

Socio-economic condition of Musahar *A case study of Rajbiraj Municipality*

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Recommendation Letter

The thesis entitled, “Socio-economic condition of Musahar- A case study of Rajbiraj Municipality.” has been prepared by Nirjala Deo under my supervision and guidance. Therefore, I recommend this thesis to evaluation committee for its final evaluation.

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APPROVAL SHEET

This is to certify that thesis work entitled “Socio-Economic Condition of Musahar: A case study of Rajbiraj Municipality” Saptari prepared by Nirmala Deo has been accepted for the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Rural Development.

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The present study entitled *Socio-Economic Condition of Musahar- A case study of Rajbiraj Municipality* is an effort to give a short glimpse of socio-economic perspectives of Musahar community of Rajbiraj Municipality, Saptari district.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to give a description of Musahar community, a socially dominated and backward caste group of Nepal. The study focuses on the socio-economic condition of Musahar community in Rajbiraj Municipality, Saptari district.

The data collection instruments are observation, structured interview schedule, household survey and interview with key informants. The data are analyzed by descriptive method and presented in table, chart, diagram and percentage. Thirty respondents were taken purposively.

It is believed that their name is derived from the word Musa (rat). It is said that they have migrated in Nepal 700 years ago from southern neighbor country India. However, there is no concrete evidence to corroborate the fact that these people actually migrated centuries ago and settled down four centuries ago.

A total of 30 household were surveyed through pre-structured questionnaire through random sampling. The life expectancy of the Musahar population is low in comparison to the national data. There were only four respondent of age more than 60 years. Gender discrimination is prominent in the study population. Female members were reluctant to interact with us. We had only two female respondents. Most of the Musahar family had more than two children. It may be due to the lack of awareness and to look for the male child. Of the thirty household twenty five had nuclear family. This shows the change in earlier trend where joint or extended family was more existent. Land is important natural resources for Musahar. But the Musahars are mostly landless and they are earning their living bread and butter by working as labourer either as agriculture labour or any other sector. They don't possess any cultivable land of their own. They usually work for rich persons on daily wage basis of Nepal. Literacy rate among the Dalits is as low as 10.7% whereas at the national level literacy rate is over 50%. In certain Dalit communities such as among Musahars the literacy rate is 4% till today. Literacy rate among the Dalit women is as low as 3.2%. The Dalit children find it difficult to receive education in the schools partly due to the social discrimination and partly for their inability to pay for tuition fee and textbooks. Most of the Musahar people of the study area are settled in huts (sixty%) and

forty% live in huts with tiled roof. They have 'taati'(walls made of bamboo sticks) are after plastered with mud. The earthen floor is at times cleaned with thin coat mud and cow dung in most cases

Of the thirty respondent twenty eight had received Citizenship. Two of the female respondent didn't have citizenship card.

They are victims of racial and social discrimination. They live in a terrible plight both socially and economically. They have no access to any natural resources, technological knowledge and educational opportunities. They don't have land for cultivation and their social lives are quite miserable and low. Agricultural labour is the main occupation. The government needs to formulate special programs and policies for these people. Income generating and skill generating programs shall be useful for the economic upliftment of this community. Basic health education, adult literacy programs should be introduced to raise their awareness.

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ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

ARTEP	:	Asian Regional Team for Employment Promotion
CBS	:	Central Bureau of Statistics
CIRDAP	:	Center on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and Pacific
DHRO	:	Dalit Human Rights Organization
FESC	:	Foundation for Economic and Social Change
FGD	:	Focus Group Discussion
GNHA	:	German Nepalese Help Association
GO	:	Government Organization
HoR	:	House of Representative
INGO	:	International Non-Government Organization
NGO	:	Non-Government Organization
NHRC	:	National Human Rights Commission
NLSS	:	Nepal Living Standard Survey
NNDSWO	:	Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization
NPC	:	National Planning Commission
VDC	:	Village Development Committee