

Chapter - One

Introduction

1.1 General Background.

Nepal is a landlocked country situated in the lap of Himalayas. It is located in between the latitude 26°22' to 30°27' North and longitude 80°4' to 88°12' East and its elevation ranges from 70m to 8848m. Nepal is a land of cultural diversity in Asia. The racial, religious, cultural diversity, it is recognized as a 'multi caste and multi lingua' country in Asia. The racial, religious, cultural, social systems are diverse according to the diversity in geography. On the basis of body structure, language, birth resident of Nepal is assumed to be 'Tibeto Nepalese' and 'Indo Nepalese'. Brahmin, kshetri, Tharu, Bantar, Jhagar, Dhobi, Dom, Musahar, Sarki, Kami etc are 'Indo Nepalese' living basically in Tarai and Hill. Similarly Rai, Limbu, Magar, Gurung, Tamang, Sherpa, etc are 'Tibeto Nepalese' residing in Hill and Mountain. They have their own socio cultural features and economic status. Large scale of cultural diversity and social features, racial occupation and economic status that exist in Nepal are major interest of many sociologists and anthropologists.

Geographically the country is divided into three ecological regions i.e. Mountain (35%), Hill (42%), and Tarai (23%). These regions are characterized by diverse ethnic composition. Some of the ethnic groups live primarily in Himalayan region such as Sherpa, Bhotiyas, Thakali, Dolpali and Manange people. Some of the ethnic groups live mostly in the Hill region; they are Rai, Limbu, Damai, Kami, Sarki etc. Similarly the Tarai region is inhabited by different ethnic group viz. Tharu, Dhimal, Danuwar, Rajbansi, Satar, Jhagar, Musahar and other. Each ethnic group has its own vulture, socio- economic characteristics, language and custom. They have their own economic and educational status.

Basically, Musahar community resides in the Tarai; the Tarai culture is more influenced by the traditional Hindu culture of North India. The language and dress patterns are similar to those of North Indian people. Varna system is maintained in Tarai, where four main Varna: Brahmin, Kshetri, Vaisya and Sudra are found. Ina general, the Brahmins act as priest, performs rites and are the ruler, the Vaisya are traders and merchants and the Musahar are included in "Sudra Varna" in the Varna system. Many ethnic groups of Tarai such as Chamar, Dom, Kurmi and Musahar are included within Sudra Varna.

To some extent, the Musahar follow Hindu culture. Musahars have their own cultural norms and values which differ from the culture of other ethnic groups. In Nepal the total population of Musahar community are 1, 72,434 out of which 1, 69,884 are Hindu; 1, 462 are Buddhist and other (1088) believe different religion. (CBS: 2001)

During the field study a senior Musahar respondent narrated that his generation is the 10th generation in Nepal, in the beginning they settled in Saptari District. From there they were spread to other parts of the eastern Tarai. Because of this reason even now they like to call themselves as Saptaria. They are with black face, black hair, small eye, very few hairs in face and are having medium height. Few decades before Tarai was covered by dense forest which was cleared up with the help of immigrant labor migrated into Tarai from India. Musahar were one of the caste groups migrated into Tarai from India. During the Rana Rule, a program named "Rasti Rasaune Basti Basaune" was launched under which Musahar were brought to eastern Tarai to cultivation. Musahar people migrated from the North India in between early eighteenth century and late nineteenth century. (Chhetri and Dahal: 1994)

There are other Tarai ethnic groups which often confused with the Musahar. These ethnic groups like Tharu, Bantar also look similar to the Musahar in physical appearance, dress, language and occupation. While there are various differences among them; Viz. culture, tradition and way of life.

The major settlement of the Musahar community is located in eastern Tarai especially in six districts (viz. Jhapa, Morang, Sunsari, Saptari, Siraha and Udayapur). The highest population of Musahar community is in Siraha district and the lowest population is in Udayapur. The total population of Musahar in Nepal is 1, 72,434 which holds 0.74% of the total population 23214681. (CBS: 2001)

Development means not only hardware development but also software development and education is a key variable of software development. It is equally crucial in case of socialization. It is very hard to uplift disadvantaged groups without educating them. Although our first five year plan (1956-61) had started to discuss upon the importance of education for development, the present facts show that only 53.7% population is literate. And many study show that the illiteracy prevails mainly in disadvantaged groups like Musahar. The average literacy rate of Musahar is 7.28%. (CBS: 2001)

1.2 Statement of the problem.

Proper education is the vital catalyst for awareness, socialization and progress of disadvantaged and weaker population of any country. But in our country it is not satisfactory, they are excluded in the nation building process. To achieve the goal of good governance, poverty reduction, democracy, equality and overall sustainable development, education will be the one major instrument in our country. Without literate and conscious people the country can never achieve its goal. Consciousness comes through education. Democracy without literate people will gradually change into development. In Nepal, democracy is not functioning properly since majority of people are uneducated. People are facing many kinds of social problems but they can not raising those problems as issues. Minorities are dominated by educated people in matters of achieving national fruit, participating in national affairs etc. Educated people are getting richer and richer overnight while uneducated weaker people are losing their property, culture and what they have. This situation is creating a vast gap between haves and have not.

1.3 Background of the study area.

Sunsari district lies in eastern part of the Tarai. It is located in between the latitude 20°52' to 27°52' north and longitude 87°19' to 87°59' east and elevation ranges from 152m to 914m and total area of the district is 1257 sq. km. The study area Chadwela VDC situated in central part of Sunsari district. There is Madheli VDC to the east, the Inaruwa municipality and Madhesa VDC to the west, Ekamba VDC to the north and Aurabani VDC to the south. The total population of the VDC is 6244 out of which 1874 were *Dalit* and 285 were Musahar. In this VDC, only 62% male and 25% female were literate.

Table No. 1
Ethnic Composition Mother Tongue and Population of Chadwela VDC

Ethnic/caste group	population	Mother tongue	population
Tharu	2008	Tharu	3128
Garti/Bhujel	1057	Maithili	2247
Bantar	739	Jhagar	573
Muslim	652	Nepali	134
Jhagar/Dhagar	602	Bhojpuri	111
Musahar	285	Others	51
Hajam/Thakur	158		
Teli	154		
Khatwe	142		
Others	447		
Total	6244	Total	6244

Source: HMG, National Planning Commission, (2003)

1.4 Scope and limitation of the study.

The scope of the study is that it provides some useful information about Musahar community. Everything has its own limitation; the study has also some limitations. They were as follows:

- A.** This study was limited in the Chadwela VDC of Sunsari district. Therefore, the findings of the study may or may not be generalized to other area of the country.
- B** This study was academic study, so a large area could not be incorporated in the study because of certain limitations viz. time, money etc.
- C** In this study formal education was given more priority.
- D** In this study, not only the household heads but also students, teachers, and leaders were included as respondent to achieve more reliable facts.

1.5 Objective of the study.

Education is the backbone of any society. The general objective of the study was to find out the educational status of the Musahar community of Chadwela VDC, their attitude toward education and their enrollment in the school. The specific objectives were:

- A. To study the present educational status of Musahar community.
- B. To analyze the disparity in the education of girls and boys.
- C. To examine the child enrollment in the primary education.

1.6 Significance of the study.

The village dominated Nepal is still facing various problems viz. unemployment, social discrimination, malnutrition, illiteracy, backwardness, lack of nutrient food, cloths and houses etc. Without rural development, we can not develop our country and education is the backbone of any kind of development. Thus the study aims to present information about the educational condition of the Musahar community, their life style and their indigenous skills.

It will help to understand the entire situation of the community in the area selected for the study. This study will be helpful for NGOs, INGOs and planners in the planning micro level plans and programs to improve educational condition of the Musahar community. It will be provide them guidelines to construct educational policies for any disadvantaged communities. It will also be useful for these who are interested to know about the Musahar community.

1.7 Research methodology.

Basically, this study depended upon the primary data collected from the field. Structured and unstructured questionnaire, field observation, personal interview, household survey and focus group discussion were the tools for this purpose. Beside this, some other useful data collected from the relevant secondary sources.

To make the sampling easy, the populations' information of Chadwela VDC was taken from the Population Census 2001. Total population of the VDC was 6244, out of this, 285 were Musahar. The actual households of

Musahar people in the study area were noted from the VDC office. Among 53 only 22 households were taken for the study purpose. The respondents of different age group were chosen by using purposive sampling. There were no households in 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8 wards of the VDC. Therefore, respondents of ward no. 6, 7 and 9 were taken equally as far as possible from each ward. (See Table No. 2).

Questions were filled up by the answers of both household heads and children. For households heads sex was not determined but both male and female were used as respondents purposively. Children were basically school going and dropout. The number of the school going children was 6 and the number of dropped out children was 6. Local leaders were used as key informants to note the socio cultural behavior of Musahar community and impact on educational status. School teachers were also interviewed to know the parents' attitude towards school and students' attitude within school environment.

Interview schedules were prepared separately for household heads and students. Interview schedule was also designed for schoolteachers and local leaders separately. With local leaders and schoolteachers focus group discussion was organized. Focus group discussion was also organized within Musahar male and female members. Information obtained from focus group discussions were noted in a notebook and later on they were analyzed and the useful information was interpreted. Informal personal interview were taken with school headmaster, VDC secretary and other literate persons of the Musahar community. During the study, biases were not allowed.

For the purpose of the level-wise enrollment and dropout situation 3 governmental schools and one private school were observed.

Most of the interpreted data such as socio-economic factors affecting the education, attitude towards education, problems that are hindering Musahar access to education etc. are the facts that were collected by the interview schedule designed for the study. No any published and printed materials were used. Researcher visited all corresponding respondents with designed interview schedule. The information out of the schedule was noted separately and later on interpreted mixing with other information.

Table No. 2
Sampling Table

Ward No.	Total Households	Sampled households	Sampled students
1	-	-	School going = 6 Dropout = 6
2	-	-	
3	-	-	
4	-	-	
5	-	-	
6	11	5	
7	37	14	
8	-	-	
9	5	3	
Total	53	22	

Source: VDC office, Chadwela (2006)

1.8 Data analysis and interpretation.

The collected data were edited by different techniques. After processing the data, it was presented with the help of tabular form and other form like percentage, ratio, graph etc.

The average literacy rate of households was calculated by this formula:

$$\text{Average Literacy} = \frac{\text{Total literate population at HH}}{\text{Total population of HH}} \times 100$$

(HH = Household)

The data concerning school enrollment, dropout situation and constraints hindering the access to education that were obtained from interview schedule and observation were similarly processed and tabulated. These were interpreted by tables and graphs in terms of percentages.

The net enrolment ratio of the Musahar community children in the school were evaluated by this formula:

$$\text{NER} = \frac{\text{Total school going children}}{\text{Probability of children to go to school}} \times 100$$

For the purpose of the analysis, total population at households denotes the sum of the population of sampled households collected from the field visit. Total literate population at households denotes the sum of the literate population collected from the sampled households from the field visit. To suggest the recommendations similar methods of data analysis were used.

Chapter -Two

Review of literatures

2.1 Who are Musahar?

The daily life style of the Musahar is a little different from other castes. They wake up early in the morning; go to the open field for defecation around the village. They do not give any importance for sanitation. Early in the morning, cooked stale rice is eaten by Children without washing their hands and mouth. During the field study, it was reported that Musahar are very poor. They do not have saving behavior. They spend almost all their income on consumption. If they have some money just to meet their supper, they prefer to enjoy leisure than to work. They do not like to preserve any assets for future. During the day time the adult males and females both work as wage earner, the senior children work as care taker of the animals of the landlords, while the junior children either stayed at home of play, and do not attend school. Most of the males drink alcohol while females cook food and wash utensils. It was absorbed that they often quarrel on a minor issue.

The mother language of Musahar is Maithili. But almost all male and few female can speak Nepali.

They worship Goddess Raj Devi, and God Dina - Badri. They worship Dina-Badri as their favorite Gods (Dina-Badri are regarded as the incarnation of Hindu Gods Ram and Laxman). They tell story about Dina-Badri. The story is like this: many years ago, there was a king named Jarabar Sing in Kattaya Khap of Saptari district. The King was very strong but he was very strong but he was very wicked. He forced Musahar to work in his field without wage and food. In the same time, two boys named Dina-Badri were born in a Musahar family. One day, when they were about 7-8 years, Jarabar Sing came to their house and forced their mother to go to his field. Upon her refusing, he began to behave badly with her. Looking the situation, both boys attacked Jarabar Sing and killed him. Since then, Musahar believe that are protected by Dina- Badri. The temple o Dina-Badri is made by the side of each Musahar village. The temple is made of mud and three bamboo trees which are the sign off Dina (Ram), Badri (Laxman) and Hanuman (the spiritual monkey). Each year they pray and worship Dina-Badri on the last day of the third month (Ashad) of Bikram Era.

They believe in the supernatural power of this Gods/Goddess. Whenever they fall ill, they worship the Gods/ Goddesses by offering sweets and wine and pray to them for their speedy recovery. They employ Jhankris for the purpose (Shrestha and sing, 1987).

They live in clustered village and generally their villages are composed of 20-25 houses. Their houses are small and one storied. Houses are constructed by locally available materials such as bamboo, straw, thatch, clay etc.

Musahar celebrate almost all the Hindu festivals like Dashain, Tihar and Fagu Purnima etc. In spite of those Hindu festivals, they enjoy Jitiya, Siruwa and Chhat festivals etc. Life cycle ceremonies in Musahar community are Birth rites, Naming, First feeding, *Mundan*, Marriage and Death rites.

Usually Musahar are non-vegetarian. They take normal food such as rice, pulse, bread, beaten rice and vegetables etc. Alcoholic drinks are common to them. They spend excess money saved in enjoying alcoholic drinks after solving hand mouth problem. Meat and fish are occasional food for them. They take mutton, pork, chicken and rat meat.

Their traditional occupation of Musahar was working on farms for wages, and often instead of working for money; they work for the mouse they could dig up in the soil which they would use for food. They move from place to place in search of mouse. This practice has been slowly changing over the years. Today they also provide other kinds of labor associated with construction such as brick making, house construction, road construction etc. Instead of working as labor, some Musahar are engaged in driving tractor, driving Rickshaw etc.

There are several stories regarding to the origin of Musahar:

Some people say that they are called mouse eaters. In Nepali language "*MUSA*" means mouse and "*AHAR*" means eating and the combination is "Musahar". But the Musahar do not agree with this statement. They have their different stories: they claim that they are progeny of Rishi Balmiki (the author of Ramayan). So they call themselves as "*Rishidev*" from the name of Him.

In ancient time, they were Brahmin and engaged in farming. In one very hot day, a Brahmin was working at the field. The Brahmin's body was swatted heavily. His Sacred thread (*JANAI*) was wetted and it made difficult for him to Work. The Brahmin took out the sacred thread from his body and put it of to the tree. After finishing his work, he searched for it but could not

find. With a plea that it was taken under the tree, he started to dig around the tree. Even after digging a very big hole, he could not find out the "JANAI", but he found a mouse and he caught the mouse and put it into his pocket assuming that it has eaten his JANAI. After that time the Brahmin society had out-caste him from their caste and progeny were called 'Musahar'. Since then, they started to dig the land to hunt for mice and digging the land for other proposes becomes their main occupation.

2.2 Review of Related Studies

Many researchers have studied various ethnic groups of Nepal from different angles. Some studies have focused on demography, some on ethnography while some have concentrated on socio cultural change and socio cultural status. But there are very few literatures available on the Musahar. Similarly, in identifying education status of the Musahar community, the social scientists have not deeply analyzed the issue. Due to those reason, nominal literature are found in the area of educational status of Musahar. However the available, few literatures related to the ethnography, socio-cultural and socio economies have been analyzed as relevant literature. This has provided some guidelines for the present study.

Tharu (2001) has tried to present a detailed feature of educational status of female education in Tharu community, the educational trend and proportion of Tharu students in school and to find out the causes of dropout of Tharu student from the school.

For the analysis of both primary and secondary data collected from primary and secondary sources, the research-work maps, tables, graphs and diagrams as well as simple statistical tools such as percentage and dependency ratio are used. Simple random sampling and purposive sampling are used for sampling. The researcher has collected the data by household survey, individual interview and field observation.

Researcher has found that the Tharu of the selected VDCs have become more conscious as they have begun to understand the value of education. The traditional attitude of the Tharu education has undergone a change. Although a large number of the Tharu girls and boys are enrolled at various levels of education, the dropout situation seems very high. The situation is tremendous in females. The poor economic condition was found to be a crucial factor of the Tharu backwardness in education.

Education Status of The Tharu (1988) is another attempt in this field, conducted by a study team of research center for Education Innovation and Development; Kathmandu, Nepal. This study is designed as a study report

with a brief introduction of the Tharu people. Only educational data have been interpreted in this study, which is concentrated in four districts; Dang, Kailali, Chitwan and Sunsari. The interpreted objectives of the study are: - to assess the educational status of the Tharu community, to explicate their attitude and opinions towards education, to make an appraisal of the problem and to suggest measures for promotion of education in that community.

This study has used basically primary data collected from the field through household survey, structured and unstructured questionnaire and field observation. Secondary sources of data have also used. Respondents, schools and households have been randomly sampled. The relevant data collected have been interpreted by tabulating, computing with simple statistical tools such as percentage.

Bista (1973) has given basic information of various ethnic and castes groups, their general socio economic condition and occupational status. He describes Musahar as an ethnic community. He writes Musahar are also called *Khatave*. He presents economic status of Musahar and has the specialization on ditch-digging, and agricultural labor is their main occupation, their economic condition is very poor and landless. (Bista, 1973)

Gautam and Thapamagar (1994) present conceptual idea about tribal ethnography of Nepal. They have studied various tribal ethnic group of Nepal and found Musahar as one of them. They present brief introduction of Musahar and their practices. They conclude, most of the Musahar are landless and they live by working as *Hali* (a person who does plowing on other's land). (Gautam and Thapamagar, 1994)

In some manner, Tamang (1994) indicates the existence of ethnic problem in Nepal. He finds higher caste people are dominating other lower castes of Nepalese. He presents Musahar as a one of the dominated community settled in eastern Tarai, who were migrated from India. He also blamed government of Nepal that it favors to the higher caste. (Tamang, 1994)

Shrestha and Sing (1987) have presented the Musahar as illiterate, hard working, simple and peace living. Though, they are farmers by occupation they don't have land of their own and therefore they work in the fields of landlord and eke out a hand to mouth existence. Their ways of living is still primitive. Researchers further argue that the Musahar have Monogamy, joint family system.

Caplan (1972) makes a study on relation between priests and cobblers (Brahmin and Sarki). He has expressed realities of interrelationship between priests and cobblers that existed in a Hindu society of western Nepal. Moreover, Caplan highlights how the pattern of social life changes due to conflict them. (Caplan, 1972)

Caplan (1970) pictures the historical context of land holding pattern of Limbu and change in it form conflict perspective along with the changed Government land reform policy. He also includes other socio-cultural changes occurring in them especially the acceptance of Hindu norms and values through Hinduization process. (Caplan, 1970)

Barali (1983) presents the autobiography of some freedom fighters against untouchability existing among the caste groups of Nepal. Barali also states the Bishwakarma and other untouchables are mostly inhabited in western Nepal, where they have been dominated by the high caste people especially Brahmins/ Pandits. Therefore to get out of the domination, they have started untouchable movements of struggle at first from Mulpani VDC of Baglung district. (Barali, 1983)

Sharma (1977) makes analytical study of old legal code and has highlighted caste history and caste hierarchic system of Nepal. He notes about social mobility among various caste/ethnic groups of Nepal. (Sharma, 1977)

Pokhrel (1997) presents a brief picture of Nepalese religious, cultural and social system. She notes religious practice of Musahar, mention the God and Goddess whom they worship, technique of celebrating various religious festivals. Moreover, she has praised the effort of the Musahar community to continue their religious culture though they are poor economic status. (Pokhrel 1997)

Dahal (2053) has made a study on Musahar community of Dangihat and Bahuni VDC of Morang district. He has concentrated on socio cultural aspect. He has identified the Musahar community within the Hindu Varna and placed Musahar community in the Sudra Varna. He has pointed out that they are poor by economy but very rich by culture. (2053BS)

More detail and precise study on Musahar community have been done by kshetri and Dahal (2051). They have studied Musahar people from different angles. They found Musahar community were migrated from Bihar of north India and settled in the eastern Tarai in Saptari. They identified the community as untouchable caste of Sudra Varna. Their Birth to Death ritual is similar to the other caste of Hindu, but the technique of celebration is different. They have made a brief study on economic condition of Musahar.

According to them most of the Musahar are uneducated, landless and very poor.

From the above discussion, it is known that many research works have been carried out. But, they have mostly focused on the socio cultural, social changes occur on many effect ethnic/caste groups. A few studies have been made about the Musahar community, but most of them are concentrated on the other aspects of the Musahar community. Seeing the lack of deep study concentrated on the educational aspect of Musahar community, this present study makes an attempt to analyze their educational status.

2.3 Education- why it is necessary

Intellectuals have presented different logics about why education is necessary for a community or a society. Everybody today gives stress on the primacy of education for any kind of work. The achievements of this century are believed to be the result of the education.

Aryal (1970) has stressed the importance of education in the following words: -

"Education exercises a great impact on the life of the individuals of a particular society. Its' influences are believed to be in the rising activities of indiscipline, in the multitude of crime and corruption, in the misbalanced economy, in the changing shape of social and moral concepts, in the struggle to develop, and in short the spheres of life activities of the human beings. Education is considered to be an effective instrument for the reshaping of the quality of the individual, of the society and of the nation at large"

Education is believed to be an instrument that shapes an individual than a society and prepares it to solve the entire problems. Education empowers; it helps people become more proactive, gain control over their lives, and widen the range of available choices (www.adb.org). The problems of 21st century are so complicated that there is necessity of a long-term vision in education (Frakher, 2003). Education opens the door to a life of dignity and independence, for people and countries (www.oxfam.org.uk).

In this way education can be taken as a necessary instrument for democracy, independence and fundamental rights of a person.

2.4 Education and Rural Development

Education brings about change in the sphere of development. Development is measured on the basis of educational attainment, its quality and standard. Education and rural development are closely interrelated to each other.

Late king Birendra has the opinion that it is education that constitutes the main spring of development (quoted in Ministry of Education and Culture, 1998).

Education plays a catalytic role in rural development. Its role extends from equipping rural people with basic literacy skills and preparing local manpower to bring about changes in the value system of the rural people and fostering in them a commitment to action for the improvement of their living conditions (Manandhar, 1988). Education for rural people could help to create a group of skilled people who could be used as primary manpower in different sectors of rural territory. Education is closely linked to virtually all dimension of development - human, economic and social. It is also a key factor in improving governance (www.adb.org). Relevance of education for rural development has given appropriate attention in Nepal. Among various programs, 'Education for Rural Transformation' was one with clear objective- to mobilize the local people through the medium of the school which encourage the members of the community to participate in and benefit from the programmes (Kasaju and Pradhan, ed.1994).

2.5 Education and disadvantaged groups

Disadvantaged groups are often characterized by low level of educational attainment. Education is one of the distinct causes of the state of disadvantaged. In all countries (Asia and Pacific), the problem of illiteracy is more serious among the disadvantaged and vulnerable sections of the population (Shakya and Mainali, 1986).

Gurung (2003) has opined that literacy provides opportunity of employment. But due to lack of the literacy, disadvantaged population has low level of employment opportunity. When, they lack employment opportunity, relatively they have low- income level. And so they can't spend on education. Although those groups need literacy most, it is by no means an easy task to provide literacy to them (Shakya, *ibid*).

In fact education is the primary vehicle by which economically and socially marginalized adults and children can lift themselves out of poverty and obtain the means to participate fully in their communities (www.adb.org).

2.6 Education and poverty

All dimensions of poverty are in one way or other related to education. Social, economic, or mental states of poverty cannot be illustrated without accounting education. Poverty is both a cause and an effect of insufficient access to or completion of quality education (www.adb.org). The relationship between education and poverty eradication is very clear: educated people have higher income, earning potential and are better able to improve the quality of their lives. Indigenous groups are often associated with poverty in a given country, and, so is a low level of education (Psacharopoulos, 1992).

The relationship between education and poverty is, in one hand, inseparable and on the other, not clear. The link between education and poverty is much debated. In the increasingly knowledge-based economy of the twenty first century, education will be an even more critical determinant of poverty or wealth (www.oxfam.org.uk).

2.7 Educational policies of the nation for disadvantaged groups

The period 1951-61 is recognized as the 'Decade of Educational Reforms' in Nepal. In this period the first democratic government for the first time recognized education as the right of the people and took significant steps for its spread, organization and reorganization (Aryal, *ibid*). So, the advent of democracy in 1950 had opened the door for Nepali people in education along with other socio-political field. This decade is also characterized by the decade when institutions like ministry of Education and Culture, National Board of Education, National Commission for Planning Education etc were established.

The Panchayat reign had provision to increase the numbers of schools, new books in different curriculum areas, free and compulsory education and the likes. Basically this period is recognized by the introduction and implementation of the National Education System Plan (NESP1971). The National Education System Plan had emphasized on linking the education to the development of the country. Under that aim, the NESP had planned to establish the model schools that are; schools that act as vehicles for change (Kasaju and Pradhan, 1994). The plan had major objectives to utilize the

schools as a major change agent for rural transformation through an active involvement of the community, democratization of education and national integration i.e. to generate among the diverse ethnic groups of people in Nepal a feeling of National Unity and integration. Fifth Plan (1976-81) had presented the concept of universalization of primary education.

After the restoration of democracy in 1990, the nation has changed its policies in education. The policies are targeted and specialized. Some facts of change have been visible today. One of the changes that have been noted is the increasing participation of rural children in education (Shrestha, 1993). 7th and 8th plan of this period launch a policy of education of the disadvantaged and girls' children, scholarship distribution, quota reservation at higher education, free education were the main policies (Bajracharya, 1998).

In comparison to 9th plan, 10th plan is more specific in the context of education. 10th plan has accepted education as one of the main medium of national overall development. "Educational policy of the country will be favorable for the production of appropriate manpower for national development" plan document has stated. For the sake of school management, local community has encouraged with an aim to participate local communities in managerial administration. Free education, literacy programs, decentralization of education, formal and informal education, quality education and education for disabled are the main policies taken by the plan.

Among various long-term visions of the plan, special educational program for the disadvantaged groups is hypothesized to increase the access of them in quality education. Informal education is taken as a tool to literate disadvantaged groups.

Chapter - Three

Data Analysis and Major Findings

3.1 Educational status

The educational status of the Musahar is analyzed in terms of parents' status, children's status and enrollment in non-formal education. For this analysis, household heads of this are taken as parents. The school going-aged children are taken to study the children's status.

3.1.1 Parent's Status

Educational status of the Musahar was found to be very poor. Out of the total respondents, 22.7% were literate. Among them only 9.09% could read and write and rest could just write their name. By the analysis of the survey data, 77.3% were found illiterate. Female's illiteracy was very much high than that of male.

About the Musahars' status of education about 75% respondents said they were too much back and about 20% answered they were very back. While 4% had opined that they were back only.

3.1.2 Children's Status

Educational status of the Musahar children is analyzed through their enrollment status at primary, secondary and higher levels.

In the primary level, children seemed odd with higher age. An eight-year girl was reading in class 1 and a 12 - year boy was reading in class two. The enrollment rate was found very much encouraging. Out of the total children with age required to enroll at primary level collected from the household survey, 79.76% found enrolled. Enrollment from ward no. 9 was high comparatively. Although they seemed very conscious to enroll their children in the primary level, they were weak to care after their school going children.

The Musahar students were found quite young at pre-secondary level. There were no any students at secondary level. Gradually with the increase of grades, they found dropping the classes. In classes 4 and 5 they found regular but at the examination of class 6, there were rare students. Status of the females was not good. 33.33% girls were found reading in pre-secondary levels from the household survey.

In the field survey, 41.66% students told that the enrollment for them in the school was bad. Behavior of teachers and friends were indicated as main causes. These points stated by teachers indicted the children's status in school: (a). irregularity in school. (b). dropout the classes because of hunger. (c). they seem with thin dress in the winter. (d). their parents do not look after them.

It can be conducted that the Musahar people are interested in education. But they lack awareness about age and reading culture. They do not give time to look after their children and rarely visit to school. In ward 6 and 7 Musahar population is high (see sampling table). From these wards enrollment was also high and the students in pre-secondary levels were found from these wards. It can be concluded that population is a cause that impact upon educational status and trend. It was seemed that when one child from a household admitted, following the same culture, another family also admits his children.

Similarly to that of other disadvantaged groups, the girls of the Musahar community were found backward in education. In comparison to Musahars' enrollment in primary and pre-secondary level, girl's status was found very poor.

3.1.3 Enrollment in non-formal education

During the field visit period the researcher did not find running adult-literacy classes. On the visiting period, it was found that some adult literacy classes were conducted in the VDC two years ago.

Out of total respondents, there were only four respondents who had already taken the adult literacy class. Three were male and one female. 25% illiterate respondent said; they were not interested in non-formal education because of their old age. But 75% were interested and demanded the adult-literacy classes at their clusters.

It seems that the non-formal education will do well for the educational status of the Musahar community. One female respondent claimed it was the adult-literacy class that made her a member of Parents Teachers Association of Shree Hari primary school. But she criticized the irregularity and unfamiliar process of classes and frequently absence of the teacher.

3.2 Status by major socio-economic factors

Socio-economic factors such as land size, job holding, migration, culture and tradition were examined to analyze the educational status of the Musahar.

3.2.1 Status by land size

Basically, the Musahars do not possess land of their own. They are like nomads. From the household survey, 77.27 were found landless. Those who had land did not have more than two *Bighas*. The primary occupation was wage labor. Although some of them claimed themselves as one of the ancient indigenous people of Tarai, they surprised that why they did not farming land.

The table explained below shows the role of land size on educational status of the Musahar people. The tabled data are primarily collected from the household survey.

Table No: 3
Educational status by land size

Land Size			School Enrollment%	Total
Not at all	Less than 1 Bigha	More than 1 Bigha		
33.33(6)	-	-	0%	27.27(6)
11.11(2)	-	-	1-50%	9.09(2)
16.66(3)	33.33(1)	50.00(1)	51-99%	22.72(5)
33.33(6)	66.67(2)	50.00(1)	100%	40.90(9)
77.27(17)	13.63(3)	9.09(2)	<---- Total---->	100(22)
34.22	62.65	54.44	Average literacy	40.66

Source: Field survey, 2006.

To explain this table, it could be found that there is a little impact of ownership of land on education. 33.33% of the respondents with no land at all did not send their children to school; same percentage of the respondents who did not have land, send 100% of their children to school. 50% of the respondents with possessing land more than 1 Bigha sent their all children to

school. On the other hand, the average literacy of household who did not possess land is 34.22% in comparison to household with land below and more than 1 Bigha.

Land size is a crucial economic indicator to measure the literacy status of any community. Although there seems a little bit role of land on child enrollment, it is not a basic fact. Instead of lack of own land, the Musahar people have witnessed to enroll their children to school. But average literacy is very poor at those households who do not have land at all. From this fact land can be examined as a major tool of educational status.

3.2.2 Status by Occupation

From the field survey, respondents were found holding these occupations; wage labor (72.72), agriculture (18.18) and job (9.09). The role of occupation on child enrollment to school and average literacy of households with different occupation is explained below.

Table No 4
Educational Status by Occupation

Wage labor	Agriculture	Job	School Enrollment	Total
25.00(4)	33.33(1)	50.00(1)	0%	27.27(6)
31.25(5)	-	-	1-50%	27.27(6)
25.00(4)	33.33(1)	-	51-99%	22.73(5)
13.63(3)	33.33(1)	50.00(1)	100%	18.18(4)
72.72(16)	18.18(3)	9.09(2)	<----Total---->	100(22)
51.55%	41.22%	50%	Average literacy	44.04%

Source: Field Survey, 2006

{Note: For the purpose of analysis, an occupation, which provides a regular monthly salary, is defined on a job.}

It is to be noted here that a regular job is not an important cause for the Musahar community that encourage community to enroll their children to school. 50% job holding respondents did not send their children to school and

only 50% was the average literacy at those households. On the other hand, more than 50% respondents who were wage laborers send more than 50% children to school. The average literacy at their household was 51.55%, which is more than those households having a regular job as their occupation.

3.2.3 Migration and Education

Migration was also found to be another factor that cause that cause education of the Musahar people. The Musahar people migrate frequently in search of work and a good habitat to live. The field survey showed that 9.09% of respondents said migration as a cause of their illiteracy and educational backwardness.

Similarly, out of the total (6) Sampled dropout students, 3 (50%) indicated migration as their dropout cause. Same local leader and schoolteacher also indicated migration as one of a crucial element.

3.2.4 Culture, Traditions and Education

During the field visit, no respondents were found engaged in any ceremony. But the Musahar were found to be tired from their tradition and culture. Most of the respondent showed disappointment towards their ceremonial activities in which they compulsorily required Jand-Raksi (alcohol).

Supporting the inherent hypothesis made by this researcher, more than 54.54% respondent said that one of the main causes of their educational backwardness was culture and tradition. Out of the total (12) school going and dropout student, 75% claimed culture and tradition as the main cause of their backwardness. Out of the respondent (22), 36.36% said that they used to borrow money from moneylender and friends to go to fairs for drink and eat.

Local leaders and schoolteachers had the same opinion. About 90% of them agreed upon it.

Most of the cultures and traditions pointed were: A. Child marriage minded B. Use of Jand-Raksi (alcohol) at every ceremonial activities and drinking. C. Lack of deposit habit D. Frequently travel to fairs.

By the observation of the above-examined socio-economic factors, we can exclude land-size, occupation or economic factors as primary factors of educational backwardness of the Musahar community. Socio-cultural factors are more crucial for them. Because it was found that socio-cultural process was constructing a shape of economic factors for the Musahar young. Some

adult and young opined that their community has been spending thousands of rupees for unnecessary works in the name of culture and tradition.

3.3 Awareness of Education

What is education? What it can do? The answers of these questions indicate the awareness of education. One can be recognized as educationally awarded if he has some expectations from education.

3.3.1 Parent's View

The Musahars people were found aware of education. They had a high expectation from education. 59.09% were of the opinion that education would provide man a job. Respondents had different expectations from education. So they were not concentrated to job only. 45.45% of the respondent agreed that if they were educated they would not be discriminated and cheated by other people. Few of them claimed that job was not necessary for them, if they remained without discrimination and cheating.

They also recognized education as a medium of easy and comfortable life, to improve the level of mind, and to read and write letters. Out of total respondent, their percentage was 13, 18 and 22 respectively. Very few, about 9.09% expected to maintain their family account. From the study, it was also found that some people didn't see any advantage from education. About 13.63% argued that there was nothing to gain from educating them and their children. They opined that although their children got education, they couldn't compete with other persons to have job.

3.3.2 Students' View

Students' expectations were a little different to that of parents' view. Most of the students expected a bright future. 68% students out of total school going students expected a good future. They believed education as a means of their good and easy life. 50% students desired a job after their education. Similarly to that of their parents, 50% students were of the opinion that education could get rid of them from social discrimination (Data are analyzed in percentage frequencies).

These data show students are more hopeful than their parents from education. Another fact that can be viewed is that there is some kind of social discrimination from which they want to come out.

3.4 Examination of child Enrollment in the Primary Level

Child enrollment in the primary level indicates the educational interest and trend in any community. In the Musahar community, child enrollment

was encouraging at primary level in comparison to pre-secondary level. The Net Enrollment Ratio (NER) was found to be 79.76% from the field survey. Whereas there was 83.33% NER of the VDC as a whole (source: Chadwela VDC, 2062).

Examination of children enrollment in the primary level was done by examining age of enrollment, causes for enrollment, sex preferences for enrollment and situation at different schools.

3.4.1 Age of Enrollment

It was obtained that about 48% respondents preferred 6-year age of children to join in school. 29% linked the age below 6-year to join their children in school. On the other hand, 22% preferred the age of above 5 year.

But from the field survey, the average enrollment age at class 1 was found to be 7 year. Similarly, 13 year was the average enrollment age at class 3.

It was clearly found that there was difference about the age they preferred and they enrolled in the school.

3.4.2 Causes of Enrollment

To the question asked about why they preferred that particular age for enrollment at the primary level, the respondents answered vividly. But more than 46% pointed that when their children speak Nepali well then they try to enroll them in the school. About 18% respondents indicated teasing from the children of the other community and fear from the schoolteachers as causes of enrollment at that particular age. Some were found interested to enroll at below 5-year but they said school didn't accept their children. So they kept the interest about how to join their children in boarding schools with lowest cast as far as possible.

It was found that learning Nepali language was problem to enroll their children at the age they want. About 4.5% respondents were sending their children to school because children disturbed them at home to work or to go for wage labor. They opined that children bored them asking food for hunger.

3.4.3 Sex Preference for Enrollment

An interesting data was obtained about sex preference for enrollment in the Musahar community. Although 68.18% respondents out of total preferred both sexes without any discrimination, rest 31.82% female or girls. They opined that if female got proper education they could manage a family well and could pass their life happily in their *Sasurali*.

3.4.4 Situation in Different Schools

There were 4 schools within the study area; 1 pre-secondary level, 2 primary levels and 1 primary level **Boarding** school. Data were found to be vivid explaining different facts.

Following table shows the situation of the Musahar students at primary level in different schools.

Table No: 5
Children Enrollment Situation in Different Schools

S. N.	Name of the school	Total students	Musahar Students							
			secondary level	Pre-secondary level	Primary level					
					Total	Male	Female	Total%	Male%	Female%
1	N. R. Hari P. P. S.	641	-	3	19	11	8	3.4	57.89	42.11
2	S. Hari P. S	363	-	-	40	22	18	11.02	55.00	45.00
3	Sarada P. S.	158	-	-	5	3	2	3.16	60.00	40.00
4	Sagarmatha E. B. S.	56	-	-	3	2	1	5.35	66.66	33.33
	Total	1218		3	67	38	29	5.50	56.71	43.29

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Two important figures can be drawn from this table. There is very low enrollment of the Musahar children in primary level in comparison to other communities (out of total students 5.50% were the Musahar). This situation affected in pre-secondary levels too. It shows there is high dropout situation in the end of the primary level. Another fact is that female's enrollment is poor (43.29%) than that of male (56.71%). While female enrollment in other communities was found better than the Musahar community. Although about 31.82% respondents were in favor of female to enroll at the school, the field survey did not support their attitude.

3.5 Constraints Hindering Access to Education

There was very poor access to education of the Musahar community. About 77.3% of the total house heads were found illiterate. Among them female's situation was very poor with 95.5% illiteracy. There were several

constraints hindering their access to education. Those constraints were analyzed through parents' view, students' view and local leaders' and teachers' view.

3.5.1 Parents' View

There was open-ended question for respondents to answer for the constraints hindering their access to education. Several causes were pointed out. They are tabled below for the simplicity of analysis.

Table No: 6
Constraints Hindering Education: Parents View

S. N.	Constraints	Percentage Frequencies
1	Economy	77.27
2	Tradition and culture	54.54
3	Lack of awareness	50.00
4	Language	40.90
5	Children not interest to go to school	31.81
6	Education is expensive	27.27
7	Tribal discrimination	27.27
8	Citizenship	18.18
9	Literate Musahar did not get job	9.09
10	Migration	9.09
11	Least population	4.45
12	Lack of permanent residence	4.45

Source: Field Survey, 2006

This shows economy and tradition and culture as major issues for the Musahar community. They themselves agreed upon it. Although they are economically weak, their maximum amount goes to cultural ceremonies and Jand-Raksi (alcohol). Besides poor economy, there are other distinct constraints for their education. Table indicates the Musahars are tribally discriminated and they are back from the society. 9.09% pointed unavailability of jobs for the literate Musahar as a constraint of their

education. They were not able to compete with people from higher communities. Similarly their opinion was also centered to citizenship. Due to lack of the citizenship card, they were unable to apply jobs and even to admit their children in the school. Lack of permanent residence was another problem pointed by them. The medium of communication, the language was pointed as a problem by 40.90% respondents. They said that they faced language problem during their study.

3.5.2 Students' View

For open-ended questions, students had noted different kinds of answers for their poor access to education. Students' view was not widely ranged. The table below illustrates them.

Table No: 7
Constraints Hindering Education: Students' View

S. N.	Problems	Percentage Frequency
1	Economy	100.00%
2	Lack of parents' education	91.66%
3	Culture and tradition	75.00%
4	Lack of awareness	58.33%
5	Language	50.00%
6	Tribal discrimination	33.33%
7	Educated Musahar did not get job	16.66%

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Here only one notable figure of fact is that 91.66% students complained parents' education as a main cause of their poor access to education. This fact shows that students are suffered by their parents' illiterate behavior or parents' lack of awareness of education.

50% of them opined language as constraint of their education. Their aspect was that language has been a problem in the primary level mainly. Because of lack of fluent Nepali and teaching materials in the Musahar' language, they can not interact with teachers and reading materials.

3.5.3 Local Leaders' and Teachers' View

Local leaders and schoolteachers pointed same points as constraints of education in the Musahar community. But their stress was different. 65% local leaders stressed upon culture and tradition of the Musahar community and 50% of them stressed upon economy. While 40% teachers stressed upon economy. The table given below shows the facts.

Table No: 8
Constraints Hindering Education: Local Leaders' and Teachers' View

S.N.	Problems	Percentage Frequencies		
		Local leaders	Teachers	Total
1	Tradition and culture	65%	45%	55.0%
2	Economy	50%	40%	45.0%
3	Lack of awareness	25%	35%	30.0%
4	Language	20%	5%	12.5%
5	Socio-political situation	15%	0%	7.5%

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Summarizing all the facts obtained from the field study, it can be said that economy, culture and tradition and lack of awareness are the major constraints of the education of the Musahar community. Language seems another cause; they speak their own language at home. By the field observation it was found that their language is a little difficult to speak and learn by other people. The pronunciation is very strange and difficult too. Therefore, Nepali language was difficult for them.

The major cultural and tradition behavior that were constraints for them were irregularity in works, frequent migration, no response towards change, carelessness towards future etc.

3.6 Dropout Situation

Dropout situation was deterrent in the Musahar community. There were only 25.5% regular students reading in different pre-secondary and primary schools of the study area. Whereas, from the field study; 37% children were

of school going age. Maximum respondents who were literate had dropout the school. And maximum (about 90.32%) had dropped at primary level.

3.6.1 Primary Level Situation

During the field observation, more students were found at grade 1. The ratio of male and female was not so wide. But as we observed higher classes 2, 3, 4 etc. along with the wideness of male-female ratio the number of students were lower.

Another interesting fact found was for one or two weeks, a Musahar student seemed irregular with 1 or 2 attendances at the register. And after one month, s/he was found dropped. Similarly those students did not do their homework regularly, didn't wear school dress and bring required books and copies.

Although there were socio-economic facts affecting their regularity in schools, the distance of the school from the house was found another crucial factor. Where the distance between the school and house was long, the situation of dropout was high. During the field survey it was found that a child send to school was fishing in the river but his father caught him and scold much in his own language.

3.6.2 Pre-secondary Level Situation

Similar case as that of the primary level was found in the pre-secondary level too. But the case was a little different. The dropout period was the examination period. Half yearly exam had no more impact upon it while final examination had a great impact. So the next class found with no or a little Musahar students. Girl's situation was high. There found rare Musahar girls at grade 6, 7 and 8.

In pre-secondary level too, the house heads and students showed distance of the school as a cause of dropout. They opined that they had no cycle to go to school of distance place. So dropout was only alternative.

3.6.3 Causes of Dropout

Field survey provided a wide range of causes related to dropout situation in the Musahar community. Socio-economic factors were found more crucial. The attitude of parents and interest of children were also found equally important. Some of the notable causes of dropout are pointed below. All are found out during the field study.

- 1) Death of the parents was another cause obtained from the field survey. 25% had opined that they left the school for this reason.

- 2) 41.66% respondents said that they had to drop the school because parents were not interested to teach them. The reason was that parents were unable to spend for their education.
- 3) 33.33% respondents said that they dropped the school because of the economic problems. Problems they indicated were lack of house, lack of agricultural land, job, business etc
- 4) 31.31% respondents had the opinion that their children were not interested to go to school. They opined that because of the lack of school bag, school dress, shoes, they hesitated to go to school. Another notable reason was that they did not want to go to school because they would be alone or few in the school from their community.
- 5) 9.09% respondents pointed social discrimination or behavior towards the Musahar community as another cause. Household works such as caring children, helping parents; the same number of respondents pointed ceremonial works.
- 6) 13.63% had the opinion of marriage as a cause of the dropout. It was found that when a regular student got married than he automatically dropped his reading. A system of child marriage was found in the Musahar community.
- 7) Enrollment at higher age was found to be another cause. 4.45% pointed this cause as one of a constraint for their dropout. From the field observation, the Musahar students of higher age were found reading at lower primary classes. They seemed odd in comparison to students of other communities.
- 8) Migration was another cause. A regular student had to drop the class because of parents' migration to another places. The Musahar people often migrate from one place to another. About 9% respondents were agreed with this cause.

3.7 Incentives for Musahars' Education

The government has planned educational incentives for disadvantaged communities. The Musahar is also a disadvantaged group. They need incentives of all kinds. Within the goal of 'Education for All', the government has made some provision to disadvantaged groups. The data obtained are studied under two topics, (a) Incentives for children (b) Incentives for the community as a whole.

3.7.1 Incentives for Children

During the field study it was tried to draw whether the Musahar children were benefited from the government policies or not. Either there were any special educational packages for the Musahars' children or not. The interview schedule was designed as so. The main aim of the researcher was to draw either the Musahar children were benefited from any kind of facilities or not.

The data obtained from the field survey were analyzed within these topics: (a) Parents' view (b) Students' view (c) Local leaders' and teachers' view. All the information is illustrated with the help of the table given below.

Table No: 9
Incentives for Children

S.N.	Needed incentives	Percentage frequencies		
		Parents	Students	Local leaders and teachers
1	Free education	68.18	58.33	90
2	School stationary	63.63	100.00	95
3	Economic help	50.00	100.00	25
4	Special programs	36.36	33.33	-
5	Nutrition	31.81	41.66	55
6	School near village	27.27	-	-
7	Teaching materials in the Musahar language	-	-	15

Source: Field Survey, 2006

3.7.2 Parents' View

From the field survey, the Musahar parents were found much unhappy towards the government's policy about poor community like them. Most of

them claimed that there was the educational policy to spend money for their community or children but the government personnel and teachers misused that. They showed their dissatisfaction that they were unable to become rich due to government's policy.

About 65% parents said they could not get any kind of facilities for their children. Only 35% had opined that they got some kind of facilities such as Rs. 250 per year, school dress, books etc for their children. But they reacted that Rs. 250 per year was ridiculous and other facilities were not sufficient.

Table 9 shows that about 64% parents' need were free education or scholarship and stationary, school dress etc for children. Another opinion to point here obtained from the table is that about 32% demanded food or nutrition for their children from the schools.

It can be noted that parents were unable to meet the schools and children's demand. So they demanded stationeries and school dresses. Although there was free education for students in the primary level, the examination fee was expensive for them. One girl student was found leaving the school by two days because of lack of examination fee. The school dress was another problem for them. School dress demands a high cost at a time, which is really expensive for them. Such problems are forcing them to withdraw their children from the school.

3.7.3 Students' View

Students were of the opinion that there was not any clear policy framed by the government. They asked whether it was government's duty to conserve a disappearing tribe like Musahar. They claimed that the government must make incentives.

Out of the total respondent, 25% were facilitated by scholarship of Rs.250 for two times. 65% were not found to be facilitated by incentives of any kinds.

The daily stationeries were their first need. 100% respondents agreed upon it. Table.9 shows that 58.33% demanded free education at all levels without examination fee. Examination fee was also a problem for them. Nutrition was demanded by 31.81% of them.

3.7.4 Local Leaders' and Teachers' View

Local leaders and schoolteachers presented a little different view about how to encourage the Musahars' education. They stressed upon nutrition. About 55% of the total respondents stressed upon nutrition that is to provide for the Musahars' children in the schools. Pointing the problems of stationeries and school dress they also demanded them.

Another important issue raised by them was teaching materials in the Musahar language. They indicated due to the lingual problem, children did not understand teachers' view and they bear difficulties to do homework.

Most of the schoolteachers and local leaders said that there was no special educational policy for the Musahar community. Some teachers had the opinion that they were about to make a plan to prepare that kind of policies for the Musahar like people from their side.

The parents and students were very much hopeful for those needed incentives. They claimed those incentives were not forever, but for a short period of time. They responded that the Musahar community was a hard laborious and gentle one. If the incentives they demanded could be provided to them 4-5 years, they could manage their necessities. During the period of field survey, the Musahars people were found discussing about how to change their tradition and culture; mainly drinking ceremonies. They opined that their backwardness was curable.

3.7.5 Incentives for the community as a whole

The incentives that the respondents demanded were much different than that of the children's need. Their need was found relatively connected to their permanent future and solution of the community vulnerabilities. Their demands were not for a short time period. The obtained information is analyzed with the help of the table given below.

Table No: 10
Incentives for the Community as a Whole

S. N.	Needed incentives	Percentage frequencies	
		Parents' view	Local leaders' and teachers' view
1	Land	77.27	25.55
2	Job	68.18	40.00
3	Household live	63.63	-
4	Rasan-Pani (bread and butter)	36.36	-
5	Interest free loan	31.81	-
6	Citizenship	27.27	-
7	Awareness program	27.27	56
8	School near the cluster, teachers from their own community and teaching materials in their own language	13.13	56
9	Informal education	13.13	32
10	Information	9.09	-20

Source: Field Survey 2006

Analyzing the parents' opinion, it can be found that the needed incentives are related to their permanent residence and the opportunities to do some extra commercial activities. 77.27 % house heads demanded land and 63.63% opined the need of house. Migration seemed a great problem to the Musahar community. Land and house can solve this problem. Job and *Rasan Pani* (bread and butter) were pointed by 68.18% and 36.36% respectively. It showed that they have the problem of money to buy their daily necessities. Some opined that agricultural land was enough while other stressed upon the job only. Citizenship was also a problem. Because of lack of the citizenship, they were unable to enroll their children in the school, buy land and so on.

Local leaders and school teachers had vivid opinions. Although 40% were agreed upon the need of job the Musahar community, other 56% highlighted the necessity of school, school teacher of their own caste and

teaching materials reflecting the Musahars' socio-cultural aspect. Equal number of leaders and teachers were agreed upon the need of special educational conservation programs and awareness programs. In the context of job to be provided to the Musahar people, they preferred the qualification of them. According to them, the job had to provide to the Musahar people according to their qualification, either by conservation or by competition. Awareness campaign was crucial for the Musahar community in the opinion of the local leaders and teachers.

3.8 Major Findings of the Study

Some key information is obtained from this field-based study about the educational status of the Musahar community. Main thing is that the Musahar people still behave like nomads. From the field study not only the educational factors of the Musahar community were observed but their habits, habitat, community structure, family status etc also. These factors have relationship with the education of a society. The major findings about the educational status of the Musahar community are given below:-

- The Musahar community is educationally vulnerable. Illiteracy is about 77.3% of the community. There are extremely few Musahar people who can both read and write their name. Comparatively female's Status was poor than male. Children's status is hopeful.
- Major socio-economic factors such as occupation, land-holding are not the crucial factors determining their educational status. But culture and tradition is a crucial socio-cultural factor.
- There are no Musahar people holding governmental services in the study area. No one of them is schoolteacher. Those who are jobholder are Tempo *Khalasi* (helper) with monthly salary 1,600.
- Maximum Musahar people expected of job, which can provide them regular salary. They believe that if they have a job they can easily enroll their children at the school and educate them as other communities.
- Enrollment of children at the primary level is very much encouraging. Maximum parents are sending their children to the school. They are also interested to join children at the school.

- Dropout situation is very high in the Musahar community. It starts from the end of the primary classes. Girls have dropped the classes more than boys.
- Economic factors are not major causes hindering their access to education. Even though economy is not so negligible factor. About the constraints of their education, the parents' and the children's opinions are different. Again, local leaders and schoolteachers have their own opinion different from the Musahar people.
- There are no special focus programs for the educational development of the Musahar community. Even some students are facilitated that is negligible or uncountable. Due to the lack of incentives for their education from the government, their interest towards the education is changed.
- Some necessary steps are required for the educational development of the Musahar community. It is found that the Musahar community will accept any programs focusing their education. They are interested to welcome those kinds of programs.

Chapter -Five

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Some interesting, notable and useful information are drawn from the field study about the present educational status of the Musahar community. The data obtained were not so ranged from the preliminary assumptions made by the researcher. By the analysis of the obtained data following necessary conclusions are made.

The Musahar community still lives in isolation from other communities. They still preferred habitat near the jungle and riverside for hunting and construction materials of house. They frequently change the place of living. They are culturally rich, simple and gentle but economically poor. Most of them do not have their own land. They basically depend upon wage labor at farm and construction. Child marriage is prevalent within the community and fertility as well as mortality rate is high. The Musahar is an ultra poor caste.

Educational status is too much discouraging. Literate people are only literate; they can sign their name only. There are rare or no Musahar parents who can both read and write. Their attitude and trend towards education is changed a little. Children's status is somewhat encouraging at primary level. But girls are very back. There was only one girl at pre-secondary level. The environment of the school and the society is not properly positive for them. This is hampering their interest of education.

Although they are old, the parents are interested in Adult Literacy Classes, but, need to be regular. The teaching materials needs relevant with socio-cultural aspect of the Musahar community.

The Musahar who have no any land at all are sending their children to the school encouragingly. During the field survey, a jobholder Musahar was found not sending his children to the school while a labor Musahar was sending his all children. But socio-cultural factors are crucially leading their educational status. Migration and customs are more responsible factors.

They have hope upon formal education. Most of them think that education will provide a job. But there is a disappointment within them that there is no job for educated Musahar people. There is awareness in the

community that girls are more important for the future. They want to educate girls preferably than boys.

Child enrollment in the primary level is encouraging. From the field survey 79.76% was found Net Enrollment Ratio (NER). In schools, there were only 5.5% of the total students from the Musahar community. Age of enrollment is greatly affected by the lingual problem. Children speak Musahar language at home. So they need time to learn and speak Nepali. For easy two-way communication they lack capacity at lower age. By this lingual problem, they enroll at higher age than standard one.

About the constraints hindering their access to education, economy is found as major one. Traditional belief; habits and customs are found influencing their education. Although parents try to send them to the school, children are not interested. They like fishing and playing. Language is another constraint because the two-way communication is not possible. It has found that the teaching materials and their contents do not match the Musahars' socio-cultural status.

The students' opinion is that due to the lack of parents' education, their educational status is poor. The children point parents' traditional thoughts, behaviors and poor attitude towards change. Even though, their opinion is identical with parents, local leaders and schoolteacher. Schoolteacher and local leader do not point language as a major problem, they do not stress upon it. It also indicates that there is no problem of language for school going children in the school.

Dropout situation is rampant in the Musahar community. No any student crosses the boarder of SLC examination. Every examination influence children to drop the classes. Very few among the total Musahars' student take the examination. Teachers have to call them to take the examination. Dropping among girls is very high. The regular students also do not attend the class regularly. Maximum parents have dropped the classes during their schooling. Hence, situation is deterrent in the Musahar community; the causes are:

- ✓ Economic problem
- ✓ Death of the parents
- ✓ Social discrimination
- ✓ Early marriage

- ✓ Migration
- ✓ Expensive education
- ✓ Children do not have interest to go to school
- ✓ Enrollment at higher age

All these causes mentioned above are equally accountable.

Owing to the incentives that are to provide for the Musahar children, free education at all levels with scholarship and school necessities are crucial. Nutrition for regular student is another element of incentives. The children from Musahar community suffer from hunger at the school time and leave the class. So nutrition is a helpful instrument.

While for the community as a whole, rehabilitation program with land and a house is important. The required major incentives are:-

- a) Awareness program
- b) Informal education
- c) Information
- d) Special conservation program
- e) Citizenship
- f) Rasan-Pani (bread and butter)
- g) Interest free loan

The primary school near the community, teachers from the Musahar community and learning and teaching in their own language are other elements of incentives.

Actually the Musahar are affected by so many kinds of causes that are being economic, social and cultural. Not only one cause is highly important and not any one-dimensional program can cure them all. Problems are dimensional and cure should be done dimensionally.

Recommendations

After analyzing the facts and figures obtained from the field study, some important findings and conclusions are made. Those findings and conclusions reflect some issues that are to judge and consider. On the basis of the conclusions and findings, the following recommendations are made to enrich the educational status of the Musahar community.

- Information is crucial to aware a community. The Musahars are very far from social information. A unique way to inform them should be developed.
- In order to develop awareness about the role of education in one's life, awareness programs will be more convenient. Such type of programs may change their general attitude and concept of education. Such programs should be designed considering the Musahars' socio-cultural life and concepts. Programs should be made in an integrated and coordinated manner by the participation of the government, non-government organization and local bodies.
- To encourage the children in schools, the schools should provide some attractive programs. Lending of textbooks, school necessities, school dress will be more attractive alone with free education. Monthly and weekly cultural programs in the schools should involve the Musahar community.
- A rehabilitation program focusing the population of the Musahar should be launched. It should be implemented in an integrated manner including land, houses or quarters and job for an individual family. Primary schools/pre-secondary schools should also be established within the rehabilitation colony.
- Non-formal educational programs should expand and it should be made relevant to life of the Musahar people. Non-formal educational programs should be gender sensitive. As far as possible, teacher should be brought from Musahar community. Time factor must be considered operating the classes.
- Schoolteacher should be trained in a manner to attract the children from a community like Musahar from their behavior.
- To solve the lingual problem, pre-primary classes should be managed at every clusters of the Musahar community. The teachers should be hired from the same community as far as possible. It should be opened within the given time schedule.
- A Musahar student with his minimum qualification to teach in the primary or other level should be provided opportunity. Teaching sectors should be opened for qualified Musahar candidates.

- In every kind of local (village level) educational activities, parents of the Musahar community, either literate or illiterate, should be included. Their representation in the school's activities, management committee etc is necessary. Those parents, who send their children to the school regularly, should be awarded.
- To involve the Musahar people in socio-economic activities, the interest free loan as a micro-credit should be provided.
- Along with free education, it should also be made compulsory for girls. To educate the Musahar girls, special provision should be managed such as training facilities, job security, special scholarship programs etc.
- Examination fee for the Musahar student should be made free. School must not hope any kinds of economic contribution from the Musahar students.
- Schools' curriculum should be developed in a manner that it could touch the reality of life. Curriculum for rural community may differ to an urban community. So at the time of curriculum development, consideration should be given to the different aspects of communities; their culture, tradition, customs etc. Curriculum should be developed in a participatory manner.

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Questionnaire for field survey on Educational status of the Musahar community in Chadwela VDC, Sunsari, Nepal

A. Household Questionnaire (For heads of households)

1. District: Sunsari VDC: Chadwela Ward No.

Name of Respondent: Sex:

Age: Type of house:

2 Introduction of the family.

S.N.	Name	Age	Sex	Educational Status					
				Literate	Illiterate	Passed class	Regular	Dropped	If Dropped, cause

Marital Status			Occupation				
Married	Unmarried	Age	Agriculture	Labor	Job	Business	Others

3. What types of ethnic groups live in your neighborhood?

A Brahmin B Kshetri C Satar D Jhagar
E Mongolian group F Sing G Others

4. Do you have your own land?

A yes B No

4.1 If yes, then how much?

Bigha..... Kattha..... Dhur.....

4.2 If not, then have you earned land?

A yes B No

4.2.1 If yes, then how much?

Bigha..... Kattha..... Dhur.....

4.2.2 If yes, then do the productions meet your needs?

A yes B No

5. Total household income of the year? (In about)

.....

6. Why reading and writing is necessary?
a) to have a job
b) to know what is right and what is wrong
c) to maintain the account
d) no one can cheat a knowledge person
7. Do you make environment to send your children to school?
A yes B No
8. Is it good to admit children in school?
A yes B No
- 8.1 If good, then why?
a) good education in school
b) illiterate parent at home
c) children can know other things in school
d) children can be socialized in school
- 8.2 If bad, then why?
a) work at home
b) no expenditure for education
c) no value of education
d) others
9. Do your children want to go to school?
A yes B No
10. Who have to be taught?
A Son B Daughter C Both
- 10.1 Why?
a) son will care at the old age
b) daughter can do as that of son
c) both are equal
d) others
11. What the children do when they drop the school?
a) work at home
b) work as labor with parents
c) work as labor in rich persons' house
d) others
12. Do you help your children in their study?
A yes B No
- 12.1 If no, why?
a) lack of time
b) illiteracy
c) lack of money
d) others

13. Musahar community is A. back B. very back C. to much back in education.
- 13.1 What are the reasons?
- a) poor economy
 - b) lack of awareness
 - c) tradition and culture
 - d) others
- 13.2 Is language a cause that is making problem in your study?
- A yes B No
14. Which age is suitable to admit children in the school?
- a) 3 years
 - b) 4 "
 - c) 5 "
 - d) 6 "
 - e) 7 "
15. Have you ever got any kind of facilities for your children to study?
- A yes B No
- 15.1 If not, what kind of facilities do you need?
- A
 - B
 - C
- 15.2 In your opinion, what things have to do to develop the educational status of the Musahar community?
- A
 - B
 - C

**B. Individual Questionnaire.
(For school going and dropout children)**

1. District: Sunsari VDC: Chadwela Ward No.
Name of Respondent: Age: Sex:

2 Introduction.

S.N.	Name	Age	Sex	Educational Status					
				Literate	Illiterate	Passed class	Regular	Dropped	If Dropped, cause

Marital Status			Occupation				
Married	Unmarried	Age	Agriculture	Labor	Job	Business	Others

- 3 Do your friends tease with you?
A yes B No
4. How the teachers treat you?
a) loving b) encouraging
c) hate d) careless
5. Why reading and writing is necessary?
a) to have a job
b) to know what is right and what is wrong
c) to maintain the account
d) no one can cheat a knowledge person
6. Do your parents make environment to go to school?
A yes B No
- 6.1 If no, why?
a) lack of time b) illiteracy
c) lack of money d) tradition and culture
e) others
7. Do you want to go to school?
A yes B No
- 7.1 If yes, then why?
a) good environment in school b) interaction with friends
c) formal education in school d) others

- 7.2 If no, then why?
- expensive education
 - far away from the house
 - no importance of education
 - friends misbehavior
 - others
8. Why did you drop the school? (For dropout students)
- lack of monthly fee
 - pressure of parents
 - no importance of education
 - death of parents
 - others
- 8.1 What are you doing nowadays?
- work at home
 - labor with parents
 - work at rich people's house
 - job
 - others
9. Musahar community is A. back B. very back C. to much back in education.
- 9.1 What are the reasons?
- economic condition
 - social value
 - illiterate parents
 - lack of awareness
- 9.2 Is language a problem?
- A yes B No
10. Have you get any facilities for your study?
- A yes B No
- 10.1 If not, then what should the government do for your education?
- free education
 - school necessities
 - nutrition
 - economic help
 - others
11. What would you do after your education?
- job
 - social service
 - politics
 - not thought
 - others

C. Individual Questionnaire
(For the local leaders and teachers)

1. District: Sunsari VDC: Chadwela Ward No. Age:
Name of Respondent: Sex:
Reference:
Name of school (for school teacher only)
2. How is the status of the Musahar community?
 - a) general
 - b) back
 - c) very back
 - d) too much back
3. What are the reasons?
 - a) poor economy
 - b) tradition and culture
 - c) lack of awareness
 - d) socio-political system
 - e) others
- 3.1 Do you think language is a problem for their education?
A yes B No
4. Has government provided any kinds of facilities for the Musahar children in their study?
A yes B No
- 4.1 If not, then what kinds of facilities are necessary?
 - a) free education
 - b) economic help
 - c) provision of nutrition
 - d) provision of school necessities
 - e) others
5. What should be done for their educational development?
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)



Musahar students at N.R.Hari P.S.S. with teacher



Women Musahar are worshipping the God Dina-Badri



Researcher with respondent on their habitat



Researcher at Shree Hari Primary School with students



Arts of the Musahar people at their house-wall



Situation of a hut of the Musahar people