

CHAPTER - ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Republic of Nepal lies in South Asia between the east meridians of $80^{\circ}4'$ and $88^{\circ}12'$ and the north parallels of $26^{\circ}22'$ and $30^{\circ}27'$. Nepal is bordered by India on the west, south and to the east, and by Tibet region of the People's Republic of China in the north. Its area is 54,718 square miles, and the present population is 26494504. Nepal embraces a part of the main Himalaya range in the north including Mount Everest (29,028 feet), the highest mountain in the world, and also a part of the Ganges plain in the south (Bista, 1967).

With a few exceptions the great majority of the Nepali people live in well defined, specific geographic regions. The Tibetan speaking Mongoloid people live in the high Himalayan regions of the north, with an alpine climate at altitudes of between 8,000 and 16,000 feet (Bista, 1967).

Nepal is homeland of several caste/ethnic groups of people. The culture, festivals, food habits, clothing and language of people different from one place to another. Nepal is multi culture, multi linguistic and multi religious country. According to census 2011, 126 caste groups are identified. Among the caste groups, Chhetries are 16.6 percent, Bramhin (mountainous) 12.2 percent, Magar 7.1 percent, Tharu 6.6 percent, Tamang 5.8 percent, Newar 5.0 percent, Kami 4.8 percent, Muslim 4.4 percent, Yadav 4 percent and Rai 2.3 percent, the survey report of National Federation of Ethnic Committee declared that, 65 ethnic groups are in Nepal. The population of Lepcha is 4056 in Nepal. Most of them (1581 nos.) residence in eastern development region (Rai et.al. 2069).

The philosophy of Hindu, Nepalese caste is divided into four layers; they are Bramhin, Chhetri, Baishya and Sudra. According to this system, the Bramhins are placed at apex in caste hierarchy and Sudra who is called an occupational caste (Damai, Kami,

Sarki Pode and Chyame) placed in lower stratum. B.S. in 1910 the King Surendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev classified the castes as Tagadhari, Matwali and untouchable castes. The castes Brahmin and Chhetri who does not includes in wine they are Tagadhari, the ethnic groups who involves in wine with their culture is Matwali and Damai, Kami, Sarki, Pode and Chyame are untouchable groups, from whose hands the Tagadhari and Matwali does not used the water, so they are called occupational caste (Sharma: 2037).

The caste Lepcha is placed in Matwali groups because they includes in wine with their feast and festivals. In outside the caste structure, Dr. Gurung defined the ethnic groups all are not tribal. Like this according to in social division Lepchas are considered as an ethnic group not as caste group. Lepchas are both Hindu and Buddhist because they celebrate both cultures (Sharma: 1982). Lepchas have striking culture and physical similarities with Rai and Limbu and inhabitants in eastern Nepal .Since the original homeland of the Lepcha tribe stretches from the Mai khola (kankal) to Bhutan. (Jeffrey, Shanti and Juddha, 2000)

Lepchas houses have thatched roofs and the walls are constructed of wood and zinc sheet. The main occupation of Lepchas is farming and agricultural labour generally the settlements of Lepchas are very small, scattered and apart from one another. They have their own socio – economic and cultural pattern. For the purpose of better livelihood they inputs their efforts to the farming but the advanced hill peoples such as Bramhin and Chhetri usually exploit them, at the end they becomes again poor and land less also. Majority of Lepchas select their spouse themselves (Love Marriage). They believe in God and worships own Kul Devta Kanchanjunga (Gurung and Shelter: 1996).

The king of Lepcha was Emehang, who ruled in Ilam districts He was the first king of Lepcha. Most of Lepcha in Nepal are peasants; small subsistence farmers to get by from what they can produce on their small plots of land. A very few Lepcha have other occupations: one is a shopkeeper, another works as a schoolteacher, and less than a handful have found employment with the government. The overwhelming majority however, are farmers (Chemjung, 2026).

All the ethnic groups have significant contribution since unification period to people's movement, 2006 and 1990 in Nepal, but they have still backwardness in socio – economic condition, political powers, access in resources and civil services. So in the case of Lepcha is not an exception, they are rather more backward than other ethnic groups. Lepcha holds 0.0064 % of the total population of Nepal. According to CBs, 2011 the 4056 Lepcha lives in Nepal, out of them 213 Lepcha speaks their mother tongue. Lepchas are minorities in number of population but they have strong historical background, so we have no hesitation to say Lepchas are oldest ethnic people living in Nepal. Lepchas have very interesting and wonderful life style such as marriage system, culture, occupation and festivals are very unique for everybody. Though the economic and social position and empowerment in politics are very poor, it should be raised up as soon as possible to uplift Lepcha community. Government of Nepal provides social security Rs.1000/month to each lepcha people because they are ranked as endangered group in the country.

At the age of globalization, liberalization and urbanization the ethnic groups are still bounded of their traditional occupation, culture and languages. As the results the socio – economic and political status is not changed as they desired. Lepchas have less representation in politics, Civil service, Army / police and other service sectors. They have less knowledge about freedom, social liberty, human rights and political ruling system. Because of less knowledge of Lepcha they are still backwards and to think seriously about uplift their socio – economic condition as well as political empowerment for build up a new Nepal.

In this study, to find out the actual social, economic and political status of Lepchas it is focused and targeted to research about following the subjects in this study. They are educational condition of children, main occupation of Lepchas and other income sources,

political and social participation and awareness, marriage system, cremation system, feast and festival.

Economically, Nepal is an agrarian country. It is one of the poorest countries in the world. The 25.4 percent of the people are below the poverty line (CBS 2011). In Nepal over the 65 % of the people are ethnical groups, they are socially and economically backwards than others. So the figure of poverty may be one reason of ethnical groups and it should be target to make policy and decline poverty status of ethnical groups in national level.

Social discrimination on the basis of caste, ethnic and gender difference plays a significant role in maintain social inequality in Nepal. Agrarian economy, traditional culture of farming is also the root of poverty. Various ethnographic studies have been undertaken in Nepal, some of studies have focused on demographic socio – economic and cultural changes in Nepalese people (Hitchok: 1965, Caplan: 1970).

The important question is that, in spite the efforts of government to uplift the living condition of rural people, why the Lepchas of Fikkal VDC are still living in a same condition before a long time. Why they are not in participate the main stream of national development. The main source of livelihood is farming of Lepcha community and leisure time of farming they goes for daily wage working in tea garden. Some times they often use to go foreign country . The family size of Lepcha is comparatively smaller than others. They spend their income in unproductive activities like traditional culture, feast and festivals and others. So there is co-relation between poverty and living standard of Lepchas.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to identify the social and economic Status of the Lepchas living in the Fikkal VDC of Ilam district.

The specific objectives are as followings:

-) To identify the economic condition of Lepchas
-) To explore the social condition of Lepchas

1.2 Significance

There is lack of sociological study on the social, cultural and economic status of Lepcha community using sociological lenses. In this study local factors will be analyzed in details. This study bestows the socio economic demographic as well as living status of Lepcha community that would be more useful as a reference for the Nepalese Sociologist, researchers, planners and policy makers.

The ethnic communities are still out of main stream of development. The social, economic and political status of those community could not have been raised up as desired by the nation. It is become necessary to find out, what is the root of the causes of the problems of ethnic community.

1.3 Limitations

This micro level of study of Lepcha has been limited on fikkal V.D.C. ward no. 5, Paandam. The study only includes social, economical condition of the Lepcha. The present study has focused on a limited aspect such as Family, Marriage, Kinship, Religion, Lifecycle, Dress pattern, Food habits, feast and festivals with economical status of Lepcha. Most of the respondents got hesitation to come in front of researcher. The interaction with the respondent at the time of data collection was a very big problem for the researcher because they are very confused and hesitated with researcher. After

convincing properly they respond nicely. This study is based on primary information which was gathered from the field work as well as secondary data has collected from various government and non-government publication and books on the subject matter, which Lepcha has been referred to, in some case information, may be inadequate to explain the exact situation due to small field area. The study was limited to 30 households hence it has difficult to find out all the needed answer from the study. The study can't be generalized with other Lepcha people living in next geography than fikkal, living in next districts on the abroad Nepal as it is only the case study of fikkal VDC, because of differences in settlement and social change.

1.4 Organization of the study

This study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter deals with the general introduction of the study, the second chapter deals the review of literature, the third chapter explains research methodology, the fourth chapter presents data analysis and interpretation and fifth chapter deals the summary, conclusion and recommendation.

CHAPTER - TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Origin and History of Lepcha

The origin of the Lepcha is not clear. Many research scholars have come up with theories regarding the origin of the Lepcha people, but the Lepcha people themselves firmly believe that they did not migrate to the current location from anywhere, and are indigenous to the region. They speak a Tibeto-Burman language which some classify as Himalayish. Based on this, some anthropologists suggest they emigrated directly from Tibet to the north, or from Eastern Mongolia. They were even said to be from Japan or Korea, while others suggest a more complex migration that started in southeast Tibet, a migration to Thailand, Burma, or Japan, then a navigation of the Ayeyarwady River and Chindwin rivers, a crossing of the Patkoi range coming back west, and finally entering ancient India. While migrating westward through India, they are surmised to have passed through southern Bhutan before reaching their final destination near Kanchenjunga. But the scholars who have suggested such migratory patterns could not come up with sufficient evidence to prove their theories. The Lepcha people themselves do not have any tradition of migration, and hence they conclude that they are aboriginal to the region, currently falling under the state of Sikkim, Darjeeling District of West Bengal, Ilam District of eastern Nepal, and the southwestern parts of Bhutan. The Lepcha people have folklore and tales that suggest they have inhabited the region since time immemorial. As to this point, writes historian Sailen Debnath (Rai et.al.2069).

Many writers, anthropologists and historians had written about the origin of these people, but none of these views are concrete. But from their appearance it seems that they are from the mongoloid stock (Lepcha, 2065). The Lepchas are highly tolerant of individual temperamental differences. As long as people are not aggressive or ambitious, remain peaceful, abide by the rules of society, and perform their communal duties, their privacy will be respected by others.

Historically, Lepchas are considered to be oblivious to personal possessions. As a community they were dependent on nature. The only possession they seemed to have been their faith in Mount Kanchenjunga as their mother. They were not keen about forming villages. But with the increase in population and various invasions they were compelled to start living in small hamlets in the valleys and forests. Bongthing, the priest and Mun, the priestess are known for their healing powers. Over a period of time bongthing and mun became the profession of some in the Lepcha community. Perhaps they were the witch doctors among the Lepcha tribe. Deprived of modern medical facilities, sick people were brought to them. They may have healed many. In addition to this they were responsible for keeping out the evil spirit from the community. When there is a death in the community they have a major role to play. They become the mediators of the deceased soul to reach the world of the Gods.(Fonning, 1987).

Fonning, (1987) reported that, the Lepchas were hunters and gatherers and used to live complete in nomadic lives, but now they are learning to cope with the modern age of civilization. They began with practicing of settled agriculture and have now diversified their interests into many other professions. However they still continue to be a Lepcha in their heart and soul - shy, simple and sincere, always carrying a chunk of blissful **Mayal Lyang** in their unsullied heart. A peace loving people, the Lepchas were free and independent aboriginal inhabitants of the place. They were the true friends of these rivers, forests and the hills, possessing an extensive zoological and botanical nomenclature of their own.

These people used to live an isolated life protected by the forests and the mountains. Their society was organized on the basis of sharing and equality - a structure that we call primitive communism. They considered themselves as children of nature, blithe spirits roaming the forests and the mountains, until they were rudely shaken from their dream by this harsh present number of western scholars have researched and written about the tribe, but recently the Lepchas themselves have started exploring their own origin. Among them writers like A. R. Foning and K. P. Tamsong have notable contribution? Mr Miku Foning, the youngest son of late A. R. Foning shares his experiences in the context of

changing times. Like most educated and committed members of his community his faith in the rejuvenation of the tribe is rather strong (Fonning, 1987).

Vaidya explained in his social history of Nepal that, Lepchas are still limited and reside at the separate places. They do not have more cultivated land, they are facing hands to mouth problem and catching the fishes for nutrients (Vaidya: 1993).

2.2 Population of Lepcha in Ilam districts

Lepchas are the permanent inhabitants of eastern hills of Nepal. In Ilam districts they are living in between east of Mai Khola and west of Mechi River in fifteen VDC. They are also living in Darjeeling, Sikkim, Kalimpong of India and Bhutan also. In the population census of 2011, their populations were 3660. In this census they are also living in different part of Nepal except Ilam. Some Lepchas are migrated to Jhapa and Kathmandu also. In this census their population (634 nos.) was found to be inhabitants in Mustang districts. But the pioneer sociologist Juddha Prasad Vaidya does not agree with this census report. So this must be further investigated. The population and households of Lepcha in Ilam Districts are shown in following table.

Table 1: The population and house holds of Lepchas in Ilam Districts -2011

S.N	V.D.C.	Ward No.	Households	Women	Men	Total	Total Population in 2011
1	Fikkal	1,2,3,4,5,6	71	222	210	432	326
2	Samalbung	2,4,5	61	169	126	296	266
3	Erautaar	1,2,3,4,5,6,8	61	142	131	275	328
4	ShreeAntu	2,3,4	33	91	92	183	155
5	Kolbung	1,3,9	59	168	142	310	268
6	Jirmale	6,7	29	84	73	157	142
7	Naamsaaling	3,4	7	24	18	42	34
8	Shantipur	2,3,7,8	28	69	76	145	161
9	Godak	7,8	23	60	66	126	111
10	Pashupatinagar	6,8	13	33	40	73	77
11	Laxmipur	2	2	4	6	10	12
12	Jogmaai	1,4,6	27	87	57	144	138
13	Panchakanya	7,9	40	114	110	124	271
14	Kanyaam	2,6,9	42	122	100	222	197
15	Gorkhe	2	3	8	8	16	14
16	Total		449	1397	1255	2555	2520

Source: Lepcha Utthan Manch, Fikkal 2012

2.3 Socio Economic Condition

According to the concise oxford dictionary 1990, socio – economic means relating to or concerned with interaction of social and economic factors. The term socio – economic status means "In a system of social stratification, it refers to a combination of various social and economic indexes of rank which are used in research studies". "The

term is often used to deal with stratification in a society without the need for the assumption that there are distinct social classes" (Bhussan: 1989).

Rajure 1978 explored the socio economic condition of Rai and Limbu in Ilam. Rai 1982 reported the socio – economic status of Lohorang Rais. The team organized by Ministry of labor and social welfare, HMG of Nepal (B. S. 2039) reported some socio – economic information about the least development communities like Sular, Dhimal, Lepcha, Darai and Bote in Jhapa, Morang, Sunsari, Chitwan, Nawalparasi and Palpa. The aim of the study was to observe the employment improvement for the least development community.

Similarly the least studies have been done by different writers on the socio – economic status of people or ethnic groups like "A socio – economic study of the migrant garbage pickers (Joshi: 1995), Socio – economic behavior of Chepang community (Rijal: 1996), The Socio – economic study of Plul Bechnehu (Lama: 1996)".

2.4 The religion of the Lepcha

Jeffery et.al.2000 mentioned in their book " The Lepcha of Nepal " that the Lepcha have in fact two religions, but these two are fluently mixed into a hole, and although the Lepcha themselves know perfectly well which ritual is part of which religion, they do not seek to separate them as rigidly as would perhaps a western anthropologist.

The oldest religion of the Lepcha we will refer to as shamanism. Many people denote this set of beliefs and practices "animism", but we think this term is wrong. Animism refers to the worship of nature and natural phenomena, such as rocks, mountains, rivers, streams, thunder and lightning, to ascribing inanimate things as having a soul. The Lepcha, however, do not outright worship these phenomena; they respect their natural phenomena, such as rocks, mountains, rivers, streams, thunder and lightning, to ascribing inanimate things as having a soul. Rather, they think these places are trees themselves, but are seen as separate from them. Religious specialists to denote such a person. In the

Lepcha language, however, they are called by several names, reflecting a hierarchy of the power that a certain shaman has. The highest class is called tung li mun. Lower ranks are yaba and mun, and bon thing (Jeffery, et.al.2000).

The second religion of the Lepcha of Ilam is Buddhism. The Buddhist religion is not very long among them, yet they have thoroughly interwoven it in their daily lives. Our theory is that Buddhism was firmly established only after the Kaji came to Ilam, in the late 1820s. That would make the Lepcha of Ilam some of the last Lepcha to be converted. There are several stories about how the Lepcha of Ilam became Buddhist and they can partly be corroborated by written documents from those days. It is important to note that although the Lepcha of Sikkim, and especially the Lepcha of Kalimpong and Darjeeling have adopted the Christian religion in great numbers, the Lepcha of Ilam have not done so. A small number of Lepcha living near the border town Pashupatinagar are however Christian. (Jeffery, et.al.2000).

The Buddhism of the Lepcha is one of the four main schools of Tibetan Buddhism :the school of Nyingma-pa. The Lepcha themselves, however, are not aware of there being different sects and were surprised when they were told so. The Nyingma-pa are unlike, the other main sects, allowed to marry and to have children. And many Lamas do so. Most of the Lamas of the two Lepcha monasteries in Ilam , however, have remained celibate and have no wish to marry.

The Lamas in Ilam are not very highly skilled and can perform only the similar ceremonies, although they are able to read the sutras. For the more intricate rituals, Lamas from India will be invited, although this is a costly affair (Jeffery, et.al.2000).

From birth to death, the bongthing and the mun perform all the religious ceremonies and rituals for the Lepchas. They are an integral part of the Lepcha culture. The Rongfolks or the Lepchas cannot really understand the theology or the spirituality preached by the priest and the priestess; but this creates a fear in them. It is this fear that generates faith in the incantations and the incarnation. This is the reason prayer and worship become part of their life, no matter which stage they are in. They worship everything from water to

butterfly, from trees to stones. In fact they seem to worship nature in general (Lepcha ,2065).

2.5 Economic and Social condition of Lepchas

Most Lepcha in Nepal are peasants: small subsistence farmers trying to get by from what they can produce on their small plots of land. A very few Lepcha have other occupations: one is a shopkeeper, another works as a schoolteacher, and less than a handful have found employment with the government. The overwhelming majority however, are farmers. The main occupation of Lepchas is farming and at a leisure time they used to go to pluck tea in teagarden. The Lepcha raise a variety of crops-maize (corn), rice, cardamom, and garden vegetables and they keep goats, cattle, and pigs. Their culture suppresses aggression and competition almost completely. Anybody they have no knowledge about own language and all they speak and understand Nepali languages, this means Lepcha themselves are not aware about own languages. The trend of marriage in Lepcha community seemed early marriage system, they all do the marriage below at the age of 20 years. The condition of Lepcha at this community is more behind sociologically, politically and economically than other people of non Lepcha communities. (Rai et.al.2069)

2.6 Studies on Lepcha

Lepchas is a rich mine for anthropological research. There are not enough serious studies made of this tribe. Though many age-old practices have become a prey to modernism, Bothing (Male priest) and Mun (Female priest), the two pillars of Lepcha religion are still very much alive and active. They still support keep alive many religious practices and beliefs. The practice of appeasing devils and demons, nature worship and ancestral worship are still very much part of the Lepcha way of thinking. Some are myths; some may have deep scientific reasons. It is only deep research that can differentiate the two. They hold tremendous amount of traditional knowledge on the use of flora and fauna acknowledged by the fact of their age old practices of using plants to cure numerous ailments. They have accumulated a vast understanding on the use pattern

of various wild products of the area. Besides being skilled hunters, they have gained marvel over the technical use of bamboo, ranging from articles of routine requirement to artifacts, water distribution network, musical instruments, etc (Lepcha, 2065).

Prof. Bista: 1967 is the pioneer one who has attempted to sketch an ethnographic map of all ethnic groups of Nepal. He has presented an interesting ethnographic picture of Rai and Limbu. But he did not explain the socio - economic status of Lepcha.

Vaidya: 1993, in his Social History of Nepal explained Lepcha, Darai, Majhi and Kumal are still timid and reside at the separate place without enough cultivated land for farming , suffering from hands to mouth problem. So, this study tries to evaluate about about their existing condition i.e. they are still in the position as Vaidhya mentioned or have got changed along with modernity.

Lepchas are slightly whitish creamy in colour, physical study, medium sized and wiry side. But they basically resemble mongoloid hill tribes in facial structure and even in other characteristics (Gautam and Thapa: 1996).

Poudel, 2025 describe cultural information about Lepcha tribes. According to him, the groom of Lepchas in the east is stolen by the brides as soon as he arrived and the marriage formulations are completed. In the same manner Upadhaya: B. S. 2027 also provide some ethnic information about the Lepcha communities and reports, he explained that, Lepchas are very strict in custom and belief in religion. They are illiterate and poor.

Rai et.al: (2069) explored the Lepcha community along with other people of Nepal. He mentioned the total population of Lepcha is 3000 in Ilam. He arranged the Lepchas social framework with Rai and Limbu tribes. He also provided the various type of information about socio culture custom of Lepchas. The common system of marriage among the Lepcha is by mutual agreement.

Main occupation of Lepchas was fishing and hunting at past and they have started farming at present. They are indigenous, simple and straight forward in nature. They are exploited from cunning people of the society and losing the properties due to this reason (Gurung: 1994).

Lepcha, 2065 mentioned in his unpublished dissertation the "Sri Antu VDC Ilam Ka Lepcha women's Socio Economic condition" is that, the traditional clothing for Lepcha women is the ankle-length *dumdem*, also called *dumdyám* ("female dress"). It is one large piece of smooth cotton or silk, usually of a solid color. When it is worn, it is folded over one shoulder, pinned at the other shoulder, and held in place by a waistband, or *tago*, over which excess material drapes. A contrasting long-sleeved blouse may be worn underneath.

The traditional Lepcha clothing for men is the *dumprá* ("male dress"). It is a multicolored, hand-woven cloth pinned at one shoulder and held in place by a waistband, usually worn over a white shirt and trousers. Men wear a flat round cap called a *thyáktuk*, with stiff black velvet sides and a multicolored top topped by a knot. Rarely, the traditional cone-shaped bamboo and rattan hats are worn (Lepcha 2065).

The Lepcha have their own language, also called Lepcha. It belongs to the Bodish–Himalayish group of Tibeto-Burman languages. The Lepcha write their language in their own script, called *Róng* or Lepcha script, which is derived from the Tibetan script. It was developed between the 17th and 18th centuries, possibly by a Lepcha scholar named *Thikúng Mensalóng*, during the reign of the third Chogyal (Tibetan king) of Sikkim. The world's largest collection of old Lepcha manuscripts is found with the Himalayan Languages Project in Leiden, Netherlands, with over 180 Lepcha books (Lepcha, 2065).

2.7 Theoretical Review

This study is an attempt to observe social and economic status of Lepcha community through sociological point of view. From the very beginning of human life the society has undergone many changes throughout the age in the past till now. Various sociological theories have been developed to explain social and economic status,

however, the present study is an attempt to describe present situation of the Lepcha from the perspective of development, modernization, dependency and gender perspectives. The researcher found these concepts appropriate to look at them in different aspects related to the social and economic status of the Lepcha community.

2.7.1 Caste System

Kroeber, defined caste as an endogamous and hereditary subdivision of an ethnic unit occupying a position of superior or inferior rank or social esteem in comparison with other such divisions (Kroeber,1930). This defining assumes caste systems as systems of social transformation-i.e. an aggregate of ranked people that is unusually rigid and birth ascribed and permits no individual mobility.

Berremann (1965) says a caste system can be said to occur, when a society is composed of birth ascribed, hierarchically order and culturally distinct groups. A caste system is different from a class system. Unlike the caste system, a class system defines the rank of its members according to their individual attributes and behavior. A member in a particular caste exhibits attributes of that particular caste because he is a member of it. In a class system, one is a member of a class because he displays the attributes of that class. Individual mobility is theoretically impossible in a rigid caste system, but it is not so in a class.

2.7.2 Development Theory

In the beginning, man had nomadic life and lives in jungle. Later on man started to settle permanently, and formed social group and community. The concept of nation, law, education, technology, religion etc. was developed in society. Every change led to a new circumstance such again in changes led to a next. Such changes are continuing and continue for ever.

Many social scientists have discussed the relationship of man, society and culture. Comparisons of such works give us idea of change. A key moment of this was the publication of Charles Darwin's "Origin of Species"(1859).This book influenced the social and natural sciences in the West. Inspiring by Darwin's works about the evolution

of biological species many social scientists theorized social change in similar ways. Herbert Spencer, who is referred as social Darwinist, explained social evolution as similar as biological evolution. In "Division of Labor"(1893), for instance, Durkheim, who is widely considered one of the founding fathers of sociology, compared 'primitive' and 'modern' society being based on the model analogue to organic evolution. The former society, he suggested, has 'mechanical solidarity', in which there is no division of labor, a segmentary structure a strong collective consciousness.

Marx argues that societies are transformed through changes in the mode of production. This was assumed to evolve in a series of stages, or modes of production, which Marx believes all societies would eventually pass through. By the early twentieth century the relationship between colonial practices, planned change its law of development of the colonies to the law of development and welfare of the colonies insisting that the colonial power should maintain a minimum level of health education and nutrition for its subjects. Colonial authority were now to be responsible for the economic development of a conquered territory, as well as the well-being of its inhabitants (Esteva, 1993)

After the world War Second (1945), the world especially the developing countries passed through a volatile period of enormous social, political, economic and ecological change. Such changes were directed from various levels and in various levels and in various ways. Some changes such as from the government level were planned and systematic transformation of society whereas some other changes were unplanned and violent. The term 'development' was used formally by US president Harry Truman in 1949; however, the concept similar to 'development' has been noticed before the War-periods. Over the years, 'development' has been used in different meanings and various theories have been developed on development.

After World War II 'development' has become one of the most popular words. Its emergence was contingent upon particular historical conjunctions control over colonies was declining a consequently most of the colonial countries became free but due to capitalist economy, they were shifted towards neo-colonialism in the name of development. Systematic plans were run from the national and international level. Its aim was to

transfer old and traditional society into modern ones. Therefore, development has become as a process of social change.

Definition of development varies according to the context as well. Pieters (2001), defines development as the organization in collective affairs according to a standard of improvement. What constitute improvement and what is appropriate intervention obviously vary according to class, cultural, historical context and relations of power. In relation to Lepcha people, they are less developed as socio-economically than other caste.

2.7.3 Modernization Theory

Modernization Theory provides most popular explanation of global inequality. It focuses on the condition that are necessary for a country to become economically developed that is, fully modern. It deals with the issues of development and underdevelopment. Modernization theory explains the poverty of under developed countries on the basis of either structural or any other western country. They say that it is true because modernization generally emphasis professionalization, rationality, planning and progress.

After 1950s the experts of development, planners and leaders of the Third World started to take the concept of modernization as a development. In fact, modernization theories were directed towards the intensive level of universalization. According to this theory, for the social development it is compulsory to change the norms and values of society. According to Atlas (as cited in Bhattarai, 2003) "modernization is a process by which modern scientific knowledge is introduced into the society with the ultimate purpose by which modern scientific knowledge is introduced into the society with the ultimate purpose of achieving a sheer and more satisfactory life in the broadest sense of term as accepted by the society concerned".

The characteristic of modernization are measure of public participation in the policy or at least democratic representation in defining and choosing policy alternatives. Likewise, the other characteristic is that an increment of mobility in the society is understood as

personal freedom of physical, social and psychic movement. The main assumption of modernization is the transformation and establishment of new norms and values of the society replacing new norms and values of the society replacing the old and traditional norms and values of the society.

N.J. Smellser describes the modernization as development of high technology, urbanization, new norms and values and progressing toward industrialization. He does emphasis on structural change of the society as follows:-

1. In Technology: There is a change from simple and traditionalized techniques toward the application of scientific knowledge.
2. In Agriculture: The change is from subsistence farming towards commercial production of agricultural goods.
3. In Industry: The transition is from the use of human and animal power toward industrialization proper.
4. In Ecology: There is movement from the farm village towards urban centre.

Modernization is occurring in all societies. Science , technology, ideology, charismatic leadership and governmental authority are promoting all conducive to modernization. As far as modernization , it is found that the Lepcha community is not modern as compared to other caste. Now a day females wear Kurtha Salwars and take mobile phones in their hands. Their children go to government school wearing modern dress. The language which their forefathers used now days it is out of practice. In the past time they used kakat in Chilim (a kind of smoke used in the earthen pipe) but now some of them use smoke with filter. These are the profits of modernization.

Modernization is occurring in all societies. Science, technology, ideology, charismatic leadership and coercive governmental authority are promoting all conducive to modernization. Attitudinal and value changes are prerequisites to creating modern society, economy and political system.

2.7.4 Dependency Theory

Dependency Theory has emerged as a radical critique of the Modernization Theory. As the third world, as well as its failure to understand the real causes of underdevelopment and poverty, led to the emergence of a new perspective in viewing them, namely dependency and the world-system theories.

As one of the experts of Dependency Theory, Andre Gunder Frank (1969) has criticized earlier theories of modernization and stages of development, underdevelopment is not original or traditional, the new developed countries were never underdeveloped though they may have been underdeveloped, he expresses. He bitterly criticized, the present underdeveloped countries could only be understood the product of reflection solely of its own economic, political, social and cultural characteristics or structure (Frank, 1969). He further adds that an analysis of historical accounts of the underdeveloped countries is similar in any important aspects of the past of the developed countries. In every society one is dependent to other, the powerful nation control the poor one. The Lepcha of the study area are found not self dependent.

2.7.5 Gender Perspective

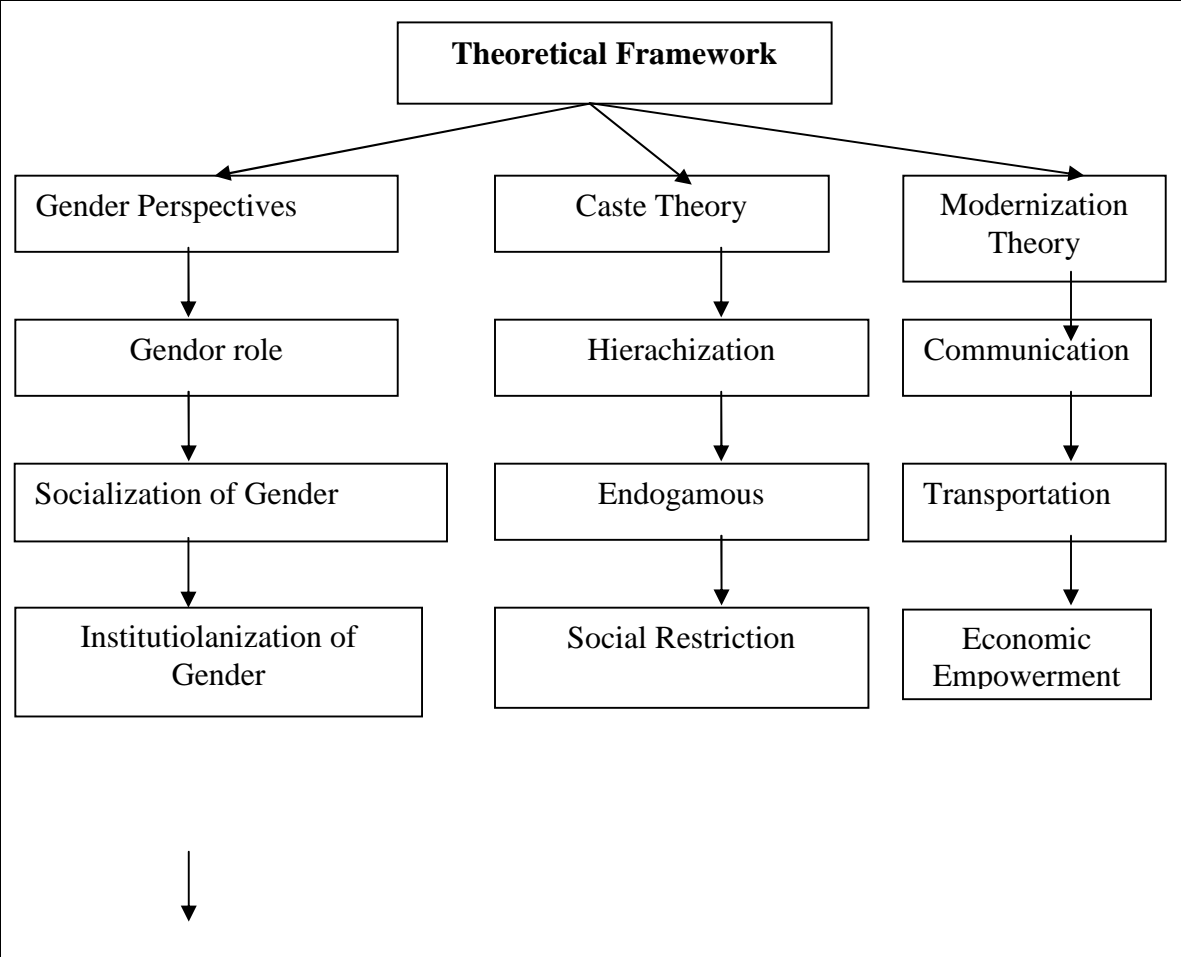
There are biological differences between men and women. Sex refers to the biological difference that is universal and unchanging, the term gender refers to the social differences that are learned, created by men and are changeable over time and have wide variations within and between cultures. Gender is a socio-economic variable to analyze roles, responsibilities, constraints and opportunities of people involved and it considers both men and women (Zwarteveen, 1993). Gender roles are learned behaviours in given society conditioning which activities, task and responsibilities are considered feminine and masculine. Gender role arise from the socially and culturally assigned differences between men and women. There are changeable and with class, race, ethnicity, religion, age and time. They influence the division of labour, which reinforces existing power relations and access to resources, benefits; information's and decision-making when working at gender, it is crucial to bear in mind the difference between sex and gender (Thapaliya, 2004).

Patriarchy is a family structure where the elder male member control and direct the family. In this type of family there is a primary role of male in a social relation, behavior and in the horticulturalist society are much more diverse in terms of gendered division of labour, family patterns and gender stratification: are other social types. The development of horticulture was an outgrowth of women's collective activities. Women in fact were the first farmers. so it is not surprising to find that women often dominate food production in horticultural societies. A common pattern for women to do most of farming (Planting, cultivating, and harvesting) while for men to do hunting and land clearing and spending most of their time on arts and crafts, tool making religious and ceremonial activities and several customs relevant to gender are associated with the horticultural societies. There were polygenic, bride wealth and menstrual taboos. These practices tend to be present in societies with more rather than less, male dominant and they indicate lower status of women.

Compared to horticultural group, agrarian societies show a distinct uniformity in the gender division of labour. Most significantly men, rather women or both sexes are primarily responsible for large-scale agricultural work. Several factors have been suggested to explain the transition from female to male dominance in subsistence (and later surplus) production in agrarian societies. The two factors—the need for more labor and greater strength explain a man's increased production in agrarian society. Because women are responsible for raising younger children in virtually all societies, this task generally keeps them close to home and leaves them with less time for fulltime farming. Most significant is that, for the first time, women became increasingly economically dependent on men. As women's tasks were delegated to the domestic sphere, their public participation and opportunity for formal status attainment decreased, in some societies the division between public and domestic life, the exclusion of women from public life were carried to an extreme and were institutionalized, that is, established as law or custom—in practice of purdah.

Lepcha society is patriarchal society, so the leadership of the family is head by the male. The gender role condition is found variably in this society. Most women engaged in household works and men works outside the home. Women have role in household decision making. There is wider gender discrimination in Lepcha society /community.

Mainly this society is patriarchal in nature. When we can sleeplessly see that there is a deep discrimination between men and women. But when researcher went there for data collection the entire male and female claim "they have no gender discrimination". Women in the study area found that they are to be mostly involved in household activities and become a housewife and less involved in economic activities. Male have primary role in a decision making process and mostly they are involved in agricultural activities.



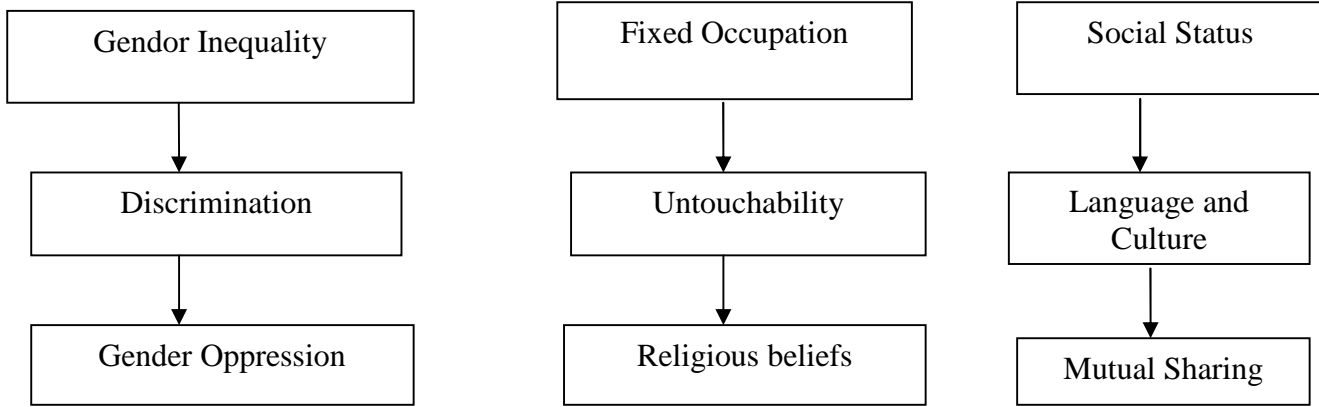


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

2.8 Conceptual Framework

Lepchas are those people who have lived in eastern mid hills of Nepal. They are simple, poorly educated and innocent. They are similar to Rai and Limbu of Nepal. They are being always different socially and have simple social status. Social and economic status play major role to designate their real status in society. Social indicators, economic indicators of development determine socio-economic status of the people. The social indicators include family, social organization, conflict, family planning, education, health/sanitation, gender discrimination etc. Similarly, economic indicators include occupation, landholding, household income, employment, agriculture, housing /shelter, commodities used etc. Lepchas are lower access to above these mentioned types of facilities as they involved in rural agriculture.

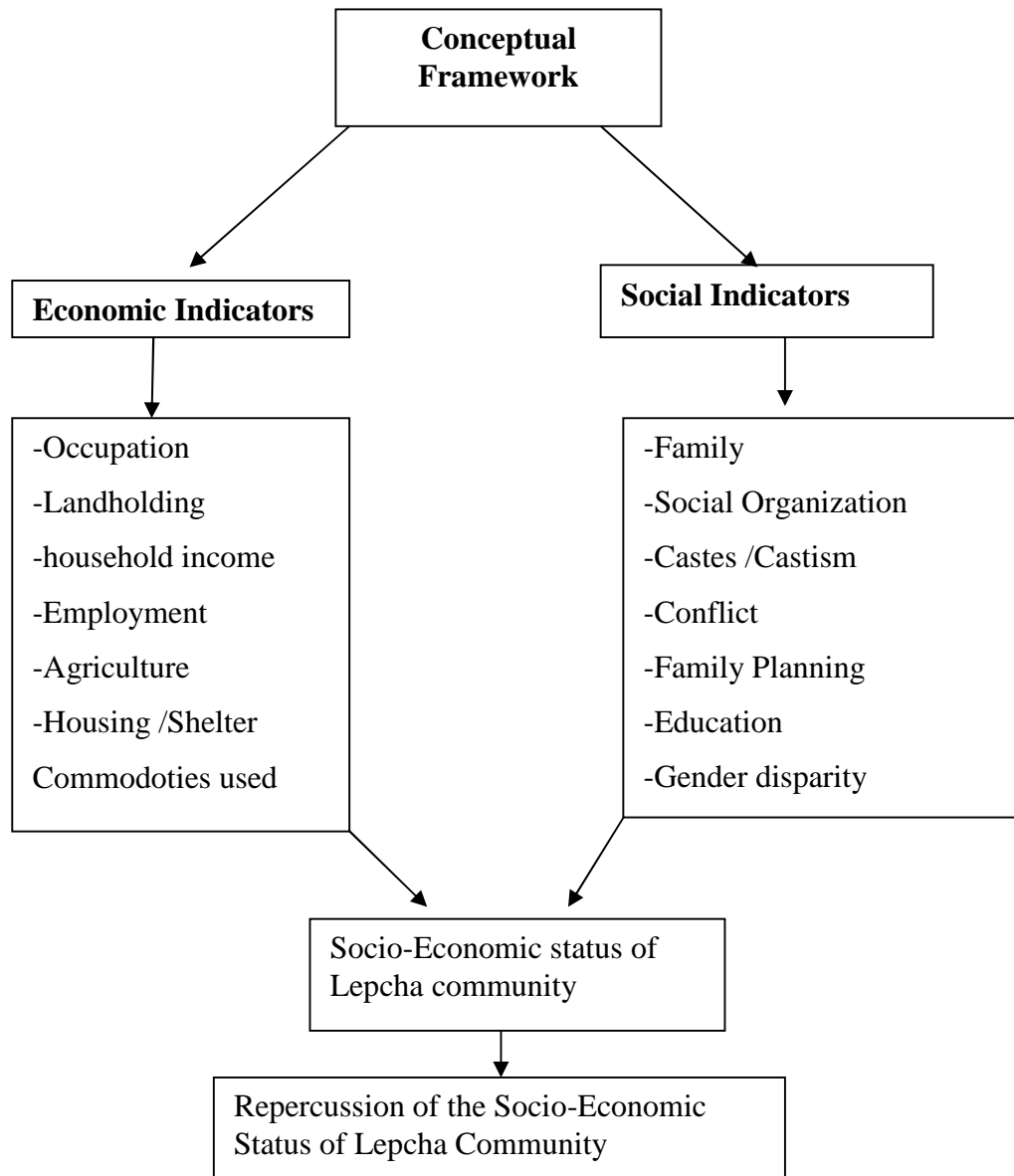


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER - THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 The Selection and the Rationale of the study area

Based on the nature of the study, ward number 5 of fikkal VDC, Ilam district is selected for the study area. In this study area there are 147 numbers of lepcha are living in 30 households. This ward no.5 has been purposively selected due to the following reason.

Researcher has found no any research has been done in this community.

3.2 Introduction to the study area

3.2.1 Ilam District

Ilam district lies in the eastern development region of Nepal. It is bounded by India in the east, Morang district to the west, Panthar district to the north and Jhapa district to the south. The total area of this district is 1703 sq. km. It has 48 VDC and one municipality. Ilam is the districts headquarter of this district. The headquarter of this district is 1298 meter from sea level. Ilam lies sandwiched between the Mahabharat and the Singhalia Ranges. Its major rivers from East to West are: Mechi, Mai khola, JogMai, Pua Mai (also called kankai), and Dew Mai. The region between the four Mai rivers is called Chaar Khola ("four rivers") since times ancient. (Baidhya, J.P. 2046)

The temperature lies between 0 to 30 degree centigrade. The annual average rainfall is 2300 mm. The major rivers in the district are Mai khola, Puwa khola, Mechi River etc. The district has subtropical, Tropical and Temperate climate. (DDC Ilam, 2069).

Total area of this district is 171725 hectare. Among its total area, the 71085 hectare lands cultivated, 80926 hectare lands is under the forest covered, 4412 hectare is

grazing land, 3580 hectare is bushes and 11722 hectare is river rocks and stony. The total population of this district is 290254, among them 141126 are male and 149128 are female. The total number of household is 64502., with the average household size of 5.4 the literacy rate of 6 years and above is 36.5 and the population density per sq. km. is 158.5 (CBS 2011).

3.2.2 Fikkal VDC

Among the 48 VDC of Ilam district, Fikkal lies to the north east from district headquarter Ilam . This VDC is bordered by Pashupatinagar and sri Antu VDC the east, Gorkhe and Nayabazar in North, Panchakanya VDC in west and Kanyam VDC in south. Fikkal Bazaar is the heart of this VDC.(Fikkal VDC Profile,2068)

Fikkal VDC has diverse caste / ethnicity such as Bramhin, Chhetri, Newar, Lepcha, Giri, Mukhiya, Sunuwar and other occupational caste. The total household of VDC is 2691 with total population 11264, out them 5568 male and 5696 female with the 4.18 average sizes of household. The majority of the population is followed Bramhin / Chhetri, Rai, Newar, Limbu, Tamang, Sunuwar mukhya, Lepcha, Yolmo etc. The literacy rate of this VDC is only 89.35%. The average land holding size per household is below than 1 hectare.Fikkal VDC Profile, 2068)

The VDC have 17 schools in all total. Among them, 1 is higher secondary, 4 are high school, 4 is lower secondary and 8 are primary school. The office of Village Development Committee established on the middle of the village and primary health center is also with in same place. The main occupations of most peoples are agriculture; they produced Tea, maize and millets as food grain. Vegetable production and livestock was also mixed their occupation.(Fikkal VDC Profile,2068)

3.2.2.1 Transportation

In this V.D.C. there are nine wards. There is not good road in each and every ward. About 50% road are not suitable for rainy season. People have Taxi, Tractor, and

Bus. Some people have horse for transportation and carrying loads. Younger people use motorbike for transportation.(Fikkal VDC Profile,2068)

3.2.2.2 Health

Fikkal V.D.C. is close to Mechi highway. Most of the people of this V.D.C. go to health post, hospital. In this V.D.C. there is one primary health care center of government of Nepal, most of the people get free treatment from health care center. But some elder people even now belief Dhami and Jhakris. When they feel uneasy first they go to local Dhami, and then they will again reach the hospital also. Because of consciousness in their society, now a day they don't believe dhami and Jhakris and they directly go to the nearest hospital. Normally in nearest districts Jhapa, there are a lot of nursing homes, and Fikkal's people used this hospital. (Fikkal VDC Profile, 2068)

3.2.2.3 Communication

Communication is important for everybody. In this V.D.C. there are private P.C.O. available. There are land line phone also available in most of the rich people's house. There is one post office and V.D.C office also, there are telephone services available. Now a day's most of the people have cell phone in their hand and communication is easy. There is facility of electricity. So people use to see T.V and use to chat through internet with their relatives so this V.D.C is developed V.D.C comparatively others V.D.C.(Fikkal VDC Profile, 2068).

3.2.2.4 Natural Resources

Natural resources are very important for nation to develop the living standard of the people. The study area Fikkal V.D.C also rich for natural resources like water,land,fertile soil ,forest etc. There is a lot of forest in this V.D.C ,so most of the people use firewood to cook food. This V.D.C lies near Darjeeling of west Bengal, so it is also importance for tourism for night stay. For agriculture, most of the people use cow dung, organic manure and so on.

Most of the villagers are farmers. They produce green tea, cardamom, maize, potatoes, tomatoes, milk, broomgrass, ginger, akabare chilly etc. (Fikkal VDC Profile, 2068)

3.3 Research Design.

This research has mainly focused to describe the occupation and income sources, social status and contribution, educational factors, marriage system and marriage stage, traditional and cultural impact and health condition of Lepcha community. Both Exploratory and Descriptive, research designs applied within the framework of ethnographic study.

3.4 Nature and Sources of Data

Basically this study adopts both primary and secondary data for the collection of information. The primary data were collected from 30 respondents of 30 households of Lepcha. The secondary data were taken from published and unpublished research reports, books, articles, and related documents. Both qualitative and quantitative nature of data was collected being based on a quan-qual approach. Qualitative data were collected from household survey method, questionnaire etc. Quantitative data were collected from in-depth interview, unstructured questionnaire, observation, key informants etc.

3.5 Sampling Design

Fikkal VDC of Ilam districts is purposively selected for this study. All 30 households of Lepcha of ward no. 5 of Fikkal VDC were collected for the primary data which was the sample size of the study and the universe of the total household is also 30. The population of the universe of Lepcha household is 432 in total. This study is limited to head of the household.

3.6 Data Collection Technique

The required data and information were collected from intensive field work and frequent visit was made when required. The key informant's interview was taken from head of Lepcha community, old man and other related person. The requiring information was collected from following methods:

3.6.1 Household Survey

All the households of Lepchas were taken into survey and both structured and unstructured questionnaire were used for data collection. The basic quantitative information such as age, sex, educational attainment, land holding size, occupation and other socio economic conditions of the households were gathered through household survey.

3.6.2 Interview schedule

It has conducted using both struted and instructed questionnaires which contain both open and close question. Total 30 household were taken interview with the help of information. Structed questionnaire had used to. Collect some of the basic information like population, education, food sufficiency, literacy rate, and family members and so on. To fulfill the questionnaire the household head were taken as the main respondent.

3.6.3 Observation

Direct observation methods have been used to get the information for the study. It has been conducted to observe food production and consumption pattern. Direct observation used to observe their daily activities, housing settlement, agriculture practice, dressing pattern, livestock and other various activities that could gather as much as information as required. To get information for study simple observation has been applied. Direct observation method was used to observe the infrastructure of ward, people and household activities, related to socio cultural behaviors and cultural change in recent

period. In field work period by observing the situation was used to investigate the marriage practice, festival celebration and other sectors of the community.

3.6.4 Key Information Interview

The old village people, School teachers, educated and knowledgeable people of the village were selected as key informants in order to collect information through interview about socio economic condition of Lepcha of Fikkal VDC. The questions were asked in interview were able to collect qualitative information. Out of 4 keys informants 1 was old Lepcha, 1 was school teacher, 1 was knowledgeable neighbor and last 1 was young knowledgeable Lepcha.

3.5 Key information

The knowledgeable person about Lepcha, elder persons are taken as key information. They provided in depth information about their sociol,economical condition, their problem and need as well as their life cycle,ceremonies,birth,marriage,festivals,death etc.The information was taken by using checklist by asking the questions and filling them at the same time by the researcher.

3.6 Data Analysis

The collected data has been analyzed simply in the tabulation and percentage. Primary and Secondary data has been managed with different table. Most of the collected data have been analyzed in the descriptive way showing statistically. The collected information about age, sex marriage, educational and economic status have been analyzed in table.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

4.1 Household Characteristics

4.1.1 Types of Houses

The residential pattern of Lepchas and housing types were found traditional. Some walls of houses were found made up of planks of wood and others were found made by mud and bamboo. The majority roofing of houses of respondents are made by Zinc sheet, some are made of concrete and very minority roofing is thatched. They all attached the verandah in front of the houses and it is useful for the guest and daily functional life of respondents. The houses are not ventilated i.e. windows are very rare. The houses are designed by the space and allocated for rearing goat, buffaloes and other domesticated animals. They do not allocated special rooms for bed and kitchen. The same space used for all purpose like kitchen, dining and sleeping.

Table 2: Types of Houses

Types of roofing	Households	Percent
RCC	3	10.0
Zinc sheet	22	73.3
Live on rent	5	16.7
Total	30	100

Source: Field survey 2013

The Table 2 presents the housing patterns of the respondents. Among the 30 household of Lepchas, the 73.3 percent house roofing is covered by Zinc sheet, 10 percent house RCC and 16.7percent household have not home. They live in rent. The housing style of the respondents presents the economic condition of the respondents. So in this study the housing condition of respondent is included. The roofing style of house

of the respondent indicates that, the roof of Zinc sheet is durable. Concrete household indicates the rich and high standard of living.

4.1.2 Family Structure

Family is the basic and universal social structure; it fulfills various needs of the members. It performs several function including continuity, integration and changes in the society.

It is believed that, generally large majority of families in Nepal are Joint. In the study area both joint and nuclear family were found at study period. In such type of Nepali family father is the head who makes decision in household level.

The nuclear family consists of married couple and their unmarried children. The joint family consists the group all family members such as parents, brothers, sisters, cousin, uncle, aunty, grand parents and other lives in together calls joint family. In which there is a joint resident, kitchen and properties.

Table 3: Family Structure

Family type	Households	Percentage
Joint	5	16.7
Nuclear	24	80.0
Alone	1	3.3
Total	30	100

Source: Field survey 2013

The family structure on Table 3 shows that, the family of most Lepcha community is nuclear. Among the 30 household respondents 80.0 percent are tied under nuclear family, the 16.7 percent are joint family and 3.3 percent are alone, they have no marriage. In this study at field work period found that, after getting marriage the youngest sons of Lepcha started to settle as nuclear family.

4.1.3 Class formation

There is no class formation in lepcha society. But Lepcha are problemized by kajis and subbas. Initially lepchas from this area were involved in agriculture. All forest, rivers and ponds from Ilam district are being used by lepcha community.

Right and ownership over the *Lepchas's* ancestral land is completely removed after B.S 1993 provision of review ofregistering land used by them. Besides this Lepchas are under control of *Kaji, Subba and Mukhias* even in using their ancestral lands. They pay tax to *Kaji* in return of using the land. In case if Lepchas are not able to pay tax then every thing is confisticated from them including the land? Many Lepchas have said that they were failed to register theirland on their names in Ilam after the enactment of Land reclamation act in B.S 2028.

4.1.3.1 Relation with other castes

With the development of community, people of different caste are living together in a single community. Lepcha people are also sharing same community with other castes in this area of study. Due to the cultural effect of different caste, people from different caste have mixed culture in this area. There is no discrimination in this area and people from all caste are living harmoniously in this area.

4.1.4 Women's status

Nepalese society pays huge respect to women religiously but behaviorally their status is not equal to men. In majority of Nepalese family, any decision is made by men and women are just a helping hand for men.

In this study, the status of women is not equal to the status of men considering of decision making. As in maximum household of Nepal, the final decision is made by men but we found out the habit of family discussion before making any decision. Women are given freedom of taking part in social and cultural activities. Household activities like marriage, puja ceremony, festivals, etc are celebrated by equal participation of men and women.

In Lepcha Society, women also play great role in their household decision. According to the respondents most of the husband ask when they want to do something. Women are involved in their own small business like to sell Raksi,Jaad,Pig ,etc.Lepcha women also involved in group saving scheme. Every month they bring some money and all the women gather one place and give the money to needy women. By this type of saving scheme now days they are improving their life standard also.

4.1.5 Household Population by age:

An attempt is made to illustrate the age structure of Lepcha population in study area followingly:

Table 4:Total Populations of Lepchas in Selected Area

Age group	Sex		Total	Percent
	Male	Female		
0-14	23	19	42	28.6
15-59	51	43	94	64.0
60 above	7	4	11	7.4
Total	81	66	147	100

Source: Field survey 2013

Table 4 shows the household population by age group of the respondents. It is the people are economically active in work generally 15 to 60 ages. In case of the Lepchas to find out the economically active people, the table of population by age groups is prepared.

There are 147 Lepcha people lives in the study area, out of them 64 percent of the Lepchas are 15-59 ages. They could do work hard to earn income for food grains to feed their families. 28.6 percent are children and 7.4 percent are oldest Lepchas, they totally

depend upon to the 46 percent active Lepchas for the survival purpose. It is found that, 64 percent Lepcha earn hard cash for their families.

But in the study period it is also found that, after the 10 years the children were actively participating in works like house keeping, goat rearing and grass cutting for cattle and in others works which they can do and like this, the oldest Lepcha also seen some kinds of income generating activities like Doko and Namlo. Oldest women Lepcha are seen responsible for cooking.

4.1.6 Educational Status of household population

Education is the major instruments of socio - economic development of a community and as well as the nation. Education helps to uplift poor and weak condition of people and society. Education provides skill, knowledge and opportunity to income generation. So the education is necessary for everybody and to find out the educational status of Lepchas the table is presented as under.

Table 5: Educational Status of household population

Education	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
Primary	43	53.1	29	43.9	72	49.0
Lower Secondary	11	13.6	7	10.6	18	12.2
Secondary	8	9.8	10	15.2	18	12.2
College	5	6.2	2	3.0	7	4.8
Illiterate	14	17.3	18	27.3	32	21.8
	81	100	66	100	147	100

Source: Field survey 2013

The Table 5 shows the educational status of Lepchas. The total numbers of student in different level of educational institutions are 115. Among them 78.2 percent children of Lepchas attendants in schools, but out of them the 26.8 percent children

leaves the school after primary education. Among the total students of Lepchas 4.8 percent reached in campus level. 21.8 percent Lepcha have become illiterate. According to this figure the educational status of Lepcha is very poor and its results the Lepcha community is more behind than other community of society in Fikkal till now.

4.1.7 Health condition and Care System of Lepchas

Table 6: Health Care System

Service sector	Household	Percentage
Dhami / Jhankri	7	23.0
Health post	15	50.0
Both	6	20.0
Non	2	7.0
Total	30	100

Source: Field survey 2013

Table 6 shows the health care system of Lepchas. According to this table 23 percent respondents believe on Dhami / Jhankri totally. Fifty percent people used to go to hospital when they becomes ill, 20 percent respondent uses both Dhami / Jhankri and hospital and 7 percent Lepcha do not use hospital and Dhami / Jhankri both. The findings of this table analyzed thus, to remain faith on Dhami / Jhankri of Lepchas still is uneducated Lepcha, absence of medical services and lack of money.

4.1.8 Family Planning

Reproduction means children production process. Birth rate is high in Nepal which is obviously true in case of Lepcha women too. Due to this, there is adverse effect on health of Lepcha women and child. Patriarchal culture is prevalent in Lepcha society due to which son is given more importance in society. In family decision, the role of men is strong. Reproduction is done in mutual consent between husband and wife but

reproduction in mainly concerned for birth of son. Decision related to life partner is subjected to be made by women independently.

The major problem of Nepal is population growth. The population growth is increasing at the rate of 1.35 percent annually and the food production is not keeping place with the increase in population. Family planning is also one solution to prevent population growth. In this study, we have analyzed the family planning trend in Lepcha community of study area. The types of family planning and its adoption by the Lepcha is mention as under the table.

Table 7: Use of Contraception

SN	Types	Respondent	Percentage
1	Condom (Male)	0	0.0
2	Pills (Female)	6	20.0
3	Vasectomy (Male)	2	7.0
4	Laparoscopy (Female)	7	23.0
5	No use	15	50.0
	Total	30	100

Source: Field survey 2013

The uses trend of family planning mention on above table shows that, 43 percent female following the temporary and permanent type of family planning and its opposite only 7 percent male using the family planning programs. This means we find that, there is exploitation to female Lepcha by the male in the case of family planning. The 50 percent male and female Lepcha does not have involved any kind's family planning. This position also presents the result of uneducated people.

4.1.9 Marriage practices

Table 8:Age at marriage

Age of marriage	Respondents	Percentage
14-19	23	76.7
20-24	6	20.0
25 above	0	0
Unmarried	1	3.3
Total	30	100

Source: Field survey 2013

Table 8 shows that, the early marriage system has more fertile in Lepcha community. It further reveals that 76.7 percent of Lepcha tied in marriage at the age of under 20. The 3.3 percent Lepcha found in this study they have not marriage. On this study 20 percent lapcha marriage in optimum age i.e 21 to 30 years. This type of early marriage system should have improved in Lepcha community to prevent early child production and to maintain woman health care. Generally in marriage programs, they spend money more in Jand, Raksi (Alcohol) and meat. Almost Lepcha takes loan from informal institution and individuals like this work.

4.1.9.1 MARRIAGE TYPE

There are three types of marriage practiced in Lepcha society. They are following ways.

1. Arranged Marriage
2. Love Marriage
3. Intercaste Marriage

Most of the people prefer love marriage. In arrange marriage, mediator play great role to arrange the boy and girl. In Love marriage, young boy and girl they get marriage

according to their own decision. Inter-caste marriage also like love marriage. But in this marriage they have to face minor challenge from family and their society also. In the study area 70% of the respondents expressed the view to love marriage and 30%, respondents have positive view of the other type of marriage.

4.2 Festivals

The religion of Lepcha is Buddhist, but they respect other religion too. They celebrate Dashain, Tihar, Chaitra dashain, Maghe sankranti, Saune sankranti, Baisakh purnima etc. Lepcha of Fikkal V.D.C were found observing the following festivals.

4.2.1 Nambun

It is the greatest festival of Lepcha. The Nambun or the New Year's Day festival; though essentially a thanks giving function has been converted into a joyous and festive occasion. But here also, as in every other case Gods and demons find their way in to it. So, only after offering thanks to the Gods for the goodwill shown towards us during the past year, and the devils for leaving us alone in the coming year, came out and enjoying this celebration to the full. This is one festival where each individual, each family, and the community as a whole, seems to reveal and make merry.

On the Nambun day, everybody in the house gets up early and starts getting ready. Some go to the spring and have a bath, while others have already had theirs on day before. On this day, before sunrise, it is the duty of the un married girls to go to the spring, and after having a bath, bring fresh water for the Buddhistic altar. Then press water is put; fresh oil is also put in to the cho-mi, the altar lamp, freshly cut flowers tastefully decorated are placed in front and the sides of the altar. Immediately in front, on a 'chyantay', a low Tibetan style table, the leading item, the Nambun chee, along with symbolic offering of fresh fruits, cereals, pulses and other things are seen placed on leaves. These are placed before the girls come in. Everybody now dresses up in his or her new or washed clothes and comes to the altar. Here, the father or the head of the family offers prayers invoking the Gods to keep everybody well and happy throughout the coming year, and to give

protection from the evil designs of the devils and the demons. This being done, the womenfolk specially get busy preparing for the sumptuous Nambun luncheon. In the meantime seniors are served with the much expected extra-strong Nambun chee. This may be interpreted as the equivalent of the Christmas cake of the Christians during yule-tide. According to kazi padam Chandra Lepcha, Nambun is the New Year of Lepchas tribe. This is celebrated as the victory of truth against false, divine versus sin. End of the devil and liberation from the atrocities and find new life and celebrated in merry and festive mood. Ancient time a devil named *Lassomungpunu* create a lot of trouble to Lepchas. With the assistance of Angel of God *Tamsangthing* Lepchas killed that notorious devil. Onward the death of devil lepchas celebrated this festival with happiness. They celebrated this festival at the end of *Mangsir* (December 15 around) collectively. In the evening of the memorial day of killing of demon the Lepchas make a dummy or statue of devil by millet flour in humane form and all spit or expection into statue and insert the demon by axe, machete like (Bamphok) bow and arrow, flame by uttering sound like Bha..... ho....ho (Lahai.....Lahai.....) and finally discard or disose in the west ward side of the house by a huge group voice uttering ram-gay-ma-o (Long lived god and decay of demon). Exchange happiness to each other. This is also a end of old year and advent of the new year. During this festive occasion youth dressed in colorful beautiful dresses and exchange greetings to each other and closing the festival by merrymaking.

4.2.2 Dashain

Lepcha also observe the Hindu festival of dashain in honour of the Goddess Durga by sacrificing goats and chickens and feasting on them. Dashain is a great festival for all Nepali. Lepcha people do not keep jamara but they use white flowers in tika. They do not go to temple for worship god in dashain. They receive white /Red tika and flower in dashain. They wear new clothes in Dashami and cook delicious food like meat, rice and alcohol.

4.2.3 Tihar

Lepcha of fikkal V.D.C celebrate the Tihar also with high enthused. They worship Devi, Mahalaxmi for health & wealth.Tihar celebrate only for five days. First day 'kagtihar'.They worship to crow and give food also. Second day 'kukur Tihar', they worship to dog at that day. Third day 'Laxmi Pooja'.They worship to god Laxmi at that day. Fourth day 'Gorupuja' they worship oxes and food also. At the fifth day "Bhaitika".They receive Tika & Sagun from their sister. They also like to play Deusi and Bhailo like Hindu people.

4.2.4 Maghesakranti

These festivals celebrate on the first of Magh month.Lepcha worship the Buddha. In Gumba or in Ghang.In this festival they invited their married daughter for this feast. They visit religious places and eat delicious food like Bread,Yam,peanut ,Sweet potatoes and Raksi.'Yam' is the main food of these festivals. They enjoy eating food, dancing and singing.

4.2.5 Baishakh purnima

It's an important religious day. This day God Buddha was received the light of education under the bodhi.Banyam tree of Gaya an ancient town of India. At the age of 29 to 33 he sat for the meditation and on the day of Baisakh purnima he became enlightened, therefore they celebrate this day as the greatest day on their religion. In this day Tamang visit the religious places and eat delicious foods like meat, wine, bread etc.

4.2.6 Loshar

Loshar is the another festival of Lepcha.It's celebrated according to Lama Calender.It falls on poush.On the occasion of Loshar they wear new clothes,ornament,and visit their relative's home. They wish each other for long life, good

health, good fortune, in this festival. In this time, they decorate their houses. They celebrate these festivals with singing & dancing. They prepare delicious food also. They gather in Gumba, Bihar, Chaitya and cook delicious food and enjoy by dancing, drinking, and singing.

4.2. 7 Chhewar

Chhewar is another ritual among Lepcha. This is performed only for male child. Chhewar means cutting of hair formally for the first time since the birth of a male child. This is celebrated in odd age of child like 3, 5, 7, 9 etc.

It's very important rituals. Without this ritual a man is not allowed to the marriage and performs other holy rituals like shrada.

The ceremony is performed by the child's parents. The chhewar wouldn't take place without the presence of the maternal uncle. If the child has no maternal uncle, the person close to be the brother its mother is invited.

For this ceremony, the maternal uncle has a high respect in the Tamang society. When chhewar is confirmed, the special offering 'sagun' is sent to the maternal uncle. There is wine and cock is sagun. When the maternal uncle touch the sagun that means acceptance of Invitations.

On the cheewar day Mama comes with a new scissors, clothes, plate, handkerchief, cap and meat. Lama spells holy chants and the maternal uncle shaves the hair of the child. The hair mustn't fall on the ground. All these hair unmarried women of the family keep on the plate. They throw hair near the river. After shaving the hair of child the maternal uncle gives the child clothes and a golden or copper pot and blesses.

4.2. 8 Kanchenjunga Pooja

This is an important festival of Lepcha tribe and considers fresh snow of Kanchunjangha's summit as their source of origin and their favorite God. During the ritual (*Pooja*) they all assemble together and pray and worship their *Estadev* family god. This festival is celebrated on fourth day and the fourth month of their calendar. All the

rituals of festival are completed by a ritual specialist (*Bongthing*). Bamboo (*Bans*) pole (*Lingo*) is fixed on the ground and decorated by banana leaves. Delicious fruits are studded and decorated and chapel is formed. Poojari Priest chanted their mantras in their native language along with scented aromatic incense accompanied by the chorus. They requested for their wellbeing and safety from their almighty creator. This is completed by sacrificing by local a fowl and a pig. Foodstuff, incense, money, uncooked rice grains, red colour powder (*Abir*), fruits are mandatory for the *pooja* (rituals). On this auspicious occasion all Lepchas family member are decorated on their perfect attire. All members finance the *pooja* collectively. At the end of the rituals wine, alcohol, meat, fruits, sweets are offered to each member and they enjoy eating and drinking.

4.2. 9 Nawagi

New crops offered to God before eating is known as *Nawagi*. In this ritual it is believed that if new crops are offered to God first before consuming removes false accusation. *Nawagi pooja* is celebrated during harvesting of new crops each year starting from *Mangsir to Falgun*. A temple or holy place is prepared inside house for ritual. Banana leaf is considered as scared and matted on the floor of the temple. On this floor small clay lamp is placed above the water pot, fish, and yearly allotted amount of cereals for Gods, millet-wine, bitten rice etc. Whole four upper facing leaf of banana is placed first and then four lower facing of banana keeping upright above and then after four *Tongwa* two upright and two lower side facing upward is placed. Upper portion facing upward is for living bodies and lower side of leaf facing downward is for dead souls. After completion of the holy place *Bongthing* (priest) utter words during worshipping. The theme of this worshipping is we ignorant lepchas offer you a pure cereals on the name of God please accept these things. Then after 6 fowls are sacrificed. A maize cob along with a silk is placed in the holy place. Blood of scarified fowl is offered in that holy place. After removing the stomach or the intestines of fowl rest meat portion is boiled and dressed with rice and bitten rice and joined by the invited neighbors and celebrate with happiness and merriment.

4.2.10 Sillytongbu pooja (religious rituals)

According to The Lepchas, they are originated from Mount Kanchunjungha. In their early days they lived on forest root crops, wild yam, fruits but started to live by hunting when the plants food become scare. For hunting many weapons were needed, so they worship their ancestor's weapons and celebrate Silly Tongbu festival. Bows and arrows and catapult are their major weapons. These weapons are handed to them from gods and protect their ancestors according to their belief. To finish this religious ritual role of *bongthing* is important. First of all bamboo pole is inserted and three storied temple is constructed and covered with bamboo leaves on all three stories and Bungthing is also sit above the leaf of banana. Then after uttering whole night by carrying catapult on hand and explain rituals to god. Worship cock at midnight, hen at dawn and pig then after in order. Burning heart and liver of these animals are offered in temple and finished the religious rituals. Alcohol and wine is offered in excess but not celebrated because in those house where the mother give birth to a child recently as a social taboo. This ritual is performed on 2/3 years according to individual wish. Considering woman as a object of lucky charm or of ill fate is considered to be bad things on this matter of giving birth to child a natural thing (Personal interview Prem Bahadur Lepchha).

4.2.11 Nauli Pooja

This is performed during bad times at an interval of 2/3 years. There is no need of specific days and dates. Banana leaves is spreaded on the floor, 3 stones represents of *Subba*, *Subbini* and *a Hunter*. Mainly these three idols are worshipped. According to their financial capacity they can worship male buffalo (*Rango*-bull), buck (*Boka*), *Tongwa* (Local millet wine), battle leaf, mugwort (*titepati*), clay vegetable oil lamp, water filled copper pot (*Kalasha*), fruits, rice, fowl egg etc. Every single sacrifice of fowl for each stones by *Bongthing* with chanting words. All hearts and liver of fowl are burnt and offer in temple. Tradition of offering first to god before ones consuming meat. Others god and goddess *Boksauli* is performed. During night stay meat, wine and alcohol are consumed as a partake (*Parsad*) which were first offered to god. Early in the morning all the items of temple is disposed nearby head of water sources thus *Nauli* religious rites is

completed. This rite is performed mainly for peace and protection of house. Avoidance from evil eyes of witch, demon, and bad person it is also done for healing of the diseases person in one's home. But now such practices are obsolete in Lepchas communities and some of them even do not know the name of this religious rite. (Tek Bahadur Lepcha, Interview 2070 B.S).

4.2.12 Birth

Lepcha tribe belief that life begins from womb. According to the epic of *Mechi and Mahakali*, Lepcha start different disciplines from the fifth month of fetus stage inside womb. If the pregnant woman and her spouse start wall erection they must complete this structure building before giving birth of baby to avoid miscarriage and other birth related problems. Social taboo includes avoidance of eating and taking fish as well as not consuming meat of accidently dead animals. After child birth they have to abide by the disciplines and their own values. They use the midwife available in health post during child delivery. They wish and have religious vow of holy place for the birth of a beautiful, peaceful and perfect children. Right from the fifth month stage of pregnancy both husband and wife maintain celibacy and obey strict disciplines. Ritual purification of the parents and newly born baby is attained on 3 to 7 days in case of son and 5 to 7 in case of daughter. *Thau*, a mixture of clove, camphor, black pepper in water as prepared by Lama and mixed in ablution water prepared for mother and her newly born baby. Naming of baby is based on the day of birth by priest or Lama. On the 16th day of delivery other member of family starts eating the dishes prepared by the mother of baby .But now tradition is changing. Lama designates the name of the baby and actual name is different from calling name.

4.2.13 Death

Death rituals of Lepcha tribe are completed by different style and according to their own religious rituals. Because of conducting death rituals, according to book *Mechi dekhi Mahakali* (From Mechi zone to Mahakali zone) death-demon could not attack other

people and liberate the demised person. They believe that soul departs from this world will reach the heaven otherwise their soul could cause trouble to the others. Therefore, they usually do not fear on the death of elderly people unlike the demise of the youth who has the strong desire of living could cause harm to the living people. Lepchas perform funeral ritual of corpse either by burning or by burial. To complete the death rituals, first of all *Lama* is invited and corpse dispatching on that very auspicious day as fixed by *Lama*. They need *Kulpurohit* (family priest) for long oration. *Lama* massage the hand of the corpse and make upright pose and each palm rest each other in *Namaskar* pose and kept in box of copper. Then, white mufler *Khadais* encircled on the corpse head and dispatched for final funeral. Main *Lama* grabbed the khada by hand and go ahead along 2 Lepchas carrying swords. Procession of a few people by carrying burning incense followed towards funeral spot. Next day remains of ash after the funeral rite was disposed into nearby river. They complete their death rituals on 15, 22, 35, 49 days according to their financial conditions. On weekly basis butter lamp (*Denchhu*) is burning outside home as well as in *Gumba* (Buddhist Monastery). Peace wishing of departed soul is the last big event of this ritual. They do not avoid either oil or salts but do yearly rites every year. On the demise of mother they do not consume milk and in a case of father they avoid yoghurt and soybean and do not visit the holy religious places. Large amount of money is given to *Lama* in this death ritual. In other cases corpse is buried on *Lama* Tradition or rituals. Wife does not need to wear white clothes on the death of husband as in popular Hindu tradition.

4.2.14 Language

Lepcha of Fikkal V.D.C they speak Nepali language. But elder people who meet their friends they speak their own language also. But modern children they even don't know their mother language. The official language is Nepali so they teach Nepali for their children. They have own script which is called Rong Scripting Lepcha scrip, there are 108 alphabets. It belongs to the Bodish–Himalayish group of Tibeto-Burman languages. The Lepcha write their language in their own script, called Róng or Lepcha script, which is derived from the Tibetan script.

Lepcha language is simple and melodious. Their religious books we find medicinal terms, Astronomy, geology and so on. But due to over crowding other language their language is being disappearing.

Table 9: Some common words used by Lepcha

Lepcha	English	नेपाली	Lepcha	English	नेपाली
Aajyo	grandfather	हजुरवुवा	Raang	Party	भोजभतेर
Aamu	mother	आमा	Jo	Rice	भात
Aaku	Uncle	काका	Kala	Pulse	दाल
Akapa	Son	छोरा	Aarok	Alcohol	रक्सी
kupjong	Grandson	नाती	Chee	Jaad	जांड
Myok	Son in law	ज्वाई	Buk	Yam	तरुल
Hik	Hen	कुखुरा	Sali	Bow	साली
Bik	Cow	गाई	Lasu	Coriander	धनिया
Biklong	Ox	गोरु	Fukpobuk	Potato	आलु
Aalyu	Cat	बिरालो	Chumbik	Weapon	हतियार
Luk	Sheep	भेडा	Chhalvot	Orange	सुन्तला
Suhu	Monkey	बांदर	Santong	papaya	मेवा
Bu	Snake	सर्प	Tee	zero	शुन्य
Kujyu	Dog	कुकुर	Kaat	One	एक
Korthyong	Eagle	चिल	Neta	Two	दुई

Source: Field survey 2013

4.3 Economic Status

4.3.1 Occupation

The almost Lepchas major occupation is farming. After farming as a secondary occupation they used to have involved in farm labour. The primary and secondary

occupation both are insufficient to address very actual picture of Lepchas. The occupations obtained by Lepcha mentioned as under the table.

Table 10: Occupation Pattern

Occupation	Respondents	Percentage
Agriculture	15	50.0
Agriculture Labor	7	23.2
Service	2	6.7
Business	2	6.7
Foreign employment	4	13.4
Total	30	100.0

Source: Field survey 2013

Out of 30 households of Lepchas, 50 percent are depending on agriculture for livelihood. The 23.2 percent respondents are in agriculture labor and 6.7 percent are engaged in service and business and 13.4 percent Lepcha involves in foreign employment.

It indicates that, majority of Lepchas were engaged in farming, but it depends on the sizes of land holdings. It is found that the profession of farming is greatly valued among the Lepchas community of study area. Farming is not only simple valued, it is the continuous source of income and security and as well as social status and prestige also.

4.3.2 Landholding size

The 80 percent of Lepchas are depending upon agriculture. For the purpose of agriculture, landholding condition by the respondent is the most important factor. Without availability of cultivated land, the farmers could not have been producing sufficient food

whatever they have needed. So in this study, the landholding condition of the respondent is described as under the table.

Table 11: Landholding size among Lepcha

Landholding in Ropani	Household	Percentage
0 to 5 Ropani	6	20
6 to 10 Ropani	5	16.7
11 to 15 Ropani	3	10.0
16 to 20 Ropani	1	3.3
Above than 20 Ropani	7	23.3
Landless	8	26.7
Total	30	100

Source: Field survey 2013

Among the 30 household of Lepcha, the 20 percent Lepcha have very small size of landholding. They obtained 0 to 5 ropani of land in which land they should unable to earn food whatever they have needed. Like these 16.7 percent respondents are also same small landholding size, they have obtained 6 to 10 ropani of land. In this condition also, the respondents should unable to product sufficient food they have needed. 11 to 15 ropani of land is generally suitable in rural setting. The 10 percent respondents are only in this condition. They produced food sufficiently whatever they have needed and the 3.3 percent Lepcha have 16 to 20 ropani of land; this condition of land availability means improved life style of than other Lepcha. Out of 30 household Lepchas the 26.7 percent Lepchas are landless,

4.3.3 Right on Land of Lepcha women

Poverty, illiteracy, blind belief, religious norms and values and tradition are some factors that hinder development of Nepalese women. In this area, the financial status of women and men is not same. They lag behind men in the fields like education. Excluding agriculture, they have not been able to make their presence in government and other sectors. In this fikkal V.D.C. women are busy in household works and agriculture. After completing household works, they make themselves busy in picking tea, farming like garlic, potato, animal raising, etc.

Nepal is an agricultural country. 76 percentages of people here are dependent on agriculture. The share of rights on land helps us to identify the financial status of women because of which having more land is considered as the measure of richness. According to the field report, 10 percent of Lepcha woman have land registered in their name. Due to the fact that Nepal government have discounted the registration fees on the land registered on women's name, this share of percentage is sure to rise in coming years.

4.3.4 Types of Agriculture production

The almost all Lepchas main occupation is agriculture. In agricultural activities they are regulated by seasonal types of farming. The major agricultural production of Lepcha is maize. They have not irrigated land and they must have to depend upon the monsoon when plantation season comes. The farming season and major production sources of Lepchas in study area are mentioned as under the table.

Table 12: Major Agriculture Production

Major Crops	Plantation Month	Harvesting Month
Maize	Baishakh	Bhadra
Tea	Chaitra	Kartik / Mangsir

Legume	Baishakh	Aswin / Kartik
Pulse	Bhadra / Aswin	Kartik / Mangsir
Vegetable	Bhadra / Aswin	Kartik / Mangsir

Source: Field survey 2013

The Major food grain of Lepchas of this area is maize, which they produced on their non irrigated land depending in monsoon. Legume, Pulses and vegetables, as well as tea are their cash income sources. Some farmer sells milk in market or dairy. The almost lands returns back again into barren after collection the maize, legume pulses and vegetables. Almost agricultural production starts from Chaitra / Baishakh to finish it in Kartik / Mangsir. Near about 3 months the lands are totally useless. When monsoon becomes the cycle of agriculture starts again.

4.3.5 Livestock

Livestock is very important for the farmers in fikkal V.D.C pandham were found keeping the livestock's but they get mentionable income form the livestock. Livestock data is given below under the table 13.

Table 13: Livestock

Type of animal	Total households	Total Animals
Cow	13	29
Goat	7	23
Hen	4	70
Pig	5	17
Horse	1	1
Total	30	140

Source: Field survey 2013

Table 13 reveals that Lepcha involve in the livestock farming. Livestock is their strong source for improve their living standers. The field survey report shows that, among different livestock cow and pig are the main source of income in Fikkal V.D.C.

4.3.6 Food Sufficiency

Food sufficiency is major and one of the basic needs of the people, with out food anybody they could not be healthy and alive. In this topic we tried to measure self produced food and its sufficiency consumption by the respondents. The condition of food sufficiency consumed by the respondents explained as under the table.

Table 14: Food Sufficiencies to the Respondents

Months	Households	Percentage
0-3 months	4	13
3-6 months	6	20
6-9 months	10	33
9-12 months	8	27
Above 12 months	2	7
Total	30	100

Source: Field survey 2013

Table 14 shows the scenario of food sufficiency consumed by the respondents of Lepcha community. It is focused, to sketch the food production self by the respondents and trend of food sufficiency on them. According to the table, 13 percent Lepcha alive 0 to 3 months consuming self produced food, like this the 20 percent are 3 to 6 month, 33 percent are 6 to 9 months, 27 percent are 9 to 12 months and only 7 percent Lepcha have surplus food and they earns above 12 months. This type of trend of food sufficiency means that, more than 93 percent of Lepchas are compelled to other sources of income to alive. They have not sufficient land to farming, after sometimes work almost Lepchas becomes unemployed. To expense the leisure time someone Lepcha goes to playing cards, someone goes to fishing and someone are laboring. To fulfill the food sufficiency to their family perhaps almost Lepcha is borrowing the loans from formal institution and individuals. In one hand almost Lepchas are facing the food starvation, but in another

side they are expensing food grains making jaad and Raksi also. Therefore the community of Lepcha is getting down yearly and becoming the victim of poverty.

4.3.7 Annual Incomes

Generally the major sources of incomes of Lepchas are agriculture, as and secondary sources of incomes are livestock husbandry, laboring wages and others. The government of Nepal provide RS. 1000.00 on each lepcha people as for social security. We sketch the agriculture production on the topic of food sufficiency. In this topic we will try to calculate overall source of income in annual sources of the respondents.

All the sources of income of the respondents are traditional type, such as in the sense of livestock husbandry, they do not follow systematic as commercial view. Some cows for milk and compost fertilizer, some cows for milk and oxen for ploughed, some hens and goat roaring for meats are kept as traditional way.

Lepchas are like magicians in bamboo crafts and produce a wide variety of aesthetically beautiful baskets and such other things that come handy in daily chores. Their knowledge of poisonous and non-poisonous plants, snakes and information on other flora and fauna are phenomenal. But, with modernity making steady inroads into the Lepcha way of life such age-old wisdom are increasingly cruising away into the sphere of myths and legends.

Table 15: Estimated annual incomes from different sources

Incomes in Rs./head	Households	Percentage
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Less than 10,000	0	0
10001 to 20000	22	73.4
20001 to 30,000	4	13.3
30001 to 40,000	3	10
Above 40,000	1	3.3
Total	30	100

Source: Field survey 2013

Table 15 shows the average estimated annual incomes of respondents of Lepcha community. The major sources of income of this community are social security pay given by the government. Government pays each lepcha Rs.1, 000 per month. Other sources of income are agriculture, daily wage, business, foreign employment and so on. The table on above presents that, no one Lepcha lives in less than Rs.10,000, the 73.4 percent Lepchas are in Rs.10001 to 20,000, another 13.3 percent are lives in Rs.20001 to 30,000, the 10 percent Lepcha alive Rs.30,001 to 40,000 incomes and the 3.3 percent are Rs. over 40,000 annually. Income level between 30,001 to 40,000 they are living nearly sufficient. Income level more than 40,000 are living sufficient level. The poor Lepcha are borrowing the loan from formal and individual sectors to purchase food grains to their family. Taken loan from individuals have more interest than formal sectors. The interest and taken loan from different sectors is increasing annually. They are unable to pay loan and interest as accordance with time schedule made by agreement and compelled to add further interest in total amount of loan. This type of condition is pulling the Lepchas to become poorer day by day and this decreasing position of Lepchas adding the poverty number to the nation in national level. So I expressed here heartily, it is necessary to uplift life condition of Lepchas lurching different types of income generating programs and as well as community development social programs from government as well as non government agencies.

4.3.8 Items of Expenditure

Generally the major sources of incomes of Lepchas expend on food grains. They are socially backwards, illiterate and can not manage their income in proper way. Due to excessive drinking habit of alcohol their majority of income spent on food grains. They have hand to mouth problem, so very few Lepcha save money for future.

Table 16: Items of expenditure

Annual expenditure	Percentage
Food grains	73
Health	6
Education	7
Clothing	10
Savings	4
Total	100

Source: Field survey 2013

Table 16 shows the scenario of annual expenditure by the respondents of Lepcha community. It shows that 73 percent of their income expend on food grains. Very few respondents save their annual income for future. They were seem less interested to spent in education. Only 7 percent of their income spent on education.

4.3.9 Political Participation

Political awareness is today's necessity. To be a capable and successful country, every citizen of it must be politically aware. Political awareness is also a right of every citizen but every community is not equally aware about politics. Lepcha people are not so aware about politics due to lack of interest. They think politics is just a give and take of votes.

Table 17: Details according to political awareness

Political awareness	Numbers	Percentage
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politically aware	5	16.66
politically unaware	25	83.66
Total	30	100

Source: field survey 2013

From Table 17 it is clear that Lepcha people have less political awareness. Politically aware Lepcha people are just 16.66 percent of total population. According to their view, politics is only for clever people, not for people from villages.

Historically Lepcha were politically powerful and organized. After the demolition of Lepcha régime, Lepcha started following the rule of the country and king in which they lived. Lepcha people from Ilam do not have an organization to bind them in a common thread. Old people from Lepcha community have an important role in legal, social and religious works. Afterwards kajis, subbas and officers took the place of old people in Lepcha community. Small problems in villages are managed by these people till date. Lepcha people are mostly not involved in fights and quarrels, so such decisions are mostly not needed in Lepcha community.

Lepcha people from Ilam district accept that they are politically inactive. Till now Lepchas are not affected by political parties. Local political groups do not have much Lepcha in its committees. Some Lepcha are able to reach in top management of different political parties but this is not the case with maximum of Lepchas.

Nepal's changed political situation is the main reason behind political success of Lepcha people. According to political leaders from Lepcha community, Maoist war has raised people's interest on national politics.

Along this, due to ethnic movement, Lepchas are now strongly involved in preserving and promoting their language, religion and culture. Lepchas from Ilam district are able to take this movement to local people according to local Lepchas.

Except this, Lepchas are involved in co-operatives, groups, government and non-governmental offices like poverty elimination groups, child development, agricultural groups, mothers group, drinking water usage group, milk production co-operatives, etc. but very few Lepchas are in the decision making level of such groups.

CHAPTER - FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary

Descriptive research design is following in this study. The thirty household Lepchas all are selected as respondents to data collection. The study is based on primary data information collected during the field survey adopting questionnaire, interview and observation of the study area.

5.2 Major findings

-) The total numbers of Lepchas is 30 household Fikkal VDC in Pandham with 4.9 average family sizes. The total population of Lepcha is 147 among them 81 are male and 66 are female and 22 percent Lepcha is totally illiterate in this study area.
-) Among the 30 household, 16.7 percent Lepcha lives in joint family, 80.0 percent are nuclear family and 3 percent are alone with out wifealso. The culture of Lepcha and trend shown that after the primary education 29.2 percent leaves the school. The native language of Lepcha has completely disappeared due to the long term interaction with other non Lepcha community and people.
-) Because of uneducated majority in Lepcha community, the 23 percent Lepcha are totally believes in Dhama / Jhankri still. Lepcha community has early marriage system, they all does the marriage before 20 years. This type of marriage invites early pregnancy to the girls and high fertility.

Lepcha people have less political awareness. Only 16.7 percent of Lepcha interest on politics.

- J Only 10% of Lepcha women have land registered in their name. This percentage have been increasing due to the rule of the government of Nepal have discounted the registration fees on the land registered on women's name.
- J Among the 30 household of Lepchas, 50 percent are totally involved in agriculture and out of them 70 percent Lepchas landholding size seemed poor.
- J The land obtained by Lepcha is totally none irrigated; annually when the season of crop planting comes, they should wait for monsoon. Almost crops are planting in rainy season and harvesting its seven to eight months later and all the lands returns in barren again.
- J 76 percent Lepchas are facing the problem of food insufficiency in daily life and to fulfill this condition they are borrowing the loans from formal sectors and individuals. This type of loan and interest pulling the Lepchas getting down and making them poor further more.
- J All kinds of agriculture and animal husbandry is still traditional types, they have no knowledge, skill and trainings to adopt new technology and commercial farming by these reasons the Lepchas are economically backwards.
- J All women Lepcha did not success to give answered about how many wards in Fikkal VDC.

- J 50 percent Lepcha did not give answered the name of chair person and vice chair person of the VDC.

- J This means Lepcha community is still behind than other community of non Lepchas.

- J The finding of the study shows that, the 49% Lepcha children attendance in school, but out of them after primary education 54 percent of Lepchas leaves the school totally, rarely 18 percent reached in lower secondary and opportunely one percent reached in secondary and campus level.

- J Lack of education 23 percent Lepcha totally believes in Dhami / Jhankri, 20 percent Lepchas believes Dhami / Jhankri and Hospital.

- J The 43 percent female Lepcha involved in temporary and permanent types of family planning in opposite its only 7 percent male Lepcha involved in family planning. This shows that female Lepchas are exploited by the males.

- J The study shows that, early marriage system is more fertile in Lepcha community because the 76.7 percent Lepcha does the marriage already than 20 years of age

- J This type of condition of Lepcha community presents the scenario of backwardness as economically, sociologically and politically.

5.3 Conclusion

Lepchas are slightly whitish in colour, physical study, medium sized and wiry side, but they basically resemble mongoloid hilltribes in facial structure and even in other characteristics. They speak a Tibeto Burman language which some classify as Himalayish. The religion of Lepcha is Shamanism and Buddhism. Most Lepcha in Nepal are peasants: small subsistence farmers trying to get by from what they can produce on their small plots of land. The trend of marriage in Lepcha community seemed early marriage system, majority of them marriage below 20 years age. The condition of Lepcha is more behind sociologically, politically and economically than others. Lepcha people prefer nuclear family. Generally they start separate housing after marriage. In spite of problem of Kojis and Lepcha, there is no class formation in Lepcha society. Like other caste, the condition of women is also behind as comparison of men. About 50 % Lepcha attend primary level of education but hardly one percent reached in secondary and campus level. Lepcha communities prefer love marriage but arrange marriage as well as inter cast marriage also practiced in this community. They follow most of the feast and festivals of Hindu culture. But their main festivals are Nambun. Lepcha community is more behind sociologically, economically and politically than other community.

5.4 Recommendations

After the study of Lepcha community the condition of Lepchas are more backward than people of non Lepcha communities. To uplift the socio - economic condition of Lepchas following recommendations are made.

-) Awareness programs are the immediate actions to be conducted to uplift the existing status.
-) Further large scale study is recommended for drawing the firm conclusion.
-) The early marriage system should have been urgently stopped to prevent early child and to maintain woman health condition well.

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Appendix

Appendix: 1

Socio - Economic Survey,2013 Fikkal VDC, Ilam Ilam districts

Questionnaires schedule

Date:

1. General in formation of Respondents

Name:

Age:

Sex:

Educational Status:

Martial Status:

Religion:

Address:

VDC:

Ward no:

Tole:

2. Family backgrounds

SN	Age group	Male	Female	Total
1	below 14 years			
2	15-59 years			
3	above 60 years			
	Total			

3. Educational statuses

SN	Age group	Male		Female		Total	
		Literate	Illiterate	Literate	Illiterate	Literate	Illiterate
1	below 15 years						
2	16-59 years						
3	above 60 years						
	Total						

4. What is your age to marriage?

Sex	below 20 years	21-30 years	above 31 years
Male			
Female			
Total			

5. System of medical treatment

- a. Hospital
- b. Dhami / Jhankri
- c. Both
- d. None

6. What is your family type?

- a. Nuclear
- b. Joint

7. What is your occupation?

SN	Occupation	Primary	Secondary
1	Farming		
2	Fishery		
3	Wage laborers		
4	Animal		
5	Husbandry		
6	Servants		
7	Making mats and ropes		
8	Others		

8. Livestock information

SN	Type	Own	Sharing basis	Total
1	Cow, oxen			
2	Buffalo			
3	Goat			
4	Hen / Ducks			
5	Pigs			
6	Others			
	Total			

9. What is your landholding condition?

SN	Landholding position	Household	Percentage	Remarks
1	0 to 5 ropani			
2	6 to 10 ropani			
3	11 to 15 ropani			
4	16 to 20 ropani			
5	above 21 ropani			

10. What is your food sufficiency?

SN	Months	Household	Percentage
1	0 to 3 months		
2	3 to 6 months		
3	6 to 9 months		
4	9 to 12 months		
5	above 12 months		

11. Uses of fertilizer trend

SN	Fertilizer	Household	Percentage
1	Compost fertilizer		
2	Chemical fertilizer		
3	Both		
4	None		

12. Annual Incomes

Income in Rs.	Agriculture	Wages	Service	skill	Business	livestock	Others
<10000							
10001-20000							
20001-30000							
30001-40000							
>40000							

13. What is political situation of Nepal?

S.N.	Political knowhow	Numbers
1	Politically awareness	
2	politically aware	
3	Politically unaware	

14. What is major agriculture production?

- a. Tea
- b. Maize
- c. Wheat
- d. Pulses
- e. Vegetable
- f. Others