females take delicious food the day before it and live without taking anything on the day of Teej. Fasting once in a year brings the advantages for women. The culture in Damai family is deep rooted for this festival. During the festival Women sing, dance and perform the pooja of Mahadev, one of the supreme gods of Hindu religion .The female informant informed that they arrange the festival to the long-life and prosperity of husband. In the study, none of the festival was carried out by male for long life and prosperity of their wives. In this sense, women's space is inferior than male in Damai society.

4.4.5.3 Others

The other general festival like Mage Sankranti, Holi, New Year, Eve, Saone Sankranti, Harlow, Krishan Ashthami, and Shivratri are also celebrated by the Damai as other caste's people do.

CHAPTER- V

ECONOMY OF DAMAI AND THE WITHIN IT

Every caste group is divided into different occupational groups on the basis of work. But in the present changing situation, there is no obligation to do a particular caste guided work. One may follow any work based on his/her ability and qualification.

Traditionally, Damai caste group has been adapting the tailoring and playing *Panchiai Baja* throughout the country. But the Damai people who are inhabitant of Raspurkot VDC-8 have a little bit exceptional case at present which is different from the history of the Damai in general. Some people are involved in these traditional occupations and on the others are involved in modern occupations as well as the farming.

5.1 Main Occupations of Damai Groups

The main occupation of the Damai group in this study area is agriculture. They adopt this occupation as seasonal and non- subsistence occupation. All of the households are involved in agriculture whether fully or partially. Besides agriculture, daily wages and traditional occupations are the other main professions of the Damai community. Major occupation practiced by the sample households are given in the table 5.1.

Table 8 Occupation Distribution of Sampled Households

Occupation	Number of HHs	Percent
Agriculture(Self)	10	35.72
Daily Wages (Non- Agriculture as well as Agriculture)	10	35.72
Traditional Occupation	8	28.56
Total	28	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

[Note: *Traditional Occupation means Tailoring and Playing Panche Baja* Table 5.1 shows that the higher percent of the respondents are engaged in daily wages which is primary occupation. About 35.72% of the respondents are involved in wage labour. Other occupations are agriculture 35.72% and traditional occupation 28.56% which is supported them economically to fulfill basic requirements.

5.2. Secondary Occupations of Damai Group

There are indications of changes in the choice of occupations made by individuals of Damai community. Some of the Damai respondents are reported to have adopted labor work as their primary occupation. But some young generations are adopting services in GoN and services in foreign countries as their primary occupations. In the household survey, Damai respondents were asked to give information about their past occupations, present occupations and the interest of the children in future. Among the respondents today, more than 28.58% have reported Wage Labour related in agriculture as well as non- agriculture was there primary economic activities in this study area. Only some of them were in regular job in Nepal and foreign country which is shown in the table 5.2.

Table: 9 Secondary Occupation Distributions of Sampled Households

Occupation	Number of HHs	Percent
Agriculture (Self)	7	25
Daily Wages (Agriculture as well as non- agriculture)	8	28.58
Service in Nepal	3	10.73
Service in Foreign Countries	4	14.27
Traditional Occupation	6	21.42
Total	28	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

[Note: *Traditional Occupation means Tailoring and Playing Panche Baja*]Table 5.2 shows that, about 28.58% of the Damai respondents reported to have adopt their wage labor is the main occupation. Other occupations are agriculture 25%, service in Nepal (10.73%), service in foreign countries (14.27%) and traditional occupation (21.42%). Identically, an equal number of males and females were reported to have adopted daily wages as their primary economic activity exacted to the agriculture. No females have entered services.

5.3. Land Holding Size

In the field observation, it was found that there was not enough size of land for agriculture for their survival. Therefore, the Damai of Raspurkot VDC are adapting different other occupations as well as agriculture. Some of them have small plot of land owned to cultivate, but majority of them cultivated the lands of Brahmans and Chhetris. Landless people work in the field of landlords for their survival. The distribution of land holding among the Damai in this study area is shown in the table 5.3.

Table 10 Land Holding of Damai Households

Land Area in <i>Ropani</i>	Number of HHs	Percent
Below 1	9	32.14
1 to 2	10	35.71
2 to 4	5	17.81
Above 4	3	10.63
Landless	1	3.71
Total	28	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Table 5.1 shows that average landholding size per family is 1.83 *Ropani*. The maximum land holding of the visited households is 6 *Ropani* and Landless household is also found which consists of 1 household. Fragmentation of land due to the segregation from the family members is the main cause to have minimum lands. It shows that most of the people of Damai group are marginal.

5.4. Types and Numbers of Livestock

The entire Damai groups have some kind of livestock. The Damai group is holding pig as the main livestock in this study area. This helps to increase their economic status. On landan average, the Damai group own 3.6 heads of livestock. The situation of the livestock holding in the sampled household in the study area is presented in Table 5.4.

Table 11 Livestock Population Holding by Damai Households

Animals	Number	Average Animal per HHs
Cow	15	8.82
Buffalo	30	17.65
Goat	115	67.65
Pig	10	5.88
Total	170	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Table 5.2 shows that most of the households keep cow, pig and buffalo. The average animals of households are cow 8.82%, buffalo 17.65%, goat 67.65% and pig 5.88%. As the animals are tamed, all of those have different purposes for the Pariyar families. The respondents reported that they keep the cows for milk. The buffalos are kept because it has double uses for man that are it gives milk and is used for meat. Goats are reared for the source of income, but the Damais of Raspurkot VDC-8 keep the pigs for meat. Especially, the Damai housewives and the children take care of the animals in this study area.

Table 5.3 shows that average landholding size per family is 5.6 *Ropani*. The maximum land holding of the visited households is 2 *Ropani* and Landless 1 household is also found which consists of household. Fragmentation of land due to the segregation (isolation) from the family members is the main cause to have minimum lands. It shows that most of the people of Damai group are marginal.

5.5 Traditional Occupations of Damais

Especially, the traditional occupations of the Damai caste refer the tailoring and playing *Panache Baja*. They are involving in the occupation from the ancient time to present time. The main traditional occupation of Damai people of the study area are discussed below from ancient time of division of caste system as well to the modern time. The overall ideas about these both the occupations in course of the study. The Damai households of Raspurkot VDC-8, Pyuthan are discussed below:

5.5.1 Tailoring

Tailoring is a major traditional occupation of the Damai people of Raspurkot Pyuthan from generation to generation. The tailoring was taken as the main source of living for the Damais in past as they used to sew the cloths of other castes in yearly wages called *Bali*. Bali is a system of taking crops from other people who are supposed to be the Balighar of Damai. Instead of taking cash they receive certain crops like paddy, maize etc for their *livelihood* as wage. But now, only there few HHs of Damais are adapting this profession. Some the young generations say that they have no idea about tailoring. They told that they were not interested in tailoring. Because of long generation gap and changing of time the new generations are going to drop out this traditional occupation. They like to choose other occupations for their earnings. Because of less earning in tailoring and due to the access of alternative job for earning, development of technology they are leaving their traditional occupation. Therefore, the change of time and situation brought the state of detraction towards tailoring among the young Damais. They go out of home for the seasonal labor works, police and army services etc. now. Agriculture is also followed by aged population as well as youths nowadays. Among 28 households, only 12.3% are following the tailoring as their occupation according to their traditional idea.

5.5.2 Beating Panche Baja

Panche Baja as is a band of traditional musical instruments having the unity of five such as *Damaha*, *Tamko*, *Jhyali*, *Sahanai*, and *Narasingha* which is played in any happy ceremony in almost all the Hindu societies. Beating *Panche Baja* is another traditional occupation along with tailoring in this Damai community from long past. Both the old and young generation of Damai people are involved in this occupation in a few numbers. But only 12.3 %households are engaged in the occupation along with the other professions such as tailoring, farming, labour works etc The job of beating *Panche Baja* preserves the culture not only of the Damais but also of other castes, because of non-damais people also increase the skill of beating panche Baja.

5.6 New Occupation Adopted by Damai Groups

Beside the traditional occupations of the Damais of Raspurkot, they are adapting other new occupations nowadays. Less number of the households are running their traditional occupations such as Tailoring playing *Panache Baja*, but the larger number of the Damais are depending on labor work, agriculture, services (Army, Police) etc. On the other, some of young Damais are working in foreign countries.

5.7. Income from Other Occupational Work

Out of the total Damai families 32% are engaged in wage labour while 68% are involved in other income generating activities such as tailoring, playing *Panache Baja* and other services like army, police, agriculture, labor work etc. These are the only sources for the families' income. Annual income of off-farming occupation of Damai group is shown below the table 5.3

Table 12 Annual Income of off-farming Occupation of Damais per HHs

Type of work	Income in Rs./year	Households	Percent
Labour Work	20000	14	50
Traditional Occupation	40000	10	35.71
Others	60000	4	14.28
Total	1,20,000	28	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

[Note: *Others include Foreign Employment and Service in Nepal*]

Among the total number of households, 50% are engaged in labour-intensive works. They are bound to do such works because they lack skill.35.71% traditional occupations and the rest of the respondents here are engaged in other works. The total amount of yearly income of labor-intensive works is Rs.90000 per household. They earn Rs.10000 from agriculture yearly and by traditional occupations they get Rs.35000. On the other, the Damai's annual income by others is Rs.70000. Altogether, all the Damai of Raspurkot VDC-8 earn total amount Rs.120000 per year.

5.8. Annual Income of Damais

The annual income of the sampled households from the all sources ranges from Rs. 15000 to Rs. 120000. The income of Damai family has observed by adding the total current market value of all agriculture production and total income from non-agricultural sector. As shown in the table 5.7, the households with annual income below 25000 have been found 23.58% of total households. Proportion of households whose income range from Rs. 25000 to Rs. 50000 is higher in the sample. Above the annual income Rs. 75000, only 10.72% of the Damai households earn. Annual income of Damai households is shown below in table 5.4.

Table 13 Economic Status of the Damai community

S.N	Income(RS 1000)	No of HHs	Percentage
1	Below- 25	8	29
2	25-50	12	43
3	51-75	5	18
4	Above 75	3	11
Total		28	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Figure 1 Economic Status of the Damai community

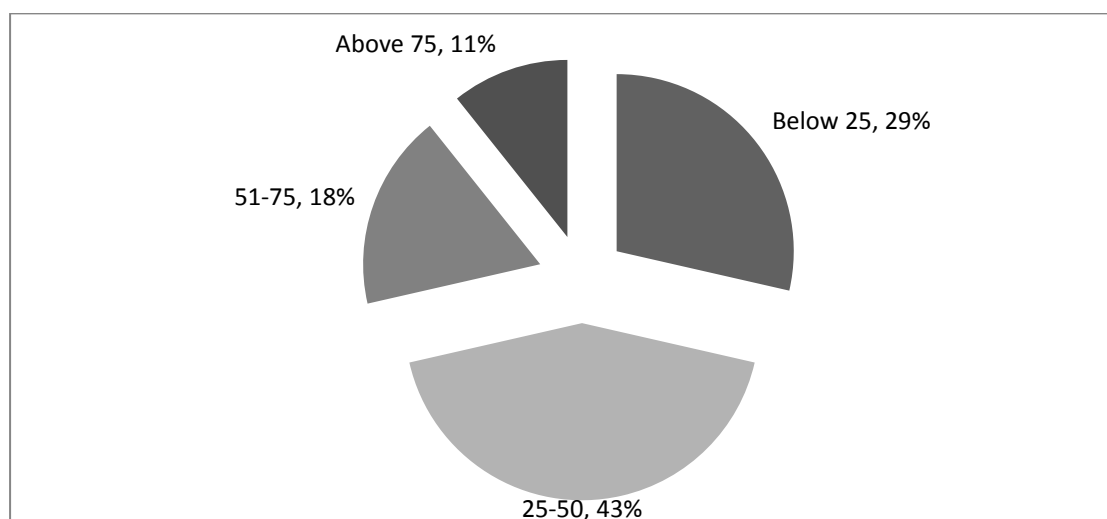


Figure 5.8 among the total households 28, 29% households found to earn below 25 thousands annually. The largest percentage of household is 43% which earns between

25-50 thousands. Likewise, 18% household is found to earn 51-75 thousands. Only 11% households earns 75 thousand and above.

5.9. Expenditure of Income

Main expenditure headings of the sampled households are food, clothes, health and education and interest of loan. All the sampled households live in their own house so that spending on housing is not accounted in the study. Share of expenditure on food 60% of their total income which is greater if we count the market price if self - produced goods also. Similarly, spending on clothes is second larger amount of the total expenditure that is 15%. Thirdly, education and health is third large part of the total expenditure which is 5% and other 5% of total income is spent for paying interest of loan. On the other, the remaining amount of income of the Damais has been saved.

5.10. Satisfaction with Current Works

Out of total 28 households in Raspurkot VDC, 35.72% (10households) reported that they are satisfied with wage labour as an occupation because they have been able to make sufficient income from it for their family. A total of 25% respondents stated that they are less satisfied from their current occupation. Only 21.42% of the respondents said that, they are very satisfied from their occupation. And 17.85% of the respondents are not satisfied with their occupations. This status is presented in the table below.

Table 14 Satisfaction Status of Damai

Satisfaction Status	Number of HHs	Percent
Very Satisfied	6	21.42
Fairly Satisfied	10	35.72
Less Satisfied	7	25
No Satisfied	5	17.85
Total	28	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Among all the Damai households, are not satisfied (17.85%) with their current works because their expectation is higher than they are achieving now. But the others are less or more satisfied as their desires are being fulfilled any way.

5.11 Factors of Change in Traditional Occupation

The following factors cause the change in traditional occupations that are:

5.11.1 Economic Factors

Change in traditional occupation of Damai group is caused because of the economic change of Damai people in this study area. The 20 households reported that the main cause of change in traditional occupations is economic. The development of infrastructure and the growth of tourism have given rise to unprecedented economic changes in Raspurkot VDC-8. These changes have had great consequences for the subsistence agriculture of the local farmers, traditional occupation of the artisans, and the economic and social relationship between the artisans and the farmers.

Traditional occupation pays very low wages that cannot fulfill their fundamental necessities like the expenditures on education, health, different social activities, and the expenditures on their desires as well. So they need to make fast money which is impossible through traditional occupation. Since they have not sound economic condition, they are forced to change their traditional occupation and find an alternative like foreign employment.

In this scenario a respondent Bal Bahadur Damai said; after the construction of road to this village, I started tailoring shop near the school in a small market area. I used to earn only sufficient to feed my family by *balighare pratha* but now I earn one thousand daily.

Similarly, another respondent Baburam Pariyar said; before I went for foreign employment I used to help my father in sewing the clothes of our customer (*Bista*) that only helped for our food but now I go to gulf country. I earn minimum one lakhs annually that support my family not only for food but also for education, health and beside that we also save some amount regularly in cooperative. Now my family members are happy with my occupational change.

5.11.2 Surrounding Environment

Although, in this study area, the people of Damai group are considerable, they are dominated by the Brahman, Chhetry community. So others influenced their own culture. The 10 households reported that another cause of change in traditional occupations is surrounding environment of present days. Gradually, the Damais left their traditional identities and occupations due to modern invent of readymade clothes, modern musical instruments which enter into competitive manners that replace their traditional occupation. In this way, they are going to drop out tailoring and playing *Panche Baja* as professional trends. At the same time the tailoring, *Hudkely* dance and playing *Panche Baja* are not respectable professions in local areas. Damai people feel inferior these days if they have to do so.

Due to the effect of media, most people know about new idea, fashion and new mechanism. So they also want to use new technology. The traditional workers do not have skills enough to satisfy the locals of this era. When Damai cannot fulfill the locals' desire, they cannot gain satisfaction through traditional work. Therefore they have to be away from the traditional occupation voluntarily or involuntarily. Another reason behind this consequence is disrespect of the so-called upper caste people of the surrounding. The society has undergone tremendous socio-cultural changes. Yet the caste-based domination prevails in there. This has become one of the major push factors for them to leave their traditional occupation.

A respondent Bompal Damai said; 5 years ago I used to make *Nara* an instrument made with the fresh skin of buffalo, used in plugging. But now this profession is not respected by my children also force not to make it. So I left that work and that instrument is replaced by plastic ropes.

5.11.3 Development of New Tools and Technology

Development and technology is another factor to drop out the tailoring, playing *Panache Baja* and *Hudkely* dance culture in this study area. The 15 households reported that the next cause of change in traditional occupations is Development of New Tools and Technology. In ancient time, the Damai people had monopoly over such traditional occupations but the development of technology in various sectors such as communication, transportation, etc. started working as the substitute of the

Damais which are more responsible to drop out their traditional work. The replacement of Damai people from their traditional occupation may have the flow of ready-made cloth and may be their inefficiency to stitching perfectly as per the demand of people. Different kinds of development infrastructure joined the Dalit group to outside. After that they were attracted to other strategies for livelihood.

New technology and ideas are being invented around us every now and then that can help to work very easily at low time production as well as low cost consumption. Traditional occupation cannot compete with new technology and invention. New technology can help to do the work faster producing more attractive goods but traditional mechanism cannot do in such a way. So they cannot stay with traditional mechanism. Consequently, they must change their occupation.

In this scenario a respondent Dil Bahadur Damai said; after the entry of new musical system in *deusi, vailo* of tihar festival our children started to use sound system instead the instrument made by us from the skin of animal. Now I don't get order for making such traditional instrument and I am seeking for another occupation.

5.11.4 Education and Knowledge

As education develops the knowledge of human beings, the Damai households of Raspurkot VDC-8 are also changing their society a little bit now. Even though, these Damais are not well educated formally, they are learning something from the surrounding situation. They are following other occupations these days because of education and knowledge. After increasing access on educational sector, gradually they were catching the alternative strategies for livelihood according to their ability and qualification. As a result, the Damai people had forgotten their own traditional occupation. 18 households clearly reported this while the research was going on. On the other hand, the lack of skilled training program is another factor for the drop out of traditional occupation. Without knowledge nobody can do. The Damai people of research site have minimum knowledge about playing Baja and Tailoring. So development and education without practical knowledge is the major factor to leave it totally. Another cause behind their shift from given occupation is the lack of familiarity to the changing trends of the modern society. In such a way, the Damais

are shifting towards other optional occupations as education and knowledge is another factor of change of occupation.

In this respect a young boy Madhu said; when I got higher secondary school degree, I got a chance to work in cooperative thereafter I did not go to play *Baja* in different ceremony. I have no proper skill on playing *Baja* too.

5.11.5 Lack of Financial Support, Narrow Marketing and Less Return

This Damai group of study area is uneducated and financially it is poor. This group is not capable to improve financial condition itself because mostly the households are used as farmer labors and they play the traditional music and tailoring market in narrow and less return. Their traditional music instruments are going to be replaced by the modern musical instruments. The tailoring market of this group is going to be replaced by the clothes prepared by the modern tailoring machines and new technology and is in marginal quantity. Neither Damai people have new techniques nor do they have money to learn the new techniques for tailoring and playing modern instruments. They are unable to buy these new instruments. Ultimately, the traditional occupations are going to be disappeared from this community. Lack of financial support, narrow marketing and less return etc. are also the factors of bringing the change of occupations in the Damai people of Raspurkot VDC-8, Pyuthan.

Large part of Damai community is illiterate and semi-literate due to which they are compelled to carry on the low paid traditional work. Since they follow the tradition, they produce the traditional kind of household goods. But that does not pay them enough. Moreover, their market is too limited. Migration is another reason for the adverse effect in their occupation which results in low demand of their products. As a consequence, Damais are obliged to get away from their occupation.

While interviewing for this research, Buddha Bahadur Pariyar said; I used to prepare at least 30 pair of pant short in a month now I prepare only 10 pair due to decreasing demand. Now day's villagers go to city for different purposes and they buy readymade clothes there so we are day by day forced to leave this profession.

5.11.6 Dominance by the Modern Tailoring Techniques and Modern Instruments

Generally the tailoring work of Damai people is with hand. Even some body has tailoring machine; they are under traditional knowledge in tailoring skill. The requirement could not be fulfilled by the traditional method of tailoring. In the way, there are new techniques and machines for tailoring which can fulfill the requirements in short period of time easily. The products prepared by modern techniques are in massive quantity and modern fashionable design which can be sold in low price. These facts attract other people who are depending upon professions of Damais of Raspurkot VDC-8, Pyuthan. There are modern musical instruments for playing *Baja* in market. They do not have the capacity to buy the modern musical instruments which are the product of science and technology. So Damai people are not skillful for the modern fashionable wearing products and playing the modern musical instruments. They cannot develop their skill and buy the modern tailoring and way of playing musical instruments due to their poverty. That's why the market of tailoring and playing *Baja* with their traditional instruments are ultimately in danger now. As a result, their traditional professions are going to be disappeared. It is also a vital factor for the shifts and changes of the traditional occupations of the Damais of this study area. The Damai people have followed the different economic activities for their survival. They categorise their economic activities as traditional and modern. Their traditional economic activities have been dominantly affected by the westernized tailoring and musical instruments. Fancy dresses have replaced the traditional clothing and drum sets have replaced *panche baja*. A group of old Damai, Tanka Bahadur, Tuk Bahadur said; our sons are not able to play these *Baja* they play modern musical instrument. After our death these *Baja* will only remain for observation.

5.11.7 Food Sufficiency Condition

Food sufficiency is defined as the condition in which people have sufficient food that is required for them for whole year and food deficiency is the condition in which people do not have sufficient food. The major food crops such as rice, maize, millet etc. are grown in the study area. Because of the small plot of land, the production is not sufficient to fulfill the consumption needs of the people– the Damais. Moreover,

the limited land itself has been facing the decline of its fertility. Their dependencies on baalipratha and khetala pratha have not been sufficient enough to provide them with food. So-called upper-caste land-owners have left their land barren causing the insufficiency of food in the local. Only a few Damais have self-sufficient capacity of food provision to their family.

A respondent Koili said; our father in law sold our fertile land in cheap to a Brahman buyer. Now we are resting in stony area. Produced food of our own land lasts only for 3 month. My husband is working as watchman in India to solve our hand to mouth problem.

CHAPTER- VI

CONCLUSION

This research is based on the overall survey of the Damai people of Raspurkot VDC-8 of Pyuthan and especially it is the analysis of occupational changes of this society. The Damais are those people who fall into a category called the ‘Dalits’ who are living in different Hilly and Terai areas of Nepal. From ancient time, the Damais have been having their own identities which are going to be lost by the shift from their traditional occupations to other occupations. Especially, the traditional occupations refer the Tailoring and playing *Panche Baja* in the context of these Damais. The main objective of this study is to find out and examine the traditional occupation in changing context along with their socio-cultural aspects of the Pariyar (Damai) community of Raspurkot VDC-8, Pyuthan district. This study also has to the minute observation of the changes of the occupations of the Damai people of this study area. Having their traditional occupation, they are engaged in agriculture, services in Nepal and foreign countries etc. This study analysis the socio- cultural and occupational conditions of these Damais at present time. In such ways, the present research basically talks about the changes in the professions due to modern insufficiency and the disinterestedness of the youths about their past occupations. But, some of the Damai households are adopting their traditional occupations too.

On the other hand, this study deals with adoption theory which is the major process of socio-cultural and occupational changes. This process of socio-cultural and occupational changes always flow in a dynamic way as the society has a lot of diversities. Basically, all the human beings have the adoptive mechanism according to the time and situation. This research deals with the adoptive nature, causes and the result of changes in Damai people of Raspurkot VDC-8, Pyuthan. Surrounding environment also affects the social structure and in this study, descriptive research design was used to meet the objective of this status of the Damais, so they are changing their occupations research. As well as, all Damai people of Raspurkot VDC were universe among them 28 samples were selected for this study. Data were selected through the census method. Both qualitative and quantitative data were captured primary and secondary sources. Key Informants Interview, interview and

observation were used for the data collection in this research. Similarly, simple tables, charts and simple statistical tools were used for data analysis in this study.

Out of the total population of 28 Damai people, most of the family members are not educated but they have admitted to their children to school nowadays. The dropout rates of the Damai students in the school are very high in. It was found that the Damai generally live in the medium family size. But looking through their history, they had a big joint family. The Damai family is the patrilineal family, where the males have a dominant figure and take cares about all the family affairs and is the main decision maker.

Damai celebrate all the Hindu festivals like *Dashain, Tihar, Teej, Maghe Shakraanti, Holi, Janai Purnima, New Year, Eve, Saune Sankranti, Harelo, Krishan Ashthami, Shivratri etc.* while the Christian celebrates Christian festivals but unlike the other caste groups. Damai use liquor as an important part of all the celebrations. If the Damais were asked that wheatear they still feed on the carcass (body), they said that their older generations used to.

The conclusion from the data analysis is that modernity in tailoring techniques and the advancement in modern musical instruments, these Damais are day by day leaving their traditional occupations. Economic growth, environmental change development of skill, improvement of education and development of the tools and technology also is bringing the changes in occupations of the Damai people of Raspurkot VDC-8, Pyuthan district. There is 30% of the Damai people continuing their traditional tailoring and playing *Panche Baja*. The others are associated with agriculture, daily wages and other works. Almost all the households do not own any sufficient amount of land and they cultivate on others land. Thus, instead of agricultural work they are depending on various labour works. All females of this community work in the house taking care of the children and are dependent to the husbands.

About 28.5% of the Damai respondents reported to have adopted their wage labour is the main occupation and 21.42% are adapt the traditional occupations. Most of the households keep Goats and Buffalos. The total amount of income of labour-intensive works is Rs. 20000 and Rs. 40000 from traditional occupations per year. Out of total 28 households in Raspurkot VDC-8, reported that they are satisfied with their occupations because they have been able to fulfill the basic need of their family.

ANNEXES

Annex-1

Questionnaire or Research Questions

1. Name:.....2. Age:.....3.

Religion.....

Social Status

1. Structure of family
 - a) Single
 - b) Joint
2. Do you know about origin of Damai?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
3. How many similar are here in your caste?
4. Have you any customs?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
5. If any what are they?
6. Are their any people who change religion?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
7. What changes occur in your religions functions?
8. Attired about discrimination
 - a) What type of feelings over the discrimination?
 - b) What are relations with other caste?
 - c) What are the visions of other caste towards you?
 - d) Have any change in rational perspective?
 - i) Yes
 - ii) No
 - e) If any? What are they?
 - f) Do you know when it has started?

9. Attitude with education
 - a) What type of your attitude are their educations?
 - b) Are your children go to school?

Cultural Status

1. Lodging fooding
 - a) What's the dress-up of the male?
 - b) What's the ornament of women?
 - c) Any change in caring them?
 - d) Describe your fooding?
2. Festivals
 - a) Name your festivals.
 - b) Your any social fests and festival.
 - i) Yes ii) No
 - c) Any change in your festival?
 - i) Yes ii) No
 - d) If any, what?
 - e) Religious rites and rituals?
3. Conjugation
 - a) Describe the conjugative process.
 - b) Inter caste marriage exists or not?
 - i) Yes ii) No
 - c) If not why?
4. Who performs the rites and rituals if your culture from birth to death?
5. Band (Panche Baja)
 - a) Relate about your band.
 - b) Name of bands
 - c) Who construes the band?
 - d) In which occasion, does it play?

- e) Any change in playing it?
- f) It is affected by tradition
- g) What are your ration issues?
- h) Any suggestion to solve it.

Economic status

- a) Income sources of your family
 - (i) Play band (ii) Sewing clothes (iii) Labor work (iv)

Others

- b) Are you satisfied with it?
 - i) Yes ii) No
- c) If not? Why?
- d) Any assistance from your family?
 - i) No ii) yes
- e) Are they getting idea of your business?
 - i) Yes ii) No
- f) How many land have you get?
- g) If you have any cattle livestock?
 - i) Yes ii) No
- h) If yes, how many?
- i) Which occupation has adopted?
- j) How much money do you earn from new occupation per year?

Specify in Rs.....
- k) Do you satisfy the current work?
 - a) Very Satisfied b) Less Satisfied
 - c) Fairly Satisfied d) No Satisfied
- l) What are the Factor Causes of Change in Traditional Occupation?
 - i)
 - ii)

iii)

iv)

Other Related Questions

1. What are their occupations?
2. What's their relation with other?
3. What are other view to wards them?
4. How are they behaved?
5. What are their feasts and festivals?
6. Is there any change in socio-economic and cultural situation?
7. What are their main issues?
8. What are the measures to solve them?

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