

# **SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF CHAMAR COMMUNITY**

**(A Case Study of Madhuri Jabdi VDC in Bara District)**



**A Thesis Submitted to  
Faculty of Humanities and Social science  
Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts in  
Sociology**

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TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY, KIRTIPUR,  
KATHMANDU  
2013**

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**KIRTIPUR, KATHMANDU**

**LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION**

This dissertation entitled "**Socio-Economic Status of Chamar Community: A Case Study of Madhuri Jabdi VDC in Bara District**" is submitted by Mr. Parshu Ram Prasad Yadav for the partial fulfillment of Master of Arts in Sociology completed under my supervision and guidance. Therefore, I recommend it for the final evaluation to the dissertation committee.

Date: .....April, 2013

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**LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE**

This thesis entitled "**Socio-Economic Status of Chamar Community: A Case Study of Madhuri Jabdi VDC in Bara District**" prepared by Mr Parshuram Prasad Yadav has been accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master's of Arts in Sociology.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION**

**LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**LIST OF TABLES**

## **CHAPTER - I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 General Background	1
1.2 Statement of Problem	3
1.3 Objective of the Study	5
1.4 Importance of the Study	5
1.5 Conceptual Framework for the study	6
1.7 Organization of the Study	7

## **CHAPTER - II**

<b>REVIEW OF LITERATURE</b>	<b>8</b>
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## **CHAPTER - III**

### **RESEARCH METHODS**

3.1 Rationale for the Selection of Study Area	15
3.2 Research Design	16
3.3 The Universe and Sampling	16
3.4 Nature and Sources of Data	17
3.5 Data Collection Tools and Techniques	17

3.5.1 Interview Schedule	17
3.5.2 Observation	18
3.5.3 Key Informat Interview	18
3.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation	18
3.7 Limitation of the Study	19

## **CHAPTER - IV**

### **SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE CHAMAR HOUSEHOLD**

4.1 Household Structure of the Chamars Community in the Study Area	20
4.2 Socio-economic Characteristics of the Chamar Household Respondent	21
4.2.1 Composition of Household Respondent	21
4.2.2 Types of Family	22
4.2.3 Age and Sex Composition of the Household Population	23
4.2.4 Marital Status of the Household Population	25
4.2.5 Educational Status of the Household Population	26
4.2.6 Land Distribution	28
4.2.7 Sufficiency of Food Production	29
4.2.8 Occupation and Source of Income	30
4.2.9 Livestock Holding in Households	32
4.3 Political Participation	34
4.4 Citizenship Status	34

4.5 Opinion of the Chamar Respondent about Women Status	34
4.5.1 Views Regarding the Property Rights for Women	35
4.5.2 Views Regarding the Educational for Women	36
4.5.3 Significance of Income for Women	36

## **CHAPTER - V**

### **SOCIO-CULTURAL PATTERNS OF CHAMAR COMMUNITY**

5.1 Life Cycle of Chamars	38
5.1.1 Birth and Naming	38
5.1.2 Pasni	38
5.1.3 Marriage	40
5.1.4 The Clan and Kinship	42
5.1.5 Death Rites	43
5.2 Religion Pattern	45
5.2.1 Religious Customs, Believes and Practices	45
5.2.2 Dress and Ornaments	46

## **CHAPTER - SIX**

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

6.1 Summary	48
6.2 Conclusion	51

## **REFERENCES**

## **APPENDIX**

## **LIST OF TABLE**

- Table 4.1: Composition of the Chamar Household Respondent by Age and Sex
- Table 4.2: Distribution of Chamar Households by their Family Type
- Table 4.3: Distribution of Household Population by Age and Sex
- Table 4.4: Distribution of Marital Status of the Household Population by Sex
- Table 4.5: Distribution of Household Population by their Educational Status
- Table 4.6: Distribution of Chamar Households by Land Possession of Land
- Table 4.7: Distribution of Chamar Households by Sufficiency of Food Production
- Table 4.8: Occupational Status of the Chamar Household Population by Sex
- Table 4.9: Distribution of Livestock Holding of the Household Respondent
- Table 4.10: Political Participation of the Chamar Household
- Table 4.11: Citizenship Status of the Chamar Household
- Table 4.12: Respondent Opinion on the Parental Property Rights, Education and Income for Women

# CHAPTER - I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 General Background

Nepal is a multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic country. The way of life, dress, language, socio-economic and cultural identities of the people are apparently different followed by geographical variation. Therefore, each group of people have their own identities, they do have their own cultural practices and other numerous characteristics. It has provided shelter and security for a large number of migrants from different places comprising different races and represent different ethnic, culture and linguistics background. There are three major groups according to racial origin, namely Tebeto-Burman (Mangolid), Indo-Aryan (Indian origin) and Astro-Asiatic (cited in Subedi, 1998).

Among the caste/ethnic groups, Chamars are the mostly labor community of Terai region of Nepal which is lesser known and backward community in the Terai region. They are born in poverty, live in poverty and die in poverty. The Chamars are one of the untouchable caste or Sudras, according to Hindu religion. Their traditional occupation is leather work (Mahato, 1993). But their tradition as work is to serve as mid wife, drummer and dumping the dead body of animals. They are mainly found in Siraha, Saptari, Bara and Parsa. Chamars are the indigenous people of Terai region of Nepal. They are generally of the black-skin.



The origin of '*Chamar*' or '*Chambhar*' is derived from a Sanskrit word meaning working in leather we can also say that the word "*Chamar*" has taken from the word "*Chamakar*". Chamar means leather and '*Kar*' means worker. So, the '*Chamar*' is derived from the word "*Charmakar*". Chamars are also called "*Mochi*". Nowadays, they are known as "*Ram*" also. Their mother tongue (language) is "*Maithili*" (Adhikari, 2002).

Chamar is in the rank of untouchable, according to Hindu caste system. Although, they are minority in number, they can be found all over the Terai. They are '*Sudra*' and their traditional occupation is leather work. Nepali Dalit Commission (NDC) has identified 20 Dalit peoples in Nepal. The NDC defines, Dalits are those communities who, virtue of caste based discrimination and intouchability, are most backward in social, economic, education, political and religious spheres and are deprived of human dignity and social justice (NDC, 2060). So, the NDC includes the Chamar caste in Tarai Dalit categories.

In India, Chamar and Sarki, both are classified into Harijan groups. Traditionally, even in modern society, Chamar and Sarki both are called untouchable caste. Indian government & some extent Nepalese government have taken many steps to uplift the status of Chamar and Sarki caste (Mahato, 1993).

Chamars were socially and economically exploited. They were victims of economic, racial and social discrimination Chamar is the caste or Harijan. So they might have different socio-demographic pattern to other caste of Nepal (Shah, 2008). Thus, this study tries to give socio-economic conditions of

Chamar of Madhuri Jabdi VDC in Bara district. It also tries to give social, cultural and economical changes that have occurred in Chamars of the study area.

## **1.2 Statement of Problem**

Nepal's governance system is highly influenced by the unequal caste system which divides people into four hierarchies with Brahmins on the top, Chhetries second, Baishya third and Dalits at the bottom of the ladders (Gautam, R and Thapa, 1994). If one attains the caste position by birth there is no possibility of upward mobility irrespective of the level of education or income. Brought into governance system during the formation of the Nepalese state, the caste framework gives Brahmins and Chhetries a disproportionate say in state administration, these two caste groups, constituting around 29 percent of the total population, control 77 percent of bureaucracy and senior position in army and police, 67 percent of state and constitutional body and 63 percent of the current legislature. The Dalit who constitute around 16 percent of the total population do not have a single position to policy making status in the bureaucracy, army or police. Ethnic communities are ranked third in the caste ladders, are the other discriminated group. They constitute over 30 percent of the total population, but have a negligible participation in state and constitutional policy making bodies (RRN, 2003, 122).

Among the various caste/ethnic groups, Chamars are one of the indigenous Dalit groups of Nepal. They are found mainly in Terai region. Most Chamars are the poorest. They are born in poverty, live in poverty and die in

poverty also. They are all engaged in labor, some of them are engaged in agriculture sector also. But they have not sufficient income to fulfill the needs to survive. They have to do hard work to get food. They are facing some problems like, poor-economic condition, illiteracy, malnutrition, high infant and maternal mortality rate and poor health. They are still found suppressed, exploited, neglected and forced to live insecure life because of illiteracy, lack of knowledge of health and sanitation, lack of knowledge of family planning, poverty and discriminatory legal system. The socio-economic condition of Chamars is degrading day by day due to lack of knowledge about such community to policy maker.

Various ethnographic studies have been undertaken in Nepal. Some studies have focused on demographic socio-economic and cultural change in Nepalese people (Bista, 1996). However, studies about Chamar at Madhuri Jabdi VDC of Bara district have taken. Due to continuous interaction with other groups, they have been losing their own social and cultural identity. The economic, social and cultural condition of Chamars in Nepal is seriously thinkable. Likewise, the Chamars at Madhuri Jabdi VDC of Bara district are also suffering the same problem.

Therefore, a study of ethnographic of Chamar is very essential throw light on socio-economic backwardness of these ethnic groups. The importance question is in spite of the government efforts to uplift the living condition of rural people especially minority group like Chamar, they are not joined the main stream of national development.

Due to modernization and urbanization Chamars have changed their traditional pattern of life. By considering this fact, this study focuses the following research problems.

- ) What is the present socio-economic condition of Chamar peoples in the Madhuri Jabdi VDC of Bara district?
- ) What are the cultural patterns of Chamar in the study area?
- ) What are the problems of Chamar community to lead in main stream?

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

The general objective of the study is to identify the socio-economic condition of Chamar people in Madhuri Jabdi VDC of Bara district in the context of changing Nepalese society. The specific objectives are: -

- ) To find out the status of Chamars community in the study area.
- ) To explore the cultural pattern of Chamar community that stems to their ritual performance in Nepalese society.

### **1.4 Importance of the Study**

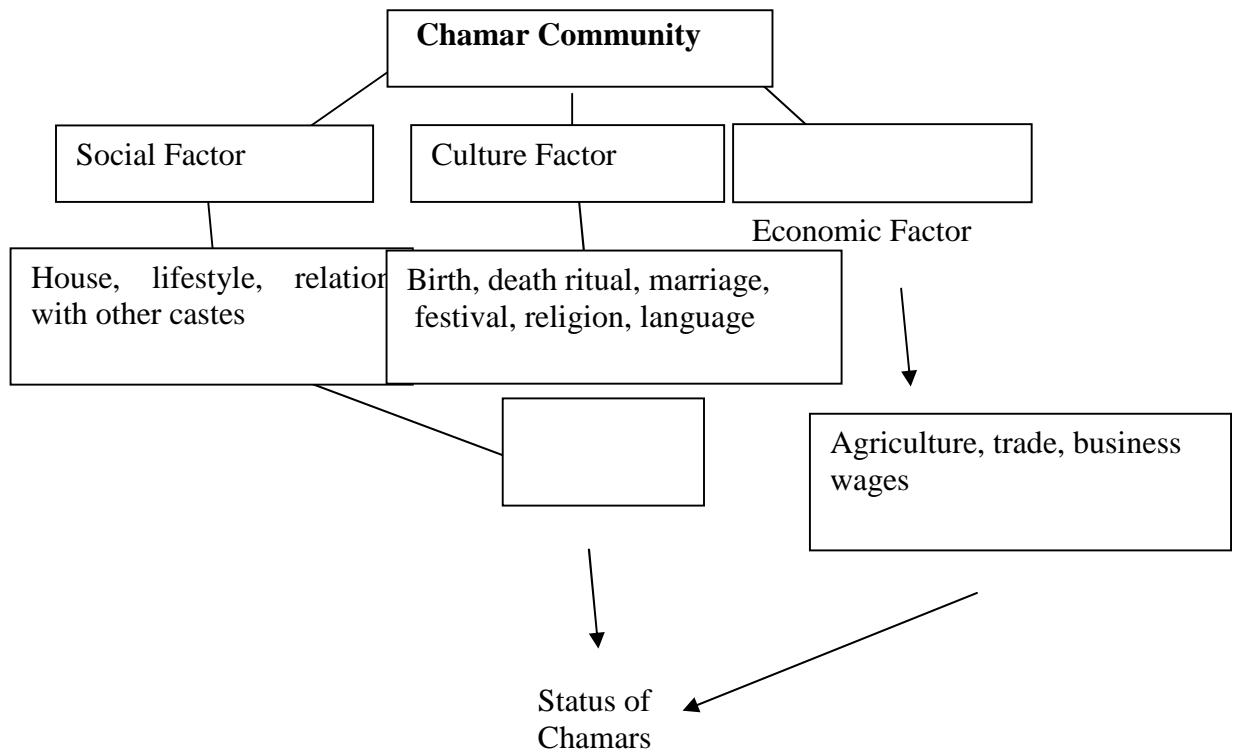
All the Nepalese villagers are affected by numerous problems including racial discrimination, unemployment, illiteracy, malnutrition, lack of food, clothing and high magnitude of poverty of rural households poses serious problem both for the planners and the poor villagers. Nepal is still facing the problem of narrowing the gap between haves and have-nots. Despite the

efforts of the government to provide an equal share of benefits of its development activities to deprived of the society, the primary needs that lies ahead is to help these communities by broadening their perception, raising their economic level and education level to take part in the mainstream of national life with dignity and with a sense of belonging.

Thus, this study aims to present information about the socio-economic condition among Chamar community. The results of the study may also be useful for other reacher of socio-economic as well as other development programs in the region.

### **1.5 Conceptual Framework for the study**

The identity of the Chamar community is measured by socio-cultural, economic and demographic factors which determine the social status of Chamars. Access to resources, opportunities and mobility in such society is determined by education and chances of participation in social activities, which finally influenced the social status. Economic variables as ownership of land, employment and economic status play important role to build up the self-confidence, which directly influence the Chamars status in the community.



## 1.6 Organization of the Study

This study is organized into six chapters. The first chapter discusses the general background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study and importance of the study. The second chapter presents the review of literature. The third chapter contains the methodology adopted for the study in which various methods of data collection and analysis are described.

The fourth chapter describes the setting the study area as well as socio-economic status of the Chamar community in the study area. The fifth chapter discusses the cultural pattern of Chamar peoples. Finally chapter six presents the summary and conclusions of the study area.

## **CHAPTER - II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Review of literature is an important element of research design. It is the description about the related topics, which is published by scholars, researchers and professionals. This section of literature review is discussed in three parts: theoretical review and empirical review.

Historically, Nepal social holds deep rooted in the Hindu caste system, with hierarchy of different groups of people within the system. Dalit or untouchables are one of the groups of people with in this Hindu caste system whose socio-economic and political conditions are lowest compared to other groups of Nepal.

In the past, Dalit were derogatory referred as 'untouchables', 'oppressed classes', 'downtrodden', 'exploited social class', 'lowcaste', etc. Indeed, the term Dalit originates from a Sanskrit word 'dal' which means 'to split' crack and open. Dalit means, according to Sanskrit scripture, things or persons, who are cut, split, broken or torn as under, scattered or crushed and destroyed. In both Nepal and India, however, the use of term is very recent and it symbolizes a struggle for reorganization of self-identity, expression of historical reality of oppression due to caste-based untouchability and occupations and a determination for creation of egalitarian society (Bhattachan et. al, 2003).

Historically, the so-called 'high caste' people of India gave insulting names to Dalits that includes Dasa, Dasysa, Raksasa, Asura, Avarna, Nisada,

Panchama, Chandala, Harijan and Untouchable. The British rulers named them as the Depressed classes and 'the scheduled caste, the word Dalit is used in both India and Nepal (Thapa, 2005:104).

One of the hierarchy orders of caste is untouchability. Our society is improving its hierarchical order of caste system day by day .It is a system, which has invited worth of social reformers and has become legally abolished .It has become a social course. So many steps have been end this caste system from society but so far all efforts in this regard have not yield desirable results .The untouchability or Dalit imposes certain restrictions on the untouchables that stand on the way of their social, economic and political development.

It is very difficult to give a clear definition of untouchability .The untouchability prefers group of prejudices and discrimination the social inhabitation of touch emerging from the characteristic of Hindu caste system. Sah (2005: 66) has defined the term untouchable castes are those who suffer from various social and political disabilities many of which are traditionally prescribed and socially enforced by higher castes.

According to Manu the Hindu law giver, practice of pratilima marriage was the cause for the origin of untouchability. Children born of such marriages were called 'Chandals'.The Chandalas was the progeny of the Union of Brahmin female with a '*Sudra*' male (Rao, 1990:645).



According to Koirala (1998), Dalit or Untouchable refers to 'a group of people, who are religiously, culturally, socially and economically oppressed, who could belong to different language and ethnic groups'.

According to Dalit commission (2060), there are 23 castes lies under Dalit. Which are as follows:

Lohar, Kami, Kasai, Badi, Kusule, Chayama, Dhobi, Dusadhn, Battar, Mushar, Satar, Sunar, Damai, Sarki., Gaine, Kuche, Chamar, Paswan, Tatma, Khatbe, Santhal, Halkhor.

Chamars belongs to Indo Aryan family at the time of the beginning of the establishment of civilizations on the sides of Ganga and Jamuna rivers. The origin of Chamar, or Chambhar, the name of the leather working caste, is derived from a Sanskrit word meaning working in leather. We can say that the word 'Chamar' has taken from the word 'Charmakar'. 'Charma' means leather and 'Kar' means worker. So, the 'Chamar' is derived from the word 'Charmakar' (Subedi, 1998). They know about agriculture except animal keeping. The kirat who were living widely in the lap of Himalayas were of same natured and also unknown to language in the eye of Aryas. So, Aryas named them 'Kirat' which is a Sanskrit word .When Aryas entered on the region of Kirat, they knew to tame goats and sheep. They were spread towards the east from the region of Ganga till B.C. 600. They are supposed to enter into Nepal at the beginning from south and west. Big eye was the distinctive character of Aryans, which differ from Mangolians. The 'Khashes' of Nepal were the branch of Aryans.

Gupta (2005) have prepared these about the socio-economic impacts on the Chamar, in which they have drawn the picture of changing condition of Chamars. During a long period of time the leather work men and village watchmen had become scarce and they gradually started to shift away from their traditional occupation. They now are depending mostly on agriculture and labour.

Hutton (1963) stated the Chamars of Chattisgarh, though belonging to that exterior caste of leather worker whose touch is polluting the castes of Hindus, are here cultivators tilling the land whose women have a great reputation locally for their handsome features. The Chamars are hereditary leather workers, who cut and dry skins, make shoes, sandals and water bags and also do tanning where a Dhor population is not to be found. They are relatively well off economically and are rated the higher in the ritual hierarchy among the 'Harijan' (Patwardhan, 1973).

Bista (1996), a renowned anthropologist is also silent in his books about Chamar. In his book "people of Nepal" he only says. Chamars have change of dirty and menial works in the community and eat any animal caress except dog, cat or horse. The Chamars play drums in the wedding band.

Subedi (1998) has shown the ethnographic, socio-cultural life, economic and occupation condition of the Chamar. He says that Chamars sit and play with high caste and following their festivals rites, and habits. They are becoming more interesting and conscious about education. Impact of modernization most of them have shifted from their traditional leatherwork to other occupation.

Ghurye (1969) has given some account about Chamars. He says: the Chamars, leatherworker of Maratha country have Ahir as one of their sub-caste. The Chamars of the Central Provinces have sub-caste named Koris Chamars who are said to be the descendants of alliance between Chamars and Koris or weavers". By far the largest group appearing under a single name, though widely distributed being represented over the whole of the Indo-Aryan area and sporadically even in Madras is the Chamar or the Chambhar, whose name proclaims him to be a worker in leather. We know definitely the under more or less the same the Chamar's craft flourished in the Vedic age but are not quite sure that it was entirely free from the stigmas of despise. Manu speaks of two groups or castes concerned with leather working, both of them being very mixed in origin. Their names are the unfamiliar and non-current Karavara and Dhigana. The former is described in occupation terms as Chamars and Chambhars, for the leather working caste in the Indo-Aryan regions. The Dhigvana's occupation, that of working in leather and trading in leather products, is represented recent and contemporary society in the above mentioned regions by the Mochi or Muchi. From the context in Manu's text it is clear that though the groups must have been despised first because of their work in dirty, filthy and impure commodity, yet they were not required to live outside villages or towns."

Patwardhon (1973) says, the Chamars hereditary leather workers. They work in leather, cut and dry skins, make shoes, sandals and water bags and also do tanning where a Dhor population is not to be found. They are relatively well

off economically and are rated the highest in the ritual hierarchy among the Harijans.

Sherring (1974) writes Chamars from nearly one-fourth of all the inhabitants of Bilaspur, where they have been settled for so many centuries that they have no tradition of any other home. They possess active and well set figures, are more brown than black in colour, and are less marked in features than the easy and higher classes.

Linche (1979), says that among the cases of Agara, these is a large group of a caste, named 'Chamarakar who are concerned with leather work is considered unholy job according to for the enlistment of this caste a political party, named Republic party of India has established. In this way, the process applied to uplift their caste is given the name of collateralization.

Sharma (1997) found that Damais are the ones who maintain their caste-based occupation as their highest priority even if a large number of them also involve in agriculture. Chhetri (1999) suggests within Dalit groups, Damais have the highest proportions who are continuing their caste-based occupation. Besides, some Karnis, a few Sarkis, and Dhobis are also involved in their caste-based occupation regularly. But, among Kamis, only goldsmiths or Sunar have maintained their traditional occupation. Decreasing involvement in caste-based occupation is mainly due to the fact that, for example, blacksmiths are hard hit by the availability of factory-produced farm implements, Damais by the availability of ready-made clothes, and Sarkis like Chamar by the availability of cheap footwear (Sharma et. al, 1994: 52).

In brief, though the caste-based occupation was the major means of livelihood for Dalit populations up to couple of years ago, it has been gradually disappearing over the years primarily due to three reasons: i) they themselves think that their occupation has lower social prestige and demeaning socially; ii) young educated Dalit boys and girls do not like to follow their fathers' foot-steps, and iii) they are finding difficulty in competing with the open market which is supplying various types of similar goods depending upon the needs of the customer (Chhetri, 1999).

The overall economic activity rate, according to 1991 census, is 63.6 per cent of the total Dalit population aged 10 years and above, which is slightly higher than the national average (57%). Similar pattern is found for both male and female Dalits. Economic activity rate is also higher among Hill Dalits (65.8%) than that of total Dalits and even higher than the national average. This is so for both sexes as well, whereas, it is slightly less among Tarai Dalits (57.4%) than the national average. The notable thing among the Tarai Dalits is that males' economic activity rate is higher than females' in all categories. This clearly shows that male involvement in diverse economic activity is considerably higher, whereas female involvement is lower indicating that females are more dependent on males. Except Dhobi, all Tarai Dalits have the rate of 80 per cent or more, which no Hill Dalits have.

In view of the above situation of the Chamar peoples of different cultural groups, it would be desirable to see the socio-economoc status in the changing context of Tarai Dalit in in Nepal.

## **CHAPTER - III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter provides the details of the procedure adapted for the present research study. It includes the rationale for selection of particular VDC as a case and describes the research design. It also provides the details of the nature and sources of data, universe and sampling procedures, techniques of data collection, and analysis and limitations of the present study.

#### **3.1 Rationale for the Selection of Study Area**

As mentioned earlier main objectives of the present study is to describe the socio-economic status of Chamar community at micro level. For this purpose, Madhuri Jabdi VDC of Bara district is selected as a case for the study. Bara district lies on the middle part of Nepal. It is spread over the plain land in the southern part of the country. There are 98 VDCs in Bara district. Madhuri Jabdi VDC is one of them. This VDC is bordered with Narahi, Pipara Basatpur, Sukhi Pathara VDCs to the East, Bariyapur VDC to the West, Dahiyar VDC to the North and Babuayain VDC to the South. In the VDC there are altogether 572 households and 4,178 populations with 2,134 males and 2,044 females (VDC Profile, 2067). Majority of the Madheshi caste/ethnic groups like Yadav, Chamar, Shah, etc. have been stayed in the VDC. The VDC was selected for the following reasons:

- )] The socio-economic condition of Chamar of this VDC is measurable in comparison to other castes
- )] The researcher had explored a general situation that Chamar people seemed somehow exploited and poor in every aspect of social life with

comparison to other community. So, the researcher was taken the Chamar community of Madhuri Jabdi VDC to find out actual situation about them.

) Researcher had got an opportunity to work in Madhuri Jabdi VDC of Bara district as native and accessible site for the study.

### **3.2 Research Design**

The study has been based on descriptive as well as analytical in nature. Being a descriptive work, it does not have any formal hypothesis regarding socio-economic status of Chamar in Bara district the main focus of the study is to find out and analyze the socio-economic status of Chamar of Madhuri Jabdi VDC though the description of institution, social organization and economic condition of Chamar people.

### **3.3 The Universe and Sampling**

The universe of the present study comprises of all the households residing in Madhuri Jabdi VDC of Bara district. The researcher was selected a one ward from the VDC by lottery method. The selected ward is ward nos. 1 which has found 59 households (VDC Profile, 2067). Among the 59 household, 21 household is Chamar households in the selected ward. A census method was applied for the study due to small size of population of the Chamar households. All the selected Chamar household respondents were taken as a unit of analysis. For the selection of interview, researcher was self decided at time of survey that is able to provide the details information about on overall household information and Chamar issues.

### **3.4 Nature and Sources of Data**

In the present study, both primary and secondary data have been used. The primary data were collected from the study area. During the fieldwork, primary data were collected from the respondents and key informants. The secondary data are taken from published and unpublished literature such as books, journals, articles, research reports etc.

### **3.5 Data Collection Tools and Techniques**

In order to obtain necessary and reliable data for this study the researcher has used following the tools and techniques for the study.

#### **3.5.1 Interview Schedule**

A set of structured and unstructured interview schedule was designed for interview and apply to meet the study purpose. The structured interview schedule deals with the purpose of getting information on socio-economic backgrounds of Chamar peoples and their cultural pattern, family affairs, and access/control/commanded over the economic resources in their household and community. Unstructured questions were designed for their opinion/view related with their cause of poverty and backwardness etc.



### **3.5.2 Observation**

Observation method was applied for some related gathering field data. Physical settlement of Chamar community, socio-cultural values, agricultural practices, behaviour and attitudes were observed by indirect participation. It is helped to the researcher to understand language, male and female communication in social ceremony, and seeking behaviour, household's works.

### **3.5.3 Key Informant Interview**

The key information has been collected from key informant using the semi or unstructured interview schedule. The informal interview or discussion was conducted with the local school teacher, intellectual person of village and senior citizen of the Chamar community, local political leader, INGO/NGOs, etc.

### **3.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The collected data were processed manually. They were manually edited and coded. The coded data were tabulated manually. An attempt was made to keep all the data in a master table. All tables were interpreted on the basis of percentage distribution.

### **3.7 Limitation of the Study**

Everything has its own limitation. This study also has research demarked with in a specific area is supposed to be scientific and systematical. Taking this fact into consideration the purpose of this undertaking is to study how the social change has affected the socio-economic status of Chamars. Chamar tribes are in confined within the limitation of this study area. Chamars here are the main actors.

The main aim of this study is to find out the socio-economic condition of Chamars in Madhuri Jabdi VDC. However, it is supposed that this study would be representation of the study relative to this area. It is also micro level study which attempt to explore the socio-economic condition of Chamars.

- ) This study is limited in the Madhuri Jabdi VDC of Bara district. Therefore, the studies could not be generalized Chamar community throughout the country.
- ) This study is prepared for academic achievement of Master Degree. Therefore, large area could not be incorporated in the study.
- ) Simple statistical tools were used to analyze the obtain data. So, the findings of this study may or may not be applicable at the others castes community but relevant in some of micro perspective.

## **CHAPTER - IV**

### **SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE CHAMAR HOUSEHOLD**

This chapter attempt has been made to describe the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the Chamar households covered by the study area. The first section presents the household structure of Chamar, and secondly, brief socio-demographic characteristics of the sample households.

#### **4.1 Household Structure of the Chamars Community in the Study Area**

The houses structure of the VDC was very peculiar. They used natural resources while building houses. The houses were generally made of wood, straw, and Khar and generally do not make windows. A house contains only a single room; the corners are used as kitchen and the passage in between as bed room, living room or dining room. The other higher classes' people build concrete '*Kachhi*' homes. The Chamars '*Toles*' are similar to the other '*Toles*' of Terai. Chamar '*Toles*' are cluster of houses or hamlet ranging from 5/6 to 10/20 houses at most.

The houses are made especially of mud, bamboo, and dry straw. The supportive poles are made of trees trunks .Since clay is used to fill the gap in the frame, such walls usually crack after drying. To prevent the walls from cracking and shrinking straw is added.

## **4.2 Socio-economic Characteristics of the Chamar Household Respondent**

It has already been envisaged in the conceptual framework of the present study that religion, cultural, socio-economic and demographic factors can explain the level of Chamar Caste. Accordingly, in the present study, some background characteristics of the household respondents were taken into consideration. In this part of the research report, an attempt has been made to describe the composition of respondent, household population, religions, and cultural, socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the Chamar households of the Madhuri Jabdi.

### **4.2.1 Composition of Household Respondent**

The respondent is important aspects to collect the various data or information for the study. In the study area 21 Chamar household are existed. The respondent age and sex composition of the household have been taken into consideration that was given overall information to the researcher. The details of the distribution of the respondent are presented in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Composition of the Chamar Household Respondent by Age and Sex**

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Nos. of Household (%)</b>
Below 19	2	3	5 (23.8)
20-59	10	5	15 (71.4)
60- above	1	-	1 (4.7)
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>21 (100.0)</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2013

The Chamar respondent was classified into three age groups, e.g. below 19 year, 20-59, and 60 years and above (Table 4.1). The classification was based on the role expectations in general maturity of respondent by age. The table 4.1 shows that total respondents were 21 where male in 13 and female in 8. Majority (71.4%) of the both male and female respondents belonged to the maturity or respectfull or active age group (20-59 years).

#### **4.2.2 Types of Family**

There family is divided into two categories i.e. nuclear and extended types of family. Nuclear family means the family with husband, wife and their unmarried children. Extended family included husband, wife, and their married and unmarried children living together and having meal in same kitchen. Some of the caste/ethnic groups still live in joint family but some other caste/ethnic groups like to live in nuclear family. In nuclear family, decision making role of women is higher than in extended family. The distribution of Chamar household family structure is presented in table 4.2.

**Table 4.2: Distribution of Chamar Households by their Family Type**

<b>Family type</b>	<b>Nos. of Huseholds</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Nuclear	12	57.1
Exteded	9	42.8
Total	21	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Out of total 21 household, 57.1% of the sample households comprised nuclear family and the remaining 42.8% of the households were extended family (Table 4.2).

#### **4.2.3 Age and Sex Composition of the Household Population**

Age and sex are important demographic characteristics. Age of an individual denotes one's mental and physical matureness, roles and responsibilities and status in the family and in the society. Age makes difference in working hours, type of works, mental and physical awareness, responsibility and involvement in decision-making. Sex refers to the biological differences that are universal and unchanging. The sex difference also refers to the gender roles. The people of the community take the sexual division of labour as traditionally granted and make gender specific distinctions between what men and women should do. Thus, age and sex are the most important personal characteristics. In view of this, age and sex composition of the population of the sample households have been taken into consideration.

The population of the sample Chamar households was classified into four age groups, e.g. 0-5 year, 6-15 years, 16-59 years and 60 and above years. The classification was based on the role expectations in general. The babies, infants and children of upto the age of 5 years were considered as completely dependent population in many respects. The children and adolescents of the age group of 6-15 years were considered economically inactive and dependent population. They were taken as the school going age population. The youths and adults of the age group of 16-59 years were taken as the economically active population. And, the old people above 60 years of age were considered as the economically inactive, at least in the formal sectors. The details of the distribution of the population of the Chamar households by age and sex are presented in table 4.3.

**Table 4.3: Distribution of Household Population by Age and Sex**

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Nos. of total (%)</b>
0-5	7 (41.1)	10 (58.8)	17 (15.5)
6-15	17 (54.8)	14 (45.1)	31 (28.4)
16-59	30 (55.5)	24 (44.4)	54 (49.5)
60- above	3 (42.8)	4 (57.1)	7 (6.4)
Total	57 (52.2)	52 (47.7)	109 (100.0)

Source: Field Survey, 2013

The distribution (Table 4.3) shows that about half (49.5%) of the Chamar population belonged to the economically active age group (16-59 years). The population that belonged to completely dependent and economically inactive age groups (0-5 years and 60 and above years) accounted only 22.0 percent.

Thirty-one percent of the population belonged to the school going age group (6- 15 years).

As shown by the table, in the age group of 0 to 5 year female population accounted for 58.8 percent as against 41.1 percent male. Under the population of 6-15 age group 54.8 percent was of males' population, where as 45.1 percent of females'. Under 16-59 age group population were 55.5 percent of males' and 44.4 percent females' respectively. Under 60 and above age group, males' population 42.8% and female's 57.1% could be seen. We could see female Chamar caste population higher than males only in this age group.

#### **4.2.4 Marital Status of the Household Population**

Marital status makes difference in women's status, because it is through marriage that the women change their status from the status of daughter to daughter-in-law, which increases their responsibility regarding the household works and decision making process. In the Nepalese context, marriage leads a women to and child bearing. With increasing role expectations the married and unmarried have different status due to this position in Nepal. In the life of women, martial status is an important indicator.



**Table 4.4: Distribution of Marital Status of the Household Population by Sex**

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total (%)</b>
Unmarried	30 (56.6)	23 (43.3)	53 (48.6)
Currently married	26 (50.0)	26 (50.0)	52 (47.7)
Widow/widower	1 (25.0)	3 (75.0)	4 (3.6)
<b>Total</b>	<b>57 (52.2)</b>	<b>52 (47.7)</b>	<b>109 (100.0)</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2013

The distribution (Table 4.4) shows that 48.6 percent of the total household population was unmarried. Nearly about half of the population (47.7%) was currently married and few cases (3.6%) were widow or widower.

#### **4.2.5 Educational Status of the Household Population**

Education is an important element of life that exposes the bright future of life. It plays a vital role for the development of people, national economy as a whole. It is the principle mechanism or agent for fulfilling the awareness and change of the people. Therefore it is a central to the process of empowering both men and women.

Likewise, educational attainment is the most important factor for the household population which they can face and solve every household problems and so on. For education development, the VDC has only two primary level community schools. The study area peoples were gone to higher study in near of VDCs.

**Table 4.5: Distribution of Household Population by their Educational Status**

<b>Literacy</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Literate	40 (57.1)	30 (42.8)	70 (64.2)
Illiterate	17 (43.5)	22 (56.4)	39 (35.7)
<b>Total</b>	<b>57 (52.2)</b>	<b>52 (47.7)</b>	<b>109 (100.0)</b>
<b>Level of Education</b>			
Informal	6 (27.2)	16 (72.7)	22 (31.4)
Primary	15 (60.0)	10 (40.0)	25 (35.7)
Lower secondary	11 (73.3)	4 (26.6)	15 (21.4)
Secondary	8 (100.0)	-	8 (11.4)
<b>Total</b>	<b>40 (57.1)</b>	<b>30 (42.8)</b>	<b>70 (100.0)</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2013

As shown by the table 4.5, majority of the Chamar household people (64.2%) were literate and the remaining one third of the Chamar people were illiterate. Among the literate, 57.1% were male and the remaining (42.8%) were female. Among the illiterate people, women accounted for the majority (56.4%) as against the (43.5%) illiterate male. Chamar women are comparatively less literate because the concept of education for women was not in the past and the people were made aware of the concept of education for women since last 10-15 years. As the study shows all the women of older generation are illiterate and all the women of new generation are all literate.

Table 4.5 shows also the distribution of Chamar household population according to their level of education. Those who have not joined school but

they are able to read and write are kept under the 'informal education'. Similarly who have joined school and passed class five examination are kept the category 'primary' level, passed class eight level examination are kept 'lower secondary', and who have passed 'ten class' examination are kept under the category 'secondary level. Out of total 70, only 8 (11.4%) male household population has been passed the secondary level of education. Similarly, 35.7 percent have passed primary level, 31.4 percent have aware by informal education, and 21.4 percent have attained lower secondary level of education of the household population. The educational background of the Chamar population has low literacy rate in male counterpart to female.

#### **4.2.6 Land Distribution**

Nepal is an agricultural country. More than 90% of it's people are dependent in agriculture. Land was found to be the main source of living in Chamar community too. A person is called wealthy or rich who possess large size land. Not only economically, but also socially he has a high position. But there is a greater number of those who have less sufficient land. While seen the present land possession condition of Nepal, 70% of the total households have less than 1 hector each (CBS, 1991). In the table 4.6 land distribution of the sample Chamar households has been shown. The land is shown in '*Kattha*'.

**Table 4.6: Distribution of Chamar Households by Land Possession of Land**

<b>Land (Kattha)</b>	<b>Nos. of Households</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1-5	5	23.8
6-10	11	52.3
11-20	4	19.5
21-above	1	4.7
Total	21	100.0

As mentioned in table 4.6, about one quarter (24.8%) of the Chamar households has less than 5 '*Kattha*' of land. About a half (52.3%) of the households has the land of 6-10 *Kattha* and remaining a quarter (24%) of the people had more than 11 *Kattha*. In those households, food was not sufficient for the family whole year.

#### **4.2.7 Sufficiency of Food Production**

The main economy of Chamar in the Madhuri Jabdi was also found as agriculture as Nepal's economy as a whole has dominance of agriculture. Over 80% of people work in the agricultural field. Over 50% of the people do not have sufficient food from agricultural production. When agri-product suffices fooding, men can pay attention for children's education and healthy, etc. But when their hard work does not suffice fooding, their attention is only for fooding and they cannot pay attention for education and health. And this condition not only troubles the family but also nation and affects national economy, social, cultural and political aspects. From the field study

area, the condition of food sufficiency of the sample households was as follows:

**Table 4.7: Distribution of Chamar Households by Sufficiency of Food Production**

<b>Status</b>	<b>Nos. of Households</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Sufficient	10	47.6
Not sufficient	11	52.3
Total	21	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2013

More than one half (52.3 %) households were found with enough food production as shown by the table 4.7. The households that have enough food products were only 47.6% of the households. Those who have not enough food production work for the secondary income source.

#### **4.2.8 Occupation and Source of Income**

Occupation is that factor which helps to improve socio-economic status of the people. In Madhuri Jabdi VDC, major occupation is their traditional farming. However, they are shifted in many kinds of occupation like service, business, etc.

Traditionally the Chamar main occupation is leather work. These days leather work cannot support them for their livelihood and they were sifted in agricultural works. But agriculture is still the main occupation of Chamar in the study area. Besides agriculture, the Chamar take on the occupation like

study, livestock keeping, daily wages labour, service, etc. In the occupational cases, generally, population in between the age of 15-59 years is considered economically more active in Nepal. It means that below 15 and above 60 aged groups is considered dependent population. However, in rural setting of Nepal above 6 years' population is also actively involved in economic activities like household chores and agricultural activities. In Madhuri Jabdi VDC, 6-10 years old children provide crucial assistance to their parents in household, agriculture and livestock hearing sectors. They begin helping their parents with domestic work as well as agricultural tasks. The occupation distribution of the Chamar household populations are as following table 4.8.

**Table 4.8: Occupational Status of the Chamar Household Population by Sex**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total Household Population (%)</b>
Agriculture Farming	20 (57.1)	15 (42.8)	35 (35.3)
Wage Labour	11 (52.3)	10 (47.6)	21 (21.2)
Study	10 (58.8)	7 (41.1)	17 (17.7)
Livestock rearing	4 (44.4)	5 (55.5)	9 (9.0)
House wife	-	4 (100.0)	4 (4.0)
Job/service	4 (100.0)	-	4 (4.0)
Unable to work	-	1 (100.0)	1 (1.0)
Do not work	1 (100.0)	-	1 (1.0)
Trade	50 (50.5)	42 (42.2)	99 (100.0)

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Table 4.8 shows that agri-farming was found as the major occupation for household source of income for agriculture was 35.3% households. Similarly, wage labour was second main occupation for household income

(21.2%) Livestock caring was main sources of income for about one-half of the households (47.62%). The other occupational sources of income include job/service (factory worker at Birgunj Coridor) respectively.

#### **4.2.9 Livestock Holding in Households**

Livestock is one of the important asset of Nepalese people for getting milk, meat, ghee, egg etc. Livestock is also a means of liquid assets which can be easily converted into cash during crisis. Crop production is supplemented by livestock by providing manure and using by products. Livestock holding also is directly related to forest product requirements such as pasture, grass and fodder besides timber products for the construction of sheds. So, the respondents are asked to provide the number of different animals they held. The following table 4.9 shows the number of livestock holding of Chamar households in the study area.

**Table 4.9: Distribution of Livestock Holding of the Household Respondent**

<b>Types of animals</b>	<b>Nos. of livestock in per HH's</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Cow/Ox	10	6.8
Buffalo (he/she)	15	10.2
Goat (he/she)	12	9.2
Chicken	44	30.1
Duck	38	26.0
Pig	27	18.1
Total	146	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Above table 4.9 shows that out of all livestock, the highest number of livestock raised is chicken, where percentage of chicken is 30.1. After it, the second highest percentage of livestock is duck and pig which 26.0 percent and 18.1. After then the percentage of buffaloes (10.9%), goat (9.2%) and cow/ox (6.8%) are followed respectively.

### 4.3 Political Participation

The Chamars participation in the politics is least. However who participates in politics they also involve only in mass meeting or really but represented at the ward level also. Among the various political parties, CPN-UML/CPN-ML have influenced the Chamar communities .They believe that these parties are for poor. They also believe that these parties will make end the touch ability and caste racial. But nowadays they also don't believe to these parties.

**Table 4.10: Political Participation of the Chamar Household**

<b>Involvement</b>	<b>Nos. of Households</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	8	38.0
No	13	61.9
Total	21	100.0

Sources: Field Survey, 2013

Above table 4.10 shows that only 38.0 percent of Chamar households are involved in politics and 61.9 percent are not involve in any parties.



#### 4.4 Citizenship Status

In the study area most of the house holds had got citizenship. Although they were back ward caste however they had got citizenship.

**Table 4.11: Citizenship Status of the Chamar Household**

<b>Citizenship</b>	<b>Nos. of households</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	18	85.7
No	3	14.2
Total	21	100.0

Sources: Field Survey, 2013

Above table 4.11 shows that 85.7 percent has got citizenship and only 14.2 (three households) percent has not got citizenship due to lack of proof the citizen of Nepal.

#### 4.5 Opinion of the Chamar Respondent about Women Status

The respondent themselves agree that Chamar women status is low in comparison to men's. According to the respondent, the reason for their low status are, they have not right in households economic system, their own illiteracy, unawareness, patriarchal society where sons are recognized. In this present study, researcherI have tried to know the views about women's right in inherited property, about income for women and education for women. Their views are clarified from the following tables 4.12.

**Table 4.12: Respondent Opinion on the Parental Property Rights, Education and Income for Women**

<b>Property Rights</b>	<b>Nos. of Household Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Favour	20	95.2
Against	-	-
No Idea	1	4.76
Total	21	100.0
<b>Education for Women</b>		
Favor	21	100.0
<b>Income for Women</b>		
Favour	21	100.0

*Source:* - Field Survey, 2013

#### **4.5.1 Views Regarding the Property Rights for Women**

In Chamar a family divides property with the number of children in each son gets his share of inherited property. In the study, among 21 Chamar respondent 95.2% was in favour of property rights for women (Table 4.12). Their views reveal that the property holding can encourage the women in decision making about them. Regarding this Property rights matter none of the members were against the property right for women. In practice, parental property was not given any child or women in their community. It is a prevailing practice among the Chamar to provide share of parental property to a boy.

#### **4.5.2 Views Regarding the Educational for Women**

Education for women is the need of these days. Literacy and education qualification are vital indicators of women's social status. It is accepted by all that the role of an educated woman is very important to educate a family. There is lack of education facility in Nepal, and there is inequality in the educational level of men and women. There was less interest in education for women but now there is improvement. While studying whether the women are for or against women's education, the following informations were found among 21 Chamar respondent all of them were in favour of education for both men and women which can empower them in awareness and empowerment. So, education is an important mechanism of fulfilling agent fro awareness of change. It (education) is a central to the process of empowering both men and women.

#### **4.5.3 Significance of Income for Women**

The economic empowerment contends that women should gain economic strength; with it, they gain both visibility and power in the home and community. As women become major economic contributors or equal to men in economic terms their own men folk and society at large view them differently, and are forced to involve them in decision-making process. As has experiment about economic empowerments in that way Chamar household respondents were also in favour of this importance of income for women.

The above table 4.12 shows that, 21 Chamar household respondents' they are for the opinion of the need of income for women. According to them, if women are economically self-dependent, the economic burden of household for men becomes less and it helps for the empowerment of women. If women's economic status is raised their role in decision making also is raised.

## **CHAPTER - V**

### **SOCIO-CULTURAL STATUS OF CHAMAR COMMUNITY**

To understand a society, it is important to understand their culture which is the base of human being. Every society develops its tradition according to its geographical setting. It is essential to study the life cycle of a particular group to understand different aspects of their life. Hence, researcher was focusing on their food habits, clothing, religious practices, customs, beliefs and festival of the chamar of the study area. Some of important social custom of Chamar community in the study area has been described in this chapter:

#### **5.1 Life Cycle Ritual of Chamars**

In the Chamar community, birth, marriage and death rites are compulsory to be completed. First feeding (pasni) is not compulsory in the Chamar community. They celebrate and complete the ritual according to their tradition. On the basis of focus group discussion it was found that their life style is mostly similar to the Hindu such as.

##### **5.1.1 Birth and Naming**

Birth is a universal fact of human life. When a man and a woman get married, they are socially permitted to have sexual relations, after the conjugal life, they give birth to children and their social life starts.

A mother is kept in a separate room after the delivery for six days. The sixth day is called Chatiyar. On this day the mother purifies herself by taking bath, touching the items made of iron or furmeric powder. In addition, the child is named on this day. A Chamar pregnant women use to work in field before she gives birth to a baby. There is no special care to pregnant women. She doesn't get any special food .She does not consult to doctor. The mother-in-law looks after the pregnant women. The pregnant woman is required to eat enough rice but not any special diet food. From the day after the birth, the mother is given a broth of ginger mixed with sugar like substance called '*Shakhar*' and other spices also.

Naming (Chhathiyar) is performed on the sixth day after the birth of a child .This ritual is performed believing god writes the fate of the child on that day. Both child and mother are bathed; their nails are cut and dressed in new robes with yellow colour. Most Hindus named their children on the eleventh day but in Chamar community, they name their babies on the sixth day. Naming is not done as separate rite. Baby is given name after five days of his or her birth. There are not any special rules for giving name to a newly born baby. In the time of naming, new baby is kept in the lap of his or her father along with the family member. Appropriate name give after having necessary discussion with family members. On this occasion they invite women who cut the umbilical cord and took care of delivery. She gives the mother a bath and massages her and her children with mustard oil.

### **5.1.2 Pasni**

There is no classical rule for any rituals in Chamar community. The Chamar folks do not seem to practice the rituals of pasni. While the parents are eating, the child also eats the same food regardless of the age. Thus it is seen that no particular time or date is fixed for this feeding and hence no special feasts is necessary. So, the Chamar child commences eating solid foods at anytime prior to the age 5 or 6 months time period which is the time when only liquids are given to the child in most caste societies in Nepal.

### **5.1.3 Marriage**

Finding from focus group discussion with the respondents in the field survey, marriage talks are initiated by the girl's father as is the tradition among the Chamars. Two to six people from the girl's side go to the boy's house to short out the matter and observe the potential groom. If the group considers the boy suitable for their relative the girl, then they say so and the boy's parents give the girl's folks a meal and then send them off. The day after this, two to six of the potential groom's people go to the girl's house to see her.

The boy also accompanies this group and should he like the girl, then this is expressed to the girl's relative who gives the boy's group a meal and then send them off. During these meetings, the presentations of clothes and money are performed, but it is a two way affair. The marriage procedure is to investigate whether there is any agnatic link between the families of the boy and girl in generations, and thus many such matches had to be cancelled

due to the ties in some of their generations, which did not possess the none generations interval. A marriage in the Chamars society takes 5 to 7 days for completion.

The first day is started by singing songs which commence the marriage rites. These songs have themselves expressing love, blessings for a bright future after the marriage and such. On the second day at both houses, a paste, composed of turmeric, oil and pina or filtrate of pressed oil is rubbed on the bodies of the prospective groom and the bride. The same thing is done at the place where the girl lives. The forth day is actual day of marriage also called '*Janti Jane Din*' or the day of marriage procession's movement. While the boy in his own village goes from door to door, the girl does so in her own village. This system is called '*Bilauki Magne*'.

The first rite is that of presenting Tilak. Among the items presented to the groom are a Dhoti, Kamij, Rumal, shirts, and paints etc. Now the couple are taken and seated at Madba. It is constructed in many different kinds of ways, by these the Chamar folks. This ritual is followed by that ritual called '*Sindhur Halne*' where the groom and bride are considered really married. In this ritual, both men and women of both sides are involved. Now the bride's head is a nominated with oil and the groom now holding the Sindur in his left hand and using a wooden spoon with his right hand pours sindur on the sindo or hair parting of the bride .It is believed that while applying this Sindur none of it must drop onto to the ground. This is done five times by the Chamar bride.



Though the actual marriage is over, the Janti returns with the bride and she is made to stand directly in front of the main door of the groom's house. A basket or Tokari placed on her head, in which a tortoise bone is placed and then burnt. Five bowl of sweet rice or khir are thrown in five different directions. Now the bride and groom are allowed to enter in the house but obstructed by the groom's sister and Phuphu. This barrier is removed by presenting some items to sister and phuphu. After this, the groom's sister and phuphu wash the feet of the coupe and then take them in to houses. After that the couple has to worship the god. It is only after this ritual, the marriage ceremony is finished.

Child marriage and polygyny is prevalent in the Chamar. Payment of jari exists but in a very rare state because jari (marriage some one else wife while she is married to that person) is looked upon with scorn and even hatred by the Chamar society. Widow marriage is are not prevalent among the Chamar.

#### **5.1.4 The Clan and Kinship**

There are many clans among the Chamar which are Mochi, Ram, Harijan, Das, Ravidas, Mahara and Chamar etc. Among them, Chamar are in majority in study area. There was no hierarchy among the people with in the community.

Finding from focus group discussion with respondents in the field survey, kinship system of the Chamar is found to be similar to that of other communities. Basically, the Chamar relationship can be categorized into

consanguine and affined relationship. The Chamar regard blood relation as strongest form of relation. So, they consider paternal uncle closer than maternal uncle. The Chamar too have an elaborate system of kinship which is based on both supposed and actual genealogical ties. Both affiance and consanguineous kinship exists among them. When a the Chamar gets married he or she established relationship not only with the one he or she get married but also number of other relationships.

Kinship terminology in the Chamar local language such as husband-Beta ko Babu, wife- Beta Ko Mai, elder brother-Bhaiya, uncle- Kaka or Chacha, aunt- Kaki or Chachi, sister of mother-Mausi, husband of Mausai-Mausa, mother's father-Nana, mother's mother- Nani, etc.

The Chamar women avoid her father in law and husband's elder brother. When she has to speak with them she hides her face by '*Sari*'. The Chamar women never touch her husband's elder brother. If she touches him by mistake then she and her husband brother's both have to take a bath for purification. There are joking relationship between Sali and Sala, debar and Bhauju etc. They tease each other and make fun of each other. A Samdhi speaks frequently to Samdhi but a Samdhini hides her face with sari at the sight of Samdhi.

### **5.1.5 Death Rites**

On the death of the Chamar, those who are able to cremate the corpse, while those who are unable to bury it. When a person dies, the dead body is cremated in any selected area or at the side of river but body is buried. The

person who put on the fire to burn the dead body is called “Karta”.It is the eldest or youngest son who gives the fire to father or mother. He does not take salt and meat till 12 days. He takes milk, sugar, and fruits for 12 days.

The women of the house clean the house and compound with mud, dung and water mixture as soon as the funeral moves out towards the cemetery or cremation grounds and finish this job before the return of the funerals goers. After all the funeral goers return to the house of the deceased, a karahi or utensil shaped like a semicircle, live coals, stones and chill are placed on the path and these must be circled from the left side to right side, five times for each item. After completing these rounds, each funeral goers must eat some of the chili and then only enter the dwelling.

On the forth day after the funeral, they go to the place of burial or cremation and make a mound there. On this day, those who had gone for the funeral are invited and given food to eat. On the seventh day, the son of the deceased or karta is taken to a pond or river where he has to bathe and perform worship with barley, sesame, fire, placed on a banana leaf. At this time, five bowl of pind are made out of rice and karta pours milk on it. Once this is over, the pind is thrown into the river or pond and the karta bathes once more only after which he returns home.

Once the eleventh day, everyone including the karta, has their nails and hair cut and on the twelfth day, sraddha is performed. On this day, 12 pinds or bowl of rice is offered again as daan or donation charity. On the thirteenth day, the karta casts off the clothes he was wearing till then and wears new clothes. Thirteen pind or rice bowl is again offered as daan. On this day, the

karta eats meat, liquors, rice, and such food which were banned for him till then. If one does not receive the food items he desires to eat, then this person is not permitted to eat these food items for one year according to the custom of the Chamars and also other tribes who have the same sort of tradition. This becomes a taboo for a karta.

## **5.2 Religion Pattern**

It is essential to study the life cycle of a particular group to understand different aspects of their life. Hence, researcher was focusing on their food habits, clothing, religious practices, customs, believes and festival etc. in the study area.

### **5.2.1 Religious Customs, Believes and Practices**

Finding from focus group discussion with a dozen of respondents in the field survey like many other societies, the Chamar also regards nature as the supreme god. They also believe in supernatural power. They also believe in the normal conventions of Hindu religion like Swarga (heaven), Narka (Hell), and Dharma (good) and Pap (sin). The Chamar strongly believe that God is the maker of fate and destiny. The Chamar believe in ghosts, spirits, and witchcrafts as well. They believe that they are capable of doing anything using black magic. Ojha or Dhama/ Jhakri are supposed to be the witch doctor that fights against the witchcrafts.

The deities and Gods of the Chamars are similar to that worshipped by Hindus. Among the Devis and Devtas, they worship Kali, Nandi, Goraiyya,

Rakatmala, and Narsingh. Besides, these deities the Chamars family has a separate deity which they worship in their houses. To these, they offer blood scarifies of pigs, bokas or uncastrated goats and tender female goats or pathi for propitiation. The pujas are done by the Dhami who must be the Chamar also. Their greatest deity Bhagbatti is worshiped once a year on any month suitable for them, however, Asadh, Mangsir and Magh are the ones performed.

On the basis of focus group discussion it was revealed that they are celebrating festival mostly similar to the Hindu such as Sankarati, Phaguwa (i.e. festivals of colors), Dashain, Tihar, Chhath, Jitia, Jursital, etc.

### **5.2.2 Dress and Ornaments**

Dress and ornaments are one of the major indicators of the socio- economics status of caste or a community. Often the dress and ornaments used by a community are different from that of another based in their social, economic, religious and geographical condition. Although Chamars have their own kind of dress and ornaments ,which is similar to another castes like most of the Terai People, male Chamars wear Dhoti, Kurta, Langue, and Kamij as their traditional dress but young Chamars used Shirts, Paints ,vests ,etc. At the time of work in the field, they use langauti or lungi or Kattu for their comfort. Female Chamars wear Sari, Blouse and Shaya but young female Chamars use Samij-Solwar. In some of special function like Hat, Bazaar, Marriage etc, male Chamars wear Dhoti, Kamij, Gamachhi, Shirt, paints, shoes etc. While female Chhamar wear expensive sari, Shaya, blouse with

other make-up (Kajal, Poudher, Lipistic) these days School boys and girls use School uniform dress as required by their school.

Generally, male Chamars do not use any type of ornaments. Some males use ring made of copper, brass, iron etc. Major ornaments are used by female Chamars are use ring made of silver, copper iron etc, in hand and legs. They use Nathiya in nose, mala in neck, churi in wrist, sindur on forehead etc. Some wear Hasuli made by silver in neck especially because of their poverty .In general cases, they don't wear ornaments. Other ornaments are Loda (used in up side ear), Tilhari, Phuli, etc.

## **CHAPTER - SIX**

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the summary of the finding generated from the data analysis and interpretation has included. The findings regarding the socio-economic status of the selected 21 Chamar households.

#### **6.1 Summary**

The objective of the study is to find out the socio-economic status of Chamars community in the study area, and explore the cultural pattern of Chamar community that stems to their ritual performance in Nepalese society.

For this purpose, Madhuri Jabdi VDC ward nos. 1 of Bara district is selected as a case for the study. This is descriptive types of the study. Researcher was applied census method for the study due to small size population in the study area. Interview schedule was developed to collect all the household information from the respondents.

The houses structure of the Chamar was very peculiar. The houses were generally made of wood, straw, and Khar and generally do not make windows. The Chamars '*Toles*' are similar to the other '*Toles*' of Terai. Chamar '*Toles*' are cluster of houses or hamlet ranging from 5/6 to 10/20 houses at most.

The Chamar respondent was classified into three age groups i.e below 19 year, 20-59, and 60 years and above. The household respondents were 21 where 13 in male and 8 in female. Out of total respondent 71.4% of the both male/female respondents belonged to the age group 20-59 years.

Majority (57.1%) of the sample household is in nuclear family structure and the remaining (42.8%) are extended family.

Total Chamar household population of the study area is 109 where 57 is male and 52 is female. Among them, half (49.5%) of the Chamar population belonged to active age group of 16-59 years. Remaining dependent age groups (0-5 and 60 above years) accounted only 22.0 percent where 31.0% population belonged to the school going age group (6- 15 years).

Out of total, 48.6% of the Chamar household population is unmarried. Nearly about half of the populations (47.7%) are married and few cases (3.6%) are in widow or widower.

Majority of the Chamar people (64.2%) were literate and the remaining one-third people were illiterate. Among the literate, 57.1% were male and the remaining (42.8%) were female. Similarly, the illiterate people, women accounted 56.4% as against the 43.5% male.

Out of total literate population 70, only 11.4% male population has been passed the secondary level of education. Similarly, 35.7% have passed primary level, 31.4% aware by informal education, and 21.4% attained



lower secondary level. The educational background of the Chamar population has low literacy rate in male counterpart to female.

24.8% of the Chamar household has holding a less than 5 '*Kattha*' of land. Similarly, 52.3% of the household has holding 6-10 *Kattha* and 24.0% people holding more than 11 *Kattha*. In those households, food was not sufficient for the family whole year.

Agri-farming was found as the major occupation of the Chamar household (35.3%). likewise, wage labour is in 21.2%, livestock caring, job/service, etc. are also in other occupation respectively.

Out of all livestock, the highest number of livestock raised is chicken, where average number of chicken is 30.1. After it, the second highest percentage of livestock is duck and pig which consists on 26.0 percent and 18.1 percent.

Only 38.0% Chamar households are involved in politics and 61.9% are not involved in any parties. Out of total household, 85.7% has got citizenship and only 14.2% has not got citizenship due to lack of proof the citizen of Nepal.

The Chamar do not discriminate in son/daughter to share the inherited parental property right. Views regarding the property right for women 95.2% of households were in favour. Among 21 respondents, all of them were in favour of education and income for women.

Chamar have its own culture in terms of performing life cycle rituals and maintaining the closeness and distance to each other in their day-to day life. The common features among the Terai Dalits are: Hindus by tradition and trace their ancestry with some legendary Hindu Ascetics, man and common, and they speak Bhojpuri as their mother tongue. The Nepali, the national language of Nepal, is the second language for most of the Dalit Chamars of this area.

## **6.2 Conclusion**

Among the Terai Caste/ethnicity groups, Chamars are the mostly labor community of Terai region of Nepal which is lessor known and backward community in the Terai region. They are born in poverty, live in poverty and die in povety. The chamars are one of the untouchable caste or sudras, according to Hindu religion. Their traditional occupation is leather work. But their traditional work is mid-wife, drummer and dumping the dead body of animals. They are mainly found in Tarai district and spread several Tarai regions of Nepal. They are generally of black skin.

Chamar people of the study area were marginalized from main stream of the development process of the nation. They have no access to any natural resources, technological knowledge, educational opportunities, political power and employment opportunity. Daily labor work is the main occupations of most of the people where agriculture and trade labor are equal. Family size system has changed a lot majority of the chamars now prefer small size of family. Therefore, nuclear family system is being popular among them.

Because of the contact with the higher castes they are slowly following the habits of higher castes, they celebrate all festivals of Hindu, such as Jursital, Jitiya, Dashain, Dewali, chat, Faguwa etc. They also follow various the life cycle ceremonies.

All Chamar have been gradually shifting from their traditional leather work to other occupation such as towards labors etc. In the study area, many young Chamars have left the leatherwork. Very few of old generation have been practiced this work. After old generation, the new generation (all younger) people are engaged in other works such as agriculture, labor, service in other part of the country, house servant etc. Chamar people, who are engaged in leatherwork, are not taking it as the main occupation. They can't survive only by this work. It is necessary to change their traditional occupation.

At different times upper caste people had handed against of leaving the traditional work of chamar. How ever they are leaving their traditional work day by day. Although they were academic illiterate however they were awarded. They did not go to play drum in Dasain also. Now the percentage vegetarian is increasing in this community highly. Due to this, the saving rate is also increasing.

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**ANNEX-I**  
**Household Survey Questionnaire**  
**MA in Sociology, Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology**  
**2013**

Survey date:

Name of the Respondent:

Sex: Age:

VDC: Tole:

Socio-economic Characteristics

1. Types of Family

2. Family structure:

SN	Name	Relation with the Hhs head	Sex	Age	Marital status	Literary status	Education	Occupation
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								

4, How much land does your family own?

.....Kattha

5, Production is sufficient, do you sell the surplus?

a) Yes                      b) No

If no where from do you fulfill food deficit?

a) Service    b) Business    c)Wage earning

d) Borrowing      e) others

6, Types of livestock and number

.....

7, Do you have housing things?

a) Yes                      b) No

8, Do you have electricity?

a) Yes                      b)No

9, Do you have sanitation and drinking water?

a) Yes                      b)No

**Access/control over to economic resources**

1. Do you get chance to expenditure the households money for personal use?

.....



2. What do you think about backward?.

.....

3. What do you think about the property right for Chamar women?

.....

4. Do you have to say anything about women's personal condition in our society?

.....

**Cultural Pattern of Chamar Community**

1. Lifecycle of Chamar:

.....

2. Marriage Ceremony:

.....

3. Death ritual:

.....

4. Religious pattern:

.....

5. Labour system:

.....

6. Traditional occupation and Identity:

.....

7. Other: political participation and Citizenship

.....

Thank you for your kindly cooperation!

