

# CHAPTER - ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Nepal is a small and developing country sandwiched between India and China. It is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-religious and secular state (Luintel, 2008). So, it is the common garden of various castes groups of people. These various caste group people have their own tradition, culture, norms and values that influence the ways of their living and their livelihood.

Every human society has undergone different level of change in the changing time context and environment. Nepalese societies are not the exception. As modern civilization develops, people are changing their livelihood strategies in order to cope with the change in time. Due to the impact of development activities, people are attracted to adapt new occupation while giving up their traditional occupations i.e. traditional agricultural and forest based economic activities. Modern development has also caused negative impact in socio- economic life of people. As a result, people are engaged in low-income job for their livelihood. Hence, various types of livelihood strategies are in practices.

Livelihood strategies are the combination of activities that people choose to undertake in order to achieve their livelihood goals. They include productive activities, investment strategies, and reproductive choices. The choice of strategies is a dynamic process in which people combine activities to meet their changing needs. ([www.eldis.org.np](http://www.eldis.org.np))

Livelihood strategies denote the range and combination of activities and choices (including on production and investment) made by house-holds in order to sustain themselves and contribute to the economic capital of household. ([www.peacebuildingdata.org](http://www.peacebuildingdata.org))

The kingdom of Nepal lies in south Asia between two large countries, India in the South, East, West and the Tibet region of China in North with different geographic and socio-cultural conditions encompassing an area of 1,47,181 sq. km. covered with rural areas and inhabited by 28.5 million people (CBS: 2010) . The total population is found to be

increased by 1.35% from the previous census done 10 years ago in 2058B.S. Nepal is divided into three major regions: Mountain, Hill and Terai according to the geographical variation.

Nepal is characterized as a mountainous, landlocked, subtropical kingdom whose most of the population is below the poverty line and isolated. It is land of various caste, tribe and ethnic groups. Each group has its own unique language, culture, social organization, myths, customs, moral values, traditions and livelihood practices. So, Nepal is known as a multilingual and multi religious country.

The Terai is a plain region which is the hotter than other regions, where Tharus, Danuwar, Yadavs, Telis, Sudis, Rajput, Brahmins, Chhetries, Muslims, Chamars, Musahars, Dushads, Doms, Sarkis, Kurmis etc live.

Change is a universal and continuous phenomena found in all societies at all times. Along with change, people have adjusted their ways of earning for livelihood as per the changing situation. Change in community can be seen through the development activities and its impact at their livelihood. Sometimes the change comes through development and sometimes through modernization, globalization along with social and political movements. But every change does not only bring positive transformation on the lives of community people. The change also brings negative impact on their lives and livelihood.

The Musahar community is also being linked with global integration, the integration of village economy with the outside world along with the impact of modernization no matter what the previous condition (social, political and economic) of the community is. So, there might be the changed relationship among various groups in Musahar community. The changed relationship in such community might affect the economic strategy of people. Similarly, it may affect the social and cultural sector of the entire community.

Musahars are so called low caste community, who have been given the name Musahar because of the fact that they used to maintain their living by catching and eating the rats (local name 'musha') found in open field. ([www.ecca.org.np](http://www.ecca.org.np)).The word Musahar is derived from 'moos', a local Bhojpuri word for rat and an account of their traditional occupation as rat catchers. The Musahar consists of consist of three sub groups, the 'Bhagat', 'Sakatiya' and 'Turkahi'. Each of these clans is endogamous ([en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)).

Mostly Musahars are landless agricultural laborers. They dig mud for construction of houses, roads and work in farm as laborers. In addition, cleaning roads/ rivers/ canals are also considered as traditional occupation of Musahar. They are the most marginalized groups of Nepal and have suffered discriminations. Although the Musahars are Hindu, they believe in the numbers of tribal deities.

Musahars' houses are made of locally available materials such as bamboo, straw, reeds etc which are small and low in height and clustered together in 25-30 house-groups in a single community. The house of Musahar is comprised of single large central room. In one corner, they keep their livestock; in another they cook their meals.

Musahar prefer them to be called as Rishidev, decent of sage Valmiki. They have started to settle in Terai region since seven centuries ago. Musahar claim Dinaram Bhadri as their Great Man. They believe that the generation of Musahar came into existence from the same person Dinaram Bhadri (RDA, 2008).

The Musahar is regarded as untouchable caste in Hindu religion. There is the belief that the part of them entered to Nepal from Magadh (India) and the others from the Tirhut (Mithila) partly in Bihar, India. Musahars manual work is digging and it plays major role in agriculture. Most of the Musahars are landless and has mud-thatched house in poor condition. They are very less literate.

Sarlahi, a district that falls under the central development region, lies in the Janakpur Zone of Nepal. Malangawa as a district headquarter. The district consists of 132,844 households and the total population is 769,729 among them, 389,756 are male and 379,973 are female, occupying are of 1259 sq km.(CBS: 2010). The district is neighbored by Rautahat, Sindhuli, Mohottari and Bihar of India.

Ishworpur VDC of Sarlahi district is specific settlements of Musahars.They are large in numbers. The total population of this VDC is 21,034. Among them, Musahar population is 1,311 which represent 6.23 per cent of total population of this VDC (CBS, 2011). Despite being in large numbers, they are very much backward with extreme poverty and illiteracy. Their ways of earning livelihood is also not appropriate for their sustainable development. Due to the impact of modernization, some changes are found in their means of earning livelihood. They are certainly trying to adjust them in changing situation and context. They have their own tradition and culture based on their own perspective. In this

situation, it is appropriate to study about such community of Ishworpur VDC of Sarlahi district.

Ishworpur VDC is one of the important settlement areas of various ethnic/ caste group where Musahar are large in numbers. So, this study is important to get the reality of Musahar community people, their traditional livelihood strategies, alternative livelihood strategies and causes of backwardness in society.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Nepal is multiethnic, multi-religious, multilingual as well as multi cultural country. Each and every ethnic group has its own cultural, economic, social and religious beliefs. Different scholars have described Nepalese culture and social life in different ways. Bista described Nepalese culture and social life is an example of syncretism of various ethnic groups (Bista: 1989:1).

Musahars are the major marginalized Occupational Caste group people who are lacking different facilities required to uplift their life standard. Their livelihood strategies of then and now are not sufficient to support their life standard. Comparatively, they are very much backward people in every respect. In such situation, it is necessary to study about the livelihood of such a marginalized Musahar community.

The Musahars of Ishworpur VDC in Sarlahi district are in touch with different developmental activities viz. modernization, globalization and modern technologies. Their economic status, health status and their perception on change might be changed. Their means of earning livelihood is also being changed in changing situation and context. Hence, it is taken as a problem to study about their livelihood strategies by applying development perspective through sociological insight.

The problem of the present study is to investigate the livelihood strategies of the Musahar community that has occurred because of the process of modernization.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The general objectives of the study are to find out the livelihood strategies of Musahar community of Sarlahi district.

The specific objectives are:

- To describe the socio economic status of Musahar community of the study area.
- To explore the traditional livelihood strategies of Musahar community in the study area.
- To find out the alternate livelihood strategies of Musahar community due to the modernization.

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

Every country's identity is based in cultural identities of the people who live in its territory. Many communities of Nepal are still back warded and still marginalized from main stream of development. The Musahar community is lesser known group and back warded minority people of country.

Due to poor economic condition, low skilled manpower, lack of sufficient sources for income generating activities, lack of permanent job, the rural and backward society, people are adopting various strategies, for their earning livelihood. The strategies are mainly agriculture, animal husbandry, wage labor, services and migration. With social and political awareness and the people's movement first and second along with the implementation of decentralization program of government, the livelihood strategies of rural community people might have changed.

This study mainly focuses on the livelihood strategies adopted by Musahar community people. The changing state of agriculture, animal husbandry, wage labor, migration, investment/saving are studied. The changing living standard of Musahar community people is also studied. The independent thinking of Musahar community people towards adopting alternative source of earning such as wage labor, migration have become the major interest of researcher. So, clear sketch of the entire Musahar community can be taken from the study.

The socio-cultural aspect of the Musahar community has decisive role in the national building process. The study may be useful for the policy makers, planners and organizations (NGOs, INGOs and Government) to introduce or implement relevant development works and useful for further research on so called Dalit Groups. The study make a significant contribution in social inclusion of Musahar community of Nepal as well as the study focuses on the livelihood strategies adopted by Musahar. The change in living standard of Musahar community and problems they are facing for their livelihood.

### **1.5 Limitation of the Study**

This present study is based on and limited to the people of Ishworpur VDC of Sarlahi district. The study is very specific like that of case studies. So, the conclusion drawn from the study might not be conclusive. The conclusion might not be generalized for the whole. But the interferences might be valid to some extent to those areas, which have similar geographic, socio-economic and environmental settings.

### **1.6 Organization of the study**

The present study is composed of six chapters:

- The first chapter comprises background, statement of problem, objectives of the study, limitation of the study and organization of the study.
- The second chapter deals with literature review concerned with the studies related to the Musahar Community, Sustainable livelihood approach, empirical studies and general studies related with different caste and ethnicity.
- The third chapter explains the research methodology, nature and sources of data, sampling procedure, data collection techniques and tools and method of data analysis.
- The fourth chapter focuses analysis and interpretation of survey data.
- The last chapter reveals summary, conclusion and suggestion of the study.

# CHAPTER - TWO

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Reviewing relevant literature is the integral part of all research including academic as well as professional without which completion of research is almost impossible. It enables researcher to find out research question needed to define the ultimate statement of the problem. Moreover, it facilitates to determine the actual topic, the theoretical base and recognize of the problem from experience of previous researchers.

The relevant literature review in this work at different phase, are presented below. First section deals with the studies related Musahar community. Second section deals with the sustainable livelihood approach in detail and then empirical studies of livelihood strategies and the general study of ethnicity.

### **2.1 Studies Related to Musahar community**

Blaikie et al (2002) has defined livelihood as the command and individual, family or other social group has over on income and / or bundles of resources that can be used or exchanged to satisfy its need. Livelihood strategies are the “range and combination of activities and choices that people make in order to achieve their livelihood goals or, the way of combining and using assets”. (DFID, 2002 quoted in Wyss, 2003). The sustainable livelihood approach is a way of putting the centre of development. It seeks to draw realistic picture of the people’s assets and capital endowment and to find ways how they can convert into beneficial livelihood outcomes. Therefore, it lies in the centre of the livelihood frame work. (DFID, 2002 quoted in Wyss, 2003).

According to Prof. Bista (1965) “Musahar as a tribes man of terai along with describing about different caste group of Nepal”. He further says the traditional occupation of Mallahas job is to do fishing, Koiri Grows vegetables, Chamars do leather works and Musahar do agriculture labour basically as a wage labour in his book “Sabai Jaat Ko Phool bari”. Gautam and Thapa have mentioned Musahar community is found in Jhapa, Morang, Sunsari, Saptari, Udayapur, Siraha, Sarlahi, Dhanusha, Mohotari and Rautahat. Previously, they were nomadic people but they later became form of permanent settlement. Kantipur, Daily Newspaper (5 may, 2005) has stated the Musahars are occupational caste and their traditional norms and customs allow marrying in childhood.

R. Gautam and A. Thapa (1994) have also provided the short description about origin and culture of Musahar community. Among the caste inhabiting the area of Morang, Sunsari, Udayapur, Siraha, Saptari, Sarlahi, Dhanusha, Rautahat are the major settlement areas of Musahar with strange tradition and culture. The writers have stated that these Musahars were nomadic previously. But now, they are a settled community

Ghurye G.S. (1969) in his book “Caste and Race in India” claimed that the Musahars ancestral tradition suggest that they are the descendents of great Sage Balmiki, the author of religious epic Ramayan.

H. Gurung (1999) has also provided short description about Musahar people. He has written that the Musahars are Caucasoid people of the lean frame and the dark complexion. He also introduced Musahar as mice – meat searcher.

L.M. Sharma (1999) has conducted his study on fertility amongst Musahar women in Siraha. The main objectives of the search were to identify the factors affecting fertility in Musahar community. He has conducted research applying purposive sampling method from 100 households representing from Musahar ethnic group. He has concluded that educated Musahar women have less number of children in compared to illiterate women. Similarly, the fertility of women is decreasing with increment in gross household income. Prevalence of son preference plays major role of decision-making power of women in reducing fertility.

M. Pokhrel (1998) has studied about Musahar of Paklihawa VDC of Nawalparasi District. She has concluded that the Musahar have a patriarchal family structure. They were very much backward in education and deprived of the benefit of the modern development.

B. Pokharel (1997) has studied about the ethnography of the Musahars of Khaji Kobhara, Morang with the objectives to draw a socio cultural economic profile of the Musahars of the study area applying descriptive research design. He has taken data from 50 households and interviewed 80 respondents out of 450. He has concluded that the Musahars of Khaji Kobhara are changing their occupation and are engaged in official work and industrial labour.



P.K. Gurung (2003) has studied about the social economic condition of Musahars of Amudha VDC of Sunsari. He has concluded that Musahar people of studied community have poor economic condition due to the lack of education, awareness, skill, will power, lack of feeling of competition and lack of saving habit.

K. Ojha (2002) has studied about the socio-economic condition of Musahar in Dulari VDC of Morang. He has concluded that the Musahars of this study area live in a terrible plight both socially and economically. They are also victimized by economic, racial and social discrimination.

L. Vaiva (2005) has given the description about the social, economic and cultural situation of the Musahar of Amudaha VDC of Sunsari. The Musahar of this VDC are totally landless and they are compelled to settle at the land given by their Malik (landlord) such land is called Girat. Vaiva has also presented some causes of poverty of the Musahar of this VDC. He has concluded that landlessness, low level of income, illiteracy, caste system, and population growth are the major causes of poverty of the Musahar of this VDC.

J. Adhikari (2008) has given articles in his book ‘ Changing Livelihoods’ and has presented various issues related with the livelihood of various rural and urban community of Nepal. Adhikari has only presented the livelihood situation of the western community of Nepal regarding livelihood but also drawn a sketch of livelihood pattern of occupational caste group like Musahar. He has concluded that most of the occupation caste groups like Musahar are deprived with the facilities of going Gulf countries. Even they had gone there; they are mainly engaged in labor activities and earned particularly less than other community people like Brahmin, Chettri, Rai, Limbu etc.

## **2.2 Sustainable Livelihood Approach**

The sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA) is a way to improve understanding of the livelihoods of poor people. It draws on the main factors that affect poor people's livelihoods and the typical relationships between these factors. It can be used in planning new development activities and in assessing the contribution that existing activities have made to sustaining livelihoods (IFAD).

A livelihood comprises people, their means of living, including food, income and assets. However, a livelihood is environmentally sustainable when it maintains or enhances the local as well as other available assets in which livelihood heavily depend. But, going for the livelihood patterns of Musahar, intervention of modern technology in agriculture affects badly on their livelihood patterns. The Musahars of Ishworpur are not an exception. To this, only environmental and labor friendly practices could only ensure the livelihood pattern sustainable.

The Musahars are fully dependent on agriculture and they are farmers. They toil hard to grow agricultural crops on the land even the land is of their Mahajan or rented. They are usually engaged in on-farm and off-farm jobs such as construction, carpentry, transportation worker etc as a labor. Usually they consume and occasionally sell it.

The changes which are occurred in the economic aspects are very obvious. The economic lives of the Musahar have gradually changed from the past. The speed of change seems so rapid in this decade. Formerly, they had a simple life style. In the past they did not like to possess their own land rather they liked to be someone's "Haruwa and Charuwa" and agricultural labor. It also sustained their life. But at present this trend has changed. Now a day they are engaged in other different activities too.

The traditional religious values, norms and beliefs are being weak. The young would not like to present themselves as their elders. They believe in supernatural power. The belief on shamanism animism has decreased among the new generation. But some of them do believe that the family deity (kul devata) is the determinant factor of their fate.

The new generations are somehow educated from modern education system. Adult literacy classes were also run with good participation. However, natural resources depleted. The ratio of population and resources is being divorced. Population is increasing and resources are limited. The life has become hard. So, people have to adapt in the changing situation. Now, they realize that they should protect their environment for themselves.

The concept of sustainable livelihood is an attempt to go beyond the conventional definition and approach to poverty eradication. The previous definition were found to be narrow because they focused only on certain aspect of manifestation of poverty such as low income or did not consider other vital aspect of poverty such as vulnerability, social inclusion, etc. It's now identified that more attention must be paid to the various factors

and process which are either constraints or enhance poor people's ability to make a living economically, ecologically and socially sustainable manner. The sustainable livelihood concept gives more coherent and integrated approach to poverty eradication. In this way this approach has to be understood basically as a tool to understand poverty in responding the poor people's view and their own understanding of poverty (Krantz, 2001).

Although Brundtland Commission on Environment and Development was the first international forum that had given the legitimacy on the concept of sustainable livelihood. Robert Chamber and Gordon were the first to give the composite definition of sustainable livelihood. The sustainable livelihood further gained legitimization in 1992 by United Nations conference on Environment and Development. The conference expanded the concept especially in the context of Agenda 21 and advocating for the achievement of sustainable livelihood as a broad goal for poverty eradication (Krantz, 2001).

It's above mentioned that Robert Chamber and Gordon Conway were the first who provided the definition of livelihood. In 1992, they proposed the following composite definition of sustainable livelihood: A Livelihood comprises the capabilities and assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for the means of living; a livelihood is sustainable which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which can contribute net benefits to other livelihoods at local and global levels and in short and long term (Krantz, 2001).

Most recently Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and Department for International development (DFID) have been putting operation the sustainable livelihood concept and approach. For the IDS, Ian Scoons proposed the modified definition of sustainable livelihood: A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it copes with and recovers from stress and shocks, maintains and enhances its capabilities and assets, while not undermining the natural resource base. This new definition does not include requirements that for a livelihood to be considered to be sustainable as it has not talked about net benefit to other livelihood. With some minor changes, this is also the definition adopted by DFID. DFID defines sustainable livelihood as: A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its

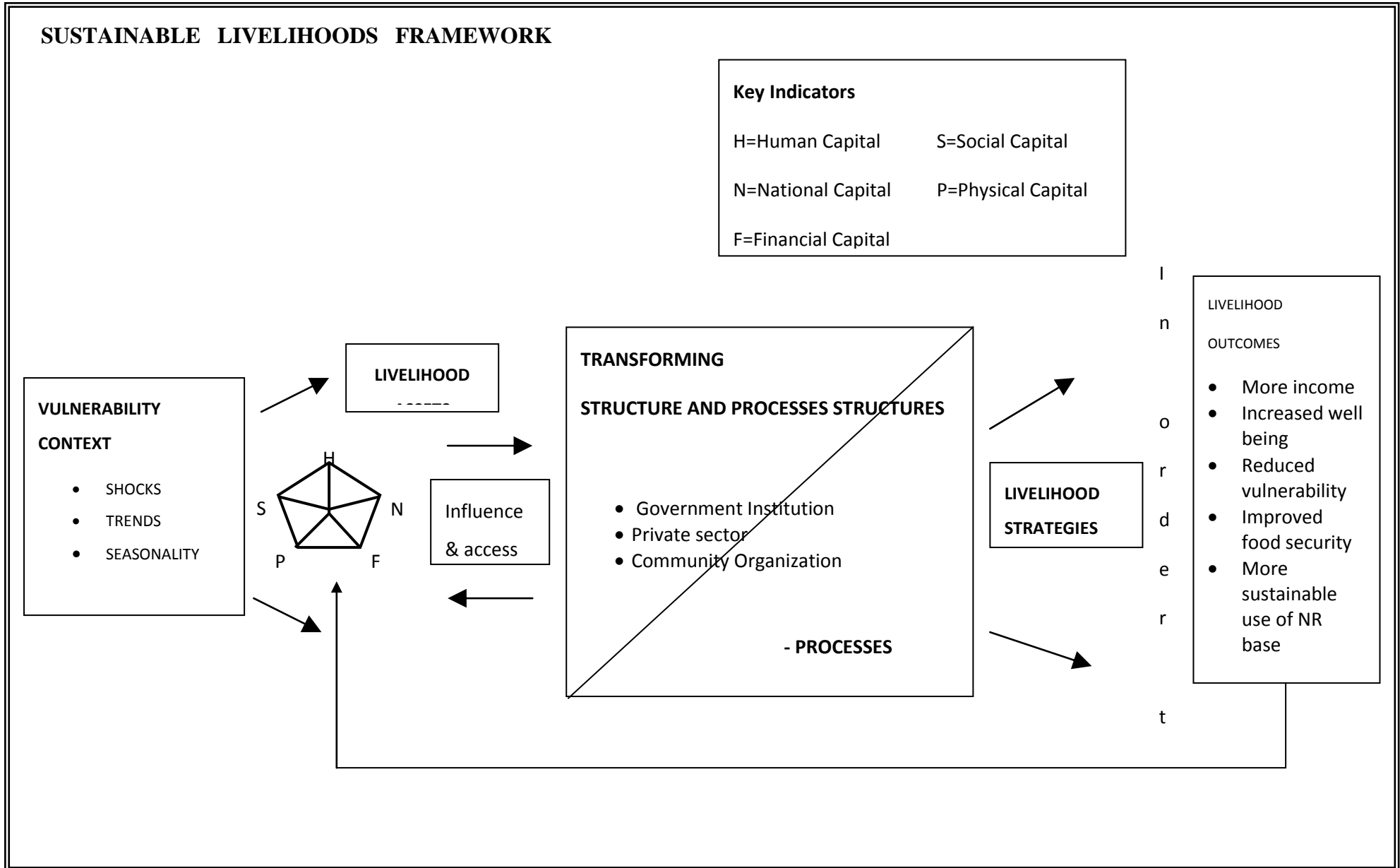
capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base. All the analysis of this research will be based on modified adopted concept of sustainable livelihood by DFID. Three insight of poverty is underpinned with this approach. The first is that the realization of no direct relationship between economic growth and poverty reduction rather depends on the capabilities of poor to take advantage of expanding economic growth. Secondly, there is realization of that poverty- as conceived by poor themselves is not just of low income but also includes other dimension such as bad health, illiteracy, lack of health service, vulnerability and feeling of powerlessness in general. Finally, it's recognized that poor themselves often know their situation and need to be involved in the design of policy and project. (Krantz, 2001).

There is no unified approach in applying sustainable livelihood concept. Depending upon the agencies, it can be used as analytical framework (tool) for program planning or as program itself. However, there are three basic features common to most approaches. The first is that the focus is on the livelihood. The second is the approach that rejects the rigid standard procedure of conventional approach taking as entry point of a specific sector such as agriculture, water or health. And finally, the sustainable livelihood approach places great emphasis on involving people both in the identification and implementation of activities where is appropriate. In many respect, sustainable livelihood approach is similar with old IRDP (Krantz, 2001 & DFID, 2002: 2). To sum up, the core concepts of sustainable livelihood approach are objective, principle and analytical framework. Enhancing the sustainability of people's livelihood, with a particular focus on the livelihoods of poor men, women and households are the objective of sustainable livelihood while principle focus on- People centered approach, holistic concept, dynamic nature, strength building, micro and macro buildings. However, the core of the sustainable livelihood approach is the analytical framework. This focuses attention on the assets that poor men and women use and the strategies that they employ to make a living, rather than focusing on their needs, in the vein of previous development approaches such as 'basic needs'.

### **2.2.1 Framework**

The following framework developed by Dina Carney for DFID shows the main factors affecting livelihood of people and how they are linked to each other. In the framework, different components (vulnerability context, capital assets, transforming structure and process, livelihood strategies and livelihood outcomes) are depicted showing their interrelationship and interaction. So these of the sustainable livelihood approach should be viewed as a complex process rather than linear one. Focus should be given on the feedback exerting from the interaction, through the form of the framework is not intended to suggest the starting point of all livelihood analysis is vulnerability context, however it helps the concerned to identify an appropriate entry point for livelihood analysis. As with this flexibility of the starting point, we can focus on any part of framework not giving equal importance to all. But it's important to keep wider picture in mind (DFID, 2002: 2.1).

Figure 1



The following section deals with each component of the framework individually.

### **2.2.2 Vulnerability Context**

Vulnerability context refers to the shocks, seasonality and trends that affect people's livelihoods. It focuses on factors that are not controllable by local people in the immediate or medium-term. Vulnerability or livelihood insecurity resulting from these factors is a constant reality for many poor people.

The vulnerability context frames is the external environment in which people exist. People's livelihood and the wider availability of assets are fundamentally affected by such context (trends, shocks and seasonality) over which they are limited or no control. Trends (i.e. demographic trends, resource trends, trends in governance) shock (i.e. human, livestock, pr crop health shock, natural hazard like floods or earthquake, economic shock, conflicts in the form of national and international war) and seasonality (i.e. seasonality prices, product or employment opportunity) are such external factor, which affect livelihood of the people through vulnerability context. But these should be viewed as an incomplete list. All these factors affect the people's livelihood by influencing capital assets and option, people have to pursue beneficial livelihood outcome. Shock trend, and seasonality should not always be considered negative. They can move towards favorable directions, diseases can be eradicated and new technologies may be very valuable to poor people. (DFID, 2002).

However, the term vulnerability context draws attention on the fact, that many of these external factors directly or indirectly increase the hardship to the poorest people of developing countries. The inherent fragility of poor people's livelihood makes them unable to cope with stresses, whether predictable or not. It also makes them less able to manipulate or influence their environment to reduce those stresses; as a result they become increasingly vulnerable. Moreover, if trends move in the right direction, the poorest are often unable to take benefit because they lack assets and strong institutions working in their favor.

### **2.2.3 Livelihood Assets**

Livelihood approach is concerned first and foremost with people. So, accurate and realistic understanding of people's strength (assets or capital endowment) is crucial to analyze, how they endeavor to convert their assets into positive livelihood outcomes. Livelihood assets lie,

therefore at the centre of livelihood framework. People require range of assets to achieve positive livelihood outcome, no single capital on its own is sufficient to yield better livelihood outcomes that people seek. This is particularly true for poor people whose access to any given category of assets tends to be very limited. As a result, they have to seek ways of nurturing and combining what assets they do have in innovative ways to ensure survival (DFID, 2002).

The pentagon shows different categories assets and their interrelationship. The shape of the pentagon can be used to show the composition of assets of social group or a community. The center is therefore seen as zero point, while the outer perimeter represents the full access to the respective assets. On the basis, different shaped pentagons can be drawn for different communities or social groups within communities.

The five capital letters represented in Sustainable Livelihood framework are human, social, natural, physical and financial. Human capital represents the skill, knowledge, ability to labor and good health whereas network, connectedness and membership in more formalized group and their system of rules, norms and sanction are social capital of human being. Similarly, natural stock, flow of resources such as land, water, forest air quality, erosion protection and biodiversity come under the natural capital. Basic in fracture and producer's goods such as affordable transport, secured shelter, adequate water supply, sanitation, affordable energy and access to information and available stock-cash, bank deposit, asset jeweler and regular inflow of money-labor income, pension and remittances are the example of natural, physical and financial capital.

#### **2.2.4 Change in Asset Structure**

Asset endowments are constantly changing, therefore pentagons are constantly shifting. A three dimensional framework, with the third dimension representing time, would enable this change to be visualized. But a two dimensional framework does not. However, it is imperative to incorporate a time dimension into any analysis of assets. Information should be gathered on trends in overall asset availability (e.g. if societies fragment, the overall 'stock' of social capital might decline) as well as on which groups are accumulating assets, which are losing and why. Where processes of 'social exclusion' are at work, those who are already



poorly endowed with assets may well be becoming gradually, but notably, more marginalized. (DFID, 2002).

### **2.2.5 Transforming Structure and Process**

Transforming structure and process represents institution, organization, policies and legislation that shape the livelihood. They are of central importance as they operate all level and effectively determine access between different types of capital and returns to any livelihood strategy.

Structure can be described as the hardware (private and public organization) that sets and implements policy and legislation deliver services, purchases trade and perform all manner of other function that affect livelihood. Structures exist both on private and public sector at various levels. This is most obvious in the case of governmental organizations. This operates in cascading levels with varying degrees of autonomy and scope of authority, depending upon the extent and nature of decentralizations. Private commercial organizations also operate at different levels from the multi-national to the very local. It's not only the local level that is relevant to livelihoods. Analysis should therefore be sensitive to the roles and responsibilities of the different levels of structures and seek to identify those that are of greatest importance to livelihoods. (DFID, 2002). Complementary to structure, processes constitute software determining the way in which structure and individual operates and interact. They include policies, legislation, institution, and culture and power relation. This structure and process occupies central position in the framework and directly feedback to vulnerability context.

### **2.2.6 Livelihood Strategy**

Livelihood strategies are the combination of activities that people choose to undertake in order to achieve their livelihood goals. They include productive activities, investment strategies, and reproductive choices. The choice of strategies is a dynamic process in which people combine activities to meet their changing needs. ([www.eldis.org.np](http://www.eldis.org.np))

Livelihood strategies denote the range and combination of activities and choices (including on production and investment) made by house-holds in order to sustain themselves and contribute to the economic capital of household. ([www.peacebuildingdata.org](http://www.peacebuildingdata.org))

## **2.2.7 Livelihood Outcomes**

Livelihood outcomes are the achievements of livelihood strategies such as more income, increased well-being reduced vulnerability, improved food security and more sustainability. Outcomes help us to understand the output of current configuration of the factors within the livelihood framework. They demonstrate what motivates stakeholder to act as they do and what their priorities are. They might give an idea of how people are likely to respond to new opportunities and which performance indicator should be used to assess support activity. Livelihood outcomes directly influence the assets and dynamically their level- the form of the pentagon-offering new points for other strategies and outcomes (DFID, 2002).

## **2.3 Empirical Studies**

### **2.3.1 Studies Related to Livelihood Strategies**

Bishop (1990) has studied livelihood strategies and seasonal rhythms in Nepal's Himalaya, especially in Karnali zone. He has summarized livelihood issues in three sections. The first section deals subsistence system model the second the subsistence system and constrained and Karnali's fate in the last. In the subsistence system model he has discussed the cultural-economical Karnali and agricultural outputs or production. The subsistence system constrained has included cultural attitude and training, ecological balance, agriculture and livestock technology, population and their health. And he has included Fate about the Niche in Karnali's (comparative advantages).

Bhandari (2004) has studied the international labor migration as a livelihood strategy of Prithvi nagar VDC, Jhapa. The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of labour migration in the livelihood strategies of the household. This study concludes that labour migration is a newly adopted livelihood strategy through which people have become able to change their living standard from ill beings to well beings, although their agricultural production is poor.

Rai (2004) has attempted to discuss on changing livelihood strategy of occupational communities (Damai and Kami) in the process of globalization and modernization. Traditionally, these people manage their livelihood through agriculture based social

institution; doing tailoring and smelting of gold and iron, not involving in agriculture directly. Now, they are involved in agriculture as their primary occupation and have made it commercial activities. Wage laboring, petty business and migration of youths are newly adopted livelihood strategy by these communities to sustain their livelihood in context of changing world. Besides, those who are still following their traditional livelihood strategy have also made it commercial. To sum up, globalization and modernization has opened the door of new opportunity however their incapability and inefficiency (skill and knowledge) have not made able to grasp the opportunity.

Ellis (1998) has attempted to discuss about rural livelihood diversification, which is wide spread in all location, across farm size, and range of income and wealth. According to her studies, the significant proportion percent of rural households' income in sub-Saharan Africa comes from farm source. This figure is even more (80 to 90 percent) in southern Africa. In rural areas of low-income countries diverse portfolio play significant role in family well-being. Off farm wage work in agriculture and non-farm activities like trading, employment in urban area and abroad provide diverse livelihood option to the rural people. Diversification in their economic activities is necessary for them to increase and to sustain livelihood mitigating the effect of seasonality in income and reducing risk in their diverse activities. Preservation of natural resources and balance development in gender are other positive aspect of it. However, the chances of increasing differences between the rich and poor and gender imbalances are its possible shortcoming of rural livelihood diversification. In conclusion the removal of constraint and expansion for diversification are desirable policies which give individual and household more option to improve livelihood security and to raise their own living standard.

Sharma, (2004) mentions that, Patuwar has developed various strategies such as selling red soil and crushing stone for their livelihood. Traditionally, they exchange their substances with their daily necessities (grain, fruit, salt, oil etc) following the bartered system. But with course of time and continuous interaction with non-indigenous people, they have changed their economic structure and livelihood strategy. Now, some of them are involving mainly wage laboring and small business. However, most of Patuwar are continuing their traditional occupation with full hardship.

Poudel, (2003) studied the issue of resources utilization and management of marginalized hill tribe through livelihood perspective. Chepang, newly shifted cultivators from the stage of food gather, has unscientific land management system and are attached with various traditional systems of activities. They are living with illiteracy, mass poverty, poor health, etc. despite the various efforts, such as, infrastructure improvement, formal education, awareness campaign, capacity building, agro forestry, and agricultural improvement to improve their condition from GOs, NGOs, and INGOs.

Giri, (2002) has studied the changing livelihood strategy of Tharus in selected VDCs of Surkhet district. This ethnic community has been involved in number of economic activities as a secondary occupation, besides agriculture. This phenomenon, which we call diversification, is essential to enhance livelihood security of rural people. Improvement in educational condition, health condition and the skill of resources management seem extra input to enhance the sustainability of the livelihood of Tharu community. However, they are not in a position to compete with other communities to earn their livelihoods.

Subedi and Pandey (2002:157) have studied the livelihood strategies of Rai communities of Arun Valley. According to them, livelihood strategies reflect the complexity of man environment relationship including local people's attempt to cope with the environment by utilizing the available resources and adopting new option over the time. This study is based on field survey in two geographical location namely Sitalpati in lower elevation and Makalu in higher elevation. This comparative study shows that over a time in both locations, Rais have adopted various strategies to earn their livelihood. This study further shows both continuity and changes over a space and time, have been observed as strategies earning livelihood. Increasing the size of khoriyas, transforming the basic none irrigated slopping terrace in to khet (irrigated slopping terrace) and are followed by other strategies such as additional input in agriculture, adoption of multiple cropping and crop diversification strategies. Besides such strategies, laboring portraying, borrowing, crediting and livestock ng are sequences of livelihood strategies adopted under the pressure.

With the objectives, which deals with the way of life and livelihood strategies of Cobbler in changing environmental and socio-cultural milieu, Basnet (2001) has found that Cobblers are now involving number of different types of alternative jobs such as work in industries,

service in private and government institution, construction work and involvement in foreign employment because of collapse and weakening in traditional primary economy. Instead of such efforts, cobblers of Katunje villages (Bhaktapur) have not been able to enhance their livelihood strategy significantly.

Bhattarai (2001) has studied the “Rikshaw Pulling as a Way of Livelihood of Birtamod as a Urban Poor” From the study; the researcher has explored several understanding of urban poor such as their occupation, living standard, vulnerability and seasonality. In this, both male and female are found as rickshaw puller, though number of female is less than male. Rickshaw pullers of Birtamod have very low income and are suffering from heavy debt. Moreover, there are no organizations to make them aware and to facilitate them in their profession. In this way, research come to end that there is no better strategy of rickshaw puller to secure their livelihood. They spend the life just on earn and end system.

Blakie and Coppard (1998) have studied changing livelihood strategy of the people of Likhukhola watershed. They have prepared the articles “Environmental change and Livelihood Diversification: Where are likely to know how farmers in hill of Nepal perceive and adopt environmental change (particularly declining soil fertility) in the context of board socioeconomic change to their livelihood. From the study they have found that anthropogenic accelerated soil erosion is not critical problem though there is local evidence of it. It does not directly threat to the livelihood of the majority, but is important for poor farmers who have not access to irrigation. They said that livelihood diversifications and growth of agricultural incomes is a major feature of socioeconomic change in module hill of Nepal. They further said that it is necessary to link the finding of erosion of the research with changing economic economics and social circumstances of farmer in order to evaluate any environmental degradation that is identified. It may be worthwhile shifting the emphasis to helping farm household to develop appropriate livelihood strategies including diversification of income opportunities rather than conforming researcher in purely physical aspect of environmental change.

Dahal has studied livelihood strategies of Barmus from western Nepal. He has attempted to examine the historical sketch and present situation widely. According to him Barmus were kiptat holder and had a kiptat due course they lost the land property, protruding timber selling,

knife selling, etc. But all these activities have not been found as reliable source of livelihood. They are also involved in adhiya system and are regarded as a way of contributing for the distribution of resources. In this way, this marginalized social group, agricultural is not sufficient to provide food grain. Therefore, off farm activities also seems indispensable to earn livelihood. Increased modernization and expansion of local market center have made significant change in socioeconomic and cultural sphere of Barmus. Developments activities in the area have not provided equal opportunities to them but have been further marginalized them. The development process terminated some of their livelihood term and other are in the process of gradual decline.

Tacoli (1998) has given emphasis on rural urban linkage to secure of rural and urban people and for mutual and integrated development. According to him the linkage may not be beneficial in all circumstances but can also increase inequality and vulnerability of that group with least assets. Moreover articles also deal with employment and land ownership shift in peri urban environment with example from sub Saharan African and Philippines.

The implication of sector approach on sustainable rural livelihood has been analyzed by Koziell. He has suggested the sector approach is one among set of possible means of promoting SRLs, however also considered its limitation. According to him, it is successful under the condition of macroeconomic stability and where the sector can be narrowly defined in terms of ministries and institution. Giving focus on addressing policies and institutional question is other positive aspect of the sector, which has profound impact on livelihood option and strategies. Sector approach has also some sort of imitation. As it is neither pro poor nor anti poor (neutral policy), biasness may arise in its implementation and should be graded against. The approach also does not deal with problem of wider level of macro economy and civil reforms. Therefore, while applying sector approach in SRLs should be viewed skeptically on its merits and limitation.

#### **2.4 General Study Related with Different Caste/ Ethnicity**

Bhadra (1997) has made the study of gender analysis of work roles and distribution of resources at Bosan of Kathmandu. According to the study agricultural and household work are mostly performed by women and girls which are more time and human energy intensive in nature. Besides, wage employment, cottage industry and wage labour in construction and

other activities are other leading function of women where male are also equally involved. However, women are paid less than men. Regarding the household decision making process, both genders enjoy some privileges. While money related decisions are mostly taken by male, others such as consumption and distribution are decided by women. Other important findings of the research are perception of receiver by women themselves in spite of their more effort in agricultural and other income generating work and feeling of provider role by women.

Bhandari (2004) has studied the changing livelihood strategies of Majhi community from Andhimuhan, Syanja and Darpuk, of Palpa. This study has explored several impacts and intervention of development process on this marginal community. Traditionally, the way of earning livelihood of this community was based on the activities such as fishing, boat selling and agricultural labor which come under the pressure by various development and modernization process such as construction of bridge, barrage, road, and hydroelectricity. In the changing circumstances, they have adopted new livelihood strategy. Migration is mostly found newly adopted strategy of this community. Besides, doing labor in constructional work and wage laboring in agricultural field are the other strategies they adopted. However Majhis of Darpuk are still adopting their traditional occupation and are able to earn livelihood.

Hamal, has studied the interrelationship between natural resources and Tamang community of Karu village in Kavre from human ecological perspective. The explanatory and descriptive research study has found some sort of understanding of the village. According to him, subsistence farming system is the main economy of villagers. Agro-pastoral activities help them to achieve their self-sufficiency adaptative strategy. Tools technology, decision making, knowledge utilized in farming, management of resources and socio cultural system in relation to environment are also heavily influenced by the survival strategy. Involvement I weaving, knitting, making handicraft, etc is other household strategy to generate extra income for the household. Besides this seasonal migration to Kathmandu for wage laboring and casual labor in their own areas are other livelihood options of the Tamang of that village. Slash and burn agriculture was massively practiced in the past and is still practiced somehow. It has degraded the soil in greater extent. Tamang adopted their strategy getting new land clearing the forest. This traditional community is changing slowly and gradually to adopt the

global change and modernization and has been new institution such as Forest Management Committee, and saving credit cooperative.

Phuyal, (2005) has studied the livelihood strategies of Tamang of Sankhu area with the objective to find out the impact of Shivpuri National Parks in the ethnic community of the surrounding. The study found that livelihood of the local people, who depended on the forest resources are pushed towards more vulnerability after the establishment of the national park because of change in occupation and income, which were changed immediately. Other changes, which occurred slowly in community and household, also have triggered the vulnerability. Those who were sound in agricultural production and had alternative income had adapted faster than the absent of them. However this adaptation cannot be considered as sustainable because locals are excluded from the conservation activities and no institutional provision has been made in this regard.

Tamang, (1998) has also made the gender study of Tamang community. His study found that, Tamang women are primarily housewife and involve both indoor and outdoor household activities. In his study, only few percent of women are jobholder, which is negligible. Cooking, house cleaning, grinding, child minding, washing, and fire wood collection are majority of works performed by women. Comparatively higher age group women are mostly housewife, the new generations of females are little changed, and they are full time worker and part time housewife.

Balami, (2058) has mentioned that Tamang are a major ethnic community of the country. They are mostly concentrated around Kathmandu valley. Because of being, the vicinity of Kathmandu capital city of the country, different sort of change from modernization and development and development activities. Mostly occupational shift is evident in this community. The traditional occupation agriculture, wage laboring has been changing toward business, service, trade and other similar types of off farm activities. Therefore, globalization process has exerted mixed effect in this community.

Acharya, (2004) has made the study of Tamang Community of Nuwakot. The gender analysis of them in rural and urban setting is highlighted in economic and educational aspect. Gender differences could be seen easily in economical and educational activities in market/town and rural areas. Tamang women have less access to formal education, but their



participation in non-formal education is higher than male. No opportunity of education form school for the girl appears as a myth in this community though it is in sizable number. However, the progressive change in educational opportunity as compared with previous year is also noteworthy. In economic sector also one can easily find the gender disparities. Women are mostly involved in domestic and household agricultural work which is rarely countered by government and. They are oppressed by society in terms of wage and participation of labor. They have very less chances to go outside from village to engage in any income generation works. However, town women are highly participating in business.

Giri (2002) has studied the changing livelihood strategy of Tharus in selected VDCs of Surkhet district. Tharu ethnic community has been involved in number of economic activities as a secondary occupation, beside agriculture. This phenomenon, which we call diversification, is essential to enhance livelihood security of rural people. Improvement in educational condition and the skill of resources management seem extra input to enhance the sustainability of the livelihood of Tharu community. However, they are not in a position to compete with other communities to earn their, livelihoods.

## **CHAPTER – THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This study was carried out mostly on the basis of exploratory research design as because the study was done focusing livelihood strategies of Musahar in the study area. The study had also tried to explore the other aspects of Musahar Community regarding socio-economic pattern, impact of modernization. It also followed the descriptive way to describe natural condition of study site and the socio economic status of Musahar community. Thus, this study can be categorized as both exploratory and descriptive.

#### **3.2 Rationale of the selection of the study area**

The proposed site for case study is Ishworpur VDC, Sarlahi District. The development activities are not seen for the Musahars at the present. However other community has better condition than Musahars. Various caste groups are living here such as Kshetry, Muslim, Brahmin, Tharus, Yadav, Sunar, Dushadh, Teli, Kami, Danuwar, Magar, Tamang, Musahar etc.

The particular area is chosen for the study because it is easily accessible and heterogeneous in socio economic, cultural and tradition. This study has helped to find out the cause of backwardness and impact of development at their livelihood.

#### **3.3 Nature and Sources of Data**

The required data for this study were collected through primary and secondary sources. Both primary and secondary data sources are used to describe and analyze the study area. The collected data are both qualitative and quantitative. The primary data were collected through structured questionnaire, interview and observation whereas secondary data were collected from different published and non- published written document from individuals, experts, and organization related to the Musahar Community.

### **3.4 Sampling Procedure**

The universe of the study was the people of Ishworpur VDC where as 60 households of Musahar communities were taken as sample for the study using random sampling. Beside them 20 households of non Musahar community were chosen as sample using random sampling process.

Among 290 HHs of Musahars in Ishworpur VDC ward no 4 and 9 do not have Musahar. So, samples were taken from ward no 2, 3,5,6,7 and 8 respectively using random and quota sampling.

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

To collect primary data, the structured questionnaire, semi or unstructured interviews and observation methods were primarily used.

#### **3.5.1 Household Survey**

To generate accurate and realistic data structured questionnaires were prepared to ask to the local people, as almost all the respondents were unable to fill up the questionnaire themselves so the questions were asked to the respondents and the answers were filled up to collect the required information.

#### **3.5.2 Key Informant Interview**

Key informant interview is most popular way of collecting the information. It was used as a field instrument in this research. It was used to get information of the past of Musahar community and their changing livelihood strategies. In the study primary data was also being collected from key informants using the semi or unstructured interview method. The interview was taken as cross checking for data obtained from questionnaire. For this 20 people related to different field like club member, teachers, social worker, elder people, political leaders, village group members were interviewed to get the needed information.

### **3.5.3 Observation**

During the research period the housing structure of respondents, settlement patterns, surroundings, working area, distance with neighbors and response of neighbors were observed. Livestock and their private assets were also observed.

### **3.6 Method of Data Analysis**

Datas collected are analyzed with the help of computer program, where simple statistical tools like table, figure are used for data analysis and Descriptive methods is used for qualitative data.

## CHAPTER - FOUR

### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF SURVEY DATA

#### 4.1 General Background of the Sarlahi District

Sarlahi is a Tarai district situated in the so-called Janakpur Zone, located in the Central Development Region of Nepal. It borders Mahottari, Rautahat and Sindhuli districts on the East, West and North respectively and India on the South. The District Headquarters (DHQ), Malangawa, is 25km south of the East-West National Highway (Nawalpur) and can also be reached by road from Janakpur (88km) and from Simara Airport (95km). It covers an area of 1,259km<sup>2</sup> and comprises four municipalities. All the VDCs are well connected to Malangwa municipality by gravel roads, though access to 30 VDCs in the south-east is sometimes obstructed during monsoon season as some roads are flooded. The district consists of 132,844 households and the total population is 769,729 among them, 389,756 are male and 379,973 are female, occupying an area of 1259 sq km. (CBS: 2011).

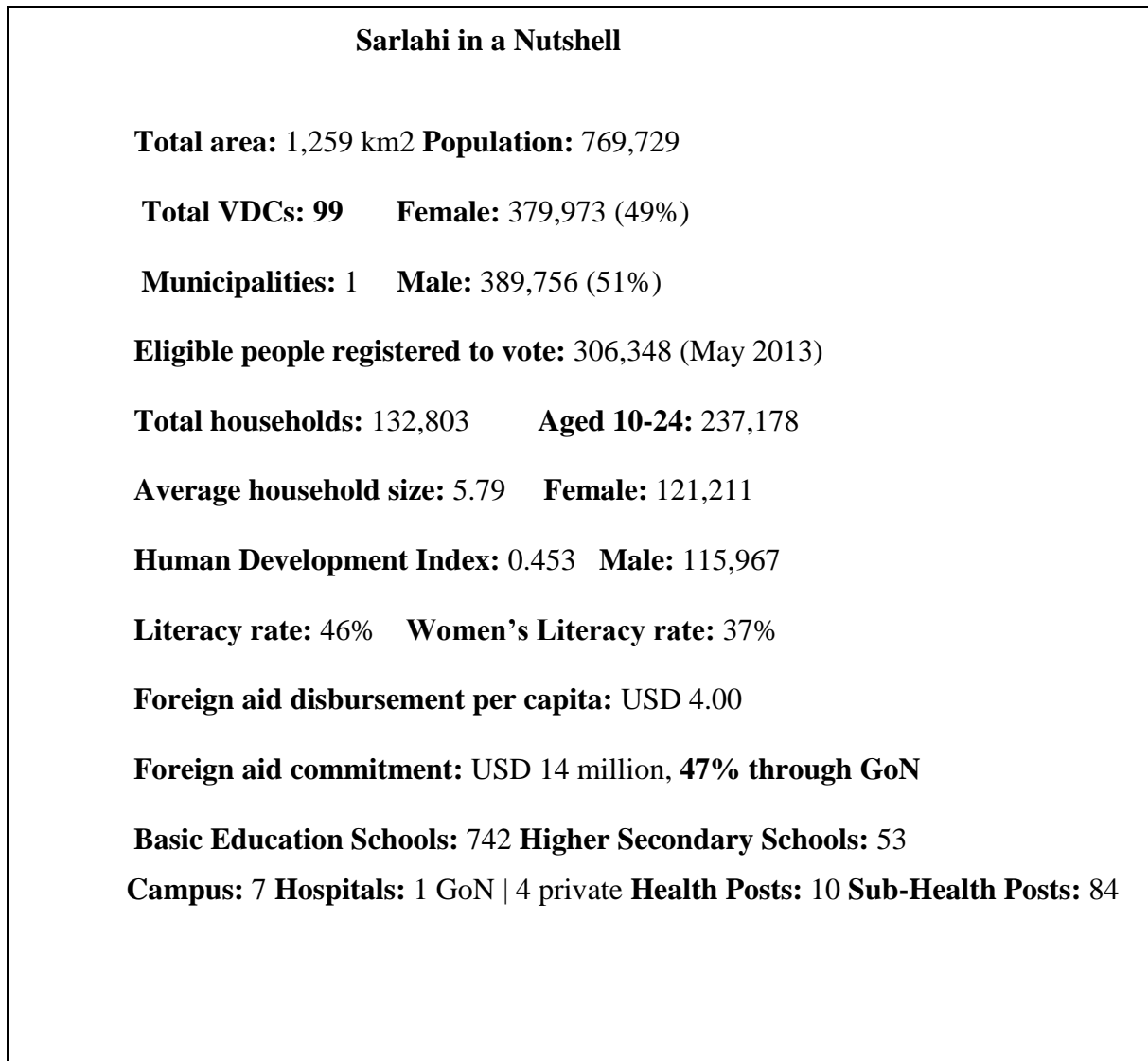
General people of Sarlahi believe that the Sarlahi name comes from the name of Sarlahi devi temple. The Sarlahi devi temple is situated in Hempur village in the Sarlahi district. There is a belief that if someone goes to the temple at night with a light then that person will die. That is why people still do not go at night to that temple with light. Still there is no residence around this temple.

The district is famous for a couple of things. One of them is tomato production and supply. Lalbandi is the place of this district which is famous for supplying tomato demand of the whole country. Scientific tomato farming was practiced in Sarlahi district at Bagwani Kendra Nawalpur, Netragunj. Farhadwa is the village which is famous for fish production and export.

According to the geographical division Sarlahi is divided into three parts: Chure mountain of north with average height of 900m from sea level, Bhawar region of middle (150m to 300m) and Terai region of south. The average temperature lies between 22 to 30 degree Celsius with reaching more than 42 degree Celsius in summer and below 2 degree in winter season.

Sarlahi as one of the district lies in Terai consists several ethnic groups. The major ethnic groups are Brahmin, Yadavs, Kshetry, Kayastha, Kalwar, Sonar, Tamang, Teli, Dusadhs, Musahar, Magars, Danuwar etc. The major spoken languages are Nepali, Maithali, Bhojpuri etc.

**Figure 2**



*Source: Sarlahi District Profile by UNFCO (2013)*

**Table no 4.1**

**Ethnic Composition of Sarlahi District**

S.N.	Castes	Total population	Percent	Remarks
1.	Yadav	119359	15.50	
2.	Brahmin–hill	27537	3.58	<b>Others</b> includes the , Rai, Sanyasi, Chamar, Bhujel, Thakuri, Sunuwar and Teraian ethnic group etc.
3.	Tharu	21778	2.83	
4.	Chhetri	28655	3.72	
5.	Tamang	39803	5.17	
6.	Muslim	60754	7.89	
7.	Newar	7352	0.95	
8.	Teli	42323	5.49	
9.	Kami	6938	0.90	
10.	Magar	15296	1.98	
<b>11.</b>	<b>Musahar</b>	<b>14137</b>	<b>1.83</b>	
12.	Koiri	61019	7.92	
13.	Sarki	1570	0.20	
14.	Kurmi	16977	2.20	
15.	Others	306231	39.78	
	Total	769729	100	

*Source: District Profile of Sarlahi, CBS (2011)*

Musahars are well distributed throughout Sarlahi, mainly in the southern part of it. Among all castes Musahars are found in large numbers like VDCs Ishworpur, Laxmipur, Chandranagar, Babargunj etc.

Musahars are the lowest untouchable caste in terai region. The Musahar believes that they are the descendents of saint and sage called 'Rishis'. Nothing is known about the time when they came to Nepal. But there is a belief that the part of them entered to Nepal from Magadh (India) and others from the Tirhut (Mithila) partly in Bihar, India. Therefore The Musahars are divided into "Magadhia Musahar" and "Tirhutiya Musahars". Most of the Musahars have 'Sada' and 'Majhi' as their surname.

#### **4.1.1 Ishworpur VDC: A General Profile**

Ishworpur VDC is one of the fast growing VDCs among others that lies 4 km south from Mahendra Highway. There are several buses which go Kathmandu, Janakpur and Birgunj daily. It is 25 km far from the headquarter Malangawa (Sarlahi). It is bordered in its east side by Bhaktipur VDC, south by Babargunj, north by Ranigunj and west by Bela VDC. The very place is accessible by a gravel road from Highway in which few kms of blacktopped road are found in the Bazaar area having the facilities of transportation in all seasons. There is an availability of telephone, cyber, postal service, health centre, electricity, water, educational institution etc.

According to CBS (2011) the very VDC have 3,868 HH with total population of 21,034 in which male are 10,304 and female are 10,730.



**Table 4.2**

**Distribution of Population and Household by wards**

<b>Ward No.</b>	<b>No. of Household</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
1.	812	4,280	2,037	2,243
2.	893	4,852	2,338	2,514
3.	372	2,357	1,218	1,139
4.	414	2,172	1,097	1,075
5.	163	902	456	446
6	435	2465	1229	1235
7	164	855	442	413
8	203	1179	582	597
9	412	1972	905	1067
Total	3,868	21,034	10,304	10,703

*Source: CBS, 2011*

The above table shows the large variation in the population in wards because of the area of each ward that covers. Ward no 1 and 2 are the most dense populated and ward no 7 is least populated among other wards. As the ward no 2 is the center of this VDC that inhabits Mahendra Bazaar, one of the largest Bazaar of Sarlahi district carries large number of its population. Hence forth ward no 7 consists people of minority classes.

The VDC has multicultural and multiethnic society as people of different castes and creed are living altogether. They are living harmoniously with each other with the feeling of brotherhood. So, still there is no conflict seen. Even the Madhes Aandolan did not affect their

feelings of brotherhood. So, one can assertively say that Ishworpurian people have a unity in diversity.

**Table 4.3**

**Ethnic Composition of Population of Ishworpur VDC**

Castes	Total	Male	Female
Cheetri	1090	499	591
Brahman-hill	996	475	521
Magar	306	136	170
Tamang	758	344	414
Tharu	2260	1125	1135
Newar	256	133	123
Kami	223	97	126
Rai	12	6	6
Musalman	2715	1328	1387
Yadav	514	260	254
Teli	1146	601	545
Chamar/Harijan/Ram	742	382	360
Damai/Dholi	54	22	32
Sarki	28	11	17
Koiri/Kushwaha	2040	997	1043
Kurmi	308	148	160
Sanyasi/Dashnami	62	30	32
Dhanuk	106	49	57
<b>Musahar</b>	<b>1311</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>641</b>
Dusadh/Paswan/Pasi	349	184	165
Sonar	340	172	168
Kewat	46	25	21
Brahman-Terai	83	33	50
Gharti/Bhujel	23	11	12
Kathbaniyan	528	275	253
Mallaha	79	44	35
Kalwar	182	93	89
Kumal	40	20	20

Hajam/ Thakur	198	92	106
Kanu	263	127	136
Sunuwar	13	5	8
Sudhi	1112	539	573
Lohar	85	47	38
Tatma/Tatwa	58	33	25
Khatwe	44	21	23
Dhobi	43	20	23
Majhi	196	97	99
Nuniya	181	102	79
Kumhar	43	17	26
Danuwar	1607	751	856
Haluwai	57	29	28
Rajput	80	41	39
Kayastha	98	44	54
Barace	237	113	124
Mali	39	33	34
Dom	32	15	17
Others	51	24	27
Total	21034	10304	10730

*Source: CBS, 2011*

From the given table we can see this VDC is dominated by Muslim community followed by Tharu, Koiri, Danuwar and Musahar respectively.

#### **4.2 The Musahar of Ishworpur VDC**

The Musahars are the main minority people of the Ishworpur VDC which are in the fifth position holding 1311 numbers of populations out of 21,034. As the Jawaar (Head of Musahar community) said ward no 3,5,6,7 and 9 consist the large population of them as the HH numbers are large in given wards whereas ward no 4 and 9 don't have any of them. They are mostly in very poor condition in accordance with other communities. They mostly have small hut which are made of local available materials such as straw, bamboo, reeds etc. They

usually have joint family mostly headed by male members for decision making. They celebrate festival like Holi, Chhath, Dipawali and Maghe Sankranti and so on.

Most of the Musahars donot know where their ancestral came from. They said they are living since some 40, 50 years ago. But few old Musahars answered that they came from India long time ago. They mostly speak Maithali language. But the new generation can speak both Nepali and Maithali language. They follow the Hindu religion. They are physically strong so most of them are engaged in agricultural works.

### **4.3 Socio-economic status of Musahar People of Ishworpur VDC**

#### **4.3.1 Housing Pattern**

Most of the Musahars' houses were made in a traditional ways which were made up of with bamboo, wood, mud and reeds having thatched roofs in the studied area. The walls were made of bamboo, wooden flakes usually supported by grain straw and reeds. Their houses were small and narrow which do not have enough rooms. They usually have same room for cooking and sleeping. The houses were scarcely ventilated i.e. windows were rare. They use verandah for their guest and their daily functional works. They design their house in such a way that they put some space for their domesticated animals like goat, cow and buffalo. They do not allocate special rooms for bed and kitchen. Thus the whole houses were dirty and black colored by the kitchen smoke.

**Table 4.4**

#### **Types of Musahar House**

<b>S.N.</b>	<b>Types of House</b>	<b>Number of Houses</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1.	Thatched roof	40	66.67
2.	Zinc sheet roof	-	-
3.	Tayal/Khapada roof	20	33.33

<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>
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*Field survey, 2014*

The above table 6 shows that out of 60 houses 40 houses( 66.67%) has thatched roof whereas 33.34% is covered by Tayal roofs having no any Zinc sheet roofs in the study area.

### **4.3.2 Structure of Family**

Family is the basic and universal social structure. It fulfills various needs of the members of the family including safety, integration, and continuity.

Most of the families of Nepal are found in joint system however in the study area it was seen both but nuclear families were large in numbers. The nuclear family consists of married couple and their unmarried children and joint family comprises group of brothers' families living together sharing the same kitchen, resident and property. The researcher has found the structure of family of Musahar community in this way.

**Table 4.5**

#### **Types of Family of the Households**

<b>S.N.</b>	<b>Family type</b>	<b>Household number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1.	Nuclear	40	66.67
2.	Joint	20	33.33
<b>Total</b>		<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field survey, 2014*

The table shows that out of 60 HH 66.67 percent Musahar live in the nuclear family where as 33.33 percent lives in a joint family. The reason behind nuclear family was quarrelling, privacy and property. So, most of them separates after their marriage.

### 4.3.3 Age Composition

It refers to the age of the respondents and their family. In Ishworpur VDC there are 210 people from the sample HH. The given table shows the total Musahar HH's children population (0-14 age group) is 33.33 percent, same as age group 15-59 is 53.33 percent and only 13.33 Percent is Musahar were above 60 years of age. From that it can be concluded that the majority of the Musahar peoples were age group between 15-59 years. The main reason of such tendency is the life expectancy of Musahar are not seen more than 60 years as well as the middle age group people is more active and dominant than other age groups. The given figure shows the above statement.

**Table 4.6**

### **Population Distribution of Musahar on the Basis of Age and Sex**

S.N.	Age group	Sex		Total	Percent
		Male	Female		
1.	0-14	39	31	70	33.33
2.	14-59	68	44	112	53.33
3.	60 above	18	10	28	13.33
<b>Total</b>		<b>125</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2014*

### 4.3.4 Language and Religions

Most of the Musahar communities speak Maithali language. They follow the Hindu religion however some also follows their family deities and other religion. Maithali language is the means of communication within their family where as Nepali language is for other communities.

They do not have their own scripts. In the study area most of the Musahar speak Maithali language and use Nepali to communicate with another caste. However old generation find hard to speak Nepali language

**Table4.7**  
**Some examples of Musahar Speaking Language**

<b>Common Nepali Verbs</b>	<b>Musahar Verbs</b>
Ab khana khaane ho	Aba khana khaichhi
Ma khet ma kaam garna janchhu	Hum khet mein kaam karela jaichhi
Kati barsha vyau	Katek baris bhelau
Ke tarkari khayau	Kathike tarkari khailau
Maiju	Mami
Mama	Mama
Aama	Mai/ Mahtari
Bahini	Bahin
Chhaina	Nahai
Bhai	Vai
Vhauju	Vauji

*Source: Field visit, 2014*

### 4.3.5 Education

Education is the measurement of the socio-economic development of a community and nation. It is a major weapon to uplift poor condition of the vulnerable group of the society. It does not only help the individual for personal development but it also provides knowledge and skills gravitates a community towards participation in nation building efforts. But almost all the aged Musahars are uneducated, so they do not understand the value of education. However the new generation children are going to school. Somehow they are able to send their children in the government school.

**Table 4.8**

#### **Educational Status of Musahar in the Study Area**

<b>S.N.</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1.	Illiterate	182	86.67
1.	Primary	25	11.90
2.	Lower Secondary	3	1.43
3.	Informal Education	-	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>210</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2014*

The above table shows the education status of the Musahar community of the Ishworpur VDC that was studied by the researcher. Out of 210 it was seen the only 28 were having an education in which 3 were of lower secondary level and 25 were of primary level whereas 182 were uneducated. Similarly the ratio of female was very low. This is because female gets less priority in education, they have to see the household work. The high numbers in primary level is due to the free education system in government school.

Before some years ago Musahars were not interested to send their children to school. The main reason is their high illiteracy and the poor economic condition. But now a days, the



Musahar younger generation know the benefit and value of education. They also know that education can play the vital role in their overall life. So they are considerably interested in education. However the numbers of school goers were very less because of lack of knowledge and distance of the school.

#### **4.3.6 Health and Sanitations**

Health and sanitation are the important factor for human being. It is the reason how one survives for period of time. The Ishworpur VDC lies just 4 km far from Mahendra Highway so the VDC is a semi urban place where health facilities are available. As most of them do not have an access of toilet they urinate and defecate on the roads and fields which have lead the environmental pollution.

Musahar people do not much care about their sanitation as they live and rear animals on the same house. Their house seems so dirty. When they become sick they usually call Dhama for their treatment. When it becomes worsen they go hospital if they have money.

#### **4.3.7 Feast and Festivals**

Each community and ethnic group celebrates different festivals. The Musahars of Ishworpur celebrate Holi, Chhath, Dipawali, Maghe Sankranti etc. They celebrate Holi with full of joys. They come to home to celebrate Holi if they are staying far from home. They do eat delicious items on such kinds of occasion. They drink Raksi on this festival. They often gather on occasion and dance and have different items including meat and Raksi. Almost all the Musahars celebrate joyously though they do not have money they take loan only to celebrate the occasion and such unwarranted expenditure push them in absolute poverty. They follow almost all the festivals as Hindu.

#### **4.3.8 Food and Drinking Habit**

The Musahars are generally known as the liquor drinking people. The studied areas of Musahars were also not free from this statement. They generally work very hard at day time and have a 'Raksi' at evening. They generally eat Dal, Bhaat and Tarkari. Meat is eaten specially on the occasion. If there is a guest in the house then Raksi and meat would be the dishes for them. Almost every young Musahar drink and smoke. They consume fish, chicken,

mutton and buff. etc in the festivals and lifecycle ceremonies. On the occasion of different festivals to welcome guests wine is necessary.

### **4.3.9 Life Cycle Rites**

#### **Birth**

The birth of a new baby in a house is the occasion of happiness of the family. In the Musahar society the birth of a child is considered as a gift of God. When the child is born, they perform the name giving ceremony on the sixth days of birth. The occasion of name giving ceremony is celebrated with their own culture and tradition.

#### **Marriage**

There are different types of marriage in Hindu culture. Marriage is an institution that admits man and woman in a family life. Marriage is the social bond that allows them to live together in the society. The Musahar are not also free from these marriage variations.

While in the field visit the researcher found almost arranged marriage in the very society of the Ishworpur VDC. Elopement, love marriage were seen in rare case while inter caste marriage is not in practice. It is so because Musahar are regarded as the untouchables and lowest ranks in the society. They followed monogamous and patrilocal system of marriage. Therefore, the Musahar community follows the custom of marriage by mutual agreement. They do not have dowry system nor do they give dowry. They maintain the rule of endogamy.

When a boy or a girl reaches 16 or 17 years then they start to search the right bride and a bridegroom. When they find the spouse then the agreement is done by the head of the family. The date and the numbers of people who come as a Janti is fixed. After completing all the marriage rituals the marriage feast is celebrated with great enthusiasm and pleasure which generally comprises Dal, Bhaat, Tarkari and Raksi. Such tradition makes the very society weak economically which leads them to go India for earning.

#### **Death**

Death ceremony is the last ceremony of life cycle. Death is a universal phenomenon. The ceremonial procession differs from culture to culture, group to group and place to place.

When a Musahar dies message is sent to the members of lineages relatives who later-help in the funeral rite. When all relatives arrive then the dead body is covered with white cloth and Avir (red powder) is sprinkled over dead boy. The Musahars practice both cremation and burial. Children are buried whereas aged people are fired near the village in the Fuljor Khola. The person who acts a major role in this ceremony is called Kriyaputri (principal mourner). Kriyaputri is a polluted person and acts to remove pollution after 13th days of death. In the Musahar community only one person acts as a mourner though they have other sons or family relatives. They have interesting tradition. At the end the feast is organized for the relatives.

#### 4.3.10 Income level of Musahar People

**Table 4.9**  
**Income level of Musahar people**

S. N.	Income Level(Rs.)	Households	Percentage
1	5000	20	33.33
2	5000-10000	30	50
3	10000-15000	6	10
4	15000-20000	4	6.67
		Total= 60	100

*Source: Field Visit, 2014*

The above mentioned data shows that the income level of Musahar people. Majority of the Musahars' income fall under the 5-10 thousand that covers 50 percentage followed by 5 thousand (33.33%), 10-15 thousand (10%) and 15-20 thousand (6.67%) respectively. The data shows that the income levels of the Musahars are increasing.

#### 4.4 Traditional livelihood Strategies

The Musahar people are living since 40/50 years ago in the study area. It has been found that they are living since third generation in the study area. They had adopted many livelihood strategies to sustain their life. Some of them are given in the table.

**Table 4.10**

**Traditional livelihood strategies**

<b>Occupations</b>	<b>No of Households</b>
Agricultural Labors	40
Animal Husbandry	20
Haruwa and Charuwa	30
AG + Animal Husbandry	45

*Source: Field Survey, 2014*

Above mentioned data shows that the Musahar people were mostly involved in agricultural labors followed by Haruwa and Charuwa and animal husbandry for their livelihood in the past. As the Musahars were very poor they used to sustain their life by being Haruwa and Charuwa of landlord or rich person's house. It was enough to sustain their life at that time but now most of the Musahars have left it as it is not enough because of the modernization. Most of the HHs had followed both agriculture and animal husbandry in past. The above mentioned strategies were enough to fulfill their basic needs in the past however now they are not enough hence they are following other strategies too along with old ones.

**4.5 Alternative Livelihood Strategies**

Musahar people were fully dependent on their maalik for their livelihood in the past. But now the scenario has been changed a lot. They are somehow became independent on own. They are now following many ways to sustain their livelihood as only one strategy is not enough to sustain their daily needs of their family hence they have been adopting many alternative livelihood ways which are given below in the table.

**Table 4.11**

**Alternative livelihood strategies**

<b>Occupations</b>	<b>Households</b>
Animal Husbandry	48
Agriculture	35
Migration	35
Agriculture + Animal Husbandry	50
Business + foreign employment	9
Wage labor	40

*Source: Field Survey, 2014*

Above data shows that the most of the Musahar people follow animal husbandry and wage labor however migration also covers large numbers. They usually migrate to India for their living and developed cities of Nepal like Narayanghat, Birgunj, and Kathmandu. It was also seen that they have been to Gulf countries and doing business but in very small numbers this is because they have not enough money to do business or to go foreign countries however this number is better than the past.

Livestock is inevitable part of rural life for both economically and cultural values. In the past, they were attached with agriculture, they reared different animal because livestock keeping is the base of traditional Nepalese agriculture. They used to rear animals to support their family economically which is still in practice and now has taken the bigger space. Although the forest is far from the study area they used to collect the fodder from their limited land. The Musahar tole is far from the forest. So, there is some sort of problem of fodder for animals in the researched area, Musahar of Ishworpur are receiving the fodder for animal from their own limited land, grassy land of field and stream. Therefore the entire household of Ishworpur had good number of cattle, goats, buffalos, hens etc. Animal reared in this

community was directly sold in cash (goat, buffalo, pig and poultry) or converted their product in cash.

Most of the members of household sell their labor (in the form wage laboring) to derive livelihood. This includes household who use it as primary occupation and who use it as secondary occupation. However, all the labor of the study areas is not equipped with required skill. Most of the young Musahar earn their earning from laborer works such as goods loader in trucks, wage labor of houses and other as per needs of the market. Now some youths have seen in learning new style and design though they work throughout the year in the city area or in India. It was seen that some few numbers of Musahars are involved in business like shops and foreign employment. The numbers are very few regarding other groups this is because they do not have money to start their business or to go abroad.

The following section describes the five assets based on DFID framework.

## **4.6 Household Assets**

### **4.6.1 Human Capital**

Human capital is the stock of knowledge, habits, social and personality attributes, including creativity, embodied in the ability to perform labor so as to produce economic value.

Human Capital represents the skills, knowledge, ability to labor and good health that together enable people to pursue different livelihood strategies and achieve their livelihood objectives (DFID, 2002:2:3.1). The importance of this cannot be exaggerated which directly contribute to achieve better livelihood outcome on the one hand and on the other stimulate other assets to strengthen them. People, who possess good health, better skill and required knowledge, might have better access on employment and earning, for deriving better livelihood outcomes. Many people, therefore, regard the ill health or lack of education as core dimension of poverty. Therefore, human capital is highly dependent on adequate nutrition, health care, safe environmental condition and education.

Labor is most important assets for the poor people, basically in urban and peri- urban setting. If one has adequate skill, s/he has better chances for the job. It is also likely to have more income. In the reverse condition manual labor that does not have necessary skill is paid less.

Most of the members of household sell their labor (in the form wage laboring) to derive livelihood. This includes household who use it as primary occupation and who use it as secondary occupation. However, all the labor of the study areas is not equipped with required skill. The following table gives insight of labor force of the study.

**Table: 4.12**

**Person Involving in Wage labor**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Skilled</b>	<b>Unskilled</b>
Carpentry	5	
Electrician	1	
Cycle/Shop	1	
Driving	2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>51</b>

*Source: field Survey, 2014*

Most of the young Musahar earn their earning from laborer works such as goods loader in trucks, wage labor of houses and other as per needs of the market. The data shows that most of the Musahars are unskilled labor people are traditionally associated with wage earner. Now some youths have seen in learning new style and design though they work throughout the year in the city area or in India.

Adequate skill is not sufficient itself, s/he also should be healthy. One may have required skill, knowledge, but if his/her health is not sound, s/he will not be able to earn livelihood using this strength. Though these areas have physical access to health from health post of their own VDC or from the hospital and medical facilities of the city, it is not far. The economic poverty or lack of money cannot get access it. The case of Budhiya Devi Majhi of Ishworpur, support this (Box 1).

## Box 1

Sixty years of age Budhiya Devi is now sick. She is almost landless. She cannot fulfill any requirements of family now. She used to work very hard for her family. But due to his illness she cannot work further more. She remembers the past days when she was strong and goes for work. During her work tenure she had been able to fulfill the needs and wants of her children. All the family members were happy. Budhiya Devi was very proud thinking that she was a very good mother. But now the time has changed she is not able to work anymore and cannot contribute her family now she is totally dependent on the head of the family.

Regarding the human capital, global change has mixed affect in Musahar community. With pace of change, literacy and educational attainment in Musahar community is increasing. They are getting skill oriented training as well. Health facility is also increasing. These all are considered as positive effects of change. But only few of them have access on it. Poor, widow women headed household are mostly deprived. Furthermore, they are losing their traditional skill and knowledge.

### 4.6.2 Physical Capital

Physical capital includes housing, tools and equipment that people own, rent or use and public infrastructure that they have access to. Affordable transport, safe shelter and buildings, adequate water supply and sanitation, clean affordable energy and access to information (Communications) public infrastructure associated with physical assets. Lacks of these assets are considered as core dimension of poverty. Without adequate access to services such as: water, energy, health facilities housing and food, they spend much of their time in non-productive sector. The opportunity is associated with poor infrastructure; can preclude education, access to health services and income generation. Without transport, essential fertilizer cannot be distributed effectively, agricultural yields remain low and it is then difficult and expensive to transport limited product to the market. The increased cost (in terms of all types of capital) of production and transportation that producers operate at a comparative disadvantage in the market. Insufficient or inappropriate producer goods also constrain people's productive capacity and therefore, the human capital is at their disposal.



More time and efforts are spent on meeting basic needs, production and gaining access to the market (DFID, 2002:2.3.1).

The importance of access to infrastructure, particularly roads, has been noted in helping people take advantage of living relatively close to city. Musahar tole is close to Mahendra Bazaar, but they have less access to those infrastructures available in nearby market. The condition of communication is better in Musahar tole.

**Table no 4.13**

**HHs having communication facilities**

<b>Communication</b>	<b>HHs</b>
Radio	45
TVs	15
Mobile phone	15

Almost 20 percent people have their own mobile phone. Others get this service from their nearest neighbors, or shop. 20 percent households have TV and 75 percent people have access on radio. Lack of access to basic services such as water and sanitation is a crucial issue in peri-urban environment. Though no evidences were found on the problem of sanitation in Musahar tole. No serious problem of water resources were found in Musahar tole. They get water from hand pump.

Housing is normally one of the most important assets for poor urban households as it is used both for shelter and reproductive purposes and for productive or income –generating purpose (renting out rooms or using the space as a workshop area) (Moser, 1998, cited in Sida, 2003). In the study area no information of using housing in income-oriented purpose were found i.e. rented, among 60 HHs surveyed and they are using themselves.

**4.6.3 Natural Capital**

Natural Capitals refers to environmental assets such as land, and common property resources (with communal management and traditional systems determining access and types of use) or 'free' (open access) natural resources such as water, forests or grazing land. Natural capital is

very important to those who derive all or part of their livelihoods from resource-based activities (farming, fishing, gathering in forests, mineral extraction, etc. (DFID, 2002:2.3.1) These assets are generally less used in the livelihood strategies of the urban poor, as they tend to be less available, especially in large urban centers. However, its importance goes way beyond this. None of us would survive without the help of key environmental services and food produced from natural capital. Health (human capital) will tend to suffer in areas where air quality is poor as a result of industrial activities or natural disasters (e.g. forest fires). And although our understanding of linkages between resources remains limited, we know that we depend for our health and well being upon the continued functioning of complex ecosystems (which are often undervalued until the adverse effects of disturbing them become apparent) (DFID, 1998: 167). In peri-urban environment such land is usually considered as farmland and theoretically has greater significance on the food production and its loss to urban development represents an irreversible reduction in the physical resources base for the food production (Daniel et.al. 2003:134)

One who involves in agriculture provides the place for the cultivation of different types of crops almost all households have at least land but they don't have ownership license. But land holding is quite small which is not sufficient for subsistence.

**Table 4.14**

**Landholding by Household (Kattha)**

<b>Categories (Kattha)</b>	<b>Below-2</b>	<b>3-5</b>	<b>6-10</b>	<b>Total</b>
Khet	-	2	-	2
Bari	8	-	-	8
Ghaderi	38	-	-	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>48</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2014*

Table No 4.14 clearly shows the very small land holding of study places. The land holding ranges from less than 2 Kattha only. The entire households were not possessed with both Khet and Bari. 12 HHs were landless. Only the 2 households have Khet.

But surprisingly, it is found that where Musahars are living, only some of them have land ownership certificate. Maximum household in the study area reported themselves as land less instead of that they have Ghaderi but no ownership.

The expanding urban growth has negative role on access of land for the poor. The small landholdings are also decreasing day by day. The fragmentation of the land is also responsible while passing through generations dividing it between the sons. The availability of common land has an impact on the ability of the landless and possibly small farmers, to keep livestock, which is not found in the study area. Therefore, they have to be dependent on crop residues to feed their animal.

Forest resources are also found important natural capital in study areas though it is far from the study area. The community forest is managed and utilized by community people as community forest user group formed by the community. According to rule and regulation made and implemented by them determines the access of household on forest which is easier. However the access on forest resources is not completely denied to Ishworpur VDC. They bring some firewood and fodder from the forest which is 4 km far from the village. Besides land and forest, pasture and water are also considered important natural assets for the poor people. The use of forest resources by household is presented below in the table.

**Table 4.15**

**Use of Forest Resources by Household**

Use	Forest Resources by household	
	Number	Percentage
Firewood	55	91.67
Fodder	24	40
Litter	20	33.33
Others	5	8.33

*Source: Field Survey, 2014*

The table clearly reveals that in the study area the households use forest resources to get firewood and fodder. Musahar of Ishworpur also use forest to get litter and to some extent for herbal. It is also evident that all households used forest for their households needs. It is because of urban influence and occupational shift from agriculture to non-agriculture. Most of Musahar collect resources from the forest. The collection of firewood and fodder by the Musahars of study area indicates the strong role of agriculture in their livelihood. Musahar people collect some sort of vegetables, fruit and herbals like *Neuro*, *Kagati*, *Kurilo* etc. for their livelihood.

Forest products were found very important to the poor including poor women, in situation in which they are unable to obtain sufficient income from agriculture or wage employment, and few other options exist there. In such cases, forest related activities are likely to be labor intensive and household based i.e. collecting vegetable, gathering fodder, litter and making Mat, *Dhakiya* etc. some households headed by women of Musahar community involved in collection of forest resources (Leaf, wild mushroom etc.) to earn extra income besides their own household agricultural.

Therefore, contribution of forest should not be counted out, especially in peri-urban areas where traditionally rural communities are being progressively absorbed into the urban fabric and dependent both on agricultural and non-agricultural activities.

Water resource comes in different forms and has multiple uses. Water present in surfaces stocks (Lakes, Ponds) and flows (rivers as ground water in aquifers or as soil moisture. All can be used directly for livelihood and all are important to the viability of ecosystem on which livelihoods depends (DFID, 1998:181). Musahar of the study area use water from hand pump which are funded by VDC.

#### **4.6.4 Social Capital**

As key asset for both the urban and the rural poor people is social capital. Social capital refers to networks of mutual support that exist within and between households, extended family, and communities, which people can mobilize to access. For example, loans, childcare, food, accommodation and information about employment and opportunities. Social capital is an increasingly used term, but also one which is difficult to define, especially in a commonly agreed manner and even more difficult to identify and access. In the sustainable livelihoods framework, social capital is intended in the widest sense as social resources (such as networks, memberships of formal groups, trust and reciprocity, etc) upon which people draw in pursuit of their livelihood objective. Of all the five livelihood building blocks, social capital is the most intimately connected to Transforming Structure of these structures and processes. In fact, it can be useful to think of social capital as a product of these structures and processes, though this over-simplifies the relationship. Structures and processes might themselves be products of social capital; the relationship goes two ways and can be self-reinforcing. For example: when people are already linked through common norms and sanctions they may be more likely to form new organizations to pursue their interests; and strong civil society groups help people to shape policies and ensure that their interests are reflected in legislation (DFID, 2002:2.3.1).

Household relation is traditional institution and newly developed institutions are presented here as social capital of Musahar community of the study area. Besides, the network on the

urban environment is also found important social capital of Musahar community, which enables and may become constraint to the urban employment.

Both inter and intra household relation is considered vital aspect of social capital in peri-urban environment. The structure, composition and cohesion of the households are related with intra household characteristic, which determines its ability to mobilize labor, and for sharing both expenditure reducing and income generating strategies and are considered one of the important asset in the SL framework. Household relation refers here both sharing same residence and multi spatial household with a relatively high proportion of active adults found, had been able to diversity their income sources more widely than small households or households with a large proportion of dependents. The following table presents the household structure of study area.

**Table 4.16**

**Household Size**

<b>No of Person</b>	<b>No of HHs</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1-2	7	11.67
3-4	40	66.67
5-6	13	21.67
7-8	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2014*

But the process of urbanization and modernization has been giving threatening to extended family and increasing the nuclear family. Therefore extended family with more than 5 family members is only 21.67 percent in Musahar tole where as 4 family members is 66.67 percent.

The process of urbanization is increasing the migrants in the study area raising the threat to inter household relation. As a result, the community and inter household mechanism are

being heterogeneous leading communal violence and social fragmentation. And these are ultimately loosening social ties; competition for access to scarce resources and the widening gap between rich and poor. The social encroachment in this traditional community is more visible in Ishworpur. However, no information about the severe disputes and violence were found.

#### **4.6.5 Financial Capital**

Financial Capital denotes the financial resources that people use to achieve their livelihood objectives. The definition used here is not economically robust, in that it includes flows as well as stocks, and it can contribute to consumption as well as production. However, it has been adopted to try to capture an important livelihood building block, namely the availability of cash or equivalent that enables people to adopt different livelihood strategies (DFID, 1998).

Income from the labor is often one of the most important assets for the urban poor and is equally important for the peri urban residents. People of the study area are engaged in different types of job, which are considered their sources of income besides selling labor. Most of all households have multiple sources of income. They are involving on off farm activities available in urban and in their own area besides agriculture. Some households in Musahars are exceptionally found having single occupation. Lack of skill and absence of social network hinders them from the opportunity.

In their own areas construction and agricultural activities provides off farm labor work for the unskilled people, while city provides job markets for all skilled labor, manual labor and educated people. However, income among them varies according to efficiency of human capital. Off farm agricultural employment is more where landholding is small in Musahar tole of Ishworpur.

As well as income from the sale of labor or income from other activities, another key financial assets for the urban and peri urban poor is access to credit, either public/credit, through the formal market, through informal credit sources or government poverty focused schemes. However, while credit may be a key asset for them, many households and individuals are unable to get credit through the formal market or even through more

expensive interest rates in informal market. This is compounded by difficulties for poor households in obtaining public credit schemes, despite the fact that these schemes are seemingly targeted to the poor. Therefore, very scanty number (two) of household reported to have loan from the bank. They had drawn it either for the investment in business or for the foreign employment. Besides these, small amount of such credit were taken for either for vegetable farming, pig keeping, goat keeping or any other agricultural inputs from cooperatives of their village. Thus, while financial capital is normally one of the most problematic features of poverty reinforces barriers blocking access to employment. But most of household reported to this researcher that they rather borrowed from relative and friends if they need money. This clearly shows strong financial capital.



## **CHAPTER – FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **5.1 SUMMARY**

The present thesis ‘Livelihood Strategy of Musahar Community’ has main aim to study about livelihood strategies and impact of modernization at the strategies adopted by the Musahar community people. To forward the research, three research questions are developed which meet the research objectives. The main objective of the research is to find out the livelihood strategies of the Musahar community of Ishworpur VDC of Sarlahi district. The main objectives were; to describe the socio-economic situation of Musahar; to explore traditional livelihood strategies and to find out the alternative livelihood strategies of Musahar due to modernization.

The study was carried on descriptive cum exploratory research design. To study the livelihood strategy of Musahar community, 60 HHs were selected from all wards except wards no 4 and 9 as they do not have any Musahar.

Though no Musahar households have the access of land apt for agricultural production in large quantity, they depend on other’s land for agricultural production. Out of 60 households, 12 households are found depended on agricultural occupation at Musahar community.

Ten years ago, 5 percent households had the registered land, 25 percent had land with Mohi Authority and 70 percent were landless. At present, 30 percent households have registered land, 50 percent households have land but not registered yet and 20 percent households do not have land at all.

Before 10 years ago Musahar people had not food sufficient because they only rely on their Maalik hence they had to sleep with empty stomach if they had not any work. But now the scenario has changed so far now there are so many other ways of earning money and they are able to feed their family. So now the situation is strong than before ten years ago.

Before 10 years, almost all the Musahar households used to depend on agriculture activities of their Maalik to maintain food deficiency, very few numbers on animal husbandry, and other wage labor and on debt. At present, 70 percent households depend on wage labor activities, 20 percent on animal husbandry, 5 percent on debt taking, 5 percent depend on business.

Ten years ago, the income from agriculture was high. They were somehow able to feed their family but now as the effect of modernization the level of income through agriculture is very low. The modern tools and techniques have killed their physical labor.

Before Ten year, the numbers of livestock in Musahar community were very few in numbers. Now there are significant numbers of chicken and other animals in Musahar households. Among 60 households almost all the HHs have got at least one items.

The income of the Musahars from animal husbandry is slightly changed than before. At present, the average income from animal husbandry of each family is 10 thousands. The income from the each household size was 4 thousand before 10 years.

Among 60 households, the majority households are depended on wage labor activities for earning their livelihood. Among them all 60 percent are engaged in wage labor activities which is not the permanent job, but seasonal. Other 20 percent have adopted rickshaw pulling, transport worker as a means of earning livelihood. Similarly, 15 per cent work as rajmistri whereas 5 percent are involved in other works.

The level of income is also varied. The households who are depended on Janman earn comparatively less than other. They earn between 30-35 thousands annually. The level of income is more as the one who are depended on Rajmistri occupation. On the other hand, the rickshaw puller and other worker earn above 20 thousand annually.

Before 10 years ago, the person from 15 HHs were gone to India, most of them Punjab for income generating activities. Now the total numbers of migrant who have left home and gone to India is 45. Among them, 11 are in Delhi, 25 are in Punjab and 4 in Haryana and the rest of 5 have gone in Gulf countries.

The income from emigration is different than that of agriculture and animal husbandry. Every individual who has gone India for income earns more than 40 thousand annually. But those who have gone in Gulf earn more than 1 lakh annually.

Before 10 years there were no any households engaged in business occupation. But, the strategy is introduced in Musahar community. The beginning of new occupation like business in Musahar community shows that the Musahar people are becoming able to handle the tactful occupation like business with changing time context and situation.

Ten years ago, all households were depended on firewood including cow dung. There were no any Musahar households having the access of electricity, stove. Now also, all the Musahars households are found depended on firewood including cow dung. They have the access of electricity in their village but not at their home. Similarly, they do not have stove, gas, chopping board, freeze in their kitchen. The number of Musahars households having bicycle at their house is significantly increased in these years. At present, 45 percent households have the access of bicycle and 55 percent have nothing at all. On the other hand, 75 percent households have the access of radio and 20 percent have the access of TVs and 20 percent Musahar carry mobiles phones.

The level of expenditure at the required field is much less in Musahar community. The level of expenditure in educational field is much less which reflect the future of the generation of Musahar children. Needless to say, the future of their generation is uncertain. It signifies that the earning of Musahar is not enough to maintain their livelihood as per the modern requirements. They are much poor and their livelihood is influenced by poverty.

## **5.2 CONCLUSION**

The livelihood strategy of Musahar community in the study area is in transition. It is shifted from agriculture base as a primary source of livelihood to non-agricultural one. The evidences collected from the field, suggest that rate of socio-economic change in Musahar community is high. However, gradually Musahar communities in Ishworpur are also in the process of shifting from agriculture based to non-agriculture based livelihood pattern. The household assets of this community have greatly influenced from the process of adoption of

new strategy and modification of traditional occupation. The household with comparatively better access to the capital to pursue livelihood have been adopting the influence of urbanization in their areas more easily than the households who have less access to such assets. As the development and other economic activities change the surrounding environment of a space, the people of a particular space have to change their way of life to adopt with the changing environment.

Research in this community in the study area shows that historically people had their livelihood from being a farm labor and Haruwa, Charuwa of their respected Mahajans but it is almost declining so they have adopted other nonfarm activities. Since, Musahar's traditional occupations Haruwa and Charuwa and farm labor have almost been shifted to off-farm activities for their livelihood. However, agriculture even in the past was not sufficient for them rather they had to dependent other activities besides agricultural.

But rapid urbanization and globalization pushed them in the transition providing both opportunities and constraints. The household assets have undergone rapid modification. Now they have no option other than modifying of the traditional occupation (Particularly Haruwa and Charuwa) towards commercialization of agriculture or adoption of urban oriented non-agricultural activities. Land fragmentation, change in social institution, regularization in communal resources such as forest and grazing land, can be considered the constraint resulted from the urbanization and globalization.

Nowadays, they have an access in urban employment especially in India which has created them some opportunities. Agriculture, which was one of the major occupations in Musahar community, now, is becoming the source of less importance. The land size is not more supportive for the Musahar and the collapse of Mohi authority has depressed Musahar's agro-based economy. The community is food unsecured. Agricultural production is not sufficient now. The level of income from agriculture source is decreased. As a result, Musahar community is being depended on other alternatives means for earning their livelihood. Nevertheless, some Musahar households are still giving more priority to agriculture. Be that as it may, agriculture occupation in Musahar community is in depleting condition.

With the decline in agricultural occupation, the use of insecticide, pesticides and fertilizers is not much significant in Musahar community. Though Tractors and modern plough are widely used, the production ratio is much minimal. The use of modern tools and equipment is not appropriate to increase the agricultural production. Musahar farmers are not able to spend enough budgets for agriculture. But the Musahar community people are mostly influenced by newly developed market at their community or nearby. The ratio of selling agricultural products is increased. It has certainly supported their earning.

Similarly, the owners (Maalik) are much faithful upon them. They can get money in advance now a day which was almost impossible 10 years before. It shows that Musahar community people are able to maintain the social relationship with their owner.

In conclusion, it can be said that the agriculture is becoming the occupation of compulsion rather than of interest for those who are depended on agriculture. The use of modern tools and equipments are not proved boon for Musahar community people. But their access towards the market has really become the good source for Musahar to maintain their livelihood. So, the impact of modernization at Musahar community is found much conceptual rather than productive.

Quite differently, though they have less land and no land to settle, Musahar community people are found much interested at animal husbandry occupation. As a result, the numbers of reared animals is found increased within last 10 years. There are significant numbers of cows and buffaloes at Musahar community. The increasing number of goats in Musahar community signifies that the community people are being aware about earning sources.

The ratio of income from animal husbandry has also increased. More the 75 percent households have reared livestock that is much significant compared to the access of land they have.

Considerable change is found in adopting occupation in Musahar community. People are found interested to search work like janman, rickshaw pulling, permanent job. The ratio of income is also more than from agriculture and animal husbandry. The new generation is particularly dragged on other occupations like rikshaw pulling, rajmistri, which are the

sources to earn more income rather than agriculture and animal husbandry. Even the number of female Musahar engaged in rajmistri occupation is considerable.

Some Musahar also have gone to Gulf country. The working in India and gulf countries as a migrant worker is slightly increased. The income of emigrants is found increased. As a result, the tendency of saving is increased significantly at Musahar community. The involvement of Musahar households' members at outside community is certainly affecting the entire Musahar community positively. The increasing number of Radio, TV, DVD, and VCD is the result of emigration. The economic status is found better at such family. So, it can be said that the Musahar community is going to be changed with haves and haves not group very soon due to unequal income. As a result, the community of unity and cohesiveness might be the victim of social discrimination along with modernization and social transformation.

### **5.3 Suggestions**

Musahars have their own identity. Though poor in economy, they are rich in their culture and custom. They are physically strong and motivated people. So, there must be the use of such community at the construction of new Nepal. The community should be studied with the academic point of view so as to expose their problem and the level of social transformation. The researcher also recommends for the study of the entire community from different perspectives than the researcher so that the social facts which are not studied by the researcher could be brought in front of the academic institution like Tribhuvan University.

On the basis of finding deprives from the present thesis Livelihood Strategies of Musahar Communities in Ishworpur VDC, following suggestions have been made.

- Nepalese government should provide proper agricultural and extension service to the people who want to commercialize their agricultural activities.
- They have low educational status and feel socially deprived. In order to uplift their socio economic status and for capacity building, as well as employment oriented program should be lunched for them.
- I/NGOs and CBOs should do more in this community to uplift the participation in all sectors of decision-making bodies.

- The government should provide credit to them on long-term basis in low interest rate to invest in agricultural implements or other business.
- Musahar should be given priority on occupation like police, army, organization or government services. Some of the reservation seats should be separated for them.
- Government should conduct research for the social and cultural preservation of Musahar people.
- Political priorities (i.e. local bodies) should be given to the marginalized Musahar people.
- They should be provided with easy loan service for animal husbandry.

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## APPENDIX-1

### Survey Questionnaire on Livelihood Strategy of Musahar community

Date:

#### 1. General Information

Name of respondent:

Tole .....	Age .....	Marital Status	
Religion	Language	Married	Unmarried

#### 2. Family Description:

1. Name of Household Heads (HH)

Sex: Male      Female

Education: Illiterate      literate      SLC or above

2. Family size

Individual ID	Relation to HH	Age	Sex	Occupation	Education

#### 3. Traditional Occupation

1. What was your traditional Occupation?

a. Agriculture labor      b. Domestic labor      c. Wage labor      d. sewage labor

2. Are you following them?

A YES      B. NO

3. If NO, What are the alternatives occupations are you following?

\_\_\_\_\_.

4. Is your father following the same?

A. YES      B. NO

5. Are your other family member adopting them?

A. YES

B. NO

6. If, no why don't they like to follow them?

\_\_\_\_\_.

7. If, yes why do they like to follow them?

\_\_\_\_\_.

#### 4. Capital Asset

1. Land holding size of the households

Land type/Ownership	Khet (Kattha)	Bari (Kattha)	Ghaderi (Kattha)	Forest (Kattha)	Others	Total
Private						
Mohi						
Bataiya						
Alani						
Guthi						
Total						

#### 5. Agricultural Production:

Crops	Cropped Area Kattha	Crop	Production	Mann
Paddy				
Wheat				
Maize				
Barley				
Bean				

Mustered				
Others				
Total				

1. Is it sufficient to feed your family?

A. YES                      B. NO

2. If No, how long does it last?

a. up to 6 months      b. 6-9 months      C. up to 9 months

3. Do you buy/sell any crop production?

A. YES                      B. NO

4. If yes, please give the information.

Crop Types	Sold amount kg.	Bought Amount kg.	Remarks
Paddy			
Wheat			
Maize			
Barley			
Bean			
Mustered			
Others			
Total			

## 6. Livestock Details

Types/ Ownership	Own rearing by oneself	Owen given to other	Taken from others	Total Having	Total Income
Cow					
Buffalo					
Pig					
Goat					
Others					

1. How many cow/buffalo do you have?

A. No. of cow \_\_\_\_\_ b. No. of Buffalo \_\_\_\_\_

2. How many liters milk do you get in a day?

\_\_\_\_\_ Liters

3. Is expansion of market helping you in your livestock farming?

A. YES      B. NO

4. If, yes how?

\_\_\_\_\_.

5. From where you get food for your livestock?

\_\_\_\_\_.

6. Are you doing vegetable farming?

A. YES      B. NO

7. If, yes mention below.

Name of Vegetable	Cropped area (kattha)	Rate	Total income	Remarks



## 7. Income Expenditure and Household infrastructure

1. Please give your annual income from different sources annual income?

Activities	Income (Rs)
Crop farming	
Animal husbandry	
Wage laboring	
Salary	
Pension	
Rent	
Remittance	
Others	
Total	

1. Which category does your income exist?

- a) > 5,000      b) 5000-10,000      c) 10,000-15000      d) above 15,000

2. Are you able to make saving from this occupation?

A. YES    B. NO

3. If yes, mention your annual saving.

\_\_\_\_\_.

4. Where do you use your saving?

\_\_\_\_\_.

## 8. Vulnerability Context (VC)

1. How much time do you give your major occupation?

- a. Full time      b. Part time      c. seasonal

2. How do you manage your expenditure at critical time?

---

3. If you have part time job, than where do you spend your rest of time?

---

## 9. Organization and Social Relation

1. Have you heard about the Organization?

A. YES B. NO

2. If, yes what are they?

a. b. c. d.

3. Are you involved in any institution?

A. YES B. NO

4. If, yes name the organization.

a. b. c. d.

5. Do you have subscription on political party?

A. YES B. NO

6. Have you represented on local government body?

A. YES B.NO

7. Did you participate in past election?

A. YES B. NO

8. If Yes, which one?

- A. Parliament Election 2048 B. Mid –term Election 2051
- C. Local Election 2054 D. Parliament Election 2056
- E. Constitutional Assembly Election 2064

**10. Development, Urbanization & modernization**

1. What development activities have been taken place over the last 5 years?

- a. Road construction
- b. Market expansion
- c. School establishment
- d. others

2. Is your village connected with road?

- A. YES
- B. NO

3. What are the impacts of the road in your occupation?

\_\_\_\_\_.

4. Do market expansion effect on your occupation?

- A. YES
- B. NO

5. If yes, what are the effects?

\_\_\_\_\_.

6. Do you have practicing any new occupation due to market expansion?

\_\_\_\_\_.

7. Which development activities have affected your livelihood? Give the name.

\_\_\_\_\_.

8. Are there any problems and challenges in your livelihood because of urbanization, modernization?

\_\_\_\_\_.

9. If yes, what are the major problems?

\_\_\_\_\_.

Thank You Very Much!

### Check List for the KIS (Key Informants)

Name of Respondent: .....

Age:.....

Sex:.....

Education:.....

1. What are the traditional occupations of Musahars' Community in this village?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Are these occupation are changing over the year? Give reason.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What are the roles of modernization/ urbanization in such change?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What are the activities of women in this community?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Are there any gender problems?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Are there any organizations in your society?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. If yes, what are they doing?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Is there any institutional Change over the years?  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. If yes what are the possible reason for it?  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What are the problems and challenges of the village on the way of making sustainable livelihood?  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. How can you improve the livelihood of Musahar community of this village? Give some suggestions.  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **Glossary**

Adhiya= Half share

Dalit= so called lower class people in the caste hierarchy

Dhami= A person that is believed to cure one's illness in rural areas

Haruwa and Charuwa= A person who works in a rich person's house as a domestic labor

Jabaar= the head of the Musahar community

Kul devta= Family Deity

Mahaajan= Landlord

Raksi= A locally made wine