

**SOCIO-CULTURAL CHANGE AMONG THE THARUS
OF PARSA DISTRICT**

(A Case Study of Nichuta VDC, Ward No. 4 and 5, Parsa)

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to

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of Humanities and Social Sciences in Partial**

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for the Master of Arts in

Sociology

Submitted By

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

This is to certify that Mr. Sandip Chuadhary has completed this dissertation entitled “**Socio-Cultural Change among the Tharus of Parsa District**” under my supervision and guidance. It is the candidate’s original work and presents useful results and findings in the concerned field.

I recommend the dissertation for acceptance for the partial fulfillment of requirement for the Master’s Degree in Sociology, Tribhuvan University.

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CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Nepal is a country of wonderful creation of nature. It is a land of marvelous mountain, villages, green terraced hillsides and amazing diversity of flora and fauna. It is also a country of different castes, tribes and ethnic groups. Each ethnic group and caste people have his/her own specific culture, language, social norms, social organization, customs, myths, moral, values and traditions. Nepali society presents a composite picture of various national cultures representing all three ecological regions: the mountain, the hill and the terrain.

Nepal is a country of multilingual, multi-religious, multiethnic and multi-caste society. There are altogether 61 ethnic groups and 125 caste groups throughout the country (CBS 2011). Among them Tharu is the second largest ethnic group of Nepal and the largest ethnic group of the Terai. The total population of Tharus according to the National Census of 2011 is 17,37,470 which constitutes 6.6% of the total population of the country.

Tharus are indigenous people of Nepal. Indigenous in the sense of being the first inhabitants of an area. They are mostly ancient, simple, honest and backward community. Their main occupation is farming since time immemorial. They live in 24 districts of Terai and Inner Terai (Chaudhary,1999:1).

“Tharus are innocent, shy and relatively timid people. Some of the earliest settlements of Tharus were deep in the forest isolated from other ethnic groups. They have been exploited by government authorities in the past and still today lesser they are out maneuvered by surroundings of non-Tharus. Tharus are not good in business and home economics. They are often in debt since the grain they produce is frequently used to brew alcoholic drinks. More clever persons from hills lend them money to purchase food and then continue to compound the interest. Eventually the Hillman acquires the Tharus land and the Tharus is relegated to landless status” (Pyakurel, 1982).

From the eastern parts of Nepal comprising Jhapa, Morang, Sunsari, Saptari, through Bara, Parsa, Chitwan in the center, Rupendehi, Kapilvastu in the west and Dang, Banke, Bardiya, Kailali, Kanchanpur in the Mid West and Far West, these people are found and have been started to be the aboriginals of these regions by many scholars. Tharus are considered among the oldest groups of people to inhabit the Terai plains of Nepal and they usually live closer to the heavily forested area (Bista, 1980).

The law of nature is such thing, nothing can remain permanent. Everything in this world either natural or artificial change with the time and situations. For Example evolution of earth, evolution of living beings, climatic and seasonal change, change in human society and culture and so on.

The process of social and cultural change evolves through some processes such as natural evolution, planned change, and change after evolution in society. The first is the natural through which changes occur in various aspects of society and culture naturally. In this process, there are phenomenal changes in all aspects of the planet earth such as physical, biological, social, cultural, etc.

On the other side, there are planned type of social and cultural change in which various specific attempts are made by people in the field of social structure, family, marriage and kinship system, material and non-material culture aspects, tools and technologies, knowledge and skills, education and economy, politics and many more and promoting culture and civilization.

Social and cultural change is regular as well as continuous process. However, some changes are beneficial but some are harmful to society. Behind this natural and inevitable process, there are many visible as well as invisible factors to lead a society in changing form. In this context, Tharu's society and culture alone can't be far away from this fact. Drastic changes can be seen in various aspects of Tharu culture and society since last few decades.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Changing pattern of life style and livelihood is one of the most burning issue of Nepalese society in this modern era. However, the problems of socio-cultural and

socio-economic changes of Tharu people have been increasing dramatically due to the process of modernization and influence of other castes.

Similarly, Tharu people are equally responsible to disappear the Tharu culture and traditions. Tharu people have been exploited through generations and centuries. But they could not protest against all these exploitations due to their simplicity. Likewise, total social, cultural and traditional behaviors or way of life of these people are changing gradually, with taking into consideration about this reality, the present study aims to tracing the Tharu living style with major emphasis on finding out the socio-cultural change and economic changes. Tharus have modified their traditional life style. They have faced problems in the new setting. So, this study will attempt to find out the attitude towards the present way of life and problem they have been facing in new setting.

In this context, it is necessary to find out the root cause for the change in the Tharu society. Although they have changed their traditional occupation, their economic condition is still the same as it was in the past. It is to be studied as to why such condition is prevailing. Moreover, the problem of the study is to find out:

- I. Is the Tharu people's present socio-economic status similar to their ancestors?
- II. To what extent Tharu society in Parsa has undergone change?
- III. What is the factor of change?
- IV. To what extent their organizations, clans, family and marriage system have changed?

So the main problem of the present study is to seek answer of the above- mentioned questions.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Generally, this study objects to find out socio-cultural change of Tharu community of Nichuta VDC. Particularly this study has the following objectives.

- i.) To analyze the present socio-economic status of the Tharus of study area.
- ii.) To study the socio-cultural change in the various sphere of Tharu people.

- iii.) To find out the factors responsible for the rapid socio-cultural change in Tharu community.

1.4 Rational of the Study

A fundamental characteristic of Nepal is the ethnical diversity. Different ethnic groups are living in different regions of Nepal and they have their own cultural identity, which differ from each other.

Different scholars have conducted research on the ethnic groups of Nepal such as Magar, Sherpa, Rai, Dhimal, Satar, and Tharu etc. in many aspects (economic, educational, health, cultural, and so on). But very little study has been done in socio-cultural change of this ethnic group.

The study area is Nichuta VDC of Parsa district of Southern Nepal. The rational of the selection of the study area is as follows: The Tharu people living in this area are not studied by any researchers till now. The researcher is also the permanent resident of the same VDC, which help to establish the rapport for deeper study of the Tharu people.

Hence, this study has tried to provide an ethnographic description and socio-cultural change in family, kinship, marriage, life-cycle ceremonies, religion and economic condition and so on of Tharu people of the study area. This study tries to trace out the factors, which are responsible for the socio-cultural change among the Tharu people and it makes easier to do comparative study between Tharu communities and other community.

The findings of the study will be helpful for that person who are interested for further study of Tharu people and those who are interested to accumulate knowledge about this group and will help them to preserve their culture. As the culture of the Tharu has significant role in the national culture and nation building activities. If we neglect the Tharu culture and society a great constraints would occur in the national integration of the country. From this study, it will be helpful to adopt the positive aspect of socio-economic behavior and to give up the negative aspect of such behavior. Moreover, findings of the research will be helpful to policy makers to formulate appropriate strategies for making the program more effective and fruitful.

CHAPTER - II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Origin of Tharus

There are many controversies about the origin of Tharus. Scholars have to be able to come to a definite and clear conclusion regarding the origin of Tharus. Some scholars have derive their origin through etymologies and some tried to trace their origin through a legend.

The Tharus are probably the oldest and original inhabitants of Terai. They usually live very close to the dense forest areas. A great number of the villages of Tharuwan are found in small clearing in the middle of the forest itself. Most of the large compact Tharu settlements are found in tropical malarial areas, infested with wild animals such as elephants, rhinoceros, bears, tigers and poisonous snakes. (Bista, 1967)

Physically and especially in facial features, the Tharus look like they stem from mongoloid stock. They speak an Aryan language. In ancient times the Tharus may have accepted Buddhism but later they were influenced by Hinduism (Pyakural 1982). Quoting from Nesfield view, Rajaure (1977) pointed out the Tharus with slightly Mongoloid featured to intermarriages, which have taken place over two to three generation. He sees them as strictly Indian and no connection whatsoever with the Nepalese origin. Risley and Knowles (1982) also found the mongoloid features predominant among Tharus.

A legend indicates their origin from Rajasthan in northwestern India. According to this legend, Tharus came from the Thar Desert of Rajasthan in India and hence the name Tharus. Most of them sincerely believe that they came from Rajasthan in India at the time of the Islamic invasions, (Bista 1980). Tharu who lived in Chitawan are called Chitaune Tharu. They have patriarchal system, which is different from the Tharus of western Nepal. According to old persons, they are the descendents of Rajput Chhettri.

When Muslim invaders captured Rajputana and murdered men and women of royal courts, the princess and many other royal women attendants fled away into the forest

of Terai. The royal women living inside forest for many years accepted their male servants as a new husband, the offspring of these Rajput women and their low caste servants became Tharus. Decedents of these Rajput women that were born out of the liaisons between the Rajput women and their servants giving birth to the breed known as the Tharu (Gautam and Thapa;1994). This derivation seems to be a pure hypothesis, which serves only trace their point of origin to the south.

Of all the ethnic groups that form the Nepalese nationality the Tharus are one. Though they are one of the most primitive races inhabiting Nepal, nothing can be said with historical accuracy as regards their origin. Their origin is still obscure, whatever theories may have been advanced as regards their origin, there is no doubt that they are the aborigines of Nepal. (Shrestha and Singh, 1987)

2.2 Socio-economic Status

Tharus, in the early days were not interested in holding land registered in their own name, due to the absence of cash. They were most interested in cultivating barren or virgin land, for which they did not have to pay revenue for a certain period. Later they again moved on in search of such new land. Tharus who had private registered land sold the land whenever possible at a cheap price and moved further west (Bardia, Kailali) to cultivate new land, for the same season. (Rajaure1977)

Pyakuryal (1982) had carried out his fieldwork in the eastern Chitwan; the main concern of his study was to explore how variabilities in settlement pattern affect the process of integration and economic modernization of farm people. The research were focused on four Tharu villages that present different location and compositional situations in the Chitwan district of Nepal. One among the two major findings of this study, which differs from what generally thought is that village location (centrality) is a more important condition factor reinforcing the manifestations of ethnicity than is the ethnic composition of the village (Homogeneity/diversity). It means that households in centrality located villages (irrespective of their homogeneity/diversity) are too more isolated areas-as the finding of the study tells.

Tharus are by traditional peasant farmers, some of them are rich landlords and few, in the east Terai, have successfully taken up business. But a great majority of them are

very hard-working tenant cultivators whose methods of cultivation in the central and western Terai are very primitive judging by the general standard prevalent in the plains. (Bista 1967)

They have a deep love of the land. Their agricultural way life has kept them isolated from the outside world of their own localities. But in general they migrate from one place to another in search of better agricultural land. (Gurung, 1994:86)

2.3 Socio-cultural Change

Land and social change in Nepal is a study of the changing relation between members of an indigenous tribal population in Himalayan region and the Hindus who have entered their region during the past two centuries, following its incorporation into the kingdom of Nepal (Caplan 1970).

Guneratne (1994) studied about Tharu class and concluded that the Tharu groups came increasingly into contact with each other as forests were cleared and networks of communication established continued to reproduce themselves as societies and moral communities distinct from one another, the elites began to reconstitute themselves as new sub- units of social reproduction. They established marriage ties with their class fellows in other groups, then came to share symbolic forms based on a common education and assimilation to Nepalese culture and their material culture and styles of consumption began to diverge from that of the poorer strata within their local societies, modernization, in other words, acted to homogenize the upper levels of Tharu society.

The Tharu are spread out in the Terai region and their rituals, customs, beliefs are not exactly alike as has been seen from the preceding matter, but today, they are beginning to change for the better and are getting a bit more organized among themselves with the development pace of the world growing faster. Today, these Tharu people are gradually merging into the mainstream and applying medical and educational ideas into their long standing and stagnant socio-cultural structure (Gautam *et.al.* 1994).

Shrestha and Singh writes: the different places in which they have settled have had some influence on their language and their tribal characteristics: the language and the

ways of living of the Tharus in Rautahat, for instance, are some what different from those of the Tharus living in Morang in eastern Nepal and Bardiya in western Nepal.

Modernization is one of the major factors of the socio-cultural change. Modernization depends on the involvement of technique, fresh invention, accelerated modes of production and rejuvenated standard of living. Modernization is the result of technological changes. Some factors impressing on social changes are advances in agricultural technologies, improved varieties of seeds, cattle, fertilizer and labor saving mechanical devices. Sanskritization is a process by which lower caste people imitate higher caste's ways of life in order to obtain the privileges enjoyed by the latter. This system has, however, been so popular in Nepal and they have accepted it in a different way of life (Prasain, 1998).

Due to the infiltration of people from all directions a prosperous community began to grow and people as the different background of languages, culture and ethnicity began to develop here a common life style, with a common language and culture. This perhaps accelerated the process of Nepalization much faster than at the initial phase. The process of Nepalization in the Terai began with the setting of hill people in that region. The process of Nepalization in the Terai was vehemently opposed by the more sophisticated plain Hindu culture of Terai, but the plain tribal of Terai have yielded to the presence of aggressive hill culture which have converted them into a Hindu follower (Upadhyay, 1999).

2.4 Festivals and Life Cycle

Festivals, religion and social customs are major aspects of socio-cultural and economic life of the Tharus. Their ceremonial customs as they practice, provide them a sense of confidence, comfort and sense of socio-religious security, social feeling and social solidarity. In the meantime the unproductive expenses in such ceremonial customs increase their indebtedness (Panthi, 1998).

Sharma (1985) has done the anthropological study of festivals of Tharu in Dang and conclude that Tharu have their own type of culture. Festivals of Tharu are a part of Tharu culture. Due to the contact with other outside people as well as Hindu immigrants from hill Tharu culture has been highly influenced by Hindu culture.

Their festivals have socio-cultural importance and have undergone some significant changes. For e.g. food habit, dress patterns, way of observing various festivals and way of living.

Tharu have customs and traditions of celebrating the festivals and enjoying them. Tharu celebrate Dashain, Tihar, Phagu Purnima, Maghi Sankranti, Tij etc. Maghi festival is the most important festival of Tharu. In this festival, they do not work before three or four days for the celebration of Maghi festivals. Only they make drink and enjoy in that festival. They eat a lot of varieties of food. Some Tharus take a fast on that festival they do not take anything in Maghi festival who are in fast. The whole night they dance and sing. *Maghi* festival take place nearly five days. *Phagu Purnima* festival is held from the *Falgun Purnima*. They do not work in a whole periods of festival. Tharus man and women drink a lot of wine. They spray color in that festival with each other. Tharus male start to sing and female start to dance. In the early morning they bath in the river and go to worship in the field in the day of *Hari Sayani Eka Dashi*. They pray to god for good harvest. They pray to earth, dig with a spade and worship to god that day they do not plough. Their oxen are free. They believe that if they plough by oxen on the next birth they would be the same (Chhetri, 1998).

Bista (1967) writes: Tharu marriage is monogamous and patrilocal. Most marriages are early, are arranged by the parents of the couple concerned and are always within the tribe. The marriage partner can be anybody within the tribe except members of the same exogamous '*gotra*' unit. There is small regional variation in the basic marriage patterns. Among people of modest means there is also the practice of exchange marriage. Families concerned decide to exchange brides for their sons. By doing this, both families can cut down the cost of gifts, presents, dowries, and other expenses.

Tharus, in general, practice their own tribal religion which consists of worshiping a number of spirits and some Hindu deities which have been incorporated. Tharus in the east Terai, who have been living in closer contact with high caste Hindus, employ Brahman priests to perform a number of Hindu religious ceremonies. Brahmin priests are also employed to conduct wedding and other domestic '*Puja*' ceremonies.

Almost all the Tharus living in the eastern districts of Sarlahi, Mahottari, Saptari, and Morang, cremate their dead while most of those in the middle and western district,

bury them. As with all other societies in Nepal, the Tharu community is undergoing tremendous changes. There is a wave of reform among educated young Tharus. They have changed their food habits, reformed their religious practices and introduced modern education. There is Tharu organization known as the Tharu welfare society, which provides hostels in Birganj for school children and students of both sexes. It has also made an effort to publish information about Tharus. This society encourages education among the Tharus of the interior regions and teaches them clean habits, such as not keeping chickens and pigs inside the house. Some have given up pork emulating the habits of high caste Hindus.

CHAPTER - III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Selection of the Study Area

The present study is conducted in Nichuta VDC of Parsa district. This VDC is located in the Terai region. Nichuta VDC is one among 82 VDCs of this district and one sub Metropolitan City (Birganj) of Parsa district. Nichuta VDC is situated in the Western part of Parsa district. It is located 24 kilometers North-west direction from its headquarter Birganj. This is the nearest market and town from Nichuta VDC. Its political boundaries are Deurbana and Paterwa Sugauli VDCs in the east, Jagarnathpur VDC in the west, Shankar Sharaiya VDC in the north and Auraha VDC in the south. According to 2011 census, total population of this VDC is 6,620(3,363 males and 3,257 female) and total number of household is 1,060. This study is carried out in ward no.4 and 5 of Nichuta VDC. Total population of the ward is 1,600 and total number of household is 214. Most of the households belong to Tharu community.

3.2 Research Design

Mainly this dissertation is concerned on the socio-cultural practices and economic aspect of the Tharu community of studied area. It is difficult to express the cultural practices with the statistical parameters. Hence the design is prepared on the statistical as well with descriptive and analytical basis. Therefore, this study is descriptive because it has attempted to describe the natural conditions of study area, the cultural process and change in different sphere with an emphasis on life.-cycle ceremonies. And, this study is also based on analytical perspectives because it makes attempt to examine the process of socio-cultural change of the Tharu people of Nichuta VDC.

3.3 Sampling Procedure

The study is both analytical and descriptive in nature. It analyses many aspects of socio-economic condition and socio-cultural change systematically and explains them in context of rural societies. The total household of this ward is 285 out of which 190

households belong to Tharu. Among them all the 190 households of Tharus are taken as a sample household for data collection.

3.4 Nature and Sources of Data

The study is based on the primary and secondary data but most of the data used in this study are primary in nature. The primary data is collected through various methods e.g. interview, observation, household survey etc. Some data is collected through secondary resources.

3.5 Methods of Data Collection

Each and every successful result of study always depends upon its methods, which are used for data collection. Therefore, for each study, the data collection method always plays the significant role for reliable information. Present study adopts fieldwork method and the techniques of data collection are interview, questionnaire and participant observation etc.

3.5.1 Primary Data Collection

The primary data have been collected from the field by different methods which are described below.

A. Questionnaire

The structured questionnaires have been used for quantitative and qualitative data collection. The basic socio-economic data such as population structure, ethnic composition, land holding etc. are collected through structured questionnaire.

B. Interview

Both structured and unstructured interview has been used to collect data. Structured interview has been used to get the specific answers of specific questions about the Tharu people. Likewise unstructured interview has been used to collect data about the history of their culture, tradition and customs of the past and the present change of socio- cultural life of Tharu people. This technique was equally used to collect the people's attitude towards the change. In addition to this, it has also been used to collect data about ethnical history, process of change in life ceremonies, rites and rituals.

C. Key Informant Interview

Some of the primary information has been obtained through key informant interview for their historical background, present practice and its effect. The key informants are ex VDC chairman, old peoples, local school teacher, chairman of the mother group, a member of Nari Bachhat Samuha etc.

3.5.2 Secondary Data Collection

The secondary data were collected from village profile, district profile, organization's documents, different books, journals, research reports and other relevant documents, literature and publications related of the study topic.

3.6 Data Analysis and Presentation

Simple statistical tools are used for quantitative data such as percentage and ratio and descriptive method is used for qualitative data collected through various methods in the field. The analyzed data are presented in Table.

3.7 Limitation of the Study

Every study has its limitations. Likewise, the present study is also not an exception. This study is preparing to fulfill the degree's dissertation paper. So time factor and budget limits it.

This study tries to focus the socio-cultural change of the Tharu community of Nichuta VDC in Parsa district. So, it is a small study that may not represent the socio-cultural change obtaining among the Tharu community of the other area. This study is limited only in Nichuta VDC, ward no.4 and 5. In this VDC, total households of Tharu people are 190 and all the households are taken as sample households in order to have correct information. But still this is very small section of the whole Tharu community of Nepal. Most of the information in this study is based on the data collected by the researcher.

The major focus of this study is socio-economic and socio-cultural change of a Tharu community of Nichuta. Thus, other castes and ethnic groups are strictly excluded.

CHAPTER - IV

SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND DEMOGRAPHIC SETTING

4.1 Origin of Tharus of the Study Area

Tharu is the fourth largest caste group of Nepal. They are found in western Terai like Dang, Kailali and Kanchanpur in large number. Tharu community of Nepal; has got the name by place like Dangora, Chitawane, Lampuchwa Saptaria, Morangia etc. the present study is about Lampuchwa Tharu of Parsa. The Tharus of that area are indigenous in Parsa district. They have their own language and cultural practices. They are localized in a particular area.

In the field study I could not find exact evidence about the origin of this ethnic group. During the time of survey, different people presented different view. These theories about origin are only plausible and there is not a single solution. But most of the people agree with the view that they are living there from before 2000 B. S., so they disagree with the view that they are the migrant from other place like Rajasthan. They said that they are the migrant of native area or district. They are living from several centuries ago in that native area and about 60 or 70 years they migrated in the study area. Now, cultural assimilation is started with the Hindu caste society in their community.

4.2 Demographic Situation

4.2.1 Population Structure

Nichuta VDC ward no. 4 and 5 have altogether 285 households with the total population of 1767. Among them 940 are male and 827 are female. But I made detailed study of only 190 households which belonged to Tharu community and all the households were taken as the sample household. This community is also not exceptional from the Nepali society in respect of son preference, which has become the main reason of the population growth in the community. Detailed population structure of the community under study is given in the table no. 1.

Table 1: Population Distribution by Age and Sex of the Sample Households

S.N.	Age (year)	Population (%)		Total (%)
		Male	Female	
1	0-15	197(21)	180(22)	377(21)
2	16-30	216(23)	224(27)	440(25)
3	31-45	235(25)	197(24)	432(24)
4	46-60	198(21)	165(20)	363(21)
	60 above	94(10)	61(7)	155(9)
Total		940	827	1767

Source: Field survey, 2018

The total population of all the 190 households of Tharu people of Nichuta VDC ward No. 4 & 5 is 1767. Among them 940 is male and 827 are female members. From the above table it is shown that the maximum number of people i.e. 25% belong to the age group 16-30 years age and the least number of people i.e. only 9% people live in the age group of 60 years above. The above table also shows that around 70% population of the given area are economically independent and active people whereas 30% people are economically dependent on others for their basic needs.

4.2.2 Family Structure

From my observation it is found that the average size of the family is 9.3 people per family in the study area. Minimum family size I found is of four members and maximum size is of 16. The size of family is small because most of the family of that area is nuclear type but the population growth is high. Modernization has affected the family structure of the study area. Tharu people are also attracted towards the nuclear family and are following this family structure. Family structure of the study area is given below.

Table 2: Structure of Family in the Study Area

S.N.	Types of Family	No. of Family	Percentage
1	Nuclear family	154	81
2	Joint family	36	19
Total		190	100

Source: Field survey, 2018

The above table shows that 81 percent of population lives in Nuclear family whereas only 19 percent of population likes to live in joint family.

4.3 Economic Aspect

4.3.1 Agriculture

In an agricultural country like Nepal, land is considered as the symbol of economic well-being. But the landless people, who own nothing except their houses work as *Adhiya*, *Bataiya*, and *Hondi* in rich farmer's land. Following table shows the landholding pattern of sample households.

Table 3: Land Holding Pattern of the Respondents

S.N.	Quantity	Households	%
1	Landless	23	12
2	1-10 Kattha	53	28
3	10-20 Kattha	46	24
4	1-5 Bigha	42	22
5	5 Bigha Above	26	14
Total		190	100

Source: Field survey, 2018

The above table shows that 28 percent of households own only 1-10 Kattha of land resources whereas 24 percent of households own 10-20 Kattha of land and 22 percent of households own 1-5 Bigha of land resources. The least households such as only 12 percentages of households are landless and only 14 percentage of households hold land more than 5 Bighas.

4.3.2 Livestock

Only those people, who take agriculture as the primary occupation are rearing domestic animals. They keep oxen for the ploughing purpose. Few families are rearing cattle, buffalo, goat, etc for home consumption. Most of the families are rearing birds like chicken, ducks, goats and pigeon for the purpose of eggs and meat. They do not keep animals for commercial motive.

Table 4: Livestock Rearing Pattern of the Sample Households

S.N.	Livestock Rearing	Households	%
1.	Livestock	154	81
2.	No Livestock	36	19
	Total	190	100

Source: Field survey, 2018

The above table shows that around 81 percentage of the sample households rear livestock for their domestic purpose whereas only 19 percentage of households do not rear livestock for their domestic purpose.

4.3.3 Occupation of the Study Area

In the study area, the main occupation of the households is agriculture and most of them work as farmers in the field and farms. Those who do not possess enough land for survival, work as wage labour in agriculture or as tenant. People here do not have to face hand to mouth problem. But, at the same time they are also not very well off.

Table 5: Occupation of the Respondents

S.N.	Occupation	Respondents	Percentage
1	Agriculture	692	56
2	Wage labour	99	8
3	Business	49	4
4	Service	185	15
5	Foreign Job	210	17
	Total	1235	100

Source: Field survey, 2018

The above table shows that most of the Tharu people are still directly depended on agriculture. Around 56 percent of total Tharu people are engaged in agriculture and 17 percent of the Tharu people are engaged in Foreign employment or remittance. Likewise 15 percent of Tharu people are engaged in service and 8 percent are depended on wage labour. Only 4 percent of the total Tharu people are involved in Business generating activities.

4.4 Social Aspects

4.4.1 Life Standard

The economic condition of the Tharu of the study area is poor. Most of them are under poverty line. They are maintaining their livings anyway. The houses of the Tharu people are different from the other communities. 20 years ago, most of the houses were found to be made up of wood, mud, bamboo, paddy straw. But these days they have started to make the house of bamboo plastered or cement with rcc roof. Before, almost all of the Tharu people decorate the wall of their mud house with the paintings of flowers, peacock and other pictures of birds and animals with different colors to make the house more beautiful. But now they are gradually changing this practice because they have no more time to decorate the house. Thus the art of the Tharu is loosing day by day although, some houses can be seen artistically decorated.

Most of the Tharu people make two or three yards for different purpose. Biggest one is used for sitting, gossiping, sleeping and receiving guest and other purposes. Small huts are used as kitchen or temple. They make other small huts for pigeon, hen and goats. They keep their houses very neat and clean. Following table shows the housing structure of sample households.

Table 6: Structure of Sample Houses in the Study Area

S.N.	Category	Households	Percentage
1	Pakki	76	40
2	Semi-pakki	10	5
3	Kachhi	104	55
	Total	190	100

Source: Field survey, 2018

The above table shows that out of 190 households 40 percent i.e. 76 households are Pakki house i.e. made up of rod, cement and concrete and 55 percent of households i.e. 104 houses are Kachhi house i.e. made up of mud, bamboo, straw and tiles. Among them only 10 houses are Semi- Pakki i.e. made up of rod, cement and Alabaster.

4.4.2 Decision Making

The elder male member of the family makes most of the decision but they consult with female or his wife before taking any decision. Generally other members of the family do not take part in decision making process. Elder male member of the family guide all the family members and all members respect him.

Table 7: Decision Making Process in the Sample Households.

S.N.	Decision Making	Households	%
1.	Male	152	80
2.	Female	38	20
Total		190	100

Source: Field survey, 2018

The above table shows that around 80 percent of households still have Male dominance especially in decision making process whereas only 20 percent of households have Female members in decision making process.

4.4.3 Wage Rate

Tharu people who are engaged in wage earning works are landless. They accept this occupation for their subsistence. The activity of wage labour depends on age and sex. Male and youth labors can earn more wages than female, child and old age labors.

4.4.4 Language

All most all Tharu people of Nichuta speaks Tharu-Bhojpuri language as their mother tongue, this language falls under Indo-Aryan group. The alphabet of this language is written as in Devnagari. It is the largest language spoken in the VDC. This language is spoken in almost 5 districts of the Terai region

4.4.5 Religion

Tharu society is impressed by superstition. They believe that god does the creation of human beings. They believe in legends. Religion tends to reinforce Tharu ethnicity. The Tharu perpetuate their traditions by adherence to their ethnic religious beliefs. Religious affiliation reinforces Tharuism a feeling of being Tharu and thus differentiate from non-Tharus. Thus their behavior is patterned by religious belief and their joint participation in religious norms makes them a more cohesive group. Most of the Tharu people believe in *Dhami* who is supposed to help protect people from attacks by witches and from diseases and possession. The Tharu believes in *Dain, Chudail, Bhut, Pret* and *Boksi*. Tharu think that they always attempt to conceal the fact that she has the ability to cause trouble to others. The *Dhami* try to protect people from these evils.

4.4.6 Marriage

Marriage is also recognized as one of the most universal and most important social institution of human society. After getting married the boy and the girl can enter the family life and they are socially as well as legally permitted to have sexual relationship and to establish consequent and correlated socio economic relations with one another. Marriage between close relatives is prohibited in Lampuchwa Tharu of Parsa.

They used to do child marriage in the past and when the daughter becomes adult, only then they send her to her husband's house. A couple use to marry twice between themselves. First marriage was called *Biha* and second was called *Donga*. In case of marriage, Tharu women are more free than other community women. If an unmarried girl becomes pregnant, her parents have to offer the feast to the community member than only the girl is supposed to be pure and she is given same status as other girls in the society.

Generally, there are different types of marriages found among the Tharu people:

1. *Magi biwaha* (Arrange marriage)
2. *Prem Biwaha* (Love marriage)
3. *Bidwaha biwaha* (Widow marriage)

4. *Golawat biwaha* (Exchange marriage)

Mainly above-mentioned forms of marriages exist in Tharu community. Among them, Tharu people prefer arranged marriage rather than love marriage. According to observation 80% marriage is categorized as arrange marriage.

1. Arrange Marriage (*Magi Biwaha*)

Marriage, in consultation with family members and relatives is called arrange marriage. This type of marriage is conducted according to the religion and family rituals.

2. Love Marriage (*Prem Biwaha*)

This type of marriage takes place when both boy and girls like each other. This type of marriage was not found before. The young generation of Tharu people is practicing this type of marriage. This type of marriage is effective among the Tharu people who are not able to arrange the formal marriage. This type of marriage is not considered good. Although it is acceptable in the society of Tharu people.

3. Widow Marriage (*Bidwaha Biwaha*)

Widow marriage is an important aspect of the Tharu society. There is no restriction in widow marriage in Tharu community. Widow is allowed to get re-married. In the past, younger brother in-law used to get married with his widow sister in-law. But now a day, due to the influence of other Hindu castes, this practice is no more in use.

4. Exchange Marriage (*Golawat Biwaha*)

Golawat Biwaha is another type of marriage which exists in Tharu community. This type of marriage takes place when the family is socially and economically backward or the sister of the groom is not so charming. In this case it becomes difficult for the parents to search a nice groom for their daughter. That is why they start to bargain their daughter in return to their son or nephew. This becomes easy for the parents to search groom for their daughter when nobody is ready to marriage their daughter. In another case, if the family is economically weak in this case they prefer to do *Golawat Biwaha*. By doing so the parents of the bride and groom do not have to bear lots of

burden. They do not have to give dowry to each other because both brother and sisters of each side is married to each other so the process of dowry is not done in this kind of marriage whereas the parents can marry their two children in a single day. So this saves them from extra burden.

Table 8: Marriage Process in the Sample Households

S.N.	Marriage Process	Households	%
1.	Arrange Marriage	156	82
2.	Love Marriage	34	18
3.	Widow Marriage	0	0
4.	Exchange Marriage	0	0
Total		190	100

Source: Field survey, 2018

From the above mentioned table it is observed that 82% of the households still prefer to marry their children with their traditional process i.e. Arranged marriage whereas the younger generation are somewhat attracted by love marriage so only 18% of the households seems to adopt Love Marriage whereas other two forms of Marriage Process are not in practice.

4.5 Educational Status

Literacy and educational qualification attained by the population is important indicator of social development. Literacy rate of Tharu people is increasing day by day. But they do not help and guide their children at home because most of the elders are not so much literate. The children have to help in household work in the morning and in the evening. Tharu girls and boys are good in studies in the beginning days. But as they reach class seven or eight, the dropouts increase because of the growing household responsibilities and low economic status is also one reason. Some years ago most of the Tharu girls married before reaching class 9 or 10. But now a days the early marriage system is not practiced much. Girls are also reaching at the high level educational. Before, the Tharu people were unaware of education. They did not want to educate their children. But these days, due to the establishment of school in the

study area and influence of other ethnic groups, they have started to send their children to school.

Table 9: Educational Attainments of the Sample Households

S.N.	Educational Status	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
1	No Schooling	85	9	90	11	175	10
2	Primary level	329	35	282	34	611	35
3	Lower secondary	244	26	240	29	484	27
4	Secondary	188	20	148	18	336	19
5	Higher level	94	10	67	8	161	9
Total		940	100	827	100	1767	100

Source: Field survey, 2018

From the above table it is observed that the literacy status of men and women in the study area are better than the national level. It may be because of more facilities of school, college, non-formal educational program, awareness of people about education.

Around 90% population is literate in the study area. Overall, 91% males and 89% females are literate. Female illiteracy is higher than male. It also shows that only 10% of the total population of the study area have not attended any formal education or schooling whereas 35% of the population has attended primary education. Likewise 27% of the population has attended Lower Secondary education and 19% of the population has attended Secondary level of education but if we talk about Higher level of education then only 9% of the total population has attended Higher level of education.

4.6 Health and Sanitation

Most of the Tharu people are aware on the good health and sanitation. They keep their house and surroundings very neat and clean. Most of them smear the floor daily, some are twice or thrice in a week. They regularly take bath and wash clothes. They are aware about the clean drinking water and using toilets. But some of the landless Tharu people do not have toilet.

4.6.1 Drinking Water

Most of the households have tube-well for drinking water. VDC has provided tube-well which is used commonly by two or three households. Some of the rich Tharu people have set up their own tube-well.

Table 10: Sources of Drinking Water of the Sample Households

S.N.	Sources of Drinking Water	Households	%
1.	Tube Well	51	27
2.	Public Tube-Well	139	73
3.	River	0	0
4.	Public Well	0	0
Total		190	100

Source: Field survey, 2018

From the above table it is observed that about 73% of the total households of the study area are still dependent on Public tube-well for sources of drinking water due to lack of proper drainage system. Among them 27% have access to private tube as a main source of drinking water as they are economically sound and also have access to proper drainage system so they have been able to install tube-well in their own premises.

4.6.2 Toilets

Using toilets are the symbol of civilization. It not only saves time but it also saves our effort. It also helps to protect us from spreading different kinds of disease. So, in terms of modern society toilets has been very useful. A society cannot be recognized as a civilized society until they uses toilets.

Table 11: Types of Toilets of the Sample Households

S.N.	Types	Households	Percentage
1	Absence	76	40
2	Low	51	27
3	Medium	63	33
Total		190	100

Source: Field survey, 2018

From the Table No. 11 it is observed that 40% of the households still lack access to toilets whereas 60% of the households has access to toilets. Among them 27% households have low standard toilets and 33% of the households have medium standard toilets. They still lack good quality of toilets that have proper management of water supply and flush systems.

4.6.3 Disease and Treatment Pattern

People here do not take immediate action concerning minor health problems, which may be the reason for changing them into serious illness. They do not care minor illness, rather they say that they are used to such illness. They let the children play in the dust even when they have bad cough saying that they were brought up in such an environment. But they are well aware about child immunization and they timely take their babies for immunization.

Tharu people mostly Lampuchwa Tharu still strongly believe in *Dhami*. So, about 58% of Lampuchwa Tharu's first priority is the treatment with *Dhami*. According to the sub-health post, no epidemics were found in the community except seasonal disease like diarrhoea and dysentery during summer season and some chronic diseases like, T.B., gastroenteritis, ulcer, pneumonia, typhoid and kidney stone. There is facility of a sub-health post, medical stores for minor illness and at the same time Nichuta is not very far from Narayani Sub-Regional Hospital and National Medical College and Hospital at Birganj. So, they visit these hospitals for cure of serious diseases.

Table 12: Disease and Treatment System in the Study Area

S.N.	Methods of Treatment	Households	%
1.	Dhami/Jhankri	110	58
2.	Medical Treatment	80	42
Total		190	100

Source: Field survey, 2018

From the above table it is observed that the Tharu community of Nichuta VDC is not an exception to the other Tharu community. They have still belief in their traditional faith healer so their primary treatment is with the *Dhami* and *Jhankri*. The above

mentioned table shows that about 58% of the households still prefer to treat their disease with their traditional faith healer whereas 42% of the households prefer to treat their disease with Medical Professionals.

4.7 Environmental Aspect

People of Nichuta seem environmentally conscious. Most of the villagers show serious concern about environmental problems. They are sensitive towards the effect of environmental degradation. They are conserving forests by forming community forest user groups. They have done community plantation and are conserving it. They do not go to the forests for grass cutting and fuel wood collection except for the public open days. Some of the rich persons have installed biogas plants. There is the facility of electricity and telephone in the village. Table- 9 shows the energy consumption pattern of the respondents.

Table:13 Energy Consumption Patterns of the Sample Households

S.N.	Fuel category	Households	%
1	Firewood	106	56
2	Kerosene Oil	19	10
3	LPG Gas	51	27
4	Others	14	7
Total		190	100

Source: Field survey, 2018

Above table shows that about 56% of household use firewood as the main source of energy, 10% households use Kerosene Oil, 27% use LPG Gas and only 7% households use others sources of energy for cooking. Thus, firewood users are found in large number in the study area. Because people have easy access to the firewood.

CHAPTER - V

SOCIO-CULTURAL CHANGE IN THARU COMMUNITY

5.1 Socio-economic Change

Change in every aspect of society is inevitable. Not a single society can remain constant in the same position forever. Similarly, various changes can be seen in different aspects of Tharu society. Due to globalization and influence of mass media, livelihood and occupational pattern of Tharu people has been changing rapidly.

Many youths are found going out of the village in Middle East and third countries for employment. Few respondents found engaged in business, daily wage labour, agriculture labour, '*Mistry*', service etc. People here seemed busy all the season. During cultivation and harvest seasons they are busy in fields and during off-season they are busy working as labour, business etc. Most of the people are involved in saving and credit groups. This resource has made them stronger in financial matter and easy access of finance for income generation activities. They practice traditional agriculture. They do not have access on the modern farm equipments or improved seeds fertilizer. But, in recent time, some Tharu of the rich group have started using chemical fertilizers, improved seeds, tractor, thresher, combined harvester etc.

5.1.1 Change in Land Holding Pattern of the Respondents

As different scholars have mentioned about the Tharus that they were the landlords and peasants of the Terai lands few years back. They have been serving the country by growing crops. But due to their illiteracy, lack of education and extravagance lifestyle, they started selling their lands at nominal price one after another. Therefore, now-a-days most of the Tharus have become landless.

According to the Table No. 3, it can be seen that the majority of the Tharu people of the study area are either landless or have very few land. The scenario shows that the land holding pattern of Tharu people of the study area has been decreasing gradually.

5.1.2 Change in Livestock Rearing Patterns

Livestock is commonly known as domesticated animals raised in an agricultural setting to produce labor and commodities such as meat, eggs, milk, leather and wool. Livestock production plays a major economic and cultural role in numerous rural villages of Nepal. But the Tharus of Nichuta rear livestock for domestic use only. They do not rear livestock for commercial purpose.

According to the respondents of Nichuta, almost all the Tharu households of the study area used to rear livestock few years back but as the family size is decreasing now-a-days, the isolated villagers are feeling difficulty in rearing livestock. Also the young generation are leaving the villages in search of bright future and good employment opportunities.

5.1.3 Change in Occupation of the Respondents

Nepal is an agricultural country where more than 80 percent of the total population depend in agriculture for their livelihood and the study area is not an exception. All the Tharu people of the study area were depend on agriculture for their livelihood but in the recent days they are gradually quitting their traditional mode of cropping system and are attracted towards service, business and foreign employment which are providing more benefits in comparison to their traditional farming system. According to the table no. 5, it has found that 56 percent people of the study area depend on agriculture however rest people have adopted different kinds of occupations for their livelihood. So that it can be concluded that the traditional occupation of Tharu people of the study area has been shifted by other kinds occupations.

5.2 Socio-cultural Change

Nature is always changeable. It is never at rest. So, change is a universal fact. Similarly society is not at all a static phenomena but a dynamic entity. Socio-cultural change refers to any significant alteration over time in behavior patterns and cultural values and norms.

5.2.1 Change in Family Structure of the Study Area

Tharu people used to live in joint family in the past. But these days, most of the Tharu people like to live in nuclear family rather than joint and extended families. When daughters in-law join the family, they have to face various problems that leads to confliction between the family members. Due to the reason, most of the people of the study area started living in nuclear family. Members of nuclear family feel satisfaction and happiness in their family life. Few numbers of old generations fond to live in a joint family. They argue that there will be easy to solve their family problems in joint family and can easily do a lot of domestic works. Joint family helps to increase the agricultural production. But today's reality is quite different, Tharu people of the study area prefer to live in nuclear family. Therefore, it can be said that living in a nuclear family in Nepal has become a common trend.

The family structure of the study area is somewhat changed during time space. Tharu people are attracted towards to live in a nuclear family than a joint family. The data (table no. 2) shows that 81 percent people prefer to live in a nuclear family only 19 percent respondents are living in a joint family. Therefore, it can be concluded that the structure of nuclear family is increasing gradually in comparison to joint family.

5.2.2 Change in Structure of the Sample Households

There has been a lot of changes in the structure of house in the study area. Most of the Tharu people of the study area used to live in ordinary houses which were made of mud and thatched roof (kachi Ghar). Almost all the houses were made of mud and bamboo except the rich Tharus or the landlords.

But now-a-days the scenario is quite different. In the recent time, almost 40% of the houses have been made up with rod, cement and concrete (Pakki Ghar). Because the Kachhi Ghar needs lots of manpower and resources for the maintenance. Such as cow dung, mud, workers etc. which is very difficult to find now-a-days. A Kachi Ghar is needed lots of wood which is very difficult to get as government of Nepal has banned to cut down trees from the forest. So, the cost between a Kachi Ghar and a Pakki Ghar is not so big difference in recent days. On the other hand, a Pakki Ghar is safe and comfortable enough in comparison to a Kachhi Ghar and it also does not require lots

of manpower and resources for the maintenance. Once it is built then it goes from generation to generation. That is the reason the Tharu people of the study area attracted towards Pakki Ghar.

5.2.3 Change in Decision Making Process of the Sample Households

Nepal is a male dominant country. However, females are also actively participating in every steps of life in the present time. In this context Tharu community alone can not be exceptional. In the past, only male members of Tharu community has the authority to take part in the decision making process but now-a-days female members of the family are also taking part actively in the decision making process. According to the table no. 7 it has been observed that 20 percent of females are able to participate in decision making process in the study area. Participation of Tharu women in decision making process are increasing gradually because Tharu males are attracted towards service and foreign employment. As the male members are out of the village the female members who were restricted up to the kitchen and household works now have started taking the responsibility of the household and can make decision for their family members.

5.2.4 Change in Language

Almost all the Tharu people of the study area are speaking their own mother language Tharu-Bhojpuri. But due to influence of mass media and interactions with other people they have started speaking other languages like Nepali, Hindi etc. People of the study area who have gone out of the village learnt other language to interact with them. Similarly, children and youths are also attracted towards other languages.

5.2.5 Change in Marriage Process of the Sample Households

Above discussion about the different types of marriage practiced by the Tharu people of Nichuta VDC shows that Tharu people generally perform arranged marriage system. But now-a-days most of the young generation attracted towards love marriage instead of arrange marriage. The field survey shows the majority of the people in the study area are still practicing arrange marriage system. However, 20 percent of them performed love marriage itself. Tharu people started to give emphasis for dowry system in the past. The family of bride would send a pot of poison to secure her from

the attack of others with the *Bariyat*. But this system is not in practice these days. Now a days child marriage, unbalance marriage and polygamy are decreasing.

Now, the Tharus people of the study area have started modern practice of marriage. Previously, wedding ceremony, it took 3-4 days but now a days, all rituals of marriage are performed in a day. They also have given up traditional musical instruments and use *Band Baja* in the wedding. The groom used to wear *Dhoti, Kurtha* in the wedding ceremony but now a days, they are fond to wear suit, shirt, and pant. Before, women did not go in *Bariyat*. At present women also join *Bariyati*.

Due to the change in socio- cultural as well as economic condition, they are bound to bring changes associated with expenditure for the marriage ceremony. In the past, they used to invite all the neighbors. But at present they invite only selected people and relatives. A significant change can also be observed in their wedding party. These days the size of the party is relatively small and items of meals seemed ordinary. Besides this, they have gave up so many rituals and process followed in the wedding ceremony. Some of the marriage system is found to exist in traditional form. But some fundamental changes are also occurring.

In the recent times there can be seen change in the process of marriage of the Tharus of the study area. In past most of the tharu people of the study area preferred arrange marriage. Their parents used to choose bride for their children but now-a-days the youth choose their life partner by themselves. The trend of love marriage is increasing and arrange marriage is decreasing rapidly. Their also used to be widow marriage and exchange marriage in the past which is not in existence in the present time. The marriage process of the study area used to be of four days in the past which have been restricted to two days. This is because they have to spent lots of money in the ceremony and the time period was also too long and as the new generation has become busy in terms of their work. It has been difficult for them to spent too many days in a single ceremony.

5.2.6 Change in Educational Attainment of the Sample Households

Educational status of Tharus of Nichuta is very good now. Student enrollment in the class has been increasing. They used to hardly send their children to the school in a minimum number till 15 years ago. But now the percentage of enrollment has

increased dramatically. They came to know the importance of education. They have started sending their children to India and Kathmandu for the higher education. But according to table no. 9 it can be seen that only some Tharus of the study area have been able to gain higher studies whereas most of them have compelled to drop their studies in the mid of the course.

On the other hand, educational status of Tharu women in the study area is satisfactory in comparison to other community. According to the table no. 9 only 11 percent of Tharu women are illiterate in the study area. However, among them only few are getting chance to join the university. Therefore, it can be concluded that Tharu people of the study area are aware of the value of education.

5.2.7 Change in Sources of Drinking Water of the Sample Households

In the recent time most of the Tharus of the study area who are economically sound have installed private tube well for their personal use whereas those who are economically backward depend on public tube well. But the scenario was different in the past, they used to depend on river and public well for drinking water. But as increasing of population and the expansion of village, the open water resources get polluted that is why they have to depend on tube well for drinking water.

5.2.8 Change in Sanitation of the Sample Households

In terms of sanitation, the Tharus of the study area are seen conscious towards sanitation. According to the table no. 11 still 40% of the Tharu household of the study area are unable to install toilets because most of the households have no proper drainage system. But the maximum households have access to drainage system therefore they have already installed toilets in their houses.

5.2.9 Change in Health Treatment System of the Sample Households

Few years back most of the people were not aware about their health and sanitation in the study area. They were totally depended on Dhamsi/Jhankri for their treatment. However, their belief upon Dhamsi/Jhankri is still deep rooted in their mind but due to the modernization and education they have started visiting to the health posts and hospitals for treatment. According to the table no. 12, 42 percent of Tharu people in

the study area prefer to visit hospital or health posts for medical treatment. The data shows that health treatment of people in the study area has been improving gradually.

5.2.10 Change in Cultural Activities

The Tharu of the study area are modifying themselves in various aspects of their life. Such modification can be observed significantly in terms of cultural practices. Because they have accepted few cultural values, which they did not have in the past. They have accepted these traditions with preferences and practicing commonly at present.

i. Change in Clothing

In dress, the Tharu man have began to wear the modern waistcoats, shirts, pants, *paijama*, t-shirts, jeans etc. Tharu culture is disappearing day by day. Women wear saris, maxis, *kurta salwar* etc and girls wear t-shirt pant, *kurta*, skirt etc. new generation do not like their traditional dress and ornaments.

ii. Change in Food, Drink and Ornament

According to the respondents of the study area, they have gradually given up their food, drinking and wearing pattern of ornament. In the past, they made some variety of food but now they make different variety of foods according to the taste. In breakfast also they used to take rice of previous day. But now they take other things instead of rice. They reduce to drink alcohol. Most of the women do not put on traditional ornaments. Women of new generation want to wear light and small ornaments with new design.

iii. Change in Dance and Song

Now a days, most of the young people in the study area have started dancing and singing with Nepali and Hindi songs. Previously they have their own special type of dancing clothes but now they have given it up. They dance in a group but without special type of dancing clothes.

5.2.11 Religious Change

Most of the Tharu people believe in animism and worship spirits. Some, however, do not have any concept of religion and a few are gradually adopting the dominant Hindu system. Tharu's traditional worshipping method and deities and spirits are gradually in the process of modification due to many factors such as dependency on other group, mass illiteracy, poverty and close contact with Hindus. Adoption of Hindu religion by some rich Tharus is also due to belief that it helps to identify with more prestige. In most cases the Tharus are open-hearted to adopt the Hindu culture and religion. In fact the Tharu religion is dynamic in its character as well as in its form.

The Tharus have adopted the Hindu ideal as an unattainable goal. They can be seen to abandon things they regard as impure such as hog breeding or to introduce typical Hindu *Pujas*. It is found some of the Tharus special cultures like, *Pitre Aunsi*, *Godana* distinct from others.

5.2.12 Change in Festivals

Festivals are the most important part of Tharu culture. As indicated earlier, they celebrate various types of festivals in their own ways on different days. Their festivals and feast have been influenced by Hindu culture but it can not be said that their festivals have not any socio-cultural importance of their own.

It can be said that festivals help social integration because during the time of feast and festivals, the Tharu people gather in a place and interact with each other and enjoy themselves by eating, drinking and dancing which also brings the ideas of 'we' feeling or this get-together may encourage the sense of communalism; hence they would be integrated. This festival helps to preserve their traditional culture because on those days they worshiped their ancestor deities and at the same time they also respect their old aged people which is their traditional culture.

During the time of *Holi* festivals the young boys and girls gather and sing their *Holi* songs and the singing-dancing activities also help them to understand each other, which is most necessary for community life. *Tihar* helps to regulate the behavior of individual people and help to maintain social order and harmonies at the community

level and also help to bring social integration. Married daughters can not frequently visit the house of parents but at *Jitia* festival they have chance to go. Tihar festival develops a sense of deep affection between brothers and sisters.

Human society is dynamic and it is changing gradually. Change is the law of nature, which is changing with certain rules. Likewise, the feast and festivals are the parts and partial of society which are automatically changing. Likewise, the feasts and festivals of Tharu people are not an exception of this rules.

There has been some significant changes in the festivals of Tharu people. It is because now a-days they do not observe their festivals according to their tribal rules and they have started to observe Hindu festivals too, as Hindu people observed.

Due to the contact with high caste Hindu people and influence of Hindu people, Tharu festivals have undergone some changes. For example previously they used to observe every festival in an expensive way. They do not perform their daily activities from many days before any festival. Now, they invite only few relatives. But previously they used to invite many people and they had their own special type of dance and song called *Dumhra Nach* and *Sorathi* which are now disappeared from their culture. Before, they did not take *Tika* from their sister in the forehead in the *Tihar* festival but now they are taking it.

5.2.13 Change in Village Politics

They are peace-loving people and always prefer peaceful co-operation and coordination. Previously, there was different type of political system in the study area. To mobilize the Tharu village co-operatively and effectively and to solve the village common problem and to apply their traditional norms, customs, belief, rule, law and regulation, selected a person, called village head (Mukhiya). The headman of the village plays the role of leader who is assisted and followed by the villagers. The head man was selected by head of the Tharu household. The head man if unfit for leadership can be removed by the approval of the household head. The headman functions as a priest, administrator, judge and guard of the village. But now the situation has changed. That system is gradually changing. They have started to participate in political organization e.g. VDC politics. The importance of headman is decreasing and substituted by chairman of VDC and head of the ward. In the past,

Tharu people did not go to the court or police office to settle the disputes. Every dispute was settled in their village. They were afraid of police or judge of the burial body outside their society, because of the fact that they did not know the legal system and procedure. Now most of the cases in the village reaches to VDC office, court and Police Post.

5.2.14 Change in Social Relationship with other Caste and Ethnic Group

The major ethnic groups of the study area are Brahmin, Chhettri, Newar, Muslim, Teli, Ahir and other lower caste as Mushar, Chamar, and Dom etc. In the past, the Tharu people did not have any relationship with ethnical communities. That is why; there was no any such group of communities near them.

After the eradication of malaria, huge number of people of hill community started to settle in this area. They gradually came into contact with the people of other ethnic groups.

At present, the Tharu people of the study area have good relation with all the ethnic groups. They are bound to keep good relation with Brahmins, Chhetri, Newar, Muslims, Teli, Ahirs, Mushar and Chamar and other ethnic groups. Although, these ethnic groups are culturally self perpetuating, in the sense that they have their own dereblicatory institution, which helps them to identify themselves from each other. In wider economic and political context, they are interdependent. Systematic interdependence emerged from people's interaction with each other and natural environmental where they have been living.

The people of Brahmin/Chhetry communities and Tharu community are mostly involved in agriculture. So there is a huge competition between these two ethnic groups for lands occupy and the Tharu people are losing their land gradually in this competition. As a result, Brahmins, Chhetry are becoming the land lord. So the Tharu community has compulsion to maintain the relation with them in order to solve hand to mouth problem. Some of them are business man and skilled workers also. Hence, the people of Tharu community are bound to keep relation with other ethnic groups. Especially they have great compulsion to maintain good relation with Brahmin and Chhetry.

5.3 Change in Environmental Aspect

5.3.1 Change in Energy Consumption Pattern of the Sample Households

Most of the area of Nepal covered with hills, mountains, and thick jungle where huge amount of timber and firewood could be found easily few years back. Therefore firewood was only one recourse for cooking food in the study area. But because of urbanization and over population the process of deforestation has been increasing rapidly so it is very difficult to find firewood. And another reason there has been reduction on the dependency of firewood because the community forest has been closed for collecting firewood for the locals so they find difficulty for collecting firewood. Those Tharus who have personal gardens or have planted trees only use firewood as their main source of energy rests have switched to either LPG Gas or others forms of energy which are easily accessible and cheaper in context to firewood.

CHAPTER - VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary

The fundamental objectives of the present study are to analyze the present socio-economic status of the study area and to study the socio-cultural change in the various spheres of Tharu people and to find out the factors and forces responsible for the rapid socio-economic and cultural change in Tharu community.

Population of the 30 household is 146 including 80 (54.8%) males and 66 (45.2%) females. Average family size of the study area is 4.86 people per family. Main occupation of the study area is agriculture. During cultivation and harvest seasons they are busy in fields and during off-season they are busy in labor, business and technical work.

Student enrollment is increasing day by day in the schools. But as they reach to secondary level, the dropout ratio increases. The literacy rate of the Tharu male is 95% and the female is 77.3%.

Most of them are aware of keeping better health and sanitation. They are aware of clean drinking water and use of toilets. But some of the landless Tharu people do not have toilet. They still strongly believe in *Dhami*. So, 80% of Tharu's first priority is the treatment with *Dhami*. After that they visit health centers.

Most of the people do not face hand to mouth problem though they do not possess enough land. Tharu farmers are rearing domestic animals but their waste is used as fuel for cooking. They have not been able to produce as much as they can. They use chemical fertilizer but it loses the soil fertility and productivity decreases year by year. Those who can not produce sufficient food work as *Aadhiya*, *Bataiya*, and *Hondi* in rich farmer's land and are involved in other activities.

Tharus used to live in joint family in the old days. But after the migration of hill people to their village, they were influenced a lot by their culture and tradition. They started to live in nuclear families. Most of the Tharu women are involved more in household works than in productive works. They are not aware about women right.

They are still living in a dominant position. But now a days they are associated with in many saving and credit groups. So they have access and control over monetary matters.

Tharu people of the study area are organized and enjoy many festivals. They celebrate many festivals such as *Tihar*, *Jitia*, *Holi*, *Sankranti*, and *Ghato* etc. Due to poor economic condition, contact with other people and development of modern technology, Tharu feast and festivals have undergone significant change.

Tharu people have different song and dance according to ceremony and festivals. *Dhumra* dance is an special dance of Tharu people but new generation Tharu do not perform this type of dance. Some of the Tharu songs are *Birhain*, *Barmasa*, *Samajchrewa* and *Samdhaun*.

Food habits, dress pattern, way of observing various feast and festival and way of living are changing day by day.

Tharu practice their own traditional tribal religion worshipping number of deities. They believe in evil spirits. Tharu's traditional worshipping method and deities and spirits are gradually in the process of modification due to many factors such as dependency on other group, mass illiteracy, poverty and close contact with Hindus. Adoption of Hindu religion by some rich Tharus is also due to the belief that it helps to increase their social status.

Rice is the main food of the Tharu people. Rice, pulse, vegetables, pickle, and bread are their daily diet. They take breakfast, lunch and dinner in a day, all the meals include rice. They consume more fish, meat and alcohol called *Jand Raksi*. They do not serve the food to the guest without fish or meat.

The main social life-cycle ceremonies are birth, marriage and death rites. Tharu of the study area celebrate these ceremonies in accordance with their culture. Previously, they gave name of their children according to birth day, month and situation etc. But now a-days, Tharus are no more giving such name and would prefer to give common Hindu names. Now the child marriage, unbalanced marriage and polygamy are in decreasing trend. Tharu started to give emphasis for *Daijo* system. Tharu people

prefer arranged marriage rather than other types of marriage. In case of marriage, Tharu women are free than other community women.

The funeral activity is also gradually changing in that community. In the past, mostly the eldest son carried the dead body to the *Ghat* but now all the son, daughter carry it. Previously, they used to organize feast to the relatives and neighbors every day for 13 days. Thus, they had to spend money in large amount. But at present they generally organize feast at 3rd, 10th, and 13th days. Now they do not spend much money like before. They use to perform ritual activities in simple way. The main causes for all this change are their economic condition and influence of other ethnic groups.

6.2 Conclusion

Tharu is one of the indigenous tribal groups of that area. They are dominated in all sphere of life by high caste. Economically they are also poor. They have their own tradition, language, norms and culture. Traditionally, they were depended upon the agriculture that was only for subsistence. Due to low level of agricultural production and small sizes of land holding they have to depend on other economic activities such as small trade, wage labor, junior technicians etc.

There are some special socio-economic and socio-cultural traditions practiced by them. They are still far from the industrial and civilized society. Their thinking pattern and social organizations are still traditional. The way of worshipping village deities, belief in spirits, habit of wearing typical dress pattern and cluster type of settlement patterns distinctly differ from other ethnic groups.

Some gradual changes have been found in Tharus activities. The traditional social organization of Tharu community is gradually changing in accordance with the situation, time and place. The change is found in the sphere of marriage, family, kinship, religion, village polity, economy, life cycle ceremonies etc. However, Tharu people have preserved some of their traditional customs. At the same time, they have adopted western culture to some extent. Due to economic hardship, they have considerably minimized their expenses during the observance of rite and rituals and other ceremonial activities.

Continuity of changes in Tharu community has been seen. The speed of change is high and rapid. The responsible factors of the change are economic factor, migration, education, technology, physical facilities, social organization, modernization, westernization, urbanization, political mobilization and deforestation. Influence of other caste, development of infrastructure and communication are also responsible for change.

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ANNEX - I

Household Survey Questionnaire

Socio-cultural Change among the Tharu Community of Parsa. A Case Study of Nichuta VDC of Parsa District.

Name of respondent.....

Age..... Gender.....Cast.....Religion.....

Marital status: Married () Unmarried ()

Educational status: Literate () Illiterate ()

1. Household information

S.No.	Age	Gender	Literate	Illiterate	Level of Education	Remarks
1	0-15					
2	16-30					
3	31-45					
4	46-60					
5	60 above					
Total						

2. Questionnaire regarding occupation

Occupation

a. Agriculture b. Wage labour

c. Business d. Service e. Foreign Job

3. Do you have your own farming land?

a. Yes () b. No ()

4. If yes how much land do you have?

(In Bigha, Kattha and Dhur)

a b c

5. When did you start to use modern technology in agriculture?

.....

6. Do you sufficiently solve the hand to mouth problem from present occupation?

a. Yes () b. No ()

7. If not what else do you do to solve your problems?

.....

8. What is the type of your family?
 a. Joint () b. Nuclear ()
9. Are you involved in any types of groups?
 a. Yes () b. No ()

S. No.	Name of the Group	Nature of the Group	Your Position
1			
2			
3			

10. What are your main festivals?
 a) b)
 c) d)
11. What type of relation do you set up with other caste?

12. How is the wage rate for male and female for the similar type of work?
 a) b)
13. Who does the decision in household matter?
 a) Only by male b) By both male and female
 c) Only by female
14. Do you rear livestock?
 a. Yes () b. No ()
15. Is there a toilet in your house?
 a. Yes () b. No ()
 If yes,
 What is the type of your toilet?
 a) Best b) Medium c) Low
16. Is there hand Pump/tap in your house?
 a. Yes () b. No ()
17. What type of house do you live in?
 a. Pakki () b. Semi-pakki() c. Kachhi ()
18. If your family be sick, where do you consult primarily?
 a) Dhama b) Health center

19. What fuel do you use to cook in your home?
a) Firewood b) Kerosene oil
c) LPG Gas e) Others
21. Do you have felt any difficulties to maintain daily life?
.....
22. What type of Marriage System does your family practice nowadays?
a. Arrange Marriage () b. Love Marriage ()
c. Widow Marriage () d. Exchange Marriage ()
23. What type of water sources do you use for drinking purpose?
a. Tube Well () b. Public Tube Well ()
c. River () d. Public Well ()

ANNEX - II

List of the key informants

- 1) Shivshankar Chaudhary
- 2) Rajdev Mahato
- 3) Shiv Chaudhary
- 4) Dinesh Chaudhary
- 5) Sukhdev Mahato
- 6) Darbari Mahato
- 7) Ramnarayan Chaudhary

ANNEX - III

Saving and Credit Group in Nichuta Community

S. No.	Name of the Group
1	Sana Kishan Bachhat Samuha
2	Nari Bachhat Samuha
3	Yuba Bachhat Samuha
4	Paurakhi Saving and Credit Co-operative
5	Aama Samuha