

**Socio-Cultural Status of Kami: A Case Study of Bobang
Village Of Baglung District**

of Kami: A Case Study of Bobang Village Of Baglung District

**A Thesis
Submitted to the Central Department of Sociology,
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Nepal
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement
for the Degree of
Master of Arts
in
Sociology**

**By:
Bhim Prasad Subedi
Symbol No.: 281759/067
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MARCH, 2016

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CENTRAL DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY, KIRTIPUR

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

This is to certify that **Mr. Bhim Prasad Subedi** has prepared the dissertation entitled **Socio-cultural Status of Kami: A Study of Bobang Village of Baglung District** under my supervision and guidance. I forward this dissertation for examination and approval as per the regular procedures of the Department.

.....
Prof. Dr. Bhanubhakta Timilsina

Date: 27th March 2016

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LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE

This thesis entitled **Socio-cultural Status of Kami: A Study of Bobang Village of Baglung District** submitted to the Central Department of Sociology, University Campus, by **Mr. Bhim Prasad Subedi** for the partial fulfillment of Master's of Arts in Sociology.

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March, 2016

Mr. Bhim Prasad Subedi

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Letter of Recommendation | i |
| Letter of Acceptance | ii |
| Acknowledgements | iii |
| Table of Contents | iv |
| List of Tables | viii |
| Abbreviations | ix |
| | |
| CHAPTER I: INTROUCTION | 1-9 |
| 1.1 Background | 1 |
| 1.2 Statement of the Problem | 4 |
| 1.3 Objectives of the Study | 7 |
| 1.4 Importance of the Study | 7 |
| 1.5 Organization of the Study | 8 |
| | |
| CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW | 10-19 |
| 2.1 Review of Related Literature | 10 |
| 2.1.1 Caste/Ethnic Groups and Varna System: | 10 |
| 2.1.2 Division of Nepal Caste System (Varna System) | 11 |
| 2.1.3 Hill Dalits-Kami | 14 |
| 2.1.4 Kami's Social Life | 16 |
| 2.1.4.1 Household | 16 |
| 2.2 Theoretical Review about Social Change | 17 |
| 2.2.1 Social Change | 18 |
| | |
| CHAPTER III: RESEARCH DESIGN | 20-23 |
| 3.1 Research Design | 20 |
| 3.2 Study Area and Rationale for Selection | 20 |
| 3.3 The Universe and Sample Size | 21 |

| | | |
|-------|--------------------------------|----|
| 3.4 | Nature and Source of Data | 21 |
| 3.5 | Data Collection Techniques | 21 |
| 3.5.1 | Interview Schedule | 21 |
| 3.5.2 | Observation | 22 |
| 3.5.3 | Key Informants' Interview | 22 |
| 3.5.4 | Focus Group Discussion (FGD) | 22 |
| 3.5.5 | Case Study | 23 |
| 3.6 | Data Analysis and Presentation | 23 |
| 3.7 | Limitation of Study | 23 |

CHAPTER-IV: STUDY AREA AND RESPONDENT

| | | |
|-------|---|--------------|
| | PROFILE | 24-33 |
| 4.1 | Physic-Geographic Setting | 24 |
| 4.1.1 | Natural Resources | 24 |
| 4.1.2 | Population Composition of the Study Area | 24 |
| 4.1.3 | Caste and Ethnic Composition | 25 |
| 4.1.4 | Facilities | 26 |
| 4.1.5 | Education | 26 |
| 4.1.6 | Transportation | 26 |
| 4.1.7 | Health and Sanitation | 26 |
| 4.1.8 | Market | 27 |
| 4.2 | Respondent Profile | 27 |
| 4.2.1 | Population Composition | 27 |
| 4.2.2 | Marital Status Marriage Type and Average Age of Marriage | 28 |
| 4.2.3 | Educational Status of the Respondents | 29 |

| | |
|--|----|
| 4.2.4 Reason for Hindrances to Educational Expansion of Kami Children | 32 |
|--|----|

CHAPTER V: SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION OF KAMI

| | |
|--|--------------|
| CASTE | 34-55 |
| 5.1 Social Condition | 34 |
| 5.1.1 Family Type and Family Size | 34 |
| 5.1.2 Health | 34 |
| 5.1.3 Women's Role and Status | 35 |
| 5.1.4 Son Preferences | 36 |
| 5.1.5 Domestic Violence | 37 |
| 5.1.6 Political Awareness | 37 |
| 5.2 Cultural Condition | 41 |
| 5.2.1 Religion | 41 |
| 5.2.2 Festivals | 42 |
| 5.2.3 Rituals | 43 |
| 5.3 Economic Condition | 46 |
| 5.3.1 Occupation | 46 |
| 5.3.2 Land Ownership | 48 |
| 5.3.3 Food Sufficiency | 49 |
| 5.3.4 Cropping Pattern | 50 |
| 5.3.5 Harvesting Storing System | 50 |
| 5.3.6 Income Sources | 51 |
| 5.3.7 Livestock | 54 |
| 5.3.8 Women Position/Role in the Economy | 54 |

| | |
|---|--------------|
| CHAPTER - VI: SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGES AMONG | |
| THE KAMIS | 56-64 |
| 6.1 Modernization among Kamis | 57 |
| 6.1.1 Change in Housing Patterns and Life Styles | 57 |
| 6.1.2 Change in Food Habits | 58 |
| 6.1.3 Changes in Dressing Habits | 59 |
| 6.1.4 Change in Health and Sanitation | 60 |
| 6.1.5 Changing in Discrimination Behaviours in Public Place | 61 |
| 6.2 Acculturation among Kamis | 61 |
| 6.3 Sanskritization among Kamis | 62 |
| 6.3.1 Change in Naming System | 62 |
| 6.3.2 Worshipping in Temples and Celebrating Festivals | 63 |
| 6.4 Changes in Socio-Political Aspect of Kami | 63 |
| CHAPTER VII: SUMMARY CONCLUSION AND | |
| RECOMMENDATION | 65-71 |
| 7.1 Summary | 65 |
| 7.2 Conclusion | 69 |
| 7.3 Recommendation | 70 |
| REFERENCES | 72-74 |
| APPENDICES | 75-87 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | | |
|----------|---|----|
| Table 1 | : Caste/Ethnic Composition of Bobang Village | 25 |
| Table 2 | : Distribution of Respondents by Age and Sex | 27 |
| Table 3 | : Marital Status of the Respondents | 28 |
| Table 4 | : Educational Status of the Respondents | 29 |
| Table 5 | : School Going Kami Student in Secondary School, Bobang | 30 |
| Table 6 | : Respondents by the Type of Utilizing Health Services | 35 |
| Table 7 | : People's Participation in Political Institutions by Castes | 37 |
| Table 8 | : Distribution of the Respondents and their Family by Occupation | 47 |
| Table 9 | : Land Ownership of the Kami by the Respondents | 48 |
| Table 10 | : House Ownership of the Kami by the Respondents | 48 |
| Table 11 | : Food Sufficiency | 49 |
| Table 12 | : Monthly Income and Expenditure of the Respondents | 52 |

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|--|
| CBO | Community Based Organization |
| CBS | Central Bureau of Statistics |
| CERID | Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination |
| CERID | Centre for Educational Research in Development |
| DDC | District Development Committee |
| DEIP | Dalit Empowerment and Integration Project |
| DNF | Dalit NGO Federation |
| HDI | Human Development Indicator |
| HMG | His Majesty the Government |
| JUP | Jana Utthan Pratisthan |
| NDSR | National Dalit Strategy Report |
| NEFAS | Nepal Foundation for Advanced Studies |
| NESAC | Nepal South Asia Centre |
| NESEC | Nepal South Asia Education Centre |
| NG | Nepal Government |
| NGO | Non Government Organization |
| NHDR | Nepal Human Development Report |
| NPR | Nepal Population Report |
| SLC | School Leaving Certificate |
| SPB | Statistical Pocket Book |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Program |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Education Fund |
| VDC | Village Development Committee |
| WCAR | World Conference against Racism |

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Nepal is divided into three major ecological regions, the Himalayas, the Hill and the Terai regions. The way of life, dresses, languages, socio-economic conditions and cultural identity of the people are different as that determined by the geographical regions. The Himalayas region is dominantly inhabited by the people of different ethnic groups/castes such as the Sherpas, the Bhotias, the Kamis, the Thakalis, and the Dolpas.

Nepal is a multilingual multicultural and multiethnic country when we go back through out the Nepalese history. It is model of mosaic society, in the real sense, Nepal is garden of all caste and ethnic groups. Historically, Hindu caste system is the underlying feature of Nepalese society, with hierarchy of different groups of people within the system. Dalits or untouchables are one of the group of the people within this Hindu caste system where social, economic, health status and political conditions are lowest compared to other groups in Nepal. Lohar, Sunar, Kami, Damai, Paswan, Tamta, Dom, Batar, Khaste, Mushar, Santhal, Satar and Halkhaor are some representative Dalits of Nepal. Kami ranks is the highest in number among all Dalits groups. In the Terai, the Chamars have highest number. The lowest number or the minority group is Gaine (CBS, 2011).

Dalits have prominent position in our social setting. They constitute 12.82% percent of the population of the country. According to the 2005 census, Hill and Terai Dalits comprise 8.11 percent, 3.95 percent and

unidentified dalits 8.76 percent of the population respectively . But throughout the history, they were discriminated and subjugated. The word Kami is derived from the Persian term "Kamin", which appear in the 18th century mugal sources of India in which this term is used for small peasants, articians, and landless labourers (ILO, 2005).

This is the largest Dalit group in Nepal in terms of population size according to census report of 2011 A.D. Kamis are the members of the occupational and untouchable caste group locally called by different names such as Bishowkarmas and Sunars, Lohars, Sobh, Shehi etc. (INSEC,1996: 355, Parajili: B., 2000:35). Kamis are blacksmiths, who are along with their traditional caste occupation of making and repairing iron tools, also practice agriculture, too within the Kamis group there is more professional group called Sunar (Gold or silver-smith) who makes and repairs gold or silver ornaments. Among the Dalits groups, Kamis are treated as highest in social rank and they never accept cooked food and water from the Dalits groups lower than them. They marry within their own groups.

They perform various ascribed occupation like blacksmithing, goldsmithing, iron making and carpentry even today . Traditionally, Kamis were economically dependent on their clients for live hood and used to provide their services to their clients through the traditional Jajamani system such as Bali or Khan. This system also exists in many parts of Nepal even today.

A hierarchal society is always based on discrimination. Dalits, an untouchable group of people are discriminated in the name of hierarchy for heredity generations. In Nepal, various forms of discriminations exist

in many region, caste, ethnicity and gender. This types of discrimination may include:

1. Not being allowed to take drinking water from taps used by members of higher castes.
2. Not being allowed to enter inside the hotels, restaurants, shops or high caste's home.
3. Not being allowed to sit or eat with high caste people at social events.
4. Being denied jobs especially higher- level managerial positions even when they qualified from them (Cox 1994).
5. To marry with other high caste groups of people.
6. To sale of the milk in the market.
7. To involve in several institutions including schools, government as well as private office.

It is important to realize that the nature and degree of caste - based discrimination appears far more prevalent in country. The Kamis of Bobang village, Baglung district are belonging to Hill dalit caste group; they are called as Ironworkers or blacksmith in the Pahadiya community. It is the homogenous community. According to some elderly respondents, Kamis are the original inhabitant of Bobang village of Baglung district. At the beginning, there were some households, as the time passes, the generation became expanded and as the results of this, there are 317 household right now in research area. Due to course of time they have many socio-cultural and educational transformations with the effect of various social factors.

As a "Disadvantages Group" to refer to those social groups who are socially oppressed, exploited and dominated by Brahmin rulers and their Bahun ideology of "Barahimmism". Bhattachan (2001) added that such groups are as follows:

- I. Nationalities or indigenous ethnic groups have become victim from in the last 140 years especially in the area of their languages, religion and culture.
- II. Dalits have been victims and untouchabilities from last thousands of years from the so-called high caste group.

Considering to the above facts and figures, this dissertations has been prepared including the situational analysis of Dalit particularly among the Kamis of Bobang village, Baglung district. Basic information along with facts and figures about the current socio-economic and educational condition and changes of the Kami people as compared to the past are incorporated in this study. The summary and conclusions made through this study may help to those individuals, institutions and researchers who want to know about the present situation of this caste.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Nepal is a small but heterogeneous society. Most of them are discriminated and dominated appear to be far more in village than urban area. Untouchability in Nepal continues to the discriminated against Kami in various ways.

Dalits in Nepal are victims of various discrimination. They are discriminated virtually in every sphere of life in Nepal, including

marriage, religious practice, access to land and access to education. Dalits commonly known as 'untouchables' are forced to live in separate settlement completely and isolated from so-called high castes. Majority of them are forced to remain silent in face of discrimination. Hindu orthodox prevails every aspect of our society which is the main cause of domination of Dalits politically, economically and educationally. Brahman and Chhetri are at the top known as upper caste/ non-Dalit while Sunar (Gold smith) Kami (blacksmith) Damai (tailor), Sarki (shoe mender) are at the bottom, and are known as the lower caste and Dalit . These lower caste people are also addressed as "untouchables ", who's touched water is not accepted by so called upper caste people. Sunar, Kami, Damai, and Sarki those are socially excluded groups. In this way, Dalit have been facing torture and humiliation by non-Dalit people.

They are culturally, economically and educationally disadvantaged. Most have still been unable to afford an adequate education of their children because of lack the money and they are socio-cultural discriminated by high caste groups. Among untouchable community, if 'Kami' of the Bobang, village, the children's parents have not been able to pay of enrollment fee and unable to buy books, copies and stationery of their children. So they are dropped out from the school. In general, Dalits are characterized as illiterate, unemployed, landless, poor, ignorant, exploited, docile feeble, unhygienic and ignored by rest of the society.

The scientific research particularly on Kami people in Nepal is limited. Most of the study focused only in the origination of Dalit castes and their discrimination. Various literatures are reviewed available on the caste situation and their discrimination along their socio-economic status. The

study related to Kami castes and their socio-economic and educational status as well as inter-caste discrimination under Dalit castes has not yet been studied sufficiently and in systematic way.

Nowadays, rural area is changing day by day because of the urban effect i.e. process of modernization, westernization, a number of development activities initiated for the perspective of commercial development and progress that also prolongs to increment if sophisticated changes of Kami people. Many studies of economic change in South Asia revealed that development has lead only to worsening of the position of the lower caste (Caplan, 1972: 90). Various community based organization and the Dalit NGO federation have been working to empower Dalit castes. Those organizations are striving their best to eradicate discrimination and violence that is perpetuated in Kami community. This 'Kami' community is rapidly changing after the advent of restoration of democracy and establishment of Loktanta in Nepal. Although, there is lack of the social research in 'Kami' community of this Bobang village, but the present study has focused on the following question based on the research theme:

1. What is the present socio-cultural and education status of Kami Community of Bobang village?
2. What are the changes occurred is due to the course of time among Kami community?
3. What is the position of Kami women in Bobang village?
4. Why participation of Kami people is less in educational, development works and employment in number comparing with other high caste people in Bobang village?

5. Why Kami people do not send their children in school until the completion of school level education?

This study aims to document the impact of socio-cultural condition in Bobang village's Kamis. Moreover, this study mainly identifies of Kamis' socio-cultural and education and also the changing scenario in their present life style.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to investigate and examine various socio-cultural and educational status and changes among 'Kami' community of Bobang village of Baglung district. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To find out the socio-cultural and education conditions of the Kamis in the study area.
2. To find out the factors for changing the livelihood of Kami community in the study area.
3. To describe the educational aspects of the Kamis of Bobang village, Baglung.

1.4 Importance of the Study

Among the impure/lower castes "Kami" is a discriminated and neglected caste of Nepalese society. But they still exist performing traditional occupation. In village Kami people spent all of their time to make the tools and do work of his high castes people but they do not get proper wages or get only hand survive of their family. So traditionally, they are subordinated with other of high caste. The socio-economic status of

community shows the living condition of people. Urbanization, modernization, migration, growing population has definitely affected the socio-cultural, economic and educational condition of any society as they living in the city. 'Kami' people are also affected by those factors and changes in their occupational composition and life style. Researchers concerning socio-economic change are not new ideas but untouchable caste of 'Kami' is still unexplored. Especially, socio-cultural, education changes and the condition of 'Kami' of this village research has not been conducted. Thus, this study will be helpful theoretically as a literature to the forthcoming researchers and those who are interested to accumulated knowledge of this caste.

The present study has to be academic as well as practical significance. Academically, this study has made an effort to analyze the existing social change, especially in the particular Kami untouchable castes of particular area and their present socio-cultural status and changes. Practically, this research would be informative to policy makers, politicians and social workers for the development and welfare of the people belonging to this caste groups.

1.5 Organization of the Study

This dissertation has been organized into seven chapters in order to make the study more specific, precise, and impressive. The first chapter is an introduction chapter which provides general introduction of the study including brief introduction of Kami caste. Similarly, the chapter also provides statement of problems and the objective of the study and importance of the study. Chapter second describes an overview of social

mobility and Varna/Caste system as well as literature on social, inequality and the untouchables in the caste system.

Likewise, third chapter deals the research methodology applied to generate necessary data for the study and method of data analysis.

Chapter four presents a general introduction of ward no. 4, 5, and 6 of Bobang village of Baglung where the present study conducted. More over it also gives a brief synopsis about Kamis.

Fifth chapter presents the analysis of socio-cultural and education conditions of Kami of Bobang village. Especially, chapter five and six are mainly relevant to the objective of this study. Finally, chapter seven presents the summary and conclusions of the study. Besides these chapters, questionnaires, bibliography, glossary, lists of informants and other relevant materials have been included in the appendix section.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Caste as a specific form of social inequality and there is wide literature on caste, framed within western knowledge systems and other more embedded in South Asian religious and social science knowledge and beliefs. This chapter deals about more or less basic parameters of pertinent literatures of theoretical implications and study topic, concern book reviews by different scholars. Dalit and untouchability, human development under caste/ethnic groups, caste discrimination in Nepali society also focuses on hilly Kamis caste and their social and educational changes and its factors.

There is little record of authentic origin of the caste system in Nepal. There has been regular attempt by scholars to link Dalits of Nepal with the old legendary religious sources such as the Vedas, Mahabharata and Manusmiriti. There is little archeological record or historical-evidence to corroborate the timing of these literature and linking the present Dalit population of Nepal-based on these literatures.

Here is mentioned below a summary of review of relevant as available. Some research documents, thesis, human development reports, text books including e-documents drawing through interact are studied trite reviewing. The summary and findings of these literatures are describes as follows:

2.1 Review of Related Literature

2.1.1 Caste/Ethnic Groups and Varna System

The caste system is Indian in its origin. The caste stratification of the

Indian society has had its origin in the 'Chatur Varnas' namely, the Brahmins, the Kshetriyas, the Vaishyas and the Sudras. The Varna system which has prevalent during the Vedic period and was mainly based on the division of labour and occupation. The caste system owes its original Varna system. Indian's caste system finds corollaries in other parts of the sub-continent, including Nepal, Pakistan, Srilanka and Bangladesh. Discrimination against Buraku, sometimes known as eta (variously defined as 'pollution abundant' or 'unclean') persists in Japan. Caste has migrated with south Asian diaspora to take root firmly in East and South Africa, Mauritius, Fiji, Suriname, the middle East, Malaysia the Caribbean, the United Kingdom, North America and other region (www.idsn.org/asia.html). The outstanding features of Hindu society, when it was unaffected by the modern ideas. Caste hierarchy consists:

- I. Segmental Division of Society
- II. Hierarchical Division of Society
- III. Restriction on Social Relations
- IV. Social and Religious Disabilities of certain castes.
- V. The civil and religious privileges or certain choice
- VI. Restriction on marriage (Ghurya, 1996)

Considering the facts above, it can be said that the people were divided into four major Varna system with the basis of Hindu religion on the Vedic period and since then, people followed the caste and ethnic groups formed in the society that has led the people into privileged and underprivileged in every development aspects.

2.1.2 Division of Nepal Caste System (Varna System)

Though Nepal is considered to have long been Hindu, its native Hinduism has not included belief in caste principles which remain a for importation

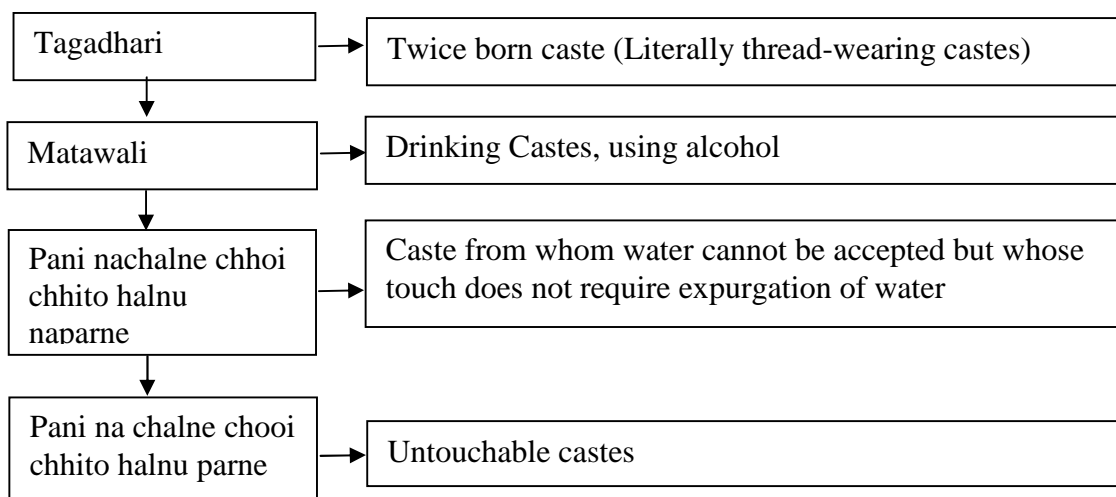
with little popular support. Only in the past hundred and forty years has ruled by the social philosophy of caste and the caste system gained any kind of endorsement through as a group they are strike ambition and high achievers, with a sense of commitment, national pride and self-confidence, a rapid and efficient Nepali adoption, pride to social and technological change be expected. But as a group these critically positioned people do not have these qualities, instead they arc the victims of their own fatalistic beliefs, poor self image; hierarchy caste status and constant defensiveness, and to hamper national development through inactivity and conservative reaction (Bista, 1996).

Religion is very important aspect of human life. People of Nepal are being orthodox from which the hierarchical notion on them is increasing day by day. In Nepal, Hinduism includes Shamanism and hence religion derived from the early Gopal and Kirat tradition as well as ancient and early medieval history has been documented by high caste Brahmanic scholars whose interests have not facilitated the most comprehensive and objective direction of Nepali history. Religious thought creates hierarchy on human which makes domination towards lower caste people. However, it is seen that nowadays religious thought of people is gradually changing as society is being dynamic.

Nepali form of Hinduism with fatalistic caste hierarchy is interpreted by Bahun priests (Ibid: 39). During the later past of the fourteenth century, king Jayasthiti Malla tried to purify religious practice in the Kathmandu valley by introducing caste principles and conduct according to the Manusmriti (Lamsal, 2008). He developed many rules for the meaning of certain types of clothing and ornamentation and for the construction of houses, different rated professional activities for different castes. He did this as a measure towards modernization, little realizing that it would lead

the society to regression rather than profession.

Another attempt to imposing the caste system was made in the nineteenth century by Rana ruler Junga Bahadur. Nepali caste system was codified in the National legal code (Muluki Ain) of 1854. The code has tried to comprehend the pluralistic cultures of Nepali into single scheme of the Hindu Caste Universe. The large numbers of non-Hindu tribal and ethnic universe has been paraphrased in the code as 'Char Varna Chhatis Jaat'. This phrase shows the similarity of the Nepalese caste can be grouped into four of or five main categories, which is given below:



The above hierarchy or the principles of social categories in the code has been determined from the order in which they are found mentioned in connection with laws laying down punishment for different castes. The "Tagadharis" who occupy the apex position in the above hierarchy consist of several caste groups and their sub-groups, their hierarchical order is as follows: (Sharma, 1977).

1. Upadhyaya Brahmans (Parbtiya and Kumav)
2. Rajputs (Thakuri in common language)
3. Chhetris

Below the 'Tagadharis' or the twice born castes, the code has accorded

place to all Nepali's tribal and ethnic groups under the name of Matawalis. There are two groups of these Matawali that are recognized. Those belonging to the unsolvable (na-masine) class, who have been given an upper ranking such as Brahmin, Chhetri and those belonging to the solvable (masine), class, who get a lower ranking. In the former class who counted the more prominent groups to the Nepalese tribal such as the Magars, the Gurungs, the Newars, the Rais, the Sherpa and so on. All of them are represented the more advanced groups of agriculturists possessing a distinct culture or their own as compared to the other economically backward tribes of Nepal. The solvable category of the Matawalis has been enumerated as follows, Bhotiya, Chepang, Majhi, Darai, Pahari etc. (Sharma, 1977).

Caste System in Nepal before 2007 B.S. was based upon marriage, eating foods stuff and traditional occupations of people. Caste was fully developed form and people were more conservative. But when the 'Naya Muluki Ain' was passed and conducted all the conservation of the caste system declined and it is now observed only on marriage or birth. All the people of Nepal are equal in the eyes of law and constitution but still people have not get freedom from the same conservative feeling of caste discrimination. Even in rural area, where people of the lower castes such as Sudras are not allowed to enter the house to the higher caste and not to allow touching to the people of high caste.

2.1.3 Hill Dalits- Kami

The word Kami is derived from the Persian term "Kamin" which appears in the 18th century Mugahal sources of India, in which this term is used for small peasants, artisans and landless labours. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the Gorkhas adopted some words from the Mughal Empire like

Kazi, Barkazi, Jagir etc. Kamin of Nepalesed Kami was one of them The Austriacs and the Mangoloids were working as artisans and crafts men during the Khasa rule and the Mangol freedoms. The coming of the Brahmans and the establishment of the Thakuri power led their low caste in a society and such occupations began to be considered as lowly. But there was no evidence of untouchability. During the later 18th century and especially the Rana period the number of clans increased as caste came to be centered on the idea of purity and the Bahuns and few Chhetri were degraded to the "jaat" of their wives taken from artisans. The name Kami was given to all these clans (Singh, 1993).

Nepal had small-scale manufacturing units scattered around the country producing textiles, iron, copper and mainly other products like guns, tools and weapons. It even used to export coins for Tibet and exported large quantities of these metals and other metal goods. It seems that these manufacturing units functioned under the guilds. Each guild was under a head. A guild or a person was known by the work associated with him like works relating to a gold as Sunar, constructing building or makes pots, working on copper as Tamta, one engaged in iron-related works as Lohar, one engaged in making utensils from wood as *Chunara*; one who constructing good from bamboo as Parki. Some persons choose to work free of the guild. Bahuns and Chhetris degraded to Kami jat used to become such heads of the guilds due to their latent relations in the upper castes and economic power enabling them to dominate the Kami descended from Mangols and the Austriacs (Dravidians). During the Rana period, these chief called Meijer were entrusted with sorting out issues related to the Jat. This system was developed with the purpose that the community members might not have to go to offices or court to settle trivial legal matters.

These days, some Kami males and females are relatively better educated than other Dalits groups and work as professors, engineers, doctors or employed in various governmental, non governmental organizations (NGO) and corporations such as bank etc. (Nepal Dalit Strategy Report, 2002).

Above facts show that Kami word is derived from the Persian term "Kamin" with the basis of ruling power of Thakuri and Bahuns. The people were divided into different class and caste; saying touchables and untouchables in the Nepalese society. Bahun, Chhetri, Vaisya and Sudra are mentioned in Hindu religious epic Veda was the major basis for the division of Kami people into lower caste or Sudra. After that type of division they have gone to neglecting from various social, cultural and religious opportunities from each generation of the upper castes people. As a result of it, now they are living as disadvantaged and excluded caste of the society even though the present legal codes and constitution has abolished caste discrimination formally.

2.1.4 Kami's Social Life

Kamis are the indigenous inhabitants of rural settlements. In terms of socialization, they have unique life styles among the Dalits. They are independent in nature. Here are some important aspects of Kami's social life has been described.

2.1.4.1 Household

In the Nepali society, the type and size of household indicates poverty or prosperity of the family. The interesting fact is that almost all people living more than a year in the rural areas owns a house for shelter though the quality and type of house differs from one household to another

(NDSR, 2002). This applies to all Dalits of Nepal including Kamis as well who are living in the rural areas.

According to TEAM consult (1994:41), households with a low housing status (plank wall and thatched roof) are found highest among untouchables (almost 80%) followed by Matwali (over 17%) and Tagadhari (about 3.0%). Among the sample of 2,079 household of untouchables, the highest percentage of Dalits has thatched roof houses. 35.7%, followed by brick/stone wall and thatched roof. Similarly 24.87% live in brick/stone wall house and 22% Dalits have tin/slate roofs. Only 1.8 percent of Dalits' own tile concrete house (NDSR, 2002).

The traditional Kami houses generally have rectangular in shape with maximum two floors of low ceiling, which hardly allow tall man to erect. They have used this house as resident, lowshed and 'Aran' as well. However, with the Kamis of Bobang village, many of the traditional households have been changed into brick/stones tin/tile roof. The brick /stone wall is made of with mud. The roofs are generally sloped in two sides. The ground floor is called chhidi or Majheri and the floor outside attached in front of the house is called pidhie where the piggery is build at one corner. The above facts clearly indicate that the life patterns of Kamis are changing gradually.

2.2 Theoretical Review about Social Change

Social scientists have applied various theories to analyze and describe society of a given area. Due to Sanskritization, Modernization as well as Westernization, the social-cultural condition of the "Kami" community has been changing. So, applying the theoretical aspects of Sanskritization, Modernization and Westernization framework this project work investigates the socio-cultural changes occurring among

the "Kami" community of Bobang village of Baglung district.

2.2.1 Social Change

Since the Dalits are the inhabitants of rural and urban settlements and they have direct influence of every ongoing change taking place in Bobang village. Due to urbanization along with modernization going through different cultures and society, the positions of dalits are also improving gradually in relation to their occupation, income, education and living standard. This effect reflects in their daily food habits, dressing, lifestyles, housing pattern and individual attitudes as well. Extension of transportation, communication and urbanization, rapid growth of education, economy and modern technologies has persuaded the communities to change their living condition in every aspects of their life. In addition, significant changes in socio-cultural and education aspect, have been seen due to the activities of INGOs/NGOs and CBOs focusing to social and economic development. It means the similar change in income and its related effect in socio-culture values and practices pertain to the Kamis as well. Theoretically, it can be said that this is due to the effect modernization, acculturation and sanskritization which are making influence in this century.

Modernization including urbanization, modern communication facilities such as telephone, internet and email access to transportation, availability of basic health care facility and the provision of political participation and legal treatment are the major factor for the overall development of the society. It also confines with the effect of globalization. Migration of people from one place to other transfers the knowledge skills and behaviours which plays the important role in adoption of socio-cultural and economic behaviors with new ideas and opinions. Acculturation is

the process of adoption high caste's cultures and socio-economic behaviours into the lower caste community. It also includes the assimilation in social process. Due to migration, modernization and urbanization Dalit castes lose their own socio-cultural identity while assimilating with separate type of socio-cultural and economic practices. Sanskritization among dalit community is being common as they feel same as upper castes while adoption of new customs, cultures, rituals habits, practicing by upper caste Hindus. It has played a significant role in changing the socio-cultural status of Dalits or Kami people. Social discrimination attached with untouchability is one of major hindrance for the socio-economic development of Dalit. Discrimination of dalits in every strata of the society has affected them to participate in any cultural and social opportunities. As a result of it, dalits are feeling as humiliated psychologically and suppressed people within the society. Many other direct and indirect, internal and external factors also have affected to social change of Kami caste in the study area.

The bottom stratum is of Dalits or untouchables; whose social, economic, gender, health status and political conditions are lowest as compared to other groups. Similar facts can be observed among the Kamis of Bobang village of Baglung district where they are living in same condition as described above. The study presents the ongoing socio-cultural practices, economic and education condition along with the affecting factors of changes among the Hill Dalits (particularly to Kamis).

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study is mainly based on two types of research i.e. descriptive and analytical. Descriptive research design was described the general pattern of the Kami people and their rituals, economic condition, educational condition and the changes taking place among them. This design also describes the socio-cultural and education condition of the Kami, social organization and the interrelationship with same caste and other caste people.

3.2 Study Area and Rationale for Selection

The present study on 'Kami' people was conducted at Bobang village of Baglung district. In Bobang village, almost 90 percents are from Kamis community. Economically they are not so bad but educationally they are poor. Fourteen years child studies in grade two. The other reasons behind the purposive selection of this site are as follows:

- i. Bobang village is heterogeneous composition of caste groups, other castes and big settlement of untouchable caste "Kami".
- ii. There are 1422 households of Dalits and ethnicity groups, out of them 317 households belong to Kamis. Ward No. 4, 5 and 6 constitute 248 households of Kami.
- iii. The community comprising of traditional occupations castes make money with the base of traditional skills and agricultural occupation.

3.3 The Universe and Sample Size

There are 317 households altogether in the study area. Out of those 248 households are of Kami people. Thus, in this study 25 households are purposively selected.

3.4 Nature and Source of Data

Both qualitative and quantitative data were used for the research. The source of data were primary and secondary. The primary data was collected from field work. These were collected through the personal contact with the respondents (Kamis), Key informants and others things were taken from the study area. The secondary data was collected from the Central Bureau of Statistics, Village Development Committee (VDC), District Development Committee (DDC), National Dalit Commission and other relevant I/NGOs as well as from their various literature, such as books, reports, journals, articles, case studies and previous dissertations.

3.5 Data Collection Techniques

The data for the present study were generated from the following techniques.

3.5.1 Interview Schedule

A schedule of both open and closed questionnaires were developed and used to generate basic data from the households which include population dynamic, family size, household income, occupation, life pattern, income from traditional and modern occupations, cultures and rituals, gender status and other general information. Only one member of household either male or female are selected as the respondent for the interview. The quantitative data was analyzed as a unit households and respondents numbers and qualitative information was reviewed with the

basis of percentage and time.

3.5.2 Observation

During the field work, the researcher visited every dalit households to interview with the respondents and collect the information on their life styles, food, habits, household type, sanitation, farming, customs and cultures. I observed the socio-cultural and education scenario in Bobang Kami community. Non-participatory methods of observation were also applied for this purpose.

3.5.3 Key Informants' Interview

This technique was chosen for its flexibility to provide opportunity to know the opinion of the respondents. A checklist was prepared for this type of interview. It gave the information of the history of Kamis present and past socio-cultural condition and the changes that occurred in the course of social development. In key informant interview, the question were related on perception and knowledge which was used to gather current information on socio-cultural condition. Information was collected for this study through VDC Secretary, elderly people, women, youth and former VDC members of Kami community from history to present situations.

3.5.4 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Three types of group discussions were made with the groups of respondents. First, the respondent was taken from women, second from youngsters, and third group from mixed (adult, old, male and female). The group discussion mainly focused on their past/present socio-cultural and education condition. The types of discriminations how they were facing now and then, factors of socio-cultural changes and impact of these changes in their community. Focus group discussion was become helpful for getting reliable and exact information in the study area.

3.5.5 Case Study

Some case study of women, youth and elderly of the Kami community was also made through group discussion and personal contact with the targeted people. It focused on present social status and changing patterns of Kamis comparative to the past.

3.6 Data Analysis and Presentation

The data collection during fieldwork was descriptively analyzed. After completion of field work, the collected data was coded and classified into descriptive and numerical characters. These qualitative data have descriptively tabulated by using computer. The qualitative data were descriptively analyzed. Moreover, in order to make the report more precise, tables and quotations are presented herewith. Opinions of the respondents have been incorporated in their original form to explain various events. In order to make the findings more organized, various chapters and sub-chapters have been arranged with making description and analysis.

3.7 Limitation of Study

The present study has some sort of limitation. Firstly this present study is a mini-research work which is prepared for the fulfillment of the master degree course in Sociology, University Campus, Kirtipur, Nepal. This study is a purposive case study of one untouchables caste group, named 'Kami' but it does not included other ethnic groups such as Magar and other untouchable castes Damai and Sarki who are living in the place.

CHAPTER IV

STUDY AREA AND RESPONDENT PROFILE

This chapter gives an introduction of the study area, a brief description of Bobang village, Baglung and brief introduction about the places where Kamis population concentrated. Geographical structure, population and available natural resources inevitably affect the structure of the society and culture.

4.1 Physic-geographic Setting

Bobang village is situated at 110 km north-south away from the Baglung Municipality. It is divided into 9 wards and the study area falls with 4, 5 and 6 wards of this village. The village is surrounded by *Adhikari Chaur* VDC in the east, *Nishi* and *Bohora* VDC in the west, *Bonga Dobhan* VDC in the north and *Devasthan* VDC in the south. In the northern part of this village the Baglung Wild Life Conservation is situated. The climate of this village is extremely cold in winter and semi-cold in summer.

4.1.1 Natural Resources

Most of the area of this village is surrounded by hills and has no sufficient sources of water in each ward but in the lower belt there is sufficient water. The trees mostly found in this village include Chilaune, Katush and Simal. The fruit trees like orange, lemon, apple are also found in the different area of the village. A plenty of birds like parrot, pigeon, kalich, Dove and Jureli are available around this village. Major agriculture productions of this village are maize, potato, wheat and millet.

4.1.2 Population Composition of the Study Area

The total population of the study area Bobang village is 6373 out of total

3371 (52.90%) are females and 3002 (47.10%) are males. It covers 1422 households (Source: Village Profile, 2015). There is the heterogeneous community, the households belong to various ethnic and dalit castes like Kami, Adai, Kyat, Sunar, Damai and Magar.

4.1.3 Caste and Ethnic Composition

Bobang village is dominated by Kamis population and others mainly as Magar, Adai, Sunar, Kyat and Chhetri. The ethnic composition of the village is given below.

Table 1
Caste/Ethnic Composition of Bobang Village

| Ward No. | Total population | Cast/Ethnic Composition | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|------------------|-------------------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|
| | | Magar | Chhetri | Bahun | Newar | Kumal | Sunar | Damai | Kami | Adai | Kayat |
| 1 | 649 | 199 | 15 | 105 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 328 | 1 | 0 |
| 2 | 506 | 45 | 222 | 46 | 22 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 138 | 31 | 0 |
| 3 | 379 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 193 | 186 |
| 4 | 990 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 990 | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | 778 | 215 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 90 | 15 | 458 | 0 | 0 |
| 6 | 787 | 118 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 368 | 0 | 301 | 0 | 0 |
| 7 | 517 | 211 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 28 | 0 | 278 | 0 | 0 |
| 8 | 411 | 104 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 22 | 0 | 280 | 0 | 0 |
| 9 | 1356 | 243 | 53 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 915 | 110 | 35 |
| Total | 6373 | 1135 | 290 | 151 | 22 | 5 | 509 | 17 | 3688 | 335 | 221 |
| In% | 100 | 17.81 | 4.55 | 2.37 | 0.35 | 0.08 | 7.99 | 0.27 | 57.87 | 5.26 | 3.47 |

Source: VDC Profile 2015.

The above table shows the population of Kami's concentrated only in 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 9 wards out of total population 57.87 percent population belongs to Kami.

4.1.4 Facilities

The village has some modern physical facilities like transportation, education, health and communication as described below:

4.1.5 Education

Since 2022 B.S., the school has been started in the ward no. 2 of the village named as Gyanodaya Primary School (currently, it is Higher Secondary School). Similarly, there has been established public primary school and private schools these days.

4.1.6 Transportation

The 15 km, motor able muddy road has been extended from Burtibang. Five time in a day regular transportation from Burtibang to Bobang is being continued that provided the facility to the people.

4.1.7 Health and Sanitation

A health post has been established in the village which provided preventive and basic curative health service to the village through Assistant Health Worker (AHW), Village Health Worker (VHM) and Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM). There is no medicinal shop and private clinics for health check up. The village health post provides some facilities to the people of the village. Majority of the wards have the facilities of safe drinking water that is distributed from pipe taps but minorities are not getting pure drinking water. Although local authority has continued the process for establishing pure drinking water facilities for all villagers.

4.1.8 Market

Local shops including small types of hotels are located in Bobang village area. People sell and buy some local products in these shops. People buy huge amount of the extra products from Burtibang, the nearest city of Bobang village.

4.2 Respondent Profile

Respondent's population, marital status and educational status is shown in the following sub headings:

4.2.1 Population Composition

Age and sex structure is an important aspect of population. The development of society depends on its active and healthy population. The following table shows the age and sex composition of the respondents:

Table 2
Distribution of Respondents by Age and Sex

| Age Group | Male | % | Female | % | Total | % |
|-----------|------|-------|--------|-------|-------|--------|
| 15-29 yrs | 2 | 14.28 | 2 | 18.18 | 4 | 16 |
| 30-44 yrs | 6 | 42.86 | 6 | 54.55 | 12 | 48 |
| 45+ | 6 | 42.86 | 3 | 27.27 | 9 | 36 |
| Total | 14 | 100 | 11 | 100 | 25 | 100.00 |

Source: Field Survey, 2015.

While selecting each respondent from 25 household each, most of the respondents were under 30-44 (48%) and 45 above (36%) years of age. Only 4 respondents were from the age of 15-29 years age group. Even the researcher tried to balance male and female as equal number of

respondents, it could not possible due to their distance of home to deal interview.

4.2.2 Marital Status, Marriage Type and Average Age of Marriage

Marriage is an important social institution. It is union between a man and woman to keep a sexual relationship and to produce offspring. It maintains the social structure, gives continuity to the society and helps to sustain social married and unmarried member of the Kami community. The marriage situation of the study people is given below:

Table 3
Marital Status of the Respondents

| Marital status | Female no. | Male no. | Total | Marriage Type | |
|----------------|------------|----------|-------|---------------|-------------|
| | | | | Arrange | Inter-Caste |
| Married | 5 | 6 | 11 | 8 | 3 |
| Unmarried | 4 | 5 | 9 | - | - |
| Widow/Widower | 2 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| Total | 11 | 14 | 25 | 11 | 5 |

Source: Field Survey, 2015.

While going into the distribution of marital status of the respondents, out of total 25 respondents, there were 14 males and 11 female. Similarly, there were 5 married and 2 window female respondents and 6 married and 3 widowers male respondents in the study area. The type of marriage of all respondents is found both arranged and inter-caste marriage. According to the information from married respondents, they all have had the marriage at 12-18 years in average age but the age of the second marriage respondents were vary.

During the focus group discussion among women, they expressed that there were difference in the process of marriage Although many couple has arranged marriage out of total population, currently, there is increasing trend of love marriage including inter-caste marriage in the Kami community.

4.2.3 Educational Status of the Respondents

Educational status of the respondents has been classified into two groups consisting of under SLC and literate, which can be revealed from the following Table

Table 4
Educational status of the respondents

| Education Status | Female | % | Male | % | Total | % |
|------------------|--------|-------|------|-------|-------|-----|
| Under SLC | 5 | 45.45 | 5 | 35.71 | 10 | 40 |
| Literate | 6 | 54.55 | 9 | 64.29 | 15 | 60 |
| Total | 11 | 100 | 14 | 100 | 25 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2015.

As per the above information, 40% respondents have the education under SLC and rests 60% are literate having education not more than primary level. It means the literacy rate of the Kami people of the study area is quite high but they didn't continue the education to higher level.

After 1950, Kami were free to get admission in the schools of the VDC. While the Bhubaneshowri Primary School was established, since then Kami people have been joining in formal education. During the study, all 25 respondents expressed that they send their children in schools either private or government without discriminating girls or boys. There is no

discrimination to dalit castes in the schools. However, due to various reasons especially pertaining economic problem and the geographical variation among them, they couldn't grade-up their education as compared to other village. Table given below gives the enrollment of student and their continuity in higher Secondary school.

Table 5
School Going Kami Students in Secondary School, Bobang

| Grade | Kami | | Other Castes | Grand Total |
|-------|-------|------|--------------|-------------|
| | Girls | Boys | | |
| One | 1 | 2 | 10 | 13 |
| Two | 1 | - | 10 | 11 |
| Three | 1 | 2 | 15 | 18 |
| Four | 1 | - | 15 | 16 |
| Five | 2 | - | 15 | 17 |
| Six | - | 2 | 19 | 21 |
| Seven | 2 | 1 | 32 | 35 |
| Eight | 2 | 2 | 31 | 35 |
| Nine | 2 | 2 | 31 | 35 |
| Ten | - | 2 | 27 | 29 |
| Total | 12 | 13 | 205 | 230 |

Source: Field Survey, 2015.

Above table shows that at present, there are total numbers of 230 students enrolled in the school both from the Kami community as well as from other community. Out of this total 230, 25 students are from Kami, has classes up to 10 grades. We can find less number of students attending classes in lower grades especially in class I to 4, but once they pass the examination of class 3 to seven, we can see great decline in the number of

Students attending further classes. There is maximum dropout in lower grades 1, 2 and 3, and in higher grades 6, 7 and 8. From the Survey it was revealed that only students out of 25, have continued their education up to 10 grades. Mrs. Aas Maya B.K. of 22 expresses,

Many children of my neighbors are being involved in household works and helping to their parents to make iron weapons. Sudden drop-out from the school as they have to assist in household and iron works is the major reason not to have proper education. However, some improvements have been revealed day by day in terms of schooling children, conducting microcredit, activities and exploring economic opportunities among Kami community. Now I would be happy when I see Kami children having school dress, because education is the only one element which can open inter eye to step onwards for achieving better economy and prosperous life".

Highlighting the mutual understanding and equality on education between non-dalit and dalit Ms. Aas Maya Kami of 20 says,

'I studied up to class 9. I left school myself I am a first girl who has attended school among Dalit particularly to the Kamis of this VDC. When I was at school, my classmates always behave same as they have. there was no discrimination due to being dalits. Since there was good opportunity to study. I regret to not completing school education. As I know that even today, and there are separate scholarships for dalits and no discriminate at all.

4.2.4 Reason for Hindrances to Educational Expansion of Kami Children

Following are the major reasons for not completing the school education of children or students (or not sending/continuing Kami children to school education) was drawn from the focus group discussion and interview with key informants.

- Poor economic condition of Kami family.
- Traditional job, no need to formal education in school
- Family's concept of without education, life is happy
- Early marriage of girls and boys.
- Attraction to foreign employment
- Effect of climate change.

One of the most known reasons for dropout of these students is that most of them come from a middle or low class family. Since the school is located very near to Kami community. We found large number of higher grade students they have already been dropout from the school. The reason for this is mainly they have short time to read due to having workload to help their parents for household work. Also the reason for dropout in higher grades is that once the students learn the basic alphabets including read and write their names, it becomes sufficient for any Kami girls or boys to do job easily at their own home following traditional occupation. Any Kami parents let their children study up to age of 12 -14 years, after that Kami boys get employed in a place where their father works (at home or other places) and Kami girls accompany with mother works (for household work or waging to upper castes farm).

The Kamis relate education with economy even though they do not get it for them higher education means a better job. Although they are getting

employment there is increasing the sense to get education. Drop out of their children between 5-7 classes is high because of engaging on household work of girls and assisting iron work of boys. They involve the children and youths for carrying out repairing iron tools, selling Khukuri and raise annual crops from Bistas. Similarly, the girls have to work for daily wages in the farms of other castes accompanying to mothers, sisters and sister-in-laws. If they give four hours to school, then they are losing money because during that time they work and earn money. Some Kami people are still with the attitude that if they join school, then who will feed them. They do not need to be scholar. If some girls and boys come up to 10 class or SLC, they could not continue further education because of no economic support extended from the family. Under such condition these children and teenagers are forced to take up jobs like assist to iron works, waging in other caste's farm and selling vegetables in the nearest city. It shows that occupational opportunities are the main reason for not completing school education. Bobang kami people are just engaged on agricultural sector in whole years. In the winter, they stay down in lower belt and during summer, they climb to Dhorpatan for agriculture. They do so because of their poor economic condition.

CHAPTER V

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION OF KAMI CASTE

This chapter mainly deals with the demographic and socio-cultural and economic and political conditions of Kami people of the study area.

5.1 Social Condition

This unit deals the current socio-demographic and political status of the Kami people of the study area. It includes family structure, health, women's positions, situation of domestic violence and political awareness.

5.1.1 Family Type and Family Size

Family is a very old institution found all over the world and also the most important institution. It is unavoidable for human development, growth and socialization. There are two types of family; one-is nuclear which can be defined as "a small group composed of husband and wife and immature children that constitute a unit apart from the rest of the community" or it is one which consists of the husband, wife and their children. Soon after their marriage the children leave their parental home and establish their separate household. The another is joint family which is also known as extended family or undivided family. It normally consists of members who at least belong to three generation: husband and wife, their married and unmarried children, and married and unmarried grand children.

5.1.2 Health

During interview, respondents said that most of the Kami people go to nearest health posts. For the serious health problem they go to Burtibang,

a nearest local market from that village for their health checkup and treatment of general to complicated health problems. Still some of them are consulting traditional healers (dhami jhankri) before contacting with health institutions and physicians. It is due to awareness and education expanded among Kami community. Refer below to see the respondents' current behaviours to respond to the health issues.

Table 6
Respondents by the Type of Utilizing Health Services

| Respondents/ Types of Services | Dhami Jhankri | % | Health Posts/Hospital/Doctor | % | Utilizing Both Services | % |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|------|---------------------------------|-------|-------------------------------|------|
| Male | 1 | | 12 | | - | |
| Female | - | | 1 | | 1 | |
| Total | 1 | 6.66 | 13 | 86.68 | 1 | 6.66 |

Source: VDC Profile, 2015.

According to above table 13 respondents (86.68%) are using modern health facilities for" the treatment of any disease whereas one respondent (6.66%) uses traditional services of Dhami-jhankri (healers). Similarly, one female respondent (6.66% of total respondents) utilizes modern and traditional both facilities for caring her family's health There is no such practice available on home treatment (homeopathic).

5.1.3 Women's Role and Status

While conducting observation researcher visits within Kami community. It is seen that almost all Kami women of Bobang are engaged in the household work along with supporting to their husband in making iron tools. Besides that they do laborious work in upper castes farm and gets money or food grains. Some of Kami women are also do business of selling vegetables in the market in Burtibang, and fruits buying from the

villages. Some of them work as a labour. They are economically independent and not considered as subordinate by their men in the family.

From the group discussion among women, it is found that they are playing a major role in household activities. They can spend their money on whatever they like in personal and family expenses .Economically, they are not dominated by their husbands. Their only complaint is that their income is taken away by their husbands who will enjoy taking liquor and playing cards. Due to the result of modernization and urbanization near to the village, there is significantly changing the situation of Kami women as like other upper caste women of the community.

Almost all percent of women are illiterate. Kami girls are not prohibited from schooling but they are not getting education well. Both girl and boy are treated equally. They have freedom to separate, divorce and remarriage on their own choice. There are no social restrictions for living with modern style among women within Kami community. In this way, Kami woman have freedom like other high castes women. Young girls/women have equal status but have slight lower than males among adult women.

5.1.4 Son Preferences

This types of Kami community is also patriarchal as like other castes of the society. All respondents have expressed that there is no such discrimination about son and daughter within their family in terms of their education, food, health and other aspects. However, still some Kami couple waits to born son due to the pressure of parents and fear of social-

stigma. As a result of it, some Kami family have many daughters up to maximum 4-5.

5.1.5 Domestic Violence

There is less domestic violence within the Kami families while interviewing with each respondents of the households and holding focus group discussion among key women informants. The situation of domestic violence towards Kami women could be found before 8 years or above but at the moment it has been abolishing. It is due to the increased empowerment of women in the society and the empowerment of Kami women as well.

5.1.6 Political Awareness

Previously, the untouchables hardly participated in the political- matters practiced in the society. They were not given any place in the politics, administration and technical and bureaucratic field. They were not allowed to hold any public post. Political rights and representation were denied for them. But after the revolution in 1951, especially after the inception of Panchayet period, the Kamis of Bobang have been given importance. The following table shows the participation of Kamis in the political system.

Table 7

People Participation in Political Institutions by Castes

| S.N. | Period | Political Institute | Participation | |
|------|--------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| | | | No. of Kami Caste | No. of Higher Caste |
| 1 | 2053 | Council of VDC | 46 | 5 |
| 2 | 2048 | Council of VDC | 46 | 4 |

Source: VDC Profile, 2015.

Above table illustrates the participation of Kamis in local political scenario. Political system after the restoration of democracy. This village is a big village with total population 6373. There are approximately 4330 voters, out of which maximum voters are from Kami community of Bobang. Though the small scale of voters of Kami in the village, they play the decisive role in the local village and ward election. In every local level election after the restoration of democracy, have been elected and nominated as a ward member. The Kami constitutes a significant presence in the village. So, there is no question of neglecting their population. From the Panchayat period, they were involved in local council. Before 2046 (1990) only one Kami was nominated in local level Gaun Panchayat Council even though the density was maximum of the dalit group. Rest of all were from Magar and Adai community group. Also after 2046 (1990), out of ten local council members, the council has only one Kami of the village. However, there is no representation in village member as ward chairman in the village during multiparty system as well. The representation of Kami in both council and VDC has been still dominated by Adai and Magar caste people. They have no representation from their community in constituent Assembly.

Kamis of Bobang village have access to national, district and village level political system. Every adult of age 18 and above is eligible to vote for the representatives in local election and national election. Individual is nominated by each party to run in the local constituency and the voters select them on the ballot by selecting the symbol of their party. Besides national election, the Kamis also vote for making local government. At local government election, they vote for chairperson and deputy chairperson, ward chairperson and members of the village. But the local

government election is not conducted due to political deadlock in the country.

According to the key informant's interview and focus group discussion, after the restoration of democracy in 1990, the Kamis of Bobang village are very much aware on politics as well as after the mass movement II of 2064. The assimilation with upper castes have resulted them to make efficient environment for participating any political events. They were more highlighted as then total number of population could not be overlooked by any political parties. They are considered as part of local political body.

Their community has been divided into two parties: Nepali Congress and Nepal Communist Party (Maoist) after 2006. Before 2046 (1990), there existed unity amongst them and used to elect one member as their community representative. At present, there is political rivalry developing between them. Otherwise, this is a homogenous community where people live with co-operation. But, currently, in the name of democracy, the faction among them has also been developed in this community. One of the respondent Aashi Man Kami of 82 narrates his awareness about social equality.

After restoration democracy in 2046 B.S. and Mass Movement II in 2062/063 B.S. many changes have been seen in our community. Stigma and discrimination from upper caste people is being reduced. As Kami youths have been more sensitized in this issues. Upper caste people particularly young generations are used to interact with Kami people as well. Before mass movement, Kamis were killed frequently by Magar community. But today, there is mutual help is established. They do not have used such types of

discrimination and behaviour with us. I am happy today because I experienced the fact in this age that we are also human being as other castes are and should not be self-humiliated.

Another woman Dhana Maya Sunar of 24 years expressed her views about the mutual help between community people. She said,

I am married woman of 24 years of age. It was inter caste marriage to me with Kami boy as I am Adai girl. I always advocate against the behaviours of untouchability and discrimination being persisted towards Kami (even all Dalits) Upper caste people do not dominate me even I got married with Kami Community, Comparatively. I have seen that less discrimination and dominating behaviours towards Kami people in this VDC.

In the caste system, the caste groups are interdependent to one-another, economically, religiously and in their social life. With the changing attitude due to time, there is close socio-cultural participation between higher castes and Kamis in the community. The Kamis domestic ceremonies and festivals are attended by the higher caste people. Younger generations have been included as political leader and social workers. The Kamis have made deep friendship and courtesy with other caste people and invite them in feast and festivals. They've been changing in their behavior as well. Earlier they had to respect all higher caste people either young or old. But now a days they have changed in their respecting manner.

The Kamis' reaction toward discrimination is quite pitiful. They blame Rana rulers for their poverty and discrimination. They say "we too are human being and one can find same red blood inside us and other higher caste people have, then why this discrimination? Wherever we go, people

misbehave us and never hear us". Many remained silent, though they believe it was unjust. They say it was their god who decided fate. The fantastic attitudes towards caste based discriminations appear among most of the Kamis. But now with the dawn of democracy and Loktantra many of them are optimistic about their chances of receiving social justice by protesting against caste-based discrimination.

5.2 Cultural Condition

This unit deals with the cultural and religious activities performed by Kami people at present. It includes mainly religion, feast and festivals and rituals. Besides interview with the respondents and key informants, some observation conducted at the time of celebration of the religious and cultural events in order to know the status as by the researcher described below.

5.2.1 Religion

Religion exists in every society and plays vital role in maintaining social structure of a given society. All the Kamis of Study area belong to the Hindu groups. Kamis have a traditional practice of following Hindu religion even since the Vedic period. They celebrate all feast and festivals with great respect as performed by other upper caste Hindus. They worship Hindu gods and goddesses in the local temples and their home as well.

It is found that only one respondent out of 25 of the study area has a practiced Christianity. The male respondent Mr. Lukhu Kami of 48 said that *he was only in the family and entire Kami community to perform Christianity*. However, he is involving in all rituals and culture practices

of his community without hesitations worships idols and received Tika at Dashain.

5.2.2 Festivals

The Kamis practice same culture and religion as performed by Bahuns and Chhetries. They celebrate the major festivals like Dashain, Tihar, Chaite Dashain, Magh/Shrawan Sankranti, different Purnimas and other Hindu rituals of worshipping gods. Only performing Kul Puja (the worshipping to key god of their home) differs to other castes. There is no restriction to enter the temple of Hindu goddess in the community of Bobang village. They all worship Hindu gods e.g. Ganesh, Durga, Laxmi, Shiva, Bishnu and Kali. Though few minority has changed their religion. With the basis of respondents' expression a brief festivals celebrating within the Kami community is as follows:

Janai Purnima

All Kami people celebrate Janai Purnima also known as Raksha Bandhan in the month of Shrawan or Bhadra. Every year the eve is particularly related to Chhetri and Bahun but kamis community also practiced this festival. They worship to the temple of Lord Ganesh, Shiva and others and also offer a piece of new maize (fresh and green). The relatives and families of them are gathered on the occasion of this festival and celebrate it with eating cook *quanti* (mixture of bean, peas and other) meat, beaten rice, ale and liquors.

Dashain

The Kami people of the study area observe a great festival of Hindus. They celebrated Dashain as they also belonging to Hindus. They keep *Jamara* on *Ghatasthapana*, the first day of *Dashian*, the great festival of

Hindu; and worship to the goddess *Nawadurga* as same as other caste do it. They worship the goddess Kali on the day of *Astami* with sacrificing of cock, he-buffalo, he-goat and duck. The worship of iron working place which is also observed in the same day with sacrificing cock or he-goat. After completing of nine days of dashain, in the tenth days of *nawaratra*, they perform the ceremony of providing Tika and *Jamara* from the eldest person which is in Vijaya Dashami and it is extended up to Full moon.

As like other upper caste people, they also perform the Tihar ceremony with celebrating *Gai puja*, *Dipawali*, and *Gobarddan puja* and *bhai puja* with full of enjoyment like observing *Deusi* and *Bhailo*. Eating sweets and playing cards and casino are the major entertainments they perform during this festival.

5.2.3 Rituals

They are used to perform various customs and culture as they continue whatever the community doing over the years. These are like *Kulpuja* (Dewali) and *Satyanarayan Puja*. Due to interaction with other upper castes like Chhetries and Magars, they don't have specific and unique cultural events except these.

Kul Puja (Dewali)

This is a day when all Kami families offer a sacrifice to goddess of their localities. Every two years after, they are dedicated to worship *Kuldevata*, key family god named as *Daremasta* even the general worships is performed two times in the month of Mansir and Jestha in years. This festival commences on the Jestha Purnima according to the Hindu calendar. As this is the greatest festival among Kami community, family and relatives are gathered at this moment from anywhere they live. In

evening of one day before celebrating this festival, Kami of Bobang worship along with offering sacrifices the day of *Kulpuja* (Dewali) they all go to the jungle taking procession of the Lineal Deity of *Kuldewata*. With establishing the Lineal Deity of *Kuldevata* at a temporary place of worship made at the jungle, they offer worshipping throughout the day and end with sacrificing a black he-goat to the goddess. They celebrate the occasion with the feast, which involves a lavish consumption of food items such as beaten rice, buffalo and mutton, pork, ale (homemade rice beer and liquor).

Above all events are performed by *Juwain* (Son-in-law) as a priest in consolation with Brahmin Purohit prior to begin.

Birth

Members of Kami caste are to have their head shaved and nail cut by their-own caste, and likewise to have their rituals purification at birth and death performed by their own caste/ relatives. The period of impurity in each case is 10 days. The ritual at birth is done on 10th day by the senior of home. Rice eating ceremony locally called *Pasni* is done for boy in five months and girls in six months of the birth. Boy's hair is cut by his maternal uncle and thrown in nearest river which is known as ritual, *chhewar*. Above 8-10 years girl is offered by *Gunyu Cholo* and boy is offered by *Bratabanda* in order to set them culturally and socially matured.

Marriage

Most Kami marriages are like other Nepalese. Parents arrange girl of same caste to the boy for marriage ritual. In appropriate date or eve, there is organized marriage ceremony as like Bahun and Chhetries in the home

or temples. Some girls and boys have their love marriage with other caste like Adai, Kayat and Magar. After marriage most of the couple live separately. They have certainly small household, since they have few assets. There is little economic incentive to stay separate household soon after marriage. It is strictly forbidden in Kami community also to marry with either side relatives. During formal procession of marriage, son-in-law performs all the Vedic methods. Key informants Mr. Tham Bahadur Sunar of 29, says, *while the marriage ceremony carried out for daughter in-law the consultation with Brahmin Purohit*. Likewise, one woman informant Sita B.K. of 51 expressed her view on marriage between Kami community to other upper caste. She says, Now-a-days,

We Kami women are also educated and civilized. Our blood is same as others and the inner spirit is also full of holy. What would be difference to get in marriage with other castes if we have love affairs and romance?

Marriage tradition is also becoming modernized now-a-days. There is no restriction between Kami people and other for marriage system. The mutual behave is seen today in that community.

Death

The death rituals of the Kamis are generally similar to other castes like Chhetri and Bahuns. While a person dead, one member of every household should represent in the funeral procession otherwise they have to go out of Guthi. When the corpse is placed near the bank of river, the offering of soil in remembrance of the person is done by every individuals present in the procession. After the funeral of dead body, son

of the dead person lives death ritual for 10 days and worship everyday nearby the river, the rite is called *Dhikuro Puja*. Every months of the date of death, there is the offering water to the soul of dead body. Such actions is performed for one year, this duration is called *Barakhi*. During that time, son or closest one of the dead person should have to wear white cloths with barring some impure food habits. Up to a year after death it is essential to perform *Shraddha* and after that it is optional.

With the basis of Karma Kanda (religious book) as practices by Chhetri and Bahuns, the all above rituals are carried out according to the instructions of their own relatives *Juwain* (Son-in-law) and or by the knowledgeable relative persons, if not available of Daughter-in-law.

As expressed by key informants during interview, they do not have specific culture and rituals of their own. As far as the informants know, the Kamis are performing various festivals, rituals and cultures in accordance with the process of upper castes people; it is due to the cultural transformation and sanskritization as well.

5.3 Economic Condition

It deals the present economic conditions of the Kami people of the study area, describing with occupational status, land and house ownership, cropping pattern and harvesting system as well as major income sources, food sufficiency, livestock and role of women in the economy.

5.3.1 Occupation

The study found that most of the Kami people have their own traditional occupation e.g. making iron tools and have Bista (work for other castes to

make iron tools and get agro products). The century old profession is still continued even the demand of tools is decreased due to industrially manufactured tools. Modernization has affected in their community. Many youths are being works in the overseas changing their traditional profession. However, old generations have still continued their old profession. In some cases, they make jewelries of gold and silver. Some people are working as mechanic and driver also. Some are bought jeep and truck for carry people and good transportation which is becoming one of the reliable source of income. The following table shows the occupational status of the respondents and their family:

Table 8

Distribution of the Respondents and their Family by Occupation

| S.N. | Occupation | Respondents | % |
|------|---|-------------|-----|
| 1 | Traditional occupation (making iron tools, metal jewelries) | 5 | 20 |
| 2 | Workers (daily wages) | 2 | 8 |
| 3 | Overseas employment | 15 | 60 |
| 4 | Driving/Mechanics | 3 | 12 |
| | Total | 25 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2015.

In the above table the highest 60% of the respondents are solely dependent on overseas employment. Similarly, there is also the high level of dependency of the family in same occupation. Level of dependency of the family in secondary occupation can be seen mainly traditional occupation.

5.3.2 Land Ownership

While conducting the study, the-information about the ownership of land of each respondent has been collected as shown in the table below:

Table 9
Land Ownership of the Kami by the Respondents

| Land | No. | Percentage |
|------------|-----|------------|
| 1-3 ropani | 8 | 32 |
| 3-6 ropani | 5 | 20 |
| None | 12 | 48 |
| Total | 25 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2015.

During interview with the respondents, the researcher came to know that a minimum number of Kamis have their own agriculture land. The above table shows that most of them have dry land (Pakho Bari), out of total respondents who have their own land which is their own property of their previous generation. Referring to above table almost above all respondents have their own land. Only 2 respondents have some wet land for rice production not more than 1 *ropani*.

Besides land, they have also house including cowshed and small *Aaran* (iron workshop). House ownership of them are as follows:

Table 10
House Ownership of the Kami by the Respondents

| Types of house | No. | Percentage |
|----------------|-----|------------|
| Old House | 16 | 64 |
| Cement House | 9 | 36 |
| Total | 25 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Above table illustrates that out of 25, nine houses are cemented and the remaining 16 houses are old in style constructed with mud and stone. At present, two ancestral houses are remained in entire Kami community. Due to poor economic condition, single family is seemed to live in small rented cottage. The effect of urbanization and modernization have created desire and imitation on the Kami castes to make modern types of houses. Gradually improving economical status from overseas employment and other sources along with modernizing traditional occupation, there is growing intention of them to have good living standards as upper castes are maintaining.

5.3.3 Food Sufficiency

Food is the basic needs of the people for acquiring proper nutritional diets. Size of family size of land and income status is the key determinants of analyzing food sufficiency among Kami caste of the study area.

Table 11
Food Sufficiency

| Period up to | | | | | |
|--------------|------------|------------|-------------|---------------------|-------|
| 3 months | 3-6 months | 6-9 months | 9-11 months | 12 and above months | Total |
| 11 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 25 |
| 44% | 16% | 12% | 16% | 12% | 100% |

Sources: Field Survey, 2015.

It is fact as above table reveals that the maximum number of Kami respondents has no food sufficiency on their own. So they have to collect food from outside by doing other secondary occupation like labor; overseas employment, mechanics and agricultural field. Maximum

percentages (44%) of the respondents do not have sufficient foods, which is only sufficient up to 3 months. Only 3 families have sufficient food for more than one year whereas rests of them consumed up to 11 months.

As shows in the figure above in Table 11, most of the Kami people do not have their own land for agriculture land. They collect foods e.g. rice, maize, wheat and millet from the *Bista's* houses. Some of them have many *Bistas* and some has least. Due to this, collecting foods from *Bists's* houses as *Balighare* is not sufficient to survive as they expressed during the study.

5.3.4 Cropping Pattern

All respondents and key informants expressed that the crops harvesting by Kami people are mainly maize, wheat, rice potatoes and vegetables respectively. The major crop is maize in the Kami community. They also produce some vegetables for the purpose of income generation. Majority of them have good productive land. Some have rare agriculture land of their own to cultivate.

5.3.5 Harvesting Storing System

It is found during focus group discussion that they follow traditional harvesting techniques for the production of different crops. There is no modern type of harvesting technologies adopted by Kami people as they have no access to the trained agronomist and related institutions. The harvesting period is Jetha-Asar for collecting wheat and cultivating rice, and Mangsir-Poush for harvesting and collecting rice. Similarly, cultivating and collecting maize on Chaitra and Bhadra respectively. Likewise, the planting of potatoes is Mansir and harvesting of potatoes is in the month of Chitra.

They store these agriculture productions in traditional clay pots, bamboo made Bhakari (a cylinder type domestic utensil) to secure agriculture products. For the maize, they make a round bunch and put it on those area.

5.3.6 Income Sources

Excluding the ownership of land, the other major means of livelihood of Dalits is the sale of their traditional caste occupation. Historically, Dalits have been practicing their traditional caste occupation and selling it to their clients to make a living. For example Kamis not only make agriculture tools and household utensils such as sickles, knives, axes, hoes, spades, plough tips, and nails but also repair them when needed. A goldsmith or Sunar makes golden or silver ornaments as demanded by their clients (NDSR, 2002).

During focus group discussion with the Kami people they expressed that in comparison with previous 10 years to now they have been standing in their own foots and being self reliant due to established and mobilization of different micro-credit groups among their community. As a result of this, now-a-days every household has their own modern toilets and drinking water taps, no human waste is available and improved sanitation and sewage around their community. In conclusion, there is increasingly improved economic situation. The empowerment of women themselves in group mobilization, saving and credit and participation in different community activities is increasing. It shows that the economic transforming along with social changes has been rapidly growing in Kami castes as well. The following table shows the distribution of income sources by their occupation.

Table 12
Monthly Income and Expenditure of the Respondents

| Monthly income in NRs. | No. of Respondents | % |
|------------------------|--------------------|-----|
| 1000 and below | 9 | 36 |
| 1000-4000 | 5 | 20 |
| 4000-6000 | 5 | 20 |
| 6000-8000 | 3 | 12 |
| 8000-10000 | 3 | 12 |
| Total | 25 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2015.

The above table shows the monthly income of Kamis which range from below to NRs. 1000 to above up to NRs. 8000-10000. This shows the monthly income of Kamis is severe, hence they are considered as lower and degraded people in the community. Most of the household (36%) have an income below NRs. 1000 and 20% household has NRs. 1000-4000. The average expenditure of them is minimum NRs.1000 to above 10000. Only three households have some profit from the income against expenditure. So, it can be said that they are economically very poor as their income level is quite low.

The traditional occupational occupation of the Kamis of this study area is to make home and agriculture tools for the upper castes and making gold/silver jewelries and *khukuri*. Beside these, some of the Kamis have been employing in the overseas (like Dubai, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia etc) as well. Similarly, some people are engaged in other professions like driving, mechanics and driving. These occupations are the major income sources of the Kamis of the study area. Kami women work in the upper caste farm and selling *Khukuri* by Kami men is the major income sources.

One respondent Indralal Kami of 75 expressed showing the regretful condition of his life. He says,

I am now 75 years old. I had faced so many humiliations throughout my life. We were called 'daangra' or 'phohori' people in the village. We had to full of respect to everyday and had to accept whoever told for doing whatever. I have lost my land and property due to pay the credits. I could not do anything during my life because of poverty and the shortage of basic needs.

According to the respondents of each household, while income is low, Kamis lend money mostly from local saving and credit groups, and some amount from local creditors to reimburse the family expenditures. They return money to the Groups through installment basis whereas they should pay only interest until not ready to return whole amount to *Sahooss*. They collect money for recovering such payments selling khukuris, agriculture tools, livestock and vegetables as well as income of overseas employment. However there is decreasing tendency of lending money from local landlord. Only respondents of the two households said that they have sufficient income for family and other expenses as they have to expense money to fulfill the basic requirements. Respondent has said that there were no sufficient money as a profit to invest in business and service oriented sector.

Their age, old traditional occupation that is still confined them as the virtue of their caste position. Making iron tools is considered low caste people work particularly to Kamis; they do not have to face competition from other caste people. This job provides them security like once they get this job there can hardly be any chance to lose this profession. This professions do not require any academic qualification. Urbanization near to the village has also provided many opportunities for them. Presently,

there is increasing the tendency of overseas employment among the Kami youth as well. It is found that some people of the Kami community are being employed in Malaysia, Dubai and Qatar and rest of young/adult people are also in queue for going overseas employment. Some of them are employed in neighboring country, India.

5.3.7 Livestock

Besides farming, the Kami people of the study area are also engaging on livestock which provides them meat and milk as well as compost fertilizer. It has also helped them to fulfill some minor and major expenses. All respondents have livestock farming such as poultry, cow, goat and pig farming. They sell milk in local bazaar in Burtibang and there is no discrimination to the Kami people for selling milk and other livestock production. They are not totally depending on this profession but taken as secondary profession.

5.3.8 Women Position/Role in the Economy

Women role basically plays vital in the society. Educated women handle every needs and wants of the house. In the house, women should be sensitive for manage the household activities. The informant Gori Sunar of 42 expressed:

“In any society, women are the basic indicators of social and economic development. Just 5 years ago, I had been literate in my family whereas my husband is still illiterate. Poverty, illiteracy and untouchability have affected deeply to our family and society. Although, I have been deprived from an opportunity to go school. I have sent my children at school. I use to sell vegetables in the market and those collecting from my own kitchen garden or buying from other rich people’s house and working with upper caste’s

farms. It helped me to complete all these things otherwise I could not do so.”

Behavioral change in the role of women (wife and mother) brings changes in social, economic and demographic structure of the society. Nepalese society is organized in the patriarchal model, the status of the women is lower to that of males in every field of life social, economic and political (NDSR, 2002). The majorities of Kami women of the study area are involving to work over the farm of upper castes as daily wages. Within this Kami community, we find almost all Kami women engaged assisting in making iron tools with their men. This is because this provides them time to carry out their household course as well as being employed with this job. They do not have to work whole days as official job but can carry out their work in daytime where they do not have to spend more than 4-5 hours. Besides engaging in household and kitchen work, it provides them an opportunity to satisfy to upper caste people for repairing and making agriculture tools and other iron tools. The status of Kami women has also changed in due course of time. According to National Dalit Strategy Report (NDSR), presently, some Kami males and females are relatively better educated than other Dalit groups and work as professors, engineers, doctors or employed in various Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) and corporations such as bank, school and hospital.

During focus group discussion among female respondents, it is found that some houses were run by females only as their husbands were idle and retired. It is found that currently they have been more empowered in the community by affiliating in different groups like micro-credit income generation etc. Presently, they do not have to depend on labour work for upper caste farm to generate money. They earn about 20 thousands per year person from different profession.

CHAPTER - VI

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGES AMONG THE KAMIS

The social change is the fundamental alternation in the pattern of culture, social structure behavior and interaction over a period of time. It is also a process by which society becomes something of different while remaining in some respects the same. Some change is occurring throughout Nepal and nowhere as fast as in the Bobang village, Baglung. As many writers have mentioned that no real change in social relation amongst caste can come unless there is economic change first.

As Kamis are the lowest and "untouchable" caste of Hindu society, they live in a homogeneous community outside the city limits but yet area the part of the multiethnic community. They occupy the bottom most rank of the social ladder. They are economically backwards, socially depressed and educationally neglected among the Nepalese population. They are categorized "Pani nachalne ra chhuna nahune jaat" (People with whom high castes cannot drink water and touch them). Though they are the goldsmith of the community they are occupational castes known as ironsmiths and make tools and weapons which are used in cultivation.

Today we are passing within twenty first century. The modern Nepal is facing big changes in terms of life styles, education, attitude and living environment. The *Kamis* of this area are no exception. The socio-political and economic changes in the community directly or indirectly influences on the *Kamis*. After the restoration of democracy and *Loktantra* in 1990 and 2006 respectively, one can see rapid changes in the socio-economic status of the *Kamis*, too. This study has focused on socio-cultural, education and political status of *the Kamis* of Bobang village. In addition,

the *Kamis* of Bobang, Baglung are being socialized in various ways to obtain higher social status and modernized in terms of material life.

Here, an attempt is made to analyze the socio-cultural changes amongst the *Kamis* of Baglung with reviewing various social change factors. Referring to the underlined findings of focus group discussion among *Kamis* people (youth, women and elderly people), interviewing with key informants, observation visits and respondents expressions, the facts are synthesized as described in the following points.

6.1 Modernization among Kamis

The *Kamis* of Bobang village are highly influenced by modernization as they are the inhabitants, near to the market. Every types of development has affected directly to them. Due to modernization including the expansion of visiting, there are many changes, taking place-relating to housing pattern food habits, dressing and other lifestyles as described below. Economic betterment also made their living standard, higher and greater exposures to modernization. Education awareness program is also made them easy. Different research persons are brought out extra standard in the respective society. Numerous field researchers brought awareness in Bobang village. Among the research programs, Tribhuvan University, Central Department of Sociology and Anthropology had also lunched a research program in that village. That program aimed to document their problem to the capital city by making ethnographic profile so that government could give awareness to that respective area.

6.1.1 Change in Housing Patterns and Life Styles

The traditional houses of Kami, without tiled roof, single floor without windows and doors like as previous during 10 years period those have not

been completely gone away. Majority of the houses are modernized as modern house. Broken wall of the houses are seen today because of unawareness of the people of that community. From the field survey it is revealed that out of 25 households, 9 houses are cemented with modern style and 16 houses are made up of stone and mud with straw tile roof. Others are commonly like as upper caste houses with moderate furnishing and decoration as interior, and exterior parts. Besides, that some equipment like *almirah*, wooden bed, CD deck, television and cameras can also be found commonly in their houses. Similarly, every mature male and female has wrist watches. Many households have their separate kitchen parts or room with clean floor and some modern kitchenware like pressure cookers and utensils.

Urbanization gradually entering to the society is one of the reasons for their change in such outlooks and design. Modern type of media is also another factor for this changes. Out of 25 households 14 have radio, television both, 9 have only radio and 2 do not have both radio and television. The media has so much influenced on their lifestyles and living pattern. Similarly, majority of the households have mobile phone in their family.

6.1.2 Change in Food Habits

Up to before five years, Kamis had to survive begging *Punki* (mix of rice, salt and other food) from *Bistas* (persons for whom they are working to make and maintain iron tools). But with the rapid growth of urbanization near and around the village, they are getting various employment opportunities and becoming economically well-being to fulfill basic needs. They spend (especially male) time drinking alcohol and eating varieties of meat. Usually, they eat dal, rice and curry along with meat

(some arranges it occasionally). They use modern instant foods like noodles, bread and tea or snacks as their own choices. Some youth come Burtibang, the local city for shopping and celebrating at restaurant.

6.1.3 Changes in Dressing Habits

Traditionally, Kamis had to wear *Cholo* and *Phariya* for females; and *Daura*, *Suruwal* for males. But due to the course of 10 years period, they started wearing all sorts clothing as per the modern fashion. Women used to wear modern clothes like blouse, midy, Kurta and suruwal; and men used to wear pant, shirt jeans, and hats with modern types of gold ornaments and wrist watches. Nowadays, whether waging to upper castes farm or selling Khukuri or vegetables, they can afford money for clothing and making ornaments what they like to use. To have lipsticks, cream and hair style is also the common for teenagers or youth girls. The respondent Mr. Jan Bahadur Sunar of 22 expressed,

As far as I know, previously, we had no sufficient food and wearing clothes in my family. The higher caste people had used to dominate us while wearing modern dress up and eating food in hotels and restaurants. We used to get only Punki and Khalo from upper castes (Bistas) to eat rice and other food items. Today, I do not feel so because of increased sensitization among us and to other castes as well. Either women or men can use any dress-up or ornaments and there is no barring to have food at hotels and restaurants Presently, every Kamis people have good economic status as compared to previous Daal, Bhat, Tarkari are being common for all. Biscuit, bread and noodles are also consumed for tiffin of children and young too.

10 years ago, we did not have sufficient living room, toilet and drinking water as well as other electronic facilities within entire Kamis community. Now, we have very nice house made-up as modernized types including sufficient wooden rooms. Toilets have been made in each household including of facility of public drinking water tap.

Due to exposure outside the village and effects of current media, above types of changes have been existed especially among the younger generation. Hence the modernization has brought change in the material life of Kamis. Modernization has made their society something different from this, they learn how to maintain the standard of living and fit in modern civilizing society.

6.1.4 Change in Health and Sanitation

Ten years ago, while established a sub-health post within the village there is significant changes took place in health and sanitation aspects. Kami people have also been aware and sensitized in the health and sanitation since that time surroundings of *Kamis* households are clean and safe now. Every households have their toilets as minimum as pit latrine, safe drinking water facilities have been managed by Dalit NGOs for accessing every household. They are using certain dumping cave for collecting all wastages (animal or human). Previously, before 10 years or above, many children did reach to the death from various childhood disease due to lack of proper care and treatment facilities. Today, there are health facilities nearby their community and in the nearest cities as well. They have a good access on immunization, family planning and reproductive health services within the village. It has improved the overall health status of Kamis of this village.

6.1.5 Changing in Discrimination Behaviours in Public Place

Mr. Chandra Lal Kami of 49 focusing about the relief of discrimination between castes says:

I am happy nowadays because I experienced the fact in this age that we are also human being as other castes. My home and entire village is clean, safe and green today. I know that it is due to the effort of new generation. Children of our caste are getting proper schooling these days.

Before 10 years, there was huge discrimination between Kamis and upper castes during worshipping at local temple of lord Ganesh, Shiva and Devi. They were not allowed to enter in the temples to worship along with upper caste people. Currently, there is no discrimination at all. Regarding it ten years ago, there were a practice of *chhoi chhito* in every place if upper caste happened to touch to the Kamis. Now, upper caste people and Kamis drink tea sitting in same bench in the local tea shops. Besides entering into other upper caste's houses, there is no such discrimination and restrictions for Kamis in public places. Hence, the discrimination has been declined in some extent as compared to last 10 years. People of the village areas are more liberal and their attitude is changing day by day. They are realizing the meaning of equality and rights through education and sensitization influenced by different social and political organization and groups.

6.2 Acculturation among Kamis

Currently, Kamis of this study area has no specific and caste specific cultures and customs as they are living in the interaction with Adai, Kayat, Magars and Damai. They have adopted the traditional cultures and values of Chhetris and Bahuns. Due to modernization including increasing trend changing process, nearby the village many changes have

been made in performing various cultures and festivals like Dashain, Tihar, Marriage ceremony, *Pasni*, *Bratabandha* and *Chhewar* comparing to 10 years before. Now, they invite many people including upper castes and put different food menus like *pulao*, meat and other varieties in the parties during performing these events. They have sense of competition celebrating the cultural and social events among each others with adopting new or modern cultures of other caste people. For instance, we can see that they started the practice of blowing *Sankha*, while funeral procession of Kami people since 10 years and above. They are also worshipping in local Ganesh temples and other. Tulasi is planted in front of Kami's houses and daily worshipping household Gods are being a regularly practice among Kami community. Celebrating the festivals like *Gokarna Aunsi* (an eve of respecting father) *Matatirtha Aunsi* (an eve of respecting mother) and *Janai Purnima* (Wearing sacred thread by upper caste Hindus) among Kami community is being common. Those festivals were celebrated only in upper caste Hindus community before 20 years. These all are occurred due to frequent transformation of the cultures through modernization, urbanization and social interactions with other communities.

6.3 Sanskritization among Kamis

The Kamis of Bobang are sanskritized in various ways. They are changing title on family name instead of original. They are adopting upper caste cultures and life style which were not prevalent amongst them in the past 10-20 years. These changes found during the study are described below.

6.3.1 Change in Naming System

There was complexity and hesitation calling with their family name Kami as a title. Nowadays, the train of changing system of their real caste to other as Rayal, Ghimire, Sunar, BK, Gotame, Pokharel and Baudel in

which they feel proud and free of domination. If they are also adopting the surname as used by upper caste people in their surname. Hence, their original family name and surnames also remain as in the citizenship and other official documents. Due to Dalit empowerment and advocacy through different means like media, NGO's activities, local political movement the changes has been made amongst Kami.

6.3.2 Worshipping in Temples and Celebrating Festivals

Twenty years ago, there was hesitation to worship in local temples together with non-dalits. Now, they have no discrimination existed to go and enter into local temples. They organize different cultural events like wedding *ratteuli* (song and dance performed only by female at night), rice eating ceremony i.e. *pasni* as performed by other upper castes. Due to interaction with upper caste people, Kamis have begun to celebrate *Janai Purnima, Gokarne Aaunsi, Matatirtha Aaunsi and Ashar 15* from which they feel so equal as other castes.

6.4 Changes in Socio-Political Aspect of Kami

According to the interview with informants and discussions with key respondents; due to various sensitization and advocacy actions within the Kami community there is increasing political party preference. They have discovered that the lower caste have equal rights in the political system. They are fully aware that all women and men and of course ethnic and low caste groups are equal. The Kamis concept of democracy being freedom to do anything seems to be good as well as bad. Good is in the sense that they now understand their rights. In the past, they were considered low caste people with no civic rights. They had to bear everything giving blamed to destiny. But with the dawn of democracy, they are getting more freedom This freedom also gives negative impact on their attitude. In the name of democracy, immoral activities began to occur frequently especially from the younger generation. Kami

community are aware about the allocation provided in government service sector for them by the state after mass movement II.

They are rarely having agriculture land. Since, time immemorial Kamis have been engaged in lowest paid professional as making agricultural tools and household weapon Khukuri. In the earlier time, some of them used to sell Khukuri in the market and earn money in order to continue their lives. They had to survive depending on only to *Bista* or *Balighare* (work for upper castes to make iron tools, and get certain food items) and remain in extreme poverty. Now, the faster growth of urbanization has created them much employment opportunities, the speeding up the process of urbanization nearby the village is providing many more types of opportunities including mechanical and iron works. Some of them are engaging with transportation, driving and overseas employment as well. They are also working in private business of making gold and silver jewelries in Burtibang, the local city and sometimes they go to Baglung municipality. Basically, they earn money only by selling Khukuris and waging to spend for fulfilling basic needs even some have income from other sources like overseas employment, jewelries business and driving or mechanical works. The economic status of Kamis of this study area is generally sufficient to survive with fulfilling basic needs. However, there is still need to transform their traditional into modern occupation opportunities that would benefit them more to uplift the economic status as well as making prosperous family and community.

Kamis of Bobang are still deprived of education. They still relate education with economy which is the main cause for educational setback and the other reasons being early entrance into married life and lack of role models. There is positive attitude forming towards the importance of better education. The good education symbolizes higher status within the society.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

7.1 Summary

This study was carried out in the Kami community of Bobang village, who are Dalit untouchable caste of hilly area. The title of this study was named as “Socio-Cultural Status of Kami: A Case Study of Bobang Village of Baglung District”. The major objective of the study was also same as mentioned in title i.e. to find the socio-cultural status and changes presently happening among the Kamis. To fulfill the major objective, three different objectives were set for the study and designed research methods with the basis of these objectives.

This study is based on both descriptive as well as analytical research design. The study includes all household of the study area as the "universe" of the study. Quantitative and qualitative information were gathered from Kami community of Bobang using census method through frequent field observation visits, focus group discussion, structured interviews, case studies and interview with key informants as well.

The theoretical Framework of modernization, acculturation and sanskritization were applied in order to measure the socio-cultural changes and status among Kamis. While analyzing the qualitative and quantitative information about the socio-cultural changes amongst them are mainly based on the change that has taken place after the restoration of democracy in 2046 B.S. The Kamis an occupational caste of the community live in hill and Terai of the country. The traditional occupation of Kamis has been to make and repair iron tools of upper castes and selling *Khukuris* (a big knife). Majorities of the Kamis of

Bobang village is employed Sunar or Bishwokarma in the community for making iron tools, *Khukuris* and other metals. There are 25 numbers of Kami children who have joined in local government school; only 6 have been continuing their education. It is found that most of the Kamis want to stop to continue the education of their children at the age of 12-15 years due to various reason like poor economic condition, support to traditional occupation and earlier marriage of girls. In the views expressed by Kamis that *education is just for economic development*. They manage to get job without education. However, they have started to continue their children's education either joining in boarding or local government schools for better future.

Comparatively, health status of them is being improves gradually; the study found that most of the Kami people used to go nearest health posts while having any health complications. They have been using safe drinking water for personal and community hygiene with modern toilet facilities. It is due to their economic and social enlistment as well supporting from government and non-government institutions. Their major occupation of Kami people of the study area is traditional. Out of total respondents, 20% have continued their traditional occupation so far and rests are changing into new one. Making iron tools and offering foods and other basic needs from *Bistas* as a return of it is still continued even today. Due to faster rate of modernization this profession is now going in declined position. As many young Kami people do not like to this profession, it's been continued only by some adult people. Although anybody can continue the profession without formal or informal education. Youths are now turned into another profession like overseas employment, driving, mechanical works and construction. However, still their major source of income is selling *Khukuris* in the nearest bazaar

Burtibang and Baglung Municipality. The primary source of income is traditional occupation which is the major income source for that community. Secondary source of earning is daily wages, overseas employment and driving/mechanics respectively. These days, most of them have income as minimum as NRs. 1000 per month. Women get money from seasonal business of vegetables and Fruits. The contribution of women in household income is significant in Kami community. They earn about 15 thousands per year per person from different profession. As they are non-agriculture people, all expenditure are consumed mainly in their daily expenditures. They also (especially the male Kami people) spend money in alcohol and gambling. Very few have saved money. Some of the women of the village also take alcohol. From the survey, it is found that the occupational shift of Kamis is very high. Only few low class and middle age people and family have continued traditional professional but most of them have already turned their occupation into new one.

In terms of house ownership, out of 25 Kami families, 16 (64%) respondents live in their old houses and the remaining 9 (36%) live in the cemented house. However, most of the Kami people do not have their own agriculture land. They collect foods e.g. rice, maize, wheat and barley from the Bista's houses. Among respondents, only 12% have sufficient food for living.

Their participation on political sector is very low as they are still dominated by elite upper caste people. As of today, only two have been elected or nominated as ward member in the village. Political awareness in one hand taught them to raise voice for their rights and in other hand, brought fraction within their own community as they are followers of three major parties of Nepal. They are being used only in voting but after

this they have not being contacted by political leaders. Due to various sensitization and advocacy actions within the Kami community, there is increasing political party preference. They have discovered that the lower Caste have equal rights in the political system. They are fully aware that all women and men and of course ethnic and low caste groups are equal.

Due to modernization, there are many changes taking place relating to housing pattern, food habits, dressings and other lifestyles. Economic betterment also made their living standard higher and greater exposures to modernization. Due to sanskritization, they are adopting upper castes cultures and life system which were not prevalent amongst them in the past 10-20 years. They are changing title on family name instead of original. They have different sub- castes like Sunar, Bishwokarma, Ghimire, B.K., Gotame and Rasaili. Due to modernization and sanskritization; lifestyles, naming system and cultural behaviours have been changing relatively than they have their own before. Today, they want to show as equal as other castes in every aspects of life. Kamis of this study area has no specific and caste specific cultures and customs as they are living in the interaction with Brahman, Newar, Kumal, Adai, Kayat, Magar and Damai. They have adopted the traditional cultures and values of Brahman, Adai and Magar. Due to modernization, including increasing trend of urbanization nearby the village, many changes have been made in performing various cultures and festivals like Dashain, Tihar, Marriage ceremony, Pasni, Bratabandha and Chhewar.

Though they are untouchable; they are still playing key role in making and maintaining iron tools in the community those will be used for the far fling. With open political system and increased continuous advocacy against discrimination of Dalits, the age-old biasness and discrimination is declining significantly with changing liberal attitude of other caste

people. They are now gradually getting better social status than before. In other words, they are modernized and socialized in terms of socio-cultural setup and material life. It can be seen as modernized and socialized with respect to taking place with improvement in housing patterns, equipping of latest luxury goods, changing dressing habits, better means to good diets and changed vision made from other caste people. Thus, with more exposure to latest media and urban cultures, they are slowly trying to assimilate out in a wider circle, which is evident from the fact that high caste people also participate frequently in their feast and festivals. In this way, the changes are taking place in their community might have for better or for worse, it only time will predict.

7.2 Conclusion

It is a very difficult work to study about social status and change in short time. Nepal is multi-diverse and multi-ethnic country having various tradition and cultures. Separating a mix of different varieties and customs among every community has its own complexity. However, pre-setup research design and cleared questionnaire has helped to collect fact and figures during the study. To meet the study objectives, the study is tried to find quantitative and qualitative information as far as possible from and within the study area.

The Kamis of Bobang are going through socio-cultural changes. These changes can be attributed to better in cultural and economic opportunities, open political atmosphere, exposure to outside world through media. Rapid growth of modernization has made their occupation in transitional stage. They are modernized and socialized in many aspects. They regard themselves as educationally and economically well off comparing to other hill Dalits of Nepal. As they relate education with economy, there

has been a number of dropouts from school but awareness of good education slowly rising amongst younger generation. Discrimination is also in line with declination with changes occurring in the attitude of other people. They are certainly more conscious in the political situation of Nepal as well.

Kamis of this study are relatively backward in every aspect of social, culture and education. Moreover, the education among Kamis has two dimensional effects, first change in attitudes and behavior within themselves and second; change in the, intercommunity culture and discrimination. For both conditions, their education definitely plays a vital role. As a political group they should be more organized. The participation of female in political groups is nil, so there is a need to empower women about socio-political issues. Their socio-cultural changes should have moved their socio-economic status in a vertical direction rather than in a horizontal direction. They should regard education as a door to higher social status rather than as a means of better economic growth.

Hence, it can be said that the study could have get the answers of all questions which were raised before, setting objectives for the study.

7.2 Recommendation

On the basis of findings, some suggestion are made for the future betterment for the study among Kamis of the Bobang village, Baglung. They are:

- 1 It is seemed that there is increasing trend of switching traditional occupation into new one among Kami people of the study to get more income in order to adjust within modern environment.

Various direct and indirect factors have affected for that type of changes. So, it is better to carry out the study with naming the title as “Socio-Cultural Impact among Kami Community due to Switch-off the Traditional Occupation.”

- 2 It is felt that the life of Kami people of this study area have been changing day by day due to exposure on modernization as well as urbanization. There is not available of such study conducted yet among the Kami community.
- 3 To reduce the practice of discrimination and untouchability between Dalits and non-Dalits, they should first attempt to reduce same behaviours among their own extend human rights education and advocacy focusing to this aspect.
- 4 While going into the depth of the study, there are still needed basic physical, financial and humanitarian supports from the government and non-government sectors in order to uplift and bring Kami people in major development continuum.
- 5 The study shows only elite groups affiliate to major political parties have used Kami people to complete their short self interest in political mainstream. Dalits Kamis should unite themselves as an organized force and raised voice or should acquire their participation in all political and administrative process of the nation at central and local levels.

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APPENDIX I
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

- 1. Respondents Name:** **Household No.:**
 Age: Sex:
 Marital Status: Ward No:

2. Family Details:

| S.N. | Name | Sex (M/F) | Age | Marital Status | No. of children | Education | Occupation |
|------|------|--------------|-----|-------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | | | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | | | |
| 6 | | | | | | | |
| 7 | | | | | | | |

3. Family Background:

- a) How many people are living in your family?
 Female [] Male [] Total []
- b) Who involve in decision-making in the family?
 Mother [] Father []
- c) How is women treated in your family?
 Respected [] Stigmatized []
- d) Is there any discrimination between son and daughter in your family?
 Yes [] No []

- e) In which family do you prefer to live in, joint or in single?
- f) What types of ornaments and dress wearing is followed by women in your family?

4. Educational Status

| Male | | Female | | Total | |
|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|
| Literate | Illiterate | Literate | Illiterate | Literate | Illiterate |
| | | | | | |

- a) Do you write and read?

Yes [] No []

- b) What level of education facilities have in your village?

Primary [] Lower secondary [] Secondary []

- c) Do you send your children in school?

Yes [] No []

If no, what is the problem behind it?

Economic problem [] Social problem [] Physical problem []

- d) Do you send only son in school or send your daughter too?

Son [] Daughter [] Both []

If you don't send daughter, what is the reason for it?

Social Reason [] Economic Reason []

- e) Is there any social discrimination at schools relating to castes?

Yes [] No []

- f) Have you and your family members ever participated in non-formal education class?

| | |
|------------|--|
| Yes (why?) | |
| No (why?) | |

5. Socio-Cultural Status:

- a) What religion do you belong to?

Christian [] Hindu [] Buddha [] Others []

- b) Is there division of title in your caste or not?

Yes [] No []

- c) Do you believe in Butta-Pretta or Dhami-Jhankri?

Yes [] No []

If yes, what's the reason?

Social [] Religious []

- d) In which place do you prefer to go when the person feels ill?

Dhami-Jhankri []

Doctors/Health posts []

Hospitals/Medicals []

- e) What types of facilities do you have to cook food?

Gas stove [] Firewood []

- f) Which food do you prefer to cook and eat in your daily meal?

Rice, dal and curry [] Rice pudding []

g) Do you cook other additional foods expect above said, in your meal? If yes, what types of foods you add daily and occasionally?

i) Daily

ii) Occasionally

h) Do you organize party in any occasion?

Yes [] No []

If yes, what types of food menu do you put in that occasion?

Vegetable items [] Non-vegetable items []

i) Would you invite to other castes as well in that occasion?

Yes [] No []

If not, why?

Caste Hierarchy [] Untouchability []

6. Cultures Performing during Birth and Death

a) Which cultures do you adopt in the time of child born?

Modern Culture [] Tradition Culture []

b) Whether a tradition of baptism is practiced in your culture or not?

Yes [] No []

If yes, how many days it is completed?

10 Days [] 11 Days []

c) Is there inter-caste marriage in your family?

Yes [] No []

If yes, to whom?

Upper Caste [] Lower Caste []

- d) What is the tradition of finishing a dead body? Either it is fired or burled in bunker?
- e) How is the tradition of homage for dead person such as *Kriya*, *Masik*, and *Barakhi*? How long it is carried out?
- f) How about the practice of *Shradha* (a ritual of Annual tribute of dead-person) in your family? Who facilitates it as a *purohit*?

Upper caste [] Lower caste [] Own caste []

7. Socio-economic Status

- a) What is your traditional occupation? Is it your primary occupation?
- b) What is the present condition of your traditional occupation?
- c) Do you satisfy in this occupation? If no, why?
- d) What is your main income source?

Traditional occupation [] Farming [] Job [] Other []

- e) How much do you earn from this?
- f) Do you have a land for agriculture farming or not?
- g) Do you have your own land or not? If yes, how much?
- h) Which food do you produce more from farming? Whether it is sufficient or exceed or less to your family?
- i) Where you sell or distribute the excess of human products?

- j) How many animals or birds you have in your home?
 Cow.... Buffalo..... Goat
- Chicken..... Duck..... Pigeon.....
- k) Do you have following items?
 ➤ Radio
 ➤ Color or Black & White TV
 ➤ Motorcycle or Bicycle
 ➤ Wristwatch
 ➤ Others
- l) Do you get following facilities?
 ➤ Electricity /Biogas
 ➤ Drinking water taps
 ➤ Modern toilet
 ➤ Transportation
- m) Would you like to tell about how is the changing pattern in present context? In which area is changing most?
 Life styles [] Occupation [] Food [] Dressing []

8. Mention here if any suggestions and recommendations:

.....

.....

.....

Thank you!

- m) Do they send-only-son or send daughter as well in school? If they don't send daughters? What's the reason for not sending them in the school?
- n) Is there any social discrimination you have experienced at schools relating to castes?
- o) Do you know any non-formal education class had been ever conducted in the Kami community? If yes, how long and how was their participation in such education?
- p) Are you affiliated working now in any organization or institution in the society?
- i. Guthi
 - ii. Social organization (NGOs, CBOs and Groups)
 - iii. If affiliated, why? Specify the reason
- q) Are there any changes have been made in Kami's socio-economic life due to these NGOs work?
- r) What reason would you like to think for being behind Kamis as compared to other ethnic-castes?
- s) Are you observing any significant changes have been made among Kami people nearly during 10 years period? Could you point out these changes specifically?
- t) Why these changes have been occurred in every socio-culture, economics and educational aspects of the society?
- u) What are the causes behind it?
- Radio [] Television [] Cinema []
- Social awareness [] Political awakening []
- If others; specify

Appendix III

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Key Points:

- Present Social, Economic, Educational and Gender Status
- Political Participation
- Religious and Cultural practices
- Organization and Harmonization
- Discrimination between Dalit and non-Dalit and among Dalits
- Socio-cultural condition of past/present Situation, changes and factors for change .

Recommendations and suggestions:

Profile of participants and attendance:

Date:

| No. | Name | Sex (M/F) | Age | Education | Occupation | Dalit/Non Dalit | Signature |
|-----|------|--------------|-----|-----------|------------|--------------------|-----------|
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

Minute of the meeting:

Appendix IV

A. List of Respondents

| Name | Ward No. |
|-----------------------|----------|
| 1. Indra Lal Kami. | 5 |
| 2. Aash Maya B.K. | 4 |
| 3. Aash Maya Kami | 4 |
| 4. Lakhu Kami. | 5 |
| 5. Dhana Maya Sunar | 5 |
| 6. Gori Sunar | 6 |
| 7. Tham Bahadur Sunar | 6 |
| 8. Chandra Lal Kami | 6 |
| 9. Jan Bahadur Sunar | 6 |
| 10. Aashi Man Kami | 4 |
| 11. Sita B.K. | 5 |
| 12. Tul Bahadur B.K. | 4 |

B. List of Key Informants

| Name | Social Position | Ward No. |
|-----------------------|----------------------|----------|
| 1. Aashi Man Kami | Elderly person | 6 |
| 2. Lok Bahadur Kunwar | Former VDC Secretary | |
| 3. Dhan Bahadur Adai | Social Worker | 4 |
| 4. Ker Bahadur B.K. | VDC Member | 6 |
| 5. Bhakta Ram B.K. | Social Worker | 4 |
| 6. Harka Man Kami | Purohit of Kami | 6 |

C. Members of focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Mix Group:

- | | | |
|----|------------------|------------------|
| 1. | Sita B.K. | Kami Women |
| 2. | Tul Bahadur B.K. | Kami Youth/adult |
| 3. | Dirga Raj Kami | Elderly person |
| 4. | Suman Sunar | Kami Youth |
| 5. | Mansara Kami | Kami Women |
| 6. | Kumar B.K. | Social Worker |
| 7. | Indra Lal Kami | Elderly Person |

Women Group:

- | | | |
|----|----------------|-----------|
| 1. | Kamala B.K. | Married |
| 2. | Gori Sunar | Married |
| 3. | Gothi Kami | Married |
| 4. | Om Maya Kami | Unmarried |
| 5. | Gita B.K. | Married |
| 6. | Karmati Kami | Married |
| 7. | Puni Kala Kami | Married |

Appendix V

Photographs



Researcher Interivew with Respondent



Bobang Village



**Seasonal Migration from Upper Belt Dhorpatan to The Lower Belt
Bobang Village**



Historical Place of Bobang Village